

NEGLECT OF MORALITY IN THE QUEST FOR TRUE REVOLUTION IN NIGERIA: A PHILOSOPHICAL INTERROGATION

By

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ABSTRACT

It is evident that the Nigeria State is rapidly degenerating to the State of irredeemable decay and the quest for revolution, becoming rapidly inevitable. The burden of this paper lies in the interrogation of the continuous neglect of morality in the quest for true revolution in Nigeria, owing to the fact that every sector of life in the country is in need of massive moral purification, which came to context as a result of massive corruption. It is necessary to raise up some pertinent questions here: what is revolution? What is corruption? Who is corrupt in Nigeria? Can a corrupt fight corruption? What is morality? Can one fight for revolution without being morally upright? Can Nigeria become an ideal society without moral re-orientation of the citizens and the application of this morality in all sectors of life activity? Our contention in this paper is that in a Country like Nigeria which is witnessing corruption and irregularities in every sector of life, self-moral revolution should be the first step towards making a quest for socio-political revolution.

Keywords: Morality, Revolution, Nigeria Situation, Mental Reorientation.

Introduction

The neglect of the impact of morality in the quest for true revolution tends to highlight something that an average Nigeria has been ignorant of, whenever they are pouring their disappointments about the current situation of the Nigeria State. It is evident that an average Nigerian is totally disappointed in the system and the headline of the daily papers is replete with the quest of taking over by the poor from the elites this irreparable system. With each and every day passing, every Nigerian is giving up on every possible hope, and this increases the inevitability of the quest for revolution.

The central focus of this paper is on moral reorientation of the people of Nigeria, because, it is in the heart of everyone that the true revolution takes place, and without moral reorientation of the self, no section of the people has the moral right to preach about revolution. This is because every one of us in Nigeria has contributed in one way or the other in the destruction of the dignity of our Nation. Therefore, in order to achieve our aim, we shall first of all try to explain our understanding of morality. Secondly, we shall also explain what revolution is all about and, then, narrow it down to the direction we

mean to use it in this work. Thirdly, we shall highlight the need for moral reorientation among our people. And lastly, it will be so pertinent to portray the impacts and benefits of “morality” in the quest of achieving a true revolution.

Conceptual Analysis of the Key Terms

Emphasis here, shall be on overview of the various discusses of the concepts like; Nigeria, morality, revolution, orientation and moral reorientation.

Nigeria

Nigeria is one of the 54 countries that constitute the continent of Africa. It is located on the western part of Africa. The name "Nigeria" emerged as a result of the amalgamation of the two different autonomous geographical entities known as the Northern and Southern Protectorates by the then British Governor General, Federick, Lord Luggard in the year 1914. The name Nigeria was coined by the then mistress to Lord Luggard named Flora Shaw. She obtained the name Nigeria from the two famous Rivers; Niger and Benue, which met at the confluence town Lokoja in the then Benue State. Nigeria existed, and experienced both the positive and negative attitudes of the British colonial masters guided by several constitutions like, the Clifford constitution, Littleton constitution, MacPherson constitution to mention but a few. Nigeria assumed her full sovereignty and independence on the 1st of October 1960 with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe being appointed as the governor general. Then, in the year 1963, Nigeria became a Republic, with the first election conducted, and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe emerged the winner and became the first President of Nigeria under the then National Council of Nigeria and Cameron(N.C.N.C) party platform, with about three regional governments viz: the northern, eastern, and western regional states. The post colonial Nigeria experienced a lot of political crisis which prompted the military take over from the then democratic government via series of coup'd'etats. The first military coup erupted around 1965/1966 when Major. General Aguiyi Ironsi emerged as the first military leader. The second coup, however, came as a result of the bloody revolution masterminded by Major General Aguiyi Ironsi, the first military head of state. This caused the lives of many prominent political leaders while sparing the life of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. The second coup'd'tat that brought in General Yakubu Gowon as the head of state from 1966 to 1975 was the result of the annoyance by the northern elites against the Aguiyi Ironsi political leadership massacre that spared Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. General Muritala Muhamed took over the government from Yakubu Gowon but was eliminated by Dinka, who later, was arraigned and killed too. Olusegun Obasajo assumed the military headship in 1976, and handed over the mantle of leadership to the civilian/democratic government to Alahaji Shehu Shagari as the president of the 2nd republic of Nigeria in 1979. The Shagari regime lingered up to 1983 under the auspices of the then "National Party of Nigeria (N.P.N)". There was another military take

over towards the end of 1983 by General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. Babangida ruled until the 3rd republic in 1993, when another civilian election was conducted, and M.K.O Abiola won the Presidential seat, but the result was annulled on 12th of June 1993. Following suit, General Sanni Abacha overthrew the government of Babangida, and thus ruled and died in the process of succeeding himself around 1998. The death of Abacha paved way for the then secretary to the Federal government, Ernest Shonekan to manage the government which he later handed over to Abudulsalam Abubakar as the interim head of Nigeria state. Abudulsalami conducted the Nigeria 4th republic election that brought Major General Olusegun Obasanjo to Presidential seat the second time. President Obasanjo ruled and handed over the government to late President Umaru Musa Yara'dua in 2007. Though, death cut short Yara'dua's leadership, but the remaining periods were completed by his vice, President Goodluck Jonathan. Goodluck Jonathan assumed his own seat as an elected President from 2011, and then handed over to the incumbent President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari in 2015.

Morality

The term morality can be traced to the Latin word "Moralis" which literally refers to manner, character and proper behavior. It is the differentiation of intentions, desires and actions between those that are proper and improper. When we talk about morality says Ezeani (1987), "it could mean the body of standard principles derived from a code of conduct from particular Philosophy, religion or culture. It could also be said to be derived from a standard that a person believes should be universal and synonymous with "Goodness" or "Rightness" of behavior."

Moving forward to pin-point the context in which this paper intends to portray, it is pertinent to note that morality can be understood in two different senses that is morality in the descriptive sense and morality in its Normative Sense.

In its descriptive sense, morality can be referred to the personal or cultural values, codes of conducts or social norms from a society that provides these codes of conduct in which it applies and is accepted by an individual. Morality as we mean here, doesn't connote with objective claims of right or wrong, but only refers to that which is considered right or wrong. In a nut shell, morality in its descriptive sense simply refers to certain codes of conduct put forward by a society or a group (Such as religion) or accepted by an individual for her own behavior.

Furthermore, in its normative sense, morality refers to whatever (if anything) is actually right or wrong, which may be independent of the values or moves held by any particular people or culture. Therefore, morality in its normative sense refers to a code of conduct

that gives specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational persons. With that being said, morality in this sense is objective and in its applied sense, it interrogates one's thought whenever the time calls for distinguishing between the good and the bad, and the best way to go about every human action. Therefore, this is the sense of morality this paper tends to mean.

Revolution

However, in order to incorporate the word "revolution" into this paper, it is apparent that the word instead of evoking a positive understanding in the minds of most people causes some certain dreadful paralysis. That is, it always provokes a state of uneasiness to some people, including some intellectuals. The term revolution is derived from the Latin word - "revolution". This word brings so much discomfort to some political leaders and the wealthy elites. Little will you wonder why the people without any doubt, have developed natural tendency of associating or equating "revolution" with anarchy or violence. Many others perceive it to mean a bloody revolt aimed at exterminating the rich and politicians. That's why most people perceive folks called Revolutionaries in the society as supporters of violent radicalism and advocates of violent measures for the economic and political liberation of the people.

Furthermore, in explaining what revolution is, it's necessary we clarify the question that always stems up in the minds of the readers whenever the word revolution is used. With that being said, one will ask if revolution is synonymous with anarchy and violence. Are these necessary components of revolutionary conduct? Is coup'd'tat a revolution?

"The voice of the revolutionary speaks of the violence of oppressive and unjust policies" and so, as a result of different misconceptions involved in many people's understanding of the word, it behooves in this paper to explain what this provocative term actually means. And since the word is more often than not used in this paper, our intention is treating it so as to disabuse the mis-educated mind of their prejudices regarding the term revolution.

Sociologically, revolution implies, first and foremost, unique change, a transformation of unprecedented magnitude. And so, seeming non-pejorative terms for revolutionaries are either liberals or progressives. Revolution here challenges the status-quo, the societal collective goals, values and ideologies. It shakes the fundamental structures of the society with a view to progressive replacements. No wonder Jurgen Moltami (1969), when asked, what is revolution? Replied, "I understand revolution to mean a transformation in the foundations of a system, be it of economics, of politics, of morality or of religion. All other changes amount to evolution or reform."

Therefore, pre-revolution periods, are the times when the expectations of revolution are being expressed and revolutionary ideas widely discussed. This can be said to be the case of Nigeria people. Again revolutionary periods are the times for social re-creation. They're the times when minds perturbed by human misery think less of bodily comfort and engage more on mental revolutionary expedition and discovery.

An authentic revolution aims towards the emancipation of the whole society and it is carried out by the people with common ideal. Therefore, what may be called violent revolution may result only from contumacy to the revolutionary principle. Violence accompanying certain revolution is not necessarily the direct result of the latter. For in the words of John F. Kennedy(1962), "those who make peaceful change impossible, make violent change inevitable. That is to say, if we accept violence as excessive, unrestrained or unjustifiable force, there is no justifiable reason to identify violence with revolution.

Revolution, according to Paulo(1982),"reflects the replacement of the old system of social living with a new order. Having been fed up by the way the system haven't been good for the general will, a taking over which is in compliance to the general will, is what revolution is all about."

Elaborating more, Paulo (1982) said,"a revolution is achieved with neither verbalism nor activism but rather with praxis that is with reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed."

Revolution has become significance as Paulo (1982) noted that, "in the process of revolution, men in communion liberate each other. According to him, liberating each other means that while the haves are liberated from being drowned in the suffocating depth of wealth, the poor are equally liberated from the agony of want."

"Revolution, therefore, cannot be reduced to an outbreak of violence or a seizure of power. It implies first and foremost, the withdrawal of collective assent to the existing social system. Revolution according to Houtart (1971),involves"arapid application of new mental patterns in institutions of laws and political organizations."

Therefore, from the above consideration, it becomes clear that more military take-over are no revolutions even if all the political incumbents were killed, yet, revolutionary process may begin with the political incumbents.

However, for any revolution to be relative to the course of the total emancipation of the people, it must begin by firstly leveling the faulty foundation upon which the society is built. Such revolution must be conducted by men who are sincerely committed to the

revolutionary phenomenon, in relation to political change; we must make a clear distinction between a revolution and a coup d'etat or a palace revolution. Men who are morally sound, with the interest of the people as supreme.

No wonder Iroegbu (1984), in his quest to clearly differentiate between revolution and coup d'etatsaid, "A true revolution is not primarily concerned with the removal or replacement of the incumbents... this is the fate of Nigeria's power struggle and this so far accounts for her dismal failure. Nigeria's own has seen movements of 'revolution' or take-over that have preserved the very structural defects which it sets out to eradicate. So, the chain of failures enjoys continuity." With these being said, it portrays what a true revolution should be and not having to be about selfish people with zero interest of the general well being, but rather, fighting for the emancipation of the people.

Impact of Morality in the Quest for Change

It is evident that every sector of life activity in Nigeria is infected with corruption; hence the severe need for reparation. However, our political and economic sector made it possible for the virus of corruption to spread properly to every sector. This paper which gears towards highlighting the neglect of morality in quest of true revolution can't be complete without portraying the impact of morality in quest for change.

First of all, it is pertinent to note that our failed system has done to us more harm than we can ever comprehend. Every of its effects on us is a subliminal one. That is, its effects have damaged us much even without our consciousness. That is why here in Nigeria; abnormal things are not seen as abnormal anymore, meaning that we live our abnormal lives with every justification. With that been said, one can understand that abnormalities have become virtuous because we live comfortably with it. A popular Nigerian slang will say "Na naija we dey, wetin you want you go get" which literally means (We are in Nigeria and whatever you want, you will get). Whatever you want, you can get is so evident because you can actually and easily get whatever you want here in Nigeria, so far as you have the money and connections, even without having what it takes, you will definitely succeed in having your way. That is why the rich keeps oppressing the poor because they have gotten the wealth and power. They control all of the law enforcement agencies and even, turn the Judiciary which supposed to be the last hope of common man against the common man. It is so because these drugselites have weaponized poverty, that with little peanut given to the oppressed, they tend to have their way to everything they want.

Why is there much need for moral re-orientation? One can say it's because we now see abnormalities as normal. Only few can actually spot what is wrong in the way things are

being done, and most times the few that speak against these irregularities are now being persecuted. Therefore, it has become a mental war. In a song by J.Cole (2017), he made a statement which can also be likened to the case with Nigeria. Thus, he sang;

Think about this for a second, you heard the way the
children in abusive households grow up knocking
girlfriends out cold, that's called a cycle where the
abused becomes abuser and that's just how life go.

Linking the above lyric to our Nigeria State, it explains what we said earlier about how the bad system has damaged our thoughts even without our consciousness. And without a moral reorientation before revolution, we would witness, a new system but however, the cycle of oppression in us will end up bringing to us, a leader who will over the time turn out to be like our previous oppressors. Because the system's bad effect on us is a subliminal one, we tend to still be blind at our abnormalities and irregularities.

Because of these long ignored mental abnormalities in us, little will you believe less when someone says that an average Nigerian is corrupt in one way or the other and with this undeniable fact, It becomes self-deception when we scream we want a revolution. It is self-deception because we don't have the moral right to seek for a change in status-quo. This is self-deception because we are all products of a corrupt and abnormal system and if without "moral re-orientation", which can mean rethink, unlearning the abnormalities which we have over the years been living with and entertaining, there can't be a true revolution.

A revolution without moral re-orientation will also bring in leaders that are also victims of the corrupt system and hereby, posing a bigger risk of the cycle J. Cole referred in his song, that is the new leaders will still entertain so many abnormalities which we have been living with.

The Need for Moral Re-orientation Among the People

We can have a look back at the history which has given a foundation to the understanding that things do not change overnight without the proper reaction from the people. J.Cole (2017) also sang;

Here I'm giving out the thoughts of my revolutionary heart
and if we take a deeper look at the history, it is there to pick
apart. It is apparent that the people at the top do what they

want, till the people after a while become smart and then start to holla "Revolution" Tired of living in destitution, enough of that looting! Can you tell what the best solution is? I used to think it was to just overthrow oppressors, see, if we destroy the system, that means we'll have less greed, but see, it's not always that simple, thinking about the history of human nature, then, realized something that made me wonder if revolution was ever the way, because power that corrupts might still affect the new revolutionary leaders.

In this above lyrics, you can understand that it is not enough to scream revolution when we are still morally unworthy. Because any leader that emanates from it will still become a big risk, because the ways of the oppressors which have been prevailing, might still catch up with the new revolutionary leaders, living the society at large to suffer more.

Therefore, the moral question we all should answer subjectively is, of what good is the revolution we are seeking without being morally upright going to be? However, in quest to answer the moral interrogation, it's pertinent to note that the real and true revolution happens right inside of us. Working towards correcting our short-comings individually, unleashing the fallacies in which we have long lived with and accepting that a new Nigeria can only begin with our individual mental and moral reorientations. With these achieved, a revolution in Nigeria will not only attract spirited and resolute individuals, but will witness in its end, a true and fruitful revolution which will not only benefit us, but our generations to come.

Benefits of Morality in the Quest of True Revolution

Firstly, the benefits of morality in quest of true revolution can be seen in the way every one of us has fixed up his/her lives and can collectively challenge the system that has been bad to us over the years.

Secondly, having morally fixed up our lives, we can have true revolutionaries that we can trust to lead our quest towards taking over from the bad system.

Thirdly, because we are all products of our thoughts, having morally fixed up our lives, we can confidently select our leaders without fear of bringing in the people that can be bended by the sweetness and immunities of power as the previous oppressive leaders do.

Fourthly, morality can as well enhance an enabling society with better thinking citizens.

With this, it becomes easy for the leaders to carry out their task of leadership.

Lastly, the next generation will emerge to inherit a better society by which the history of how the people fought for the emancipation from the oppressors will be there for them to learn that power truly belongs to people.

Conclusion

Morality is the foundation upon which the judgment of the human behavior is built. Morality as the value oriented philosophy questions the rightness and wrongness of the human conducts as they affect the progress and stability of the society. Morality, moral law or moral philosophy as it implies is the part of natural law in humans which they use to distinguish between good and bad behaviors and prescribe what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. It is the bedrock upon which the positive/manmade law operates. Cut off from morality says Emedo (2010), "mankind will automatically turn to beast society characterized by brutality, predatory, and survival of the fittest." The theme of this work centers on "the neglect of morality in quest for true revolution in Nigeria". Revolution is a fundamental and relatively sudden change in political power, political organization which occurs when the people revolts against the government typically due to perceived bad governance and oppression. Oppression, however, could be political, social or economic. There have been diverse questions whether all revolutionary acts should be termed violent? And whether coup'd'tat is a revolution? Revolution could be violent and non violent. Violent revolution involves killings and blood flow while non violent doesn't involve waste of life, though the two involve forcefully overthrow of leadership for the public good. The truth of the matter is that coup'd'tat, whether bloody or not, unarguably is not revolution because the leadership power is taken by force for personal interest. Coup'd'tat sometimes is propelled by power intoxication. We should think for instance the French revolution that lasted for the period of 10 years, from 1789-1799, the American Revolution that separated England North American colonies from Great Britain and led to the formation of the United States of America, these, however, were human freedom oriented. The Nigerian coup'd'tat of the year 1966 was truly bloody yet, it wasn't a revolution because of the selfish motive attached to it. Nigeria, being the point of discourse here has experienced series of coup'd'tat as given example above. Yet, Nigerians have not for once enjoyed any better change; rather, life experience becomes more tedious every day. The questions, however, are; why is it that things deteriorate in Nigeria every day? What is the cause of all these problems? Is Nigeria cursed or are we the cause? Nigerians are agitating for revolution due to bad governance and oppression. But, is revolution possible in Nigeria? If not, what could prompt the impossibility? The uncontested truth is that Nigeria as a body isn't cursed; rather, we Nigerians are the cause of the problems. Imagine the country where both leaders and the led are corrupt, what can a person with good conscience expect to happen there? There is what the writer tagged overt corruption in Nigeria. All sectors of life activity in Nigeria are affected with corruption. Hence the possibility of accomplishing the revolution which we Nigerians are yearning for is not near, because, a corrupt cannot fight corruption. Moral practice in

Nigeria is a lip talk. How could the yearning for revolution be possible when our relatives are occupying the governmental positions, and we the led are also corrupt? If at all revolution could be possible in Nigeria, moral rule which states that human beings should always do well and avoid evil should be embraced without sentiments. And Nigerians should be morally reoriented.

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