

## *Critical Assessment of Israf (Wastefulness) on Socio-Religious Activities of Muslims in Mushin, Lagos State*

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### Abstract

*Islamic teachings preach against Israf (wastefulness) and even more so when it takes place due to unnecessary rivalry and competitiveness. However, in some communities, Muslims engage in this practice, either consciously or unconsciously. This study establishes that the socio-religious activities of some Muslims in Mushin are an example of this practice. Using historical and descriptive approaches, it shows the effects of Israf on the development of the community as a whole and ways of curbing Israf among Muslims in Mushin. Moreover, the study suggests that the concept of Wasatiyyah (moderation) as enjoined in the primary sources of Islam is an important step in dealing with the menace. This paper has policy implications for institutions engaged in socio-economic development and Islamic spiritual values for society. The present study looks at the socio-religious implications of wastefulness in society and examines this from the bird's eye view of Islam. This would serve as a basis for further exploration of issues of Islamic spiritual values and community development in contemporary Muslim societies.*

**Keywords:** *Israf, Socio-religious, Muslims, Mushin, Wasatiyyah*

## **Introduction**

Examining the issues of *Israf* (wastage or wastefulness) in a developing country – specifically in an area regarded as ‘slum in urban area’<sup>1</sup> – can provide important understandings into the connections of development and responsibilities of Muslims in a community. Narratives on Muslims and development are most times explained in the sense of improving the socio-economic condition of Muslims, which invariably diminish their socio-economic responsibilities and more importantly their religious responsibilities.<sup>2</sup> Hence, researchers have examined the responsibilities of Muslims to socio-economic development in their communities.<sup>3</sup> This paper explores the extent to which Muslims in Mushin are addressing their responsibilities to the community, with a particular focus on the issue of *Israf* and how some Muslims in Mushin are engaged in it.

Prior studies have noted the importance of Islam and religiosity to development,<sup>4</sup> this paper argues that some Muslims in Mushin while contributing to the development of their community indulge vehemently in different acts of *Israf* consciously or unconsciously. By studying Muslims in Mushin, this paper uncovers examples of some Nigerian Muslims’ acts that are of negative impact on the development of their communities without them realizing it.<sup>5</sup> The study argues that Muslims are compelled by their religion to not only praise the Creator but to also care for their community.<sup>6</sup> However, many do not know that there are deep and long-standing connections between Islamic teachings and environmentalism.

Besides, it notes that religion and the environment are far more closely linked than one might think.<sup>7</sup> This is because Islam addresses the social, human, and economic dimensions of environmental sustainability. There are Quranic verses and Prophetic traditions that relate to social responsibilities and communal obligations. It is important to state that the basic communal responsibilities and obligations of the Muslims are eternal and must be fulfilled by all Muslims at all times. However, the implementation of the activities related to these responsibilities and obligations are subject to the lifestyle and culture of particular Muslim communities. Besides, part of the social responsibilities and obligations of Muslims in a community is to organize themselves in such a way that the social obligations of the religion can be discharged and that the development of the community socially, intellectually, and spiritually can take place.<sup>8</sup> Islam raised human relations above the level of a clan, tribe, ethnicity, and race, giving priority to piety and belief,<sup>9</sup> this study analyses the issues of *Israf* as a social phenomenon among Muslims in Mushin.

The study shall, therefore, proceed as follows: historical background of Mushin, *Israf* and its religious connotations, socio-religious activities in

Mushin, effects of *Israf* on socio-religious activities of Muslims in Mushin, and conclusion.

## Literature Review

The issue of wastefulness has been the concern of not only religious scholars but also contemporary researchers and writers. This is because there are various dimensions to wastefulness. Osman Nuri Topbas in his *Society's Hidden Wound Wastefulness* mentions the forms of wastefulness in terms of spiritual and material.<sup>10</sup>

There are several references in Islamic classical literature on wastefulness and this is based on the notion that being wasteful is an act that is abhorred in Islam, as attested in Chapter 17 verses 26 and 27 of the Quran. Hence, many *Aḥadīth* regarding moderation, excessiveness, wastage, punishment for the act of wastefulness, etc can be found in pages of works such as '*Al Jami' al Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī*' by Imām al-Bukhārī, '*Al Jami' al Ṣaḥīḥ Lil Muslim*' by Imām Muslim, etc. In these works, the issue of wastefulness and its related consequences were addressed under various topics. Hence, from the Qur'an and Aḥadīth, we have references to the discussion about wastefulness and its related matters.

Also, in recent times various angles to the issue of wastage are being addressed by researchers, for instance, Katharine Hibbert's *Free: Adventures on the Margins of a Wasteful Society*;<sup>11</sup> J. W. Smith's *The World's Wasted Wealth 2: Save Our Wealth, Save Our Environment*;<sup>12</sup> *A Crisis of Waste?: Understanding the Rubbish Society* by Martin O'Brien;<sup>13</sup> *Initiatives on Prevention of Food Waste in the Retail and Wholesale Trades* by Nordic Council of Ministers;<sup>14</sup> *Waste and Abundance: The Measure of Consumption: Special Issue of SubStance* edited by Susan Cahill, Emma Hegarty, Emilie Moran;<sup>15</sup> Gay Hawkins and Stephen Muecke edited *Culture and Waste: The Creation and Destruction of Value*,<sup>16</sup> all discuss the societal issues and environmental concerns related to wastefulness in contemporary society. Some of the authors analyze and address the ethical issues vis-à-vis the economic systems found in various countries.

Several articles discuss wastage issues in society. This include:

1. Carla Binotto and Alice Payne, "The poetics of waste: Contemporary fashion practice in the context of wastefulness".<sup>17</sup>
2. Glenda Wall, "Recent representations in popular environmental discourse: Individualism, wastefulness and the global economy".<sup>18</sup>
3. Eiko Maruko Siniawer, "Affluence of the Heart": Wastefulness and the Search for Meaning in Millennial Japan".<sup>19</sup>
4. Sainz, Mario, Steve Loughnan, Rocío Martínez, Miguel Moya, and Rosa Rodríguez-Bailón. "Dehumanization of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Groups Decreases Support for Welfare Policies via

- Perceived Wastefulness".<sup>20</sup>
5. Tanhum Yoreh, "Consumption, Wastefulness, and Simplicity in Ultra-Orthodox Communities".<sup>21</sup>
  6. Martin O'Brien, Consumers, Waste and the Throwaway Society Thesis: Some Observations on the Evidence".<sup>22</sup>
  7. Nicky Gregson, Alan Metcalfe, and Louise Crewe "Identity, mobility, and the throwaway society".<sup>23</sup>
  8. Verena Winiwarter, "Investigations into Types of Wastefulness".<sup>24</sup>

Among the works related to the issue from the contemporary Muslim world point of view is Ibrahim Abu Bakar's "Islamic Theological Teachings on Ecology"<sup>25</sup> which included the issues of wastefulness as part of its discussion. The article elaborates on the role of Islam and its impact on ecological discourse. Also, Daud Abdul-Fattah Batchelor's "Reducing Wasteful Consumption Towards Sustainability by Waste Avoidance Using Self-Improvement (*Tazkiyah*) and Contentment (*Qana'ah*) Approaches" addresses the connection between consumer greed and wasteful consumption in modern society as well as the negative impact on the environment and the individual. The paper then proposes an Islamic approach to moderate consumption levels by emphasizing the spiritual aspect of man's being.<sup>26</sup>

Other studies on environmental conservation in the light of Islam and the Islamic approach to the environment, in general, are also indirectly linked to the main focus of this paper.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the activities Muslims engage in within Nigeria's multi-religious social system?
2. To what extent are Muslims involved in socio-religious activities within the Nigerian public space?
3. What are the effects of Muslims' socio-religious activities and responsibilities towards society to promote community development?

### **Research Methodology**

Based on historical and descriptive approaches, this study examines connections between Muslims and the community. It also outlines the historical and religious background of Mushin in Lagos State, Nigeria. This research assesses the socio-religious activities in which Muslims in the community are involved and makes contributions in that regard.

### **Historical Background of Mushin**

Mushin is a suburb of Lagos, located in Lagos State, Nigeria, and is one of Nigeria's 774 Local Government Areas. It is located 10 km north of the Lagos city center, adjacent to the main road to Ikeja, and is largely a congested

residential area with low-quality housing.<sup>27</sup> Also, with geographical coordinates of 6° 31' 45" North, 3° 21' 18" East situated in Mainland, Lagos Nigeria.<sup>28</sup> Mushin is one of Nigeria's 774 Local Government Areas. It had 633,009 inhabitants at the 2006 Census. The town is home to hospitals as well as educational facilities reaching the secondary school level. Mushin lies at the intersection of roads from Eko, Shomolu, and Ikeja. Most of its inhabitants are from the Yoruba ethnic group and as a result, Yoruba is the most common language spoken.<sup>29</sup>

Mushin Local Government is located right in the heart of Lagos State. It has its inhabitants mainly from all parts of the country. It is a commercial center with almost every street having one selling center or the other, Mushin is home to the Aworis. It shares boundaries in the North with Oshodi-Isolo Local Government, in the East with Somolu, and in the south with Surulere.<sup>30</sup>

The word Mushin in the western part of Nigeria was originated from the picking of 'Ishin fruit' which is a portmanteau of two words: "mu", meaning "pick" and "Ishin", which is a fruit. The Ishin tree was located along the road and it was the main passage point to Lagos "Eko". Two hunters coincidentally met at a spot where they resolved to make their final abode which is under an Ishin Tree and it is considered as a resting point for birds and wildlife in those days. However, the meeting point where the two hunters met was a place occupied by an Ishin Tree and the first pronouncement made by the two hunters was "Ibusin mi re" meaning "This is my place of abode".<sup>31</sup> Also, whenever these hunters want to cook, they make use of the stone to kindle a fire which made them be regarded as "Adokutamegbesun", meaning "One who sleeps with a stone tied to his side".<sup>32</sup>

These hunters are *Odu Abo*re from Ile Ife and *Aileru* from Benin. Thus, travelers from different parts whether far or near used to rest under the tree before proceeding on their journey to Lagos by foot, which they described as "Idi Igi Ishin", meaning "Under the tree of Ishin".<sup>33</sup> Thereafter, people started joining these hunters gradually to form a village and with the passage of time and evolutionary changes, the village grew to a commercial city known as Mushin in the present time. Furthermore, most of the areas in Mushin derived their names from what is existing and famous in that environment such as *Idi-Araba*, *Idi-Oro*, *Ilupeju*, *Matori*, and *Odi-Olowo*. *Idi-Araba* had a big tree called *Araba tree* where many people found it as a resting point after their daily activities. *Idi-Oro* once had an *Oro tree* in which whoever passes by the tree used to pluck fruit and eat. *Ilupeju* was a meeting point for different tribes such as Egbas, Egbados, Ijebus among others. *Matori* was a jungle where cane was found in those days. *Odi-Olowo* is a boundary of the rich people.<sup>34</sup>

After independence in 1960, there was a large migration to suburban areas. This led to intensive overcrowding. As a result, poor sanitation and

inadequate housing led to poor living conditions. However, since the rise of industrialization in Nigeria, Mushin has become one of the largest beneficiaries of the industrial expansion. Their local commercial enterprises include spinning and weaving of cotton, shoe manufacturing, bicycle, and motorized-cycle assembly, along with the production of powdered milk.<sup>35</sup> Also, the "Oja Mushin" meaning "Mushin market" which was established in 1920, was regarded as "Mushin Ajina." as it is considered to be an overnight Market.<sup>36</sup>

### **Theoretical/Conceptual Framework**

*Israf* connotes mismanagement of resources. It includes an obscene display of affluence, quality or wealth, wasteful spending, or usage of resources. It is a means of exceeding the permitted limit of Allah. Whatever that is spent or consumes in order than its rightful place or manner, is regarded as an extravagance. It means exceeding the limit of *Halal* and stepping into the domain of *Haram*. It shares meaning with flamboyance and in Islamic terminology, it is generally referred to as *Israf* or *Tabdhir* as contained in the glorious Qur'an. It is a lack of restraint in spending money or using resources. Also, it is the practice of spending more money than is necessary or reasonable or something expensive and not necessary.<sup>37</sup> However, any action in which an individual performs what exceeds the limit is considered as extravagance, whether it relates to excess in quality or quantity.

In another view, *Israf* can be defined as being excessive, wasteful of bounties of nature, and food that is given by Almighty Allah.<sup>38</sup> Again, *Israf* can be regarded as spending in the wrong place for the wrong thing.<sup>39</sup> However, the *Shari'ah* teaches moderation even when being generous. Qur'an says "And do not fold your hands to your neck or open it up so that you are blamed".<sup>40</sup> Also, "And when they spend, they are not extravagant nor miserly, but they spend in moderation".<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, one of the main reasons why Allah has warned against spending extravagantly is that one becomes excessively attached to materialistic pleasures and satisfaction of this world to the extent that it tampers with one's faith. Allah warns by saying "And eat and drink, but waste not in extravagance".<sup>42</sup> It is not an overstatement that *Israf* is one of the types of sins that many often indulge in without taking cognizance of it. That is because there is no uniform reason on the way of spending excessively. Some are extravagant in the attempt to achieve satisfaction and temporary happiness in this finite world, while for others; the drive is unconstrained greed and pride. Whatever the justification is, one scary vibe which the aforementioned Qur'anic verse gives off is that one should always be mindful of one's spending, for, there are those in need of what is wasted. And Allah

detests the greedy and those who spend beyond the limit or extravagantly.

*Israf* is a major problem in some communities and can be caused by the influence of Shaitan; as it is said that those who indulge in *Israf* are considered as allies of Shaitan.<sup>43</sup> Other reasons are the love of pride and class, to showcase affluence, and to satisfy the base desire. To this end, one is encouraged to enjoy the pleasures which Allah has blessed humankind with while maintaining a balance. Being conscious of extravagance is a way of seeking nearness to one's Lord, and it is He who nourishes worldly pleasure.

### **Socio-Religious Activities in Mushin**

#### **Nikkah (Wedding) Ceremony of Muslims in Mushin**

One of the recognized and indisputable commandments of Islam is marriage- the sacred union between man and woman. Concerning this revered bond, there are many verses of the noble Qur'an and countless *Ahadith* that enjoins marriage on both sexes- man and woman. This is not limited to the young brothers and sisters who have never been married and are looking for their life mate alone, but even those who have been through divorce have also been encouraged to re-marry and to 'complete' their faith. The Qur'an says: "Marry the single people from among you and the righteous slaves and slave-girls. If you are poor, Allah Will makes you rich through His favor; and Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing".<sup>44</sup> In this verse, Allah commands Muslims to marry the single, righteous man and woman from among themselves.

A wedding ceremony has great importance in different cultures of the world, and it has also been made incumbent upon man by Allah which is regarded as the fulfillment of half of one's faith. In Mushin, there are instances of Muslims attempting to outshine one another resulting in negative budgets. Such an unreasonable budget is not only to lose face or deviate from the norms, but also to show-off. Islam calls for simplicity while society and culture implore for lavish spending. To be extravagant is to spend beyond the limits set with the guidance of Islamic teachings. It has been observed among some Muslims in Mushin that at most of their functions especially wedding ceremony, they display wealth during their children's wedding which serves as a platform for the rich families to show affluence and spend extravagantly for a program of few hours, expensive decorations, and usually, these events also lead to excess wastage of food. Wastage of food at the wedding function in the community is quite common and often ends in lots of food being dumped in the refuse bin. They argue that they have to make food in excess to ensure enough distribution of food.

Also, in this community, there are examples of a wedding after giving

birth to one or two children which are contrary to the Islamic law (children out of wedlock), and yet, the *Nikkah* will be done extravagantly which will result in committing two different forbidden acts. There is no doubt that wedding parties are among the things that are prescribed to express joy and happiness, but that does not mean that one should fall into extravagance or spend unnecessarily. Some Muslims in this community argue that it is only once in a lifetime, hence, the need to overspend if possible.

The extravagance done at a wedding in this community are outrageous that the majority of the people even forget the needs of the future while spending more on a wedding. Although some people may be able to afford to spend so much which is not necessarily good, the money spent could have been used for something beneficial in the future. Moreover, the number of events that take place in a wedding also causes much spending by the families. Some choose to celebrate weddings quietly by having a small family reception or by having a *Nikkah* at the mosque. However, it is observed that some extravagant wedding is done as a result of societal pressure which in the end may lead to bankruptcy all in the name of a wedding ceremony.

### **Mawlid-un-Nabī Ceremony**

*Eid Milad-un-Nabī* also called *Mawlid-un-Nabī* is the festival to commemorate the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad. It is celebrated on the 12<sup>th</sup> of Rabi-ul -Awwal. The birth of the Prophet is seen as an important event in the history of the world. Prophet Muhammad is regarded as the chief of the prophets, the perfect man to whom the Qur'an was revealed, the best exemplar, and the greatest benefactor of mankind. He is the person for whom God has proclaimed: "Allah sends down the blessings on the prophet, and His Angels constantly invoke His blessings on him; do you, O believers, also invoke Allah's blessings on him, and after him the salutation of peace."<sup>45</sup> The extent of festivities, on this occasion, is restricted because the same day marks his death.<sup>46</sup>

On this occasion, therefore, Muslims celebrate *Maolud* by holding special programs for adherents, where people can learn about the character and life of the Prophet. The religious leaders make speeches on different aspects of the life of the prophet and how Muslims should imbibe them. Songs and salutations are also recited in his praise, places like mosques, streets, a public building, or an open field are mostly used for the celebration which will be decorated and well illuminated at night, though, some organize theirs during the day. Feasts are as well arranged and rice and meat dishes are often served to the guests, some people also distribute them among the poor.

However, the rate at which some Muslims in Mushin celebrate *Maolud Nabiiy* is uncalled for as they spend more than necessary which makes them



indulge in the act of extravagance. This is done to the extent of inviting Muslim musicians to entertain the guests on the day of celebration. After giving the musicians a huge amount of money for entertainment. There are also instances of money been sprayed on the musicians while performing. Some Muslims in this community go to the extent of celebrating it like a wedding ceremony, by renting a hall, ensuring uniformity in appearance, among other things, while the necessary things that ought to be done like; preaching by the religious leaders, words of wisdom and so on are only given a short time, unlike the entertainment which as expected by the audience takes more time. Some attend the *Maolud Nabī* only for entertainment, or to spend on entertainers resulting in showing-off and spending extravagantly.

### **Funeral Ceremony of Muslims in Mushin**

Man is mortal, but according to the teachings of Islam death is not the end of life. There is a life hereafter which is a reflection of the present life. Therefore, though one becomes sad at the loss of a person who is dear to one yet a Muslim is not expected to bewail the dead. Crying loudly over the dead, or tearing one's clothes, or tormenting oneself is not the way a Muslim expresses his grief and sorrow. When a Muslim hears the sad news of the death of a person, he says; '*Innā Lillahī wa innā Ilayhī Rāji'ūn*', meaning 'Verily to Allah we belong and verily, to Him shall we return'.<sup>47</sup> Also, Islamic religious law calls for burial of the body as soon as possible, preceded by a simple ritual involving bathing and shrouding the body, followed by *Salah* (prayer), and burial is usually within 24 hours of a death to protect the living from any sanitary issues.

The best thing a Muslim can do for a deceased is prayer and *Sadaqah* (Almsgiving). Some Muslims today take funeral ceremony as a social ceremony and celebration galore. There are instances of some Muslims in Mushin who commemorate and celebrate their deceased relatives and this celebration happens when they mark anniversaries of the deceased relative. This may take place a year or more after death. This celebration varies from one family to another, as some of the families in the community commemorate the dead after forty days. They bring people together under a rented tent or the house of the deceased, call Muslim preachers and their students to recite Qur'an. They also prepare a meal like a wedding feast, and they adorn the venue with light and comfortable furnishing, some go to the extent of renting a hall or an open field to celebrate. They go to the great expense which often results in extravagance.

Moreover, some finance the celebration by the means of loans. All these actions have been criticized because there are examples of the deceased not well cared for while alive but when dead they are celebrated extravagantly. Some of those who engage in these activities do it out of social

pressure or expectation of the community or for the family not to be looked down upon, hence, wasteful spending.

### **House Warming Ceremony of Muslims in Mushin**

House warming can be regarded as a way of giving thanks to Allah or appreciating Allah's bounty upon the life of man, one may invite friends and family to the house on this happy occasion and feed them. Being grateful for Allah's bounty is in line with the Qur'anic verse that goes thus:

*"And (remember) when your Lord proclaimed: if you give thanks (by accepting faith and worshipping none but Allah), I will give you more (of My Blessings); but if you are thankless (i.e. disbelievers), verily, My punishment is indeed severe."<sup>48</sup>*

Although, one is encouraged in Islam to show gratitude to Allah through inviting people to a feast, however, some have turned such occasions to opportunity for wasteful spending. It has been observed that some Muslims in Mushin indulge in wasteful spending during housewarming events. The house, in some instances, may be built on loan. Yet, in celebration it is sometimes done extravagantly resulting in more debt after the occasion. Rather than giving thanks to Allah, invite people to a feast and spend, some go as far as inviting musicians to entertain in the event. These are often done to show off and to conform to societal norms, in order to be regarded among the affluent in the community.

### **Ceremony after the pilgrimage to Hajj in Mushin**

The Hajj (pilgrimage) is said to be an annual pilgrimage to Makkah, Saudi Arabia, the holiest city for Muslims that must be carried out at least once in their lifetime by all adult Muslims who are physically and financially capable of undertaking the journey and can support their family during their absence. Hajj is heading to a place for the sake of visiting and to worship the Almighty. However, some Muslims today have turned the pilgrimage to Makkah as a thing of showing off and competition in the society, because some do not go for this visiting for the sake of Allah, but because they also want to be called and seen as *Alhaji* or *Alhaja* in the society.

The above instance is also found among some members of the Muslim community in Mushin. When they return from Hajj, they celebrate their journey back home by inviting family and friends and some go to the extent of celebrating in a wasteful manner. The religious angle of such occasion may result to inviting musicians to entertain the guests during the celebration and leading to several other unnecessary spending which the occasion might warrant.

## **Effects of *Israf* on Socio-Religious Activities of Muslims in Mushin**

### **Effect of *Israf* on the Religious Activities of Muslims in Mushin**

Islam as a religion has a set of principles binding on its followers. It emphasised the need to maintain balance and moderation to its followers in all of their affairs and equally enjoins its followers to be persistent on righteousness and shun that which is forbidden.<sup>49</sup> Extravagance can, therefore, be regarded as an act that is discouraged because anything discouraged constitutes the boundaries and limits of God, and committing it means crossing and trespassing borders and going beyond limits.

Indulging in *Israf* has devastating consequences both on the individual and the society at large. Among the effects of *Israf* on the religious life of the Muslim residents in Mushin will be examined in this section. Firstly, it must be stated that *Israf* is one of the limits set by Allah which one must avoid at all costs. Therefore, indulging in this act is tantamount to crossing over the boundaries of Allah which can result in incurring the wrath of Allah. Hence, excessive or unnecessary spending is a detestable act that leads to the wrath of God, because God does not love those who are extravagant; this can be substantiated in the light of the Quranic verse that says: "Surely, the squanderers are the fellows of the Shaitans and the Shaitan is ever ungrateful to his Lord".<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, the consequential outcome of *Israf* will amount to a decrease in the blessings of Allah and misguidance. In light of this, it is harmful to an individual and the society at large. However, some Muslim individuals in Mushin have been found in this regard which invariably affects their religio-spiritual life, as *Israf* can result to decrease in blessings of Allah in one's life. In other words, *Israf* comes hand in hand with a decrease in the blessings of Allah.

Although, some Muslim preachers in the community have been highlighting the problem and warning members of the community on the harms of *Israf*. This is because it leads one to punishment in the Hereafter especially those who exceed the divinely set limits and consider them insignificant.<sup>51</sup> The Qur'an has mentioned the following in this regard, "And thus, do We recompense him who is extravagant and does not believe in the communication of His Lord, and certainly the chastisement of the hereafter is severer and more".<sup>52</sup>

By and large, wasteful spending is a major problem that requires urgent attention within Muslim communities in Mushin because of the direct and indirect consequences on religious duties. Moreover, there is high tendency of it leading to other unworthy attributes such as unnecessary display of wealth, or giving *Sadaqah* in religious gatherings in a way that the

less fortunate feel oppressed and some intentionally let the clerk in the ceremony announce the amount they are giving out which will also make others who are of his class also do the same by giving out more than what the former gave, leading to the slippery slope of vanity and pride.

### **Effect of Israf on the Social Activities of Muslims in Mushin**

The social wellbeing of society is one of the objectives of Islam. As such, necessary mechanisms are put in place in the *Shari'ah* in a bid to realize its objectives of a serene society. In this regard, the effect of *Israf* within the societal outlook is seen as the oppression emanating from the rich on the less privileged. Islam, however, considers it as a black poison expected to be avoided just to uphold the spirit of societal wellbeing.

It is crystal clear that if people were to be wasteful and extravagant, they would be harming the community and shrinking away from their responsibilities. In addition, they would develop and cultivate negative personal characteristics that would be destructive to them on an individual level. Moreover, those who engage in wasteful spending in Mushin have been harming the community which has led to the decline of societal morals and ethics. This is the consequence of improper use and waste of resources, hence, the reason for large scale corruption and societal decadence.

This has reached the point that an individual cares less about the needs of others and only cares about himself/herself. In this community, *Israf* has also led to the creation of class strife and struggle among the people. Also, some individuals with immense wealth believe that they can spend their wealth in any manner that seems pleasant to them, even if it goes against the stipulated rules of Islam and negative effect on the society. Wasteful spending constitutes a barrier between the poor and the rich leading to hatred and lack of brotherhood in the community.

The perpetuation of *Israf* in the community has also resulted in moral degeneration, which implies that there is little sense of belonging in the community. The poor feel inferior because they are barely surviving while the rich spends lavishly. In addition, acts of greediness, pride and boastfulness are part of the resultant effect of *Israf*. Some of those who engage in wasteful spending often find it hard to give a helping hand to the needy rather they prefer to flaunt their wealth and spending where it is not necessary.<sup>53</sup> More so, *Ar-Riya* (show off), is a driving force and negatively affecting communal living among residents.

It is not surprising, however, to hear cases of armed robbery in the community. Armed robbers think there is more wealth in circulation and utilize occasions where wasteful spending occur to commit atrocities. Not only properties are lost in such events but also lives. Criminal acts are well

documented in the area, especially youths who are jobless easily engage in such acts. This shows that *Israf* is a direct/indirect result of such acts.<sup>54</sup>

### **Effect of Israf on Economic Activities of Muslims in Mushin**

There is no doubt that wasteful spending could lead one to environmental pollution and the exhaustion of resources. This is because if a community is found guilty of extravagance, there will be wastage in the resources of the community as most of these resources are spent or used when it is not required. In light of this, extravagance is spending money where it is not required, at the time it is not required and, on the thing, it is not required.<sup>55</sup>

Also, Islam frowns at any unnecessary spending or wastage of economic resources because what is wasted may be of benefit to the needy. This is why extravagance is seen as any type of expenditure which is contrary to Islamic teachings and expenditures which are superfluous.<sup>56</sup>

As a matter of great concern, when there is high perpetration of *Israf*, the economic situation of the community will seem superfluous; people spending more than their needs and wants, therefore, the problem gives rise to the recession in the economy. This is equally obtainable in Mushin as there is a limitation to the flow of economic activities due to the various unnecessary spending with the mind of displaying affluence. By extension, in Mushin, extravagance can be said affect its economy especially in the price of commodities in the area. For instance, the traders prefer to sell goods to the poor in the same amount which are affordable by the rich due to the rich financial buoyancy and therefore constituting a threat to the poor and subjugating them due to their financial handicap and on the other hand, they utilize the affordability of the rich to maximize their profit which will be inconvenient to the poor and also going against the rules of Allah. The Qur'an says:

*"Greatly blessed is Allah to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. Similarly, all that is between them is also under His ownership and control. To Him also belongs the knowledge of the last Hour when all of these have served their purpose and the time for them to perish has arrived. Ultimately, everything will be brought back to Him."*<sup>57</sup>

When a person is made responsible for a specific task or is entrusted with something of value, he is answerable to the one who entrusted him with those responsibilities; but a person who regards himself free and unanswerable to anyone would be inclined to do whatever he pleases. This verse of the Qur'an is a reminder that all worldly governments, kingdoms, and powers are under God's command and are granted to human beings only as a trust. Humans must not consider themselves unaccountable just because

they have some limited control of material wealth. This is because one may appear to have authority and ownership on the surface, but in truth, one is only holding a trust from God.<sup>58</sup>

More importantly, the effect of *Israf* is also felt on household welfare and individual personality. Wasteful spending has affected children and youths in this community because some parents find it difficult to fulfil their responsibilities after unnecessary spending, wastage of resources, and the fact they always want to feel among the influential people in the society. Some even go as far as using their children's school fees for "Asoebi" with the saying that the children are just commencing a new term. With this, some kids stop attending school but are made to hawk goods to fetch money for their households.<sup>59</sup>

## **Results & Conclusion**

This paper investigates the issue of *Israf* among Muslims in Mushin Local Government Area of Lagos State. It shows that there is substantial evidence to support the view that *Israf* is advertently or inadvertently being committed by Muslims in Mushin. The paper highlights the effects of *Israf* on the socio-religious activities of Muslims in Mushin. The paper also explains ways of curbing *Israf* among Muslims in Mushin. Moreover, the paper identifies the need to checkmate wastefulness as it affects the moral, physical, social, and economic life of the community.

## **Suggestions:**

1. The study suggests that the concept of *Wasatiyyah* (moderation) as enjoined in the Qur'an and Hadith is *sine qua non* in curbing *Israf* and to maintain balance in all facets of a Muslim life.
2. The paper suggests the effects of *Israf* in the socio-religious activities of Muslims.
3. The findings of this paper have policy implications for Muslims' development and responsibilities and open the way for further research in these areas.



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