
DHIMMI UNDER ISLAMIC STATE: POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

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Abstract

This article discusses the political and social responsibilities of a non-Muslim (*Dhimmi*) under Islamic state. It defines Islamic and Secular states and explains their features. It evaluates the position, rights and the responsibilities of *Dhimmi* under Islamic law. Their fundamental rights, which include protection from all external threat, internal tyranny and persecution, freedom of religion, general welfare, equality before the law, freedom of trade, right to participate in government work have all been delineated. Similarly, the article highlights the duties and responsibilities of *Dhimmi*-this consists of respect of the religion of Islam, payment of poll tax (*Jizya*), and land tax (*Kharaj*) among others. It then wraps up with conclusion. The analysis was made within the framework of northern Nigerian states, this with a view to proffering possible solutions to the multi-religious violence in the region. The objective of the paper is therefore, to serve as important mechanism and spiritual safeguard against executive lawlessness and disrespect for citizens' rights no matter what religion they profess. The paper uses analytical phenomenological methodology.

Keywords: *Dhimmi* , Islamic State, Muslim State

Introduction

Religious crisis in Nigeria is fast becoming epidemic, unbearable and uncontrollable. It is also becoming a lifestyle, especially in the Muslim dominated Northern parts of Nigeria. So much life has been wasted in the past ten years and property worth billions of dollars has destroyed. Development is now at the lowest level due to religious unrest. Religious crisis should become a big concern to every Muslim because it is now a very ugly feature of the Muslim dominated states Northern Nigeria. The crises, many attributed to differences in religion as well as ignorance of other peoples' rights. Similarly, there are also problems of inability among many, to differentiate Islamic state

and Muslim state. It is against this backdrop that the paper explains Islamic state and non-Muslim rights in an Islamic state. This is to establish that none of the states in the North is Islamic, and to expatiate that even in a state which is termed Islamic the non-Muslims residing within it have their rights and privileges that must be respected. If the average Muslim is well guided by the place of Dhimmi as well as the proper meaning of Islamic state and Muslim state the religious crisis will be highly controlled or even brought to a stop. The research therefore sees lack of understanding of Dhimmi among a problem that leads to religious crisis in the Northern parts of Nigeria and is poised to address it in such a way as to bring harmonious living among Muslims and non-Muslims in the Muslim dominated Northern areas of Nigeria.

The word *Dhimmi* as a concept refers to the non-Muslim living in an Islamic state, they are referred to in *Shari'ah* (Islamic Law) as *Dhimmis*-The covenanted people. They are usually referred to as "people under the protection or pledge of Allah, His Messenger and the Muslim community"¹. In Islam, state is an ideological one based on Islamic teaching. Hence, its systems of politics, economic, administration and more importantly, legal and social institutions are quite different from other systems such as Democracy and Socialism.

Islamic state is a type of government primarily based on the application of Islamic law, dispensation of justice, maintenance of law and order. It is a state which recognizes and concerns itself with the Sovereignty of Allah as the sole power behind its system.² In other words, it is a state in which absolute Sovereignty belongs to Allah, Who alone has the prerogative to determine structure of values that the Muslim community must uphold. These values and principles are expounded by the Shari'ah, which is grounded in divine revelation and expression, hence the Sovereign will of Allah. According to Islam, state is a means which facilitates the interpretation and application of the ordinances of the Islamic law, to administer justice, freedom and equality among all people. Muslim state on the other hand, is a state densely or majorly populated by Muslims, it is called Muslim state because the majority of population of the state are Muslims. Thus, a state can be a Muslim state but not an Islamic state and vice-versa. This is because the former, is only a state with Muslims as majority but it is not necessarily to recognize the sovereignty of Allah, in addition, the law of Muslims state is largely a man-made law.

In an Islamic state people are classified into two: **Muslims** and **Dhimmis**. It also differentiates between the two on the basis of the principle and ideology on which each is based. Hence, in an Islamic State only those who believe in those principles and ideology can be entrusted with the responsibility of running the fundamental affairs of the state. But still, an Islamic state respects

all basic human rights of its citizenry irrespective of their religion, race or tribe.

Who is *Dhimmi*?

The word “*Dhimmi*” is an Arabic word derived from “*Dhimmah*” which literally means pledge (*al-Ahd*), guarantee (*al-Daman*), and safety (*al-aman*).³ This word is being referred to the non-Muslims living in an Islamic state due to the fact that they live under the pledge of Allah, His Messenger and the Muslim community. They are those who have affirmed to remain loyal and obedient to the Islamic state wherein they propose to live, regardless of the country they were born in.⁴

A non-Muslim who lives in an Islamic state enjoys complete religious, social and political rights guaranteed to him by Islam in return for his loyalty and the payment of a reasonable tax called *Jizyah*.

Classification of *Dhimmis*:

Islamic scholars classify *Dhimmis* into three categories:

1. The *Dhimmis* who become the subject of an Islamic state under some treaty or agreement.
2. Those who become the subjects of the state after being defeated by the Muslim i.e. the conquered.
3. Those who are in an Islamic state in any other way.⁵

Features of Islamic and Secular States

Islamic state is a state whose constitution is Qur’an, Secular or secular state on the other hand, refers to the country which is an independent political unit, usually formed of people with the same language and traditions.⁶

There are certain features with which both Islamic and Secular states can be identified. For instance, in an Islamic state, people believe and accept Allah’s sovereignty not only in the next world but here on earth. They also believe and accept the political vicegerency of man on earth. In a wider scope, the political actions of the Muslims individually and collectively are guided by the laws of Allah as contained in the Qur’an and traditions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.).⁷ While in secular state the sovereignty is said to belong to the state, that is to say a state is a legal and political organization with the power to acquire obedience and loyalty of its citizens, therefore, sovereignty lies in the hands of few individuals who cannot distinguish between their interest and that of the state.⁸

Another feature that distinguishes between the two is the way people are given right in a Secular state to, seek for political offices and use whatever means possible to achieve this aim, contrary to what it is in Islam where an individual is strongly discouraged from seeking an office. It is also one of the features of a Secular state that every law in the constitution is supreme to any other law be it traditional or religious, and it is binding on all its members of the nation.⁹ An Islamic state classifies people residing within its jurisdiction into two being the Muslim who believe in its ideology and the non-Muslims who do

not believe in that ideology. While a secular state classifies its citizens into two groups being the majority and minority. The majority is those groups or race which has established the state and dominates it; hence it is responsible for running its affairs. Minority are the groups of people not belonging to the state therefore, they are not part of those who run the affairs of the state.

In an Islamic state, the task or responsibilities of running the affairs of the state rests on those who believe in the principle and ideology of Islam. But in the Secular state, this responsibility remains in the hands of the majority group which established.

Another ideological nature of Islamic state is the way it distinguishes between Muslims and non-Muslims in an honest and upright manner. It has categorically declared the rights conferred upon non-Muslims residing within its jurisdiction, so also the rights which will not be enjoyed by them. Secular state on the other hand, has in apparent the policy of equating all its citizens but what that transfers is discrimination between majority and minority this is because the former deprives the later their basic human rights. Islamic state guarantees the non-Muslim specific rights within the state which will not meddle with its affairs and assures them equal treatment upon their acceptance of Islamic principle of life. On the contrary, Secular state destroys the spare entity of the minority group by exterminating it physically through genocide or allowing them to exist as untouchable.

It is also a duty bound upon an Islamic state to confer the essential rights of its *Dhimmi*s as enshrined in Islamic law, none of their rights should be tempered with by any believer. While in a Secular state, though the minorities are being granted some rights, but that depends on the section of the majority, therefore, their fate depends on the whims of those who have the power (majority).¹⁰

The Position of *Dhimmi* under Islamic Law

Non-Muslims always constitute the minority within Islamic state, and this was exactly the case when the first Islamic city state was established by the Prophet (P.B.U.H) in Madinah. The position of the non-Muslim in the constitution of Madinah was that of weak group's dependant on strong groups from protection. Before the death of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H), a similar status was given to non Muslim communities on the Gulf of Aqabah. Similarly, when provinces of the great empires were conquered, the Christians and other communities from other regions were treated in same way.

As far as the people of the book, (Jews and Christians) are concerned, they have been given special position in the Qur'an since their religion were originally based on the Heavenly books that is *Taurat* and *Injil*, respectively *Dhimmi* were given a specific consideration in both Qur'an and traditions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H). For instance, Allah says with regards to the cordial relationship that exists between the Muslims and non-Muslim citizens:

Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you
not for your faith nor drive you out of your homes, from

dealing kindly and justly with them. For Allah loves those who are just. Allah only forbid you, with regards to those who fight you for your faith and drive you out of your homes and support others in driving you out, from turning to them (for friendship and protection) it is such as turn to them (in these circumstance), that do wrong".¹¹

He also said:

And dispute you not with the people of the book, except with means better (than mere disputation), unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury); but say: "We believe in the Revelation which has come down to us and in that which come down to you; our Allah and your Allah is one and it is to Him we bow (in Islam)."¹²

Similarly, the traditions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) have emphasized on this relation, he also warned against the prosecution of a *Dhimmi*. Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was reported to have said concerning them:

Whosoever persecuted a *Dhimmi* or usurp his right or took work from him beyond his capacity, or took something from him with evil intention, I will be a complainant against him on the Day of resurrection.¹³

In another tradition, he said:

Whosoever hurts a *Dhimmi* I shall be his complainant, and for whosoever I am a complainant; I shall ask for his right on the Day of Resurrection.¹⁴

These verses and traditions of the Prophet show how Islam protects the integrity of *Dhimmi* and that was ascertained by the way Prophet (P.B.U.H.) admonished against any thing that will hurt them, he was reported to have said that whosoever hurts *Dhimmi* indeed hurts him and whosoever hurts him, hurts Allah.¹⁵ A Muslim killed a *Dhimmi* during the life time of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) as a result of which the Prophet ordered the execution of the Muslim and Prophet then remarked that:

I am responsible for obtaining redress for the weak.¹⁶

In another tradition, the Prophet warned that:

Whoever oppresses a non Muslim subject or taxes him beyond his capacity, and then I shall be the opposite part to him in the litigation.¹⁷

Caliph Umar (R.A) is reported to have said the following in the last moment of his life.

I exhort my success or regarding the treatment to be meted out to the converted people by the messenger of Allah. They should receive the fullest execution of their covenant, and their life and property should be defended even if it requires going to war (with oppressors). And should not be taxes beyond their capacity.¹⁸

These traditions and several others teach that the non-Muslim must be treated with leniency and must not be hurt or oppressed by any ruler and must not be treated beyond their capacity.

The four rightly guided Caliphs¹⁹ used to show great concern about non-Muslim whenever people came enquiring about them from the neighboring countries or provinces. Whenever there was any complaint from non-Muslims, they use to give their urgent attention to it in order to ensure that justice was done to them.

In-fact the head of the government and those in authority are duty bound upon them to look after the interest of the entire citizens including *Dhimmi*, using all available forces at their disposal.

Rights and the Responsibilities of *Dhimmi*

Dhimmi residing in an Islamic state enjoy equal rights with Muslims. Therefore, they are entitled to freedom of religion, this means that they have total freedom to practice their religion and to observe their festivals with fullest freedom, but this freedom is allowed in the areas where *Dhimmi* are majority, but in areas or localities where Muslims are purely inhabitants, there will be restriction to such freedom. Therefore, *Dhimmi* are allowed to repair their places of worship in case of the destruction or damage but they are not entitled to build new ones in the areas dominated by Muslims.

Fundamental Rights of *Dhimmi*

The fundamental rights of *Dhimmi* in an Islamic state are in different kinds:

1. Protection from all External Threats

This kind of protection is the same as in the case of Muslim. The head of state and those in authority are bound to look after the interests of all citizens using all the force at their command. The famous Maliki Scholar Imam al-Qarrafī quotes the statement of ibn Hazm from his book *Maratib al ijma* thus:

If enemies at war come to our country aiming at certain *Dhimmi*, it is essential for us that we come out to fight them with all our might and weapons since he is under the protection of Allah and His Messenger. If we did anything less than this, it means we have failed in our agreement for

protection.²⁰

2. Protection from all Internal Tyranny and Persecution

The most important protection to be given to non Muslim citizen is from internal justice.²¹ It is necessary upon Muslim citizens to spare their hand and tongues from hurting the non-Muslim citizens.

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) stated that:

One who hurts a non Muslim he hurts me, and one who hurt me hurts Allah.²²

Allah says:

Allah only forbid you respecting those who have fought against you on account of (your) religion, and have driven you out of your homes, and helped (others) in driving you out, that you make friends of them it is these that are the transgressors.²³

From the above quotations, it is evident that *Shariah* is not and will never be in support of any type of injustice to a non-Muslim. But is rather enjoys Muslims to deal with the non Muslim with kindness and justice unless they are out to destroy Islam, Muslims and their interests.

3. Freedom of Religion

The agreement reached between the Muslim and the non-Muslim in Medina under the leadership of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) has pointed to the whole world, the attitudes of *shari'ah* towards non-Muslim in an Islamic state. This agreement reached in 622 C.E has tremendous influence on many subsequent constitutions drawn at different parts of the world particularly on issues pertaining to human rights.²⁴

Paragraph 25 of the agreement reached between the Muslim and non-Muslim in Medina explicitly stated that the non-Muslims should practice their religion and the Muslim should practice their own religion. The section further maintains that this agreement must be abided by all the parties concerned and its violation will be considered as oppression on the part of he who violated it and the members of his house.²⁵

4. General Welfare

It shall be the responsibility of the government to guarantee the provision of basic human necessities that include food, clothing, housing, medical relief and education to all citizens who might temporarily or permanently be incapable of earning their livelihood due to unemployment, sickness or other reason, and no distinction should be made on the bases of religion or race. Islam recognizes the rights of the needy people, and recommends assistance to

them. In respect to the assistance to the needy people, Allah says:
And in their wealth there is acknowledge right for the needy
and the destitute.²⁶

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said if a man brings up and educates an orphan, he will be as near to Paradise as the finger of a hand are near each other.²⁷
He further enunciates that:

A man who helps and spends his time and money in looking after widows and the poor holds the same position in the eyes of Allah as one who fights in the Holy war, or fast every day and prays the whole night over a number of years.²⁸

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) has made no distinction in these traditions between a Muslim and a non-Muslim. In fact, he used to help many Jews in Medina out of the *Zakat* (poor due) funds which were collected by the state from only Muslims. Similarly, Caliph Umar was of the opinion that the word *miskin* used in the Qur'an for the poor means the non-Muslim therefore, both should be assisted in the treaty of Hira. Khalid bin Walid made an expressive promise to the Christians that if there was an old man or woman among them or a disabled person or a blind man, the Muslim government would grant him or her a pension for life from the *Bait al – mal* (public treasury) this is because Islam stands for the good and happiness of all mankind Muslim and non Muslim as well.²⁹

Similarly, the state has been entrusted with the duty and responsibility of looking after all those who need help and assistance. A truly Islamic state is therefore a truly welfare state which will be the guardian and protector of all those in need.

5. Equality before the Law

Islam gives its citizens right to absolute and complete equality in the eyes of the law. As far as the Muslim are concerned, there is clear instruction in the Qur'an and tradition of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) that in their right and obligations they are all equal.³⁰

This religious brotherhood and the uniformity of their rights and obligations are the foundation of equality in Islamic society in which the rights and obligation of any person are neither greater nor lesser in any way than the right and obligations of other people. As far as the non Muslim citizens in Islamic state are concerned, the rule of Islamic law about them has been very well expressed by the Caliph Umar (R.A) in these words:

They have accepted our protection only because their lives
may be like our lives and their properties are like our

properties.³¹

This statement means that *Dhimmis*' lives and properties are as sacred as the lives and properties of any Muslim in an Islamic State. Any distinction on the basis of creed or colour has been condemned by Islam in strongest terms. Qur'an narrates evil action committed by Pharaoh as serious crimes thus:

Truly Pharaoh elated himself and divided its people into groups, marginalizing a group among them.³²

Similarly, Caliph Ali's incident when he was brought before the Muslim judge by a Jew, even though he was then a supreme leader, was a clear evidence of such equality shown to *Ahl Dhimmah* during classical period.³³

6. Freedom of Trade

Dhimmis in an Islamic state have the right and privileges to buy and sell as well as participate in lawful businesses they wish to undertake within an Islamic state. Therefore, engage into businesses like dying, carpentry, farming and so on, they could also make foreign trips for business sake, owned shops in public markets, open private mini markets or super markets, companies, make contracts, become experts in medicine and engineering among others³⁴. This right given to *Dhimmis* would not also grant them right to bring evil or anything harmful into Islamic state for instance, they would not be permitted to open shops for selling prohibited drinks, pork meat, prostitution houses etc.³⁵

7. Right to Participating in Government Work

There is no specific rule prohibiting *Dhimmis* from taking government job in an Islamic state when they are found to be competent and have the ability to carry out duties assigned to them in so far there is confidence in them. Still some other important issues must be taken into consideration in such dealings, some of which are:

- (a) Any work that directly involves religious duties like hajj committees members appointment of judges, taking part in Jihad excreta should not be given to the *Dhimmis*. The Prophet's saying that that they will never seek help from the non-Muslims, he was referring to the above mentioned sorts of works.
- (b) All the Islamic government secrets are to be kept away from the non Muslims as such they are not to be included in the operation of security plans as well as secrets. Allah said in the Qur'an:
O you who believe take not into your intimacy those outside your ranks: they will not fail to corrupt you...³⁶

- (c) Muslims must be considered first on any occasion before non Muslims, because in an Islamic government Muslims status is above that of non Muslim Qur'an explains more.
...But honour belongs to Allah and his Apostle and to the believers, but the Hypocrites know not.³⁷
- (d) For convenient running of an Islamic government affairs, non Muslim must never be left to run a certain branch or part of government wholly to the extent that they occupies all the major key positions for example the head of parastatals, his deputy and secretary go to non – Muslims.³⁸
- (e) While choosing workers, it is important to take into consideration those who will make use of their positions and work to exert their unislamic influence e.g. educational sectors, if they are found to be doing any secret effort in that direction then it becomes necessary to change them to other areas where they could not have the opportunity to make any damage, if that proves abortive, then it is compulsory to remove them all together.³⁹
- (f) *Dhimmis* have a right to be free from any inconvenience when they are employed in respect to their religion, as such should not be compelled to work on Sundays as was the case for Christians.⁴⁰

With the exception of key positions mentioned above, a non-Muslim can hold any office entrusted to him by a Caliph. In the early Islamic state and throughout Muslim history there had been cases or instances where non-Muslim occupied important posts of high status. Significant enough is the fact that the first ambassador of the Prophet to the Negus of Abyssinia was Amr ibn Ummayad al-Damri, who had not then embraced Islam. Umar the Caliph, appointed a Greek Christian as the chief accountant in Medina. The same way followed by Caliph Mu'awiyya, as during his time, a Christian named Sarjusun was appointed as his head office clerk.⁴¹ Reputable jurists like Al-Mawardi and Abu Ya'ala alfarra, belonging to the Shafi'ite and Hanbalite schools, respectively, did not hesitate to support the view that "a Caliph may lawfully nominate non-Muslim subjects as ministers and members of executive councils."⁴²

Duties and Responsibilities of *Dhimmis*

According to Yusuf Qardawi⁴³ the responsibilities of a non Muslim living in Islamic state are of three kinds:

1. Respect the Religion of Islam
2. Payment of Land Tax (*kharaj*)
3. Payment of Poll Tax (*jizyah*)⁴⁴

Respect the Religion of Islam

Shari'ah enjoys Muslims to respect other people religions and encourage them

to kindly share relationship with them, this, in order to leave with them peacefully and harmoniously and to save his religion from been abused by non-Muslims. Qur'an explains that;

Revile not ye those whom the call upon besides Allah, they out of spite revile Allah in their ignorance. Thus have we made alluring to each people its own doings. In the end will they return to their lord, and we shall then tell them the truth of all that they did.⁴⁵

In this manner, it is duty upon non-Muslim to respect the religion of Islam and abide the rule and regulations of Islamic state. Maududi, a reputable Islamic scholar and leader of Islamic movement in Pakistan says "A *Dhimmi* may commit the greatest crime and yet it will not disqualify him from being treated as a *Dhimmi*. Even if he refuses to pay the Jizyah (poll tax) or kills a Muslim or attack the honour of a Muslim woman, he will not be considered to have done anything that may break the bond or make him an outlaw. Of course for all such acts, he will be taken to task in accordance with the penal code, but he will not be declared a rebel, nor can he be deprived of the privileges according to him as a *Dhimmi*. There are, however two emergencies where in the *Dhimmi* lose all claims to protection namely:

1. When they leave the Muslim state and go over to the enemies.
2. When they openly revolt against the state and try to destroy it.

Kharaj

It is a tax levied on the producer of the landed property owned by the non-Muslim in an Islamic state. Just as the Muslim pay '*Ushr*' the non-Muslim are supposed to pay *kharaj* to the *Bait al-mail* (public treasury). According to Iman Abu Yusuf, *Kharaj* is a kind of *fa'y*.⁴⁶

Kharaj is of different kinds viz:

- (a) *Kharaj Muqassamah*: The proportional *Kharaj* which consisted in a proportion of the ground like 1/3, 1/4 or 1/5. *kharaj* was collected every time a crop had been grown.
- (b) *Kharaj Muwazzaf*: The fixed *kharaj* which is charged on the ground as so much of natural product or money per unit area or per tree.
- (c) *Kharaj Muqata'ah*: That paid is a lump sum by certain tributary provinces especially those were on the border of the Muslim empires and had been able to preserve their autonomy. The lump sum agreed upon to be paid yearly to the state by individuals in consideration of public lands made over to them by the state.⁴⁷

The land taxes remain due from non-Muslim landowners even if they accept Islam. They continued to pay land tax and *Zakkah* and the commodities they cultivate are considered as Muslim properties.

Jizyah.

Jizyah which is usually translated as “poll tax,” means to give what is due in return for something given. The *jizyah* is an annual tax levied on non-Muslim citizens living in the Islamic state. Just as the Muslim pays the compulsory *zakat* the non-Muslim also pays the *jizyah* in return, it will be the duty of the Muslim state to protect his life and property like any Muslim citizen. The payments of *jizyah* will exonerate them from fighting for the cause of the state or render any military service to the state. The *jizyah* collected will go to the *bait al-mal* as the Qur’anic injunction explained:

...Nor acknowledge the religion of truth, (even if they are) of the people of the book, until they pay the *jizyah* with willing submission, and fell themselves subdued.⁴⁸

Jizyah was not imposed upon the children, insane, women, the poor, monks and all those who cannot afford it. Furthermore, non-Muslim subjects who become bankrupt are not only exempted from paying *jizyah* but are entitled to be given pensions from the state treasury. Khalid ibn al-walid, in his famous “covenant of peace” given to the people of Hirah, wrote that:

I have stipulated that if any one of them becomes unable to work on account of old age or for some other reason, or if anyone who was formally rich becomes so poor that is co-religionists have to support him. Then all such persons will be exempted from paying *jizyah* and they, together with their dependants, will get a pension from the Islamic treasury as long as they choose to reside in the Islamic state.⁴⁹

If any non-Muslim citizen dies leaving arrears of *jizyah* those arrears cannot be realized from his heirs. Abi Yusuf, in his *al-Kharaj*, writes: any *Dhimmi* that has to pay *jizyah* and dies before paying it, the same will not be realized from his heirs nor from his residual properties.⁵⁰

The nature of the *jizyah* can be well understood if we recall the fact that military service is not compulsory upon non-Muslim. This is only fair as much as Islamic state is based on ideology which non-Muslim did not believe in. They are on the other hand, subject with rights and duties equal to those of any Muslim subjects. They would be protected and defended against internal and external aggressions for they pay the *jizyah*.⁵¹

There is no fixed amount of *jizyah* neither in the Qur’an nor in the tradition of the Prophet, the financial capacity of *Dhimmi*s was the only standard or the measurement introduced by the authentic texts, and the fixation of *jizyah* was left to the consideration of Muslim authorities to decide based on mutual

agreement.⁵²

The treaty between the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and the Christians of Najran developed elaboration of what was first enacted regarding the Jews a specific tax is imposed.

Misconceptions

On the basis of earlier definitions of Muslim and Islamic state, one realizes that none of the Northern states in Nigeria can be identified as Islamic state but rather Muslim states (in case of others who were Muslims majority states). There are still some misconceptions and ignorance of the features of both Islamic and Muslim states among many people. The same is the case about the rights and privileges of the non-Muslims (*Dhimmis*) living in an Islamic state, the factors which aided the endemic religious violence in some Muslim majority states in the north. Even though sometimes the causes of such chaos are neither misconceptions nor ignorance, but personal selfish desires of some individuals which resulted in their campaign to disturb the peace and security of various communities by introducing ethnic or religious and political crises to facilitate achievement of their selfish objectives.

It is on the basis of this revelation therefore, the article recommends that, people should differentiate between the true teachings of a religion and the attitude of some of its adherents. The behaviour of some people may sometimes conform to the teachings of their religion and or otherwise. Therefore, it is good to assess a religion purely on its merit by considering its precepts and teachings. It would be unfair therefore, to pass judgment against a religion merely on the attitude of some deviant adherents of that religion.

It is therefore, our individual and collective responsibilities as human beings, to try hard in various ways to first of all educate people that the population is not a determining factor of identifying or characterizing a state as Islamic, secondly, to also enlighten them that even in a state which is declared Islamic, the *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) recognizes and respects the rights and dignity of non-Muslims residing in the state, and such must be respected by all Muslims. Thirdly, people should be reminded of the legacy of peace and peaceful co-existence which have been demonstrated by the Prophet (P.B.U.H) as well as his successive Caliphs.

Conclusion

It is paramount to note that all principles of good morals and human dignity are equally applicable to both Muslims as well as to non-Muslims in an Islamic State. The inviolability of the human personality is the foundation of the justice demanded by Allah for all men. Freedom of opinion, oral or written of worship, association, choice of profession and of movement is guaranteed to all men. Freedom of opinion, oral or written of worship, association, choice of profession and of movement is guaranteed to all subjects: Muslims and non Muslims alike. These rights flow from the principles of every individual's

complete responsibility to himself and to Allah. Allah says:

Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds⁵³

Shariah allows non Muslim not to only practice their religion, but goes further to allow them to apply their own legal system (if they have) in their personal matters. In a nutshell, the non Muslim living as *Dhimmi*s in an Islamic state are given freedom to leave as their Muslim counterparts, their living in an Islamic state is a form of contract which both Islamic government and the *Dhimmi*s have to respect therefore, the duties and responsibilities expected from them are sort of compensation to the rights given to them by Islamic state.

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19. The first four Muslim Caliphs who succeeded the Prophet Muhammad,(P.B.U.H). They were Abubakar, Umar, Uthman and Aliyu
20. A.R.I Doi Op.cit P.429
21. Ibid P.429
22. A.R.I Doi Op.cit P.27
23. Qur'an 60 Verses 8-9
24. Y.Y.Ibrahim "Shari'ah and Muslim in Nigeria" Fisbas Media Service Publication. Kaduna. 1991,P.48
25. Ibid P.48
26. Qur'an 51 Verse 19
27. A.R. Doi Op.cit P.392
28. Ibid P.392
29. Ibid P.392
30. See Qur'an 49 Verse 10-11
31. Ibn Qudamah, Vol.III P.445
32. Qur'an 28 Verse 4
33. Qardawi, Y. "Non-Muslims in Islamic Society. Cairo. 1982, P.16
34. M.M Ibrahim " Matsayin wanda ba Musulmiba a kasar Musulmi" Degel Journal of the Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies. Vol.V, 2001, P.121
35. Ibid
36. Qur'an 3 Verse 118
37. Qur'an 63 Verse 8
38. M.M Ibrahim " Matsayin wanda ba Musulmiba a kasar Musulmi" Op.cit P.122
39. Ibid P.122
40. Ibid P.122
41. Qardawi, Y. "Non-Muslims in Islamic Society. Cairo. 1982, P.13
42. Ibid
43. Is a renowned contemporary Islamic scholar based in Egypt. He gives *fatawah* on many contemporary Islamic issues
44. Al-Qardawi, Y. "*Ghairul Muslimin Fi Mujtama'il Islam*" Cairo 1977.P.56
45. Qur'an 6 Verse 108
46. A.R.I Doi Op.cit P.389
47. M.Abdul. The Classical Caliphate, Islamic Publications Bureau. London. 1976, P.218
48. Qur'an 9 Verse 29
49. Ramadan Op.cit
50. Ibid
51. Ibid
52. Ibid
53. Qur'an, 74 Verse 38