

MISSING LINKS BETWEEN THE ISLAMIC MARITAL VISION AND THE MUSLIM PRACTICE AMONG THE YORUBA IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Marriage is ordained in Islam to stabilize individual and the society. It is premised on tranquility, love and mercy that should permeate the Muslim matrimony. However, reverse is the case in many contemporary Muslim marriages among the Yoruba in Nigeria. Many homes have been turned into abode of tension, pain, grief, and regret. Rather than love and compassion, hatred, mistrust and distress now characterize family life with their attendant social and health hazards. This scenario depicts some missing links between the Islamic vision of the home and the reality of Muslim homes. It is these links that this study hopes to examine among the Yoruba Muslim couples of Nigeria. The study is descriptive, while interview is the major research instrument. The paper reveals that couple's lack of commitment, mismanagement of marital discord, mishandling of polygyny, extended family interference and economic predicament are major causes of the failure of Muslim marriages among the Yoruba. However, it is suggested that if couples are committed to their marital pledges as prescribed by Islam, other problems are surmountable and peace, love and care would resurface as envisioned by Islam.

Keywords: Islamic marital vision, Muslim practice, Nigerian Yoruba

Introduction

Marriage is an institution that is as old as man. However, details surrounding it are shaped by its context. In Islam, Marriage is accorded prominence because it is expected to be of immense benefit to human peaceful co-existence. Islamic marriage should provide a fortified peaceful atmosphere where love and compassion are nurtured for the fulfillment of the basic biological and social instinct of human beings to have sexual and emotional gratification. Hence, marriage is not only expected to shield man from indiscriminate cohabitation and chaos but to also guarantee tranquility, proliferation of love and care, particularly among the couple.ⁱ

The lubricant which propels the spousal happiness and eternal association are explicitly mentioned as love and compassion. These are nurtured by marital obligations which are allotted to husband and wife based on their natural endowments.ⁱⁱ While the husband is charged with the maintenance of the family and everything associated with the family up-keep, the wife is charged with the making of the home, through her unflinching faithfulness to the husband and the nurturing of the by-product of the marriage. Each of them must be committed and views his/her obligations as complimentary to that of the other so as to have a wholesome relationship. This expectation is captured by Allah's description of a spouse as a garment which protects and beautifies the body (Qur'an, 2:187). Couple's interactions should therefore foster love and compassion as divinely ordained.

It is disturbing to note that the reverse is the case in most contemporary Muslim marriages in Nigeria. Some homes have been turned into abode of tension, pain, grief, and regret. Love and compassion have been replaced with hatred, mistrust and distress. This scenario depicts some missing links between the Islamic concept of marriage and the Muslim homes. It is these missing links that this study hopes to examine. The paper captures the Islamic marital vision, marital obligations in Islam, causes and effects of rifts among Yoruba Muslim couples and the Islamic methods of resuscitating family harmony.

This study is prompted by the researcher's privileged interaction with spouses, especially Muslim women on various marital challenges and the need to nip marital conflict in the bud. The study is confined to Muslim couples among Yoruba speaking people of Nigeria.ⁱⁱⁱ This tribe has a reasonable percentage of the Muslim populace in Nigeria. Interview is the major research instrument and is randomly conducted in some Yoruba communities in Kwara, Osun, Oyo, Ogun, Lagos, Ondo and Ekiti States of Nigeria. This study is conducted between 2005 and 2016. About 100 people were interviewed, out of which 60% were female while 40% were male. Age of the interviewees ranges from 20 to 85 and cut across lettered and unlettered Muslims. Due to the population of the respondents, percentages were used where so many interviewees shared the same opinions; otherwise, the presenter of any view is acknowledged accordingly.

Islamic Marital Vision

Islamic marriage provides psychological, social, material and spiritual succour to couple in particular and society at large. It gives the most honouring avenue for the fulfillment of sexual urge and provides serene abode to recuperate from life challenges. It initiates an atmosphere where love, kindness, compassion, mutual confidence, solace and succour abound for the couple. The following verses of the Holy Qur'an among others attest to these facts.

And among His signs is this that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts). Verily in that are signs for those who reflect (30:21).

Permitted to you on the night of the fasts, is the approach to your wives. They are your garments and ye are their garments ... (2:187, see also 2:223, 24:32, 7:189, etc.)

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) also eulogizes marriage in the following traditions among others: "You have seen nothing like marriage for increasing the love of two people;"^{iv}

He who can afford to marry should marry, because it will help him refrain from looking at other women, and save his private parts from committing illegal sexual relation; and he who cannot afford to marry is advised to fast, as fasting will diminish his sexual power.^v

Marriage equally legalises the reproduction and perpetuation of the human beings as asserted in the following Qur'anic verses:

And Allah has made for you mates of your own nature, and made for you, out of them, sons and daughters and grandchildren, and provided for your sustenance of the best ... (16:72, see also 4:1, 43:11).

Therefore, marriage keeps the existence of the human race from extinction and purifies descent from obscurity. Marriage also shields human beings from immoral behaviours and their attendant evils, and makes them responsible and God fearing in order to live happily. Through marriage, several families are closely united and have the sense of protecting each other as stakeholders, thus, the emergence of group solidarity.

Marital Obligations in Islam

Valid marriage in Islam confers on the couple marital rights and obligations. Wife's rights are the husband's duties and vice versa as mentioned in the Qur'an: "... And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them according to what is equitable; but men have a degree (of advantage) over them and Allah is Exalted in Power Wise" (2:228). Prophet Muhammed also says: "Verily you have rights due upon your wives, and your wives have rights due upon you."^{vi} The husband is recognized as the head of the family and charged with its maintenance. He is mandated to provide the psychological, material and social needs for his wife. He is to treat her acceptably well and fend for her in a desirable manner as contained in the Qur'an (4:34, 4:19). Prophet Muhammad emphasises this in his farewell sermon:

O people! Listen! Behave well towards women, for they are like captives with you. You have no right to give them harsh treatment saves in the case when they show open disobedience. If they are guilty of disobedience, keep away from them in the bed room. In case you punish them, take care not to cause them severe injury. When they come round and obey your will, do not find pretexts to harass them. ...^{vii}

The most perfect Muslim in the matter of faith is one who has excellent behaviour; and the best among you are those who behave best towards their wives.^{viii}

The foregoing citations justify a wife's entitlement to total welfare. What constitute total well being of a wife have been expatiated by classical and modern scholars.^{ix} However, the wife's basic rights are exclusive, conducive and befitting accommodation; adequate and nourishing food; reasonable and protective dresses; sharing of love and companionship, among others.^x

The wife's obligations to her husband are her submissiveness and faithfulness to his needs^{xi} and the nurturing of the children.^{xii} She must obey her husband in everything lawful. This duty emanates from what she enjoys from the husband who expends so much on her total well being. Thus, a wife must be responsible for the management of human and material resources of the husband. Marital duty of a wife is captured in the following verse of the Qur'an 25:74 "...Our Lord! grant unto us wives and offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes" The Prophet also explains what it takes for a wife to earn the joy of her husband in the following *'ahadith*:

When Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) was asked which woman was best. He replied, "The one who pleases (her husband) when he looks at her, obeys him when he gives a command, and does not go against his wishes regarding her person or property by doing anything of which he disapproves."^{xiii}

After fear of Allah, a believer gains nothing better for himself than a good wife who obeys him if he gives her a command, pleases him if he looks at her, is true to him if he adjures her to do something, and is sincere towards him regarding her person and his property if he is absent.^{xiv}

From the above citation, it is paramount for every wife to critically study her husband and understand his various moods and be watchful of the slightest indications of his approval or disapproval.

Causes and Effects of Rifts among Yoruba Muslim Couples in Nigeria

Studies and current happenings have shown that numerous factors are responsible for rifts in marriages worldwide.^{xv} However, the major ones in some Yoruba Muslim marriages in Nigeria, according to the respondents of this study, are; the couple's lack of commitment to marital union, mismanagement of marital discord, mishandling of Polygyny, external interference and economic predicament. These factors are enunciated below.

Couple's Lack of Commitment to Marital Union

Marital union involves a serious commitment in Islam.^{xvi} It is regarded as solemn and a weighty trust. Couples are bound together by the Leave of Allah for the purpose of peace, love and purity of progeny. To sustain these objectives, couples are given divergent but complementary obligations as discussed above. Where these obligations are faithfully performed, love and compassion flourishes and peace reigns. However, contrary to Allah's design, the interviewees lament that some contemporary Muslim couples in Yorubaland are not fully committed to their partners through the ways and manners they interact. According to them, virtues like sincerity and faithfulness are abused in marital relationship. This fact manifests itself in the shirking of marital duties by either or both of the spouses; or performed based on convenience.

In respect of some husbands, duties like family financial up-keep, sharing of love and companionship are mostly neglected.^{xvii} 90% of the interviewees lamented that what most husbands supply their families are far less than their requirements. So, wives have no option but to augment what is made available or live in sorrow. In another submission, it was claimed that husbands' attitudes towards sharing of love and ideas, sexual intercourse, keeping company and kindness with their wives are very poor and humiliating. 60% of the female interviewees added that most times, sexual gratification is at the mercy of the husband and the affected women rarely complain for fear of stigmatization. The effects of this on the affected wives, as noted by the interviewees, could be suicidal. The most harrowing of such effects is on the women's psychic as submitted by Harley^{xviii} and Umm AbdurRahman & Umm Yasmeen.^{xix} Further still, 50% of the interviewees viewed husbands' living in separate apartment and not meeting the sexual right of the wives as a serious danger which could be a lee-way to indecency. Part of it is that such wives scout for love-making outside their marriages. This scenario, according to these respondents, account for why some women engage in consensual polyamorous relationships secretly.^{xx}

On the part of marital obligations of the wife, the interviewees claimed that some wives have little or no respect for their husbands, not to talk of obeying their orders. They added that some wives expend much time on their businesses or professional callings than paying attention to their families. Thus, they appear careless about the welfare of their spouses in particular. Husbands of these women, according to the respondents, have no control over their wives as ordained by Islam. Worst still, some wives are noted to have been denying their husbands sexual gratification, despite the Islamic condemnation of the act. As a result, victims of these circumstances suffer untold deprivations. This scenario according to the respondents could trigger some men to (unplanned) Polygyny. The interviewees expatiated that the act of wives shirking their marital duties to their husbands account for such men engaging in polyamorous relationships with women outside the marital union and in extreme cases with their own children. Children produced from such home, they emphasized, are devoid of home training and religious upbringing. Hence, they fall prey to bad gangs and lead indecent lives.

From the foregoing, it is deducible that the consequences of shirking marital obligations are devastating in the study area. It has caused love and compassion to be replaced with hatred, mistrust and distress. This attitude is equally identified to be responsible for the proliferation of different ailments, which most families battled with in the recent time.^{xxi} Divorce becomes a daily affair and single parenting is on the increase.^{xxii} *Zina* (adultery) has also become a common phenomenon through the patronage of polyamorous consensual relationships.^{xxiii} Negligence by Muslim couples has equally led to innocent children becoming victims of indecent behaviours.^{xxiv} Reckless search for material wealth becomes the order of the day, particularly among women as their husbands fail in their marital obligations. Some women whose husbands are forthcoming have failed to overcome the drive for excessive material pursuits.^{xxv} The Islamic envisioned blissful homes become hell and members wander in wilderness.

The hard facts that underpin the above conducts, according to the respondents, are the consequences of lack of commitment to marital obligations, misunderstanding or misapplication of marital laws or complete ignorance of marital principles in Islam due to Yoruba cultural orientation, which gives little room to women to lodge complaint, particularly about the psychological trauma resulting from denials of marital rights.

Mismanagement of Marital Discord

Poor management of disagreement by couple constitutes another hindrance to marital happiness, according to the interviewees. It is a known fact that human coexistence is not devoid of disagreement, hence the Islamic provision of crisis management as asserted in Qur'an 49:9-10:

If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight ye (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah; but if it complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair: for Allah loves those who are fair (and just). The believers are but a single brotherhood: so make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah that ye may receive mercy.

In case of family jar, the Qur'an is explicit in specifying ways of addressing the disputes. When it emanates from the wife, the husband is mandated to take the following steps as mentioned in Qur'an 4:34-35:

... As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (next), refuse to share their beds, (and last) beat them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance): for Allah is Most High, great (above you all). If ye fear a breach between them twain, appoint (two) arbiters, one from his family, and the other from hers; if they wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation: for Allah hath full knowledge, and is acquainted with all things.

But if it is the wife who is aggrieved, she is directed to source for peace in the following order:

If a wife fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part, there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between themselves; and such settlement is best; even though men's souls are swayed by greed. But if ye do good and practise self-restraint, Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do (Q. 4:128).

Deducible from these injunctions for the couple to explore in this instance are: admonition, patience, desire for settlement and involvement of skilled arbiters. Unfortunately, these laid down Qur'anic orders are sometimes misinterpreted^{xxvi} or applied haphazardly or abandoned for whims and caprices.^{xxvii} The respondents expounded on how some couples do reprimand themselves publicly or engage in physical combat. This, according to them, becomes aggravated when their sympathizers intrude into the situation.

In another instance, the interviewees noted the archaic methods that are sometimes resorted to, which in many instances, do worsen the problems. An instance of this is when the extended family members (who may not have the Islamic knowledge or skills to mediate) preside over the settlement of the row between the couples. The interviewees added with dismay that some modern couples do refer their disputes to their friends who in most cases mess-up the whole matter. This happening, according to them, revealed such friends' inexperience, intellectual shortcoming, bias (as they may be jealous of couple's cordial relationship).

Closely related to this problem is the dearth of formal counseling centres (with Islamic bias) where problems are professionally handled and referrals are made when necessary. The interviewees expressed the viability of such centres which they believed will contribute tremendously to efficient management of marital discord. They analyzed various impacts of weekly Islamic programmes on the television, radio and even newspapers which are targeted on family affairs. Prominent among these programmes is *Al-Hidayah* which is aired from the Kwara State Broadcasting Corporation (Radio Kwara), with focus on sustaining peace and harmony in Muslim matrimony.^{xxviii}

Mishandling of Polygyny

Polygyny is an age-long form of marriage that is practised often without limitations or regulations in almost all cultures except Islam.^{xxix} Islam regulates its practice and authorizes it in the following injunctions:

If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, marry woman of your choice two, or three or four, but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, or (a captive) that your right hands possess. That will be more suitable to prevent you from doing injustice. (Qur'an 4:3).

Ye are never able to be fair and just as between women, even if it is your ardent desire, but turn not away (from a woman) altogether, so as to leave her (as it were) hanging (in the air). If ye come to a friendly understanding, and practice self-restraint, God is oft-forgiving, most merciful. (Qur'an 4:129).

These injunctions are argued, by some people, to be contradictory and to even ban Polygyny. These views can be regarded as baseless, given the circumstances surrounding revelation of each of the concerned verses and the Prophetic traditions which make it a remedy to some social problems.^{xxx} Conversely, these verses can be interpreted to mean endorsement of both monogamy and polygyny with much emphasizes on the sensitivities of polygyny, to ensure its humane practice. In all ages, the positive effects of polygyny cannot be overemphasised. It has proved to be a right measure to solve some socio-economic problems that have or may plague the society.^{xxxi}

In Islam, polygyny is more of sacrifice from a husband than frivolity. This fact can be appreciated in the Prophet's interaction with his spouses. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) exhibited the highest level of fairness among his wives. He was so sensitive to their slightest feelings and never took them for granted under any circumstance. For instance, when his sickness could not allow him to move round to attend to his wives as was his habit, he informed them of his predicament and sought their concession, which led to amicable settlement.^{xxxii} Equally, the sharing of what is humanly possible is emphasized for a man who is involved in polygyny to have a peaceful coexistence.^{xxxiii} In this wise, wives in polygynous relationships gain more by sharing responsibilities (with co-wives) and lose little in terms of their rights. However, these wives must be sincere and be faithful to their husband to facilitate this task.

The practice of Polygyny among some contemporary Yoruba Muslims, according to the respondents, is contrary to the Islamic laid down principles. This great institution is subjected to sentiments and is mostly crises-based in its foundation or deliberately engaged in to punish women.^{xxxiv} Worst still, some polygynous men lack the Islamic prerequisites such as money, health, wisdom and time for a wife not to talk of several. The reckless and indiscriminate approach to polygyny was noted by respondents to be responsible for the disintegration and destabilization of many families. In their opinion, it breeds persistent acrimony, hatred, chaos and evils in the society.

Yoruba adages are not left out in the depiction of the practices as odious. These include among others:

Ile olorogun, ogba were – (polygynous home, centre of mentally derail people).

Ile olorogun, ile ogun – (polygynous home, home of misery).

Ile olorogun, ile ogun – (polygynous home, home of sorcerous display).

Nonetheless, this same tribe (Yoruba) eulogizes polygyny and encourages men to embrace it for its inherent socio-economic benefits. Possession of a large family provides the required manpower to work on the farm and alternative to a wife who is indisposed among others. This perception is apparent in the following expressions:

Alaya kan ko kuro lapon – (a man with one wife is like a man without any wife).

Alaya kan, toni ohun diju pe, afira ki iyawo ohun ko jade, toba di ale, ogiri ni yio ri – (a man with one wife, who in annoyance sent his wife parking, by the night period, he will have wall, as his companion).

The foregoing shows Yoruba people's perception and attitudes towards polygyny. Some interviewees asserted that the expressions in praise of polygyny are outdated and not realistic in the modern context given the changes in socio-economic reality of the modern time. This scenario makes some people (particularly women) irrespective of their religious affiliations to vehemently oppose polygyny.

The unhealthy preconceived ideas about Polygyny, according to some respondents, accounted for some baseless and imaginary battles in polygyneous relationship in this setting. More complications were noted to have set in, due to globalization of the world and the indiscriminate assimilation of cultures that promote individualistic and materialistic ways of life. The interviewees contended that the societal change from agrarian setting and the cost of living which has gone skyrocketing in the present age are critical issues in polygyneous families. All these, among other reasons mar harmonious relationship in some contemporary polygyneous relationships among Yoruba Muslims.

External Interference in Couple's Relationship

Mutual obligations for protection of one another and financial assistance among extended family are of overwhelming concern in Islam. Thus, it accords goodness to kindred and neighbour as attested to in Qur'an 4:36,

Serve Allah, and join not any partners with him; and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (ye meet), and what your right hands possess: for Allah loveth not the arrogant, the vainglorious.

To facilitate peaceful interaction in the extended family, the Qur'an gave warnings and guidelines such as listed in Qur'an 49:11-12. However, the practice of extended family among the Yoruba has constituted unhealthy interference in spousal relationships. This is attributed to the notion of marriage as involving the participation of the whole family. Hence, in-laws are seen as major stakeholders in a Yoruba marriage. The respondents mentioned that where the Islamic limitations of interference are neglected and in-laws meddle in couple's affairs, such involvements are mostly catastrophic. Instances of mothers-in-law dictating the pace of child birth and couple rapport are given. This is in addition to unrealistic demand of attention and care by sisters-in-law from their brother. Wife's failure to accord due respect to the in-laws and denial of access to her husband are also noted as critical concern that erode peaceful rapport among some Yoruba families.

Some respondents asserted that the parents-in-law are responsible for many marital crises owing to incessant meddling in the affairs of the couple. In their argument, some parents are bias and over-react during couple challenging periods and most times insist on their archaic perceptions of how family members should relate and run their lives.

Economic Predicament

Nigeria as a country is endowed with numerous material and human resources. Lots of these natural endowments are yet to be tapped; hence, the standard of living of most Nigerians is very poor. There is mass youth unemployment; thousands of university graduates are roaming the streets in search of job. Worst still, the cost of living is skyrocketing. Many employees are less paid and their salaries are too meager to cater for their needs. Even though, minimum wage for civil servants in Nigeria is officially eighteen thousand naira, not all Nigeria workers receive this as at when due. This meager salary obviously cannot be sufficient for a man, not to talk of his family for a month.

Besides, with the meager salary and high cost of living, interviewees added that some people still misplace their economic priority and engage in frivolity. Women are mostly the victim in this situation. Hence, what remains for family up-keep cannot be adequate. This constitutes a veritable ground for marital discord. Economic predicament according to the respondents, is a major cause of depression among couple as well as waywardness and lack of focus by some children, particularly the female.

Islamic Panacea to Marital Hurdles

Since marriage is an ordained institution for the well-being of man and his society, Allah in His infinite mercy has urged man in numerous verses of the Glorious Qur'an to imbibe some qualities and take some practical steps to attain tranquility of mind and be loved by Allah and other beings. These qualities and steps are more fundamental to be carried out in spousal relationship, bearing in mind that it is the foundation of any society and whatever transpires in this setting reflects in the larger society. These qualities and steps are:

Exhibition of Laudable Qualities:

Muslims must consider every act or interaction, including those of marital relationship as an act of worship as directed in Qur'an 51:56 and 6:163 etc. Therefore, commitment to marriage duties is nothing but worship, which must be done with all sincerity, fairness, and transparency to avoid suspicion and misreading.

Good conduct is highly praised and Muslims are persistently urged through fascinating rewards and expositions of its inherent benefits as contained in the following verses among others: "Verily man is in loss, except such as have faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of truth, and of patience and constancy." (Qur'an 103:2-3); "Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He admonishes you, that ye may receive admonition" (Qur'an 16:90); and 55:60; etc.

Exercise of patience, endurance, and tolerance are virtues that surmount any provocation or difficulty. These acts are vehemently encouraged as expressed in the Qur'an (3:200, 39:10, 2:153, 41:35, etc.). Leniency and subtleness towards others and overlooking of their faults and shortcomings are qualities that sustain group solidarity. Allah expatiates: "Nor can goodness and evil be equal. Repel (evil) with what is better: then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate!" (41:34), 3:159, 7:199, etc.

Ability to execute the aforementioned prescriptions by couples and those around them will lead to resuscitation of dwindling marital love and affection which will nurse other wounds that are inescapable in marriage relationship.

Pragmatic Efforts:

Allah encourages self appraisal and determination towards positive changes. Invariably any pragmatic step towards cordiality in marriage by all and sundry, within the Islamic principles, is permitted. Allah says:

Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls). But when (once) Allah willeth a people punishment there can be no turning back nor will they find besides Him any to protect (Qur'an, 13:11).

Couples need some elements of urging to be responsible and forth coming. The facts that the damages caused by negligence of marital duties are immeasurable make persuasion of one another by couples a necessity. Failure by any spouse to turn anew leaf, in spite of all efforts, should be punished to serve as deterrent to others, who might want to deliberately shirk their responsibilities.

Even though both monogamy and Polygyny are approved for Muslims, Islamic and Muslim scholars should work towards their conscientious application. Many innocent personalities have suffered and are still suffering due to the indiscriminate practice of both. These happenings make a mockery of this great institutions and the Muslim *Ummah* (community). Prospective polygynous men in particular should be well guided; such as by seeking permission from the designated authority to scrutinize them for the possession of at least minimum Islamic polygynous requirements.

Muslim societies in Nigeria should work towards having formal Islamic counseling centres as done in other Muslim domains in the world.^{xxxv} The advantages of having experts to mediate in family ordeals cannot be overemphasized; they are not only able to dispel some tension in marriage, but also help couple in cohabiting gorgeously.^{xxxvi}

Since Allah places financial responsibility of any home on the husband, then, effort should be geared towards assisting the less privileged and the unemployed family men. Nigeria economy needs some sort of structural support from the Muslim communities, particularly for men. Wealthy people should be sensitized to assist the unemployed Muslims. *Zakat* institutes should be established in Muslim communities to serve the purpose for which it is intended as explicitly stated in Qur'an 9:60:

Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of Allah. And for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

Judicious use of *zakat* is a realistic means of poverty alleviation.

Conclusion

This study has delved into what is absent in the contemporary Yoruba Muslim marriages which obstruct the Islamic intent of blissful marital cohabitation. The study reveals that couple's lack of commitment, mismanagement of marital discord, mishandling of Polygyny, societal interference and economic predicament are the major causes of acrimony in the family. The study shows great disparity between the Islamic marital provisions and the Muslim marital practices. This disregard for the Islamic principles results in bitterness, grief, pain, chaos, health and social disorder among the couple and the society in general. It observes that this scenario is likely to persist, except Allah's provision is respected. When Allah's designs reign, marital duties will be conscientiously performed and marriage objectives will be realized. Peace, love and compassion will flourish in the family and worthy progeny will be raised. The aforementioned Islamic solution is seen by this paper as the only feasible means that could guarantee strong, stable and peaceful family.

Endnotes

ⁱ Q 30:21, (Yusuf Ali's translation is used in the paper), Q 7:189, etc. See also Salih Al-Fawzan, *A Summary of Islamic Jurisprudence* Vol. 2, 2 Ed. (Riyadh: Al-Maiman Publishing House, 2009), 407-413.

ⁱⁱ Q 4:34, Q 2:233, etc. See also Aisha Utz, *Psychology from the Islamic Perspective* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2011), 230-235.

ⁱⁱⁱ Louis J. Munoz, *A Living Tradition Studies on Yoruba Civilisation* (Ibadan: BOOKCRAFT LTD, 2003), 4.

^{iv} Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 921, *Alim Islamic Software*.

^v Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *Sahih Al-Bukhari (English-Arabic)* Vol. 3 (Beirut-Lebanon: Dar Al Arabia, 1985-1405AH), Hadith No. 129.

^{vi} A.I. M. I. Sawrat, *Sunan At-Tirmidhi* Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr, 1994/1414), Hadith 1166.

^{vii} *ibid.*, Hadith 1166.

viii Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 106, *Alim Islamic Software*.

ix For details See works like: A. Al-Jazairiy, *Kitabu 'l-Fiqh 'ala Madhahibu 'l'Arba'in* Vol. 4 (NP: Daru 'l-Irshad Liltab'at Wa n-Nashir, ND), 402-506; Sherifat Hussain-Abubakar, "The Practice of Islamic Marital Rights and Obligations of Women in Kwara State, Nigeria" (Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 2011), 38-82.

x Hussain-Abubakar, "The Practice of Islamic Marital Rights and Obligations of Women in Kwara State, Nigeria," 38-65.

xi Within the provision of the Islamic Law.

xii Q4:34, Q2:233, etc. See also Hussain-Abubakar, "The Practice of Islamic Marital Rights and Obligations of Women in Kwara State, Nigeria," 65-82.

xiii Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 964, *Alim Islamic Software*.

xiv *ibid.*, Hadith 923.

xv Numerous causes of rifts in Muslim marriages worldwide are heard through phone-in Daily *FATAWAH* Programme of *Iqraa* Television. See also Majdi Muhammad Ash-Shahawi, *Marital Discord in Islam* (Riyadh: Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, 2004), 85-124.

xvi Marriage commitment is like that which is mentioned in Q 4:21.

xvii These views are expressed by 92% of the respondents.

xviii W. F. Harley, *His Needs and Her Needs: Building an Affair-proof Marriage* (London: Gazelle Creative Production, 1999), 130.

xix Umm AbdurRahman Hirschfelder and Umm Yasmeen Rahman, *From Monogamy to Polygyny: A Way Through* (Riyadh, Jeddah, Sharjah, Lahore, London, Houston, New York: DARUSSALAM, 2003), 76-77.

xx It is a form of loose sexual relationship that is based on consent. It is now an institution in countries like United States of America, Europe, etc.

xxi Submissions of: Dr. Nimat Idris (Medical Director, Health Services, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria); Alhaja Limata Goroso (Director, International Women Communication Center (IWCC), Ilorin, Nigeria); Barrister Jade Mohammed (Osun State Coordinator, Baobab for Women's Human Rights, Ede, Nigeria) interviewed by author, March 12, 2016; June 14, 2006; and April 14, 2006 respectively.

xxii This is evident in the increasing number of divorce cases in courts of law in Kwara, Oyo, Osun and Lagos States. Some of these cases are reported at the Nigeria daily programme of 'Press Reports' in both print and electronic media.

xxiii Some interviewees noted how some aggrieved married people engaged in extramarital relation with several partners.

xxiv Some respondents attached this blemish to mothers' inability to man their homes. Others opined that the fathers' shirking of financial obligation is the major cause.

xxv Some respondents lamented the zeal and the reckless search of some Yoruba women, particularly the Muslims for material wealth, which in most cases prevented them from nurturing and mentoring their children.

xxvi These verses are used to justify domestic violence against women, whereas Prophet Muhammad never does so but urged believers to be subtle to their wives.

xxvii Sherifat Hussain-Abubakar, "Sulh (Reconciliation) in the Context of Muslim Marriage in the Ilorin Emirate," *FAIS Journal of Humanities* 4, no. 1 (2010): 90-102.

xxviii *Al-Hidayah* is one hour weekly sponsored radio programme of Kwara State Broadcasting Corporation, Nigeria.

xxix Abu Ameena Bilal Philips and Jameelah Jones, *Polygamy in Islam* (Saudi Arabia: International Islamic Publishing House, 1990/1411 AH), 1-9; Abdur-Rahman I. Doi, *Shari'ah: The Islamic Law*, revised and expounded Abdussamad Clarke (London: Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd., 1429AH/2008CE), 235-247.

xxx *ibid.*

xxxi For example, polygyny can be succor in the following circumstances: Where female population is more than that of the male, resulting from either mass killing of males in war, accident or diseases; preference for gay (as is the case in the USA) etc; where the first wife is unfit for matrimonial duties or critically ill. Furthermore, Polygyny is highly valued in agrarian society where members of a family constitute the labour force, so, the larger the family, the bigger their wealth. Hence, additional wife is a form of additional labour. In another instance, polygyny is regarded as a form of social prestige in some traditional communities particularly in Africa. The larger the family of a man, the higher the respect accorded him by the society. This honour at times, are extended to the wives and children of the polygynous relationship. Polygyny can also have positive effect on maternal health and child birth spacing, when family chores and child nurturing duties are shared.

xxxii Khan, Vol. 7 Hadith 144.

xxxiii Doi, *Shari'ah: The Islamic Law* (Np. Nd), 144-153.

xxxiv Some respondents gave instances of how friends or family members do facilitate the coming in of another wife if they have scores with the first wife.

xxxv Malaysia is an example. For details see Maznad Mohamad. Ed. *Muslim Women and Access to Justice*. (Penang: Women's Crisis Centre, 2000).

xxxvi Abdulrazaq Oniye, "Marital and Family Counselling" in *Guidance and Counselling in Education*, ed. Adeyemi Idowu (Ilorin: INDEMAC Publishers, 2004), 227-246.

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