



ISLAM

FORBIDS

Corruption



Please handle this brochure with care
because it contains verses from the Glorious Qur'an

Written by: Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA)

Islam Forbids Corruption

Preamble

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ
Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, so that they may return. Qur'an Chapter 30 Verse 41

There is a rich tradition in Islamic heritage of high moral standards, ethics, values and norms of behaviour which governs a Muslim's personal, professional and business life. Therefore, anything that goes contrary to these natural inclinations is corruption. Corruption may take the form of looting, fraud, money laundering, foreign exchange malpractices, embezzlement, bribery, obtaining property by false pretence, smuggling, human and arm trafficking, illegal arms deal, illegal oil bunkering, illegal mining, tax evasion, open market abuse, theft of intellectual property, electronic telecommunication offences, surreptitious dumping of toxic wastes, marketing of prohibited goods as well as terrorism, etc.

What is Corruption?

According to M. Cherif Bassiouni, in his book, Introduction to Islam (1988), "Corruption is a deep-rooted phenomenon that exists in innumerable forms, knows no cultural boundaries, operates in the private as well as the public sector, occurs in rich countries and poor, and defies comprehensive definition." Corruption is dishonesty and illegal behaviour by people in positions of trust. Transparency International describes it as the misuse of entrusted power for personal gain. This involves the abuse of power of those in authority, usually for personal benefits,

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Prophet Muhammad (SAW) also said in a hadith narrated by Abdullahi bin Umar (RA) that, “Surely! Everyone of you is a guardian (leader) and is responsible for his charges”

From the above hadith, it is clear that we are all custodian of different trusts and responsibilities which we must discharge irrespective of our economic and social status. You can either choose to discharge them dutifully and with accountability or become corrupt.

Ruling on Corruption

Islam abhors corruption in all its forms and kinds. Almighty Allah and His Messenger have warned against and prepared severe punishment for anyone who indulges in or aids corrupt acts.

Allah says,

قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ.....

Say: My Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed ...Qur'an Chapter 7 Verse 33

Corruption is considered in Islam as both religious and criminal offense due to the serious harm it causes to the society. Thus, Islam strongly condemns corruption in all its forms and calls for justice to reign supreme in all circumstances. The punishment for corruption is treated with utmost seriousness either, in the form of hadd (fixed legal penalties), qisas (retaliation) or ta'zir (discretionary penalties). In each instance, the ruling carries the necessary importance it deserves.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) (in an authentic hadith related by Buhari) said, “The Muslim is the one whom other Muslims are free from harm of his tongue and hands, the emigrant (one who performs Hijrah) is the one who migrates (refrain from what Allah (SWT) has forbidden, while the believer is one who people’s life and wealth are secure with him; and Al-mujahid is the one who struggles against his own soul (self) to follow the commandments of Allah.

Effects of Corruption

The effects of corruption cannot be overemphasized as they weaken the socio-economic fabrics of any nation. The global financial crisis that the world is facing today is not unconnected to corruption. Corruption leads to underdevelopment, unemployment, poverty, poor service delivery, denial of social amenities to the masses, crime and criminality, social inequality, brain drain and bad image to the country.

Allah says,

وَاتَّقُوا بَأْسَ اللَّهِ لَا تُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

And fear an affliction which may not smite those of you in particular who are unjust; and know that Allah is severe in requiting (evil)

Punishment for Corruption

Islam provides appropriate punishment for those who indulge in corruption to serve the purpose of correction (provide the right thing to do next time), deterrence (discouraging others from engaging in similar misbehaviour), retribution (making offenders pay the price of their misbehaviour) and reformation (providing reformatory facility for the culprit).

Allah says,

إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ
أُيُودُهُمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِّنْ جَنْبٍ أَوْ يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ جَزَاءُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His messenger and strive to cause corruption in the land is only this, that they should be murdered or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides or they should be imprisoned; this shall be as a disgrace for them in this world, and in the hereafter they shall have a grievous chastisement. Qur'an Chapter 5 Verse 33

Roles of Muslims in Fighting Corruption

Muslims have a duty towards the world and towards fellow humans. It is therefore their unilateral obligation to invite others and work together in building a better and peaceful world; a world which is free from corruption, oppression and exploitation, where rights are a reality and where justice prevails over hypocrisy.

Allah says,

...فَلَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ الْخَبِيثِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

.... And help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is severe in requiting (evil). Qur'an Chapter 5 Verse 2

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in an authentic hadith related by Muslim said, “whoever amongst you encounters an abnormality should change it physically (using his hand). If it (physical change) is impossible, let him change it orally (by condemning it). If that is still impossible, let him reject it in his mind, and that constitutes the weakest form of faith (Iman).”

Conclusion

The above quoted verses from the Glorious Qur'an and Prophetic traditions have enjoined Muslims to shun and condemn corruption wherever they are. Muslims are therefore encouraged to collaborate with the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and other anti-corruption agencies in the fight against corruption by exposing corrupt practices

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