BOOK REVIEW

Islam's Response to the Quest for Peace, Orderliness and Well-Being in Nigeria - A Festschrift In Honour of Professor Kamaldeen AbdulAzeez Balogun, Edited by Kehinde E. Obasola, Olatundun A. Oderinde and Akeem A. Akanni (Ijebu Ode: Alamsek General Concept, 2020), 529pp. ISBN 978-8026-94-X

Saheed Ahmad Rufai

Sokoto State University

This 529 page book comprises an impressive collection of carefully arranged chapters by authors from a multiplicity of academic backgrounds that are closely related to the field of religious and peace studies. Its six sections contain thirty-four chapters of varying quality contributed by forty-five prolific scholars from twenty institutions of higher learning covering all but two of the six-geopolitical zones of Nigeria. It is remarkable that only fourteen of these forty-five contributors are affiliated with Olabisi Onabanjo University, where the subject of the Festschrift is based. It is also remarkable that only two of the contributors are independent researchers whereas the others are eminent academics in various disciplines with no fewer than nine of them as respected Professors.

In its first paragraph, the Foreword, written by the Vice-Chancellor of the university, Professor Ganiyu Olatunji Olatunde, graphically captures the essence of the book and leaves no one in doubt over its worthy nature (p.iii). In Section One which comprises five chapters, Afolorunso Dairo and Fornatus Alabi, in the fourth chapter, accurately see peace building as "usually an aftermath of conflict...which takes critical and tactical analysis of issues by those who because of their positions in the society are respected by the populace" (p. 47). The authors engage analytically with the hazards of leadership in peace building (p. 56) but probably fail to distinguish between the roles of key stakeholders identified in the chapter who, in most cases, lack the expertise required for the "critical and tactical analysis of issues" (p.47) assigned to them which, in the scholarship of Security Studies, is the job of technical stakeholders who are security experts.

Chapters 1, 2 and 5 shall be reviewed in the conclusion in view of their interconnectedness.

In Section Two which also comprises five chapters, Dauda Egbeolowo in Chapter 7, addresses the question of societal peace in connection with polygamy in Southwestern Nigeria. In Chapter 8, Muinat Agbabiaka-Mustapha discusses Family Crisis and Peace in Islam while Bashir Olanrewaju, in Chapter 9, covers such interesting topics as Status of Women in Islam, Gender and Women's Rights in Islam, and Gender Equality and Peace. Chapter 10, by Babawale Taiwo, Segun Olulowo, and Oke Moses, emphasizes the importance of revelation to healthy marriage which they describe as a foundation for a violence-free society.

Of the seven chapters in Section Three only five are peace-focussed namely 11, 12, 13, 15, and 16 respectively contributed by Ismail Odeniyi, Ahmed Arikewuyo, Auwal Mohammed, Oyekolade Oyesanya, Sunday Emuze and Kehinde Obasola, as well as Afolunsho Dairo and Adeniyi Abodunrin. Chapter 11, addresses Islamic Recipe for the Attainment of Peaceful Coexistence in Nigeria, and Chapter 12 exposes some of the factors responsible for intra-religious differences in Islam. The author is at his best where he provides the juridical implications of the difference in subsidiary matters of religion, the probability of the correctness of an opposing view, and the implication of an error committed by a qualified jurist.

In Chapter 13, the reader is treated to short but interesting contents on just three concepts namely religion, peace, and Islamic perspective on peace.

Chapter 14 is simply a discourse on the Boko Haram Movement which takes no less than nine pages (pp. 222-230) of the fifteen-page chapter. The authors claim that "violent extremism is rarely defined, and that neither the United Nations nor the European Union has an official definition" (p. 218) but turn round to contradict this by stating that 'the abundant literature on radicalization, terrorism and violent extremism does not mean that these phenomena are well understood' (p. 220). Chapter 15 underscores the significance of religion for the enthronement of peace and sustainable development. This is followed by Chapter 16 which examines the causes and solutions to religious conflicts in Nigeria.

Section Four is the only section that contains no chapter on a subject other than peace. The section offers eight chapters (17-24) by Olatundun Oderinde and Julius Ademola, Marian Alarape and AbdulGafar Fahm, Ogbenekevwe Jibromah, Samuel Alamu, Muhsin Balogun, Ahmadu Folami and Majeed Musolihu, Jacob Babalola and Samuel Oladiran, Victor Akerele and Babajide Dasaolu, as well as Oluwaseyi Shogunle. While Chapter 17 examines key issues in Christian-Muslim Relations Chapter 18 interestingly argues that Muslims and non-Muslims especially the

adherents of African traditional religions in Ikorodu 'celebrate together peacefully' (p. 297). The pitfall here is the authors' failure to situate this claim in context of scriptural provisions for religious engagements between adherents of Islam and Christianity on one hand, and adherents of African traditional religions on the other.

Chapter 19 addresses Christian Religious Education as a Tool for Promoting Peaceful Coexistence while Chapter 20 casts an exegetic look at the Holy Scripture and attempts to situate Romans 12-18 into the Nigerian context. Chapter 21 examines the commonalities between Islam and Christianity with a view to making a case for religious harmony and peace in Nigeria whereas Chapter 22 focusses on the question of moral decadence and the role of the Church and the Society in peace building. Chapter 23 engages with such unique questions as the ethical dimension of human relations, with God, among human beings, and with Government, while Chapter 24 which is the last in this Section, educates the reader on the topic, Covenant Meals and Fellowship Imagery in the Old Testament and Its Implications for Religious Harmony in Nigeria (pp. 383-387).

Section Five is the most diverse in the book as it covers Sufism, Literature, History and Civilization, Religion, and International Relations. Chapter 27 enumerates causes and manifestations of security challenges in Nigeria and attempts to formulate a role for ascetic practices in the face of the unfavourable experience while Chapter 28 leads us on an excursion into the concept and typology of feminism (pp. 410-415). What is conspicuously missing in this chapter is what makes al-Khansa a feminist poet. The author identifies her courage and perseverance as instrumental to her attainment of eminence but one wonders if any of these qualifies her as a feminist poet. The author deserves plaudits though the Arabic version of the quoted Al-Khansa's poem was inaccurately captured (pp. 416-417) and the very verse that launched al-Khansa into prominence was missing: "Sunrise reminds me of Sakhr and I think constantly of him at sunset"!

Chapter 29 grounds its conceptual analysis of the concept of caliphate in the Qur'an and provides some background on Islamic Civilization before discussing the scope of the Sokoto Caliphate and identifying the historical sites in the Caliphate which include Maratta, where Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo was born, Degel, where Abdullah Danfodiyo was born, Gudu to which the Shehu migrated. Others are Tafkin Kwatto, Magahci, Sifawa, Shehu's Tomb in Sokoto, Bello's Tomb in Wurno, Marnoma and Zamfara. But for its omission of the present Sultan's Palace in Kanwuri, this chapter would probably have passed for an exhaustive list of historical sites in Sokoto. Chapter 30 identifies visits to Makkah and Madina by many Nupe indigenes as a positive impact of Islam on

them and reduction in the number of the traditional religious festivals as a negative impact. Chapter 31 sees the spread of Islam from its earliest days as the beginning of both the theological and cultural crisis between the people of the West and the East (p. 465).

Section Six, Islam and Education, which is the last, comprises three chapters. In the first which is Chapter 32, there is an examination of the development of Islamic universities in Nigeria with a focus on its implications for university education. This chapter, obviously the shortest in the section, is remarkable for its elegant prose and successful differentiation of the three categories of private universities in Nigeria namely Sole Proprietorship, Religious based, and Hybrid types. He identifies Al-Hikmah, Al-Qalam, Crescent, Fountain, and Summit as 'Islamic universities' (pp. 483-484). How accurate is it to characterize all these universities as "Islamic"? Are they truly "Islamic" or merely "Muslim" universities? Are there no distinctions between a 'Muslim' university and an 'Islamic' university? These are some of the salient questions that should have guided this interesting chapter.

Chapter 33 examines the evolution of Islamic education in Nigeria while Chapter 34 erroneously employs the terms Islamic Studies and Islamic Education interchangeably as though they convey the same implication. The author's ability to underscore the differences in the two interrelated concepts would have been a remarkable strength to the chapter. It should be noted that Islamic Studies is a body of knowledge constituting the discipline while Islamic Education is all-encompassing as it applies to the totality of learning activities involved in schooling.

The Family as a Bedrock for Corruption-Free Nation by Kabir Paramole and Siddiq Uthman is the only non-peace related chapter in Section Two. This perhaps is the weakest chapter in the book on account of conceptual pitfalls, linguistic errors, imprecision in citations, unsystematic prose and arguably inadequate grasp of standard academic language. For instance, the authors say "divorce between the two couples" instead of "couple" (p. 76), "sucking the child" instead of "suckling" (p.76), "look inwardly" instead of "inward" (p. 86), "with references to the lives and character" instead of "with reference" (p. 87), "corrupt-free" instead of "corruption-free" repeatedly and consistently throughout the chapter, and "Encyclopaedia America...argues" instead of "Encyclopaedia Americana states" (p. 74). Yet, all these may not really suggest that the chapter lacks merit!

Back to Section One where Chapter 5, by Tiwatola Falaye, analyses Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther's leadership strategies in peace building. The most remarkable part of the chapter contains the multiple sterling qualities of the great bishop which include hard-work and perseverance. In Chapter 4, Fatimah Adesope and Taofeeq Salahudeen appraise the scholastic

efforts of Professor Fatimah Biade as a notable female scholar with impressive record. Chapters 1 and 2 are purposefully scheduled to be reviewed last in reverse order. This is owing to their significance and immense value.

In Chapter 2, we are led on an excursion into Prof. Balogun's leadership style by Asif Azeez, one of his Ph.D students who recalled how the Professor called him concerning a course he was taking his Ph.D set. This happened while the Professor was away on Sabbatical at Fountain University, Osogbo. He was so concerned about the students that he arranged a visit for them to enable him teach them. From the moment of their arrival in Osogbo to the point of their departure, the Professor not only taught them but also fed, accommodated and 'spoilt' them with his hospitality. In Chapter 1, Samuwilu Owoyemi examines the Professor's strategies in building symbiotic relationship between the town and the gown, the relationship between the Olabisi Onabanjo University and its Ago-Iwoye host community, as well as the Professor's enviable record as an academic leader and university administrator. Aside the author's imprecise translation of the title *Rihlaul-Bahth* as 'Drama in Arabic' instead of "Voyage of Research" as well as his inaccurate translation of the title *Arba'un Qissah* as "Short Stories in Arabic" instead "Forty Stories", the chapter would probably have been a perfect piece.

The book's faithfulness to its title is excellent and laudable. I shall not comment on typos and minor linguistic errors which are not sufficient to mar the quality of the book, as such errors and related questions will receive appropriate attention before another edition of the book is out. But for the editors' erroneous claim on the back cover that the book contains thirty-three academic papers, whereas it contains thirty-four, the cover page would have been the selling point of the elegant book. Even the Vice-Chancellor, confirms in his Foreword, on page iv that the papers are thirty-four! There is probably no more appropriate way of concluding this review than saying as the Vice-Chancellor says in his Foreword, "I recommend the book to all and sundry, from policy makers to individuals, as there are useful excerpts for everyone in the *Festschrift*."