

## EVOLUTION OF A JUST NIGERIAN STATE *VIS A VIS* THE LAW OF KARMA

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### **Abstract**

Nothing raises more questions, or is more misunderstood than the notion of karma. Karma is a Vedic Science, with its root in India, and is a central teaching of many spiritual traditions including Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Taoism and Jainism. The wheel of karma is the idea that everything in our life takes place due to past actions and that present actions affect future lifetimes. The fruit of previous actions are like echoes, and they cannot be escaped. Karma is intricately linked to causality. The idea of a just society first gained momentum and attention when philosophers such as John Stuart Mill asked, "What is a 'just society'?" Their writings covered several different perspectives including allowing individuals to live their lives as long as they did not infringe on the rights to others, to the idea that the resources of society should be distributed to all, including those most deserving first. The main thrust of this research is to examine the relationship between karma, restructuring and resource control which has over the recent times began to gather momentum and relevance within the Nigerian political space. The belief is that this will help engender a just Nigerian state. Meanwhile, the researcher discovered that a just society is guaranteed when resources are equitably distributed, especially to those who are most deserving. Historical research method was adopted in the conduct of this research.

**Keywords:** Evolution, Just state, Karma

### **Introduction**

This paper explores the evolution of a just Nigerian state from the amalgamation through the present democratic dispensation and maintains that the only legacy bequeathed to the country by Western imperialism that has assumed independence is conceivably religion and ethnicity. It is the position of the paper that resource control and restructuring have more than any phenomenon significantly militated against the evolution of the country into a just nation state. This underscores continuous agitation for sub-regional autonomy and secessionist attempts by the Eastern region of the country as witnessed in the Biafra civil war of 1966 and current restructuring agitation. This paper will attempt to establish a significant relationship between Karma and a just state Nigerian which is achievable when the drivers of the project Nigeria understand that whatever one sows he/she will definitely reap.

Karma as much as it relates to rebirth, its emphasis is on action and effect. Each and every action people take in life ripples out from them like a stone thrown into the water. The ripples have untold effects on others, and will also flow back at some point in the future.

Once one becomes conscious and attains higher stages of awakening and enlightenment, no longer identifying with the 'self,' they step off the karmic wheel of life—escaping the endless cycle of rebirth and personal karma. This is the aim of spiritual practice. A just Nigerian state will be a state defined and characterized by equity balance resource allocation which can only be achieved through restructuring of the current structure of the Nigerian state.

In 1861, John Stuart Mill published an essay entitled, "Utilitarianism". In this famous essay, Mill advocated the latter view, in which decision makers attended to the "common good" and all other citizens worked collectively to build communities and programs that would contribute to the good of others (*Mill, 1871*). When this is achieved in a society, then it can be said that a just state has been ensured.

Unfortunately, the Nigerian scenario pictures a situation where the hen that lays the golden egg is often repressed, suppressed and muzzled hence the agitation for resource control and restructuring of the Nigerian state.

## Evolution

Evolution in science is change in the heritable characteristics of biological populations over successive generations. These characteristics are the expressions of genes that are passed on from parent to offspring during reproduction (Brian and Benedikt 2008). It is also a process of accumulating change. In this context therefore, evolution will be defined as a progression of change, often diversifying in the process. By implication, it implies a gradual directional change especially one leading to a more advanced or complex form of growth and development

## Just State

Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau defined the term a just state thus:

...one in which the rights of minorities will be safe from the whims of intolerant majorities. ...will be one in which those regions and groups which have not fully shared in the country's affluence will be given a better opportunity. ...one where such urban problems as housing and pollution will be attacked through the application of new knowledge and new techniques. The Society will be one in which our Indian and Inuit populations will be encouraged to assume the full rights of citizenship through policies which will give them both greater responsibility for their own future and more meaningful equality of opportunity. The society will be a united Canada, united because all of its citizens will be actively involved in the development of a country where equality of opportunity is ensured and individuals are permitted to fulfil themselves in the fashion they judge best (*Foster 2007*).

At a time when the enemies of true federalism in a democracy cannot be dissuaded by appeals to shared values and conventions, nothing is more pressing than a thoroughgoing investigation of what the state should be perhaps by appealing to their consciences through the dictates of karma. Whereas contemporary thinkers have mostly relativized political justice or conceived it as a formal concept lacking institutional detail, the Just State provides a comprehensive theory of self-government, legitimating democracy and concretely conceiving how political institutions should be organized.

One of the purposes of Plato's *Republic* is to put forth a conception of the 'just state'. Plato describes how such a state would be organized, who would govern it, what sort of education the children would have, and so on. He goes into great detail, laying out ideas that may at times strike the modern reader as wrongheaded, petty, or even immoral. Sir Karl Popper argued in *The Open Society and its Enemies* that Plato's ideal state is totalitarian, with little freedom of expression allowed, little diversity, and a perverse commitment to a Spartan-like regimentation of social life. Others see evidence of democracy in Plato's description, for instance in the egalitarianism that characterizes certain aspects of his educational program. In Nigeria today, to what extent Plato's vision is still relevant – whether it has anything valuable to say to us? Is it entirely impracticable, or are there elements that can and should be put into practice towards evolving the type Nigeria we all desire?

What becomes apparent when we analyze Plato's just state looking at larger scales than individuals' transgressions. Many would agree with Plato that theft is unjust and that the politicians or professional who ignores their duties can be called 'unjust', and also that tyranny is unjust. Suffice to say that the tyrant's injustice consists in his suppressing freedom, killing innocent people, and disregarding democracy and self-determination. Plato, on the other hand, would say that the tyrant is unjust insofar as his acts promote anarchy and prevent his subjects from seeking the Good and living in harmony with themselves and the community.

## Overview of the Law of Karma

The Spiritual Law of Karma dictates 'as you give, so shall you receive' and 'you reap what you sow'. Karma means action, work or deed; it also refers to the spiritual principle of cause and effect where intent and actions of an individual (cause) influence the future of that individual (effect). Good intent and good deeds contribute to good karma and happier rebirths, while bad intent and bad deeds contribute to bad karma and bad rebirths.

The *Spiritual Law of Karma* tells us that the vibration of thoughtfulness, kindness and graciousness are considered to be 'good karma'. When you send out these energies, they will be returned to you in kind.

Anger, hate and resentment are negative, damaging energies. When you send out these vibrations, they too will be returned to you in some form, to the exact extent that we live and express these qualities (both positive and negative), at some point we will receive an equivalent back into our lives. The Spiritual Law of Karma dictates that all karma is recorded and balanced. Loving deeds, emotions, thoughts and words are 'credits'. Negatives are 'debits'. The Universe will call these up for us to experience when we least expect it.

According to the **Spiritual Law of Karma**, our families are our karma. Our souls choose our family prior to our birth. Difficult family relations and ties may be a consequence of unresolved issues and feelings, or situations in a past lifetime. Our souls choose that particular family because it wanted another opportunity and chance to finally resolve issues and problems. This offers us the lessons our soul needs to experience and learn.

According to the Spiritual Law of Karma, mind-sets that we bring into this lifetime are our karma. If we have the self-belief and mind-set that we are lacking or 'not good enough', that belief will inevitably draw into our lives the people and circumstances that will make us feel weak and/or inferior.

Positive beliefs and mind-sets create good karma in our lives. Wonderful things then happen and enter our lives consistently. We are responsible for our own beliefs and mind-sets, so we must be aware to amend our beliefs if they do not serve us in a positive manner.

Our health is our karma. Prior to incarnating (or reincarnating) we chose our family, our life challenges and our soul mission or life purpose. We also chose our body and genetic predisposition. Our moment-by-moment choices of emotions and thoughts affect our health and vitality.

The balance sheet of our karma is known as our 'Akashic Record', which is a recorded history of all of our lives and life experiences and lessons. Our karma is carried forward from one lifetime to the next; therefore we may not experience the consequences of our actions until a subsequent lifetime. Because of this, sometimes there is no obvious and/or visible co-relation between our action and its' consequence.

The higher our spiritual vibration, the quicker our karma returns to us. Many on the earth plane at this time are subjected to 'instant karma'. This means that whatever one gives out comes back to them instantly. It is a sign of becoming more evolved because the 'karmic balance sheet' is being kept up to date, and the soul is not allowing karmic debt to accumulate.

### **Evolution of Nigerian State**

According to Kavwam (2011) the Nigerian state has grappled with threats to nationhood since independence as several irredentist movements have truncated the maturation of the country into a just nation state. Similarly, gross failure of leadership aided by corruption of political actors has stifled the transformation of the country beyond the unfortunate colonial union of 1914.

The secularity of the Nigerian constitution has been interminably jettisoned in the pursuit of scarce social goods by political actors as amply demonstrated in the imposition of Sharia law in some northern states of the country. This has heightened religious and ethnic consciousness of citizens thereby constituting significant drag on the country's march to nationhood (Stanley, 2011). The paper advocates the recognition of the country's plurality and diversity as building blocks of unity and national integration. Furthermore the issues of resource control, equitable allocation and possible restructuring should be urgently addressed if we must succeed in building a just and virile Nigerian state.

The geographical territory in West Africa today called Nigeria is without any vestige of pessimism is a creation of British colonial administration which dates back to the 1914 amalgamation. The occupation of this territory by the British was with all intents and purposes antagonistic to the collective will of the indigenous population who owing to inferior military might, kowtowed to British invasion and subsequent annexation of present day Nigeria into a British colony. This chronicled a marriage of inconvenience between the multifarious ethnic groups that occupy this geographical territory. The reaction of particularly three major ethnic nationalities that constitute this territory, viz; Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, to this union, varied significantly. While the Hausa in the North overwhelmingly stooped to British rule, the resistance in the South Western and Eastern regions of the country largely inhabited by the Yoruba's and Igbo's was aggressively extemporaneous. This was not surprising given the differing structures of social organization that obtained in the regions. Colonial rule in the North for instance, was largely aided by the emirate system of administration which gave enormous power to the emirs to administer their territories while answerable to the colonial authority through indirect rule system. However, in the Southern part of the country, the colonial administration met stiff opposition as protests against the crown were widespread. That was partly due to the native authority system that was well rooted in the region which left chiefs with less autonomy to compel absolute obedience as opposed to the emirate system which wielded absolute power and autonomy to the emir who doubles as religious and political leader (Stanley 2011).

Nigeria was amalgamated in 1914 by Lord Lugard, the first High Commissioner of Nigeria from 1900 to 1906. Lugard had created the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria in 1900 with headquarters at Lokoja (later moved to Jebba) which was soon abandoned, then to Zungeru, and finally settled at Kaduna. Lugard returned in 1912 as Governor of Northern and Southern Nigeria, eventually carrying out the amalgamation of 1914; and thereafter continued as governor-General of amalgamated Nigeria from 1914 to 1918 (Geary, 1965). Given the fusion of different kingdoms and city states like (Kanem-Borno, the Fulani/Dan Fodio Empire, Benin Empire, Kingdom of Ife and Oyo Empire, Bonny, New Calabar, Okrika, Brass, Warri, etc.), the Igbo polities of the south-east, and the small ethnic groups of the Plateau and others that were not part of any of these prominent empires; the new Nigerian nation came to have a land area of 356,669 sq. miles so big and bogus that it was doubted if it could survive or be sustained. The British architects of the amalgamation and the inhabitants both doubted that Nigeria would survive. (Crowder, 1966: 23).

Granted the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, the colonial administration successively ensured that the two protectorates were administered separately. Best cited in Stanley (2011) notes, the colonialists did that for two reasons. First, they had promised not to interfere with the religion, culture and customs of the caliphate. Second was the need to foster a culture of friendship and nurture the emirate system as a basis for succession after independence. Thus, even though Nigeria was amalgamated, a cultural and by implication religious iron curtain separated the north from the south. Whereas Western education and the westernized elite, urbanization, Christianity, commerce, and other factors were revolutionizing the south, the north remained a culturally and religiously conservative terrain committed to preserving Islam and its traditions. Whereas, Christian missionaries worked to transform the traditional society and its ways of life in the parts of Nigeria where they operated, and this included the Middle Belt areas of the historical north, the colonialists using the Indirect Rule system worked with the Emirs to preserve existing traditions instead (Coleman, 1958). This preservationist orientation of colonialism was responsible for the perpetuation of the dichotomy between the north and south on the one hand, and between the Middle Belt groups converted to Christianity and the Muslim north on the other hand, a dichotomy that continued into independence and has remained prevalent to date. The dichotomy has further helped to weaken the bonds of nationhood (Stanley, 2011: 11).

In 1960, the entity known as Nigeria was granted independence and has since been grappling with the challenge of building a virile and just state. This researcher believes with karma in view the present and forthcoming leadership can achieve the much anticipated just Nigerian state of our dream.

### **Karma, Restructuring, Resource Control and a Just Nigerian State**

All Nigerian leaders seem to follow the philosophy of the late 5th-century thinker Thrasymachus, who believed that people should pursue their own interests aggressively, even if others are unjustly affected. To Thrasymachus, injustice is to be preferred to the life of Justice. He did not look upon injustice as a defect of character. On the contrary, he said, "Justice is pursued by simpletons and leads to weakness". For him, people should pursue their own interest aggressively in a virtually unlimited form of self-assertion (Roger, 2007). By implication therefore, a just society where justice and equity is guaranteed is not feasible as it will encourage laziness.

Furthermore, he regards justice as the interest of the stronger and believed that might is right, for laws are made by the ruling party for its own interest. Hence, he defined law as what is right and is the same in all states with the same meaning as the interest of the party established in power. Graubard affirms that, "what is right is the same everywhere, the interest of the stronger party" (Graubard, 1989). That is the reduction of morality to power, an inevitable logical consequence of the progressive radicalism of the sophists, which led them to a nihilistic attitude toward truth and ethics.

For the fact that most Nigerian leaders seem not regard karma they act and lead with impunity – amass wealth for themselves and family members to the detriment of general good of the greater majority.

In the words of Itse Sagay, Resource control means "a state's exclusive right to the ownership and control of resources, both natural and created, within its territory" (Vanguard, 2001). This campaign was led by the governments and other organizations of the oil-producing states. Youth organizations added militancy to it. They did not achieve resource control, but got other concessions, mainly a political settlement of the onshore-offshore controversy, the amnesty programme and the establishment of the Ministry of the Niger Delta. This matter has been dealt with by Okechukwu Okeke in his inaugural lecture when he discussed fiscal federalism. He made it clearer why achieving resource control was and remains problematic.

Advocates of restructuring are of the view that Nigeria is not practising true federalism, let alone fiscal federalism. Some of the advocates add that Nigeria practised "true federalism" during the First Republic. Thus, in the words of former External Affairs minister, Bolaji Akinyemi, "the provisions of the Independence Constitution were clear: the regions controlled their resources and surrendered only a percentage to the federal government". In their view, in a true federal system, states have ownership and legislative powers over mineral resources (resource control). Thus, according to them, the system of revenue allocation whereby state governments troop every month to Abuja to receive money from the federal government is totally contrary to the principle and practice of federalism. Rather than the federal government being a "feeding bottle" for the states, the states should collect revenue and pay taxes to the federal government. They are convinced that, because states depend on the federation account for the bulk of their revenue, state governments have become lazy, and unlike the regional governments of the First Republic, are no longer competing with one another to develop their various states.

A just Nigerian state can only evolve when the law of karma is taken into consideration. Each state must be prepared to develop the resources within her environment with the mind set of reaping from what they sow rather waiting to reap from where they did not sow.

The Universal Spiritual Law of Karma is 'as you give so you shall receive', or 'you reap what you sow'. Bad deeds and thoughts return to you, as do kind, thoughtful deeds. To the exact extent that you live these qualities, you will receive an equivalent back into your life, at some time. Karma is recorded and balanced. Loving thoughts, emotions, deeds and words are 'credits'. Negative ones are 'debits'. The Universe calls these up when we least expect it. With this in mind, it is expected that a just Nigerian state is possible when the law of karma is applied in the allocation of resources. Karma will also facilitate hard work among the various components of the Nigerian state bearing in mind that amount of input (resources) equals amount of output (reward).

## Conclusion

The agitation for a just Nigerian state is on the increase especially since the recent campaign for restructuring began. The Nigerian political space seems to be tensed since many groups have joined in the call for the restructuring of the Nigerian state. The researcher in this researched attempted to show that with the law of karma starring at the faces of Nigerian leaders, then a just Nigerian state would be attained.

Without karma the world is just meaningless chaos. Karma is real in the sense that it brings meaning to the world. It brings to us the fundamental truth of nature namely you reap what you sow and that all suffering is a cleansing of your soul and is meant to expunge your record of all that is unworthy until you are pure enough to dissolve in the supreme. With this in view, a just Nigerian society is achievable.

The Hindu concept of karma is an attempt to explain the "whys" of the world. Karma, in short, means that your deeds are your capital which in time yield results according to the deeds. Sometimes your deeds fructify in your present life some other times they fructify in your next life or the life after. With the mindset of retribution of sorts for every act, the society can be just when leaders take cognizance of the above analysis.

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