

# ISLAMIC MOTHERING: A PROPHYLAXIS FOR SOCIAL VICES IN NIGERIA

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## Abstract

The upsurge of youth and underage participation in social vices and their disastrous effects are causes of apprehension for the future of Nigeria. This trend is attributed to the ineffectiveness of the home in child upbringing contrary to the Islamic provisions. This development indicates missing links between the Islamic duties of mother on child rearing and the practice of Nigeria mothers. This scenario precipitates this study which explores the Islamic mothering culture in curbing the social vices, especially among the Muslim youths in the country. The motherly roles depicted in the Qur'an serves as models for nurturing upright children. The paper expounds on some missing links between the Islamic mothering provisions and the practice among the Nigeria Muslim mothers. The study also suggests manners of fixing the gaps created in mothering Muslim children. Interview and related studies were the major research instruments. Muslims, male and female, between the ages of 12 and 80 were randomly selected as interviewees. These are: Islamic scholars, educators, school counselors, parents, youth, etc. The findings revealed that Islamic mothering is a comprehensive nurturing of a child to forestall his/her engagement in nefarious activities. Impediments to Islamic mothering identified are majorly mother's disposition and economic predicament. The study concludes that mothers should be resolute on discharging their duties as ordained by Islam, by being available and accommodating and consciously managing the meager resources made available to them. These shall make the home peaceful and serve as shield for the children against vices.

**Keywords:** Islamic Mothering, Muslim Mothers, Prophylaxis, Social vices, Nigeria

## Introduction

The increasing rate of the youth and the underage in social vices and their destructive effects are alarming and causing apprehension for the future of the country. These realities are not hidden in the daily media reportage and research findings.<sup>1</sup> It is on record that many contemporary youths channel their vibrancy into nefarious activities such as cultism, licentiousness, terrorism, etc. instead of constructive endeavours. This trend was averred to be chiefly due to ineffectiveness of the home.<sup>2</sup> This development negates the Islamic fortification of the home in anticipation of entrenching serene atmosphere

conducive for child nurturing among other.<sup>3</sup> Islam accorded comprehensive provisions to mothers to equip her wholesomely for the task of nurturing upright children (Q. 4:34, 2:233).<sup>4</sup> Surprisingly, some Muslim mothers are alleged to have downplay their maternal duties thereby making their wards including the underage participate in different kind of vices.<sup>5</sup> This children embrace vices with impunity, showing the laxity in their upbringing, as if Islam does not vehemently condemn vices.<sup>6</sup>

This development indicates that, there are some missing links between the Islamic mothering provisions and the practice of Nigeria Muslim mothers. The ineptness of some Nigeria Muslim mothers is reported to have made their wards susceptible to nefarious practices and availed the disgruntled politicians avenue to recruit them for horrendous activities.<sup>7</sup> These youth are most times mobilized with hard drugs, ammunition and material wealth which consequently reinforce them to engage in all sorts of destructive activities and institutionalization of criminality in the country.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, consumption of hard drugs and other intoxicants, cultism, promiscuity, fraudulent and nefarious activities become their way of life. This happening has the devastating effects of: incessant lost of lives and properties; destruction of youths (physically, mentally and morally) thereby rendering them unproductive and becoming liabilities to the society.<sup>9</sup>

These scenarios spurred this study with the aim of exploring the Islamic mothering culture as depicted in the Qur'an (that produces upright personalities), to serve as a model for Nigeria Muslim mothers and others from elsewhere. The paper delves into the missing links between the Islamic duty of mothering and how some Nigeria Muslim mothers nurture their children into blameworthy children. Also, ways of surmounting mothering challenges that ensures best care as ordained by Islam for children are suggested in the paper. Interview and related studies were the major research instruments. Muslims male and female, between the ages of 12 and 80 were randomly selected as interviewees from Muslim dominated communities in Ilorin, Kano, Zaria, Ibadan, Lagos and Abuja. These are: Islamic scholars, educators, school counselors, parents, youth, etc.

### Mothering Culture in Islam

Child is regarded in Islam as a precious gift from Allah, which He bestows to whomsoever He wishes as attested in Qur'an 42:49-50:

لِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۖ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۚ يَهَبُ لِمَن يَشَآءُ اِنثٰٓءً وَيَهَبُ لِمَن يَشَآءُ  
الذُّكُوْرَ ۚ اَوْ يَزُوْجُهُمْ ذُكْرًا وَّاِنثٰٓءً ۚ وَيَجْعَلُ مَن يَشَآءُ عَقِيْمًا ۚ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٤٩﴾

To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills (and plans). He bestows (children) male or female according to His will (and plan), Or He bestows both males and females, and He leaves barren whom He will: for He is full of knowledge and power.<sup>10</sup>

Every human being intuitively longs for children with their might and main, given the benefits attached to them. Among others, they are considered adornment of life as affirmed in the following verses of the Qur'an:

أَمْالٌ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۖ وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِندَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ  
أَمَلًا ﴿١٨﴾

"Wealth and sons are allurements of the life of this but the things that endure, good deeds, are best in the sight of Thy as rewards, and best as (the foundation for) hopes" (18:46).

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا  
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا ﴿٧٤﴾

"And those who pray, "Our Lord! Grant unto us wives and offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes, and give us (the grace) to lead the righteous" (25:74).

هَٰذَا لَكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ ۖ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ  
الدُّعَاءِ ﴿٣٨﴾

"There did Zakariya pray to His Lord, saying: "O my Lord! Grant unto me from Thee a progeny that is pure: for Thou art He that heareth prayer!" (3:38).

This human dispositions to children, coupled with Allah's intent of purifying human race from filth, child nurturing is painstakingly handled in Islam to guarantee them as best gift (Q. 18:46, 25:74) and not curse as enunciated in Qur'an 64:14:

إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾

"Your riches and your children may be but a trial: but in the presence of Allah, is the highest, reward".

These verses suggest that the uprightness or otherwise of any child depend largely on the treatment given to him/her by the parents. Prophet Muhammad also explains further:

No child is born except on *Al-Fitrah* (Islam) and then his parents make him Jewish, Christian or Magian, as an animal produces a perfect young animal; do you see any part of its body amputated?" Then he recited: "The religion of pure Islamic Faith (*Hanifah*), (i.e. to worship none but Allah), The pure Allah's Islamic nature with which He (Allah) has created mankind. Let there be no change in Allah's religion (i.e. to join none in Allah's worship). That is the straight religion; but most of men know not..." (Q. 30.30).<sup>11</sup>

Hence, the Islamic method of mothering is meticulously handled to enable every child to grow with proper care and become righteous. Though this assignment is specifically designed to be spearheaded by the mother, but the paternal duties of the father and the society are germane to the proper training of a child.

Mothering culture in Islam is the act of dedicating to the wholesome nurturing of a child from the state of fetus till adulthood in accordance with the Islamic principles. This task involves the rearing of child affectionately in the stages of pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding and every stage of development till he/she becomes of age (adult). These stages of mothering are captured in the following Qur'anic verses:

حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهَنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفَصَّلَهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَىٰ الْمَصِيرِ ﴿٣١﴾

"... In travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command), "show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) goal" (31:14);

وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَدَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُنْمِ الرِّضَاعَةَ وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ لَا تُكَلَّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَا تُضَارَّ وَالِدَةُ بَوْلِدِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِوَلَدِهِ وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَسْرِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَا آتَيْتُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣٢﴾

The mothers shall give suck to their offspring for two whole years, if the father desires to complete the term. But he shall bear the cost of their food and clothing on equitable terms. No soul shall have a burden laid on

it greater than it can bear. No mother shall be treated unfairly on account of her child. Nor father on account of his child, an heir shall be chargeable in the same way. If they both decide on weaning, by mutual consent, and after due consultation, there is no blame on them. If ye decide on a foster-mother for your offspring, there is no blame on you, provided ye pay (the mother) what ye offered, on equitable terms. But fear Allah and know that Allah sees well what ye do (2:233).

حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا وَحَمَلُهُ وَفَصْلُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

... In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. The carrying of the (child) to his weaning is (a period of) thirty months. At length, when he reaches the age of full strength and attains forty years, he says, "O my Lord! grant me that I may be grateful for Thy favour which Thou has bestowed upon me, and upon both my parents, and that I may work righteousness such as Thou mayest approve; and be gracious to me in my issue. Truly have I turned to Thee and truly do I bow (to Thee) in Islam (46:15).

It is apparent from the above expositions that Islamic duty of mothering is instinctively the responsibility of the mother and the father to make adequate provisions for their upkeep (i.e. the mother and the child).

### Prerequisites of Islamic Mothering

To facilitate Islamic mothering, marriage is declared the only gate to family life in Islam (Q. 4:3, 24:32). Marriage does not only create security to the couple (Q. 30:21, 2:187), but provides veritable loving and serene atmosphere for child nurturing. Also, preference is given to religiosity as the basis of choice of the marriage partner to be predisposed to righteous children as canvassed by the Prophet.<sup>12</sup> Allah explicitly shared marital duties to couple (parents) to foster peace and harmony in the home, as well as having commitment to the care of children. Matrimonial and parental responsibilities are allocated based on the natural endowment of the husband (father) and wife (mother). The husband (father) is obligated to maintain the family by supplying them with conducive environment, nourishing their physical and spiritual selves. These assignments are elucidated in the Qur'an thus:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means ...” (Q. 4:34).

لِيُنْفِقَ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ ۖ وَمَن قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَّا آتَاهَا سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا ﴿٧﴾

Let the man of means spend according to his means; and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. After a difficulty, Allah will soon grant relief (Q. 65:7).

Prophet Muhammad also said in this respect:

Mu'awiyah asked the Apostle of Allah, what is the right of the wife of one of us over him? He replied: That you should give her food when you eat, clothe her when you clothe yourself, do not strike her on the face, do not revile her or separate yourself from her except in the house.<sup>13</sup>

Thus every husband is the head, guardian, protector and backbone of his family.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, he must create an enabling environment that will enhance the wife's (mother) psychological and physical stability for the arduous assignment of child nurturing.<sup>15</sup> The wife (mother), on the other hand, is ordered to be faithful to her husband and serve him efficiently as commanded in the followings:

فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ

“... Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard ...” (Q. 4:34); and Qur'an 25:74.

The wife (mother) is equally saddled with the management of the home particularly, the children by overseeing them (as earlier cited in Qur'an 2:233, 31:14, etc). The maternal duties of mothers, which are the focus of this paper, shall be expounded upon in the work. The extended family and other relations (society) are similarly stakeholders in the Islamic culture of mothering. They are to lend support to the immediate parents' efforts

in nurturing the younger ones. They are to be the community watchdog against any vices and also promoter of virtues as expatiated in the following Qur'anic verses:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾

The believers, men and women, are protectors one of another: They enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil: They observe regular prayers, practise regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is exalted in power, wise (9:71).

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ ...

"Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah ..." (3:110).

The Prophet summed up these duties for the stakeholders thus:

All of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards. The ruler is a guardian and the man is a guardian of his family; the lady is a guardian and is responsible for her husband's house and his offspring; and so all of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards.<sup>16</sup>

### Mother's Responsibilities in Islamic Mothering

Allah fortified mother to intuitively have passion for her children. She is bestowed with unique physical, psychological and emotional characteristics needed to effectively care for their upbringing. Her compassionate, sensitive, patience, kindheartedness natures are suitable for tending the younger ones. Nonetheless, her faith and trust in Allah; her willingness to obey Allah's command are germane to her behavioural tendency in this duty. The Qur'an gives example of Hanatu (mother of Maryam) and her resolute on righteous progeny through her fervent prayers and monitoring:



إِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٨١﴾ فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَىٰ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ ۖ وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذَرِيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا ۖ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا ۖ قَالَ يَمْرِئُكُمْ أَنَّىٰ لَكِ هَذَا ۖ قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٨٣﴾

Behold! a woman of 'Imran said: "O my Lord! I do dedicate unto Thee what is in my womb for Thy special service: so accept this of me: for Thou hearest and knowest all things."

When she was delivered, she said: "O my Lord! Behold! I am delivered of a female child!"- and Allah knew best what she brought forth- "And no wise is the male like the female. I have named her Mary, and I commend her and her offspring to Thy protection from the evil one, the rejected."

Right graciously did Her Lord accept her: He made her grow in purity and beauty: in the care of Zakariya was she assigned. Every time that he entered (her) chamber to see her, he found her supplied with sustenance. He said: "O Mary! whence (comes) this to you?" she said: "From Allah. For Allah provides sustenance to whom He pleases without measure" (Q. 3:35-37).

The aforementioned verses show the efficacy of prayers, resourcefulness of Hannatu and her faith in Allah by entrusting Maryam to Prophet Zakariya to enhance her religious devotion. Prophet Zakariya monitored Maryam perfectly to the extent of realizing that she does have miraculous provisions in her midst. This narrative shows that if mother employs prayer, resoluteness and resourcefulness, she will raise upright children like Maryam.

Mother's uprightness is germane to mothering as a viable example to her child. Maryam was blessed with a child without having intercourse with any man. This happened because of her chastity and devotion to Allah (Q. 66:12). The miraculous conception of



Maryam and her birth to Prophet 'Isa (Q. 19:16-22) also illustrates that if mother is chaste, her progeny will be pure as narrated in Qur'an 66:12:

وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتِبَ لَهَا الْفَقِيهَاتُ ۖ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِيَاتِ

وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتِبَ لَهَا الْفَقِيهَاتُ ۖ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِيَاتِ

“And Mary the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity; and we breathed into (her body) of Our spirit; and she testified to the truth of the words of Her Lord and of His revelations, and was one of the devout (servants)”.

Similarly, Hanatu's virtue and chastity was eulogized when her daughter, Maryam appeared before the society with her miraculous child, Prophet 'Isa (Q.19:28), indicating that Maryam has righteous parent.

Mothering duties equally involve submissiveness to husband (as wife), the sacrifice of comfort, exhibition of patience and perseverance for the sake of the child. These virtues were demonstrated by Hajarrah for the survival of her son, Prophet Ismail in a hostile environment as described in Qur'an 14:37. Hajarrah's hastening between *Safa* and *Marwa* several times in search of water for her son, not minding the roughness of the terrain is commemorated during *hajj* and *'umrah* as *sa'y* (Q. 2:158).<sup>17</sup> Her son also grew up with good virtues, became righteous and acclaimed forbearer (Q. 37:100-103). Hajarrah was able to rear her son with laudable qualities she possessed. She served as model to him in obedience, endurance, patience, faith in God among others. If mother relates honourably with father (her husband), and lives by the Islamic moral principles, her children are predisposed to being righteous like Prophet Ismail.

Prophet Musa's mother's skills of nurturing are also narrated in the Qur'an 28:7-13. Her faith in God gave her the courage to protect her son from being killed at infancy by Fir'awn's soldiers. She displayed high level of ingenuity by sending Musa's sister to monitor his son on the river. Her cleverness assisted her in breastfeeding her son and partaking in his upbringing. The role played by Asiyah, the wife of Fir'awn who adopted Prophet Musa is remarkable to his survival and rearing in the palace of a tyrannical king. Asiyah protected him against her husband through humility and persuasiveness as reported in Qur'an 28:9. Her love for Musa is infinite; she tenderly protected him and defended him ultimately. Prophet Musa was nursed with high moral standards possessed by Asiyah (Q. 66:11) and his mother. Consequently, Prophet Musa grew up courageous, kindhearted, humble, and steadfast. If a mother breastfeeds her child, supervises the upbringing, and/or have virtuous guardian around him/her, such child will grow up a balanced rugged human being like Prophet Musa.

The intimacy between mother and child, through pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, and tending for many years till adulthood; her attendant sacrifice of sleep, comfort, energy, resources and other inestimable discomfort as established in the Qur'an (2:233, 31:14, 46:15, etc.) equip mother for mothering. These experiences ignite mother's level of patience, endurance, attentiveness, understanding, skillfulness, etc in child rearing. This reality creates natural bonding between mother and the child. She becomes his/her first teacher, the closest person who understands the child's needs and peculiarity. It is this design that makes mother the chief architect of child's personality. It is what she ingrains during the formative stages of development that she nurtures at adolescent through appropriate guidance, counseling, mentoring, and becoming righteous model to the child.

The task of tending children becomes more complicated at teen stage for mothers due to the convulsive nature of the stage.<sup>18</sup> In this period, Islam applies authoritative style of parenting as exemplified by Prophet Ya'qub (Q. 12:4-6, 16-18, etc.) and Luqman (Q. 31:12-19). In the case of Prophet Ya'qub, he was approachable, responsive, supportive, patient, subtle, forgiving in his interactions with the children. It was the confidence reposed in him that enticed his children to share their worries, seek his guidance and follow them appropriately. His constant admonitions and exhortations on belief system in Islam, evils associated with Shaytan and its accomplices assisted in cultivating good moral standard in them and feeling remorseful when they erred. In the case of Luqman to his son, Qur'an 31:12-19 contains his admonitions which covers the themes of: worship of God alone; honour of parents, knowing that God will judge all deeds, fulfilling duty towards God and humanity.<sup>19</sup> Mothers should comply to the above instructions to save themselves and their wards from hell fire (Q. 66:6).

The above verses set boundary for a child in his/her relationship with God, parents and other human beings in a very eloquent and logical manner. These verses are not only moral training for children, but also prepare them intellectually. Although these training methods were explored by fathers (Prophet Ya'qub and Luqman); mothers too, can apply them in training their children. These expositions describe healthy relationship that is envisioned for child and parent interactions in Islam.

The enormous duty of the mother in Islamic mothering as described above, are all-embracing (moral, physical, and intellectual development of the child). There is no doubt that this arduous task demand so much from the mother, in terms of exhaustion of her time, energy and comfort, among others. This reality presupposes why mother (wife) is to be furnished with care and attention by husband to enhance her total dedication to child upbringing. Similarly, her steadfastness in child nurturing is profoundly appreciated and recompensed immeasurably in several verses of the Qur'an such as in: 17:23-25

❖ وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٢٣﴾  
 وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا ﴿٢٤﴾  
 رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي نُفُوسِكُمْ ۚ إِن تَكُونُوا صَالِحِينَ فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ لِلْأَوَّابِينَ غَفُورًا ﴿٢٥﴾

Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour. And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: "My Lord! bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood." Your Lord knoweth best what is in your hearts: if ye do deeds of righteousness, Verily He is Most Forgiving to those who turn to Him again and again (in true penitence).

Prophet Muhammad in several '*ahadith* also eulogize mother out of which is:

I asked, "O Allah's Messenger, to whom should I show kindness?" He replied, "Your mother." I asked, "Who comes next?" He replied, "Your mother." I asked, "Who comes next?" He replied "Your mother." I asked, "Who comes next?" He replied, "Your father, then your relatives in order of relationship."<sup>20</sup>

Most importantly, children of this mothering model become righteous, progressive, and resourceful. Hence, mothering is a religious obligation on every mother that supersedes any form of other endeavours in life.<sup>21</sup>

### Missing Links between Islamic Mothering and the Practice in Nigeria

#### Mother's Disposition

Mother's disposition according to the interviewees cut across her values, interest and behaviour tendencies. They expatiated that some Muslim mothers in the country have denigrated their religious duty of nurturing children consciously or unconsciously; seeing mothering as burden that restricts their movements, comfort and progress.<sup>22</sup> They added that these women cherish western way of rearing children by monetizing the duty through the intervention of housemaids/nannies or daycare centres (that are most times, indiscriminately chosen).<sup>23</sup> These outlets are charged with the home management and training of the children as well as socializing with them. The interviewees also lamented that neither the nannies/housemaids nor the daycare centres usually have the Islamic

learning and orientation to inculcate in the children.<sup>24</sup> These children are therefore left deciding for themselves, or at the mercy of the personality that harbour them mostly. In this wise, children are denied motherly affections, love, care and attention needed for proper upbringing and become prone to freedom, luxury and even vices at tender age.

The case of mother's desperate quest for materialism and living in excessive luxury was equally mentioned as attitude that deters adequate supervision of children. These mothers are said to be mostly after the physical and intellectual development of the children at the detriment of the moral. They enroll them in institutions devoid of Islamic orientations but inclined only to western ideologies. These children are nurtured with sophisticated clothing, feeding and even information and communication gadgets which predispose them to horrendous activities. Inadvertently, these children imbibe foreign and unIslamic culture of materialism and careless living.<sup>25</sup>

The life pattern and social values of mothers are also averred to be another impediment to the righteousness of some Nigeria Muslim children. Instances of mothers who adopt socialite style of living as well as opposing Islamic values were identified as bad omen for their children. Their incessant attendance in ceremonies, coupled with extravagant spending launch their children into materialistic tendencies and frivolities. They grew up with little or no respect for God and perceive Islamic ethics as outdated and unrealistic for modern time. They embrace vices as a way of life and engage in them with impunity.

Another challenge of mothering is aggressive and impatient behaviour emanating from mothers' inability to combine home management with career callings. The interviewees affirm that most contemporary Muslim mothers in the country are victims of this. They work round the clock to cope with the twain duties having little or no time to rest.<sup>26</sup> This experience makes them vulnerable to life trials and tribulations, with attendant poor health. They sometimes act impatiently and sometimes aggressively with their spouses and children. These attitudes coupled with their inevitable absence (at one point or the other), strain the natural intimacy between them and their wards. Consequently, the children lose confidence in them and seek guidance and solace elsewhere or even in vices.

### **Weak Family Rapport**

Poor family rapport is reported to have been precipitated by complex happenings in the family, especially between the couples.<sup>27</sup> One of these is, where the husband and wife relationship is very tensed; the atmosphere is devoid of peace and love; and inadvertently, couples act selfishly. Their home becomes the abode of tension and their wards are in disarray without any family grip. Also when fathers (husbands) shirk their familial duty, the wife and the children bear the brunt. This attitude is reported to have tempted some wives and children into licentiousness among others; in an attempt of making the ends meet.<sup>28</sup> Individualistic style of living of modern time is also mentioned to have weakened the extended familial rapport whereby the parents are the only adult available for the training of children. Children are consciously or unconsciously nurtured

to disregard extended families in their affairs. The role of immediate and distant family relations in ensuring that young ones act properly is erased. All the aforesaid make children vulnerable to vices (like licentiousness, fraudulent and obnoxious activities).

### **Economic Predicament**

Economic difficulty being witnessed in the country has devastating effect on Islamic mothering of children.<sup>29</sup> Many parents who are conscious of their parental roles are impeded by either nonpayment of salary or poor harvesting, or problem of insurgencies. Children's training needs could not be met; school graduates or artisans are also jobless and could not fend for themselves, but still look up to their parents (who have meager resources). The above scenarios frustrate some youth into fraudulent or nefarious activities. The activities of the socialite mothers, who have carved fake opulent way of living, also create avoidable financial mess for the family. The children who are given wrong impression about the financial strength of the family; and could not cope when they come of age with meager resources; may end up in fraudulent or nefarious practices.

### **Bridging of Gaps between the Islamic Mothering and the Practice in Nigeria**

#### **Qualities of Motherhood in Islam**

Muslim mothers should cultivate laudable qualities cherished in Islam and internalize them in their lives. These qualities are obedience to Allah and husband, virtuousness, patience, perseverance, trust in God, tolerance, selflessness, prayerfulness, among others. Obedience to Allah is the major quality that can sustain any human through the phases and intricacies of life. Allah emphatically prescribed Islam as the only acceptable religion for humanity (Q. 3:19, 85). It has comprehensive laws that cater for every aspect of human endeavours and Muslims are unequivocally commanded to live accordingly. Hence, the Muslim mothers must allow Islamic principles to guide not only her ritual worships but also human interactions. She should surrender wholeheartedly to the Islamic injunctions as commanded by Allah and subject her values, interests, behaviours as well as her general outlook to it as done by Hannatu, mother of Maryam. She must possess strong will for Islamic ideals and institutionalize them in her way of life. Mother's obedience to Allah involves her total submission to her husband as asserted by Islam. She must serve him enthusiastically without reservation and see to his physical, mental and moral serenity.<sup>30</sup>

Similarly, Muslim mothers should imbue patience in their interactions (Q. 3:200), especially with their husbands in order to cope with their shortcomings. In the same manner is the need to cultivate perseverance in the times of difficulties to prevent them from blameworthy reactions. These laudable qualities will fortify them with the will and courage to live by Allah's commandments even in the presence of apparent challenges.<sup>31</sup> Consequent upon these, their homes flourish in love and tranquility with their children receiving the best Islamic care and having models to emulate like the case of Hajarat and her son Prophet Ismail.



## Mother's Disposition to the Children

Muslim mothers should manage the home with all their natural endowments and resources as worship as demanded in Q. 6:162:

قُلْ إِن صَّلَاتِي وَنُفْسِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“Say: Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds.”

They must dedicate themselves to the overall well being of their children as clamoured for by Prophet Musa's mother. Every stage of child's development requires mother's affection, attention, guidance, patience, endurance, resourcefulness supervision among others. These interactions will afford the mother ample opportunity to recognize the spoken and unspoken actions/reactions, feelings, opinions and activities of the child and apply appropriate, immediate measures in due course. These happenings will equally create lively and lovely rapport that ingrain the trust of the mother in children. Consequently the children will cultivate confidence in them and abide by their guidance as was in the case of Prophet Ya'qub narrated in *Surat Yusuf*, i.e. Qur'an 12.

Muslim mothers should train their wards to recognize the boundaries of Islam and to live in accordance. She should explicitly, eloquently and systematically present Islamic teachings according to the level of child's understanding. The fear of God and His attributes should be ingrained in the child's mind right from infancy. The rationales behind the dos and don'ts of Islam as well as the reward or punishment attached to them should equally be emphasised to the adolescent children in particular as done by Luqman to his child.

Muslim mothers should guide their ways and strife to practice the Islamic principles to the best of their abilities. They should be sensitive to what they say, do, and their reactions in every events of life. They should be good model to the children to reinforce the practicality and viability of the Islamic principles. Reference should always be drawn of important personalities in Qur'an or Muslim societies as model to demonstrate righteous living.<sup>32</sup> Child should be given enabling atmosphere to clear their worries or ask any questions without fear of intimidation. Most importantly, the mothers should be sensitive, scientific and pragmatic in diagnosing these cases and responding through Islamic injunctions appropriately.

## Mediating Economic Challenges

Muslim mothers should manage the financial resources of the family judiciously and live within their limit as directed in Qur'an 65:7. They should be mindful of extravagant spending (without compromising quality) on dietary, clothing, accommodation, schooling systems in the family. They should avoid unhealthy competitions and incessant ceremonial outings of their peers for productive needs. They should ingrain in their

children the need to live honourably and be creative to explore lawful opportunities, as well as reposing trust in Allah.

### Conclusion

This paper has explored the Islamic mothering culture as prophylaxis against social vices in Nigeria. It emphasized mother's responsibilities in rearing her children to be upright as envisioned by Islam. Mothering styles depicted in the Qur'an that nurtured important personalities in Islam were used as model for Nigeria mothers to emulate. The paper also identifies Muslim mothers' disposition as the major hindrance to Islamic mothering among Muslims in the country. Their carefree stance to Islamic ideals and careless attitudes to their homes rob children proper orientations prescribed by Islam. The paper therefore, concluded that the aforementioned challenges to Islamic mothering can be surmounted through Mothers' obedience to Allah and their husbands; dedication to, and prayers for their children, along with her exercise of patience, perseverance, resourcefulness and trust in Allah. Consequently, the homes will flourish in peace, love and tranquility; and shield children and family members against any vice.

### Endnotes

1. Ukoji Vitus Nwankwo & Okolie-Osemene James, "Prevalence of Lethal and Non-lethal Crimes in Nigeria," accessed January 02, 2019, <http://www.nigeriawatch.org/media/html/Nwankwo-James2016.pdf>; Faridat Olavumi Olaniran, "An Examination of Gender Interaction among Kwara State University Students" (B.A. Project, Kwara State University, Malete, 2017), 25-29.; Wale Akinola, "Groups Seeks End to Drug Abuse, Social Vices among Nigerian Youth," accessed February 02, 2019, <https://www.legit.ng/1136708-group-seeks-drug-abuse-social-vices-nigerian-youth.html>; Halima Musa, "Nigeria: Parents and Rising Cases of Social Vices among Youth," 22/4/2016 accessed February 02, 2019, <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/parents-and-rising-cases-of-social-vices-among-youths.html>; Ahmad Muhammad Auwal, "Curbing Campus Vices," 28/8/2014 accessed January 02, 2019, <http://thenationonlineng.net/curbing-campus-vices/>
2. *ibid.*
3. Dr. Muhammad Abdul Bari, *Marriage and Family Building in Islam* (UK: Ta-Ha Publishers; 1427/2007), 31-76.; Abdulfatah A. Bello, *A Guide to Family Happiness* (Kuala Lumpur: Dakwah Corner Bookstore (M) Sdn Bhd, 2008), 65-70.; Abdul Kareem Bakaar, *Home Trajectory Essential Guides to Building a Successful Family* (Malaysia: Dakwah Corner Publications Sdn. Bhd., 2013), 14-119.
4. *ibid.*
5. Halimah Musa, "Nigeria: Parents and Rising Cases of Social Vices among Youth."



6. Several verses of the Qur'an explicitly condemn vices such as in: 5:91-92, 17:32, 16:90, 2:195, etc.
7. Halimah Musa, "Nigeria: Parents and Rising Cases of Social Vices among Youth;" Alhaji. Abubakar Usman (Islamic Cleric, Anguwar Kaya Gyellesu, Zaria) interview by Author, January 14, 2019; Mallama Hadiza Yunusa (Business woman, Railway Quarters, Kano) interview by Author, January 16, 2019; Alhaja Limata Ibrahim Salihu (Retired School Counsellor, Emir's Road, Ilorin) interview by Author, August 14, 2018 etc. Hassana T.O., Faruq A.A., Amina Giwa, Mariam A.S. (400L Student, Kwara State University, Malete) interview by Author, March 14, 2017 etc.
8. *ibid.* See also, May Omogho Esiri, "Political Thuggery and Crisis of Confidence among Youths in Nigeria," *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Sciences* 21, no. 1 (2016), 1-7. <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%2021%20Issue1/Version-3/A021130107.pdf> Effects of vices.
9. *ibid.*; Nwankwo, U. V & Okolie-Osemene James, "Prevalence of Lethal and Non-lethal Crimes in Nigeria," accessed January 02, 2019, <http://www.nigeriawatch.org/media/html/Nwankwo-James2016.pdf>; Faridat Olawumi Olaniran, "An Examination of Gender Interaction among Kwara State University Students" (B.A. Project, Kwara State University, Malete, 2017), 25-29); Wale Akinola, "Groups Seeks End to Drug Abuse, Social Vices among Nigerian Youth.
10. Yusuf Ali's Electronic Copy of Arabic+Translation of the Qur'an is used in this paper.
11. Sahih Bukhari Hadith, Vol. 6 Book 60 Hadith 298, *Alim Islamic Software*.
12. Sahih Bukhari Hadith, Vol. 7 Book 62, Hadith 27, *Alim Islamic Software*.
13. Abu-Dawood, Hadith 877, *Alim Islamic Software*; See also Qur'an 2:233, 65:6 etc.
14. Mohamed Rida Beshir, *Family Leadership Qawamah An Obligation to Fulfill, Not an Excuse to Abuse*, (USA: Amana Publication, 2009A.C./1430A.H), 14-40.
15. Al-Jaziriy, A., *Kitabu'l-fiqh 'ala madhāhibu'l 'arba'ah*. Vol. 4. (N.P: Daru'l-Irshad Liltab'at Wan Nashir, ND). 148, 223-224, 489-503.
16. Sahih Bukhari Hadith, Vol. 7. Book 62 Hadith 128, *Alim Islamic Software*.
17. Ibn Kathir, "Story of Prophet Ismail/Ishmael (pbuh)," accessed December 25, 2018, <https://www.islamawareness.net/Prophets/ismail.html>.

18. Juwayriya Badamasiuy, "Parenting Under the Shari'ah in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Prospects and Challenges," *Al Ijtihad Special Edition, The Journal of the Islamization of Knowledge and Contemporary Issues* 1, no. 1 (2010/1431): 19.
19. Dr. Mustafa Khattab trans., *The Clear Qur'an A Thematic English Translation of the Message of the Final Revelation* (USA: Book of Signs Foundation, 2016), 230-231. See also, Abd-Allah Nasih Ulman, *Child Education in Islam*, trans. Muhammad Mahmoud Ghail et al (Cairo: Dar El Salam, 1412/2001), 59-400.
20. Muhammad bin Isma'il As-Sanani, *Bulugh Al-Maram Attainment of the Objective According to Evidence of the Ordinance*, Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani (Comp.) (Saudi Arabia: Dar-us-Salam Publications, 1996/1416H), 405, Hadith 986.
21. Maulana Muhammad Hanif 'Abdul Majid, *Ideal Mother*, trans. Mufti Muhammad Kadwa (New Delhi: Adam Publishers and Distributors, 2010), 133-135.
22. Justices S. O. Muhammad (Retired Grand Qadi, Kwara State Sharia Court of Appeal, Ilorin) interview by Author, January 16, 2018.; Halimah Musa, "Nigeria: Parents and Rising Cases of Social Vices among Youth;" Alhaji. Abubakar Usman (Islamic Cleric, Anguwar Kaya Gyclesu, Zaria) interview by Author, January 14, 2019; Mallama Hadiza Yunusa (Business woman, Railway Quarters, Kano) interview by Author, January 16, 2019; Alhaji Sanni Ademola, (Civil servant, Idumata, Lagos) interview by Author, January 16, 2018, etc.
23. *ibid.* See also, Amina Mayowa Bolaji, "Child Care Delivery of Housemaids among Muslims in Ebute-Metta: The Islamic Perspectives" (B.A. Project, Kwara State University, Malete), 13-21.
24. *ibid.* See also Badamasiuy, "Parenting Under the Shari'ah in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Prospects and Challenges," 27.
25. All the respondents expressed these views.
26. Mothers among the respondents asserted that they are the first to make up and the last to sleep in their homes (lately).
27. All respondents expressed these views.
28. Alhaja Bolatitio Yusuf, (Business Woman, Agboowo, Ibadan) interview by Author, June 16, 2017; Bukola Kassim, (Student, University of Ibadan) interview by Author, June 16, 2017; Bimbo Abubakar (400L LIS student, Kwara State University, Malete) interview by Author, March 16, 2018; Agunbiade Abdul Aziz, (300L Computer Science student, Kwara State University, Malete) interview by Author, March 16, 2018; etc.

29. Juwayriya Badamasiuy, "Parenting Under the Shari'ah in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 27. All the respondents equally lamented this.
30. 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), 65-82.; Majid, *Ideal Mother*, trans. Mufti Muhammad Kadwa, 123-127.
31. *Be Patient & Paradise will be Yours*, (Riyadh. Jeddah. Al-Khober. Sharjah. Lahore. London. Houston. New York: Darussalam Global Leader in Islamic Books, 2012), 15-86.
32. See: Sameh Strauch, trans., *Child Companions Around the Prophet* (Riyadh, Jeddah, Sharjah, Lahore, London, Houston, New York: Darussalam Global Leader in Islamic Books, 2003); Maulana Saeed Ansari Nadvi, Maulana Abdus-Salam Nadvi and Allama Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, *Biographies of the Women Companions of the Holy Prophet* (Pakistan, Urdu Bazar Karachi-1: Darul-Ishaat, 1995); Abdul Malik Mujahid, *Golden Stories of Muslim Women*, (Riyadh:Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, 2014); etc.

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