

**SULTAN MUHAMMAD BELLO SENSE OF GOVERNANCE AND
SHAYKH UTHMAN FUDOYE UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAMIC
PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT IN KITAB *SARD AL-KALAM FIMA
JARA BAYNI/BAYNANA WA BAINA ABD AL-SALAM AND KITAB AL-
FARQ***

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Abstract: *Sokoto jihad literature seem to be the only literature in Nigeria, written by group of scholars that happen to be comprehensive in nature that covers every part of human endeavor the paper outlines the document of Islamic principle of leadership understand by shaykh Uthman bn Foduye. The books show the differences between the unbeliever's system of government before the jihad and the Muslims system of government after the jihad. It also highlights the misunderstanding between Abdussalam who is happen to be shaykh's student and either shaykh himself and or Muhammad Bello. The paper also concludes by recommending to the three group of people individual scholars, sultanate council and government in general to act appropriately for the re-introducing Sokoto Jihad literature to the Muslim community. The paper adopted secondary data in writing the research with the selection of the two books written by Shaykh Uthman bn Fudoye and Muhammad Bello which are Kitab Sard Al-Kalam Fima Jara Bayni/ Baynana Wa Baina Abd Al-Salam and Kitab Al-Fara.*



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Keywords: Governance, Islamic Principles, Government, Sokoto Caliphate, Abd Al-Salam,

A. Introduction

It is generally accepted that methodology of Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye in teaching, writing and jihad was based on training he received from his family and other teachers within his immediate environment. The same he taught his students by personal and practical example not only theory. His own life was through what he called people to, i.e. the embodiment of Islam. *Da'wah* activities of the Shaykh Uthman was a complete system which comprised teaching/preaching and writing as well as application of the good deeds. Indeed, that his main life-engagement. This is what made him Strong in realizing and sustaining the Islamic state. '*Kitab Al-farq bayn wilayaat ahl Al-Islam wa bayn wilayaat ahl al-kufr*' is one of the literary works by Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye dealt with Islamic principle of leadership. The book explains the differences between Islamic and Non-Islamic principle of government. It describes the nature and features of both Muslim and Non-Muslim system of government, highlight the foundation of the Islamic government etc.

On the other hand, Muhammad Bello son of Shaykh Uthman is also one of the founders of the Sokoto jihad. He wrote on what happened between Abdussalam and either Shaykh Uthman or himself (sultan Muhammadu Bello) during his time. Concerning leadership differences of opinion and misunderstanding that caused a war between them, i.e. Abdussalam and Muhammad Bello, that is what resulted Abdussalam to lose his life. The book is highly pointed out the sincerity and understanding of Muhammadu Bello's responsibility and abiding by the rule and regulations as an Islamic leader and scholar.¹ The paper is going to start by explaining the three personalities i.e. Shaykh Uthman, Muhammad Bello and Abdussalam. It will also describe Shaykh's understanding in Islamic principle of government based on the description of *kitab al-farq* and pointed out Muhammad Bello's diplomatic sense of governance as showed in his *kitab sard al-kalam*

B. Method

The aim and objectives of this paper is to Sultan Muhammad Bello Sense Of Governance And Shaykh Uthman Fudoye Understanding Of Islamic Principles Of Government In Kitab

¹ I. M. Talata Mafara, (trans), *Littafin Sardul-Kalam* by Muhammad Bello, np, npp, 1982.

Sard Al-Kalam Fima Jara Bayni/Baynana Wa Baina Abd Al-Salam And Kitab Al-Farq. Analytical method is employed when conducting the research. Thus this paper use qualitative approach and use various literature to analyze the problem.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Brief history of Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye

Shaykh Uthman Bin Fodiyo was born in Marata, in 1754 C.E in a much-respected family. His father, Muhammad Fodiye was a knowledgeable scholar Uthman first studied from him. He was educated according to traditional system². After finishing at home his basic education of reading and writing Arabic, memorization and translation of the Qur'an, some knowledge of Hadith and jurisprudence, grammar and arithmetic, he then obtained the advanced knowledge of Islamic sciences from specialized professors of the subjects. Some of his teachers include Shaykh Abd al-Rahman b. Hammadah, his maternal uncle Uthman Bidduri, Muhammad Sambo, Muhammad b. Rajab, and Jibril b. Umar.³

Shaykh Uthman was a writer who wrote over one hundred and fifteen books on almost every subject or issue that had relevance, importance and meaning in the life of the Islamic community. Throughout his life, the Shaykh was motivated by the desire and ambition to create an Islamic Ummah (Community) based on the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as explained by several Islamic scholars before him⁴.

As for student Shaykh Uthman has many who assisted him in and out of his family. He was always available to them, in teaching, answering, clarifying to them. He always preached intellectual discussion and prepared his students to discuss rather than fight. This among others are the pioneer in the succeeding for the establishing the Caliphate as is evident in the writings of Shaykh Abdullahi bin Foduye and Sultan Muhammad Bello in *Tazyinil al-waraqataq* and *infaqul al-maisur* respectively.

His writing style was simple, easy in reading and understanding. He reflected the organic relationship between all aspects of life, which Islam discusses from a holistic point of view It was realized that his preaching was excellent, that in compliance with the Qur'an, he preached

² I. M. Talata mafara, *Rayuwar Shaykh usman Danfodiyo da Gwagwarmayarsa*, Hudahuda publishing Company limited, zaria, 1999, p5.

³ Bn Foduye Abdullah, *Ida' al-nuusukh man akhazt min al-shuyukh*, np nd.

⁴ M. Sulaiman, *A Bibliographical Guide to Sokoto Caliphate Sources*, Center for Intellectual Services on sokoto caliphate, sokoto, 2004, p. 40.

with wisdom and goody exhortation, and his training of the men around him and his call to people, were all based on knowledge. Thus, the Shaykh fully utilized the sciences (*ulum*) in his efforts to transform his society; the sciences of Tawhid, Qur'an, *Hadith*, *fiqh*, Economic and politics etc. Among his contribution in politics is *kitab al-farq bayn wilayat ahl al-islam wa bayn wilayat ahl kufr*.

2. Brief history of Muhammadu Bello

Sultan Muhammad Bello the son of Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye regarded was second Amir-ul-Muminin of Sakkwato Caliphate was born in 1195AH.1780 CE.⁵ He is the most learned among the children of Shaykh Uthman, and trained to be preacher, scholar and a writer and he grew-up in all. Muhammad Bello was gifted with intelligence and an excellent memory. He studied under his parents and several scholars of his time. Before assuming office as Sultan, Muhammad Bello served as a diplomat, teacher, and commandant of the Army, He was a Mujtahid who was prepared for the office of the Caliph before assuming the office.⁶

Sultan Muhammad Bello succeeded his father and was Caliphate for over twenty years. He faced several challenges particularly revolts in Alkalawa and Zamfara etc.⁷ Sultan Bello reconciled with his uncle, Shaykh Abdullah bn Foduye who was in charge of the western part of the Caliphate. He then moved tactically and united the Ummah and brought about peace and security never precedence before. This brought about an expansion in economic activities in industrialization. An erudite scholar and prolific writer, Shaykh Muhammadu Bello wrote over one hundred and twenty books on such fields as administration, law, warfare and most importantly politics. He is recognized and appreciated as an authority on the latter. Sultan Muhammad Bello like his parents wrote books based on circumstances. When he is asked a question or a problem arose, he wrote in response to the problem. When he appoints an Amir, he writes explaining to him what to expect and what is expected of him. The issue and subject of discussion determined the size of his books. The book *Kitab Sard al-kalam fima jara baynana wa bayna Abdussalam* was written by Muhammad Bello in order to highlight on what happened between him and Abdussalam one of the Shaykh's student

⁵ I. M. Talata Mafara, (trans), Littafin Sardul-Kalam by Muhammad Bello, *Op. Cit.*

⁶ M. Sulaiman, A Bibliographical Guide to Sokoto Caliphate Sources, Center for Intellectual Services on sokoto caliphate, *Op. Cit.*

⁷ *Ibid*,

Sultan Muhammadu Bello died on Thursday, 25th Rajab, 1253 at the age of 58 having spent twenty years as Amirul-Muminin. He left behind a stabilized polity and a library according to Shaykh Isah Talata Mafara with over twenty thousand books. Where are those books?

3. Brief History of Shaykh Abdussalam

He is Abdussalam bn Ibrahim from Arawa, a tribe living in Argungu area of Kebbi state. He is among the students who copied systems and patterns of Shaykh's teaching and Da'awa and that made him to have many followers among his tribe. He also assisted immensely in the jihad,⁸ after the jihad Shaykh Uthman assigned and distributed the leadership between the jihadist who assisted in the jihad. Shaykh Abdussalam was assigned in the western part of the empire which is largely under the leadership of Shaykh Abdullah bn Foduye.

Abdussalam seemed to understand that his share was not enough for him looking at his level, so from there misunderstanding started between him and Shaykh Abdullah; later on, Shaykh Uthman ask Abdussalam to leave the place to Kware which is part of Muhammad Bello's area and he did so. There after Shaykh Uthman did not stay long, after his demise, another misunderstanding rose between Abdussalam and Muhammad Bello which resulted a war between them, at last Abdussalam loose his life therein.⁹

4. Description of *Kitab Al-Farq*

Kitab al-farq bayn wilayat ahl al-islam wa bayn wilayat ahl kufr meaning the book of the difference between the governments of the Muslims and the governments of the unbelievers. The book is one of the works of Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye as quoted by Hisket that Muhammad Bello mentioned it in his book *infaqu al-maisur*.¹⁰ The author divided it into introduction four different sections and conclusion. In the introduction he explained what is upon a Muslim leader for the first place which is to fear Allah, and follow the Muslim habit and avoid that of non-Muslims in their leadership, putting assistance, deputies or someone to act on his behalf. He also classified these assistance/deputies into three:

⁸ I. M. Talata Mafara, (trans), *Littafin Sardul-Kalam* by Muhammad Bello, Op. Cit.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Ibn Foduye, Uthman, *kitab al-farq* (edit &Trans) Hisket, M, Baraka publishers Limited, Kaduna, (nd).

- a. A deputy in charge of either general or specific matters
- b. Appointment of chief judge who will supervise all the judges of different town and places.
- c. He will also appoint other workers of different ministries, agencies and assign each to his duty and portion. They all be guided by him for not following the habit of non-Muslim in their leadership as the Prophet Peace be upon him says: each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock.¹¹

Section One: In Describing the way of the non-Muslims in their government, the author here mentioned some of the way the unbelievers run their government eg through hereditary right, by force without any consultation and after all no mercy or compassionate in their operation. They kill, exiled and dishonored whoever they wish without any *Shari'ah* right. They also have the habit of taxing people unnecessarily and unprescribed by the *Shari'ah* by putting other name to the tax e.g. *Jangali, kudin gari, kudin salla* etc. On the other part of social-religious activities they intentionally eat, wear whatever they like whether it is permitted or not permitted. They also imposed to the subjects whatever they liked without looking the commendation of *shari'ah*, as stated Many irregularities in the government/leadership of unbelievers in different areas e.g. Religion, politics, social and economic aspect

Shaykh also concluded this section by warning Muslims no to follow or imitate unbeliever in their government; even in the title of the king e.g. *Kokani, Galadima, Ubandawaki, Barga* and *Yari* etc. he also advised Muslim to named their leader as in the chief emir as commander of the believers and emir of each town as emir of so town, province or place etc.¹²

Section Two: an explanation of the ways of the Muslims in their government. The author here explained the purpose of the Muslim in their government which is to keep off the evil things and introduced reforms in both religious and temporal affairs. He even cited an example on, as in providing strongholds to his province and be ready for the war against unbelievers and setting up military stations etc.

An example of introducing reforms could be seen in maintaining the Mosque, order people to keep to five daily prayers, strive to read the Glorious Qur'an comprehending the

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

lesson and teaching it to others which as a result of that command good and forbidden bad will penetrate in the society.¹³

Section Three: an explanation of the foundation of the government and its ministers.

The author here mentions the foundation of government

- 1) Authority should not be given to one who seeks for it
- 2) Necessity for consultation
- 3) Abandoning harshness
- 4) Justice
- 5) Good works

While he mentioned the ministers as four

- 1) Trust-worthy wazir (advisers) that can weak up, remind the ruler
- 2) Minister of justice that blamed of the blamer cannot encourage or discourage him in the Allah's duty
- 3) Police Minister that will do justice between a weak and strong people
- 4) Finance minister who will not cheat the subject.¹⁴

Section Four: an explanation of the types of treasury upon which the best of interests of the Muslims depend and their expenditures. The author here made mention the seven types of treasury in an Islamic government:

- 1) Fifth i.e. 1/5
- 2) Tenth i.e. 1/10
- 3) Poll tax
- 4) Land tax
- 5) Booty and surplus
- 6) Something that owner are not known
- 7) Inheritance property having no owner

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

He further gave account of the expenditure of public treasury, starting with the sealing off dangerous places and frontiers, providing weapons war, paying the soldiers, judges and other workers, followed by building a mosque etc.¹⁵

In the conclusion of the Book the author advice all stakeholders in leadership affair to take the biography of four rightly guided caliph, Hassan bn Ali and Umar bn Abdaziz (May Allah have Mercy on them) in order to copy and imitate them in their blessed life.

5. Islamic Principle of Government as Understand by Shaykh Uthman Bn Foduye

The theory of government in Shaykh's view could be seen in this book especially the last two section i.e. three and four where the foundation of government and its ministers has been explained. As a scholar and leader who understood the responsibility of leadership reflected a clear image of leadership of the great companion of the prophet Muhammad (peace be Upon him) to justify the political realities during his time, the concept of Imamate or caliphate apply here as head of the empire, was to enable in unifying the divided kingdoms of Hausaland.¹⁶

Another important factor in the Islamic government is the issue of public treasury and its expenditure which has been explained in section four of this book. Theses among others are the clear picture of Shaykh's Understanding in Islamic principle and system of government. Therefore, the clear picture of an Islamic and unbeliever's system of government is highlight, the following are the differences of system of government between the two.

- a. An Islamic government always concern about the reformation of Islamic in major area of life such as religion, socio-economic, and political area
- b. Teaching and encouragement religious duties
- c. Emphasizing on commanding good and forbidden bad
- d. Enhancing the economic system
- e. Strengthen the military setup

Looking at this gesture nowadays, one may realize that Islamic system of government is full enough to emulate in every part of our leadership process. Muslim in general had one way

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

or the other neglected the utilization of teaching of this book. Therefore, the activities of some of our leaders in Islamic need to be corrected since a leader is a vicegerent of Allah on the earth. He is after the commandment of Allah (SWA). The rules and regulations have been described.

Some of our current problem in leadership has been highlight by the author in this book such as transgression, ruling not leading system copying unbelievers in dealing with the subject. Unbelievers before the jihad maltreated the subjects, hereditary in choosing the leaders without competency or qualities. Other socio-economic activities are not in line with the Islamic right, all these among others are happening now and then

6. Description on *kitab Sard al-kalam fima jara baynana wa bayna Abdussalam* (Meaning the Book of Narration of what has Happened between us and Abdussalam)

The author starts in the introduction on Abdussalam, his Name, tribe and class among the Shaykh's student, and what happened between him and Gobir rulers during Nafata,¹⁷ his migration to Gimbana, up to the time of Yunfa¹⁸. he also elaborates the up and down between Shaykh and his people what necessitated the migration to Gudu up to holy war in Tafkin kwato¹⁹, where Muslims recorded victory with Allah's power.

It was as a result of this victory the caliphate was established. The sultan (*Amir al mu'minin*) appoint (*wazir*) Governors/Ministers, Judges and deputies and Abdussalam was one of the deputies in western part of the caliphate where Shaykh Abdullah bn Foduye happen to be a *wazir*, Abdussalam intended to make some changes while Shaykh Abdullah prevented him, this is the beginning of the misunderstanding that made him to violate the instruction given by his master which resulted that Shaykh call him into order for the first time and accepted his excuse but later on he realized that Abdussalam and those in line with the idea are aggressors, then he attached Muhammad Bello with him for supervision because of fear in what could lead to violence .

In this book Muhammad Bello has several pointed out his diplomatic sense of government through intelligence, knowledge and training of leadership the following are some of them:

- a. Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye asked Abdussalam to transfer to kware under Muhammad Bello and assign him to supervised their activities

¹⁷ A gobir ruler after Bawa Jan gwarzo, he ruled in 1800-1802 CE

¹⁸ A Nafata's son, who succeeded him as a Gobir ruler.

¹⁹ A place where holy war take place between Gobir rulers and Shaykh In 1804 CE.

- b. Muhammad Bello observed that after Shaykh's death people within and outside the empire come for condolence and pledged allegiance to him but Abdussalam refused to and of call people to pledge for himself
- c. He noticed what Abdussalam did in order to subterfuge his administration
- d. He instructed Abdussalam to return the booty he collected from the *mujahidun* (Islamic fighters), Abdussalam refused to return it back to the unbelievers because of the connection he has with them
- e. There are series of letters between them (Muhammad Bello and Abdussalam) ranging from complaining, calling attention and warning against something etc from different aspect eg socio-political activities. Therefore, Muhammad Bello realized that such habit did not change by Abdussalam but rather increase its level.
- f. As a result of that Muhammad Bello concluded that Abdussalam defected and apostasies his religion and this gave him the chance of sending troops to fight him morning and evening
- g. Muhammad Bello's understanding is creating a state within a state, and this must be stop according to Islamic rules

Perhaps there are some reason for Muhammad Bello in writing this book, the following are some of them:

- 1) Abdussalam is a Muslim scholar who contributed immensely in the jihad, many people may question Muhammad Bello for attacking him, so the book is an answer for that question
- 2) There are many scholars like him but no one was recorded such habit, so people want to know the reason of this understanding
- 3) The book clearly shows the sincerity of Muhammad Bello because he even recorded many good habits of Abdussalam in that book
- 4) Among who assisted in foundation of the empire no body tasked them as Abdussalam did
- 5) Finally, the book pointed out how expert and knowledgeable Muhammad Bello in both religion and military setup

D. Conclusion

Muhammad Bello met serious problem at the beginning of his rule among which was rebellion of Abdussalam who after the death of Shaykh Uthman expressed his dissatisfaction which he started earlier. But with Allah's help Muhammad Bello was able to demonstrate both intellectual and militarily²⁰ in tackling the rebellion activities. The paper also shed more light on shaykh Uthman's understanding of Islamic principle of government and Muhammad Bello's sense of governance

E. Recommendation

The following recommendations are here given by this paper:

1. Muslims should try as much as possible to read and understand the books written by Sokoto *Jihad* literature.
2. Government must put effort to recover and preserve the manuscript of the Sokoto jihad literature.
3. Sultanate council should find a way of connecting with the educational institution and different personality in editing, translating and publication of these literature.
4. Governments at all level in their schools try to put these literatures in their syllabus.
5. Individual scholars in mosque and personal *ta'alimat* try to teach and made people to engage and understand these literature

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