**RADICALIZATION AND VIOLENT APPROACH TO *DA’AWAH*: CAUSES, EFFECTS AND LIMITATION**.

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**Abstract**

Islam as a religion and standard civilization embraces life as an all-encompassing phenomenon; therefore, it does not stand as a barrier between man and his legitimate desires as may be conceived by some people. 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 venerable Companions of the Prophet considered this universe as a domain of Allah in which He has raised them as human beings in the first place and then as Muslims to represent Him as vicegerents and as illuminating guide for those who dwell in it. Allah (SWT) has made it religious duty of Muslims to keep humanity on the straight path, to flush out imperfections, iniquities and frail conducts of human being, to defend the weak and establish justice and peace on earth. It should be noted that the continuous recurrence of dispute in different parts of the country in recent time is a source of worry for both policy-makers as well as meaning and conscientious people and researchers alike. Disagreements and differences among people are natural propensities in people because all of us in one way or another are different but our differences should not result into violence and all sorts of radicalization. The paper attempts to explore the radicalization and violent approach to *da’awah* in North East Nigeria.

**Introduction**

Islam being the religion that entails total submission, surrender, obedience and total resignation to the Will of Allah. Islam is an all-embracing faith, giving total and comprehensive guidance on all vital aspects of individual and collective existence which being divinely revealed and self-sufficient, insists upon absolute moral values and most vehemently rejects the eclecticism, innovation and moral relativity (Diraz 271). Islam is the only way not only to righteousness and spiritual perfection but also the most potent medicine for mental health. Islam demands that the individual devote his concentrated attention towards fulfilling his duties of worshiping Allah (SWT).

The purpose of life is to please Allah through implicit obedience to His Divine law in the Qur'an and the way of life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and attain eternal salvation in the Hereafter. According to Islam, life is not a pleasure trip but an examination. Islam does not only result in the harmonious integration of the individual’s personality but the integration of his society as well. Islamic *Shari'ah* prevents all sorts of oppression, tyranny, lawlessness and social anarchy. Peace is achieved through active obedience to the revealed commandment of Allah (SWT), for Allah (SWT) is the Just, the Peace. (A.Rahman 1)

Islam is a universal message that was divinely commanded by Allah (SWT). Islam is not named after any individual or a name chosen by any person, it is a *Deen* (religion) first preached by Adam (AS) and the Prophets after him. They exhorted people to clear understanding of Allah’s (SWT) commandments. They gave teachings relevant to their time. Islam is a universal faith not of the East or the West. It is a complete way of life implying total submission to Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) has honoured the Muslim *ummah* by appointing them to share in the noble cause of their Prophet (Saw) by inviting people to follow the straight path, the companions of the prophet did their utmost, individually and collectively to convey the light of Islam to all people.

**Definition of terms**

⃰⃰ Da’awah: is an Arabic word that means "to invite" or "to offer to share." Or encouragement toward the acceptance of something, invitation and call. (kassas vi), while *Da’awah* to Allah simply means invitation to belief in Allah (SWT) and what His messengers have taught, in particular the final messenger Muhammad (SAW) in the propagation of Islam. (Kassas VI)

⃰ Radicalism: is a political policies that advocate more sweeping political, economic, or social change than that traditionally supported by the mainstream political parties. (Encarta electronic dictionary)

⃰ Violent Radicalization: is a process or processes whereby individuals or group come to approve of an (ultimately) participate in the use of indiscriminate violence for political aims or religious ideology. (Miqdad 3).

⃰Violent approach: using physical force to injure somebody or damage something, or showing extreme, destructive uncontrollable force (Encarta electronic dictionary)

**Causes of Radicalism**

Muslim reform movements in the Middle East first acquired a sense of

Urgency with the arrival of European imperialism in the latter part of the 19th

Century. The end of colonialism and acquisition of independence by most Muslim countries after World War II accelerated this drive. However, the massive social changes that accompanied these reforms and the simultaneous introduction of new ideas that were alien to classical Islamic tradition—such as nationalism, popular sovereignty, and women’s rights—disrupted traditional ways of life and caused traumatic dislocations in these societies.

Disillusionment with the path Muslim societies have taken in the modern period reached its height in the 1970s. Increasingly widespread rejection of

Western civilization as a model for Muslims to emulate has been accompanied by a search for indigenous values that reflect traditional Muslim culture, as well as a drive to restore power and dignity to the community.

Militant Islam (also referred to as political or radical Islam) is rooted in a contemporary religious resurgence in private and public life. The causes of Islamic radicalism have been Religio-cultural, Political, and Socio-economic and have focused on issues of politics and social justice such as Authoritarianism, lack of social services, and corruption, which all intertwine as catalysts. Many Islamic reform groups have blamed social ills on outside influences; for example, modernization (e.g., Westernization and secularization) has been perceived as a form of neocolonialism, an evil that replaces Muslim religious and cultural identity and values with alien ideas and models of development. (Al-Hageel 113)

While enumerating the causes of radicalism in his award winning book, *Takfeer fee Daw’us Sunnah An-Nabawiyyah*, a contemporary scholar, Basim bin Faysal al-Jawabirah said:

Ignorance of the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). Likewise, ignorance of aims and intents of the *Shariah*, whether that be out of utter ignorance with some of them or out of partial ignorance due to a false interpretation or *Ijtihad* (exerting scholarly efforts in solving a *Shariah* related issue)  by one who is not suitable for it. If they (extremists) truly were people of *ijtihad* they would not put forward actions which brings about harms(such as bombing) and then apply these false interpretation(of Jihad) to Muslim countries, the rulers, the people the *Da’awah* and those who call to it. (Al-Jawabirah 148).

Also, from the causes of radicalism is lack of adhering to the *Manhaj* (methodology) of the *Salaf* (righteous Muslim predecessors) when confronted with the *fitnah* (trial, discord) of ruling by other than what Allah has revealed in many of the Muslim lands.

The third cause for the *fitnah* (trial, discord) of radicalism is ignorance of the Universal Sunnah (way of life) in regards to being established which does not take place except with patience and bearing the harms of the unbelievers.  The Prophet (pbuh) bore the harms of the unbelievers in *Makkah* patiently for many years before succor came his way.

It has been justly asserted that from the causes of radicalism might be the harsh measures used and iron-fisted suppression that is meted out by the security apparatus in many Countries including Nigeria when dealing with those who have some connection to *Da’awah* (Islamic Preaching). This is whether an individual is actually far from any involvement in extremist ideology or not. It may be the case, in some Countries for example, that an innocent individual becomes worse than the actual preachers of the radicalists ideology due to such treatment. Such suppression gives rise to radicalism within those who were initially moderate beforehand. As for the one who is already a radical then (such maltreatment) increases him in the evil ideology and also instill the spirit of revenge and retribution and lead to confronting such transgression with what is even worse (like suicide bombing).

According to scholars, radicalism could be curbed by proper adherence to the *Qur’an* and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (pbuh).So referring back to the Book of Allah and adhering to it is the protection and the foundation by which Allah preserves one from falling into destruction. We must make sure to understand the Qur’an and Sunnah according to the methodology of the righteous predecessors (*as-Salaf as-Salih*). This will not be achieved unless the Muslims seek such understanding from the sincere and knowledgeable scholars who, by the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger (pbuh) refute the distortion of the extremists, the false assumptions of the deniers, and the misinterpretations of the ignorant ones. Allah says, “So ask the people of knowledge if you don’t know. (Q, 2:7)

And He (SWT) further says:

If there comes to them a matter of safety or fear, they (immediately) publicize it. If only they had referred it to the Messenger and to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have understood it from them (directly) (Q, 4:83)

Striving in worshipping Allah (SWT) and try to remain constantly and fearfully conscious of Him (SWT) – having *Taqwa* (consciousness of Allah). This is done by carrying out what He has commanded and remaining away from what He has forbidden. This is the way of success from every hardship as Allah (SWT) says, “And whoever has *Taqwa* of Allah, He will make his affairs easy for him. (Q, 65:4)

And He (SWT) says, “And whoever has *Taqwa* (consciousness) of Allah, He will make for him a way to get out (of every difficulty).” (Q, 65:2)

So having this *Taqwa* of Allah, remaining firm on His legislation, and performing deeds that please Him is the way to achieve every success and victory in both lives (the *Dunya* and Hereafter).

Also radicalism could be curbed by stopping the widespread sins amongst ourselves, because whatever of *Fitnah* (trials), evils, or disagreements that afflict the Muslims, it only stems from sins prevalent among the people and disobedience to Allah. Whatever calamity afflict them is only due to what they themselves have earned as Allah says:

When a disaster afflicts you, although you struck (your enemies) with one twice as great, you say, “From where does this come to us?” Say, “It is from your own selves (because of your evil deeds). (Q, 3:165)

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) also said:

Indeed, Allah is pleased for you three things and is displeased with three things. He is pleased for you that you worship Him without associating anything as partners with Him, that you hold all together to the rope of Allah and not split into groups, and that you give sincere advice to whomever Allah puts in charge of your affairs.(Muslim vol 9 no 1967).

He (pbuh) also said:

There are three things which the heart of a Muslim should never object to: sincerity in doing deeds solely for the sake of Allah, giving sincere advice to those in authority of affairs, and sticking to the main body of Muslims. (Ibn Majah vol 9, no 1016).

**Position of Islam on Radicalization**

The World today is suffering from wars of terrorism and radicalism which might throw all human beings into an inferno of troubles and calamities. Hardly a day elapses without an operation of extremism and terrorism taking place as a result of the phenomenon of extremism and radicalism. These operations echoed in mass media only helps in strengthening these extremists organization by popularizing them and ultimately influencing gullible minds among the people. What is regrettable is that operations of terrorism and radicalism are attributed to Islam. The truth is that Islam is acquitted from such allegation. Islam exhorts people to practice righteousness and prohibits and cautions against radicalism or religious extravagance. Allah the Almighty has commanded in the Glorious Qur’an that people should be righteous and adhere to all that is right. Allah Says:

So remain on a right course as you have been commanded, (you) and who have turned back with you (to Allah) and do not transgress, indeed, He is seeing of what you do. And do not incline toward those who are wrong, lest you be touched by fire, and you would not have other than Allah any protectors, then you would not be helped.(Q, 11:112-113)

One of the perceptions of staying firm on the straight path is to continue being righteous and not to transgress the bounds stipulated by Allah, the Almighty.

Allah the Almighty said:

And if you do not, then be informed of war (against you) from Allah and His Messenger; but if you repent, you may have your principal; (thus) you do no wrong, nor are you wronged. (Q, 2:279)

The bounds or limits are the ultimate ends of all that is allowed and all that is prohibited. To transgress the bounds means to go over the limits. However, radicalism is not from pristine Islam in any way as Islam is synonymous with peace and middle path. The scholars say *Shiddah* (harshness) and the *Ghuluw* (extremism/ radicalism) are forbidden in Islam and that anyone who carries out these two evils is on his own.

So, ascribing those bombings and killings in the name of Jihad to Islam and the *Salaf dawah* is injustice as the *Salaf* scholars of the religion of Islam clearly forbid causing senseless destruction to any creature of Allah. In fact, the extremists are very harsh in their hatred for the true callers to the pristine Islam (*salaf*) than they have for other than them. The reason is because salafis are the only ones who know the weak and strong points of the extremists or terrorists; they are the ones who expose the *modus operandi* of the radicals.

And the radicals exert their efforts in bringing ‘the downfall’ of those callers and in abusing them calling them ‘*Mumayyi‘oon*,’ (those who take a lenient stance). They defame the major scholars of the sunnah, discrediting them and accusing them of being scholars of the government. They also slander them by describing them as being merely scholars of women’s period and menstrual fluid (because of scholars’ emphasis on the need for Muslim to understand every aspect of the religion including the knowledge of monthly period of women). (kassas 138)

And from the signs and stocks in trade of radicals are: *Al Khurooj* (revolting against the rulers), *At Takfeer* (declaring Muslims to be disbelievers) and *at Tabdi'* (declaring Muslims to be innovators in the religion without any evidence)

**The Concept of Peace in Islam**

Peace in Islam is more than a mere desire that ought to be realized in life. Peace is of faith in origin, and it is a factor in the basic constituencies of faith and it is a benevolence felt deep in the sentiments of believers, society and the nation in general. Through peace in Islam, life is viewed as a humanitarian unity that aims at mutual acquaintances and cooperation among people towards all that is good. Peace in Islam does not visualize life as a struggle between social classes. It does not view peace a war between species. Allah the Almighty said in the Glorious Qur’an:

O mankind! indeed We have created you from male and female, and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another; indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you, indeed, Allah is all Knowing, Aware. (Q, 49:13)

Peace is a principle that Islam has rooted deep in the psychology of Muslims. It has become part of their entity and faith. Since the dawn of Islam, this religion has voiced a call for peace. That invitation echoed all over the world.

Accordingly, Islam dictates a wise plan to invite people to peace gently. Islam loves life and people as well, and thus frees them from fear and dictatorship of men. It is an ideal plan for humanity to abide by, and to achieve progress, and to realize a state of sublimity that can flourish in the shadow of peace. The term Islam is derived, originally from peace for Islam and peace converges to secure: Allah (SWT) inspired peace of mind, security, immanence and tranquility. Peace is one of the Names of Allah (God) the Almighty for it secures safety to people through both laws stipulated by Almighty and through tight divine methods. A person who conveys the message of Islam to people carries the banner and integrity of peace because he carries to them religious guidance, light, benevolence and integrity of conduct.

Islam as a divine guidance put an end to motives and causes that lead to enmity, wars, dissension, violence, and terrorist acts between people. The word peace has occurred in different places of the Glorious Qur’an and the tradition of the Prophet (SAW). This diversity is due to the graceful place that peace occupies in Islam. It is intended by this repetition to awaken the sensation of people and orient their thinking to this sublime peaceful principle. The greeting that Muslims utter is peaceful for it stimulates tranquility and they strengthen ties of relationships between people. It also brings human beings closer to one another. People who truly love Allah, the Almighty remain conscious of Him and are eligible of His mercy, they are those who greet others with the expression of peace and spread it on the land because to spread it among people is part of faith and worship. Allah the Almighty has ordained that greeting of Muslims in the word of peace makes the believers to be aware that their faith is the religion and security, and realizes that they are a nation of peace and they are believers who pursue it. Peace is in the essence of Islam, in its principles and methods. We are all recommended to achieve peace and enhance it in the consciousness of Muslims. Islam also aims at enhancing the sovereignty of peace in society. There is no any law and no any legal system in the world that forces people to adopt the concept of peace except the faith of Islam because it is established on solid foundation and firm principles.(Al-Hageel 97)

***Da’awah* methodology in Islam**

Keep in mind at all times that you are on a special mission to deliver a message of inviting people worship Allah according to the way that He wants to be worshipped. You are to call them to know the truth and how to follow it. You do this with both your kind words and correct actions.  
Your words are used in lectures, sermons, books, tapes and dialogs. These words help people to understand the truth of Islam. Your actions are observed by others through your behavior and manners. You become the role model for what Islam is all about. Both methods (*Da’awah* by words and actions) were used by the Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) when delivering the message of Islam. He was the perfect example of what He was calling the people to do. Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said that if you would like to see a living example of the Quran walking, then simply look to Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him). His life was the best example of the noble teachings and principles set forth in the Glorious Quran.

Muslims are supposed to advise everyone by using a gentle and simple approach to attract the hungry souls to the Way of Allah (SWT). For sure today more than ever, people need to know about Islam and be able to put it into practice. We all need an example to follow. Actually, the problem is not so much calling or inviting people to the message of Islam, as it is the way that we go about it. The way that we present ourselves and the message is most important and unfortunately, something that many of the Muslims are not taking into consideration these days. Some have actually ruined the image of *Da’awah* due to the rigid methods, mistakes and misunderstandings they are applying. This gives a very negative impression about Islam and the Muslims in general. Considering all of the detraction and negative media against Islam and Muslims occurring in these days, it is vital that we approach our *Da’awah* with wisdom, kind invitation and logical discussions.  
  
  **Conclusion**

*Da’awah* to Allah (SWT) is the obligation of the Muslim Community, every Muslim is charged with the responsibility according to his ability. The *Ummah* (community) of Islam can still give the message of faith to a disillusioned humanity. Never was there a clearer appreciation for the need and worth of this message as now. The Civilization of ignorance has been publicly disgraced. Its shame is being fragrantly exposed. People are disgusted with life, they are in despair of their intellectual and cultural leaders. Modern civilization is seriously ill. There is a dire need to disturb the complacency of the Community of the faithful, it must be persuaded to care for human welfare more than for its own material interest. The salvation of humanity is not achieved by force of arms rather it relied on the moral courage and self-sacrifice of a handful of people who by worldly standard are often considered lacking on good fortune. It is they, courting dangers and trials who will release millions from their miseries and lead them from despair to hope and from wretchedness to grace. They are the people who consider it a good bargain if by the sacrifices of a few, many are able to achieve dignity and prosperity and if through some loss of affluence and wealth, the doors of material and spiritual well-being are opened to many.

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