

# The Socio-Attitudinal Disposition for Nigeria's National Development in the Light of Isa 1:16-17

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## **Abstract**

If national development presupposes the ability of a nation to harness its human and natural resources for growth and advancement to its full potential, then Nigeria is a long way off. Because human capital development and socio-economic growth have been abysmally poor in contemporary Nigeria. In consequence, the nation has retrogressed in those fronts. The retrogression has been informed by the preoccupation of her leaders with cosmetic solutions to the nation's problems, rather than time honoured and enduring ones. All because the cosmetic solutions serve as conduit pipes for the leaders to siphon the nation's wealth to their foreign bank accounts. Thus, leading to the reason why the basic indices for enduring socio-economic growth are not in place; and those that are in place, have been through decades of neglect reduced to the shadows of their potentialities. One area that has contributed to creating this ugly situation is the depreciation in moral rectitude in Nigeria. Utilizing selected features of literary analysis, this article argues that the content of Isa 1:16-17 contains the moral compass that challenges Nigerians to renew themselves, to eschew every form of evil practice and to encourage the exercise and perpetuation of good through seeking and actualizing justice. The moral regeneration derivable from Isa 1:16-17 is imperative for the transition of Nigerians from their unproductive moral outlook.

**Keywords:** *Tôrah*, Self-renewal, Purification, Justice.

## **1.0 The Nigerian Paradox**

In 2004 and 2005, Nigeria was respectively voted the most religious nation in the world. Indeed. A first-time visitor to Nigeria will immediately notice and feel the explicit display of religious houses, symbols and their activities. This visitor will also – after a few days – expeditiously notice that everyday Nigerian language and expressions are laden with religious sentimentalities.

Paradoxically, in those same years, Nigeria was voted among the most corrupt nations in the world. And her corruption is all-encompassing. It is affecting and eating deep into every fabric and facet of the nation's life. If her population is 200 million, it may not be an exaggeration to avow that 150 million Nigerians are

either corrupt or have easy tendency to it. No sector or portion of the nation is spared from corruption's lethal hold. It has astronomically deadened the consciences and will-power of the nation, leading her to her worst economic recession in recent decades. Nowadays, not to be corrupt, especially with regards to the proper management of public offices, is to be averagely depicted as being «unwise». Also, when a public office holder refuses to be corrupt in the Nigerian style, he is «deified». It seems as if the only none corrupt Nigerian, is the one who has not had the opportunity to choose between being and not being so. For this reason, those Nigerians who stand out against corruption are not ever given the opportunity of patriotically serving the nation.

Now among the corrupt Nigerians are tens of millions of Christians who believe God's word endures for ever (Isa 40:8), and since no one is capable of annulling it (Isa 14:27), it never goes back to God without fulfilling its purpose on earth (Isa 55) (Sweeney 1996, p.60). This article intends to use God's word in Isa 1:16-17 to call for attitudinal change from being prone to corruption. We assert that this change is one of the surest ways to the nation's growth and development. To achieve this, an interpretation of the chosen biblical portion will be first made, and then the fruits of the interpretations shall be marshalled out as bedrocks for this change.

## **2.0 Isa 1:16-17 in its Literary Context, Justification and Division**

Literary context and justification signify the literary parameters and framework within which verses 16-17 make meaning and convey their messages, while its division demonstrates how thoughts were articulated in the passage to convey its messages. An exegesis that is not done against the prior establishment and explanation of a passage's framework and manner of articulation of thoughts becomes wishy-washy.

### **2.1 Literary Context, Justification and Division of the Passage**

The literary context of Isa 1:16-17 is chapter one of the book of Isaiah (BI). Most scholars subdivide it into five blocks (verse 1, verses 2-3, 4-9, 10-17, 21-26 and 27-31), and a few scholars interpret it as an introduction to some key themes and events of the BI (Fohrer 1962, pp. 253-254). From the divisions of Isa 1, verses 16-17 fall within the verses 10-17 unit.

The major delineating elements of this unit according to J. Eck are the imperative verbs of verse 10 and verses 16-17. These verbs summon the leaders and people to listen and pay attention to the word of God in verse 10, and in verses 16-17 instruct them through directives of what the word of God expects of them. This syntactic formation of imperative verbs opening and closing a unit is unique to this block in its literary context (Eck 2015, p. 83). The exhortative invitation with a *cohortative* in verse 18 and the closing formula (for the mouth of

the Lord has spoken) at verse 20 demarcates verses 18-20 as a different unit from verses 10-17 (Sweeney 1996, p. 79; Wildberger 2002, p. 36). Finally, the *Setûmâh* (ט) at verses 9 and 17 – according to the Masoretic division of the BHS – closes the verses 4-9 and 10-17 units respectively marking out this unit (see Scaiola 2011, p. 162). With the mention of Sodom and Gomorrah in verse 10 and the speech formula – says the Lord – in verse 11a, this unit is inserted into its literary context in what precedes in verse 9 and in what follows in verse 18a (Gitay 1983, p. 220).

Verses 10-17 contain a speech broken into three sub-parts: Part 1 contains verse 10, which is a summons to the leaders and people to listen and pay attention to the word of God; Part 2 contains verses 11-15, which talk about the prophet's contestation against their flamboyant religiosity that is not acceptable to God; and Part 3 contains verses 16-17, which state the directives of God's word to the leaders and people to practice and lead a life of social justice, especially to depicted people in order for their worship to be acceptable by Him (Vargon, p.183; Williamson 2006, p. 82).

## 2.2 The Genre of the Literary unit and Analysis of verses 16-17

The speech of verses 10-17 is either called *tôrâh* instruction (Childs 2001, p.16) or prophetic *tôrâh* (Fohrer 1962, pp. 259-260). *Tôrâh* is used by the prophets to mean «teaching», «instruction», «direction» and not ordinarily «law». *Tôrâh* underscores the teaching and content of God's revelation to humanity prescribed in statutes, precepts and ordinances intended to act as guidelines on how the Israelites would mould every facet of their socio-economic and political life to conform to His (Mafico 2001, p. 645).

The classical prophets' oracles therefore solely instructed and directed the Israelites to lead their lives according to God's teachings and revelations based on the principle of justice to Him and to humanity, just as they had accepted at the Moab Covenant they made with Him (cf. Deut 28:26-30:1-20). Israelites' failure to orientate themselves by this principle implied that their worship and ritual acts became unacceptable by God (cf. Amos 5:21-24; Mic 6:6-8). It was therefore obligatory for them to practice righteousness and good neighbourliness among themselves as a covenant community. The failure to do so merited them divine punishment (cf. Amos 2:6-8). To fulfil this obligation involves a constant change of heart towards God (cf. Jer 31:33) shown in concrete practice of justice to the poor who were economically and politically crushed by the unscrupulous rich and powerful (Amos 4,1-3) (Mafico 2001, p. 645). These are essentially part of what a prophetic *tôrâh* aims at.

Isa 1:16-17, which falls under Part 3 of the prophetic *tôrâh* of verses 10-17, is a directive instructing the rulers and people to a self-renewal that rids them of all

forms of evil in order that they will lead a life in which they practice social justice, especially to some designated members of their society. The verbal (*shiftû*) and nominal (*mišpāt*) Hebrew languages' lexemes used to characterize the theme of justice in verse 17 highlight the social justice orientation and motif of verses 16-17. M. A. Sweeney and E. M. Obara avow that verses 16-17 are positive instructions in a progression of nine commands (Sweeney 1996, p. 79; Obara 2010, p. 88). Obara graphically detailing the progression states that the first four (in verse 16) demands a purification of the encrustation of evil (Obara 2010, p. 88) through self-renewal. She describes the last five in verse 17 as an exhortation to take up positive actions synthesized in two general requests firstly particularized into: learn to do good and search for justice, and secondly itemized into three final commands: the defense of the right of the oppressed, widow and orphan. This article takes a step further on Obara's detailing by merging verse 16b with verse 17, firstly on the theological grounds of the dyad *tôḥ wārā'* (good and evil) (Dohmen «רעע», p. 583), and secondly on the syntactic grounds that the direct objects of the verbs of verses 16b and 17aα are said by P. Joüon and T. Muraoka to be verbs of mood of action (Joüon – Muraoka 2009, pp. 154.149). So instead of Obara's learn to do good and search for justice (Obara 2010, p. 88), this article has three general directives of cease to do evil, learn to do good and search for justice: all with verbs of what must be done.

Thus far, this article has shown that verses 16-17 are the heart and climax of this prophetic *tôrāh* of verses 10-17. The values of the verbs of this prophetic *tôrāh* (verses 10-17) shall, among the nouns of verses 16-17, guide the call for attitudinal change in Nigeria as a panacea for the growth of the nation.

### 3.0 Isa 1:16-17 and Contemporary Nigeria

There is no dispute against saying Nigeria needs a complete overhaul of her socio-economic and political structures and systems, and her citizenry's commonplace psycho-attitudinal dispositions about what it means to be a Nigerian since the Gen Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida's era (1985-1993). The eight *maradonic* years of Babangida successfully dribbled the collective will and intellect of Nigerians into the *chop-i-chop* and make-it-big-quick mentalities. The eight years equally democratized corruption. With the democratization of corruption by the Babangida's epoch, it became the practice not only of those at the corridors of power but of seemingly a great majority of Nigerians. The result is the rot in the polity and an unending proficiency for self-gratification: *me, myself and I or us, ourselves and we*. So, «every» Nigerian seemingly wants to own a 50 million naira house with little or no effort. Such unethical crave in recent decades is counted as «God's blessings». And so most Nigerians are no longer driven by the enduring efforts to success and by the desire to work towards national growth and posterity. Therefore, all sorts of unethical means and channels, including the manipulation of religion and ethnic affiliations, are

employed by those interested in corruption to reach their ugly goals. Today, Nigerians averagely do not work for the spirit of Nigeria and the onions of what she exists for. Most “privileged” Nigerians do not feel any remorse or shame for any ill-gotten wealth.

This negative psycho-attitudinal disposition has geometrically decreased moral rectitude and enabled unguarded negative exploitation of the nation's life. Hence, in recent times, Nigerians see deeds of infamy and are not shocked: to embezzle public funds and abuse public trust as long as it is in tandem with «due-process» is acceptable. «Due-process», as understood by many Nigerians in contemporary expressions, means that the stolen funds and/or the abused public trust respectively was shared and/or involved Nigerians of all religious and ethnic divides. This poor conception of «due-process» has trickled down from the highest office in the land to even the common man on the streets, and to even intra-family relations. One cannot understand why the alleged \$20 billion dollars that simply disappeared before 2015 was of no consequence. The eyelids that bated were only Sanusi Lamido Sanusi's and a handful. It has not been adequately investigated («Missing \$20 million Oil Money»). Between 2011 and 2015, Nigeria earned a total of N51 trillion from petroleum resources alone. The money is part of the N96.212 trillion the country earned in 58 years from crude oil sales (Ndujihe «Under Jonathan, Nigeria earned N51trillion from crude oil»). These monies have been probably mismanaged and seemingly unaccounted for because there is nothing tangible, grand and of enduring socio-political good to show for them. Those who steered the nation during the epochs in question have not been thoroughly investigated, and a greater number of them still constitute those who decide the fate of the nation. And where they are investigated, the investigation served as channels for punishing perceived political opponents. Some opinions demand that the nation moves on and forgets the past just like that. Therefore, who will stop or prevent prospective future looters then? Where it is known that reserves of the nation have been depleted and savings squandered, and government Agencies rarely give befitting account of their services to the nation, who can stop future looters? Those anti-progress deeds have been swept under the carpet, in the «spirit» of moving on. State Governors of the Jonathan's administration – despite warnings from economic experts – shared the monies that accrued in the excess crude oil account meant to serve as a safe haven for the nation's rainy days. It now seems as if the same State Governors and their cronies looted those monies, because States now owe their workers' salaries for years, and no identifiable physical development reflecting the amount received from the sharing is known in most States.

In their «lawlessness», these politicians now see Nigeria as their personal investment. They care less about what happens to the citizenry of the nations,

but care more about their personal well-being and those of their cronies. Who will have the moral capacity then to stop future looters? Even the present administration is seemingly making lip service at fighting corruption. Billions accumulated from JAMB, Customs, TSA, etc have not improved the socio-economic misfortunes of Nigerians. President Mohammed Buhari in condemning the Jonathan administration publicly declared that the whole fuel subsidy regime was a fraud. That his government pays the same subsidy even into trillions of naira (\$5 billion) implies he himself is fraudulent (Ruth Olurounbi, "The Rising Cost of Nigeria's Petroleum Subsidy"). The question of fraudulency may be asked on all areas of his leadership in the last four years because of heightened insecurity where lives have been lost slaughtered animals in abattoirs. The economy under Buhari's watch is experiencing a geometric degradation, and in consequence, many Nigerians are direly suffering. All we hear from Buhari's administration is cosmetic solutions to the nation's problems like the wasteful and inhumane Tradermoni. The refineries are almost non-functional. In fact, his governance pattern has stagnated the nation. Nothing could be more responsible for this unfortunate development than the lack of moral rectitude even in Buhari's administration.

With the leadership morally decayed, most average Nigerians see such attitudinal disposition to consciously do the wrong thing as «right» and okay. When most Nigerians commit offences like examination malpractice, electioneering deceits that change election to selection, breaking of every manner of regulations, etc, they see nothing wrong with what they have done and feel no sense of guilt assailing them (Chibuko 2013, p. 79). It is taken as the Nigerian way. The economic losses resulting from the unjust systems, regressive structures and unproductive attitudinal dispositions have made it impossible for children born thus far in this century in Nigeria to see the Nigeria of our dreams. Simply because the basic platforms for national growth are not yet in place: our universities are not the apex centers for technological breakthroughs that can fetch the nation forex advantages, our political system is run by retired heads and ostensibly by the same visionless and unproductive political thieves that put the nation in the sorry state it is in, we do not have the technological basis for production since we import even pencil and petrol, there is no «electricity», «trains» and good roads, etc.

Nigerians being dogged people who survive through thick and thin can make a difference of their present despicable state, but it must begin with an attitudinal change. The change presupposes that Nigerians re-engage with the past by putting it to trial, so as to make those who milked the nation dry to account for their misrule. There should not be killings, but a move to make them return a certain percentage of their loot to the national treasury for national development. This will serve as deterrent to the future. It should not be done in

the style of the charades like the Oputa Panel, Constitutional Conferences and various Bodies set up to study issues affecting the nations that end up becoming toothless bull-dogs that are reduced to White-papers fit only for the national archives. There should also be aggressive campaigns through teaching, preaching and propaganda for attitudinal change. The principles for pushing the attitudinal change agenda is what this article believes *Isa 1:16-17* has, and it intends to analyse and present them, beginning with the content of verse 16aαβ.

### 3.1 Verse 16aαβ: The demands for the Purification of the Encrustation of Evil

All the verbs in verse 16aαβ are imperatives: *rachātsû* (wash yourselves), *hizzakkû* (clean yourselves) and *hāsîrû* (put away). Of the three verbs, two – *rachātsû* and *hizzakkû* – have no direct objects. *Rachātsû* and *hizzakkû* summon the leaders and people of Judah (*Isa 1,10*) – the entirety of the nation – to look inwardly and evaluate themselves through washing and purification to an attitudinal change that is ethically inspired.

*Rachātsû* (wash yourselves) in different verbal forms has 72 occurrences in the Old Testament and it signifies washing for cleanliness: religious, ethical and hygienic. Its use in verse 16aαβ is metaphoric, and it refers more to ethical and a little to religious cleanliness through the washing of selves to remove the filth and blood of their evil deeds arising from primarily unethical behaviors (cf. *Isa 4:4* and *Ezek. 16:9*). Because to think of themselves as clean while remaining unclean is decried by *Prov. 30:12* (Zobel, «רהץ», pp. 460-463). *Hizzakkû* (clean yourselves) underscores inner and deeper self-re-evaluation through purification to self-cleanliness. A cleanliness of ethical and religious implications that leads to a life of pure righteousness (cf. *Job 8:6; 33:9; Prov. 20:11; 21:8*) (Averbeck «זכה», pp. 1099-1100). The directive for the purification of the encrustation of evil in these verbs is not an offer of unconditional grace, but rather a reasoned, detailed demonstration of what constitutes the true path of life (H. WILDBERGER, *Isaiah 1-12*, 48). That is why they betoken repentance (Williamson 2006, p. 98) from unethicity.

This style and nature of ethical renewal is what verse 16aαβ recommends to Nigerians if the nation must make progress. We had just underlined that these three verbs were used to direct the people and leaders of Judah to inner self renewal. Hence, it is fitting to use them to call Nigerians to attitudinal change that is ethically based. However, the quality and nature of this inner attitudinal renewal of Nigerians demands the last item of verse 16aαβ that is championed by the verb *hāsîrû* (put away). With *hāsîrû*, verse 16aαβ invites Nigerians to strive to remove all evil deeds. A striving that is prefigured by inner self renewal through washing and purification of encrusted evil. That *hāsîrû* is a *hiphil* verbal form means that Nigerians must make it happen. They must bring to reality that which removes every form of evil in their midst. Therefore, crimes in which the

worth of a Nigerian is trampled upon caused by someone's wanton craving and arrogance (Isa 3) (Wildberger 2002, p. 49; Stoebe «רעע», pp. 1249-1254) must be removed.

The purification and washing should lead every Nigerian to be guided and orientated by the spirits of nationalism, patriotism and common humanity. It also demands too that Nigeria deals with unethical attitudinal impurities of the past decades of her history that have caused it economic and socio-political woes. Otherwise all projects at making Nigeria a great nation will simply be parodies and showboating of what it takes and not the reality. Sweeping the past wrongs under the carpet does not solve the problems on ground. It rather encourages newer forms of unethical behaviors. Because future offenders will, on the basis of how past perpetrators went free, assume no one will call them to justice. But if the past is revisited and adequately dealt with, the contemporary will be challenged to be more careful.

### 3.2 Verses 16b-17: Summons to Take Up Positive Actions

Having demanded the purification of the encrustation of evil, verses 16b-17 summon and instruct the entirety of Judah to take up and lead their lives in positive and society's constructive deeds. The first two clauses of the summons invert the antithetic *tôb wārā'* (good and evil), and they present two of the general but common Old Testament's requests: cease to do evil and learn to do good. Dohmen argues that the ability to distinguish cognitively between good and evil, and then choosing the former and eschewing the latter, is a fundamental Old Testament ethical requirement (Dohmen «רעע», 583). This Old Testament's ethical requirement empowers a person's mastery over life as to be intelligent enough to judge it wisely as Solomon (1 Kgs 3,7-12; 2 Sam 14,17; 1 Kgs 3,9). Those who fall short of this ability are designated as «immature» and «babies» (cf. Deut 1:13; Isa 7:15ff; Num 14:31) (Höver-Johag, «טוב», p. 309). Wildberger's interpretation of the general requests is quite important. He says people must cease to «behave in an evil way» and learn to «behave in a good way» (Wildberger 2002, p. 49).

To cease to «behave in an evil way» and learn to «behave in a good way» come about through taking up a fundamental new direction and disposition of life. A disposition that ceases to do evil whether in the physical due directly to nature, and/or in the moral evil due to human volition. To be short of this disposition is to engender social and/or structural evil, an evil that results in the injustice that falls between necessity and approbation. Such evil leads to suffering because it attacks existence, threatens and destroys life, by creating disorders and catastrophes in the society. This is what Nigeria has suffered in the past decades in forms of corruption and embezzlement caused by structural-political evil, and in forms of religious and tribal crises caused by the systems of social evil. A

social evil that has sparked off a geometric increase in the frequency of armed robbery, kidnapping, the mentality of the-winner-takes-it all, etc, because Nigerians have not ceased to «behave in an evil way» and have not learnt to «behave in a good way». Therefore, the third request does not find a place in the nation: most contemporary Nigerians do not seek (*diršû*) justice (*mišpāt*). The verb – *diršû* (seek) – used for the directive to seek justice implies the “practicalization” of the justice sought for (cf. *Isa 16:5*; *Jer 29:7*; *38:4*) (Koch «*דָּרַשׁ*», pp. 296-297). But most Nigerians have not sought to behave in a just way, where every body's due is given to him in right and complete measure. The inability of most Nigerians to seek to behave and live in justice has empowered an oligarchy to control Nigeria's socio-economic and political landscapes, and so reduced well over 170 million Nigerians to «poverty», deprivation and deaths.

In the Old Testament, the dispensation of justice was the responsibility of priests (cf. *Ex 28:15-30*), judges (*Ex 21:6*), Moses (*Num 25:1-5*), Joshua (*Num 27:21*; *Jos 20:6*), kings like Solomon (*1 Kgs 3:11.28*; *7:7*) and figures like Deborah (*Judg 4:5*) (Ennis «*מִשְׁפָּט*», p. 1143). This means it was the primary responsibility of leaders, but also of the people: all are to seek, promote and exercise justice in its positive and fullest sense (Johnson «*מִשְׁפָּט*», pp. 86-98). Unfortunately, Nigerian courts are predominantly theatres where the most connected in government and the richest flex muscles against the vulnerable. If the citadel of justice is wanting, imagine what it is within other socio-political systems and structures in the country. A nation that lacks justice does not make progress; meritocracy becomes a system reserved for those in the graveyard. No wonder, the prophets castigated corrupt leaders (cf. *Isa 1:17.21*; *5:7*; *10:2*; *59:8-9*; *Hab 1:4*) and people (*Isa 4:4*; *Jer 5:1*; *7:5*; *Ezek 5:6-7*; *20:11.13.16.19.21*; *Hos 5:1.11*; *Mal 3:5*) who breached justice and/or did not promote it (Ennis «*מִשְׁפָּט*», p. 1143). When every Nigerian becomes confident that he can be heard and given his true measure, then people can be inspired to be altruistic, nationalistic and patriotic. Until when Nigeria is not driven on the platform of nepotism, tribalism, religious bias or any form of anomaly but on merit, that is when it shall indeed grow and develop to its full potential.

But where the nation's attitudinal disposition does not cease to behave in an evil way, learn to behave in a good way and seek to behave in justice, she cannot at all affect and promote the human dignity and socio-anthropological good of every member of its citizenry. This is exactly the summons of the reminder of verse 17. It directs the leaders and people of Judah (cf. verse 10) to defend the rights of the oppressed (Phelps «*יָתוֹם*», p. 182): orphan and widow. The oppressed in the Old Testament refer to the most vulnerable to abuse. They could include strangers, orphans and widows (Hamilton «*יָתוֹם*», p. 570). The orphans in the Old Testament are the fatherless and they metaphorically could

denote the weaker and vulnerable members of the society. The Old Testament prohibits taking advantage of them (cf. Ex 22:22-24[21.23]; Deut 24:17; 27:19), it rather requests that they be provided for (cf. Deut 14:29; 24:19-21; 26:13). Where rulers and people fail to do so, the Old Testament says God fights for them (cf. Deut 10:18; Psa 10:14.18; 68:5[6]; (Jer 49:11) (Hamilton «תוֹמָם», p. 570). The widow in the Old Testament designate those in bereavement from having lost a husband (cf. 2 Sam 14:5), and those deprived of economic and social protection and security. Since they can become victims of social contrasts, they are to be protected from their creditors and their deceased husbands' (cf. Deut 24:17; Job 24,3), they are not to be regarded as spoils (cf. Isa 10:2), they are to receive the benefit of doubt in civil suit (cf. Ex 22:21[22]; Deut 10:18; 27:19; Isa 1:12;23; 10:2; Jer 7:6; 22:3; Zec 7:10; Mal 3:5) and they are to enjoy social privileges which included the tithes of every third year (cf. Deut 14:28f; 26:12f). Should the society fail to carry out this responsibility, God assumes it (cf. Deut 10:18; Psa 10:14.18; 68:6[5]) (Hoffner «צַדִּיקָה», pp. 289-291).

To shortlist the oppressed, orphans and widows as those to whom justice is to be done to, means that every member of the society deserves it. Because he or she is important and can contribute veritably to the wellbeing and development of a people or nation. So it is imperative that there exists charitable altruism in the wider interests of the Nigerian society (Williamson 2006, p. 102). Everybody is entitled to be part of the Nigerian society not minding class, tribe and religion. Every Nigerian must learn to see God in the other. Our social structure must, in the spirit of justice guided by an inner self renewal, admit the fallacy of «business-is-business». It must judge its economic policies not merely by their feasibility but by their morality, and it must confess that its economics and politics must be shaped by justice with a human face (Chibuko 2013, p. 80).

#### 4.0 Conclusion

Christian Ethicists or Moral theologians like T. Pazhayamphallil define virtue as "... a habitual and firm disposition to do the good" (Pazhayamphallil 2004, p. 394). Therefore, any moral expression incongruous with this definition of virtue is a vice (Mattison 2008, p. 6). There is a relationship between habit and virtue. A habit is not simply a way of calculating how frequently a person performs a certain type of activity in a certain way; it is an abiding disposition that changes who a person is and resides in a person like a second nature. Therefore a virtuous person is not simply someone who consistently performs good actions, although that is certainly the case, but one who is transformed by his/her virtuous disposition (Mattison 2008, p. 6) in order to give his best, after having undergone self-transformation by the influences of that virtue (Pazhayamphallil 2004, p. 394). This enables one to act spontaneously and automatically and thus the inclination to act well is easily spreadable to related

areas in life (Odafe 2013, p. 119). This is what *Isa 1:16-17* simply calls for in this short piece.

This informs why I contended that the Bible is the only inanimate object with living cells. It is an inanimate paper, but its content gives life because it is the word of God that speaks to every age and time, cutting more incisively than a double-edged sword into it. Thereby seeking out where the soul of that age is divided from its spirit and its joints from its marrows. The word of God can judge the secret thoughts and emotions of that age. This is why it is alive and active (*Heb 4:12*). So had God spoken to the Israelites in an idyllic situation and not through its daily experiences and encounters with nature and its histories, they might have not believed Him and/or the Bible would have gone extinct tens of centuries ago. But because it dealt with human beings within the parameters of common human experience of pain, injustice, encrustation of evil and losses, the Bible has still remained relevant.

That relevance is what *Isa 1:16-17* has aimed to do in this article, by laying down guiding principles that are perceived fitting enough for the pursuit of a better Nigeria. It is hoped that this prophetic *tôrah* will be hearkened to, and that it will inspire the needed revolutionary change for a better Nigeria. For a society that lacks social justice is designated by *Isa 1:21* as a «prostitute» and assimilated to «assassins», who have nothing to do with God, who is justice Himself. Therefore human interactions must be based on God's justice (Obara 2010, pp. 88-89).

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