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## In Search of the Humanum: On Order and Disorder in Kamaldeen Balogun's *Rihlah al-Baḥth an al-Insān*

IBRAHIM LERE AMEEN<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

The works of Balogun have often been noted for providing antidotes to social maladies. This is particularly true of his creative work entitled *Rihlah al-Baḥth*, in which notions of order and disorder have been mirrored. The paper, using Jacques Derrida's theory, examines construction and representation of order and disorder and search for the humanum across cultures and civilizations. It gives a vivid picture of the social cankerworms that permeate all facets of establishment such as bribery, reduction in the weight and double standard of morality, practice of prostitution, siphoning public funds, exploitation of tenants by landlords, selfishness of members of National Assembly, etc. The paper concludes these vices, as against author's impression, can still be nipped in the bud, despite the rarity of the righteous ones to champion the cause.

### Introduction

Balogun, the author of *Rihlah al-Baḥth* was born in 1951 in Abeokuta, a city in south-west Nigeria. His father, Shaykh Abdul-Azeez was a popular *Sufi* and an Islamic scholar of no mean repute. As he turned seven, Balogun began his primary education which he combined with elementary Islamic education under the tutelage of Alhaj Abdul-Azeez Olorungbo<sup>1</sup>. Thereafter, he proceeded to *Al-Ma'had al-Dīnī al-Azhari*, Ilorin- an offshoot of al-Azhar University, Egypt. Balogun is specially endowed not only with intellectual acumen but also noble character. Added to this is charming outlook which naturally endears him to people. These noble qualities coupled with the nobleness of his pedigree, perhaps, are contributory to building his religious and academic personality. His brilliant academic performance became blossomed at *Ma'had al-Dīnī* where he got scholarship to further his Secondary Education *Thanawiyah* at Al-Azhar University<sup>2</sup>.

The Balogun's mind, at the threshold of his *thanawiyah* studies, was obsessed with thinking about what would become of his socio-academic future on coming back to his homeland as a university graduate. He was quiet aware of the linguistic antithesis between his host country and his

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home country which might make him unsuitable for social mainstreaming. This, perhaps reminded him of the need to develop his knowledge of English and preferred to study simultaneous translation at degree level for which he was admitted in 1972 in the same University. On the completion of his studies, he joined his co-Nigerian graduates at National Youth Service Corps<sup>3</sup>.

Balogun developed unbridle penchant in humanity and often engages people on the need to make life more comfortable for human populace. He considers having a sound education as a viable means to achieve the goal. His strong desire to further his studies later led him to University of Ibadan for Masters and Ph.D degrees in Arabo-Islamic Studies which he completed in 1982 and 1990 respectively<sup>4</sup>.

While in Cairo, Balogun worked as a translator at Cairo Radio, Voice of African Unit. His brilliance, during his postgraduate program, impressed his teachers that he was engaged to teach undergraduate students. Balogun also served as an external examiner in a number of Nigerian higher academic institutions including Universities of Ibadan, Ilorin and Lagos State<sup>5</sup>. He was a visiting lecturer at Al-Hikmah and Fountain universities, Ilorin and Oshogbo respectively. While in the latter, he occupied a number of sensitive positions; he was the foundation Dean of Students Affairs, the University Orator and the pioneering University Imam<sup>6</sup>. Balogun is a foundation member of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye where he has been serving in various capacities; he was the head of Department of Religions, the Dean of the Faculty, and the Director of Sandwich Program of the university<sup>7</sup>.

Balogun has to his credit not less than fifty inspiring and informative publications. They are also geared towards providing antidotes to the prevailing social maladies. Notable among his works are: *Islamic View Point on Family Planning*, *Islam and World Peace*, *Religious extremism in Nigeria: problem and solution*, *Islamic solutions to Nigeria's problems* and *Rihlahal-Bath an al-Insān* which Oladosu describes as the first Arabic work published by him<sup>8</sup>. The language of the book, as described by Ibrahim, is 'elegant' and the idea 'well knitted'; it reveals the literary ingenuity of the author despite its novelty in the annals of his published literary repertoire in Arabic<sup>9</sup>.

The widespread upheaval currently pervading many parts of the world today, as noted by Balogun, is fallout of 'modernity' and it was authored and still being nurtured by the West<sup>10</sup>. The agenda, which aims at wedging the whole world into a global village through adoption of a unified culture, has contributed negatively to the erosion of humanity. The situation is further excruciated by the complacency of the concerned nations that fail to challenge it in collectivism. Lamenting this collective apathy, Balogun writes<sup>11</sup>:

ويا أسفاه! فأين الإنسان اليوم من هذه الوظائف؟ فقد زلت القدم، وانهارت القيم، وأوشكت الأمة على الضياع التام عند ما لحقت بها موجات وتيارات الحضارة والمدنية! فإني أزف هذه الرسائل العشر إلى القراء ليعلموا أنه ما قد غمزاها من فقد الإنسانية.. وقد كنت أعلم أن من أعجز العجز أن ينظر الإنسان إلى الأمر نظرة طائفة حمقاء ولا يفعل شيئاً ليبدل سيناتها حسنات ورسائلها فضائل!

Alas! Where is man regarding these responsibilities? The road is missed and the values suppressed such that the society was about to collapse when confronted with the waves and the currents of modernity and civilization. So I bring these ten messages to readers for them to know what has been the lot of this land regarding the dearth of righteousness. And I know that it will be bad of man to just be looking at the matter like a stupid bird without attempting at changing it for better.

### *Rihlat al-bahth an al-Insān: a Content Expose*

The full title of the work in question is: *Rihlahal-Bahth an al-Insān: Hiwārūn bayna al-Sā'il wa al-Mas'ūl*<sup>12</sup>(A Journey in Search of Humanum: A Dialogue between the Questioner and Respondent). It is an Arabic play which depicts various horrific situations characterising the modern world. It contains 11 acts with two principal actors symbolically referred to as 'questioner' and 'respondent'. The first act (pp.17-18) serves as introduction to the play; a meeting point for the two heroes. The latter appeared before the former in the broad daylight with a lantern in search of a "man". The former felt surprised for the quest of the latter owing to his conviction of preponderance of people in town that could warrant being looked for. Responding to this, the respondent said: "it is not everybody in befitting outfit that is worthy of being called "a man". Not satisfied with this response, the latter requested the companionship of the former to follow in quest of his lost target and was readily granted.

The second act (pp. 19- 24) is situated at court where two cases were decided. The first suspect was a poor old man accused of stealing a number of yam tubers. Responding to the accusation, the suspect said, "in spite of my wretchedness, I strove to support my son to the point of obtaining B.A from University of Ibadan, yet, he remained unemployed. The thing became tighter that we resorted to begging. On that fateful day, I was tempted to steal some tubers yam to of fulfil the momentary need of my family". Pronouncing his judgment, the poor man was instantly ordered to be jailed. The second suspect accused of murder was an honourable member of the Federal House of Representative. He was reported to have killed a poor man who parked his motor at a car park meant for the men of high class. The suspect was eventually released on account of immunity he enjoys because of his position. How could such a judge be a human being when he jailed a poor old man on account of stealing just some tubers of yam while a murderer was let go scout free? Being worried by such an unfortunate scene, they decided to proceed on their journey in search of a real "human being".

The third act (pp. 25-31) features dismal occurrences in the motor park. A loaf-sale girl of about 10 years old was engaged in a conversation. She spoke of her background as an abandoned baby discovered at refuse ground by a man called Babake who took care of her until she was five years old. The man was made to fend for her through bread selling. No sooner that a smile was put into the face this downcast little girl, by procuring his remaining loaf of breads, worth, N100 than another commotion ensued in the area. Help! Help! My property, my money! There has been a robbery case somewhere around. But who dare approach the scene? The victim later appeared at the park only to be lambasted by the conductor: "why were you shouting instead of thanking God for having your soul spared? Please, come on board provided you have some money left on you. Our slogan here is: "you either fare or fall". Being dizzy by the statement, he aptly approached the driver trying to make him understand his plight only to be further "knocked down": "So long the journey to Makkah is for those who have the means, how could the trip to Lagos be imagined to be free? Whereas, fuel is not gotten free of charge" he retorted. Being further put off by this inhumane approach, both "respondent" and the questioner saw the need to proceed on their journey in search of their target.

The fourth act (PP. 32-37) is located at the hospital. There was somebody on the sickbed crying for help but no one to rescue him. When interrogated, the sick felt happy and said: "the doctor prefers my death to my life". After a while, his pain got increased and the respondent was forced to call the doctor on the top of his voice. Carefully rushing to the spot, he said: "any emergency case? The doctor felt disturbed on knowing that he was called just to attend to the already admitted sick person. He then enquired about his relationship with the sick and whether he has money to settle his medical bill. Following his negative response, the doctor said: "the patient was brought to the hospital sequel to his involvement in a ghastly motor accident in which he was the only survivor. The test conducted on him attracts ₦50,000 for medication with no one to pay. And without it, there is no possibility of having his life saved... Is it not better that he dies than to be alive? When the latter was urged to render any assistance he could, he replied: "any other relevant discussion? If he dies, he is not going to be the first person to die. Nothing goes for nothing... Before this long discussion could end, the sick one had breathed his last. The respondent felt so bad that he felt like having his eyes cascading down of tear to wash away his depressive feelings. Having been tired of the trip, they felt like passing a night to continue their journey on the following day.

Fifth act (PP.38-44) depicts another harrowing experience. Having slept for a while, they started hearing another call for help from their neighbouring house. They peeped through the window and saw a couple struggling for survival as thieves were plotting to have their way in. Three

hundred naira possessed by the wife was presented to the thieves to ransom the soul of her husband whom they insisted on killing, but was belittled. He was shot down, and the sound of the gun awakened his sleeping children who saw their father lying in a pool of blood. Baffled by this situation, the respondent and the questioner blamed the occurrence on the frailty of our national security and insincerity of the police who have turned to be manslayer spilling the blood of innocent citizens on refusing to give out bribe. They then decide to leave the town with their aim unachieved.

Sixth act (pp. 45-52) is situated at the village. The impression given by the villager they first met seemed to present it (the village) as an appropriate place of peace where the kind of person they sought could be met. In the course of interrogation with this villager, the siren of the police was heard. Hence, they inquire for the cause, he replied that they came to investigate the case of spiritual killing-the remains of a woman whose head and a pair of breast have been removed. The villager equally lamented the severity of the hunger owing to upsurge change of farmers' attitude to the cultivation of India-hemp instead of eatables. Everybody wants to deal in hard currency. Just as those in towns are involved in exportation of crude oil, the villagers equally deal in illegal cultivation. Huge success can hardly be attained by planting ordinary rice mainly patronized by the poor. This response makes the respondent to express loss of hope instantly, in attaining their lost desire in the village. So, they had to go back to the town to further their search.

Seventh act (pp. 53-58) pictures the pension's office where the retired civil servants were patiently waiting on a long cue. Interrogating one of these retirees, he replied: "I have been here for about five hours and our waiting is bid for seven days. One of us fell down yesterday and kicked his ghost instantly". Recounting his bad experience, a retired lecturer after about forty years of service expressed his regret for not going abroad on academic calling when hail and hearty. He declined joining the wagon of brain-drain process which could bring the country nothing but a colossal loss. Another retired engineer regretfully said that all his take-home had been expended on the family and that he possessed only a house which he was about to sell just as he had sold his car to take care of his family. The respondent and the questioner both felt concerned about the situation and tried to appeal to the head of the pension scheme but to no avail. So they continued searching for their need.

Eighth act (pp.59-66) features the happenings at an international airport. The first person they met there was a traveller. In the course of their interrogation with him he unfolded that travelling abroad remains the best option for every member of this nation. Because according to him life is difficult here: no access to good education, sound health, etc. At offshore, one must just get something to sustain himself. Some get engaged in farming and

office work. Several others deal in india-hemp. Some ladies engage in drug trafficking by hiding cocaine and heroine in their private parts; while some take to prostitution, which they consider as their profession. This has become a must in order to gain freedom from this oppressive government which is bent on money laundering, siphoning public funds to build mansions abroad or diverting them into their personal account in foreign banks. This attitude displayed by the government has made the heart of every member of the land to become stiff and no amount of sermon could soften it. Consequently, these unfortunate scenarios discouraged both the questioner and respondent, and they left the scene instantly because they realised that their needs cannot be met.

Ninth act (pp.67-73) is a reflection of parliamentarians' attitude. When both the questioner and respondent had an opportunity to witness a parliamentary session, two cases were tabled for deliberations: the hike in prices of goods and review of parliamentarians' allowances. The first deliberation was the issue of allowances which was peacefully and unanimously ended with the following approved percentages. Tourism allowance was raised by 200%, furniture by 100%, hospitality by 100%, fuel by 100% and salary by 300%. The deliberation on the second matter- price hike generated a hot debate which ended in a deadlock. The respondent could not control his feelings over the sheer egocentrism by these opportunistic parliamentarians, so he suddenly cried out: "What an unjust deliberation!" For this effrontery, he was almost made to face the wrath of the government, but was spared because he was aged. Both respondent and questioner left the scene with their hopes dampened.

Tenth act (pp.74-82) depicts the events in the market place. While preparing for shopping, the landlord of their rented apartment intercepted them notifying them of the increment on rent, making it the second one in a year. The landlord insisted that the decision became necessary as a result of the price hike of everything in the market. All the plea made to rescind the decision held no water. The tenant should therefore opt for another apartment that would suit his financial position or park out. On getting to the market, the situation met was more awful than imagined. A customer (rice-seller) that was approached was found using two different measurements: the white one, which is natural, contains five kilos while the green, the artificial one, contains only three. This difference is nothing but an expression of commercial freedom as a result of food crisis rocking the country to which the government has remained indifferent. Considering the justification untenable, the respondent read a portion from the Glorious Qur'an prohibiting the act. Instantaneously, the seller responded: "truth is the word of God" but our situation here does not encourage total compliance with such aspect of divine constitution. Everything is in disarray; before the rice could get to the market, the police must be tipped, the carriers must be paid

and middlemen must have their own dues." Tired of the situation, they unhappily left the place and continued their journey.

Eleventh act (pp. 83-94) took place at a University campus. After much disagreement between the questioner and respondent over the havoc caused by universities in the name of modernity, both of them moved to a University campus to witness what really operates there. At the point of entry, while exchanging greetings with the gateman, all of a sudden, the respondent saw a group of students standing somewhere appearing almost in the same form. They can hardly be distinguished by gender, as both guys and ladies were putting on trousers with their heads shaved and uncovered. Some boys were even putting on earrings in the name of civilization. Before ending this discourse, one female student suddenly appeared almost nakedly and was being chased by a guy who, having caught up with her, started giving her a deep kiss in the presence of people. Considering the situation inhumanly, they move into the campus where they saw a lecturer who was distributing his hand-out emphasizing on its being a catalyst of success in the forthcoming examinations. He declared that he would be busy flying over the world. Seeing the academic circle being permeated by this social cankerworm, the respondent lost hope regarding discovering their target, the questioner then said: "we have really made you toil; let us retire back home. This journey has been, indeed, stressful."

### **Analysing Balogun's Notion of Order and Disorder in Rihlah al-Bahth**

It is germane at this juncture to first x-tray the theory of order and disorder in order to facilitate our understanding of Balogun's notion of the concepts. The words 'Order' and 'disorder' are two ambivalent terms. They are mutually exclusive at the level of implication and application, and are philosophically hierarchical in the scheme of nature and nurture. The word order is, philologically traced to both Old French *ordre* and Classical Latin *ordo* (*gen. Ordinis*)<sup>13</sup>. Order, as put by Webster's New World College Dictionary- is a state of peace or things being in the right place. It can also be defined as a process of doing things in the right place, at the right time and in the right manner with the intent of achieving a well balanced system.

Maintenance of order in any given society is considered a legal duty. Kelsen<sup>14</sup>, views this as a coincidence of the concept of norm and the concept of "ought". The main function of norm is to provide a guiding principle for the provision of ideal situation. Realising an ideal situation, as further argued by Kelsen, is hinged not only on a mere command but also 'positive permission'. His words:

The question of the basis of the validity of a norm, that is, the question of why a norm is valid, why a norm is binding, why one ought to comply with a norm, is the question of why the subjective

meaning of an act intentionally directed to a certain course of behavior is also interpreted as its objective meaning. The answer to this question lies in the appeal to a higher norm. The basis of the validity of a norm, an "ought," can only be another norm, another "ought"; it cannot be a fact, an "is," and therefore cannot be the act positing this or another norm either. An "ought" follows only from an "ought," not from an "is," just as an "is" follows only from an "is," not from an "ought." To be sure, it is said that we ought to comply with a certain norm, the norm, say, that we love our neighbour, because God commanded it, that is, because God posited this norm.<sup>15</sup>

It could be explained, in view of the above that the relegation of the social guiding principle occasions the absence of peace at various levels of human endeavour. Of the causes identified for the fast disappearance of social order is the emergence modernity which aims at achieving unified global culture premised on western tradition, the tradition with an ambivalent worldview to moral rectitude and whose way of life differs considerably from what obtains in African terrain.

One of the characteristic features of African writers, as argued by western critics, is being overzealous with social message at the expense of drawing convincing portraits of real human features. Francis, while holding the notion as incontestable, explains that the Africans' indifference to the practice is not unconnected with their conviction of the need to domesticate their creative works to reflect the concept of man and to explore thematic issues that ignite creative sensibility<sup>16</sup>. The west, as viewed by Balogun, emphasizes individualism, materialism and group superiority in dominating the world as well as fuelling the emergence of a global culture<sup>17</sup>. This cultural antithesis, no doubt, informs the reason why the cultures of most of colonised parts of the world continue to petrify, wither and wear away amidst the forces of modernity<sup>18</sup>. The experience, which could be described as traumatic and horrific, has affected Africans' perception of the world leaving them with only hazy recognition<sup>19</sup>. The indifference of the affected individual nations, such as Nigeria, to stand tall against it has often resulted into catalogue of woes: social unrest, official corruption, political instability and economic quagmire. This contemporary socio-political and economic issue has constituted a focus in the literary repertoire of Nigerian writers. One of such notable works in this regard is *Rihlath Bahth* of Balogun<sup>20</sup>. In this book, Balogun aver that it is unbecoming for man to be indifferent to the perpetuation of evil as the basic reason for the creation of man is to act as Allah's vicegerent. He writes:

فنعيش اليوم في عصر وفي ظروف نحن فيها أشد الحاجة إلى الرشد الفكري وخاصة أمام منعطفات التحول الفكري والاجتماعي والمادي التي بيننا وبين إنسانيتنا ! فلقد خص الله الإنسان بثلاثة أشياء : أولا : عمارة الأرض لقوله تعالى: ( واستعمركم فيها ) (سورة هود الآية 61) وذلك بتحصيل ما به تهية المعاش وغيره.

ثانيا : عبادة الله سبحانه وتعالى كما قال تعالى (وما خلقت الجن والإنس إلا ليعبدون (سوره الذاريات الآية 56)

وثالثا: خلافته تعالى المذكوره في قوله : (ويستخلفكم في الأرض فينظر كيف تعملون (سوره الأعراف الآية 129) وغيرها من الآيات.

وعلى هذا الأساس , فإن الله قد وهب الإنسان من الاستعدادات من يوهله للقيام بهذه الوظائف؛  
ويا أسفاه! فأين الإنسان اليوم من هذه الوظائف ؟ فلقد زلت القدم , وانهارت القيم , وأوشكت الأمة على الضياع التام عندما لحقت بها موجات وتيارات الحضارة والمدنية! فإني أزف هذه الرسائل العشر إلى القراء ليعلموا أنه قد غمز البلاد ما غمزها من فقد الإنسانية .. وكنت أعلم أن من أعجز العجز أن ينظر الإنسان إلى الأمر نظرة طائفة حمقاء ولا يفعل شيئا ليبدل سيناتها حسنات وردانها فضائل!

Today we are living in a period and under a condition strictly requiring intellectual guidance. We are particularly (looming) in the wake of social, intellectual and material dynamism serving as a border between us and our humanity! Allah has surely endowed man with three things:

First; to enliven the earth, as He says: He has made you live on the earth (Surah al-Hūd:61) so as to attain (your) sustenance and other things.

Second; to worship Allah, the Most High. He says: "I neither created the Jin nor man except for them to worship me. (Surah al-dhāriyyāt:56)

Third; to serve as His vicegerent, as mentioned in His word: "and He makes you a vicegerent on the earth, for Him to see how you work. (Suratu A'raf: 129)<sup>21</sup>.

Far from paying mere lip service to the desired change, Balogun took the Bull by the horns, using his intellectual wherewithal to challenge the situation. His work, *Rihlah al-Bahth an al-Insān: Hiwarun bayna al-Sā'il wa al-Mas'ūl* (In search of humanum: a dialogue between a questioner and respondent) is one of his numerous works in that regard.

*Rihlah al-Bahth...* is an Arabic play presented in a philosophical manner, in which he deconstructed the notion of order and disorder. Robert Con Davis and Roland Scheleifer describe this notion as deconstructive reading which starts from a philosophical hierarchy, where two opposing terms are presented as the 'superior' general case and the 'inferior' general case<sup>22</sup>. While the 'order' which Hekesen describes as 'ought' is represented in the play by the 'respondent', the 'disorder', also referred to as 'is,' is symbolised by the questioner. The journey in search of humanum, took the respondent and the questioner to various places which include: town, village, market, higher institution of learning, place of worship, etc.<sup>23</sup>

Ideally, the best place supposedly to locate justice is Court of Law. Unfortunately, the scourge of corruption intensely ravaging every fabric of human society today did not spare the industry; judgment delivery is in

contradistinction from the letter and the spirit of the constitution. The journey of both the respondent and questioner into the Law Court reveals high level of socio-disorder. The disposition of the judge towards two cases involving people of different personalities, calls for wonderment. The first case involved a wretched man suspected for stealing some tubers of yam, and he was ordered to be jailed by the judge. The judgement was delivered without considering the circumstances leading to the offence. The circumstances, which was described as a temptation is narrated thus:

لم أكن في يوم من أيامي لصا ولا سارقاً، بل قضيت أيام شبابي عاملاً مجداً في طلب الرزق لي ولأهل بيتي حتى كبرت وأدركتني شيخوخة. فأصبحت عاجزاً عن العمل ... وولدي وحيد الذي أنفقت كل غال ونفيس عليه - قد تخرج من جامعة إبادن بعد أن أكمل دراسته وحصل على شهادة الليسانس منذ أربع سنوات ... ولكن لم يكن من حظهِ الحصول على وظيفة، فأصبحنا جميعاً في حالة اليأس واليأس. فلجأت يا مولاي إلى ما يلجأ إليه أمثالي - كل مضطر عديم - أتكف الناس سواء أعطوني أم منعوني، حتى جاء ذلك اليوم المشنوم فلم أجد من يحسن إليّ ... ودار في خلدي أن أسرق البقول علّه يسدّ الرمق! فهذه قصة يا مولاي ... ورحمته! 24

There was never a day I engaged in stealing or burglary. I rather committed my prime age to hard work for my upkeep and members of my family until I got senile that I could no longer work. The only child on whom I spent all I had (in the process) had his first degree at the University of Ibadan about four years ago but got no job; we are all languishing in deprivation and desperation. My lord! That was how I got lured into doing what people in my shoes do; I started begging, not minding whether I would be given alms or not. On that fateful day, I got no one to help me... it occurred to me that I should steal some tubers of yam to fulfil the need ... This is my story, my Lord, I beg your pardon...

The second case involved an honourable member of the house of representative and a university student. The former murdered the latter on account of parking his motor in a motor park believed to be meant for VIP. The enviable position of the suspect loomed the Court decision on introducing himself as an honourable member of the House. The judge delivers thus:

إذا كان الأمر كما وصفت فيبدو أن كثيراً من الناس لا يعرفون أن منزلة أولي الأمر كمنزلة الأنبياء بين الناس أنهم معصومون إقديماً قالوا: "زامر الحي فلا تطرب" فعلاوة على ذلك فإن قانون بلادنا يمنح أولي الأمر حصانة ... فحكمتي إذن: دمالمقتول هدر، فاذهب أنت فإن جرّ من أحرار البلاد تتمتع بالحصانة. 25

If the matter is as you have described it, it is clear that people are unaware that the position of men in authority is like those of prophets who are infallible. It is proverbially stated that celebrity is rarely appreciated in his birthplace. More so, the constitution of our land grants immunity to those in authority. My judgement is: "the blood of the murdered has already been a waste. So you are released, being one of those enjoying immunity in the land.

The journey in search of humanum later brought them to a motor park, a place mainly populated by the rank and file. These people who could be presumed to be more godly and be socially symbiotic are found to be malignant and malevolent. In this place, there was a very slim lady, a bread seller. The girl, being a foundling, is nicknamed *Omo-Ijoba*. Her worrisome situation which ordinarily ought to have attracted humanitarian competition attracted only a malevolent called Babake who profits on her meekness; she was deprived of education and charged to bread-selling to fend for his entire family. Having finished her narration, she burst into tears and was appeased by the searchers of humanum by buying the whole loaves of her bread. No sooner than the lady left the spot that an unimaginable scream sparked up; it was a cry for help. There was a case of robbery, yet everybody went on his normal business as if there was no problem around. The derision melted by the cab conductor on the survivor of the robbery situation who begged for lift indicates rarity of humanum. He says:

يا للعجب ! إذا كان السفر إلى مكة المكرمة على من استطاع إليه سبيلا ، فكيف يدور في خلدك أن السفر إلى لاجوس بدون مقابل ؟ أنسيت أن الدراهم بالدراهم تكتسب ؟ كيف يمكن أن أحملك إلى لاجوس مجانا ؟ والبنزين .. والبيترول لا يعطى مجانا ... مع السلامة يا حبيبي والله معك! 26

What a surprise! If journey to the holy land of Makkah is ordained only for those who have means how could you think of travelling to Lagos free of charge; have you forgotten that even money exchange attracts gain? How could you be taken to Lagos free of charge, while the fuel could not be freely given? Goodbye, my friend. May God be with you.

The pathetic incident in one hospital visited by the searchers of humanum is another reflection of socio-disorder. A sick person on the danger list was abandoned groaning. His deadly scream attracted the attention of the visitors who felt concerned about his situation and started calling for the doctor on duty to rescue him from the verge of death. The doctor felt disturbed on knowing that he was invited for the long-time abandoned sick person who had nobody to pay for medical treatment for the injury he sustained in a ghastly motor accident on his way to his place of work. When pressed further to assist, the doctor responded:

ليس الأقربون أولى بالمعروف؟ حدثني بشأن آخر إن لم تجد ما تنفقه على المريض. ولن مات فإنه لن يكون أول راحل عن الدنيا .. فإن الدراهم بالدراهم تكتسب! 27

Are his relations not in the best position to assist? What else is there to discuss if you have nothing to spend on the sick. If he dies, he is not the first being to exit this world. Exchange of money with money attracts gain.

The sudden pass-away of the sick called for a torrential cry from the questioner who could not contain himself for the tragic event. This cry was described by the respondent as a sign of humanum:

ليتك تبكي كلما وقع نظرك على محزون أو مفؤود، فإن الدموع في مثل هذه الحالة تدل على إنسانيتك ولطفك! عندما تبكي السماء فإنها تبكي رحمة بالإنسان، وما أنين الأرض إلا عطفًا بالإنسان ! فأين

القلب العطوف الرحيم من هذا الطبيب وأمثاله في مجتمعنا اليوم؟ ولأجل ذلك قد أصبحت بطنة الغني انتقاماً لجوع الفقير! <sup>28</sup>

What a pity! You cry each time you cast a look at the aggrieved. Each teardrop on the situation implies your humanness and goodness, the cry of the sky is a blessing for mankind just as the groaning of the earth is also a blessing for them. Where is the good heart in this doctor and the likes of him in our society, today. The voracity of the rich has to be a punishment for the starvation of the poor.

Wanton burglary is another social malady identified by the searchers of humanum. Having retired to bed after the hustling and bustling of the day, the free flow of their sleep got stampeded with sudden crying for help. What could have happened! There was nobody to provide them with the needed information. They later discovered, on peeping through the window, that burglary operation was ongoing in the neighbouring house. The inability of the burgled couple to provide the burglars with the demanded ransom led to the termination of the husband's life. What a pitiable condition! Where could the family of the deceased go to seek redress! The policemen who are ideally supposed to intervene in such a situation are of no difference in character from the accused.

The respondent described our security personnel as "men of uniform in the day and burglars in the night; those who use official machinery to aid and abate. They love only those who give bribe and are ready to kill whoever acts otherwise. Their inordinate love for wealth has blurred their vision regarding their responsibilities as they become puppet in the hands of rich ones<sup>29</sup>."

The freedom and serenity characterising the village life is probably a stimulating factor for the searchers of humanum to consider the place appropriate to locate their target. This singular notion became altered on practical contact with the village and villagers. The situation appeared worse than the city. There were cases of ritual killing; women are particularly not safe. Their private parts and some other sensitive organs such as breasts are found useful and efficacious for money-making. Even there are dungeons where pirates operate. More so, the common slogan, like in the city, is: man must be rich. As a result, efforts are concentrated on growing Indian hemp at the expense of eatables. The dearth of humanum both in the city and village has schematically depicted the submission of a poet who says:

لم يبق صاف ولا معاف ++ ولا معين ولا معين

وفي المساوي بدا التساوي ++ ولا أمين ولا ثمين<sup>30</sup>

There is none on earth that is good or a helper

Equal are they in evil doing; there is no trustworthy nor a reliable one

The thought of what becomes of one at old age is enough justification for one to be thoughtful of the aged. This schematic delineation has probably

stimulated the searchers of humanum to visit the office of pensioners. The reality of the situation reveals the dearth of humanum in the scheme of things; retirees who have served the nation at their prime age to the point of senility are subjected to traumatic long-queue which lasted for seven days; many died on the spot while some have to sell their houses in order to make both end means. The evidence advanced to justify such inhumane act is the need to avoid impersonation which can actually be circumvented without necessarily subjecting them to such gruesome experience. There are many ways to achieve this if really the government is serious and has no ulterior motive. A clue has to be taken from developed countries by putting in place a working system which has a strong data base of every member of society right from his 'being' to the point of death. But in a situation where vultures are in position of authority such a system cannot be allowed to work for it would expose their rots and block their illegal ways of making money. How can there be a perfect order!

The above scenario may be the reason the recent penchant by common men to abandon the country in search of greener pasture. Unfortunately, the means to achieve such desire have not been honourable; some are engaged in washing corpse while several others are employed for clearing pits and cleaning lavatory. Picturing such pitiable situation, one of the victims laments:

رجال كأمثالي يستأجرون في المزارع والمصانع ، وإن لم نجد فبيع المخدرات. أما الفتيات فأكثرهن يتجرن بشرقهن ، فيصبحن عاهرات ساقطات في الخارج ، أو يخدمن في المنازل ، أو يشاركن في المخدرات. إنما نقوم بما نفعل في إعادة إنسانيتنا التي سلبتها حكومتنا<sup>31</sup>

Men like me are employed by agricultural farms and firms. Where such (jobs) are not available, we are engaged in drug trafficking. As for women, most of them trade in their private parts; they turn to prostitutes roaming round the street, some are employed as housemaid or engaged in drug trafficking... We do this in a bid to restore our humanum which has been extorted by our government.

Even though the maintenance of social order is a collective responsibility, the enforcing role expected of government could be described weightier. The strength of the victim's submission regarding the government responsibility with respect to the betterment of the society can be underpinned from the saying of the prophet which says:

إن الله لينزع بالسلطان ما لا ينزع بالقرآن<sup>32</sup>

Allah does enforce order through position of authority faster than he does through the Qur'an.

The questions that syllogistically follow are: Can real political order be attained and maintained by those who are heartless? What forms of legislations could such political opportunists make? These questions and many more, are probably the basis for the searchers of humanum's visit to

the parliament. There, two proposals were brought for deliberation: the astronomical hike of market price and allowances of honourable members. While the first proposal, which affects members of the house alone was thoughtfully attended to, the second proposal which concerns the whole nation, was treated with temerity. They all unanimously responded:

بلى ما بالنا بارتفاع الأسعار وعندنا من المال ما فوق الكفاية!<sup>33</sup>

Nay! What concerns us with the price hike when we have more than enough money?

The inhumane attitude and self-centeredness of the people in authority informs reactionary behaviour of the subjects; hence, the rank and file care not to step on anybody's toes in order to make money. The journey of the searchers of humanum pictures people's desperation in this regard. The case of a landlord who inflated the house rent twice in a year keeps them awesome. Also witnessed in the market is the variation of selling scale and uncanny extortion of money from the customers. People are so insolent that they denigrate Allah's warnings in this regard. How could one interpret the notion of one trader who says?

صدق الله العظيم. هذا قول الله! ولكن الظروف المحيطة بنا في هذا البلد لا يتماشى مع القانون الإلهي، كل شئ عطلان: قيل وصول كيس الأرز إلى السوق البوليس يأكل، والحمال يأخذ والسماسة...!<sup>34</sup>

Truth is the word of God, the Majesty. But conditions surrounding us in this county cannot accommodate the divine injunction. Everything is in disarray; before a bag of rice gets to the market, police must be given their own share of the money, likewise the carriers as well as middle men.

Having had their hope dashed, as a result of the disorder that the humanum searchers observed both in the public and private sectors, they headed to academic circle. But to their dismay, the dictate of the situation runs contrary to their expectation. In the name of freedom, immorality appears in highest order; women both students and lecturers move about half-naked, and the male students put on earrings. The lecturers are not interested in teaching but in the selling of handouts to the students. They equally trade with the future of students as they travel out of the country for personal development. This situation does not differ from Yusuf's description of the current socio-intellectual situation of Nigerian terrain. He writes:

The educated class, who are supposed to be the guardians and symbols of moral characters, have unfortunately seen some of its members become morally bankrupt, the subjects of probes, enquiries and investigation. Some students are involved in acts of indiscipline. Drug abuse, alcoholism, cultism, vandalism and other forms of immorality are daily occurrences in some Nigerian campuses<sup>35</sup>.

## Conclusion

This paper examined the Balogun's construction of the entangled complexities currently underpinning our society, particularly Nigeria where cultural norms, mores and social principles have been benumbed from taking their normal course. This is done by locating the points of order and disorder in his book entitled: *Rihlath Al-Bahth*- a portrait of socio-political and economic happenings. Balogun's approach in this regard is basically philosophical. It is logically packaged and typified by two imaginary personalities referred to as *Sā'il* (Questioner) and *Masūl* (Respondent) who set out in search of humanum whose loss he believed to be the cause of the displacement of order.

The work, though a fiction, represents what actually operates in real life. The journey by the searchers of humanum, which took them to virtually every human habitat such as places of worship, Court of Law, Market, school, etc, ended without achieving the desired result- locating a real and righteous human being. While we agree to the rarity of the possessors of such human value in our contemporary time, we utterly disagree to the absolute dearth of them. Having such impression even negates the Qur'anic stand which avers the continuous existence of righteous ones, no matter the meanness of the degree, till the day of Recompense.

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