

A BIOGRAPHY OF

His Eminence

Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky (H)

(The Leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria)

By:

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Shaikh Zakzaky's Works.

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INTRODUCTION:

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. May His salvation and eternal bliss be upon the best of creatures, the Prophet Muhammad, son of Abdullahi, his purified and infallible progeny.

One of the major factors that spurred us into writing this small book was a day the Nigerian Army under the leadership of the Nigerian president, Muhammad Buhari descended upon the leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky (H) in Zaria during which over a thousand of his pacifist members were ruthlessly massacred, hundreds of others were illegally being detained without trial, and they shot him and his wife several times, and the assaults had damaged parts of their bodies. He had been detained and kept incommunicado since then, giving him little access to his family members. The Zaria Massacre had sparked protests and condemnations from in and outside the country with international community condemning the pogrom and calling for the perpetrators to be brought to book.

Before the Zaria Massacre, Zakzaky was not as popular as he was until when the Nigerian Army laid siege to the sheikh's residence, an incident which made Zakzaky something of a cause célèbre and many people are keen on knowing more about Zakzaky's history, years of his struggles and how he is able to attract millions of followers within a few decades. Nearly every user of Social Media is a witness to people's thirst for reading the biography of Sheikh Zakzaky. This is the major reason that compelled us to write a short note which could shed light on the life of his eminence Sheikh Ibrahim Yoqoub Zakzaky and the Islamic Movement in Nigeria.

It is a well-known fact that the life of Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky is so multi-faceted that it would be tedious and hard for a single biographer to write down his full biography, but an Arab adage has it that "what cannot be carried out completely, it is unwise not to do anything about it." This is why we have made up our mind to write something briefly about some of the most eventful moments that shaped the life of this preacher and we do hope that this book could serve as a boon for those who are interested in furthering the scope of their researches about Zakzaky. Furthermore, this book will, in no way, quench the curiosities of researchers who want to delve deeper into the cleric's movement for there are many areas of his struggles we have not touched, and this decision is necessary to avoid prolixity, even the areas we have discussed are laconic. Therefore, for those who are interested in furthering the scope of their researches about the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, I suggest they consult other relevant books.

Thank you

- *Institute Of Compilation And Publications Of Shaikh Zakzaky's Works.*

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CHAPTER ONE:

A Brief History of Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky

HIS ANCESTRY

According to the most reliable source which was narrated by Sheikh Zakzaky himself, he was a descendant of Shingidi, which was situated in the ancient Songhai Empire, but the ancient city is now part of the territory of Mauritania. His grandparents migrated from the city to Mabruk in Mali from where which they dwelt in Timbuktu. It was from the city of Timbuktu that they migrated to Nigeria in twelfth century.

HIS LINEAGE

His lineage was traced to Sheikh Ibrahim bn Ya'aqub bn Aliyu bn Muhammad Tajuddeen Bn Liman Hussain Batoranke. Liman Hussain belonged to Fulani community, an offshoot of the Toronke ethnic group. He migrated to Hausa land from Mali during the caliphate of Sheikh Usman Bn Fodio. He was appointed to be leading prayers in a town he lived which was also an enclave of Sokoto. The son of Liman Hussain, Tajuddeen who was presumed to be a protégé of Usman Bn Fodio followed the entourage of Usman Bn Fodio's representative in Zaria enclave that is the emir of Zazzau Malam Musa, and it was the bn Fodio who assigned Tajuddeen to be in charge of teaching Islamic studies in Zaria.

Most of the lineage of Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky was confined to Liman Hussain, but to this moment, there is a report that his genealogy was traced to as far as the scion of the Prophet, the leader guidance of the Ahlul Bayt, that is the grandson of the Prophet (PBUH), the infallible Imam Hassan, the son of commander of the faithful Imam Ali bin Abiy-Talib (AS).

HIS FATHER

His father was Malam Yaqoub Aliyu, he was nicknamed Magaji (a Hausa term for a jurist who inherited Islamic knowledge from his parent). His exact birthday was not recorded, but he was presumed to have been born in 1902. He grew up in a learned household which enabled him to accumulate Islamic knowledge in no small measure. He was famously known for his devotion, patience and sense of humour. He was hailed for his audacity to express good

attitudes when it came to dealing with people. He was a farmer per excellence and that he never stopped teaching up to the end of his journey in life when he died at the presumed age of 70 (1902-1972).

HIS MOTHER

Salaha Muhammad Gidado who was famously known as Hajiya Hari Jamo was the mother of Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky. She, just like Zakzaky's father, belonged to Toronke ethnic group, and her grandfather was a Bedouin merchant from Mali who later on his life migrated to Zaria and settled there. The nickname Hari is an alias in Fulfude (a language spoken by Fulani ethnic group) for a person born during a raining season. She was born in 1924 in the ancient city of Zaria, and she and her husband, Yaqoub gave birth to twelve children five of whom died at infancy and Zakzaky is her fifth son.

Hajiya Hari Jamo was very adept at religious matters. She used to teach neighbouring women and children Islamic jurisprudence, she was praised for religious devotion especially reading the Holy Quran and incessant prayers. She died on 17th November, 2014, after a protracted illness that kept her bedridden for a long while. She was 90 years old when she breathed her last, and she left behind six children and many grandchildren. Her shrine is located in Jushi residential area, Zaria.

HIS RELATIVES

The father of Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky, Malam Yaqoub had left sixteen children, eight female and eight male. Zakzaky's mother, Hari Jamo had 7 children out of which four are male while the remaining three are female. Here they are in sequence: Abdulqadir Yaqoub, Maryam Yaqoub, Fatima Yaqoub (AKA Goggon Kaura), Ibrahim Yaqoub (Sheikh Zakzaky), Badamasi Yaqoub, Yahaya Yaqoub and their last born is Maimunatu Yaqoub. As for his other relatives whom he did not share the same mother, they are nine in numbers, four male and five female, and their mother was Hajiya Amina who was popularly known as Iya Maimanja. Here they are: Muhammad Sani Yaqoub, Ramatu Yaqoub, Karimatu Yaqoub, Usman Yaqoub (who holds a traditional title of Sarkin Malaman Fadar Zazzau). Maryam Yaqoub, Abubakar Yaqoub, Salihu Yaqoub, Zaliha Yaqoub and their last born is Hajara Yaqoub.

These are the blood relatives of Sheikh Ibrahim Yaqoub Zakzaky. He is the sixth son of his father but fifth son from his mother, if we took into cognizance his brother Zubairu Yaqoub who died at infancy

HIS BIRTHDAY

Sheikh Ibrahim Yaqoub Zakzaky was born at the dawn of Tuesday, 5th May, 1953 which is equivalent to 15 of Sha'aban 1372 AH. His birthplace is Kwarbai Residential Area, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria, just a stone's throw from the emir's palace.

HIS NICKNAMES

His real name is Ibrahim but his most famous nickname is El-Zakzaky which is equivalent to 'a native of Zaria.' In a nutshell, he got this sobriquet in the heydays of his schooling. He and one his classmates shared the same name, Ibrahim Yaqoub, and in order to avoid confusion, it was suggested that one of them add a title to his name which prompted him to add Zakzaky to his name. That was how he got his nickname.

Another nickname that is being attributed to him by Sheikh Usman bin Fodio in his will is Sharafuddeen, (the revivalist), and he inherited this nickname as a result of his advocacy to revive the glory of Islam which was eroded by the advent of colonialism in Nigeria. He is, furthermore fondly called Ibrahimul Maghriby, which is translated as 'a preacher from West Africa'. His wife used to address him with Khaleel but apart from his wife nobody addressed him with such name. In a nutshell, Ibrahim Zakzaky has three nicknames, El-Zakzaky, Sharafuddeen, and Al-Magriby which he is widely known with, and Khaleel which is used only by his wife.

HIS DESCRIPTION

Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky is a dark-skinned, heavily-built and fairly tall man. He has bulging eyes and ethnic cicatrices are visible in the sides of his face which aligned him to Fulani ethnic group, an offshoot of Toronke ethnic community. His thinly grey-beard coupled with his grandstanding, walking has made him stand out among his relatives. He has a great sense of humour and he mostly and tersely talks less and acts more. Besides, he is highly devoted, learned, eloquent and addicted to reading books.

HIS CHILDHOOD

Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky grew up in a very religious household; therefore his childhood was impeccably influenced by kindness and hospitality he had inherited from his parent. He was never known for stubbornness, belligerent attitude, cruelty or superiority complex towards his childhood friends. He was best known for his introspection towards dealing with his superiors. Best known as an obedient, compassionate boy, he was throughout his childhood known, moreover, for helping the poor, the elderly and his younger brothers. He read voraciously and hated laziness and immobility.

Those who knew his childhood could attest to his unblemished childhood as corroborated by a traditional title holder, Alhaji Basiru Aliyu Dan Sidi: "At that time (during our childhood) as far as I knew him, he was a very modest boy who had a penchant for respecting his elders, and I had never seen him for once committing any crime or engaging in mischievous behaviours"(2). Moreover, another traditional title holder, Alhaji Abubakar Jibrin has this to say about Ibrahim Zakzaky: "I knew him as a boy who was very shy and he rarely discussed gibberish..... even in his schools, he was very respectful and obedient to his superiors, in fact we could not find any immoral behaviour to criticise him for".

Another octogenarian who belonged to Zakzaky's clan also gave her testimony of Ibrahim Zakzaky's unblemished childhood. She was reported to have said that: "When he was a little kid, we noticed his strange behaviours which signaled that he was going to be a great figure in his later years. I can attest to his humility and obedience to the elderly. He was fond of paying visits to his relatives because he loved and still loves his relatives and wherever they are, he would never feel reluctant to visit them. He in fact grew up with this kind of kindness. Throughout his childhood, he was never known for belligerent behaviors towards other people, he only minded his own businesses. He grew up like a gentleman for he was not used to inconsequential tendencies exhibited by many children, and he was actually the one who would call them to order".

An erudite Islamic scholar, a childhood contemporary of Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky, Malam Wadan Mai Raqumi, had this to say about his childhood: "Ibrahim was a boy who never took his religion for granted, he was not used to

silly plays practiced mostly by his friends at home or in schools. When we came to a playing ground to have fun, he would usually distance himself from us until we were done before he rejoined us”.

In a nutshell, Sheikh Zakzaky (H) is endowed with poise, restraint and sense of humour because he grew up in the bosom of modesty and adoration devoid of childish peccadilloes, and it can be deduced from the aforementioned testimonies that he has an unblemished past.

HIS EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky is a very knowledgeable personality whose academic prowess enabled him to pursue both Islamic and Western education, and he was able to achieve those feats by treading the same paths, that is by attending Islamic schools controlled by Malams (Islamic preachers) who used to settle in shanty buildings with dozens or hundreds of pupils around them, and by moreover, attending formal Western-oriented schools.

As far as Western education is concerned, the sheikh started his schooling only when he reached puberty because he was not able to attend primary school as a result of some religious factors of which parents were jittery about the ulterior motives of the then newly-introduced educational system; they feared that their children might be brainwashed to abhor their cultural values or end up being proselytised. That factor, among others, was why many parents declined to send their children to schools.

He first attended Fada Provincial Arabic School, Zaria, in 1969-1971. Students used to spend four years at the school before graduation, but Zakzaky was able to complete his study in just a matter of two years. He merged teaching job with his studies which further broadened his minds in no small measure. In 1971, he proceeded to School for Arabic Studies in Kano to further the scope of his studies after he successfully passed a thorough interview. Having learnt of his English mastery, the school principal then advised him to switch to subjects that were being taught in English, an offer he accepted, and he completed his programmes in 1975.

In the course of his stay at School for Arabic Studies, he obtained his now-outdated Grade Two certificate with special emphasis on Economics, Government, Islamic Studies, and Hausa language. Having graduate magna cum laude, he easily advanced to a degree programme at the Ahmadu Bello

University, Zaria. He enrolled fully into the university in 1976 where he was studying Economics and he would have completed in 1979 if he had not been arrested by security operatives when he was writing his final exams for barring people from holding a wine drinkers party in the university's premise. He was unable to complete his study as a result of that arrest until he was discharged from a high security jail in Enugu in 1984. He was allowed to finish his exams, but the school management withheld his certificate for what they said his threat to national security. He was confirmed to have graduated with a first class honour from the department.

It is estimated that it normally takes a person twenty years from primary to university level, but Ibrahim Zakzaky completed his studies in ten years' time due to the fact of his extra ordinary talent. To dissect all this, he spent two years in Fada Provincial Primary School instead of four years. He spent four years in School for Arabic Studies, which served as a secondary school instead of six years. And he graduated from the university in four years.

Throughout the period of his studies, he was very active in student unions and he held various positions but his highest position was his appointment as secretary general of the Muslim Students Association of Nigeria (MSSN) in 1978 before he later on became a vice president of the body. His office was tasked with supervising foreign students' interests of the union.

HIS RELIGIOUS STUDIES

As is stated, Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky grew up in a religiously-oriented house. Many of his relatives were very learned and extremely religious persons. His father took a lot of time to tutor him the Quran when he reached four years, and he started learning Arabic grammar from his grandmother who was popularly known as Hajiya Mai Karatu.

He was able to garner a lot of Islamic knowledge at his youthful age as a result of his unfettered access to various learned scholars. That propelled him to become a force to be reckoned with especially among his peer groups. He virtually read everything religious at his disposal ranging from the Quran, Hadiths, jurisprudence, Islamic history, Arabic grammar, literature, etc. His father, Malam Yaqoub and his grandmother, Hajiya Mai Karatu had played impactful roles in broadening his mind. He also got unfettered access to prominent Islamic scholars who mostly resided in Zaria. Those scholars

included Malam Sani Abdulqadir Fateh, Malam Sani Na'ibi, Malam Isah Kwarbai, Malam Ibrahim Nakakaki, malam Aminu Na Madaka and many more. Moreover, he widened the scope of his jurisprudence during his knowledge-seeking sojourn in Kano, and he was mentored by Sheikh Nasir Kabara- one of the most influential Sufi scholars in Africa, and Sheikh Isah Waziri a chief Imam of Kano. Other scholars who tutored him in the ancient city of Kano included Malam Nuhu an Imam who led prayers in one of the Sufi mosques in the city; Malam Datti Ahmad a cerebral linguist who taught him Arabic; Malam Ibrahim Babarbare and Sheikh Abdur-Rauf Usman an Egyptian scholar. All these scholars are a force behind his religious knowledge.

HIS BLOOD RELATION TO AHLUL BAYT (AS)

Sheikh Zakzaky's lineage was traced to the blood of Ahlul Bayt (AS), and he in fact got the name 'Sayyid' as a result of his seeming blood relation to the grandson of the Prophet, Imam Hassan bin Aliy bin Abiy-Talib (AS). Long before he came public with his lineage, there existed many genealogists who attributed his ancestry to the Ahlul-Bayt. It was in 2004 after he paid a visit to his ancestral home in Mali with a view to further exploring his extraction that he had made his blood relation to Ahlul Bayt public.

The day Zakzaky announced his lineage during a Zahra Day programme, he made mention of a hadith in which the prophet was reported to have cursed any person who lied to him with a view to ascribing his ancestry to him. Moreover, the prophet prohibits his descendants from hiding their lineage to him. It can be deduced from this revelation that Zakzaky's decision to make his lineage to the Ahlul Bayt public was borne out of necessity which was not meant to promote his ego.

During an interview with Indian Chennel 'Maulaty-TV' in 2015, Sheikh Zakzaky said; "My grandparent are from Magrib that is Morocco in that time, specifically from the city of Shingydi (now in Mauritania), they are traveling from one place to another, from shingydi to Mali, from Mali to here (Nigeria), they are descended of Imam Hassan Al-Mujtaba (AS)".

Moreover, Zakzaky declined to put on a black turban due to a primordial Hausa tradition which does not accord much respect to people who wear it. It was the slaves of medieval kings who used to wear it. That was the major reason why he found it appropriate to put it on. He resorted to strapping a

blue scarf around his neck in order to supplant the black turban which would symbolize him as the scion of Ahlul Bayt in the Sub-Saharan Africa.

HIS UPBRINGING

It was a well-known fact that Zakzaky grew up in the Sunni community and though he was entirely tutored by Sunni scholars, there was no exact period of which Zakzaky converted to Shia Islam, but it was inherently clear to people that he was basing his religious views on the Ahlul Bayt school of thought in 1980, when he was 27 years of age, and he was leading a group of students who were entirely Sunni. The students almost immediately began to complain when they noticed some bizarre religious practices from him. Those practices ranged from ablutions, and prayers which were not known to them for, at that time, Shia Islam was not known to be in existence in the Sub-Saharan Africa. So people had little or no idea about Shia.

He once shed light on a misunderstanding exhibited by adherents at that time which marked the beginning of the Sheikh becoming public with his mission of propagating the tentacles of his movement under Ja'afariyya school of thought. "I could remember a day after the Funtua Declaration (a day when he declared that he would be resisting injustice and dictatorial tendencies of the then military rulers that were not commensurate with Islamic injunctions), when some of my adherents came to inquire why I rubbed my feet instead of washing them during ablution, I just declined to answer the discomfoting question. One of them claimed the strange practice was peculiar to Shia Islam but I paid no heed to his claims. Another person alleged to have seen me raising my hands during Qunut, I also declined to comment on that. For the third time in a row, another person claimed to have overheard me reciting prayers audibly whenever I prostrated, and just like their previous claims, I declined to comment."

"There was a time when I travelled to Sokoto State. I think it was in the 1980s, I led Zuhur and Asr prayers by audibly reciting Basmalah. A curious adherent of mine inquired to know the sense of what I had just done. I replied to that by saying, 'I have done so because the Prophet used to do so.' You know people are irascible, and they can easily argue about everything (no matter how miscellaneous it is) or even accuse you of practicing a different injunction but I did not want to trouble people at all".

During a retreat with his representatives from other states at that time he confided to them that: “I am expected to make it public that I am Shiite so that people would desert me, I am really a proud Shiite! I have been practicing Shia Islam for long; you met me as a Shiite and you would have been clueless to think otherwise of me. Therefore, I am a Shia Muslim and I will by the grace of Allah die a Shiite and I implore Allah to resurrect me a Shia Muslim, and reunite with Shias in our final abode”.

In short, going by Zakzaky's proposition, whoever made contact with him in the 1980s after the Funtua Declaration, met him practicing Shia Islam- a form of brotherhood through Al-Wilayat and total subservience to the cause of his movement. But in order to douse impending tensions and bickering from his mainstream communities, he kept his belief to himself only until a crunch came when he came public with his new-found belief which resulted in the conversion of millions of his followers. This has made Zakzaky become a single person in the history of Islam who singlehandedly converted millions of Sunni Muslims to Shia Islam within a few decades.

HIS WIFE

Sheikh Zakzaky is married to Zeenatuddeen Ibraheem. She was also one of the most notable campaigners of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria long before she met Zakzaky. She was born on 14th August, 1961, in Sabon Gari residential area, Zaria. Her father was Malam Ibrahim, and mother was Maryam. She was the third daughter out of the only four children from their mother.

She began her formal education by attending a missionary elementary school in her locality from where she was transferred to St George Primary School in the same locality from 1967 to 1973. Having completed elementary school, she proceeded to Commercial College, Zaria in 1977 and she completed in 1979. She went to CAST, Katsina where spent two years before she later upon obtained an admission at Ahmadu Bello University to study Banking and Finance, but unfortunately she was not opportune to graduate as she was expelled in 1982 together with a number of other students for their religious activities, while Zakzaky as we mentioned earlier had his certificate withheld for the same reason.

THEIR MARRIAGE

Zeenatuddeen first came to know Zakzaky in 1977 during her stay at Commercial College, Zaria when he was a student at Ahmadu Bello University. His position as one of the prominent figures of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN), and he was among the keynote speakers in most of the lectures organised by the group. It was in the cause of those interactions that she came to know and eventually met him.

Zakzaky on the other hand, did not know her until around 1979 during the Islamic Vocational Conference (IVC) organised by the MSSN (Muslim Students Society of Nigeria) in Lagos when he, for the first time, met her because she travelled all the way from his hometown, Zaria. That encounter did not turn into relationship until they met again during another round of the IVC program in Bauchi State. She was the only female participant, who came from another state, and she set forth for Bauchi immediately after the wrapping up of the programme in Lagos, and many people from other states were not aware of the programme.

During the programme in Bauchi, she was financially stranded and had to reach out to Zakzaky for loan with the proviso that she would pay back when she returned home. Zakzaky sympathised with her predicament, and he gave her sufficient money to take care of her needs. When they reached home, she returned the money but Zakzaky declined to accept it, saying he only came to her rescue for the sake of Allah and he did not mean to have the money back. That was the beginning of their relationship.

As a devout and committed lady, Zeenatuddeen had quickly become a prominent figure in the movement; she was being invited by the MSSN to retreats which Zakzaky used to teach and propagate his new-found ideology of Shia Islam. Those secret meetings were being held after the IVC programme. Zeenatuddeen accepted the offer to be part of the movement in Wudil, Kano State in 1979 and later in Funtua, Katsina State where she publicly parted way with man-made laws which were replete with many contradictions and injustice.

A year after her invitation, Zakzaky confided in her that he was smitten with her and would be willing to marry her, an offer she turned down forthwith because according to her, marriage was off her radar screen. As the time went on, after a lot of reflections and consultations, she changed her

mind. She travelled to meet Zakzaky who was then being incarcerated in a high security jail in Enugu (1981) where she told him of her intent to marry him. Zakzaky and Zeenatuddeen got married in 1984 after she returned from two years' study in Iran.

HIS FAMILY MEMBERS

Sheikh Zakzaky is blessed with nine (9) children, seven of whom are male and two female. But due to the ongoing persecution of members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, six out of his seven sons were prematurely gunned down by the Nigerian Army in less than two years. He is now left with only three remaining children: one son and two daughters.

Muhammad Ibrahim Zakzaky: He is the eldest son of Sheikh Zakzaky. He was born in 1985 during which his father was being detained by the then military dictator, General Muhammadu Buhari. He attended his elementary and secondary schools in Nigeria and England, and he studied Architecture at the University of Tehran, Iran.

Muhammad Ibrahim Zakzaky is very reticent, circumspect and he is allergic to hot arguments. He rarely barges into things that do not concern him, and that is only if his intervention is highly needed. He got married in May-2016 when his father was being detained unjustifiably by the Nigeria government under the same dictator-turned civilian president, Muhammadu Buhari after massacring more than a thousand of his followers.

Nusaiba Ibraheem Zakzaky: She was born on 21st April, 1987 after her father was released from prison. He is the first daughter from her father. She attended elementary and secondary schools in Nigeria and she attended a Malaysian university from where she proceeded to International University, Dubai, United Arab Emirates to further her study. She is famously known for her patience and sense of humour.

Ahmad Ibraheem Zakzaky: Ahmad was Zakzaky's third child. He was born on 15th October, 1990. He attended his elementary and secondary schools in Nigeria from where he obtained an admission to study Chemical Engineering at the Xhenyang University of Technology, Shenyang province, People's Republic of China. But his study was truncated by his premature martyrdom on Friday 25 July, 2014, when he was gunned down in his hometown, Zaria by the Nigerian Army during Quds Day Rally organised yearly in solidarity with the

plight of the Palestinians. He was the head of Abdul Fadl Abbas Foundation, a brigade of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria that is devoted to protecting flowers of the ahlul-bayt (AS) from enemies. He was said to be a carbon copy to his father for their resemblance. He was fond of hanging around with children. He was very religious par excellence.

Hameed Ibraheem Zakzaky: Hameed Ibraheem was Zakzaky's fourth child. He was born 17th January, 1992. Just like his other brothers, he did his elementary and secondary schools in Nigeria, and shortly afterwards, he obtained an admission to Aeronautical Engineering at the Zain University of Technology, located in Xing province, China. She was one year to graduation when he was martyred by the murderous Nigerian Army alongside his two brothers during Quds Day rally on 25th July, 2014. He was 22 when he attained martyrdom

Hameed was a brainy student who was often being nicknamed 'The Genius.' Before his martyrdom, he was believed to have developed the knowhow to manufacture an airplane. He was a boy of remarkable originality who was as taciturn as his brother, Ahmad.

Suhaila Ibraheem Zakzaky: Suhaila is Zakzaky's fifth child and his second daughter. She was reportedly born on 8th August, 1993. She completed her primary and secondary in Nigeria. She was admitted into Danfodio University, in Sokoto State, but she soon became disillusioned with the university and she later upon, made up her mind to study Sociology at International University, Malaysia. She is addicted to reading and learning new things especially bizarre ones.

Mahmood Ibraheem Zakzaky: Mahmood is Zakzaky's sixth child. He was given a sobriquet 'The Gentle Man' by his schoolmates owing to his innate poise and taciturnity, but at home he was being nicknamed 'Shehu', a term in Hausa that describes a person who is very learned and humble. He was born on 20th March, 1995. He was done with his elementary and secondary schools in Nigeria and he was on his third year at Al-Mustapha International University, Beirut, Lebanon, when he was martyred.

He attained martyrdom on 25th July, 2014 together with his two brothers, Ahmad and Hameed during Quds Day rally in Zaria. He was martyred at the age of 19.

Martyr Mahmood was well-versed in computer and software. He was more religious person . He was in fact more interested in religious studies than Western education. He was, furthermore, more sociable than his brothers. It was presumed that if he had not been martyred, he would have inherited his father's compendium of Islamic knowledge and intellect.

Hammad Ibraheem Zakzaky: Hammad was born on 10th December, 1997. He was too young to attend university, but, before his martyrdom, he was able to complete his elementary and secondary schools and he received his Islamic education from his father, Zakzaky.

He got martyred on Monday 14th December, 2015 when the Nigerian Army laid siege to their home. He lived for 18 years and before his martyrdom, he was the head of youth brigade called 'Kasshafa', a brigade that is intended to inculcate moral values of Ahlul Bayt in children. He stood out among his other brothers and sisters when it came to discipline, interaction with children and total subservience to the cause of Islam.

Ali Haidar Ibraheem Zakzaky: Ali Haidar was the eighth child of Sheikh Zakzaky. He was born on 15th September, 1999. He, as his other brothers and sisters, received his Islamic education from his father, and he completed his elementary and secondary schools in Nigeria. Ali Haidar also was caught up in the Quds Day killings when he was arrested alive by soldiers alongside his two other brothers who were taken to army barrack where they two of his brothers were tortured to death. He was the sole survivor, and he was freed after suffering multiple gunshots on his left leg.

Despite his tribulation, he was not fortunate to survive another massacre, named The Zaria Massacre, when the same soldiers laid siege to their home and virtually killed every occupant of the house. He got martyred on Monday 14th December, 2015. He lived for 16 years.

Humaid Ibraheem Zakzaky: Humaid is Zakzaky's last born. He was born on 22nd June, 2001, as his other brothers and sisters, received his Islamic education from his father, and he completed his elementary and proceed to secondary schools in Nigeria, and he attained martyrdom on 14th December, 2015. He was 14th years old when he was martyred.

To put it briefly, these are the terse details of Zakzaky's family members. Six out of the children have been martyred cold-bloodedly by the Nigerian Army, leaving only three children - one son and two daughters alive.

THE BEGINNING OF HIS MISSION

Sheikh Zakzaky started preaching at the Provincial Arabic School, located in Kwarbai residential areas, Zaria, during an Islamic conference in the month of April, 1972. The conference was meant to establish youthful activists who would revive the Islamic values. The conference had attracted prominent personalities including traditional chiefs, kings and Islamic scholars. That was his first public preaching, and he delivered that preaching at the tender age of 19.

Most of his lectures in the later years tilted towards how people would do away with un-Islamic values and stopping living as if they were in a pre-Islamic era, and he began that mission shortly after he was admitted into the prestigious Ahmadu Bello University. He came out with his mission for Islamic revolution in 1980 before his mammoth adherents in Funtua city, Katsina State. That declaration was famously regarded as the best of its kind since the beginning of his mission. He proclaimed his dissociation from falsehood, oppression, and vowed not to pander to oppressors no matter how cruel and ruthless they cracked down on him and his followers.

After the famous declaration, Zakzaky preached before a large crowd of audience not only students- in Kwarbai Mosque- an enclave of Zaria. The lecture carried the ingredients of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria. But no sooner had he proclaimed his allegiance to the course of Islam than he began to face motley of challenges, ranging from discrimination, abandonment by his followers to ruthless crackdown by the security forces as well as intense pressures from his relatives. He once said during a sermon that, “There was a man who told me that; I would never be able to concentrate on my Economic study at university?, I responded by saying; 'There are many people who can take care of this job, but nobody can carry out this mission of mine except me. I had better focus on the actualisation of the Islamic mission’”.

THE REASONS BEHIND HIS DECISION TO START PREACHING

Many people would be anxious to know as to how Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky had started his mission or how the thought of leading a popular movement came to his mind.

Sheikh Zakzaky had once responded to a question by a journalist that he never thought in his life that he would be a preacher: all he thought was as soon as he was done with his study, he would be a civil servant or a lecturer because their lifestyles made him feel enthralled. He liked a private life devoid of noise and onerous responsibilities.

So how did he all of a sudden make a U-turn to become a preacher? Zakzaky had solved this mystery when he answered this question: “I could say my decision to start preaching was divinely borne out of the actions of some conspirators who wanted to silence, gag me or even make my life miserable..... when I got enrolled into the university, Muslims were inundated with various challenges, the proponents of socialism abounded at that time (their number may have been shrunk by now everywhere.) Those socialists were fond of criticising everything Islamic.

“So, as a person who grew up in a learned household, I knew for sure that they were criticising Islam out of prejudice; they were of the view that religion was just “the opium of the masses”, many people hid under the cloak of the religion to defraud their gullible followers. They even buttressed their point by citing examples of pre-colonial emirs who were used to marrying many wives and concubines, making it look like Islam is only glorifying sex. We, on our part, felt unconvinced with the groundless demonisation of Islam and we had to protect our religion from their blackmails, it was through that medium that our movement had started with a view to protecting the image of Islam, teaching and reviving the true Islamic values.

“We realised that there were many Muslim children who did not know what their religion was all about, a loophole of which the propagandists could utilise to delude people with their new ideologies. In fact, most of those young socialists were callow Muslims who were made to deride Islam as a barrier to human rights seeming to forget that there had never been any form of civilisation throughout history that salvaged humanity other than Islam.

“Another salient issue with which they fired salvo at Islam is the issue of women, they accuse Islam of violating women rights, but with our layman knowledge, we know for sure that they are economical with the truth even though the actions of some people towards women seem to justify their accusation but that (accusation) does not mean it is the teaching of Islam. So, I could, in a nutshell, say our movement started from that and from all

indication our movement did not go down well with many proponents of socialism: they were not happy with the people's awakening. That was how they resorted to discriminating against us through illegal arrests and detentions, since we were students.

“I could nonetheless say that this movement is a divine will because if we take a look at the story of the Prophet Moses, we can clearly learn that he was trying to protect a fellow member of his ethnic group when he accidentally hit the Pharaoh's courtier to death. The incident had compelled Moses to migrate, and it was on his way back home that he received revelation of prophethood. That was a destiny of which the Almighty Allah destined to occur. On my part, I can say my mission is a destiny, for I had never seen that coming; I had never thought that I would one day become an Islamic preacher. All I expected was to be a civil servant or a university lecturer. This is how I unexpectedly have found myself in what I am now practicing”.

After Zakzaky drew a line with the socialists who found faults with Islamic ideals blaming and criticising Islam for many troubles (that deluged the humanity,) the campaign, through philosophy and their shrewd application of deception, had succeeding in deranging the minds of many Muslim children to the extent that whenever Zakzaky picked up the Holy Quran to read, he felt as though the holy book was directly talking to him; as if the Almighty Allah was commanding him to rise up and protect Islam by teaching people the true religion and leading them to the path of righteousness.

In an interview with the pro-IMN magazine 'Gwagwarmaya', stated “when I was reading the Holy Quran; I was able to grasp its verses in different perspectives to a point that I had not done before: I can recall with nostalgia the time when I viewed the verses as refreshing as if they had just been revealed... that is to say, the Quran had enriched me with a new sense of understanding; if I recited the verses, I felt like they were personally addressing me,”

Therefore, if we considered these revelations, we could learn that two forces were behind the birth of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria under the leadership of his eminence Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky: his desperate attempts to salvage Muslim communities from ideological decadence, and divine will that destined him to be an Islamic revivalist. These are the real forces behind the birth of the movement.

THE MISSIONS OF HIS MOVEMENT

Sheikh Zakzaky's missions are no more than fulfilling religious obligations exerted over every Muslim to make amends to people's consciousness in order to live a successful life and in the same vein attain salvation in the Hereafter.

It is axiomatic that before the rise of Zakzaky, people were living in intellectual vacuity without freedom and religious conscience. The laws that governed the people's daily parts of existence were unwittingly shelved thereby creating a state of egocentricity and darkness. Those among other factors created a torrent of problems in the society's midst ranging from negative mental attitude, callousness, oppression, subjugation, subversion from within, illiteracy without any sense of direction.

That was what spurred the Sheikh Zakzaky into establishing a religious institution through which people would be taught the art of finding out panaceas for their troubles. It is with this institution that people would defeat hegemony, regain the lost glory of religious harmony, develop a positive mental attitude and attain salvation on the Day of Resurrection. Therefore, the missions of Zakzaky's movement are meant to change the mindset of people into believing that Islam has what it takes to positively change people for the better.

CHAPTER TWO

The Intellect and personalities of Sheikh Zakzaky

HIS PERSEVERANCE

Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky was, since his childhood known, as a cerebral young boy. He is endowed with a high degree of intelligence for he was the most hard-working boy among his father's children. Malam Badamasi Yaqoub stated this in an interview with newsmen that: "Sheikh Zakzaky grew up with strong passion for learning and it is quite true that none of our father's children stood a chance of outshining him when it came commitment to learning for, I could recall that he had two elder brothers, Abdulqadir Yaqoub and Sani Yaqoub; our father used to teach them (Islamic education), but the teachings rarely got assimilated into their brains and they often forgot them, and even though Malam (Zakzaky) was lagging behind them, they usually turned to him for help whenever they wanted to remember their previous lessons. Furthermore, he pursued his Western education without having to attend primary school. This among other factors had given Zakzaky an edge over his brothers".

Once upon a time, we (the writer of this book included) paid Zakzaky a visit; he was conversing with us in a jovial manner when the conversation straddled into his childhood memory, he said: "Whenever I remembered what I did during my childhood, especially when I was around 5 to 6 years old, many things came to my mind."

The writer said to himself: 'that was because you are extraordinarily unique, and we stand no chance of matching your mental power.'

This innate mental and physical agility of Zakzaky was borne out of his perseverance and sense of decorum. Malam Ahmad Shehu, a traditional ruler and a childhood friend of Zakzaky has attested to Zakzaky's perseverance when he said: "Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky stood out among us since he grew up with strong passion for knowledge and thirst for knowing more about history, understanding the historical background of everything he wanted to relate to.... And he was an exponent of research on everything he didn't know; so long as what he was interested in was positive, he would not hesitate making a research on it and relate it to his worldview".

Another achievement that could add piquancy to Zakzaky's perseverance was how he was able to memorise the Holy Quran in two versions 'Hafs' and

'Warshu'. According to the writer of “Malam, Malam ne,” (a book that chronicles his life of struggles and movement,) wrote in page 11: “Zakzaky is a great reader of the Holy Quran and in the same vein, its memoriser. He singlehandedly wrote the complete Quran by heart during his detention in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria from 1986 to 1989”.

HIS WORLDVIEWS (FIKRAH)

Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky was uniquely endowed with special sense of solicitude. It would not take a person long before he comes to realisation that Zakzaky neither contradicts his statements nor does he commit gaffes. He is always treading the right path of which he never deviates. He gains poise and summons up courage when other people especially his followers are looking for ways to find solution to a problem. He does not go off on a tangent; he seems to be ready to handle any unexpected issues.

During the Gulf War when Iraqi's long-term dictator, Saddam Hussain, invaded Kuwait, and air campaigns to drive Iraqi troops were led by the US. Nigerians were sharply divided as many people seemed to regard it as a war between the US and Muslims. That had resulted in the eventual polarisation of Sunni Muslims due to failure to separate the lesser devil. The stand-off between Saddam Hussain and Bill Clinton at that time had torn Muslims apart to the extent that some Muslims down here in Nigeria were not left behind: some were in support of the crusade as opposed to other who regarded it as the war on Islam. In the midst of that confusion, Zakzaky broke silence to shed more light on the conflict cautioning people that the war had nothing to do with Islam: it was just fallout between a godfather, Uncle Sam and its sidekick, Saddam Hussain. It was a war of interests which every faction wanted to assert and protect them. But that statement had generated a heated debate from the mainstream uninformed Muslims who accused him of bias and propaganda, but no sooner had the war ended than people realised the relevance of his prognostication.

Moreover, in 1999, shortly after a return to civilian rule in Nigeria some northern Nigerian governors under the aegis of Ahmad Sani of Zamfara State introduced Sharia laws with which they would use in place of the constitution. That strange decision had attracted the people's attention from all over the country, with some in the northern part coming out en masse to show their

solidarity with the Sharia laws while Christians who suffered marginalisation and felt alienated by the Sharia laws, opposed.

In the midst of the controversy, Zakzaky came out to condemn the moves insisting that Sharia laws, should not be imposed on people via political processes because to provide an Islamic government of which the Quran and Sharia could hold sway, some steps ought to be followed. But those were merely attempts to deceive people and deviate from focusing on what really mattered such as working to improve people's standard of living but to establish Islamic laws in a system that is protected by a secular constitution was merely a tool of deception.

Radical clerics suddenly resorted to lashing out at the Sheikh's position with many of them verbally abusing his personality, but in a matter of one year after the introduction of the Sharia laws, people came realise that they were taken for a ride and deceived by the so-called Sharia laws. In fact, no Sharia laws were ever applied. Many people hailed Zakzaky's transparency and audacity to call a spade a spade.

Furthermore, in 2010, all of a sudden an armed group which called itself 'Jama'atu Ahlissunnah Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad' which is popularly known as Boko Haram emerged with a mission to establish what they called an Islamic government. But to people's surprise, instead of trying to topple the central government, it targeted the predominantly Muslim northern Nigeria as a Launch pad of its jihad.

The rampaging group in its so-called mission to establish an Islamic state, they kill virtually everybody who does not share their dreaded idea: they kill the elderly people, women, children, physically-impaired people and even infants are not spared. They destroy livestock, massacre animals, pillage and burn down villages to ashes. They bomb mosques when people gather to say their prayers; they bomb churches when church-goers converge to pray. They target bus stations, restaurants, hospitals, schools, cinemas, and gatherings, where casualties in large numbers are recorded many of whom are Muslims. But they still regard this ruthless campaign of terror as a part of jihad.

People were ubiquitously deceived that the group sprouted up to liberate Muslims and establish their own Islamic state, and the weird thing about all this was the way many people fell victims to the propagandas. But Zakzaky on his part hit the nail on the head by insisting that Boko Haram was a

fictional group created by the Nigerian security forces in collaboration with the CIA and MOSSAD in order to depopulate the Muslim population, perpetually keep them in bondage, pillage their mineral resources and tarnish the image of Islam. Islam has nothing to do with these abominable acts, it is a covert operation staged by neo-colonialists and blood-sucking marauders.

Sheikh Zakzaky cited numerous instances that proved beyond reasonable doubt that Boko Haram was a planned operation carried out by the New World Order with direct support from the Nigerian government. The revelation had woken up many people from their reverie to the glaring plot being devised in the name of Boko Haram to deceive and re-colonise them.

These are some instances of how Zakzaky's worldview uncovered various deceptive operations. He does not fall prey to the enemies' plots whatsoever; his brain is impervious to propagandas. He could not be cowed or influenced with red herrings let alone his worldview be tethered to tentacles of lies. In one of his sayings, he said by the grace of Allah, he had never for once lost touch with his common sense. He said: "my common sense has nothing to do with perseverance, knowledge, heroism or astuteness, my common is uniquely inborn".

The writer of the book of 'Malam Malam Ne' in page 25 said that, the late Dr. Kalim Siddiqui, the British Muslim Society leader, said he had never met a person who, in a matter of minutes, could precisely tell you his entire missions like Sheikh Zakzaky.

HIS CLEANNES

Whoever is familiar with Sheikh Zakzaky, he must have known him as a hygienic person with strong aversion to filthy lifestyle. He always lives in a clean and unpolluted surrounding. Zakzaky has in fact integrated aesthetic decorations into Hausa and Fulani cultures because he made it a part of his lifestyle to decorate his car, places of gathering and his home with motley of flowers.

Sheikh Muhammad Turi, one of the closest protégés of Zakzaky, narrated Zakzaky's fondness of cleanness and purity in an interview with newsmen. He said after they were arrested alongside Sheikh Zakzaky during the heydays of Abacha's regime just years before its downfall, they were taken to a high security prison in Kaduna where they were locked in malodorous cell.

“The cell was an eyesore and it was the filthiest cell (probably) in the whole prison. It was notorious criminals who were being put there as punishment.... Sheikh immediately ordered (his followers) to bring in colourful paint, and the room was soon painted and decorated with flowers. The cell did not even have electric light bulb, but the cell was converted into a beautiful detention room.

“I could vividly remember a day when a prison’s chief paid a visit to our jail. No sooner had he entered our room than he exclaimed, 'oh, this room looks like it is made for a bride.' He knew the room could only be likened to a filthy latrine, but to his surprise, the room was cleansed, painted and decorated with assorted flowers and fragrances. The prison chief was taken aback for a while before he left. Zakzaky saying: 'This man seems to forget that there are some people whose sanity and fragrances are so overwhelming that they could turn a stinking latrine into a fragrant fountain'.

The way he renovated his detention room and decorated it at Kaduna prison had made the prison warders to dub it a VIP cell, because it was the most beautiful room in the whole prison.

Zakzaky's life was wholesomely characterized by cleanness and fragrances. Fragrances are all over his room, study, home and even the likes of his car are not exempted from cleanness. He was so fond of perfumes that whenever he passes people by, he leaves the retinue of his perfumes hanging in the air.

HIS MODESTY

Sheikh Zakzaky was an advocate of modesty and humility. He was never accused of pomposity or superiority complex. It is only if a person gets closer to him that he can realise how simple he is. For those who used to call at him in his residence in the evening, they can blithely attest to his audacity to serve his visitors cupful of hot tea, and he without a fuss has made it his hobby.

Sheikh Muhammad Turi one said: “During our incarceration in Kaduna, it was Zakzaky himself who served us food, I could not forget the moment when a chief warder barged in during which Zakzaky was serving us food, he was taken aback by the way Zakzaky was exhibiting his modesty and unassuming nature. He was very surprised and said “This is leadership by example!”.

“There was a day also during the Unity Week, one of the invited guests came over to witness Zakzaky serving himself, and the man was so shocked that he unwittingly asked: 'ah why are you letting the Sheikh serve himself? Can't you give him a hand?' he didn't know that is the lifestyle of the Sheikh. Furthermore, we once set out on a journey when the car stuck in a mud and demanded a push. As we stepped out to push the car, Zakzaky out of the blue came out to help push out the car.

It is part of his modesty that he visits patients ranging from relatives, neighbours or his followers. He pays condolence visits; he tours prisons to visit convicted criminals or his followers who are detained illegally. One of the followers of Zakzaky expressed his delight when Zakzaky visited him. “When I heard his footsteps coming to see me, I could not express how delighted I was. It was just too hilarious.”

Sheikh Yakubu Yahaya Katsina, another prominent disciple of Zakzaky was reported as saying: “There was a large Islamic learning center which was just a stone's throw from Zakzaky's family house, Sheikh used to accommodate his guests there, and I happened to be one of his accommodated guests. There was a time when I came to discover that it was Zakzaky who prepared my bed and readied my room. That gesture surprised me so much. Moreover, when I was set to return home, he was the one to accompany me, which made me feel nervous.”

In an interview with the Al-Mizan newspaper, one of the followers of Sheikh Zakzaky, Malam Dawud Aliyu cited an incident that exhibited the self-effacing nature of sheikh Zakzaky. He said: “I could remember, when Zakzaky was living in Kwarbai, (his family house before he relocated to Gyallesu residential area), I came as Zakzaky was about to go to his private apartment to rest and make some researches, he carried me in his car. Upon entering the house, I saw his clothes soaked in a bucket, but when I attempted to wash them, he declined and he washed them himself.”

A former associate Abdullahi Manu narrated that Zakzaky was used to washing his own clothes, he did not allow other people to do the work. It was his habit to soak his clothes in the morning and wash them in the evening. When he soaked them and left, I (secretly) washed them and hanged them to dry. He cautioned me to stop it but I paid no heed. He soaked some clothes the following morning, and I repeated the same thing. When he returned to find

out what I did, he didn't say anything and few days when his clothes needed washing, he soaked them, carried the bucket and locked it in his living room, leaving me with no option but to let him be washing his own clothes. It was in the process of washing his clothes that he had an accident with a bucket and broke his hand.”

It was a well-known fact that Zakzaky used to handle his own chore as evidenced by his courage to wash his clothes. This shows the depth of Zakzaky's modesty and self-effacement.

HIS ASCETICISM

It is common for pious scholars to distance themselves from worldly materials, so Zakzaky is not exception when it comes to aversion to worldly materials. He possessed the requirements to be an ascetic. He wears good clothes as a necessity owing to the kind of society he lives in.

Every learned person who studied the life of Zakzaky, he must have known him as a pious person with no taste for materialism. Here is a testimony from one of his followers: “One day I bought a good amount of sorghum and took it to Zakzaky's home, the sheikh was very delighted with the gift telling me that he spent exactly three days without cooking anything”.

Zakzaky is a person who eats less, skipping meals in most of times, especially on Friday on which he used to have his breakfast at 3:00 o'clock pm. There was a time when we were about to start a programme, he plausibly excused himself, saying: “Let me have some morsels of food,” he said, “it's been a while since I last ate.” He added.

The author of 'Malam, Malam Ne' said: “Sheikh Zakzaky is truly an abstemious ascetic, mark my words, I swear by Allah that Zakzaky, until recently, did not have luscious mattress in his bedroom let alone a bed itself. He lay just on a mat or carpet.”

During a visit to one of the northwestern states of Nigeria, a governor visited him at his accommodation, but to his dismay, he found the sage scholar lying on a floor. The governor was so awestruck by what he had seen that he didn't know when he exclaimed: “what a simple man!”

A rich man offered to build him a mansion, but Zakzaky adroitly turned down the offer saying it was not his wish to leave behind so much wealth of which his children would clamour to inherit. He preferred to morally, physically

and educationally build them so that they could live a meaningful life without having to bank on their father for survival.

“Whoever devotes himself to the Almighty Allah,” says Zakzaky in a speech, “he will surely find anything in this world disenchanting. The world would not be as important to him as many people think”.

The former military dictator, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida was notorious for gagging Muslim scholars with bribes. One day he sent a large sum of money to the Sheikh in return for loyalty, the sheikh disdainfully scorned at the money the way prophets scorned at idols. He looked at the money and then told the sender of that money: “The amount of the money is not as valuable as it seems!” he said.

The messenger replied in a trembling voice that: “No, sir. I swear the amount is intact and nothing is deducted from it.”

“I see paradise is not included in the message,” Zakzaky added. The messenger suddenly got the sense of what Zakzaky was saying.

“It is true, sir that we cannot provide this,” the messenger replied to Zakzaky politely.

“Then take back his money since it cannot buy me the Allah's kingdom of which I am desperately after!” The messenger left wondering how it was possible that a man could stifle a desire to collect a jackpot like that.

One thing that can add piquancy to Zakzaky's asceticism was an episode during his trip to a foreign country. Having wrapped up his activities and poised to return home, he visited a super market in order to buy souvenirs and other essentials. Unknown to him, an admirer of the Sheikh spotted him when he entered the super market. The person drew his credit card, went over to the cashier and asked him to deduct whatever Zakzaky would buy from the credit card. He left the scene in order for Zakzaky not to spot him. Desperate to take advantage of that, the cashier met Zakzaky and informed him of the development, Zakzaky on the spur of the moment made a U-turn and refused to buy what he had intended, choosing to buy a piece of handkerchief instead.

“It seems that you did not get my message, sir,” the cashier said. “I understand everything,” said Zakzaky as he made for the door leaving the cashier staring after him in consternation.

In short, these have shown how Zakzaky regards the luxuries of this world as transient and deceptive which do not guarantee salvation on the Day of Judgment.

HIS STEADFASTNESS

Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky is a man who always attributes his activities to the will of Allah. Whoever cares to listen to his speeches, he knows him as such. At the beginning of his movement, there was a cleric who downplayed the movement, asking Zakzaky to perish the thought of establishing the movement for it was simply impossible to actualise. Zakzaky only responded to the statement in a few words: "So, you think there is what is beyond the power of Allah? I never said I would do it alone, but I said it is Allah who can do the job and you can feel free to prove me wrong if there is limit to what Allah can do."

In the year 2014, when enemies upped the ante by embarking on various attempts to assassinate him on his way to Hussainiyya, his well-meaning adherents reached a decision to buy him a bullet-proof car in order to stave off the plots. They even made contact with the company in Germany when the news was leaked to the Sheikh. Having learned of the gesture, he thanked them but turned down the offer, insisting that it was the Almighty Allah who would protect him till the end of his time. "We have no power to evade death; we are only expected to refer our lives to Allah but we have no cause to fret as to when soldiers would pounce on us, this business isn't ours. Therefore, we should keep praying for salvation."

Shortly afterwards, soldiers encircled his residence and massacred hundreds of his followers including his three more children. During the siege, his followers offered to sneak him out of the house so he could survive the massacre, he just smiled, shrugged and said: "let them do what they intend to do, ours is to rely on Allah and He will come to our rescue." He was quoted as saying by one of the survivors of the siege. It was in the midst of the siege that one sympathiser called him from Iran to know his whereabouts, but his laconic reply took the man off guard: "Only Allah alone can deliver me," the sheikh said.

These are some of the instances of Zakzaky's steadfastness, steadfastness that inarguably makes greater influence not only on his followers but also on other Sunni Muslims and even non-Muslims.

HIS SELF-CONFIDENCE AND DEFINITENESS OF PURPOSE

Sheikh Ibrahim is a person of self-confidence and his subservience to the cause of Islam is superb as evidenced by the way he practices what he preaches.

In most of his speeches, he used to assert that no amount of plots or forces can suppress the growth of Islam. That is to say despite the enemies' overt and covert operations to scuttle the growing popularity of Islam, the religion is invincible in this era. In one of his speeches, on the Fortieth Day of Ashura, he made mention of the current schism in Islam, accusing the West and their minions-clad in the garment of Islam, of the chaos. "The oppressors," he says "always seem to think that they can scuttle Allah's destiny just because they have weapons and know how to use them (against humanity), seeming to forget that if killings could bury the light of Islam, the scourge of Karbala would have buried Islam in its entirety." Moreover, in the speech, he claimed that the triumph of Islam was in sight.

One more thing that can further bring to light the steadfastness of the Sheikh was the scourge during the heydays of Abacha's regime. He was in prison when his family members informed him that they were being pressurised by a landlord to vacate their rented house- that meant they were in predicament. When Zakzaky heard the scathing news, he allayed their fear, convincing them the trial was a glaring sign that they would soon not only be able to buy the house of their own but also be able to donate houses to the poor. He made the statement when his family members were trying to draw his attention to their dilemma.

Zakzaky's steadfastness is not restricted to his transcendental philosophy of the cosmos and human interaction, his firm belief in Allah and other forms of worships give testimony to that. In 2010 when he discovered a plot to assassinate him, he doused the flames of fear in the hearts of his followers by saying: "I am grateful to Allah for blessing me with the will to stay firm in what I believe, because my haters know since my childhood that I have never cast doubt on my conviction. Therefore, death is inevitable, it is my belief that I could be assassinated the way other people who were more important and influential than I were killed."

These are some of the examples that showed Sheikh Zakzaky's definiteness of purposes and steadfastness.

HIS PATIENCE AND ENDURANCE

Sheikh Zakzaky is known by many people for his patience and endurance, many of such testimonies abound but we will narrate the testimonies from three persons only.

Throughout the timeline of Zakzaky-led movement, his followers are subjected to various forms of persecutions and segregations. The Nigerian security forces have been overtly attacking their religious centers they painstakingly built with their money, and many of such thugs were being carried out with the furtive collaboration of traditional rulers, street urchins or thugs. There are many instances when properties of his followers-worth of millions of naira were destroyed in different waves of attacks against his people. His followers were and are still languishing in various prisons across the country. Hundreds of his followers were secretly mass sacked from their jobs just for showing solidarity with his movement. Hundreds of other students were also expelled from high schools, worse still; dozens of his well-meaning followers were turned to paupers as a result of such discriminatory measures. In spite of these untold persecutions they have been subjected to for nearly forty years, there has never been a time when Zakzaky asked his followers to retaliate or take laws into their hands.

In 2014, the Nigerian soldiers under the command of S.K Oku gunned down thirty three members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria including three sons of Zakzaky. They committed the heinous killings with the intention of inciting him into resorting to insurgency, but to their dismay, Zakzaky issued out a bland statement urging his teeming followers to remain calm and not to take laws into their hands.

It was said that during the killings of his children, the news reached when he was saying Isha'i prayers, and no sooner had he finished and started pouring tea than his phone rang; it was after answering the call that he was heard uttering: "we are from Allah and to Him we shall return" then he briefed his followers about what happened to his children. Despite the impassioned tension that reigned in the room, he did not shed a drop of tears. He stood motionless for a while, accepting the will of Allah, despite his unquenchable adoration towards the slain children. He silently got up and entered the house.

That unprecedented behavior had touched the hearts of his followers who were present at the time.

A year after the Quds Day killings, another legion of soldiers were dispatched at the locations of his followers under the supervision of the army chief, General Tukur Yusuf Burutai, to commit another heinous atrocities which according to the Human Rights Watch and some analysts, were the most ruthless massacre a government committed against its own people in recent memories. The marauding soldiers massacred hundreds of his followers, including three more of Zakzaky's children, his elder sister was gunned down and her body was burnt beyond recognition. He and his wife, Zeenatuddeen, were sprayed with bullets which crippled parts of their bodies. Having virtually killed every occupant of the house, the house was razed down. His Islamic centres, including a cemetery where the Shias used to bury their martyrs were demolished altogether. Most of the graves of martyrs who were killed during the Quds Day killings were desecrated and partially exhumed, even his mother's shrine was not spared in the atrocities. The soldiers arrested badly-wounded Zakzaky, his wife and hundreds of his followers and kept most of them incommunicado since then.

It was in the midst of this exceptional injustice that Zakzaky, after recuperating from his injuries, issued out kudos to his staunch followers who remained steadfast in the aftermath of the massacre. He praised them for their impudence to remain non-violent in spite of their persecutions by the Nigerian authorities. He also urged them not to resort to violence no matter how intense their situations might seem.

HIS FONDNESS OF FORGIVENESS

Zakzaky is a man known for his penchant for forgiveness; he easily forgives and forgets the crimes committed against him by other people. He pays no heeds to the campaigns of calumnies and innuendos launched against him by his adversaries. Many people, especially his neighbours and his disciples can vouch for his extra-ordinary sense of forgiveness. For examples, during the transformation of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria into Shia-driven movement, there were various frictions within and outside the movements which resulted in desertions of thousands of his followers, many of whom resorted to launching literary wars against the Sheikh, publishing articles in the

newspapers, pamphlets and newsletters with a view to deterring people from joining his movement. Having failed to revise Zakzaky's influence, years later, and the people came to the Sheikh to seek his forgiveness, and the Sheikh without resentment forgave them. Few days later, during a conference, he raised the issue again, saying: "whoever said anything bad about me, he does not need to approach me for forgiveness; I have forgiven him."

Furthermore, some of his followers rebelled against him, splintered from his movement and resorted to tarnishing his image by creating many lies against him. Zakzaky never mentioned them in his speeches let alone criticise them either. During a lecture to celebrate 25 years since the birth of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, he said: "where are the rebels who defected from our movement? We plead with you to come back; the porous door through which they absconded is still intact and open, and if it is the aspersions you cast on me that make you too shy to reunite with us, I forgive you with all my heart!"

Notwithstanding the internal revolts that nearly brought down the then nascent movement, Zakzaky never held grudges against his adversaries. There was a time that he nearly lost his life at the Bayero University, Kano, during the Friday's prayer when people had attacked him, but did he retaliate? No, for he travelled to Mecca to perform his Hajj rituals, he forgave them praying the almighty Allah make them realise the lights of his missions.

It was in 2010 that one of his acclaimed followers was secretly audio-taped casting aspersion on Zakzaky's personality and missions. When the Sheikh listened to the tape, he ignored the tape, but his hagiographic followers suggested he take (legal) actions against him. But when the suggestion was brought before the Sheikh, he downplayed the case: "I wish it was me, who listened to the tape alone, and nobody would have heard about it; I would have hidden it beneath my pillow so that it could not generate this controversy because the person isn't the only person (who insults me,) there are many of them and we are aware of them; it is just that they do not deserve our words. Their criticism will not harm us an iota; everybody is fighting for his own destiny." Zakzaky said.

At times when youths were hired to attack his followers or destroy their properties, used to get angry with the attacks, but his answer is less caustic than the attacks. "If it's not for fear for miserable life, we would have cursed

them, but we will rather curse the oppressors who (exploited their poverty and) hired them.”

In 2011, a journalist asked Sheikh Zakzaky how he regards the people who persecuted him in many ways. The Sheikh answered as follows:

“Well, I think those who oppressed me are fallible people who are somewhat allergic to social revolution because they are scared that the change would affect their lives, while we, on the other hand, are trying to assure them (that it is the best option to defeat tyranny) but the same people whom we are trying to change are the same people who are trying to crush us (or even kill us.) Their target is to wipe us out while ours is not to see them die, but live to understand what our missions stand for. We intend to draw their attention to their dire state of affairs in order to alter their mindsets. They are desperate to crush us while we are anxious to influence and change their mental attitudes (so as to find solutions to their own spiritual and social problems.) Notwithstanding all this, it is visible to everybody that we are not fighting anyone. This is the crux of the matter. We are only here to bring changes and it is the enemies of the changes who are fighting us.”

This statement has shown how Zakzaky's heart is illuminated by compassion and sense of forgiveness towards people; he does not harm his people let alone bear ill-wills towards them, and even those who harmed him in some ways, he forgives them and also pays back with kindness.

HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH PEOPLE

Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky is a man who exercises fairness in his dealings; he is not such a selfish person who promotes his interests against the wishes of others. Take for example an incident in 1993 when his followers revolted against him over the allegation of infusing Shia Islam into his movement. Having publicly dissociated themselves from the Sheikh, they vowed to fight the movement to the end. Zakzaky did not bar them from deserting him; he only discussed the problems for the first time during a programme when he outlined the missions and visions of his movement. He was quoted as praying: “Oh the Lord of Moses and Aaron, if what these people (the rebels) stand for is the right path, I beg you to dismantle my movement and let theirs take precedence over mine. But if mine is more appealing to you, then I implore you to dismantle their rebellion and make mine supreme.” This is the kindest

prayer and the only public statement he delivered since the rebellion that nearly pulled his movement to pieces erupted.

Additionally, in his special session with the singers of the movement in 2015, Zakzaky had made it clear that: “we don't assert that our path is the only right path that leads to salvation, that is why we do not excommunicate people, we only maintain that if you left our movement, make sure your destination is purer and more organised than ours.” There is certainly something to ponder in this wise quote.

HIS SENSE OF HUMOUR

Sheikh Zakzaky is a pious servant of Allah whose heart fills with humour and charisma; his relationship with other people is cordial and superb.

There are many occasions when people failed to talk to him in person even though they travelled all the way to visit him. “I was a victim of his powerful sense of humour,” said one follower of Sheikh Zakzaky when he was asked about the Sheikh's charisma. “I heard in times without numbers that talking to Zakzaky required a great deal of courage and self-confidence, but no sooner had I stepped into his living room and caught sight of his powerful eyes than my mouth gagged and lost its words, making me unable to exactly tell him what I was there for. I was completely enveloped by nervousness.”

There was also a time during a programme when the emcee failed, due to nervousness, to mention the outline of the programme. Having concluded the lectures, some people asked the emcee as to how he declined to mention the schedules. His answer was unsettling: “Oh, you never know how difficult it is to speak before the sheikh, it's as challenging as moving a mountain,” he said.

One member of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria wrote in his diary how he viewed his first encounter with the Sheikh looked like and he was awestruck by it. “I have been hearing news about this man,” he said, “I made up my mind to visit him when I realised he is based here in Zaria. Upon entering the house I found his followers sitting in a large premise. It did not take long when the Sheikh came out, and my soul immediately filled with excitement when my eyes met his. He beamed and greeted me; since that encounter, an impulsive urge to accept his movement enveloped my soul.”

A lecturer entered a class and delivered a lecture on the validity of hadith which says there are certain infallible servants of Allah whose impacts make a person remember Allah. The lecturer said: "it is only if a person is so devoted to Allah that he can achieve this feat." He then went ahead to ask: "who among our contemporary scholars suits this privilege?"

A student raised and said: "Sir, this Shiite scholar! The man is so committed to the truth that a person hardly mentions his name without remembering Allah."

"What's his name?" the lecturer asked, curious.

"His name is Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky." No sooner was his name mentioned than the students chanted Allahu Akbar! (Allah is the greatest.)

This was what spurred the lecturer into researching the life and movement of Sheikh Zakzaky, a research that eventually led him to convert to Shia Islam.

HOW HE RESPONDS TO SITUATIONS

Zakzaky is known for introspection when it comes to uttering his words. He does not speak in anger or responds to vile criticisms especially the criticisms that are made to elicit his responses. These may be the reason why he rarely commits gaffes. Throughout the life of Zakzaky, and his movement, he is subjected to seemingly countless obloquy, character defamations, misinterpretation of his speeches, and banking on baseless and ridiculous lies to persecute him and his followers. Despite all this, Zakzaky refuses to even speak out of spite, he rather chooses to respond in an adroit and simplistic manners which even his most notorious adversaries feel humbled by the responses.

For example, in the first year of his movement, many Islamic clerics tried in vain to criticise his modus operandi in order to trigger his followers to abandon him. One prominent cleric said this about the Sheikh: "It is the likes of El-Zakzaky who assertively calls for the return of Sharia laws even though he is a callow preacher with no in-depth knowledge of the Islamic jurisprudence."

Zakzaky replied to the cleric saying: "this criticism is welcome since what you said about us is not cogent enough to claim we have strayed from the right path because being too young is not a deficit since it is clear that a big tree from little acorns grow. Besides, nobody was born as an old man. Besides, the

accusation we lack in-depth knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence is a testimony that I am a student of learning.”

In 2002, Salafi clerics and their gullible followers embarked upon spreading a false propaganda that the then president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo awarded Zakzaky as his personal assistance on peace co-existence and inter-religion dialogue of the country. This false news was spread to virtually every nook and cranny of the northern Nigeria. It took Zakzaky months to even talk about it. It was when he was asked in an interview by a journalist working for a local radio, Federal Radio Corporation, Kaduna as to how he would react to the news which was fast making the round that he was awarded with the position in the government. “I heard a lot of this. It was later on I realised there is someone called Ibrahim Musa Gasshash of the National Tranquility Movement, and I think it is him (Ibrahim Musa) who bagged the award because people may have mistaken me for the person. But Zakzaky never held any position in the government”. He said.

“I am of the view that if government had really set up a commission, and installed Zakzaky as its head, it is the government that would break the news, not the public. But it is sad that people are no longer expressing their discontent with their government and the person they so much try to discredit has nothing to do with it. That is why people want to tarnish my image by claiming that I am working for the government which is not true.”

Moreover, during the maiden Arbaeen Symbolic Trek to Hussainiyya Baqiyatullah in Zaria, there was an outrage and condemnation from various religious groups across the country with Salafi clerics upping the ante by claiming that the followers of Zakzaky had embarked upon trekking without foods and water, beating their chests, wearing black attires and unnecessarily inflicting hardship upon themselves which, as they claimed, bore no physical benefits let alone godly rewards.

In his response to the saga in one of his lectures, he summed it all up when he said: “What is your business? How dare you care too much about what we do? Are we trekking on your feet? Is it not our feet? Whose chests are we beating? Is it not our chests? Who are bearing the brunt of hunger? Is it not our bodies? Are we putting on anybody black attires? Is it not our bodies? Whose eyes that are shedding tears? Is it not our eyes? What on earth is your

business? What is the basis of this unnecessary outrage? (If you cannot join us, watch us).”

HIS PHILANTHROPY

Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky is like rainfall when it comes to donating to the poor. Everything he possesses is subject to donation to the poor. It is not possible to write seemingly countless events of which he gave away his precious possessions for charities. But we can briefly mention some:

In 2014, when the Nigerian Army killed three of his biological children alongside thirty others, when people started trooping to his residence to offer their heartfelt condolences, an old woman came in, and after condoling with the sheikh, she fumbled in her purse and brought out a banknote of 200 naira and handed it to the Sheikh, but the sheikh declined and rather brought out an unspecified amount of money and gave her in return. “Please, take this so that you can buy something,” the sheikh said, humble. When the news reached the woman's grandson, he said: “If you had given him 500 naira, he would have given you 50 thousand naira. This is the way the man pays back.” The man was reported to have said.

Philanthropy as far as Zakzaky is concerned, has become something of an addiction which even when well-meaning persons visited him, he never let them leave empty-handed; he gave them something to rejoice with. For instance, when the Iranian ambassador paid him a visit in 2014, he presented him with a hand copy of the Holy Quran. Moreover, when the Swiss ambassador visited him, he also presented him with a copy of the Holy Quran to read. Whenever Sunni scholars visited him, he used to hand them copies of Shia literature such as Saheefa Sajjadiyya. In fact, he used to offer presents to his visitors in proportion to their position in the society.

In 2007, he bought a large house for a leader of physically-challenged persons and his men in Tudun Wada, Zaria, and the cripples converged in the sheikh's house to greet him and appreciate his efforts to help them, he gave each of them a large sum of money.

Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky had been in the habit of donating money to the students of Fudiyya Islamic Centre programme every week he attended the programme, and he never got tired of his philanthropic gesture. Every week, he gave them transport fees. Moreover, the women who participated in his

regular workshops reported of how the sheikh used to give each of the participants a meaningful amount of money to the extent that the women banked upon the sheikh's stipend to borrow money when they came to know that the programme was around the corner because they had the assurance that Zakzaky would not let them leave empty-handed.

HIS HUMANITARIAN GESTURES

Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky is indeed a knight in shining armour to orphans and the less privileged. He is a mercy to the poor around him for his humanitarian gestures were there for all to see that he touched a countless number of people in distress. The sheikh taught his followers the virtues of being kind to their host communities because every community, in one way or the other, is in need of humanitarian services. Zakzaky also used to mention a hadith which says: "the most impactful persons on earth are those who positively impact their community."

It is due to this moral guidance that thousands of Zakzaky's followers used to embark on blood donation in various hospitals across the country every year in order to help patients in need of blood transfusion. This donation is normally being carried out during the events Ashura commemoration and Maulud, the birthday anniversary of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the altruistic service has, however, saved thousands of lives from perishing.

In addition to all this, Sheikh Zakzaky has himself outlined some forms of humanitarian services his followers would prioritise, these include cutting the matted grasses in cemeteries, ridding their environment of waste, removing wastes from drainage and spreading insecticide to contain the menace of malaria and other health-related hazards. Giving out food rations to the needy and victims of disasters, building water drainages to avert threat of flood are also some of the major pet projects prioritised by Zakzaky's followers, these projects are mostly carried out by Youth Forum and volunteers.

Sheikh Zakzaky has become a voice to the voiceless within the society. For example, in 1994, a one tyrant traditional ruler in Kudan- a town not far away from Zaria, seized a large piece of land from an old woman inherited from her parent. The woman lodged a formal complain to the relevant authorities but nothing was done to bring back her confiscated land. She dragged the man to court demanding justice all to no avail because despite the

fact that the court ruled in her favour, nobody could implement the court ruling because the judicial system at the time was mired in corruption and as a result of military meddling. Besides, she was dealing with a person who was more powerful than her. The woman was worried because she had children and grandchildren to whom she would bequeath the land to. She was advised to inform Zakzaky of her ordeal and solicit his assistance. Upon listening to her plea and seeing the land certificate, Zakzaky and his entourage travelled to the town and asked the king to return her land and respect the court ruling which favoured the woman. That compelled the ruler to abandon his claim over the land and the woman was happy to witness the return of her land.

In fact, the followers of Zakzaky in various places have become a symbol of humanity and backbone of the less privileged and the oppressed because they would do everything diplomatically to solve the problems.

FEEDING PEOPLE

There was nothing that brought more joy to Sheikh Zakzaky than putting smile to the faces of people who were suffering from various forms of poverty and miseries. It was historically Zakzaky's hobby to be kind to people around him especially by feeding them. Throughout his ephemeral stay at university, he was the one feeding all his friends.

The writer of *Tarihin Harkar Islamiyya* (The History of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria,) cited in page 94 that: "His fellow students had made his room a Mecca, coming every time to drink tea and eat many varieties of food that he provided, for he personally asked his sisters at home to fry a bucketful of pie and bring it to his room because people used to come to his room expecting to have something to eat."

During his imprisonment in Enugu- located in southern part of the country, he used to share the foods brought to him by his visitors. One of his closest disciples, Sheikh Yakubu Yahaya Katsina narrated that: "there was a time we visited the sheikh in a high security prison in Port Harcourt, and brought him a lot of presents. He went out to the vicinity of the prison and gave all the presents to his fellow inmates. That was what made one inmate to, out of curiosity; say 'Alhaji never eats and never sleeps:' (He was always worshipping.)"

HIS HUMANITY

Sheikh Zakzaky is an embodiment of humanity and hospitality to whomever associated himself with him. He had the audacity to serve people beyond people's imagination.

Malama Jamila Auwal, a housewife of Malam Mukhtar Sahabi (a close disciple of Zakzaky,) narrated her encounter with Sheikh: "When I was accompanying my daughter to Iran after her wedding, we visited Sheikh at his home. The sheikh inquired as to where we would take the flight to Iran. I said via Lagos. He said: 'It is tomorrow morning that you will leave Kaduna for Lagos since your flight schedule is 2 p.m. I said no, we will set forth today by car. The sheikh then said: 'oh no it is tedious to travel to Lagos by car. Tell Malam Mukhtar Sahabi to book you a flight to Lagos. I will send him the money.' That was how it was done. We comfortably flew to Lagos."

In the early month of December, 2015, the Nigerian Army besieged the residential area of Zakzaky in Gyallesu. Before they reached the sheikh the army gunned down hundreds of his followers including women and children. During the siege that lasted for over 70 hours, the area was replete with informants who were instrumental in helping the army to commit the heinous crime to the extent that writers and historians compared the people of Gyallesu to the people of Kufa, Iraq, who betrayed Imam Hussain (AS) and left him in the lurch.

But to their surprise, during the month of Ramadan, that was six months after the massacre, Sheikh Zakzaky sent a message from his detention room that foodstuffs be shared to the poor people of his residential area as he was used to doing every year before the massacre. A day later, a truckload of foodstuff came to the area and a lot of poverty-stricken people benefited from the humanitarian aids. That showed how Zakzaky repays cruelty with kindness as a result of his innate crave for humanity.

One follower of Sheikh Zakzaky narrated that: "one day in the evening while sitting in Zakzaky's living room, a well-meaning person visited Zakzaky, and after discussing a lot of things with the sheikh, the man handed him a car key; 'here is a car, sheikh. It could be useful for domestic activities,' the man said, smiling. The sheikh was happy and collected the key. No sooner had the man left than the sheikh stared fixedly at the car and said: 'this car is beautiful and it could be useful indeed to someone', (he mentioned the name of one of

his followers, who was sitting beside him,) and said to the man: 'you can enjoy this car on a Sahara desert, right?' He handed him the key and said: 'take it and have fun.'" This is a great and extempore honour to the man considering the fact that none of Zakzaky's children had a car at the time, and instead of giving it to his children, she chose to give it to his follower.

Nonetheless, Zakzaky was in the habit of slaughtering animals annually and dedicate the rewards of the rituals to his millions of followers who had been unable to slaughter the animals. He also used to give as much animals to the poor and physically-challenged persons as possible the way the Prophet did to his adherents.

HIS COURAGE AND INTREPIDITY

Sheikh Zakzaky is an intrepid man from all sense of the term; he was so feisty and focus-driven that he never feared for the consequence of his actions. In a party organised to mark his 45 years on earth, the sheikh was reported to have said he was innately fearless and the secret of his success in his mission was his promptness when it came to taking decision regardless of what might transpire afterwards.

The writer of Tarihin Harkar Islamiyya stated an occasion when Zakzaky said courage and definiteness of purpose was a key to his success and the way he was not scared of telling the truth so would he never be scared of confronting tyranny and falsehood.

It could be deduced from all this that he never went into hiding to avoid arrest, despite the fact that he had been detained several times, he never complained; he was instead describing his detentions as "experience." In 1984, during his detention in a high security prison in Lagos, he wrote a secret letter to the teeming of his followers that: "while being driven to Kirikiri (Prison,) my heart was enveloped by a sense of assurance that the gravity of my mission is worth the risk." The Kirikiri prison had, at that time, recorded an infamy for tortures and maltreating inmates; and the place was reserved for high profile figures especially politicians purged when the military seized power."

When he was released from prison in Enugu State, he delivered a lengthy speech to his followers from which he said: "Certain things could only be learned by experience and my incarceration has opened my horizon about the way I see certain things".

Sheikh Zakzaky was indeed a hero when it came to speaking out against injustice, dictatorship and oppression. During the nadir of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida-led junta, Zakzaky was arrested and arraigned for posing a threat to national security. The judge, Karibi White, after reading out the verdicts of crimes he was allegedly accused to have committed, sentenced him to four years imprisonment, and before he read out the sentence, he asked Zakzaky whether would show remorse and ask for leniency, the sheikh smirked in a sheer moment of poise, and said defiantly: "I would like the court to inflict on me the most stringent punishment it can ever deliver. It should not have to pity me," he looked fixedly at the judge and added, "if you are in a position to either sentence me to death or life imprisonment, I suggest you condemn me to firing squads." There was a terrible consternation in the courtroom as none of them, throughout their legal careers, ever heard a defiant speech like that.

Zakzaky's intrepidity can further be brought to light looking at the way he was severally and without prior notice being arrested to the extent that the sheikh resorted to keeping a bag in which contained bathing and washing soaps, lotions, perfume and toothpaste, etc. He kept the bag in case the security forces would descend upon him and arrest him so he could pick up the bag and say, 'let's go!'(17).

Upon the country's return to a democratic government, under President Olusegun Obasanjo from 1999-2007, rumours were ripe that the security forces would arrest Zakzaky; his followers had even suggested that he relocate to another country until he was no longer in danger of arrest or assassination. Zakzaky downplayed the suggestion saying: "Even the president would not agree with the news that I can seek asylum in another country." (Meaning Zakzaky was not scared of arrest or assassination.)

Furthermore, on 12th December, 2015, when the Nigerian Army under the command of General Yusuf Tukur Burutai laid siege to the house of Zakzaky and massacred more than a thousand of his followers before they reached him, Zakzaky was asked by his followers to be sneaked out to a safer place, and Zakzaky turned down the offer right away saying he would rather die resisting the enemies than capitulate to them by leaving his followers in the lurch. The army spent over 48 hours shelling his house and firing grenades which set the house alight, but despite the monstrosity of such siege, the sheikh did not flinch an inch, staying in the house with his family and closest disciples. After

using a sledgehammer to crack a nut, by using the heaviest weapons at their disposal against the armless Shiites, the army finally reached the sheikh and fired at his position which killed his three children right away and multiply shot his wife more seven times in different parts of her body. He too sustained various gunshots in sensitive parts of his body. This strange show of courage by the sheikh was unprecedented for centuries and it could only be compared to the epic sacrifice of Imam Hussain (AS) in Karbala.

HIS POWERFUL PRAYERS

Sheikh Zakzaky was divinely endowed with miracles to always have his prayers answered promptly. The sheikh was a devout worshipper who used to spend a lot time praying and he whenever he sought divine vengeance against the oppressors of his followers, Allah promptly answered his requests.

There was a time in 1991 when his followers took to the streets to condemn the satirical cartoon by the Fun Times magazine against the Holy Prophet; the police violently pounced upon the protesters clubbing them and hitting them with the butts of the guns, the attacks had injured dozens of them. The police took the injured and locked them up in detention rooms denying them of access to medical attention. Two days later, journalists asked the commissioner of police, Saminu Daura, as to the condition of the detained followers of Zakzaky; the commissioner claimed all the inmates were hale and hearty, while their actual condition was critical because they were taken to the police headquarters with various degrees of injuries and not a single medic was there to attend to them. When Zakzaky heard of such statement, he prayed: "if their condition is good as you claimed, I pray that may his condition be as healthy as they are and if they were in critical condition, may Allah make your health as critical they endangered the lives of our brothers." It took the police commissioner few weeks to fall sick and later he died.

Moreover, in 1992, the security forces arrested the sheikh at Aminu Kano International Airport, Kano, while he was about to take a flight to attend a conference in the UK. The security locked him up in a notorious prison in Lagos, and his detention was aimed at torturing him possibly to death or physically incapacitating him. No sooner had he been brought to the prison than he started praying, asking the Almighty Allah to unwittingly force the oppressors to free him in order to be able to attend the conference. He said he

had lived in various prisons but he never complained of his detention let alone prayed for his release. It was the first time he was urgently asking Allah to bail him out, and in less than a week, an order came from the presidency that he be released. His passport and documents were returned to him and give him permission to attend the conference.

In 1994, when a large number of his followers revolted and nearly buried the light of his movement, the sheikh during one lecture said: “If these rebels are on the right path, oh Allah destroy this mission of mine and make theirs prosper, and if mine is the right one, I ask You to destroy their evil plots and never allow them to disrupt our peaceful mission.” Months after the prayer, the mutineers shrunk into oblivion and they soon became too divided to cause any setback to Zakzaky.

THE OTHER SIDE OF ZAKZAKY

Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky is widely applauded for his hospitable individuality for he does not hold grudges against whoever offended him, and even those do not subscribe to his idealistic state of mind, can vouch for his poise, simplicity and sense of forgiveness.

For instance, his aunty, Goggo Fatima was once quoted in a book written to celebrate the 60th birthday of Sheikh Zakzaky, as saying that: “when he was born, even though he was not the first born in the family, we had witnessed an unprecedented blessing and abundant contributions during his naming ceremony. It seemed from the onset that the little Zakzaky was going to be a force to be reckoned with and it was only the light of his mission manifested that we came to remember the miracles that transpired during his birth.”

As we mentioned earlier that Zakzaky's phenomena was not peculiar to the sheikh himself, the swelling number of his followers has given impetus to the growth of small scale businesses as a result of constant presence of his followers in Zaria who trooped to the city on daily basis to attend his programmes. Moreover, his followers are always eager to buy his posters, stickers, portraits, books and pamphlets as a result of this, Zakzaky's immense popularity supported a lot of jobs. Whenever, a book bearing the name of Zakzaky, no matter how many copies, is published, the books could be sold in a matter of days. In times without numbers, some books had to be republished to meet people's high demands. Whenever the sheikh set out on a journey,

visit or lectures to some parts of the country, small businesses such as eateries, water vendors, and other essentials usually boomed to a large extent. Fuel stations, taxi drivers, and motels owner also used to report a lot of patronage during the stay of Zakzaky because he was always being flanked by a large number of followers. A man who was selling tea in Kano, was asked as to how Zakzaky's visit to the city helped prop up his business, he said: "I am really happy with this visit and if he could be coming to this city every year, I would have amassed so much wealth that I could not imagine." He said, happy.

It is true that the mass movement of people to other places boosts economy tremendously, and Zakzaky is the only Islamic preacher alive in Nigeria whose movement attracts millions of followers and this may be the reason why even non-members of Zakzaky-led Islamic Movement in Nigeria welcome his visit to their place for they were always eager to capitalise on his visit.

HIS INFLUENCE

Sheikh Zakzaky is one of the handfuls of clerics whose words are heard like thunderstorm and impactful on the lives of his millions of peoples. He is still being regarded as one of the most influential people in Nigeria. His influence is so immense that millions of his followers tend to emulate his abstemious lifestyle such as observing fasting throughout the months of Rajab, Sha'aban and Ramadan consecutively despite the fact that he never imposed the rituals on them; he only used to remind them of abundant rewards attached to observing them.

In 2006, during the annual Ashura commemoration, Zakzaky declined to be driven to Hussainiyya; he rather chose to trek barefoot in a bid to raise awareness among the vastly Sunni majority city-dwellers who ignored the plight of members of the purified Household of the Prophet, who were chained, dragged mercilessly for days on the sweltering desert of Karbala. Zakzaky's decision to trek on that day was the genesis of Arba'een Symbolic Trek that saw millions of his followers trekking hundreds of miles to Zaria in commemoration of fortieth day of the Karbala Tragedy. It used to take the Shiites at least six days to reach Zaria, and the ritual turned out to be most popular rituals among the followers. This shows the gravity of how Zakzaky's

followers always to try to emulate his deeds for they know for sure that he would never lead them astray.

There was a time the sheikh paid a visit to the shrines of some pre-colonial monarchs who after the arrival of colonial administrators refused to pander to the white men's demands and exiled in Lokoja, a once remote city. They spent their remaining days there. But when the sheikh visited their graves, he was shocked to see how abandoned their graves looked. People recklessly dumped refuse nearby their graves and rodents abounded in the area due to lack of concern for the fallen emirs. But when Zakzaky expressed his dismay at the sheer lack of concern for the pre-colonial emirs' graves, the respective emirates soon moved to not only renovate their shrines but also make them historical sites. The Kano Emirate Council for instance, built a large museum near the shrine of its former emir, Aliyu Bn Abdullahi while the Zazzau Emirate Council_ a kingdom that entails the city of Zaria and its environs, built a large mosque near the shrine of its self-exiled emir, Aliyu Dan Sidi, and classes for Islamic studies. The places before they were renovated were an eyesore as faeces and garbage nearly shrouded the tombstones of the graves. Thanks to the influence of Zakzaky whose impromptu visit galvanised the emirs into preserving the graves and memories of their conservative emirs who rather chose to relinquish their exalted thrones than worked for the colonial interests at the expense of their religious and cultural norms. (For more information on the influence of Zakzaky, a reader can consult Malam Malam Ne, a book about the life of Zakzaky, it is written in Hausa.)

The influence of Sheikh Zakzaky is not confined to his followers per se, whenever the Nigerian government came up with a policy, the most feared critic is Zakzaky. He is the only cleric who has the audacity to openly criticise any policy that was not meant to serve the poor, and whenever the witty sheikh shared his views about a policy, sooner or later people would come to realise the sense of his views especially when the policies ended in failure.

When certain northern states in Nigeria introduced the pseudo-Sharia laws in order to appease their conservatively Muslim populace who wanted the return of Islamic laws, Zakzaky was the first person to foretell the downfall of their strange policy. He described the introduction of Sharia laws as a parody of democracy and affront to the ideals of Islam because it is not right for one to exploit a secular democracy, a non-Islamic system and use it as a

medium to introduce Islamic laws. It is not possible. But a decade after the introduction of the so-called Sharia laws, people came to know that they were fooled by the politicians as nobody was ever punished in accordance with the said Islamic laws since the northern states introduced the system.

In a nutshell, Zakzaky is indeed very influential especially when it comes to airing his views about the happenings in his country.

HIS JOVIALITY

It is truism that, people who meet Zakzaky for the first time would assume him to be an acerbic cleric, and however, many people seemed taken aback by his sheer simplicity and cheerfulness. Spending time with the sheikh serves to allay people's stress for he is fond of engaging his followers in sharing beautiful anecdotes and inspirational stories of influential Muslims whose impacts helped profoundly spread the message of Islam to different parts of the world, and he shares most of those stories in such a jovial way that those around him easily forgot their worries.

A catholic minister, once paid Zakzaky a visit and after spending some time happily chatting with sheikh, the minister could not hide his surprise when he said: “as a matter of fact, we were under the impression that Zakzaky was not so easy to deal with, but now, we are more than certain that he is truly an advocate of peace in this country. If other Muslim preachers could be like Zakzaky, there would never be religious crises in this country.” He told the newsmen.

Pastor Meter Peller, an Abuja-based preacher followed a different tack when he asked his fellow Christian to change their perspective about the sheikh. “We need to open the door of understanding to these people (the Shiite followers of Zakzaky,) because consultation between us is no longer an option, it is the only option. Once you observe his sermons, you would be surprised to note that he (the sheikh) does not discriminate against other religious groups. His sermons are purely religious devoid of political undertone. I believe that once my fellow Christians understand the true message of Zakzaky, they could become his admirers as I did.” He told the Al-Mizan newspaper, a pan-Shia newspaper which is published weekly in Hausa.

The writer of the acclaimed 'Malam, Malam Ne', narrated a journalist who, after interviewing the sheikh, said Zakzaky was so pacifist that “he could hardly wound a fly,” he said. The journalist was surprised by the unassuming

nature of the sheikh in sharp contrast to what he often read in the mainstream media.

HIS WILLS

It has become a tradition among the Muslims to write their wills before they die. Zakzaky wrote at least two wills one of which was written when he ferreted out a plot to assassinate him in 2010. He even showcased the paper of which contained a tacit approval (Blueprint) of the presidency to execute the covert operation. The sheikh in his will warned the oppressors that their fondness of creating avoidable crises to perpetuate themselves in power would backfire and consume them dearly. He also asked his followers to be steadfast and stick to the ideals of Shia Islam in case he was assassinated because throughout history, subservience to the cause of Shia is never an easy task. He gave them a glad tidings that “whether they like or not the Islamic reawakening would prosper, and there is no way, a gun can suppress the true message of Islam, it is impossible.” The sheikh asserted. He then tasked the Muslim Umma to not let the enemies exploit their primordial divide and set them against one another.

His second will was the one he gave his remaining three children namely, Muhammad, Nusaiba and Suhaila. He made the will on the day the Nigerian Army besieged his residence and massacred over one thousand of his followers, severely wounding him and his wife in the presence of his children. He never thought he would survive the onslaught, he told the will secretly to his daughter, Suhaila who was with him during the siege.

“He told me,” said Suhaila, emotional, “not to take our ibadats for granted, and to contest the injustice meted out to us through legal means and never be silent and never let the sordid memory of the massacre go unpunished. He enjoined me to emulate the virtues of Sayyida Fatima and the way she lived the rest of her life in grief, confronting the usurpers of her father's legacies who turned blind eyes to what he had bequeathed. Despite the fact that he had to speak loudly for his voice to rise above the deafening sound of gunshots, he never stopped asking me and my sister to go back to school. If we had survived, we had to make sure that we returned to school; which meant we should not allow the calamities that befell us to deter us from

returning to school, but we should not let our killers go away with their heinous crime.” She told the Al-Mizan newspaper.

These aforementioned wills of Zakzaky has further brought to light his total aversion to violence and his advocacy for justice, education and religious harmony.

CHAPTER THREE

Zakzaky and his Obsession with Ibadats

HIS DEVOTION

Sheikh Zakzaky is long known for his incessant ibadats especially constant prayers, fasting and remembrance of Allah's blessing to the mankind and regularly attending pilgrimage (hajj), before the enemies made him their prime target, Zakzaky found a great deal of solace in praying during the night; he was so obsessed with this act that he often regarded it as his hobby.

When it comes to offering obligatory and voluntary prayers, Zakzaky since he was a lad, he incorporated the habit of Nawafillil Yaumiyya, a type of voluntary prayers that are performed during and after the offering of obligatory prayers. In this case, whoever lived with or knew the pious sheikh knew him as a person penchant for prayers. He performed eleven raka'at during the night, two raka'at before the dawn, eight raka'at before Zuhr, eight raka'at before Asr, four raka'at after Maghrib and three raka'at after Isha'i which, if we take the obligatory prayers into account, totaled fifty one worth of raka'at the sheikh performed every single day under normal circumstances. This excludes the two raka'at the sheikh used to perform for the repose of his parent's souls; two raka'at for the repose of his children, two raka'at he used to perform for martyrs who sacrificed their lives on the altar of protecting the ideals of Shia Islam, and two raka'at for his teeming followers. These do not include special prayers he performed during special periods such as Friday, Ramadan, Eids and Ashura etc.

Sheikh Zakzaky has a special obsession with prayers for it is only during the prayers he generated a great deal of inner peace and poise and sometimes, he reflected.

He once told a gathering of visitors who visited him in his residence that: "If I could be asked as to my hobby, I would have blithely chosen prayers." He said.

A reader can further ascertain Zakzaky's obsession with prayers if he could remember the Zaria massacre, despite the intensity of shelling and killings, the sheikh did not panic. "I kept entering our dad's parlour," Suhaila told the Al-Mizan, "to brief him on what was happening but I repeatedly found

him engrossed in praying. I had to ask our mom to persuade him to halt it and be briefed about the shelling of our residence.”

HIS FASTING

When it comes to fasting, sheikh Zakzaky was so used to observing the habit of fasting in every Monday and Thursday that his followers observe the voluntary fasting as the sheikh. He also observes the fasting of the entire months of Rajab, Sha'aban and Ramadan consecutively. The sheikh, moreover, observes fasting during sacred days like Ghadeer, the day of which the holy Prophet crowned Ali Bn Abutalib to be his successor. The relentless sheikh never gets tired to fasting many times in virtually every month.

The sheikh's younger brother, Malam Badamasi Yaqoub agreed that he grew up witnessing the sheikh observing fasting for three months in a row. That is the months of Rajab, Sha'aban and Ramadan.

A person who happened to live with Zakzaky in prison stated that: “The Sheikh spent at least nine months fasting and he was so abstemious when it came to eating that we advised him not to starve himself to death.”

HIS OBSESSION WITH RECITING THE HOLY QURAN

Like fasting, is so obsessed with the Holy Quran that he only stops reading it when he is overcome by the exigencies of dealing with people. His wife, Zeenatudeen, attested to his reading, “He once used to complete reading the Holy Quran in seven days' time.”

There was a time the sheikh, during his imprisonment, said he would have loved to read the Holy Quran in less than three days, but the established Sunnah of the Prophet which cautioned people not to read the whole Quran in less than three days, he had to adhere to the injunction. Notwithstanding the sheikh's obsession with reading the holy book, his wisdom, resilience and total dislike for tyranny could all be attributed to the way he regarded and continues to regard the Holy Quran as the only fountain of inspiration.

HIS DEVOTION TOWARDS PRAYERS

Sheikh Zakzaky is a great proponent of supplications; he believes more in the transcendental power of supplication than anything else in his life. Everything he does, he prays for its success, every mission he makes up his

mind to embark on, he unwaveringly prays for its fruition. The sheikh, in fact, has so much faith in prayer that it has become an integral part of his lifestyle with which he cannot perform any action, be it ablution, sleeping, wearing clothes, riding or disembarking from a plane, without accompanying it with prayers. It is a glaring reality that the sheikh does not develop anxiety over the delay in anything believing that patience and supplications are a disinfectant for anxiety. His addiction to supplication can, therefore, not be overemphasised. The sheikh also serves to observe the recommended prayers for every night, week, month and supplication during special times and exclusive days. The sheikh, furthermore, has published a small book titled 'Ad'iyyatul Nawafilir Ramadan.' The book is focused on the application of supplication during the blessed month of Ramadan.

When it comes to observing the special prayers for Allah to avenge the injustice meted out to his followers by the Nigerian government, he normally observes 'Al-Qamah' and Sahmul-Lail and other types of supplications that generate quick or instant results.

Despite the seemingly unwavering adversities that never cease to haunt him and his followers, Zakzaky never stops including his followers in his prayers especially those who lost their lives in his movement.

HIS OTHER RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Sheikh Zakzaky for several times, spent a whole month of Ramadan in Mecca, that is to say he used to visit the Holy Ka'aba to perform lesser Hajj a month before the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan.

There was an admirer of Sheikh Zakzaky who heard a lot about the sheikh but was never opportune to meet him. He luckily stumbled across the sheikh engrossed in praying. He waited for him to finish so that he could talk to him but the sheikh, oblivious of the man's presence, was busy praying. "I spent more hours," said the man, "awaiting him to finish but even when wanted to eat something, he only brought dates, ate and drank a cupful of milk and went on with his prayers. He felt no need to eat heavy food." The man further said: "I had to come back and forth and still found him praying. When he prostrated, it took him so long that I felt tempted to alert the security for I thought he was dead. It was during that moment of indecision that the sheikh rose up and at

last took a break. If it had not been for the fear of the security, I would have loudly paid allegiance to the sheikh right away.”

Among his notable philosophy was he rarely asked his followers to practice any act of worshipping until he was in the habit of practicing it himself. For example when he started informing his followers of the blessings attached to performing 100 units of prayers in certain blissful nights, the sheikh had been observing the prayers over ten years earlier. Before he also suggested the idea of 1000 units of prayers to his followers between Magrib and Isha'i during the days of Ramadan, the sheik had already published a book reminding people of their infinite importance.

In addition, he was the first person in Nigeria who revived the forgotten ritual of confining to mosque for some days without going out. Before the sheikh initiated the ritual, none of the country's clerics ever encouraged people to embrace the habit. Zakzaky not only introduced it, he became the first person at his tender age, to spend days in a mosque performing the ritual (I'tikaf.) There are a lot of jurisprudential books that discussed the issue of I'tikaf, but the people lacked a person to motivate them and also lead by examples. That was the genesis of how the issue of I'tikaf regained its popularity among the vastly Sunni Muslims in the country. His elder sister, Fatima Yaqoub, attested to the Sheikh's giant strides, “when he was in his 20s, he spent 10 days in a mosque during Ramadan (I'tikaf) and he went out during the Eid Fitr, and I never saw any person at that time performing this ritual.”

CHAPTER FOUR

Some Crucial Parts of Zakzaky's Life

HIS TRAVELS

Sheikh Zakzaky has extensively travelled around the world; he visited many countries. In Asia, Europe and Africa, he visited Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Malaysia United Arab Emirate etc.; in Africa he toured the likes of Niger Republic, Mali, Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, Sudan Sierra Leon etc. Apart from all this, he was able to visit the so-called most powerful countries on earth namely, the United Kingdom, United States of America, Russia and France. He was able to tour the above-mentioned countries as a result of invitations to attend conferences on human rights, religious harmony and how to promote good governance and justice.

HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH VARIOUS COMMUNITIES

Muslims: It is clear that Sheikh Zakzaky is the only religious figure famous for his relentless efforts to maintain understanding and good rapport with the various sects of Muslims who are deeply divided by primordial differences. The sheikh used to organize 'Unity Week' every year in a bid to remind Muslims of the needs for unity and brotherhood among themselves. The sheikh had for long observed that there is no way unity could be achieved among Muslims if they (the Muslims) continue to spread hatred and enmity by blaming each other for their own woes. This is the main reason why the sheikh does not make any snide remarks about other people and their denominations, he rather focuses on preaching the peaceful ideals that safeguard the image of Islam, and he never stops urging his fellow clerics to follow suit. The sheikh often visits some Sunni scholars in his efforts to remind them of the fact that there are more things we share in common than we have in difference. Zakzaky is the only preacher in Nigeria who refuses to allow his followers to build their own mosques suggesting that they pray alongside and behind their Sunni brothers because no unity could be achieved if every denomination resorts to praying in its own mosques. When Zakzaky's mother died, the sheikh singlehandedly invited his elder brother, a Sunni Muslim scholar, to lead her funeral prayer. These are the kind of disciplines Zakzaky builds his followers on: practice your faith but never, on the basis of sectarian

or religious differences, show any modicum of discrimination or hatred towards everybody.

Christians: It is a well-known fact that the sheikh has been able to maintain a cordial relationship with Christians more than any Muslim preacher in Nigeria. The Christians always appreciate the ways Zakzaky regards them as his 'counterparts in humanity,' and a lot of Christian groups are being invited by Zakzaky to the programmes organised by the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, and, on the other hand, members of Zakzaky-led movement visit their churches during merry Christmas and during special events like New Year, Christmas Carol and Epiphany etc. In fact, many Christians regard Zakzaky as the real preacher of Islam, an advocate of humanity and interfaith harmony because he, in times without numbers, shielded Christians from religious attacks which could have claimed their lives if it had not been for Zakzaky's help. According to the sheikh, the best way to spread the true messages of Islam is not to attack people who do not subscribe to the religion but to imbibe the intrinsic virtues of brotherhood, humanity and other forms of good deeds which would obviate the needs for confrontation.

HIS COMPASSION TOWARDS WOMEN

Sheikh Zakzaky is a staunch advocate of women rights and critic of the way some people in Nigeria treat them like slaves. The sheikh has successfully made amends to the atavistic perception of women as incapable of contributing anything to the society. Before the rise of Zakzaky, people especially in the northern part of the country did not often regard women as worthy of respect. Sheikh also refused to promote a bad notion of which women are entirely locked up, treated like sex slaves and deprived of right to education and working like their male counterparts. Some of the basic changes that sheikh brought about in his relationship with women is by asking his followers not to impede women's access to education even if they are married off, and allowing them to contribute towards their religion and society as male counterparts. The idea of scuttling women from gaining access to formal education is still widespread in northern Nigeria but Zakzaky's influence has broken the jinx of male dominance in the academia as more and more women are defying the cultural (not Islamic) restriction to pursue knowledge with vigour without having to worry about social stigma.

Zakzaky has, in at least three ways, contributed to the cause of women rights and their contribution to the society.

Firstly, the influence of Zakzaky has considerably made a dent in high number of divorces, particularly among his followers. The sheikh, in a lecture voicing his concern over the upswing in the high number of divorces, said: "if I were in the position, I would have introduced restriction to the rampant cases of divorces in this country. I would have suggested that the same person who invited people to his wedding, publicise and invite the same people to the ceremony marking the end of his marriage, if it is a good thing, he would not feel any remorse about it." Sheikh introduced new marital lifestyles that inspire couples to work as much as possible towards love, compassion and pleasing one another, initiatives that make it something of a rarity for his followers to end their marriage.

Secondly, when it comes to marriage, Zakzaky has boosted the prestige of women in the society for, as is the case, women, especially in northern Nigeria, were paid infinitesimal amount as dowry thereby making it easy for men to marry and divorce their wives. This practice was what brought about a lot of problems in marriage ranging from lack of respect for women because men see them as cheaper to men's reluctant to adequately cater for their wives as a result of social stigma attached to act of allowing married women to work or attend formal schools. Further, lax knowledge of women rights in Islam contributed immensely to the rampant cases of divorces for a lot of men seem not aware of how they can live with their wives in accordance with the Islamic injunctions. But Zakzaky has, to sum up the case, has revived the tradition of paying a lot money as dowry, thereby making women more valuable to the society than they were once regarded, and once a person paid heavy prize to marry a woman, he would not afford to be at odds with her let alone develop the idea of parting with her.

Thirdly, Sheikh Zakzaky has inculcated a new spirit of decency and orderliness in his followers to the extent that despite various smearing campaigns to tarnish their images, they never deviate from what they are built upon. For example, Zakzaky used to remind his followers of need to be compassionate to parents to whom they would marry their daughters because it takes parent many stressful years of burden to cater for their daughter's needs such as schooling, health and moral upbringings until she is mature

enough to be married off. Furthermore, the parent still has to bear the heavy burden of providing her with a piece of furniture and other essentials; this costs them a lot of money in the process and to worsen the issue, the parents are mostly so poor that they sometimes have to borrow money to be financially able to marry off their daughters. It is against this backdrop that men have to pay more to marry a lady in order to ease the burden on the parent. Thanks to the sheikh's initiative, his followers, despite economic hardship among some of them, manage painstakingly to live up to the sheikh's suggestions. These have contributed to the stability of marriages among hundreds of thousands of couples especially his followers.

Sheikh Zakzaky on the other hand is a vocal critic of domestic violence against women who are on the basis of gender and social inequality being inhumanely maltreated. The sheikh used to voice out his concern over the ways husbands maltreated their spouses, describing it as the remnants of pre-Islamic era during which enslavement of women was a tradition. Therefore, the practice should in way be allowed to have relevance in this age.

In a lecture marking the World Women Day (Zahra Week, as Shiites often call it in Nigeria,) a special day set aside to highlight the numerous roles women play in the society, the sheikh called upon husbands to be compassionate to their wives like adored and pampered children. They should in fact try as much as possible to please their wives with everything at their disposal. "Women," according to the sheikh, "need love and sense of importance to their husband." So, a person should not begrudge pleasing his wife even if doing so would cost him his money. Should any kind of misunderstanding occur, they are supposed to settle issues in a diplomatic not in a violent or confrontational way. It is only through this that stability could be achieved in marriage.

Sheikh Zakzaky's passions for women empowerment is not peculiar to the Muslim women alone, even women who are, for some reasons, exposed to prostitution are not excluded for when circumstances necessitate, his followers assist the women in various ways to abandon prostitution and pursue a new life devoid of exploitation and misery.

HIS SERVICE TO THE FAMILY MEMBERS

Sheikh Zakzaky emulates the humble virtues of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by assisting his wife to run domestic chores and other activities that in northern Nigeria require women to exclusively run them.

In an interview with newsmen, Zakzaky's wife, Zeenatu had this to say about the sheikh:

“It might have come to your notice that ever since we got married, my husband has been contributing immensely to the activities of the household: he helps me cook, and sometimes sweep our rooms. We share virtually everything; he in fact likes doing certain things himself without needing help. Whenever he wants to cook, he does not need everybody to help him.”

In another interview, the wife added:

“He (the sheikh) does not allow us to do certain works alone; he wants to be there to give me a helping hand. He never asked me to bring him a thing or sent me on an errand. He does not even burden his children with demands. Always we are trying to please him as much as he does to please us, but we have little chance for doing it, because he is doing everything for himself.”

One of the sons of the sheikh, Ahmad, told of how he was bred under his caring father. He said that he was being taken care of and looked after as if he was the most valuable asset in the heart of his father.

“Though my younger brother was born a year after me, I was weaned earlier than I was supposed to be. So my mother was giving more attention to my younger brother than me while my father was giving me all the necessary cares as my younger brother. That made me much closer to my dad than mom.”

“We for several times ate meals cooked by Zakzaky,” said Malama Maryam Sani, a close friend to Zakzaky's wife, Zeenatu. “There was a time my elder sister paid me a visit and we accommodated her in sheikh's residence. The visitor saw the sheikh washing dishes and cooking and it did not take the sheikh long to bring them meals. My elder sister was taken aback by the sheikh's strange behaviour because the food was supposed to be prepared by his wife and she did not even enter the kitchen which meant it was the sheikh who entirely prepared the food. That show of humility had made a great deal of impacts on my elder sister.”

On her part, Malama Maimunat Abdullahi, the wife of Sheikh Mahmud Turi said: “it is true that sheikh stands out among most of our people because up to this moment, he does not allow his social status to prevent him from serving his family. He cooks, looks after his children and even serve his followers tea.”

All these testimonies about the sheikh's unassuming nature are due to his efforts to emulate the humility of the prophet's Muhammad (S) who was very compassionate towards women. Besides, the sheikh wanted to show the people that marital happiness is a key that unlocks the door of success in life.

HIS PREACHING

Sheikh Zakzaky, if not the most, is one of the most tireless preachers in the country because he organised at least five lectures every week and below are some of the prominent lectures:

The Holy Quran Exegesis: The sheikh has a constant schedule for the Holy Quran exegesis every Wednesday unless there are special programmes or impromptu travels that could force him to force postpone the lecture. But so long as the sheikh is in his hometown, the lecture takes place. During the lectures, the sheikh usually gives incisive exegesis of the verses of the holy book, Sunni/Shia perspectives about the verses and how Muslim scholars think about some salient areas. The sheikh is a straightforward preacher who goes directly to the point and rarely goes off on a tangent; he tries his best to avoid prolixity and unnecessary analyses that confuse audience.

Nahjul Balagah: The sheikh also used to read out this book on every Tuesday. But just like the exegesis of the Holy Quran, it is only special programmes or travels that prevent the lecture from taking place. During the lectures, the sheikh focuses primarily on analysing the sayings of Imam Ali (AS), shedding lights on some important events that occurred throughout the life and martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Ali (AS). The book of Nahjul Balagah is a compendium of various events, Hazrat Imam Ali's correspondences to his followers and his conflicts with some of his contemporaries. The book is so vast that the sheikh has to make references to other books which could help the audience understand the lesson easier.

Workshop for His Delegates: This is a seminar organised for delegates of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria who represent the members at the grassroots

levels. The seminar is aimed at training the delegates on a wide range of issues such as management leadership, sensitive areas of Islamic education. This workshop is organised occasionally when the need arise, but he mostly organises this workshop after every three months.

Workshop for Women: This workshop is being organised to educate sisters of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria on many areas of Islamic education e.g. Hadiths (wise saying of the Prophet and Ma'asoomen) History of Islam, Islamic Jurisprudence, household management and child up-bringing. Women from various parts of the country attend the workshop which takes two weeks to conclude.

Other programmes organised by the sheikh include the programmes of Ashura which takes forty days, Unity Week which seven days, special programmes commemorating the departure of the holy Prophet (S), programmes celebrating the birthday of the 19th century Islamic revivalist, Sheikh Usman Bin Fodio, programmes celebrating the birthday and commemorating the premature martyrdom of Fatima Al-Zahra (AS), and Ghadeer, the day the Holy Prophet crowned and designated Imam Ali (AS) as his first caliph.

Furthermore, the sheikh tirelessly delivers lectures when invited to conferences by non-governmental organisations and other programmes that are not within the purview of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria.

HIS PUBLICATIONS

Sheikh Zakzaky is not well known in publications and this may not be unconnected with the fact that he is so much engaged in numerous activities that he does not have much time to write down his thoughts. He once alluded to his lack of publications when he stated that there were seemingly endless literatures in every field of study that are more than enough to satiate our quest for books. This explains why the sheikh focuses more on imparting the real virtues of what the Islam really teaches on his people than he finds time to write. But despite all this, the sheikh is able to publish some few books, like:

- The Mission of Man on Earth
- The History of Zazzau (Zazzau is a kingdom that entails the city of Zaria and its environs)

- Supplication during Discretionary Prayers in Ramadan (published in Arabic.)

In the three aforementioned books, only one book is successfully published in book form; that is 'Supplication during Discretionary Prayers in Ramadan.' The manuscripts of the other books may be burn during Nigerian army siege in his house in 2015.

But aside from all this, there are hundreds of articles, books and pamphlets that are published to propagate the messages of the sheikh. Some of the most notable books include the voluminous, "Reawakening of Our Muslim Brothers," "Nigeria: The Solutions" and "The Life of Imam Khomeini" etc. Moreover, in lectures marking the Day of Martyrs, his speeches are being transcribed and published yearly under the title, "Martyrdom: A Disinfectant for Death." His speeches during Ashura lectures are also being transcribed and published under the title: "Ashura Speeches." "The message" his speeches during the birthday anniversary of the noble prophet Muhammad (S). The sheikh, however, delivers motivational lectures every year to the Youth Forum of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria which are also transcribed and published as "Letters to the Youth." The lectures aimed to galvanise the youths into channeling their energy into the courses of the islam by shunning idleness, pursuing knowledge with vigour and promoting a sense of brotherhood.

In order to meet the increasing demands for Zakzaky-related publications, the Islamic Movement had to establish three wings institutions of publishing named IM Publications, IM Production and Institute for Compilation and Publication of Sheikh Zakzaky's Works to publish and distribute various publications about Zakzaky's messages.

HE IS A POLYGLOT

Sheikh Zakzaky speaks four languages, namely Hausa, Fulfulde, English and Arabic. The fact that Hausa and English have dominated northern Nigeria, Fulfulde-the language spoken mostly by the nomad Fulani ethnic group is rarely spoken by the sheikh; while Arabic is mostly used during Islamic lessons. But sheikh Zakzaky delivers most of his lectures in Hausa because most of Nigerians especially northerners virtually speak Hausa fluently; and he holds interviews with journalists in English. Moreover, whenever he was invited to Islamic conferences, he delivers his lectures in English. Therefore, Zakzaky

speaks four languages, but he is more active and proficient in Hausa and English due to the environment he has found himself in. His mastery of Hausa proverbs and adages has enabled the sheikh to shroud most of his messages in ambiguity to the extent that some audience have to contact those who are familiar with the sheikh's lectures to shed further lights on some cryptic messages.

CHAPTER FIVE

Zakzaky under Persecution

GOVERNMENTS THAT JAILED ZAKZAKY

Sheikh Zakzaky was for several times arrested and threatened by Nigerian security forces throughout the near-four decades of his mission. It is confirmed that the Nigerian governments have arrested and detained the sheikh ten times and he has spent over ten years in detention. The sheikh was detained in various prisons across the countries ranging from Zaria Prison, Kaduna, Enugu, Port Harcourt Lagos and Abuja. Moreover, the sheikh was tortured under duress and confined to the most squalor and disgusting detention centres a human could endure. These kinds of persecutions were aimed at suppressing his movement from coming to fruition. The government thought the sheikh was being sponsored by foreign countries to destabilise the country but the government was dismayed to realise that the sheikh was only inspired by the Iranian revolution but he had in no way been sponsored by the country to destabilise Nigeria. But the peaceful-cum fearless missions of the sheikh baffled and left them with little option but to conclude that the sheikh meant no harm to the country. Despite the killings of hundreds of his followers; despite smearing campaigns propagated by the Salafi clerics to discredit him, the sheikh never reached out to any politician for financial assistance and he has been able to maintain cordial relationship with Christians and Sufi clerics. He, in fact, has no time to reply to his critics who are hell-bent on distracting him from focusing assiduously on his missions.

From what is ubiquitously clear is the sheikh has been able to garner a large number of followers as a result of his decision to shun violence and become a vocal critic of injustice, dictatorship and rampant corruption that had, up to the current democratic dispensation, destroyed the economic fabric of the country. It is his perseverance and audacity to lead by examples by practicing the intrinsic teachings of Islam that enabled the sheikh to convert millions of people into a version of Islamic school of thought which focuses on reviving the teaching of Ahlul Bayt.

In regard to the above timeline of his detentions, it was military juntas that detained Zakzaky more and this might not be unconnected with the fact that the country experienced a spate of military coups and counter-coups.

Sheikh Zakzaky was once detained in so a desolate and decrepit dungeon that he could not see his hand. He was tortured under the most pitiable condition but the determined sheikh never pondered the idea of abandoning his mission. "I was once detained in a dark dungeon," said the sheikh while sharing his ordeal in a lecture. "It was so dark that where we could not separate day from night. Once in a while we were allowed to take a shower. One of the prison warders, out of curiosity, asked me why I was reluctant to come out and take a bath. I told him I could not expose my body to inmates who were being crammed in a bathroom to bath. It was then he realised that I was a Muslim. He then began to allow me to be having a bath privately."

Throughout the nearly of Zakzaky's sporadic incarceration, the sheikh suffered a number of psychological traumas as a result of tortures that still haunt me up to this moment..

ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS

It was noteworthy that Zakzaky had not been arrested for 17 years since the country's return to democracy. Many observers were of the opinion that the lull was due to the enemies' conclusion that imprisonment alone could not stop the sheikh whatsoever. One security expert who spoke on condition of anonymity to the author of 'The History of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria' said: "it had come to their notice that they could not suppress him and his movement by detention or crackdown because they were only fanning the embers of his popularity. Having seen the futility of their strategy, they started devising different plots as to how they could silence him. If we take a look at the period of time of which he has consolidated and unfolded the structures of his movement, there were numerous attempts to assassinate the sheikh at all cost in order to actualise their evil agendas, but their plots normally failed on arrival due to whistleblowers who leaked to the sheikh what were being planned against him."

During Yaradua's transient tenure as a president, it was reported that the president gave a tacit order to eliminate the sheikh in a matter of weeks. But the planned failed when the already-ill president contracted a heart-related disease, which eventually took his life.

Additionally, in 2013, the Nigerian government tried unsuccessfully to assassinate the sheikh by offering a contract to a US-based contractor who was

notorious for high profile assassination all over the world, to bomb Zakzaky on his way to Hussainiyya and make it look like a handiwork of Boko Haram. Zakzaky would have been caught unaware had he not received the news from an insider. Upon receiving the report, he mention the plot on his public lecture. The leakage scampered the plot from being executed.

During the Quds Day protest against Israel-continued aggression in Palestine, the Nigerian Army opened fire on the protesters killing at least 33 members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria including three biological children of the sheikh. The military wanted to provoke the sheikh into confronting the security which could be used as a justification for his assassination but the sheikh, despite the painful and premature exit of his agile children and followers alike, he urged his followers not to resort to violence or disturb public order. That was a huge setback to the military that were hell-bent on eliminating the sheikh.

The Zaria massacre brought to light what the sheikh had long been telling the world of conspiracies to eliminate him and dismantle his movement. The army had committed the most heinous massacre against the people it was supposed to protect: they killed another three children of Zakzaky; they shot the sheikh and his wife multiple times and burnt hundreds of others alive. Having carried out the massacre, they denied the victims' families access to their loved one and married them in mass graves. If it had not been for divine intervention, Zakzaky would have been assassinated in the siege.

There were also some plots to assassinate the sheikh during his detention in various prisons across the country. For example, in Sokoto Prison, he was looked after by a giant inebriated police officer. "He once confiscated the Holy Quran I was reading, and he was on the spur of the moment alerted that it was a sacred book, but he threw away the book without remorse. He smashed the spectacles of my fellow inmates and urinated in our detention. A slight show of protest would have provoked him to go berserk." The sheikh said.

HIS TRIBULATIONS

Sheikh Zakzaky has faced so many persecutions that he could, if he were a writer, write a book about his experiences in the hands of the Nigerian governments. Despite the sheikh's fondness of hygiene, during his

incarceration in Sokoto, he was prevented several times from taking a bath for weeks. "We were put into a cell with a lunatic; we spent many weeks without being given a chance to wash our dirty clothes or take a shower," said the sheikh.

In an allusion to his ordeal in Nigerian prisons, "we were subjected to many forms of hardships in prisons; we stayed in fleas-infested room, and I was so tormented by the parasites that when I was moved to Enugu Prison, I had to shelve my hair. I was putting on a dejected pair of shoes which I had repeatedly patched throughout my stay in the prison. I neither used a bathing soap for three years nor did I use Vaseline on my body. You could imagine how a person would look like when he went through this hardship for years." The sheikh added.

Moreover, Zakzaky was held in Kirikiri Prison, Lagos which at that time was the most notorious prison in the country. "The prison," according to the sheikh, "was so hellish that he could be beaten up if you dared kill even a mosquito." A person was only allowed to enter with skimpy pieces of clothe leaving an inmate at the mercy of mosquitoes, cold and other harmful insects. But the sheikh when he was brought to the prison, he was adamant that he could not enter without clothe, which after a standoff, he was allowed to keep his clothe. He is the first person in history of high profile prisoners to be allowed enter the Kirikiri prison with cloth.

There was an underground dungeon in which it was so dark that he could not ascertain the time for prayers. He said he was able to know the time when the warders brought him his meals. They brought him his lunch in midday and he used the time to exercise Zuhr and Asr Prayers. They only gave him a cupful of water per meal which he drank half and used the remaining to perform ablution. "I used to decipher the time for Maghrib prayers I was given a dinner because they normally brought it in the late evening which I prayed shortly afterwards. And observing Subh Prayer was not easy (because they never brought anything at the time,) but I used my instinct to wake up in the night and kept saying supplications until they came in the morning to verify the number of the inmates, and they normally came at 07 o'clock a.m. Sometimes, I seemed to realise that I only observed the prayer at 01 or 03 o'clock a.m.

When the Nigerian Army massacred hundreds of his followers before they reached him in 2015, they fired intently in his room, injuring him in many

parts of his body to the extent that he lost an eye in the assault. Despite various degrees of injuries the sheikh sustained, the security officials refuse to release him in order to seek medical attentions elsewhere. The assaults on Sheikh Zakzaky have rendered him unable to read the Holy Quran as a result of the increasing throbbing of his eye. That is what the enemy wanted; to render him physically incapacitated to the extent that he could not amount to anything even if he lived.

But as a determined person, Zakzaky has successfully established the ideals of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria despite the seemingly countless challenges, ranging from detentions, tortures, persecutions to threats to his life.

To sum up the case, there were various many assassination plots against the sheikh, but there are at least eight of such botched assassination attempts which only surfaced after they failed to materialise. Some of the famous assassination plots are mentioned hereunder:

First attempt: at the outset of the sheikh mission at Ahmadu Bello University when he was a figure of the then powerful Muslim Students Society of Nigeria, there was a surreptitious conspiracy to assassinate him by using some security operative to sneak into his room and strangled him to death when he was asleep. The plan was botched by the God almighty.

Second attempt: the military head of state, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida wanted to eliminate the sheikh when he jailed him in 1992 in order to suppress the sheikh's growing influence. But for fear of unrest that might ensue who was sure to threaten his stay on power, the junta leader was left with no option but to release him few days after he was captured.

Third attempt: Assassination attempt was made to the sheikh when the breakaway faction of his movement who parted way with him when he switched his movement to Shia Islam, attacked and nearly lynched him inside a mosque in 1994. He survived the attack when his handful of followers humanely shielded him.

Fourth attempt: in 1996, there was also an attempt to assassinate the sheikh by the junta leader, Sani Abacha when the general asked prison warders in Kaduna to inject him with poison and let him die in detention as it was done to General Shehu Musa Yar'adua, one of the highest profile prisoners who died in prison. The attempt was foiled by the power Allah for preventing him.

Fifth attempt: there was a threat to Zakzaky's life during the civilian government of Umar Musa Yar'adua in 2010 when a powerful explosive was to be planted in his home and bombed him altogether. The plot also failed when the sheikh was informed of the impending attack which was averted only after told the world of the plot.

Sixth attempt: many assassination attempts on the sheikh's life between 2013 and 2015 failed but killed dozens of his followers including his three biological children.

Seventh attempt: when the sheikh was few days to celebrating his birthday, he ferreted out an assassination attempt on his life which was to be carried out by foreign agents. The plot failed when downpour scuttled his birthday celebration and the news surfaced shortly afterwards of the botched attempt.

Eighth attempt: this is the most serious assassination attempt on the life of Zakzaky and it was in December, 2015, when the security falsely accused the sheikh of trying to assassinate the chief of army force, an accusation which was later upon used as a justification to massacre over one thousand followers of the sheikh. The carnage was meant to kill the sheikh, his entire family members, closest disciples who were with him and subsequently destroy his religious centres which, as they thought was the end of Zakzaky and his movement. In addition, the orchestrated massacre was meant to incite the sheikh's followers into armed insurgency, but the well-organised leadership structure of the movement has enabled the group to remain strong and despite the setback it suffered, the movement is still active.

CHAPTER SIX

Some of the Achievement of Sheikh Zakzaky

HIS PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

It is virtually impossible to enumerate the numerous achievements the sheikh has accomplished in his near-four decades of preaching but one of the most notable achievements the sheikh accomplished personally is guidance and order he brought to the people. The Almighty Allah has guided him and made him stand out among other people in his country and beyond because the sheikh's unique personality of practicing what he preaches and his ability to guide and impart the spirit of tolerance and unity to his followers have not only enabled him to convert millions of followers but also made him the most peaceful preacher among the whole Muslim population in the country.

Another success the sheikh has achieved is the success of converting millions of Sunni Muslims into the fold of Shia Islam in less than four decades, an unprecedented accomplishment in the history of Islam. This includes ideological, behavioural and moral changes in the heart of his followers.

It is moreover, as a result of Zakzaky's decades-long preaching that helped thousands, if not millions of people abandoned the communist ideology into Islamic movement. Before the rise of Zakzaky, the most serious movement that posed real threats to the country was communism, but Zakzaky was able to usher in a new vista of religious and political ideals which aimed to galvanise and reawaken the souls of millions into restoring the neglected Islamic values. This is a great achievement not personally to the sheikh but also to thousands of people who parted way with him when he incorporated Shia Islam into his movement.

Nonetheless, the sheikh's spiritual battle with corruption, injustice and dictatorship has made him the only preacher who never supported or aligned with corrupt politicians in return for money, favour or loyalty. This is the major reason why both the military and politicians hate the sheikh too much because he does not pander to their whims and caprices.

THE ACHIEVEMENTS HE BROUGHT TO THE SOCIETY

Sheikh Zakzaky has been able to make amends to the ways people understand things because it is his fondness of telling the truth regardless of

how the enemies would react that impacted the society as a whole. He worked a lot to extricate people of all religious or sectarian backgrounds from intellectual darkness. He focuses much of his social analyses on how people are being taken for a ride by politicians who deny them access to education and use corrupt clerics to deceive them while they are on the other hand siphoning their money and stashing it in foreign banks. Sometimes, people ridicule Zakzaky but many years later, the people come to understand his points. This is how people hold him in great esteem.

HIS IMPACTS ON THE SOCIETY

Sheikh Zakzaky has achieved a lot of successes in influencing the mindsets of millions in Nigeria and neighbouring countries. Most of his impacts revolve around motivating people to stand up and fight off injustice no matter how risky the mission may seem. Zakzaky has reawakened the souls of millions who had once been deprived of access to the truth about the real Islamic values which in many occasions result in people regarding Islam as synonymous with violence.

Other and religious and social changes the sheikh has brought about include the following:

Reintroduction of Hijabs: (body covering regalia): before the rise of Zakzaky, the entire Muslim society in northern Nigeria knew nothing about properly covering their bodies or it was not a social stigma to see women going about their businesses without having to worry about covering their sensitive parts. As his movement gained momentum with the sheikh calling for the return of Islamic values as they were prior to the arrival of colonialists, many people seemed to have been influenced by the sheikh's lectures especially for women not to emulate the European values; this had influenced millions to resort to wearing hijabs.

Women Roles in Islam: Sheikh Zakzaky was the first to introduce women to the arena of spreading the messages of Islam which before his rise was monopolised by men. What it was famously known of them was to be locked up, confined them to cook and occasionally, go to mosques on Friday. Zakzaky's arrival ushered in a new dawn for women engagement into religious activities: they could attend every Islamic conference, gathering and sermons etc.

Procession: Zakzaky was the first to introduce the art of organising religious processions in Nigeria with a view to propagating what the religion really teaches. Before then, nobody was aware of its importance. The procession is used as a basis to express happiness over the birthday anniversary of the holy Prophet Muhammad (S) or commemorating the Ashura. There are millions of Sunni Muslims especially Sufis who also take to the street to celebrate the birthday of Muhammad (S). Moreover, Zakzaky's influence has made it easy for the Muslim society to take to the street venting their spleen over the provoking cartoons deriding the holy Prophet, Muhammad (S) as a terrorist. But it is a well-known fact that this kind of orientation was not known before the rise of Zakzaky.

Itikaf (seclusion in a mosque): Sheikh Zakzaky was the first to observe Itikaf during the holy month of Ramadan in Nigeria. He had been observing the ritual during his youth. The ritual of Itikaf is well-known in both Sunni and Shia literatures, and a lot of people were reluctant to observe it until when the sheikh arrived and trailed the blaze which others, in the long run, followed.

Protecting the Image of the Prophet: Sheikh Zakzaky was the first to introduce protest in moments of any smearing campaign against the Prophet by writing extensively and demonstrations but he never called for attacks against other religious groups in retaliation for the smearing campaigns; he only serves to tell the world in strong voice that Muslims all over the world are not happy with their action.

Unity: Sheikh Zakzaky as was mentioned several times in this book is an advocate of unity among different religious groups especially between Christians and Muslims. He has long been advocating for various religious groups to understand each other's differences because sporadic resorts to violence is an affront to their religious conscience. The sheikh's allusion was borne out of the increasing influence of Wahhabi Islam which seeks to spread hatred towards whoever does not pander to its sanctimonious religiosity. It is against this backdrop that the sheikh resorted to organising Unity Week every year with a view to finding solutions to religious crises. The sheikh also used to invite Christians to celebrate with him Sallah Feast for Eid Kabeer. These initiatives have significantly averted religious crises in the country.

Self-reliance: Sheikh Zakzaky-led movement has highlighted the need for self-reliance when it comes to running the activities of his movement without

having to rely on governments or organisations for supports in sharp contrast to other Muslim societies who fester on governments in return for supports which makes them incapable of speaking out against injustice and repression of the poor. He enjoined his followers to donate to the course of the movement. This initiative has inspired a number of religious groups to follow the footsteps of the sheikh. Zakzaky has made it clear that his movement does not collect foreign aids, government supports or any form of aids from private organisations; it is an independent movement that can organise its programmes independently through donations from its members. Zakzaky's decision to do away with this kind of parasitic reliance has made the movement so entrenched and independent that nobody can hijack its directions.

Mosque Services: a mosque is a place of worship and other forms of religious activities for Muslims, and during Zakzaky's stay at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, he used to observe a lot of ibadats. In order to inspire other Muslims to be attending mosques incessantly, he resorted to carrying out the activities of the Muslims Society of Nigeria (MSSN) such as meetings and retreat when he was the leader. "I am very sure," said the sheikh in a response to public outrage over his frequent activities in the ABU central mosque, "that even during the time of the holy Prophet, a mosque is an epicenter of all religious activities, not just praying. He (the Prophet) preached in a mosque, delivered sermons in a mosque, resolved disputes in a mosque and even accommodated visitors from faraway places inside a mosque. That why is support to organise our religious activities in the mosque." Years after the decision by Zakzaky to conduct various religious activities in mosque, many mosques especially in universities followed the examples of the sheikh.

Reviving the Art of Naming: it is clear that people in the last few decades a lot of people were fond of using traditional names in lieu of names suggested by Islam; it was normal to be calling a person Idi instead of Idris, Audu instead of Abdullah, Garba instead of Abubakar, Dauda instead of Dawood and Ado instead of Adam etc. As for women, a lot of Islamic names were also being traditionalized or adulterated to some extent, namely Ruqayya (Rakia), Bilkisu (Balki), Maimunat (Munari), Aishatu (A'i), Khadijah (Dije), Zainab (Abu) etc. Moreover, that tradition was so entrenched that the adopted names virtually supplanted the Islamic names of the people. But as a result of the Islamic

reawakening under the supreme leadership of sheikh Zakzaky, people eventually abandoned the tradition. Most of these names are now obsolete in the predominantly Muslim communities in Nigeria.

Propagation: Another phenomenal the sheikh brought about was using his own way of propagation ideology to counteract the ruthless war the mainstream media launched against him. In order to counter their smearing campaigns against his movement and followers alike, the sheikh provided alternatives to the state-owned media by establishing Al-Mizan newspaper (in Hausa), Pointer Express (in English) and two other magazines such as Gwagwarmaya and Mujahida magazines. The provision of these four media outlets has greatly helped to provide unbiased news and incisive reportages of the activities of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria as well as the enemies' plots to subvert it. It is against this backdrop that many other religious bodies resorted to establishing their own newspapers.

Reviving of the Prophetic Traditions: When it comes to reviving the traditions of the Prophet that were neglected as a result of the intrusion of European values, the sheikh is always at the forefront of reviving them. He was the first to revive the tradition of wearing a beautiful ring for men; he was the first to revive the tradition of distributing gifts to people during Eid celebrations; he was the first to conduct a Tafsir without a person reading out the verses for him. Moreover, the sheikh was the first to revive the tradition of using diplomacy to make peace with the enemies or people who differ with him on religious issues. Before then, it was impossible for bickering clerics to sit and settle their differences on the basis of let-agree-to-disagree approach. The sheikh was, nonetheless, the first to introduce the birthday celebrations of the holy Prophet by organising processions on the streets; he was the first to revive the criteria for donning a turban which, before the arrival of Zakzaky, was being regarded as a mere cultural practice, but the sheikh's insistence that turban was only applicable to the learned men, a lot of people seemed to have heeded the sheikh's points on the matter. Finally, sheikh Zakzaky was the first to revive the tradition of visiting and adorning graveyards with flowers to the extent that people would not be scared away by the presence of poisonous reptiles such as snakes.

These are some of the influences of Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky on the society which despite the fact that a lot of people parted way with his

movement when he switched to Shia Islam, the vestiges of his legacies in the mostly Sunni communities still live on.

SHEIKH ZAKZAKY AND THE SHIA WORLD

The status of Sheikh Zakzaky among the Shia world cannot be overemphasised considering the enormous roles he plays in various capacities. He is a member to the Ahlul Bayt World Assembly. He is also a member at The World Forum for the Proximity of Islamic Thought. He is a member at the World Federation of Shia, Khoja. He is at the forefront of speaking out against Israel aggression in Palestine, that is he is part of the movement led by Dr Zahra Khumaini, a daughter of Ayatollah Khomeini, the man who revolutionised Iran. The sheikh is included in International Islamic Human Right, with its headquarters in London. He in fact part of the part of the various international organisations which are centred on human rights and religious tolerance.

The sheikh's prestige is apparent when he visits countries like Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Europe, and parts of Africa, the kind of reception the sheikh receives is a testimony to his growing acceptance due to the roles he plays in the Muslim world.

What further brought the sheikh to the limelight was the massacre of 33 of his followers on the Quds Day, 2014; the massacre that also claimed his three children. The entire Shia World rallied behind the sheikh in solidarity. Thousands of senior Shia scholars around the world offered the sheikh their words of condolences and condemned in strongest terms the callous killings of innocent people whose only fault was showing solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine. Ayatollah Ali Khamna'i sent his special envoy, Ayatollah Muhammad Akhtari, to condole with the sheikh. He also praised the sheikh for exercising restraint by not resorting to violence despite provocation by the security forces. He received prominent letters from international organisations, and the most senior Shia scholars in the world and many other letters from government's organisations and universities.

Another sign of the sheikh's reputation in the Muslim world is the way thousands of senior Shia scholars elevated him and gave him many titles most of which are peculiar to certain categories of scholars. Most of the letters the sheikh received were meant to not only condole with him but also salute and

encourage him as to his relentless efforts to spread the messages of Ahlul Bayt in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Furthermore, Sheikh Zakzaky has once again become a global symbol of repression when the Nigerian Army lay siege to his residence, massacred hundreds of his followers and secretly buried them in mass graves. The episode which was dubbed the Zaria Massacre had attracted various demonstrations all over the world in solidarity with the persecuted Shiites in Nigeria. Millions of peoples including activists around the world protested against the continued persecution of Shiites by the Nigerian government which was heavily blamed for not doing enough to call its armed forces to order during the siege that lasted 70 hours. Moreover, in solidarity with Zakzaky, demonstrations were held in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, India, USA, United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway, Canada, Malaysia, Ghana, Pakistan, Mali, Philippines South Africa, UAE, Niger Republic, Cameron etc.

In a speech condemning the plight of Shiites in Nigeria, the spiritual leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamna'i told prominent Shia clerics that world must condemn the state-sanctioned persecution of Shiites in Nigeria. "Why is the world so silent on the plight of Sheikh Zakzaky, a proponent of unity between Sunnis and Shiites? More than a thousand of his followers are killed including his children."

HIS AWARDS

Sheikh Zakzaky is one of the most decorated religious personalities in the world. He was awarded several times in different countries of the world. Some of his most notable awards include the following:

In January, 1980, Sheikh Zakzaky was opportune to attend an Islamic conference in Iran, and in the sideline of the conference, the sheikh was honoured to get an access to Imam Khomeini who was ill at that time and after their meeting, Imam Khomeini gave the sheikh his personal Quran and asked the sheikh to return home and propagate the teaching of the Holy Quran. That award had influenced the sheikh to be steadfast in his movement.

Another award of excellence given to the sheikh was in 1996 when the military government in his state honoured the sheikh as the most peace-loving and influential person in the state. In 1998, when the sheikh went on trial, he

presented the award as a testimony for his peaceful campaign and this had led to his subsequent exculpation from any wrongdoing.

In 2012, Lebanese Hisbollah under the Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah honoured the sheikh by presenting him with the flag of the Shrine of Imam Hussain, the Leader of Martyrs. The award had further propelled the status of Sheikh Zakzaky to a global prominence. In addition, in 2013, the shrine of Imam Hussain (AS) in Karbala, Iraq, also granted him a flag from the shrine of Abul Fadl Abbas (AS), the most famous hero who defended Imam Hussain during the siege of Karbala.

National Blood Donation Agency of Nigeria in 2013, gave an award of excellence to the sheikh, hailing him for encouraging his teeming followers to donate blood especially during Ashura when millions of Shiites all over the world commemorate the tragedy that befell the families of the Prophet Muhammad in Karbala during which the entire family members were virtually massacred by the forces loyal to an accursed ruler, Yazid who was ruling in Damascus, now in Syria. The award was the first of its kind given to any religious ruler who helped to fill the sheer shortage of blood donation in the country.

In another development, Youth Forum of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN,) honoured the sheikh in 2014, describing him as a peace-loving person who preaches and advocates peaceful coexistence among various religious groups in the country. The association hailed the sheikh for his boldness to preach peace and nonviolence in spite of severe criticisms from hard-line Muslims who foolishly described the measure as apostasy. However, the sheikh brushed off their criticisms and continued to preach the ideals of Islam among Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

The Southeast-based Coalition of Human Rights Organisations which comprises twelve bodies of various human right networks with its headquarters in Abia State, the Southern part of the country, awarded the sheikh with the prestigious award of 'Prisoner of Conscience' who endured hardship, tortures, imprisonments, persecutions and massacre of his followers and children in many years but his courage and peaceful advocacy did not dissuade him to deviate from his noble course or more to the point incite him to resort to violence. The head of the non-governmental organisation, Mr. Emeka Umeagbalasi, while honouring the sheikh in absentia that Zakzaky was

an epitome of peace and nonviolence: he was the most oppressed person in Nigeria, because his followers and children were killed, and he was being detained illegally without giving him enough access to his relatives and followers.

In 2014, the parents of Global Network of Martyrs with its headquarters in Iran honoured the sheikh as the father of martyrs after he lost his three children when the Nigerian Army gunned down thirty three followers of the sheikh. The conference was held in Iran and parents of people who were martyred in different facets of struggles all over the world attended the conference. But considering the fact that he lost his three agile sons at one go, made him the most decorated personality in the conference.

The management of the shrine of Imam Ridah in Mashhad, Iran, decorated the sheikh as the true servant of Imam Ridah by presenting him with the green flag that was hoisted over the shrine. The ceremony was attended by prominent Shia clerics across the country and it took place in August, four months before the Zaria Massacre in December, 2015.

Furthermore, the shrine of Sayyida Fatima Ma'asuma decorated the sheikh with a green flag hoisted over the shrine. The grand ceremony took place in Isfahan, Iran, in January, 2016. The sheikh was unable to attend the ceremony as a result of his illegal detention by the Nigerian government, but he was represented by some of his followers who were studying in the country. In the same month of the year, 2016, the shrine of Zainab (AS), also decorated the sheikh-in absentia with the flag of the shrine. Similar award was given to the sheikh by the Iranian Cultural Caravan. It is noteworthy that gift of flags of the twelve infallible Imamate are the most respected awards in the Shia world.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT SHEIKH ZAKZAKY

Sheikh Zakzaky is popular not only among his followers but also among various religious groups and organisations, and many people, however, give props to the sheikh owing to his steadfastness and tireless efforts to be at peace with them.

Various Christian organisations repeatedly praised the sheikh for his peaceful movement, and they sometimes describe his pacifist sermons as a replica of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Reverend Musa D, Musa of Anglican

Church, Gombe, said the sheikh's ways of preaching is similar to the ones adopted by Jesus Christ, "I have been with the sheikh for over twenty years, I listen to his lectures and they are so touching that I sometimes regard him a person who has what it takes to lead us. There are many sheikhs in this country but sheikh Zakzaky stands out among them. I wish him success in his mission, and I hope his movement would bring more success to this nation and beyond." The reverend stated this during a workshop on interfaith harmony organised by Youth Forum of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, in Bauchi.

Another minister and the leader of Anti-corruption Network, Mr. Ebenezer Onyetekan said, "the way I observe Zakzaky's personality and styles of preaching, if I were to become a Muslim, I would certainly be his flower and join his movement." The activist made this statement in July, 2015, at a Sheraton Hotel, Abuja during a conference to mark a year since the Quds Day Massacre that claimed thirty three followers of Zakzaky.

Pastor Meter Peller of the Anglican Church, Abuja, told newsmen that: "Sheikh Zakzaky is not like other deceitful preachers who are reluctant to practice what they preach. The sheikh combines both preaching and putting into practice what he preaches, and we are witnesses to all this. To me, this affable sheikh should be a father to all of us."

The sheikh is really a bridge builder, a person who helps in no measure to bring various religious groups together in order to understand each other. Many ethnic groups like Igbo communities, who reside in Southern Nigeria, are of the opinion that if there were to convert to Islam, they would surely subscribe to his mission.

One day Zakzaky visited Sheikh Muhammad Nasiru Kabara, one of the most respected Sufi scholars in Africa during which the Sufi scholar warned his students that any person who criticised Zakzaky-led movement had betrayed the ideals of Sufism (because Shia and Sufi shared a lot of things in common, including love for Ahlul Bayt). This is why up to date there is a good understanding between Sufi and Shia communities in the countries. Another prominent Sufi scholar, Sheikh Abul-Fathi in his speech during the Unity Week in Zaria, said, "Sheikh Zakzaky possesses all the qualities of the prophets, and if I had not paid fealty to Sheikh Ibrahim Inyass, I would have obeyed the sheikh for he would never lead me astray."

In addition, traditional rulers also praised the sheikh for his peaceful conducts and nonviolence. For example, the late emir of Kano, Ado Bayero, whose one of his wives converted to Shia Islam, repeatedly hailed the sheikh-led movement and even supported him when the military dictator, Sani Abacha imprisoned him. The emir of Zazzau, Alhaji Shehu Idris saluted the sheikh for maintaining peace in his emirate. The emir stated this during a special ceremony organised to celebrate his thirty years on the throne. The emir said, "He (the sheikh) is one of our obedient sons, he is really a blessing to us."

PUBLICATIONS ABOUT ZAKZAKY

On the other hand, there are many books written about the sheikh and his decades of active services to humanity. Most of the books focused on some of the most important aspects of his movement.

Ibrahim Musa, the editor of Al-Mizan newspaper wrote a book titled Kitabul Bushra which compared the rise of 19th century revolutionary, Usman Bn Fodio to Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky who worked to return the revolutionary ideas. Moreover, another titled 'Zakzaky: Life and His Miracles' (in Hausa,) the book entails a short biography of the sheikh and mentions some virtues and his religious life style

The third book about the sheikh is 'Words of Monotheism from the Life of a Revolutionary' (in Hausa.) This is a philosophical book by Ibrahim Muhammad Potiskum, which revolves around the unique life of the Prophet Muhammad (S) and revolutionaries who struggled to revive, his idyllic messages buried by the enemies of the religion. Sheikh Zakzaky is included as one of such revolutionaries. The book was published in 1997.

'Yusufuz Zaman' is another book that juxtaposes the plight of Prophet Yosef in his life with the persecuted Zakzaky who like Yosef, endured many years of imprisonment and the killings of his followers. The book was written by the same writer, Ibrahim Muhammad Potiskum and it was published in 1998, shortly after the sheikh was released from prison.

In a nutshell, there are no less than a dozen books about the life and struggles of Sheikh Zakzaky. Some of the further books about the sheikh include the following:

1. The Living Vicegerent on Earth, (in Hausa,) by Malam Danjuma Katsina, 1997.
2. The Rise of a Revivalist, (in Hausa,) by Al- Ameen Isah Al-Sakkwaty, 2001.
3. Malam, Malam Ne, (in Hausa,) by Malam Haruna Shelleng, 2007.
4. Zakzaky's 60 Blissful Years, (in Hausa,) by Ibrahim Musa, 2012.
5. A Revolutionary of the Century, (in Hausa,) by Muhammad Nasir Gombe, 2013.
6. Praying: an Integral Part of Worship, (in Hausa,) by Abdullahi A. Hamza, 2014.
7. A Biography of Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky and Islamic Movement in Nigeria, (in Hausa,) by Muhammad Suleiman, 2015.

It is noteworthy that most of the aforementioned books discuss the lectures, decades of preaching and the persecutions of his followers. But one of the most important aspects of Zakzaky-led movement is its success in the conversion of over twenty millions of Sunni Muslims and Christians into the fold of Shia Islam.

PANEGYRICS TO THE SHEIKH

As a prominent personality who has been able to impact the lives of millions, Sheikh Zakzaky has hundreds of followers who help to promote his course by writing poems or composing songs of Ahl-Bayt and their teachings, since 1995 to date. There are thousands songs composed by his followers and admirers, and today Shia songs are among the most listened songs in Nigeria and neighbouring countries.

DREAMS ABOUT THE SHEIKH

It is a well-known fact that every pious revivalist has particular qualities with which people can reflect and ponder. It is against this backdrop that many people had miraculous dreams of the sheikhs in which their encounters with him made them change their perspective about the way they regard the Islamic Movement in Nigeria.

There was a radical Salafist living who, in 1995, had a dream that he met the Master of the Time Imam Mahdi (AF,) in which he told him, "If I

reappeared, you would be among those whom I would fight against,” the Imam told him. Upon hearing it, the Salafist burst into tears entreating the Imam to show him the way-out. “If you really need salvation,” the Master of the Time told him, “you must pay fealty to the missions of Ibrahim Al-Zakzaky.” In the wee hour of the morning, the man rushed to the sheikh's representative in Bauchi and paid his allegiance.

Nevertheless, in 2000 another staunch critic of Zakzaky named Muhammad Tasiu whose dream of the sheikh made him accept his mission. The heart-touching anecdote was published in the newspaper, Al-Mizan. He said: “I had a dream that a large mosque was built in our hometown, and a prominent cleric, Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Zakzaky had been invited to lead prayers for the first time in the mosque. I was very astonished to realise that Sheikh Zakzaky, a Shia-orientated cleric would launch our mosque which was built for Sunnis. I kept asking myself as to why was he invited, and why the mosque committee didn't consider other prominent Sunni clerics since we shared nothing in common with Shias. I just shrugged off and donned my caftan and off me go to the mosque. The mosque was filled to the brim by worshippers, and shortly afterwards the sheikh came over to lead the prayer but I made up my mind not to pray behind him and I immediately made for the doorway. On my back home, I came across ferocious wild animals such as hyenas, lions, Hippopotamuses and deadly reptiles crawling towards me from different parts of the forest; they were eager to devour me. I hurriedly ran back to the mosque and prayed behind the sheikh. I woke up immediately. I was so shocked by what I had seen that I had to pay allegiance to the sheikh, and I am happy to be one of the staunchest followers of Zakzaky.”

A Sufi follower (name withheld) had a dream of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in which he told the man to rally behind Zakzaky because he was a guardian to the right path. So long as the man wanted simple salvation on the Day of Judgment, he ought to follow the sheikh. There was a prominent Islamic jurist in Senegal named Sayyid Haidar Muhammad Shamsuddeen who had three dreams in a row of Bibi Fatima Al-Zahra in which he had been asking him to go to Zaria and pay allegiance to Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky. In the third dream she warned him not to slack off and it was in 2014 that the scholar visited Zaria and paid his allegiance as directed by his dream.

There are in a nutshell, countless dreams in which people were asked to hold on to the course of the sheikh.

PROPHECIES ABOUT THE RISE OF ZAKZAKY

It is known throughout history that whenever a prominent person was about to be born, a lot of prophecies seemed to appear either verbally or in literatures about the rise of that person just like there existed some individuals who foretold the rise of prophets as well as the rise the revolutionary, Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio. Documents were also recorded about the rise of Imam Khomeini who revolutionised Iran in 1979. In Zakzaky's case, there were some people who foretold his emergence and influences.

The first prophecy was from Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio who described the features and the possible year of his birth. Sheikh Dan Fodio foretold this in his poem which was written in Fulfulde Language (one of the several dialects spoken mostly in northern Nigeria and West African countries.) The poem and many others was compiled in a book called "Bushral-Ahbab." The book is a collection of Dan Fodio's poems about influential people who preceded him and those who would come after him.

There was a clergyman named Sheikh Bayero Muhammad Sambo Kulwa who researched and translated the book, Bushral Ahbab from Fulfulde to Arabic. He found the manuscript from his father's corpus, a contemporary and follower of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio, and he died in the year 1248 AH (1832).

Another prophecy about the Sheikh was from a poet, Nana Asma'u, the daughter of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio. He prophesied the rise of the sheikh Zakzaky in her poem, also written in Fulfulde. The poem was collected by the British researchers and compiled in a book called 'The Collected Works of Nana Asma'u' by Jean Boyd and B. B Mark, published in Ibadan City in 1999.

Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio had written a lot of poems about the imminent emergence of Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky. Some of the stanzas are:

There shall emerge a saint after me,
He will be Ibraheem, the revivalist,
and Jamalul-Badry Hasamuddini.

The person called Hasamuddini,
He will be a reclusive saint who would rise to protect our religion

He would emerge in 1370 (1951) after Hijra,
That Ibraheem will be a helper to Imam of Time, Mahdi.

Sheikh Bayero Sambo Kulwa had given an incisive analysis of such the above poems. He said, the term Sharafudden, would a nickname to him which mean he would revive the true teaching of Islam during his time. While the term Husamudden mentioned by the Sheikh Usman would be the last of the saints. Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio was asked as to who would be that Husamudeen? He said it was the much awaited Imam Mahdi (AS) .

He was also asked as to what would happen in the year 1370s AH (1950s AD). He said it would be the year saint Ibraheem would emerge. Ibraheem according to him, he would be the greatest helper to Imam Mahdi. Having done with reading the poem, he was once again asked about the sheikh, he then read impromptu stanzas about the man Ibrahim, read:

There shall emerge a person in the West Africa,
He will have a lot of helpers to Imam Mahdi
This person will emanate from the wasteland of the Sahara,
His followers will be of great help to Imam Mahdi (AS).

One the man emerges,
You must pay fealty to the man for he will be answerable to Imam Mahdi (AS).

The man will emerge in the year, 1370s, (1950s AD) and
He will be a great helper to Imam Mahdi (AS).

This person will have a sparkling forehead and cicatrices,
Once you recognise him, ask him about Imam Mahdi (AS).

This person will have a dark skin,
And his beard would be hairy enough.
He will have eyes like those of Cat,

He will be a frequent visitor to (the grave of) the best of creatures (Muhammad).

His nickname would Sharafuddeen and, Ibraheem will be the name of the great helper to Imam Mahdi (AS)

These stanzas gave very details about Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky. In addition, it has added credence to the fact that Zakzaky matches the foretelling because he possesses all the descriptions made by Dan Fodio.

CONCLUSION

While a lot of efforts have been applied to produce this short biography of Zakzaky, it is noteworthy that this book has not entirely covered Zakzaky's near-forty years of active struggles as there are many areas of Zakzaky's life that have not been touch or extensively explained due to some reasons.

Do not forget sheikh is currently being detained by the Nigerian government despite court order to the effect that he be released and compensated. One of the calamities the Zaria Massacre was the destruction of various documents which would have been used to enlarge this book. Readers are hereby informed that efforts are underway to publish other works about Zakzaky and his movement, in sha Allah.