

EXPATIATING THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM, AS CONTAINED IN *SURATULA-BAQARAH*, VERSES TWO TO FIVE; A DIRECTION TO INTRA-RELIGIONS UNDERSTANDING AMONGS MUSLIMS

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Abstract: *This paper tends to examine the exegesis of the first five verses of Suuratul-Baqarah, to explain the fundamental principles of Islam in order to establish the concept of intra Religious understanding amongst various Islamic sects. It has been observed that sectarianism as a result of theological dissension is causing havoc to the unity of Muslims, and seriously affecting the concept of peaceful co-existence as stated by Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet. Significantly, this paper expresses intra-Religious understanding amongst the Muslims with fundamental principles in the first five verses of Suuratul-Baqarah as unifying factors. The exegeses of various Scholars of the Qur'an and the views of other Muslim Scholars accord this work a qualitative methodology that explores archival documents and intellectual Books. Thus, giving space to all theological ideologies and cultures would be a panacea to the problem of sectarianism and theological dissension amongst Muslims. The fundamental principles of Islam, serve as factors that can be upheld as point of unity rather than chaotic individualism.*

Keywords: *Exegesis, Fundamental, Principles, Intra-Religious, Theology, Dissension*

Introduction

Sectarianism has generated a lot of differences among the Muslims; it has created polarity that seriously destroying the unity of Muslims in different part of the world. Sectarianism is the division of Muslims into different factions with different theology that even resulted into political ideology. The problems lie on the belief uphold by many of these different groups that one is more superior to the other. Some believes that their doctrines are the best and they are better Muslims than the other. These sets of people, for instance the *Wahabism-Salafiya* order, are dogmatic with series of misinterpretation of Qur'an and *Hadith* in order to back up their creed. Meanwhile, most of things creating problems are mostly theological which Islamically is varied base on society, tradition and circumstance, more so, the problem also emanates, in many cases, from socio-political differences. Therefore, it is clear that there is no discord in the fundamental principles of Islam which this paper tends to examine for intra-religious understanding among the Muslims. The main Islamic concept is that the whole universe was created by the Almighty Allah, the Lord and Sovereign of the universe (Qamar, 2018). Islam stands for complete submission and obedience to Allah, and the Almighty Allah prescribes certain code of life as the correct and perfect for mankind but at the same time conferred upon man freedom of choice as to whether or not he adopts this code as actual basis of his life activities.

This paper tends to examine the exegesis of Qur'an 2, verses 2-5, to define the fundamental principles of Islam, so as to establish the concept of intra-Religious understanding amongst various Islamic sects. It explains the meaning of sectarianism and its inception among the Muslims. The paper expatiates the views of scholars on verses two to five of *Suruatul-Baqara*, how can the facts extract from exegeses of these verses be used as a means of intra-Religious understanding among the Muslims, and what are the benefits of intra-Religious understanding

for the Muslims in a particular community. Significantly, the crux of this work is to establish an Islamic idea of tolerance in order to maintain peaceful co-existence among the Muslims, and to create room for unity and conglomeration rather than chaotic individualism. The teachings in the fundamental principles of Islam, as stated in the two to five verses of Qur'an chapter two should always be the focus of various Muslims, irrespective of sects, politics or ideology. This will ensure unity as one *Ummah* and tolerating one another, despite the differences in theological creed and will stimulate love, peace and tranquility in any Islamic community. Thus, creating discord, fighting, abusing and, confrontation is not Islamic and should be expunged among the Muslims and the way to eradicate all these problems is by intra-religious understanding among the Muslims.

Aims and Objective

The need to strengthen Muslim brotherhood and work on the unity of *Ummah* is sacrosanct. This paper aims at providing the exegeses of Qur'an chapter two verses two to five to expatiate the fundamental principles of Islam in order to establish the doctrines of intra-religious understanding among the Muslims in a particular society. This will create peaceful co-existence and harmonious inter relationship among various sects of Muslims around the World.

Methodology

This work is library based with qualitative methodology. It explores various archival document and views of different Islamic scholars on the subject matter. It aims at discovering the underlying motives and desires, using in depth analysis of academic materials. This is also important in the behavioural sciences where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behaviour (Kothari, 2004).

Sectarianism among Muslims

Sectarianism is a political or cultural conflict between two groups often related to the form of government they live under. Prejudice, discrimination, or hatred can arise in these conflicts depending on the political status quo and if one group holds more power within the government(<https://www.en.m.wikipedia.org>). In Islam the meaning of sectarianism is different; this is due to the fact that Islam does not debar members of a particular sect to worship in the same mosque and behind the Imams of other Muslim sects or factions. The fact remains that Islam as a unique religion, does not preach division, rather, Qur'an says: "verily, this community of yours is a single community" (Q 21:92). Thus, most divisions in Islam are based on theological issues and trivialities. This is because all Muslims believe and practice the basic and fundamental aspect of their religion (Abdul-Ganiy, 2001). The views of many Scholars, despite the notion of a unified and consolidated community, as taught by the Prophet Muhammad, serious differences arose within the Muslim community immediately after his death (<https://www.britannica.com>). While other Scholars believe that disagreement between human beings is natural and trace the origin of disagreement among Muslims to the Prophet's time (Abdul-Ganiy, 2001).

Abdul-Ganiy (2001) revealed that there was a kind of internal opposition against the political headship of the Prophet in Medina. Abdullah ibn Ubayy, a Madinite of Khazraj's Banu Hubba, and a Muslim, used to show his hatred to the *Mahajirun*, including the Prophet for their domination of the real indigenes of Madinah (the *Ansar*). A clear example of this hatred became manifest during the battle of *Uhud* in which Ibn Ubayy led a group (known as *Munafiqun*), who deserted other Muslim Army in that fierce battle. Another instance of Ibn Ubayyi group's opposition to the Prophet and *Muhajirun* was his malignant address to some

Ansar at Muraysi during the campaign of *Banu Mustaliq* in which he advised the *Ansar* to deny the *Muhajirun* all privileges so that the latter would leave and seek somebody else's help. When the hypocritical address got to the Prophet and other *Sahabas*, 'Umar suggested that Bilal should be sent to kill him but the Prophet rejected the suggestion (2001). The implication of the Ubayy's opposition was due to political envy of his group on the occupation or domination by *Muhajirun* on the indigenes (*Ansar*), which later became an implication on the early Muslims as the first sect in Islam based on political conflicts.

Although there are facts about the leadership tussle immediately after the death of the Prophet. The first factions, the *Ansar*, advanced reason that when the Makkah's rejected their own son (the Prophet), they (the *Ansar*) accepted, supported, and hosted him and all his followers. The Prophet lived in their town. Based on this argument, they are qualified to produce *Khalifah*. The second faction, the *Muhajirun*, base their argument on the facts that they were the first to be converted to Islam, the most respected of the Arabs (*Quraysh*), the nearest in relation to the Prophet and the first to suffer for the cause of Islam. The third faction, the supporter of Ali ibn Abi Talib was of the argument that Ali was the closest relation of the Prophet who really cared for the Prophet. He was a boy of ten years when he had been living with the Prophet. His mother was Fatimah, an aunt of the Prophet and his wife was also Fatimah, the only surviving child of the Prophet and he was third person to accept Islam (2001). Though Abu Bakr was later elected as the first *Khalifah*, but the point is that all the argument became theological ideology for the process of choosing a leader in Islamic doctrine which can be adopted base on the society or circumstances.

Generally, it is widely accepted that aftermath of the battle of *Siffin* led to the emergence of theological dissention from which sectarianism gain its ground in Islam even till date. The chronology and the nature of the events which followed the battle of *Siffin* are among the most disputed points in the early Islamic history (Francesco, 1968). Ali was disqualified by his own representative, he was tricked by the greater cunning of his adversary 'Amr ibn Al-'As, who himself declared *Mu'awiya* worthy of the *Khalifah*. Theological dissention obviously emerged from the battle of *Siffin*. Instead of the single block which Islam had formed under the first three *Khalifahs*, it was divided into three factions, who were to fight and still fighting one another; firstly, an orthodox majority, who accepted the new *khalifah*, and later the new dynastic State, with burning loyalty or at least with pious repugnance for schism. Secondly a minority, the *Shi'a*, who remained faithfully to the memory and claim of 'Ali and to the "house" or family of Muhammad as represented by his descendants who dedicated to this legitimism a fanatical devotion and a capacity for intrigue and trouble-making which might have been more useful to 'Ali while he was alive. Lastly, the numerically insignificant but politically extremely active *Kharijite* dissidents, opposed to any form of legitimism and to any dynastic or racial privilege. They proclaimed the equal right to the *Khalifah* of any Muslim possessing the right of qualification, even an 'Abyssinian slave, and were as ready to shed the blood of fellow Muslims as that of infidels, and to throw away their own lives in rebellion and guerilla fighting (1968).

In view of this, sectarianism emerges as a result of religious dissention which was the aftermath of battle of *Siffin*. The emergence of the orthodox Muslim (*Sunni*), the *Shi'a* and the *Kharijites* came up with their different theological doctrines that subsequently became political ideology. There emerge various other sects, born out of these first three; *Murjites*, *Qadarites*, *Jabarites*, *Mu'tazilites*, *Ash'arites*, and many others till date. All these sects uphold their theological doctrines, claiming superiority with different points and facts in the Holy Qur'an to back up their creed. Meanwhile, most of the factors responsible for the emergence of sects in Islam is

as a result of tribal or racial superiority, ambiguous nature of some Qur'anic verses, differences in the understanding of *Hadith* and fabrications of *Hadith*, differences in the application of *Qiyas* and most importantly, political interest. The concern of this work is not to examine these factors but to buttress the understanding that sectarianism was born out of theological doctrines in Islam that later metamorphosed into socio-political ideology and in most cases, does not have anything to do with the fundamental principles, which are the basic rudiment of Islamic religion.

Fundamental Principles in Verses Two to Five of *Suuratul-Baqarah*

The verses read thus:

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah. Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them, And who believe in what has been revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain [in faith]. Those are upon [right] guidance from their Lord, and it is those who are the successful.

People often wonder about the meaning of first verse of *Suuratul-Baqara*, *Alif*, *Lam*, *Mim*. No one is certain about the truth that can be ascribe to the meaning of these letters, any particular meaning that these letters might have is known only to Allah. According to ibn 'Abbas (2008), *Alif* stands for Allah, *Lam* for His kindness (*Lutfuh*) and *Mim* for His dominion (*Mulku*). "This is the scripture, whereof there is no doubt, a guidance into those who ward off evil" (Q. 2:2). This is the Book Muhammad is reciting to you (the Qur'an), there is no doubt that it has come from Me (Allah), if you believe in it, I shall guide you, but if you do not believe in it, I will torment you. Whereof there is no doubt, means there is no doubt that the description and traits of Muhammad are found in the Torah and Gospel, which no doubt a guidance into those who ward off evil, thus, Qur'an is an exposition for those who ward off disbelief, associating partners with Allah and indecencies, it also means a favour to the believers, or that it means a mercy unto those who ward off evil. "Who believe in the unseen and establish worship and spend of that we have bestowed upon them" (Q. 2:3). Ibn Abbas (2008) refer "who believe in the unseen" to that which is hidden from them such as Paradise, Hell, the bridge over Hell, the Scale, the Resurrection, the Reckoning, etc. It is said that this means that they believe in the unseen which is revealed in the Qur'an and also in that which is not revealed therein, the unseen also means Allah himself. They believe in the unseen and they perform to completion the five prescribed prayers, including the ablution that precedes them, the bowing and prostrations which are parts of them and also what is obligated in these prayers in terms of appointed timing. "Spend of that we have bestowed upon them and of that which we have given them of wealth they give to charity," means they give the poor-due (*Zakat*) from their wealth (2008).

"And who believe in that which is revealed into you (Muhammad) and that which was revealed before you, and are certain of the Hereafter" (Q. 2:4), what was revealed into you (Muhammad) means the Glorious Qur'an and what was revealed before you refer to the Scriptures given to all the Prophets. They believe in resurrection after death and in the bliss of Paradise. These depend on guidance from their Lord. "These are the successful" (Q. 2:5), those who have these traits are of guidance from their Lord, they enjoy favour, mercy and clear exposition that has come down from their Lord, and these are the successful ones. The ones who shall escape Allah's wrath and torment, it is also said that this refers to those who have apprehended and

found what they were seeking and have escaped the evil of that from which they were fleeing and these are the companions of Muhammad (2008).

Seyyid Qutb (1995) in his view of Qur'an 2:2, said once a man's heart is filled with the fear of God, he will benefit by the Qur'an. Fear and consciousness of God is the quality that opens one's mind to the true guidance contained in the Qur'an and allows it to have its proper effect on one's life. It is the factor that causes one's heart and mind to become sensitive and receptive to God's guidance and enables one to respond to His call and His instruction. In Qur'an 2:3-4, According to Seyyid Qutb, the most essential quality of the God fearing believers is their conscious, active, moral unity that enriches their souls with profound belief in the imperceptible, or *ghayb*, dedication to their religious obligations, recognition of all God's messengers, and unshakeable certainty in the hereafter. Such are the ingredients that make the Muslim faith a complete whole and distinguishes believers from unbelievers, such a thorough outlook is worthy of God's final message to man, which was intended as a focus and guide for all human endeavour on this earth. Man is called upon to adopt this message and lead a complete and wholesome life, guided by its light which shapes man's feelings, actions, beliefs and ways of living and behaviour. Thus, these are "those follow their Lord's guidance, and they shall surely prosper" (Verse 5): indeed, they adhered to God's guidance and they were successful. Those who wish to follow in their footsteps, the route remains clearly marked (1995).

Maududi (2019) explain that "this is the Book which contains nothing doubtful", is not like the common books on metaphysics and religion which are based on mere speculation and guesswork. The first pre-requisite to benefit from the Qur'an is that one should be a *Muttaqi*, (One who fear Allah), discriminates between good and evil and intends to be righteous, while the second condition for obtaining guidance from the Qur'an is that one must believe in the "unseen". Those are the things which cannot be perceived by the senses and which do not come within human experience and observation. Thirdly, one should be willing and ready to put into practice the teachings of the Qur'an. *As-Salat* is the practical proof and permanent test of the sincerity of one's faith. After a person's profession of Islam, the moment he hears the call to prayer, which sounds regularly five times a day, he should join the congregation. This determines his sincerity in Islam. Fourthly, one should be willing to part with one's money according to the instructions of the Book in order to render the rights of Allah and Man. Those who do not believe in any kind of guidance from Allah, cannot benefit from this Book. Thus, the fifth condition is that one must believe not only in the Qur'an but also in the truth of all the Books which were revealed to the Messengers of Allah at different times in different places. Maududi stated the sixth condition, according to Qur'an in 2:4, to be the belief in the Life-after-death with all its implications, (a) man is responsible and answerable to Allah for all his actions and deeds (b) This world is not everlasting, but will come to an end (c) Allah alone knows the time when the other world will be created in the Hereafter and when all human beings without exception, shall be brought back to life together to render and account of their actions to Allah, who will reward each and everyone according to his deeds (d) Those who will be judged as good by Allah, will go to paradise and those who will be declared as bad shall be sent to Hell (e) Success or failure, therefore should not be measured by the yard-stick of prosperity or poverty in this worldly life, this will be decided by Allah on the Day of Judgment. These are the people that will benefit from the guidance of the Qur'an and such people are on the right way from their Lord and such are truly successful (2019).

Hidayah (Guidance) is only granted to those who have fear of Allah. Ibn Kathir (2003) views "guidance for the *Muttaqin*" to mean those believers who avoid shirk with Allah and who

work in His obedience. Ibn Kethir accepted different explanations of *Salafas* to the meaning *Al-Ghayb* and explain the meaning of *Salat* in the Arabic language to be supplication but in religious terminology, *Salat* is used to refer to the acts of bowing, prostration, and the remaining specified acts associated with it, specified at certain times, with those known conditions and the characteristics and requirements that are well-known about it. “And spend out of what we have provided for them”, means a man’s spending on his family, this was before the obligation of *Zakat* was revealed. He describes verse four to means they believe in what Allah sent you (Muhammad) with, and in what the previous Messengers were sent with, they do not distinguish between (believing) them, nor do they reject what He brought from their Lord. “They are”, in the fifth verse, refers to those who believe in the unseen, establish the prayer, spend from what Allah has granted them, believe in what Allah has revealed to the Messenger and the Messengers before him, believe in the thereafter with certainty and prepare the necessary requirement for the thereafter by performing good deeds and avoiding the prohibitions. “On guidance” means they are following a light, guidance and have insight from Allah, “and they are the successful”, in this world and the Hereafter. They shall have what they seek and be saved from the evil that they tried to avoid. They will have rewards eternal life in paradise, and safety from the torment that Allah has prepared for His enemies. (2003).

The above *Tafasir* enumerated the fundamental principles of Islam that are generally accepted, irrespective of sect, creed, thought, believe or traditions. Although we have other basic doctrines of Islam, like fasting in the holy month of Ramadan (*Sawm*) and *Hajj*, the holy pilgrimage to Makkah and Madinah which are well explained in other chapters of the Qur’an, but the fact remains that all Muslims uphold to these fundamental principles and there is nothing like discrimination nor any sign of argument on these principles. As explained in the *Tafasir*, these principles make one to be a complete Muslim and it form nucleus of Islamic unity despite the diversities. Thus, these are the basic principles that can determine the authenticity of Islam in a particular person and not all other form of theological creeds or ideologies.

Intra religious understanding among Muslim

Islam places, automatically, the responsibility of safeguarding, preserving and defending the life, wealth, faith, image, and chastity of fellow believers by any means necessary on each and every Muslims (Hauwa & Abu-Bilaal, 2013). Qur’an says: “The believers are but a single Brotherhood: so make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy” (Q. 49:10). Also, according to the sayings of the holy Prophet Muhammad: The believer is the believer’s mirror and the believer is the believer’s brother who guards him against loss and protects him when he is absent (<https://www.sunnah.com>), in another *Hadith*, the Prophet said: Everything of a Muslim is sacred to a Muslim; his property, honour and blood. It is enough evil for any man to despise his brother Muslim (<https://www.sunnah.com>).

The connection between Muslim brotherhoods is of vital significant aspect of Islam. It defines the behaviour and feelings of the Muslims towards other Muslims and their involvement with one another especially with regards to their daily interaction (Hauwa & Abu-Bilaal, 2013). In view of Bello (2020), the Islamic body is divided into two distinct groups, the minority *Shi’ah* (supporters of Ali ibn Abu-Talib and Prophet’s family and the majority Sunni which means the orthodox Muslims. It is from these two distinct groups that *Ummah* is further polarised into different camps as a result of political, theological and doctrinal differences. In spite of all these differing attachments, Muslims are united by many institutions and factors such as *Iman*

(monotheistic belief), *Salat* (devotional worship), *Zakat* (compulsory charity), *Sawm* (Ramadan fasting) *Hajj* (holy pilgrimage), Qur'an, *Qibla* and so on. Virtually these factors were mentioned in Qur'an 2:1-5, and these factors of conglomeration and unification must engender tolerance, brotherhood and harmonious relationships amongst Muslim irrespective of different theological or political affiliations (2020).

Paramole (2015) explained the *Hadith* about a man that asked the prophet that: "if I perform the obligatory prayers, fast in Ramadan, treat as lawful that which is lawful and treat as forbidden that which is forbidden and do nothing further, I shall enter paradise, the prophet said: Yes" (2015). This simply means that anyone who sincerely believes in God, and performs perfectly all the obligatory duties stipulated in the fundamental principles of Islam, even though he does not engage in the performance of other voluntary duties and treats as lawful all the lawful things, treat as forbidden all the forbidden things, will be accorded with *Al-Jannah*. Thus, discussion of trivialities and non-manifestation issues, to cause disaffection amongst Muslims are manifestation of religious bigotry and should be discouraged. Therefore, sectarianism should not be a mechanism for rift among the Muslims, the attempt by some Muslim groups to re-convert fellow brethren in faith into their own theological perspectives, at times generates tension amongst the Muslims (2015). Meanwhile, this and many others have resulted into many disputes and open confrontations between different sects which are, absolutely, not in conformity with the doctrines of Islam.

An appraisal of the religious understanding among the Muslims

It is a known fact that Muslims Scholars do agree on all fundamental issues, it is only the small, subsidiary issues upon which there is disagreement. Scholars agree on the requirement of five daily prayers and its conditions; ritual purity of person, place, and clothing, most of the integrals of prayer itself and the conditions that validate and invalidate the prayer (Laurence, 2004). Meanwhile, scholarly disagreement does exist over some small, subsidiary issues, such as where Muslims should hold their hands while standing during prayer, how they should point their finger during sitting, whether the *Basmallah* (The first line of al-Fatiha, commonly translated to the meaning: In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful), should be recite silently or out loud, length of one's trousers and the likes. These are typical example of what is happening amongst the Muslims in their understanding of Religion as a result of sectarianism that is based mainly on trivialities. In many places, Scholars have lost their traditional religious understanding, a stratum of new Religious intellectuals have emerged, they acquired knowledge independently from different authorities and try to mobilize support against the political and religious establishment so as to enforce claim for leadership (Alexander, 2015). Thus, problems arise when one shows hatred towards other theological creed and consider his own above all (Hilal, Raihanah & Lee, 2015). This superiority complex gives birth to discord and chauvinism which are the main hurdles Muslims are facing in their religious understanding.

Islam appreciates good manners and respect the act of bowing, prostration and kneeling down is a system of greetings and respect in many traditions (Alawiye, 2020). However, *Ahlu Sunnah* sect refers these act of greeting to be shirt (associating partners with Allah), creating intellectual discord, family chaws, disrespect and enmity that has resulted into psychological damages amongst the Muslims in many societies, especially the Yoruba and Hausa people in Nigeria (2020). The *Salafiya/Wahabiyya* sect, vehemently oppose the celebration of *Maulid-Nabiyy* due to the fact that it was not prescribed by Allah or by the messenger of Allah, and celebrating is amount to disobedient to the command of Allah and His Prophet

(<https://www.islamqa.com>). Meanwhile, in Sufism and many other sects, approve the commemoration of the Prophet's birthday. Muslim rulers and intellectuals over time have come to accept it as part of the mental and emotional furniture of Muslim society (<https://www.tribuneonlineng.com>). The *sufi* orders worldwide, celebrate *Mawlid-Nabiyy* and were of the opinion that is not a departure from the mainstream and would argue such practices among believers is a living testimony that Muslims of their times are still faithful to the Qur'anic injunction: "O you who believe! Ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation (Q.33:56)". Another issue is the keeping of beards, in 2010, Hisbul-Islam militants in Somalia ordered men in Mogadishu to grow their beards and trim their moustaches, anyone found violating the law will face the consequences (<https://www.bbc.com>). The Taliban, who ruled Afghanistan until they were ousted in 2001, and the Islamists of Somalia, are among the minority in the Muslim world who demand unconditional observance of beard keeping, and threaten penalties for no-compliance. Different scholars have argued that all practicing Muslims should be free to exercise their choice over a matter about which there is no overall consensus of opinion, without fear of retribution. An Islamic scholars and one of the founders of the Muslim Council of Britain, Sayid, opined that beard keeping is not one of the compulsory pillars of Islam, like prayer or fasting (<https://www.bbc.com>), it is just an emulation of the Prophet which should be considered a recommendation rather than an obligation.

Meanwhile, solidarity and standing together are important and basic elements for constructing a sound united Islamic society (Khalida, 2015). The holy Prophet initiated the concept of *Ummah*, integrating individuals of different colours, races, ethnicities and social classes with equality into one united brotherhood. As the Islamic dominions expanded, this *Ummah* assumed, even a greater diversity bonds, the likes of which the world has never witnessed, the only criterion worth consideration was human righteousness (2015). But *Ummah* today is distributed into many sects and divisions; each one has severed its relations with the other due to theological differences. However, unity is the union of Islamic followers. The Islamic unity is the acceptance of mutual beliefs in the fundamental principles of Islam (Khairullah & Aliqullah, 2020). All Muslims are brother and have equal rights, they must live in light of Islamic Religion's principles and not pose faction among themselves and not separate from each other as says in the Qur'an; "without doubt, the believers are brother so make settlement between your brothers" (Q. 49:10).

Religious understanding among the Muslims has to do with the concept of unity in Islam. Qur'an says: "And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided" (Q. 3:103). This means Muslims were ordered to keep their unity and refrain from conflict, this is because unity causes reward and conflict cause torment (2020). In other chapters, Allah forbade differing and informed us that it is the cause of failure and the cause of decline of strength; "...and do not differ, lest you lose courage and your strength departs and be patient, indeed Allah is with those who are patient" (Q 8:46). Thus, it is conspicuous that Muslims have allowed division as a result of theological conspiracy to destroy the salient Islamic unity, thereby jeopardising the strength of the Muslims in the contemporary world. The fact remains that the teachings of the holy Qur'an as contain the first five verses of *Suuratul-Baqarah* defines the fundamental principles of Islam which serves as points of unity to all Muslims irrespective of theological sects.

Recommendations

- Discussion on trivialities as a result of Religious bigotry should be discouraged among the Muslims.
- The fundamental principles of Islam should be the points of unity and love that will guide the relationship of the Muslims despite their different theological creed and affiliation.
- Islam embraces tolerance, accommodation and peaceful co-existence, and diversity is the natural inclination that we must accept, thus giving space to all theological ideologies and culture would be a panacea to the problem of sectarianism, segregation and theological dissension among the Muslim.
- Muslim Scholars, Imam, Preachers should emphasis more one the areas that bind us together like the first five verses of *Surratul-Baqara* that enunciate the fundamental principles of Islam, to foster unity and conglomeration to expose more on intra-Religious understanding amongst the Muslims.
- Fundamental principles of Islam are means to reach consensus, compatibility, cooperation and peace. Muslim scholars are capable enough to recognize the intolerance and extremism among the *Ummah*, thus, fundamental principles of Islam and other mechanism with proofs and evidence in the Qur'an and *Hadith* of the Prophet should be used to defeat this menace of sectarianism and foster peaceful co-existence among the Muslims of different theological background.

Conclusion

It is widely believed that the event which took place after battle of *Siffin* led to theological dissension that sprang up sectarianism in Islam, and it is causing a lot of havoc to the unity of *Ummah*. Meanwhile, the fundamental principles of Islam as expressed in the first five verses of *Suuratul-Baqarah*, with exegeses of various Scholars; ibn Abbas, Seyyid Qutub, Maududi, and ibn Kathir, used in this paper serves as the unifying factors for the Muslims. Intra-Religious understanding amongst the Muslims is the connection between Muslim brotherhood and sacrosanct. Sectarianism as a result of theological dissension should not be a mechanism for rift amongst the Muslim brotherhood. Religious understanding amongst the Muslims deals a lot with unity and conglomeration which has been established ever since the inception of Islam. Tolerance, accommodation, and peaceful co-existence should be well encouraged and Muslim Scholars and Preachers should always emphasis on it. The fundamental principles of Islam, especially as it contains in the first five verses of *Suuratul-Baqarah*, serves as factors that can be uphold as point of unity rather than chaotic individualism.

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