**ISLAM AND THE INFLUENCE OF ORIENTALIST MOVEMENT ON MODERN MUSLIMS OF PLATEAU STATE.**

**BY**

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**ABSTRACT**

In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Universe. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is His servant and messenger. May the peace and benedictions of Allah be upon the noble Prophet (s.a.w), his companions, his household and all that follow their foot step till the day of Resurrection.

Islam as a religion and standard civilization embraces life as all-encompassing phenomenon, it does not stand as a barrier between man and his legitimate desires as conceived by some. It does not regard man’s mundane existence as a gloomy dale of sorrow or punishment for some original or inherited sins. At the same time it does not envisage life on this earth as a fleeting opportunity for material satisfaction or sensual delight.

Islam pictures life as a gift to create an enabling environment for man to attain nearness to the supreme creator Allah (SWT) and attain perfection by exploiting the mental, physical and spiritual opportunity in his disposure. The greatest companions of the Prophet considered this universe as a domain of Allah in which He has raised them as human being in the first place and then as Muslims to represent Him as vicegerents and illuminating guide for those who dwell in it.

Allah (SWT) has granted mankind the right to enjoy the resources of the earth without being spendthrifts or misers. It is however the religious duty of Muslims to keep humanity on the straight path, to flush out imperfections, iniquities and frail conduct from human society, defend the weak and establish justice and peace on earth. Hence, Islam is a standardize civilization as the Noble Qur’an and Sunnah contain the solutions to the modern problems if only Islamic ideals are given way as the wavelength for the modern Muslims on the Plateau.

This paper aimed at showing the negative impact of orientalist movement on Modern Muslims of Plateau state where most of them negate their religion and bear nothing of the real meaning of Islam except its name.

**ISLAM AND HUMAN PSYCHE**

Since Islam originated from pure monotheism, it conceived idolatry as its ardent enemy and came with the purpose of subduing it first in the Arabic land then throughout the world. Islam teaches man leadership qualities and self-confidence without any taint of conceit and egoism breathes into him the favor of faith and unalloyed conviction that makes him steadfast in his pure creed. Then, as a Muslim, he is required to shoulder the responsibility of humanity at large and enjoins on him the trusteeshipof the entire human race. Therefore, it is a binding duty on every Muslim to guide to the right path those who have gone astray and lead man from darkness to light with Allah’s supreme guidance. (Suba’iee 52).

The superiority of the Islamic ideology was envisaged and brought to life with solid spiritual foundation with the advent of the seal of the Prophets, after other messengers and Prophets who came before him had introduce the message. The real emphasis of the message of Islam is on the development of moral stamina in men and on the metaphysical orientation of life.

The universal gift of Islam to humanity was the re-establishment of man’s belief in the unity of Allah, so uncompromisingly and energetically did the Muslims espouse the doctrine of monotheism that even the Trinitarians and idolaters had to offer apologies and excuses for their ideas on religion and for their modes of worship. Therefore, the only means of purifying the heart is to have complete believe in Allah, the lord of the Universe. There can be no meaning to life without sound faith in Allah. (Jameelah 20).

**WEST AND HUMAN PSYCH IN PLATEAU STATE.**

Western Civilization is not of recent origin, its roots go back to thousands of years to ancient Greek and Rome. The Greek civilization was the first clear manifestation of the Western mind and it was the first civilization to be built exclusively on the Western intellectual and ethical ideals and aspiration. (Nadwi 113). The Greek civilization was purely materialistic, the Greek could not even conceive of God without giving Him physical forms and shapes, and making images for His Attributes and installing them in their temples so as to lend a visible aspect to their devotions. They had a god of sustenance, a god of benevolence, a god of fury, and so on. All the attributes of physical existence were ascribed to these gods. (Nadwi 114).

The worship of idols, the exaggeration off emphasis on material comfort, the devotion to idols and pictures, music and the other fine arts, the extravagant notion of individual liberty and the excessive indulgence in games, sport and festivals had a most pernicious effect on the Greek minds and morals. Hideous excesses of unnatural lust and unending protest and revolts against all forms of authority gradually became the order of the day with them, vulgarity received a charter and greed became rampant. (Nadwi116).

While the Roman religion had never been a source of moral enthusiasm but been wholly paganism and superstitious, it was altogether incapable of checking the progress of skepticism and unbelief among its followers.

**THE INTELLECTUAL WARFARE**

The Muslims were the first humanist as Islamic ideals preach respect for human dignity, honor and respect for every being. They were the first to reveal to the West that outside the prevailing Catholic Church, it was not all darkness and barbarism but untold wealth of knowledge.

Gradually, some non-Muslims who noticed the great position of Islam and Muslims in the world started attacking to give the ‘dog’ a bad name to be able to hang it. The Christians venomous reaction against Islam in the East and West take different forms, intellectually, psychologically, physically and economically. But our focus here is the intellectual and psychological warfare declared on Islam and Muslims. Those who criticized it vehemently and do not wish to it as a religion took the lead. John of Damascus in his book ‘*De Haerisibus’* considered Islam to be heresy. The first Byzantine to refer to the prophet was Theophanes, the Confessor. He also attacked Islam severely as John Guilbert’s de Nogent’s criticism was based on the fact that wine and pork were tabooed in Islam. Guillaume de Tripoli’s work on Islam was written with extreme hatred and was most offensive. His descriptions were far from reality being the mixture of mythical element with history. On his path, St. Thomas to Islam and its theologians by tenting his criticisms with a philosophical orientation. Raymond Lull studied Arabic at Majorca, and Muslim Philosophy in Borgia near Tunisia. It was he who suggested to the then Pope to start the moral crusade against Islam. This suggestion which was at first with complete neglect was later accepted by the Popes after Raymond’s persistent pressure and this became the foundation of the missionary movement. Raymond translated Asma’ullahi Al-Husna (The Beautiful Names of Allah) and many books on Sufi theology and philosophy, but yet, he essentially documented and preserved his enmity against Islam. (Musawi189)

**AN INSIGHT INTO ORIENTALISM AND THE ORIENTALISTS**

**What is orientalism and who are then Orientalists?**

The dictionary (oxford) give the meaning of the term orient as eastern part of the world especially the Far East, china and japan.

Orientalism refers to the study of the languages, civilization, arts, religion, etc of the orient countries. It can also be refer to an attempt of Judeo-Christian west to fight Islam psychologically and intellectually by employing western scholars to study, examine, monitor, and distort the fact of Islam. (Sharuf 189).

While Orientalists are fundamentally soldiers of fortune who fight Islam for living and their basic mission is to prove that Islam is false and thus justifies colonization. However, under the shadow if colonization, they exercise complete monopoly of the source of knowledge, information and machinery of propaganda.

The orientalists constitute a block of crooked, dedicated and indefatigable scholars ready to challenge with utmost the ideal intensity of Islamic civilization. (Sa’id 19). They therefore study Islam in all its ramifications as a creed, law, system, civilization as well as its sources and philosophy just to plat seed of controversy in the intellectual realm of Muslim world. This move has been yield result in the Muslim Ummah with the subdivision of the Muslims into different codes.

1. **Traditional Muslims or Islam** is the code name given to genuine and orthodox faith based on the Qur’an and Sunnah without having anything to do much with mundane affairs. They are the masses who are the unhappy victims of colonial exploitation who nevertheless still insists on retaining their identity, dignity and self-determination.
2. **Modern Muslims or Islam** is a code name for a particular version of Muslims who are ready to serve as tools of deception. This version of Muslims constitutes cancer in the body of Muslims Ummah.
3. **Progressive (Secularist) Muslims** is a code name given to a Muslim who has a mixture of all manners of collaboration, and they include the Muslims who claim to be Marxists, Socialists, Capitalists, and Liberals. This group also includes Muslims Scholars who are paid to undermine Islam from within and perpetuate colonial thoughts.
4. **The Fundamentalists** are the contemporary religiously-conscious Muslims who serve as the preservers of Islamic values and defenders of the integrity of Muslim Ummah. They follow the trend of events and guide others to the dictates of Allah as enshrined in the Qur’an and Sunnah. This group have been labeled as ‘terrorists’ in the modern world due to their exposure and sophistication of their methodology of propagation of the ideals of Islam with full exploitation of modern technology. (Irfaan 60).

Furthermore, the orientalists have the preconceived notion that Islam is a false religion which must be destroyed by all means and this idea influenced all their thoughts. One of them, Hanuto once said:

“The best way of strengthening or consolidating the rule of European colonialists on Islamic countries is through distorting the Islamic religion and making its adherents conceives it as a religion replete with doctrinal contradictions as well as given a distorted explanation on the fundamentals of Islam so that it’ll divert them from their original sources and values”.()

In an attempt to any creed or ideology, it is not appropriate to study it through an enemy or secondary sources. But such a study should be carried out on the basis of primary sources. In the methodology of the orientalists, they never rely on primary sources of Islam in their studies. They rely heavily on books which are foisted on Islam and replete with Israelism, queer stories and superstitions.

**Aims and objectives of the Orientalists**

**(a) *Religious motives:*** The two major objectives to be achieved here are

1. To destroy the values of Islamic thoughts by raising doubts and stirring suspicion on the religion as a means of imposing western civilization.
2. To curtail and drop Islamic influence by putting a check on it so that it will not spread to other places in the world.

**(b)** ***Colonial Objectives:*** Colonialism adopted the movement of orientalism since when Shi’ah Military forces failed during the crusades and also resorted to orientalism for help and considered them as their vanguard that are always out to know how people think so as to carry out their vicious propaganda.

**(c) *Acting as Jewish stooges:*** One of the major objectives of the Orientalists in their attempt to pull down the edifice of Islam is serving the Jewish plan, empowering them and emphasizing their rights.

**(d) *Commercial motives:*** Most of their followers were sent to study Islam and Arabic language. By this, they translated Islamic books with distorted interpretation there by negatively shaping people’s understanding about Islam and Muslims. (Sharuf 87).

**THE INFLUENCE OF THE ORIENTALISTS ON MODERN MUSLIMS OF PLATEAU STATE.**

The negative influence of orientalists is one of the most dangerous influences on the Muslim Ummah in Plateau state. Some of the areas of influence are highlighted thus:

**(a) Intellectual invasion** which affected the Muslims in their religion and even transform them into people who bear nothing of Islam except its name. They have been intellectually brainwashed and mentally whitewashed. They have thus succeeded in having many Muslims distanced from the true teachings of Islam.

**(b)** The orientalists as protagonists of the western civilization have penetrated some scholars, trampled upon them intellectually and streamlined their thoughts in line with western orientalists. These brainwashed Muslim scholars are nothing wrong in shaking the opposite sex, attending westernly-oriented parties or even drinking alcoholic wines.

**(c) Division of the Ummah:** The orientalist has successfully created divisions in the Muslim Ummah. They revived the old discord between the Sunnis and the Shiites; nowadays we here Sunni Islam and Shiites Islam in Plateau state. They needed to create and nurture this disintegration in the Ummah since Islam is the formidable stumbling block to the growth and spreadto western civilization. (Ghulam 105).

**(d) Diverting the attention of the Muslims:** They have succeeded in directing the attention of many Muslims to only literary trends and theories. The attention of Muslims has been diverted from experimental and scientific research so that they will remain backward. As an alternative, the attention of the Muslim youths particularly in Plateau state has been directed towards European football league matches of ‘Arsenal’, ‘Chelsea’, ‘Manchester United’, English premier leagues, snooker game and their alike.

**(e) Mortalizing Arabic Language:** The enemies of Islam have realized that destroying Muslim unity will be a Herculean task as long as they speak, understand and communicate in one language i.e. Arabic. With this language, the Muslims link their past with the present because language is the heritage of any given nation and nationality can have to unit indivisibly. This is the reason why the orientalists try to mortalise the standard Arabic language and replace it with colloquial Arabic which they now encourage in the Muslim world. This movement was adopted by Louis Marcinium. They recruited many Egyptians who spread the idea that the language of the Qur’an and Sunnah does not meet the need of the modern age, and therefore, it must be forsaken and dropped. A Turkish national, Kamal Ataturk had actually executed these ideas and replaced Arabic language with Latin and translated the Holy Qur’arn into Turkish language and compelled Muslims in Turkey to worship Allah with the Turkish language, (Musawi 52). Likewise today in most of the Islamic schools of Plateau state, you will hardly get quite a significant number of graduating students who register Arabic language in their final Waec, Neco and their equivalent which is a capital slap on the Muslim Ummah. A Muslim can and will never understand his religion perfectly if he doesn’t understand Arabic language because it is the language of the religion.

**(f) Abandoning Jihad in the Cause of Allah:** The most dreaded word in the eye of the enemies of Islam is ‘Jihad’ because they have tasted the effect of the word in the minds of sincere Muslims. Consequently, they planned and primed to sponsor some people like Ghulam Ahamd who has given everything he needed to start a new religion tainted with some Islamic values and abandoned Jihad totally.

**CONCLUSION**

From the foregoing, it is established that the orientalists are to destroy the Islamic values intellectually. This intellectual warfare has been systematically followed with psychological, mental and physical warfare just to totally extinguish the light of Islam which is impossible by Allah’s Divine promise. They have invented all sort of device to achieve their aims and objectives but all to no avail. However, they were successful in causing discord amongst Muslims and dividing the Muslim Ummah by employing divide and rule gimmick.

Therefore, my clarion call here is the call for the unification of the Muslim Ummah premised on the Noble Qur’an and Sunnah. Muslims should not allow themselves to be brainwashed by the intellectual process of the orientalists. Muslims’ minds should be de-whitewashed by embracing the true message of Islam and sticking to the norms and values of Islamic civilization. There is no other path of salvation but that of the pristine Islam. So, let us downplay our trivial differences and emphasize on our areas of convergence based on the unalloyed *Tawhid* to build a formidable Ummah that will regain every aspect of our lost glory.

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