ASPECTS OF ISLAMIC SOCIAL INTELLECTUAL HISTORY IN HAUSALAND: 'UTHMÄN IBN FÜDI, 1774-1804 C.E.

by

'Abdullah Hakım Quick

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Department of History, in the University of Toronto

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ABSTRACT

TITLE: Aspects of Islamic Social Intellectual History in Hausaland: ʿUthmān ibn Fūdi, 1774–1804 C.E.

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The Sokoto Jihad of 1804 C.E. in Hausaland produced a powerful Islamic state. Its leaders and thinkers were Islamic scholars who communicated with each other in classical Arabic and produced an unprecedented number of writings never before witnessed in Hausaland. Many of these works are still in existence today. In an atmosphere of struggle and strife a type of intellectual renaissance occurred where scholarship was being widely disseminated and even women scholars were given authority and recognition.

Despite these achievements very little attention has been paid to the intellectual history and social impact of the Sokoto Jihad and the resulting Caliphate.

This thesis is intended to bring out aspects of the social, intellectual history of Hausaland in the eighteenth century and discuss the ideas produced by Shaykh ʿUthman ibn Fudi (the Shehu), leader of the Sokoto Jihad, to meet the challenges. An attempt has been made to look at some of the Shehu’s major
writings during the period of his intellectual life before the jihad, 1774-1804 C.E.

Part one, the Background, looks at the role of Islamic scholars in the development of Islam in Hausaland. It, then, delves into aspects of the social, political atmosphere, by looking at the local religious and political systems, some prominent customs, and the position of women in society. Finally, the Timbuktu system of Islamic scholarship, and the actual scholars who impacted on the Shehu are examined.

Part two, the Analysis, is an in-depth look at the Shehu’s comment on social and religious customs in such areas as: personal hygiene, childbirth, circumcision, sexuality, marital relations, the affairs of the mosque, medicine, and the supernatural. An attempt is made to re-analyze the Shehu’s confrontation with extremist scholars, and to look at the advice he gave his students on innovations, self criticism, and Tasawwuf (Islamic mysticism). Finally, the Shehu’s concept of the role and position of women in society and the dynamics of struggle in the development of an Islamic society are explored.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABU</td>
<td>Ahmadu Bello University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUK</td>
<td>Bayero University, Kano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSOAS</td>
<td>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAD</td>
<td>Centre for Arabic Documentation, Ibadan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Centre for Islamic Studies, University of Sokoto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIFAN</td>
<td>Bulletin de l’Institut Fondamental (formerly Francais) d’Afrique Noire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJAS</td>
<td>International Journal of African Historical Studies</td>
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<td>JAH</td>
<td>Journal of African History</td>
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<tr>
<td>JHSN</td>
<td>Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria</td>
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<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Manuscript</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAK</td>
<td>National Archives, Kaduna</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHRS</td>
<td>Northern History Research Scheme</td>
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<td>ODU</td>
<td>Journal of West African Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>RBCAD</td>
<td>Research Bulletin of the Centre for Arabic Documentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHB</td>
<td>Sokoto History Bureau</td>
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v.
GLOSSARY

Adhān. Muslim call to prayer.

Ajami. Non-Arabic language written in Arabic characters.

AlKāli. The Hausa form of the word, al-Qadi (Arabic), judge.

Almami. Imām

Amīr. Ruler or commander.

Amīrate. Emirate, kingdom.

al-‘Amr bi’l-marūf wa al-nahy ‘an al-munkar. Commanding the good and prohibiting evil.

‘Aqīda. Creed, fundamentals of faith.


Attajirai. (Hausa) Wealthy business people.

Awliyā’. Muslim saints, especially in Sufism.

Bayt al-mal. Central treasury house.

Basmalah. Invocation: "In the name of Allah".

Bay’ā. Pledge of allegiance.

Bid’ā. Innovation in religion.

Birni (plural: birane). (Hausa) Walled city.

Boka. (Hausa) Spirit medium.

Bori. (Hausa) Spirit possession.

Dinars and dirhams. Units of currency in the Middle East.

Durūs. Lessons.

Faqīh. Scholar of Islamic jurisprudence.

Fāsiq. A disobedient person, sinner.
Fatwa. Legal opinion.
Fiqh. Islamic jurisprudence.
Fulfulde. Language of the Fulbe.
Gari (plural: gararuwa) (Hausa). Town.
Habe. A term in Fulfulde to describe non-Fulbe.
Hadīth. Saying or tradition of the Prophet Muhammad.
Hajj. Pilgrimage to Makkah.
Haqīqa. Sufi term for the inner reality.
Ḥarām. Prohibited
al-Ḥarth. Farming.
Hijra. Migration, or turning from evil in an Islamic sense.
Iblīs. The proper name of the Devil in Islamic literature.
‘Īd. Festival.
Iḥsān. Righteousness.
Ijāza. A teaching permit.
IJma'. Consensus of scholars.
IJtihād. The process of arriving at scholarly religious decision based on established law and firm reasoning.
Inna. (Hausa) Mother.
Iska (plural, Iskoki). A Hausa word for air or wind meaning spirit.
Jamā'ī. Community
Jangali. (Hausa) Cattle tax.
Jangare. City of the Jinn in Hausa belief.
Jinn. Spirits, in the Islamic belief.
Jizya. Islamic Poll tax.
Juhhāl. Ignorant people.

Kabbe. Oral teaching of tawhīd based on the Fulfulde translation of the treatise, al-‘Aqīda al-Sughra by Shaykh al-Sanusi (d. 1488).

Kabbenkoobe. Advocates of the doctrines of Kabbe.

Kāhin (plural: kuhhān). Wizard, soothsayer.

Kalima Shahāda. The testimony of faith in Islam.

Kasar Hausa. Hausaland.

Khilāfa: Caliphate.

Kibr. Pride.


Kufr. Disbelief.

Kulle (Purdah). The seclusion of women.

Kurdin Gari. (Hausa) Pre-jihad tax taken from male adults in Hausaland.

Kurdin Salla. (Hausa) Pre-jihad tax paid to the ruler during the ‘Īd festival.

Madhab (plural: madhāhib). School of Islamic jurisprudence.

Magajiya. (Hausa) Senior woman of the royal household.

Mallam (plural: mallamai). (Hausa) Learned person.

Mālikī. From the teachings of Imam Malik ibn Anas.

Masjid. Mosque, Muslim house of worship.

Masu Sarauta. (Hausa) Ruling class.

Mulāzama. Learning through apprenticeship and actual living experiences with the teacher.

al-Muważlat. Allegiance, clientage.

Mutakallimūn. The scholars who concentrate on speculative theology.
Nikāḥ. Marriage.

Purdah. Seclusion of women.

Qabīla. Clan

Qādī. Judge

al-Qirā‘a. Reading or diligence in learning.

Rumada. (Hausa) Slave villages.

Riyā’. Showing off or engaging in worship to be seen by others.

al-Safar. Travel.

Salaf or al-Salaf al-Sālih. The preceding scholars.

Ṣalāḥ. Prayer.

Sarki (plural: sarakuna). (Hausa) Ruler or king.

Shāfi‘i. From the teachings of Imām al-Shāfi‘i.

Shahāda. Testimony of faith.

Ṣiḥr. magic.

Silsila. Chain of authority.

Sulta�. Ruler

Sunna. Tradition, way or method of the Prophet Muhammad.

Tafsīr. Quranic exegesis.

Tajdīd. Revival.

Takabbur. Arrogance.

Takfīr. Anathemetization or accusing one of disbelief.

Talaba. Students

Talakkawa. (Hausa) The general populace.

Taqlīd. Blind imitation.

Ṭarīqa. Sufi order.

ix.
Tasawwuf. Sufism.
Tawḥīd. Monotheism, doctrine of unity of worship.
Tsafi. (Hausa) Spirit based.
Ṭullāb. Students.
‘Ulamā. Islamic scholars.
Umma. Community.
‘Urf. Customs.
Uṣūl. Foundations or principles.
Walīma. Marriage reception.
Wilāya. Sainthood.
Wird (plural awrād). Spiritual formula of prayers.
Wuḍū’. Ablution.
Zāwiya. Monastery or Sufi religious centre.
Zuhd. Asceticism.

NOTE:
The transliteration from Arabic follows the system of The Encyclopaedia of Islam (New Edition) except for the letters Qāf and Jīm for which the letters Q and J are used instead of K and DJ. Arabic words such as jihad, Quran, sharia, Ramadan, Muhammad, and Imam have not been italicized as they have been anglicized in some English dictionaries. The Hausaized forms of Arabic words have been written, also without italics.
INTRODUCTION

Through the pioneering efforts of the late Professor Abdullahi (H.F.C.) Smith who taught for twenty-nine years (1955-1984) at the University of Ibadan and Ahmadu Bello University (Nigeria), a considerable amount of theses and publications about the Sokoto Caliphate and its leaders have been written. Professor Smith impacted on a generation of scholars through his undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, his formulation of history syllabuses at all levels, his identification, assessment and preservation of historical source materials at a number of centres for research and documentation (many of which he founded himself), and a few ground breaking articles and chapters which he wrote.¹

The theses of Murray Last, R.A. Adeleye, F.H. El-Masri, in the sixties, which later became publications, broadened the knowledge of students of history concerning the importance of the Sokoto Caliphate to Islam in the Western Sudan.² With a wealth of primary source materials written by the leaders of the Sokoto

¹A Little New Light, Selected Historical Writings of Abdullahi Smith (Zaria: The Abdullahi Smith Center for Historical Research, 1987), 1.

jihad and their students being made available in institutions such as the Northern History Research Scheme at A.B.U. (founded in 1964), the Arewa House (founded in 1970), and the Sokoto State History Bureau (founded in 1977), researchers began to produce papers and theses focusing on the nature and implications of the Sokoto Jihad, the fall of the Hausa governments, the institutions of the caliphate, and the economic and political history of Hausaland during and after the period of transformation.

Historians had recognized that the Sokoto jihad produced not only a powerful Islamic state which governed over two hundred and fifty thousand square miles, but a generation of intellectuals who succeeded in producing an unprecedented amount of writings never before witnessed in Hausaland. The governors of the provinces of the Sokoto caliphate communicated with each other in classical Arabic and even women scholars were given recognition.

Despite these extraordinary achievements and the existence of a number of the writings of the Sokoto Jihadist until our present day, very little attention has been paid to the intellectual history and the social impact of the Sokoto Jihad and the resulting Caliphate. This may be attributed to the difficulty in learning classical Arabic and mastering the specialized terminologies of Islamic scholars, or the over-emphasis on the jihad itself. Whatever the case may be, the lack of in-depth research on the social, intellectual activity of Hausaland prior to the jihad of 1804 C.E., and the encouragement of Dr. Ahmed Mohammed Kani, a student of Abdullahi Smith and an

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3The present author was not only keenly interested in this area of study, but also encouraged to enter it based on his extensive study of the Islamic sciences and the Arabic language, during undergraduate work at the Islamic University of Madinah, Saudi Arabia.
Shehu’s writings with an emphasis on the concept of Taidid (revival).

The present thesis is an attempt to go beneath the surface and delve into the mind of the Shehu in order to understand the intellectual challenges faced by the leader of the Sokoto Jihad. Was the Shehu an Islamic academic who merely echoed the orthodox teachings of the Muslim world, or was he a grassroots scholar who tailored his teachings to meet the actual events and challenges he faced in his environment? How were the Shehu’s teachings relevant to his people in their social and intellectual lives?

This thesis is intended to bring out aspects of the social, intellectual climate of Hausaland in the eighteenth century and discuss the ideas brought by the Shehu to meet these challenges. An attempt will be made to analyze the Shehu’s pre-1804 writings for their social, intellectual content. It is intended to go beyond the language of Islamic scholarship and try to understand the issues that the Shehu was confronting; to look at the Shehu’s approach to the issue of sexuality, circumcision, sunna and bid’ā, muwālat, Islamic educational standards, the role of leadership, women in society, sharia and tasawwuf, and the formation of Islamic society in times of confrontation.

The Sources

A number of scholarly attempts to list the works of the Shehu have been made over the years. The initial attempt was made by the son of the Shehu, Muhammad Bello who recorded twenty-eight
works in his Infāq al-Maisur. He mentioned at the end of the list that there are other works which are more that "one hundred in number". Before the recent upsurge in the study of the scholarly Arabic writings of the Western Sudan, there were three other significant lists. Those of Whitting , Vajda , and 'Abdullahi Ilorin .

In 1954, W.E. Kensdale, commissioned by Ibadan University, travelled throughout Northern Nigeria and collected Arabic manuscripts. He produced A Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts preserved in the University Library, Ibadan, Nigeria in 1955. He later wrote three articles for the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society and he added new titles to the original list. His titles for the Shehu reached eighty-five. After this collection appeared, several other lists were compiled, the most well known being those of Abdullahi Smith , Murray Last , and J.O. Hunwick

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 4Adam 'Abdullahi al-Ilūri, Al-Islām fi Naijiriyva wa 'Uthmān ibn Fūdi (Cairo, 1950-51), 41.

 5W.E.N. Kensdale, "Field Notes on the Arabic Literature of the Western Sudan" (1955), 162-168; (1956), 78-80; (1958), 53-57


 7Murray Last, The Sokoto Caliphate, 237-240. He listed ninety-four works.
The Problem of Chronology

Despite the publication of so many lists of the writings of the Shehu, there has never been a proper chronological study of these works. M.A. al-Hajj made an open plea to all those involved in the writings of the Shehu to try to classify his writings according to the origin and growth of the movement. He divided the writings into three periods based on the most significant events of the Shehu’s career, and attempted to fit his writings into these categories. Al-Hajj’s periods were:

1. 1774-1804: The period of teaching, preaching and community formation.
2. 1804-1808: The period of the jihad and the overthrow of the Hausa states.
3. 1808-1817: The post-jihad period of state building and

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the maintenance of Dār al-Islām (the Islamic state).\textsuperscript{15}

Other attempts to classify the writings of the Shehu such as that of F.H. El-Masri \textsuperscript{16} have also added to the general understanding of the chronology of the Shehu’s writings. The present author has found that the division of M.A. al-Hajj was broader concerning the formative period and clearer in analyzing the writings of the Shehu. The significance of 1804 C.E., for the Shehu and his community, cannot be underestimated, for it was the year of the famous hijra to Gudu and the battle of Tabkin Kwotto. These traumatic events must have had a profound effect on the Shehu and should serve as a major turning point in his career.

The present author was also fortunate to be able sit with Dr. Ahmed Kani in Sokoto, Nigeria and sift through the lists of the writings of the Shehu in order to isolate the works written in the formative period of 1774-1804. Particular attention was given to the works categorized by M.A. al-Hajj, and the other significant dating found in the previous listings.

The order of this thesis, therefore, is chronological, in that, the background is centred around Hausaland before the eighteenth century and the analysis focuses on the formative period of 1774-1804. The writings have been chosen from what appeared to have been written during that period. A few of the

\textsuperscript{15}M.A. al-Hajj, "The Writings of Shehu ‘Uthmān Dan Fodio: A Plea for Dating and Chronology" (Kano Studies N.S. 1, 2, 1974/77), 6.

works used in this thesis were written after 1804, but their subject matter is significant to the discussion.

The order is also thematic, in that the most important themes of the formative period are the basis of the divisions of the chapters of the analysis. The Shehu, in his early years, concentrated on the education of the masses, women, and scholars. He denounced local customs contrary to Islam and established the Islamic alternative based on the primary sources of Islam. He refuted the misconceptions of the scholars, clarified belief from disbelief, and laid the foundation for his community. These themes, put in the proper perspective, are also the basis for classifying the early writings and setting the chronology.

The Locations of the Source Materials

The bulk of the source materials for this thesis were obtained in the course of two field trips taken to Northern Nigeria in 1989 and 1990. While participating in the "Islam in Africa Conference" held at Abuja in November of 1989, the present author had the opportunity to meet and share information with a number of leading West African scholars. As a result of these discussions, the directors and librarians of a number of leading libraries and research centres were gracious enough to give the present author full access to the Arabic documentation areas and the local collections of unpublished theses, books, and papers.

The main libraries visited included the following:

(1) Kano: The Post Graduate Research Room at Bayero,

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University.

(2) Zaria: The Research Room of the Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, also known as The Northern History Research Scheme (NHRS). Dr. Abdullahi Mahadi who was then, the director, was kind enough to not only open his facilities, but to also assist the present author in binding the unpublished theses.

(3) Kaduna: Arewa House Centre for Research and Historical Documentation, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU). Dr. Bashiru Ikara most graciously gave full access to this invaluable collection of historical documentation. The centre was formerly the official residence of the late Al-Haj Sir Ahmadu Bello.

(4) Kaduna: Nigerian National Archives. A number of Arabic documents including an excellent copy of the Kano Chronicles were obtained here. The workers in the binding section were also enthusiastic enough to bind over twenty unpublished theses in four days.

(5) Sokoto: Centre for Islamic Studies at the city campus, University of Sokoto. With the assistance of Al-Haj Bashir Osman Ahmad at the city campus, the present author was able to photocopy twenty-six Arabic manuscripts of relevance to the formative period of the Shehu.  

For more useful information on these documentation centres and others in Nigeria see: J. O. Hunwick, "Notes on some collections of Arabic Manuscripts in Nigeria", Arabic Literature in Africa, no. 3, 91-101.
Other locally printed Arabic manuscripts were obtained over a ten year study of this region at the local markets in Nigeria and at University book stores in Nigeria and the United States. One of the most frequent sources of publications was the Gaskiya Corporation of Zaria. Friends and colleagues have also made available books and manuscripts from their private collections.

The Categories of Source Materials

The primary source material of this thesis can be divided into the Arabic writings of the Shehu in and around the formative period, the Fulfude poems of the Shehu used to translate and express the ideas found in the Arabic works, Arabic works written by the brother of the Shehu Abdullahi and Muhammad Bello (his son), giving historical information about Hausaland and the formative period, Arabic historical writings written by Islamic scholars in Hausaland before and after the jihad, general Arabic writings that provide the historical background of the Western Sudan or the classical interpretation of Islamic ideas and practices, and selected verses and passages from the Holy Quran and the Hadith literature.

The secondary source materials include unpublished theses, papers, articles, and books, written about Hausaland and aspects of the jihad of 1804, as well as the recorded observations of European and Arab travellers who ventured into the Western Sudan before or after the Shehu’s mission. Significant aspects of the
chronology and the importance of the most significant source materials will be mentioned as the thesis unfolds.
PART ONE:

BACKGROUND
CHAPTER 1

THE ROLE OF THE 'ULAMĀ IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM IN HAUSALAND

In many societies there are people who embody the national ideal and verbalize its history, hopes, and aspirations. There are people who express the society's philosophy, inspire its defenders, and lay down its laws. These are the learned men and women. They often form a specialized group, bound by a strict discipline of learning and dedicated to preserving the culture and heritage of their people.

In Orthodox Islamic society, the temporal law is taken directly from the religious texts. The spiritual is not supposed to be separated from the material. According to Islamic tradition, the primary source of knowledge, the Quran, was embodied in the life of the Prophet Muhammad. His actions, sayings, and legislations were later organized into the second source of Islamic knowledge called the Sunna. The Sunna represents, for Muslims, the Prophetic implementation of God's revelation to humanity. This set of principles and the practices that were taken from them were carried by Muslims outside of the original base in the Arabian peninsula to the four corners of the earth. The task of interpreting and, sometimes, implementing these principles was entrusted to the scholars ('Ulamā) of Islam. The Prophet Muhammad, himself, in describing the 'Ulamā was recorded to have said,
The superiority of the scholar over the unlearned worshipper is as the superiority of the moon over the other heavenly bodies on the night of the full moon. The scholars are the inheritors of the prophets. The prophets did not leave behind dinars or dirhams, but they left knowledge, so that whoever obtains this knowledge has become immensely fortunate. (Reported in Sunan of Abu Dawûd)¹⁹

So the ‘Ulama, by virtue of the theological basis of Islamic society were always held in high esteem by the Muslims. They were the natural leaders or supporters of the leadership. Their connection with the primary sources of Islamic legislation enabled them to either guide the people they encountered directly into Islamic lifestyle or present Islam in a compromising fashion in order to blend into the local religious and social milieu. Direct exposure to Islam with its strict monotheistic doctrine would often challenge aspects of the newly encountered culture and lead to confrontation. On the other hand, gradual teaching by example or through local symbolism could eventually lead to a peaceful transition into Islamic lifestyle or create a mixed version of the original way of life.

Such was the challenge facing the carriers of Islam as it spread across North Africa and then crossed the Sahara desert. They encountered people who bitterly resisted Islamic values and laws, and others who became the champions of Islamic thought and propagation. From the numerous ethnic stocks of the Sahara region, the Sahel, and the Savannah, clerical brotherhoods and

mystic orders developed. Some of these groups were to play a
decisive role in the movement of Islam into the Western Sudan and
beyond. Approaches to Islamic application and renewal were to
take root in the Western Sudan which paralleled the major trends
in the heartland of Islam. Hausaland, near the centre of the
Western Sudan and in a pivotal position on the Pilgrimage-trading
route became one of the primary inheritors of Islamic traditions
filtering in from the east, west, and north.

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM

The first significant progress for Islam in Hausaland was
realized in the second half of the fifteenth century, during the
reign of Muhammad Rumfa, son of Ya'qūb (1462/3–1498/9).20 The

20According to the Kano Chronicle, "a composition possibly
compiled in its present form, between 1883 and 1893. It lists the
rulers of Kano from Bagauda, the first acknowledged Sarki, to
Muhammad Bello, son of Ibrahim Dabo, giving an account of the
major events in each reign and the number of years each Sarki
ruled. A translation only of this document was published by H.R.
Palmer in the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute,
vol. 38 (1908), 63–98 and again in his Sudanese Memoirs, vol. 3,
97–132. The Arabic text from which he translated it is to be
found among his papers preserved in the Jos Museum (Cat. no.
35/K46)." (taken from J.O. Hunwick, "The Dynastic Chronologies of
the Central Sudan States in the Sixteenth Century: Some
Reinterpretations", Kano Studies New Series, 1, 1, 1971, 44). The
present author found a copy of the original Arabic manuscript at
the National Archives, Kaduna, Nigeria. I have left a bound copy
of the original at the Northern History Research Scheme at
A.B.U., Zaria, Nigeria and Arewa House in Kaduna. The same copy
is being used for direct translation in this thesis. For more
information about the ongoing debate surrounding the authorship
and chronology of the Kano Chronicle, see: M.G. Smith, 'The Kano
Chronicle as History', in Studies in the History of Kano, ed.
Bawuro M. Barkindo, (Kano: Bayero University, 1983); Elias Saad,
'Islamization in Kano: Sequence and Chronology' in Kano Studies
New Series, 1, no.4, (1979); Paul Lovejoy, "Notes on the Asl al-
Wangariyin" in Kano Studies, New Series, 1, no. 3, (1978); J.O.


22The term Wangara or Ungara seems to have applied to the Mande speaking people of the Galam, Bambuk, and Bure, in the area of the upper Senegal and Niger rivers. It was used by the medieval Arab geographers to refer to gold traders from this region. (Mervyn Hiskett, The Development of Islam in West Africa, (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1984), 45.)

Al-Maghili. Of the many works performed in Kano by the two eminent Shaykhs, their first major action was to cut down a huge tamarind tree where the inhabitants of the city practised idolatry. It was an event of great significance to the people of Kano as this tree had been the most important spiritual site in the city and, according to Asl al-Wanqariyin, "strange devils that no one can describe came forth from its trunk". Later a congregational mosque was built on the site of the sacred tree.

The destruction of the sacred tree, one of the leading shrines of the Iskoki belief system, and the establishment of the Friday Mosque represented the beginning of a new trend for

24 M.A. Al Hajj, Asl al-Wanqariyin, 11.

25 There are two mosques associated with the site of this tamarind tree, one in Madabo and the other in Yan Doya. The latter, said to have been built by Bilqasim, one of the companions of Shaykh Zagaiti, is credited with the reputation of being the oldest mosque in Kano (M.A. Al Hajj, Asl al-Wanqariyin, footnote 41, 12.

26 M.A. Al Hajj, Asl al-Wanqariyin, 12.

27 The main Hausa religion at the time was the Iskoki belief system which involved the worship of various spirits of natural phenomena. Iskoki was connected with rites pertaining to agriculture, pastoralism, fishing, and hunting, the protection of settlements, and various other social endeavour. This belief system had developed in response to man’s preoccupation with nature and activities most closely identified with it, and was widely practised throughout Kasar Hausa. For more on the Iskoki belief system and its relationship to other African belief systems see 'Abdullah Rafi Augi, "The Gobir factor in the Social and Political History of the Rima Basin C. 1650 to 1808 A.D.", (Ph.D. dissertation, Ahmadu Bello University, 1984) 1, 225, 226, J.H. Greenberg, The Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion, (New York: J.J. Augustin, 1946), and A.J.N. Tremearne, Ban of the Bori, (London: Frank Cass, 1968).
Islam in Hausaland. Shaykh ‘Abd al-rahmān and Shaykh al-maghīlī set a new precedent by establishing Islam as a major outward manifestation of worship. This act of confronting what is perceived to be evil in the view of Islamic law is known as Al 'Amr bi'l Marūf wa al-Nahy 'an al-Munkar (Commanding good and forbidding evil). Since the early phase of Islamic growth in the Arabian Peninsula, it was considered to be a primary duty of the Muslim leadership and a necessary part of a dynamic Islamic society.28 Al-Maghīlī continued this approach after the death of Shaykh ‘Abd al-rahmān and played a key role in the early evolution of Islam in Hausaland. His life and teachings have greatly influenced the Muslims of this region and must be reviewed in order to appreciate later developments.

Al-Maghīlī was born at Tlemcen (properly Tilimsan), in what is now, North-West Algeria. After having aroused great controversy among the ‘Ulāmā of North Africa because of his harsh stand against non-Muslim elements, and his aggressive preaching against innovation and liberalism in Islamic practices, Al-Maghīlī was forced to flee. He conducted a missionary tour to the south, stopping at Air, Takedda, Kano 29, Katsina, and Gao.30


29 Gwarzo, Al Maḥīlī, 63; and Palmer, S.M., 81.

Everywhere he stopped and interacted with the people, significant changes in Islamic practices resulted. His stay in Air is established through oral sources and confirmed by the written authority of Shaykh Ahmad Baba, the celebrated sixteenth century Muslim Jurist. European travellers later found traces of these records still being circulated among the people. Henrich Barth in 1850 A.D. found that Al-Maghili had established places of prayer. In 1922 A.D., Francis Rennell Rodd, travelling through Air was informed that "The people of Air belong to the Maliki persuasion of Islam, as a result of the teaching of a great leader who came amongst them in the early sixteenth century. His name was Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim al-Maghili, surnamed Al-Baghdadi, and he was the Apostle of Islam in the Central Sudan." Al-Maghili maintained his militant approach to Islamic preaching and confronted the practices of the Muslims who were not practising Islam in totality. Rodd reported the following information:

His stay (Al-Maghili's) was not entirely peaceful, for he was eventually driven out by these lax Muslims on account of his uncompromising attitude. It is reported traditionally that he was attacked by a party of Aulimmiden in Western Air, but was not apparently killed, for thereafter he again preached in

31Ahmad Baba, Nawi al-ibtihāj bi tatrīz al-Dibāj, on margin of Ibn Fahūn, Al-Dibāj al Mudhahhab, (Cairo: 1351 A.H./1932-3 C.E.), 331, (Gwarzo, Al Maghili, 57).

32Henrich Barth, Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa, (London: 1857) 1, 386.

In Kano Al-Maghili had a long lasting, powerful impact. Here, he came in contact with the Wangarawa, who may have already begun making important changes in Kano society. The presence of Al-Maghili and the learned men of the Wangarawa must have given Sarki Rumfa the Islamic knowledge to actually bring about real Islamic change. Among the significant aspects of Islamization in Kano that came about as a result of this scholarly group were that they persuaded the Sarki to eradicate the traditional symbol of worship, establish a Friday Mosque and Islamic schools of higher learning, and institute Islamic Sharia not only as a theoretical dogma but a legal framework for the political order of the state.

Islamic knowledge was also spread throughout the countryside and Al-Maghili was credited with promoting Islamic awareness wherever he went. Hassan Gwarzo, in his study of Al-Maghili’s life, quoted the following from an unpublished article of Al-haji Abu Bakr Imam, entitled "The Constitution of Northern Nigeria":

It cannot be denied, since it was as early as 1493, over 466 years ago, that Shaykh Maghili founded two Islamic Universities in Northern Nigeria, one in Kano and the other in Katsina. The site of the one in Katsina is now

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34Rodd, Veil, 292.

35For a discussion of the reforms of Sarki Rumfa see "The role of Al-Maghili in the reforms of Sarki Muhammadu Rumfa (1463–1499) of Kano: A re-examination" by Bawuro M. Barkindo, Kano Studies N.S., (1987–88) 3, no. 1.
Another highly significant contribution to the Islamization of Hausaland made by Al-Maghīlī was his encouragement for the institutionalization of Islamic Sharia and enhancement of Islamic government. Sarki Rumfā had already begun to make changes in Hausa society. The institution of Amir (properly translated as Ruler and not Prince) was in existence. The Amir or (Sarki), for instance, in Katsina did not assume complete judicial, military, and political authority over the people. He was merely the leader of a loose group of garuruwa and birane which remained largely autonomous in internal affairs.

Al-Maghīlī, on first arriving in Kano, assisted the Sarki in appointing an Imam for the Friday Prayers and a Qādi for legal matters. He also helped established Sharia courts and personally supervised over the Amir's court. Sarki Rumfā approached Al-Maghīlī requesting his advice in the affairs of State. Al-Maghīlī composed a treatise on the art of Islamic rule

16Gwarzo, Al-Maghīlī, 66.

17The ruler in Kano was called Sarki.

18The Hausa equivalent of towns and cities.


40M.A. Al Hajj, Asl al Wangariyin, 11.

41Hasan Gwarzo's informant M. Isa Sarkin Sharifai reported that according to local tradition, Al Maghili had a place in the court of the Amir where he used to sit. This practice is monopolized by the descendants of Al-Maghīlī to our day. (See Gwarzo, Al-Maghīlī, 72 ).
and the qualities of the ruler. This treatise known as Taj al-Dīn Fīmā Yajib 'Ala al-Mulūk (Taj) or The Crown of Religion Concerning the Obligations of Princes became a type of practical counsel for the institution of Amir in Kano.\(^2\) He later wrote several letters to Rumfa advising him in matters not covered by the Taj. One of these letters called Wasiyyat Al- Maghīli ila Muhammad Rumfa (known as Jumla Mukhtasara), was quoted completely by Shehu 'Uthmān ibn Fūdi in chapter six of his Tanbīh al-Ikhwān al-āhwāl ard al-Sūdān and by Abdullahi ibn Fūdi in chapter one of his Divā' al-Sīvāsāt\(^3\). These two works, are the only presently existing documents written by Al-Maghīli for Hausaland. By directly influencing Sārki Rumfa and recording his advices and counsel, Al-Maghīli laid the groundwork for Islamic rule and revival for the next four hundred years. The revival movement of the Shehu and his followers cannot be seen in isolation from Al-Maghīli, nor as a mere reflection of some of his ideas, but as a direct result of the trends of Islamization that he established in the fifteenth century.

In the Taj, Al-Maghīli stresses the recognition of God and the need for adherence to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad

\(^2\) The present author has depended mainly on the translation made by Dr. Kamāl I. Bedri of the Department of Arabic, Bayero University, Kano and Priscilla E. Starratt of the Department of Preliminary Studies, History section, Bayero University. This translation was based on the collated manuscript edited by Dr. Hassan Gwarzo. Only slight spelling changes have been added. This translation can be found in Kano Studies N.S. (1974/77) 1, 2.

of Arabia in all affairs of State. In his forward he writes:

May God lead you to the fear of Him and prevent you from feeling the effects of earthly pleasures. For indeed, the position of Amirship is that of a successor of God and a deputy of the Messenger of God. How great are the responsibilities. For if the Amir is just, then acting in fear of God will spoil the joy of his pleasures. And if the Amir is unjust, earthly pleasures will ruin the sincerity of his piety. And upon you, may God be merciful unto you, is the obligation to act in fear of God because each soul is going to taste death. You will be given your wages in full on the Day of Resurrection. 

In chapter one of his Tai, Al-Maghili, after establishing his definition of Islamic rule (Khilâfat), continues his Islamization of leadership by stating:

...Depend on God: and in your affairs, all of them, seek help from God. And let your work, all of it, be for the sake of God. Be mindful that you are merely one of God’s creatures. Many would be more powerful than you, were it not for the help of God. And let your ambition, all of it, be for the sake of God. And your fear, all of it, be of God. And your concern, all of it, be for the general welfare of the creatures of God. For God did not appoint you over them to be their Master. Rather, you were appointed to improve their faith and their welfare.

With Islamic theocracy clearly established as the form of rule, Al-Maghili skillfully went on to describe the obligations of the Amir concerning his public appearance. The Amir, he taught, should be well dressed, dignified but not too embellished. He should be truthful, trustworthy, and resolute. Even the associates of the Amir should be well chosen.

Do not take anyone as your councillor or your civil servant who in the eyes of the people is not worthy of

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44Bedri, Tai, 17.
full respect, for as men clothe themselves, so you must choose the best garments. 46

In regards to the delegation of authority in the kingdom, Al-Maghili advised Rumfa to act justly in war and peace. He should form a council choosing wise ministers who would safeguard the treasuries and dispense the wealth in justice. He should take advantage of learned men and people of sound mind and character, and secure his kingdom with a powerful army, strong fortresses and able doctors. 47 At the end of every chapter, Al-Maghili would stress:

Moreover, the height of affliction is the isolation of the ruler from the subjects. 48

In matters of war, Al-Maghili advised that the army should be well organized and equipped. They should be on constant alert and their pay should be well regulated. He ruled that Jihad could be used not only as a means of defense but as a means to purify corruption. He wrote:

So ride the horses of resolution on saddles of determination. Uplift the country from the baseness of corruption. Purge it with winds of battle, and clouds of dust (of armies) and the thunder of neighing (of calvary) and the lightning flashes of swords and the thunderous noise of sabres and endless waves of soldiers. For indeed, sovereignty is won by the sword and not by procrastination. And how can one dispel fear (of the enemy) except by intimidating him? 49

46 Ibid, 18.
48 Ibid, 19.
In Public affairs, Al-Maghīlī advised Rumfa to investigate all matters that would bring harm if ignored. He should be informed of every subject of which he is ignorant. He should declare all negligent, orphans, and irresponsible people as wards of the State. He should constantly check the performance of his employees to guard from corruption and injustice. He should investigate any breach of the law and punish the guilty according to Islamic Sharia. Justice, Al-Maghīlī stressed, is one of the pillars of the State, and everyone is entitled to it. To support this concept he established a detailed court procedure for the administration of justice according to the gravity of the crime. He even instituted a means by which all people could approach the Amir directly. This system was later to be adopted by the Shehu and his successors. Al-Maghīlī wrote:

Every great Amir should hold a public audience so that women and children may approach him (with their petitions). It is not sufficient to appoint Qādis and court officials, because the complaints of the subjects might be of the behaviour of these very appointed officials. And it is the duty of the Amir to restrain his appointed officials from the exploitation of his citizens.  

In dealing with the Public treasury Bayt-ul-Māl and the distribution of wealth, Al-Maghīlī warned Rumfa that generosity is the cause of longevity of kingship and greed and extravagant spending its ruination. He admonished him to collect only those categories of wealth that were allowed by Sharia.

\[50\] Ibid, 23.

\[51\] Ibid, 25.
If the money increased, he said, leave the surplus from it untouched in the public treasury in case of disasters, or the building of mosques or the ransoming of war captives or the settlement of debts, or the supplying of dowries for the marriages of bachelors or assisting pilgrims and other types of expenditure for various needs.  

Sarki Rumfa brought about a series of changes in Kano. The Kano Chronicle states:

Rumfa was the author of twelve innovations in Kano. He built the Dakin Rumfa (palace). The next year he extended the walls...The next year he entered his house. He established the Kurmi Market. He was the first Sarki who used Dawakin Zaggi (the use of spare horses for the ruler) in the war with Katsina. He was the first Sarki who practised Kame (building a special castle for the women). He appointed Durman to go round the dwellings of the Indabawa and take every first-born virgin for him. He was the first Sarki to have a thousand wives. He began the custom of Kulle. purdah. He began the Tara-ta-Kano (council of state). He was the first to have Kakaki (trumpets) and Figinni (ostrich-feathers fans) and ostrich feather sandals. It was in his reign that Sallam Idi (‘Id Al-KabIr) was first celebrated in Kano at Shadakoka. He began the custom of giving to eunuchs the offices of state...  

Some of these changes occurred as a result of the influence of Al-Maghili, and others came about as a result of the evolution of Kano. To the West lay the Songhay Empire whose controversial ruler, Sonni ‘Ali had died under mysterious circumstances in 1492 C.E. and was replaced by a more Islamically aware Askia Muhammad Ture, a former military commander.  

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53Palmer, S.M., 112.

Mai, Ali Ghaji had claimed to be the 'Caliph of Borno'.\textsuperscript{55} Sarki Rumfa probably needed a great scholar and authority such as Al-Maghîli to justify his reforms and keep him in tune with the changes in the region. Al-Maghîli merely confirmed these reforms and did not initiate them nor even advise Rumfa as to how to carry them out. Scholars, who attribute these reforms solely to Al-Maghîli are grossly exaggerating what actually happened.\textsuperscript{56}

The influence of Al-Maghîli and the Wangarawa clerics, however, spread to other parts of Hausaland. Al-Maghîli seems to have revived Islam in Katsina in the reign of Maje Ibrahim.\textsuperscript{57}

The Katsina King List states:

Maje Ibrahim ordered the people of Katsina to marry and made them pray. He ordered all the inhabitants to make praying places, and those who did not obey to be imprisoned. In his time there were many learned men (Mallams).\textsuperscript{58}

Al-Maghîli is also credited with the establishing a major

\textsuperscript{55}Barkindo, Bawuro " Kano relations with Borno, early times to C. 1800 " in \textit{Kano and Some of her Neighbors} edited by B.M. Barkindo, Ahmadu Bello University Press Ltd., Zaria, Nigeria, 1989, p. 155.


\textsuperscript{57}According to Hassan Gwarzo, Al-Maghîli's presence in Katsina during the time of Maje Ibrahim is well established in oral as well as written tradition. For more information see Gwarzo, \textit{Al-Maghîli}, 63. John Hunwick, on the other hand, felt that the ruler at the time was Ibrahim Sura (c. 1493-8), (\textit{Shari'a in Songhay}, 40-1).

\textsuperscript{58}Palmer, \textit{S.M.}, 81.
Islamic educational institution, finding the direction of prayer
d, and establishing Sharia law in Katsina.

Thus, the fifteenth century represents an important stage in the Islamization of Hausaland. Kano and Katsina were virtually Islamic states and scholars circulated around the countryside. A solid foundation for Islamic education and government had been not only taught, but instituted. Moreover, the most significant development was the initiation and codification of concepts in Islamic revival. Al-Maghili had emphasized the principals of Islamic change which would inspire Islamic revivalists in later times. He had also succeeded, through the writing of his Taj, his letters to Sarki Rumfa, and later his The Replies of Al-

\[\text{Gwarzo, Al-Maghili, 64.}\]

\[\text{An informant Al-haji Habibu, interviewed by Hassan Gwarzo in Katsina on March 14, 1969, said "We do not have much history because of the death of the elders but we are certain that it was Al-Maghili who introduced the Sharia in this land. "This view was confirmed by many others." See Gwarzo, Al-Maghili, 66.}\]

\[\text{As in the case of the jihad of Nasir al-Din (1673-1677 C.E.) who called for an Islamic reform in Mauritania. He was a manifestation of the revivalist, clerical tradition of the far Western Sudan. He was part of the 'Zwaya tradition' and claimed to be a successor to the Caliphs of the Islamic world. He took the title Imamuna (leader of the faithful) which later became Almami in Fulfulde, and sent missionaries south of the Sahara desert, through Futa Toro, and the northern Wolof states of Jolof, Walo, and Cayor. He demanded a return to formal Islamic rule, an acceptance of his authority, and a literal application of the law. Nasir al D In died establishing an Islamic state but his call, which in Islamic tradition would be considered as Taidid or revival of the original Islamic city state of Madina set the stage for uprisings in Futa Jallon and later other regions across the Western Sudan. See Philip Curtin, "Jihad in West Africa: Early Phases and inter-relations in Mauritania and Senegal" in J.A.H., XII, 1, (1971), 18.}\]
Maghili to the questions of Askia al Haji Muhammad 62, in defining for the Muslims of the Western Sudan the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, Muslims and syncretists, and Muslim masses and their rulers.

The Era of Instability, Accommodation, and Islamic Growth (The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries)

Hausaland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed an intense rivalry between the leading cities, Kano and Katsina. With the emergence of Kebbi, Zamfara, Yawri, Gobir, and Zaria, it experienced an almost constant state of instability and warfare. The absence of any agreed code of interstate or international relations, and attempts to realise boundaries most conducive to political and economic survival were perennial sources of conflict. Economic prosperity in Hausaland also contributed to the rivalry of the States.63 None of the competing Hausa states ever possessed the power to impose its hegemony effectively over the others. As the technology of warfare was not advanced and the difference between the power of one state and another was one of degree rather than of absolute superiority in sophisticated weapons and military strategy, total defeat essential for the absorption of one state by another was out of the question. Hence, a recurrent theme in this era was frequent wars leading either to a stalemate or very transient

62 For translation and commentary see: J.O. Hunwick, Shari'a in Songhay.

63 Murray Last, " Hausaland and Borno 1600-1800 " in J. Ajayi and M. Crowder, History of West Africa, 1, 588,9.
dominance of one state over another. More often than not, victory in a war resulted in the acquisition of booty and mere border adjustments.⁶⁴

Despite this atmosphere of hostility and instability, the few sources available describe positive growth for Islam. In the time of the twenty-second Sarki of Kano, Mohamma Kisoki, the son of Abdullah (1509-1565 C.E.), Islamic learning was enhanced by the entrance of three well known Islamic works. The Kano Chronicle states:

In Kisoki’s time a Shaykh from Tunis, who brought As-Shifā'⁶⁵ to Hausaland, came to Kano. Dan-Goron-Duma also came, and Shaykh 'Abdus-Salām, who brought with him the books Mudawwana⁶⁶, Jāmi', us-Saghīr⁶⁷, and Samarkandī.⁶⁸ In the next year Tubi came from Zukzuk to learn from the Shaykh from Tunis and became his chief disciple in Kano.⁶⁹


⁶⁵As Shifā' fi'i-ta'rif bi huqūq al Mustafa is a widely renowned Maliki work written by Al-Qādi ‘Iyād b. Mūsa al-Sabti (d. 1149 C.E.)

⁶⁶Al Mudawwanah Al Kubra is an extensive book on the jurisprudence of the Maliki school of thought. It was written by Saḥnūn, based on information provided by Abu ‘Abdur-Rahmān ibn al Qāsim (745-813 C.E.)

⁶⁷Jāmi' as-Saghīr by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmān Al Sūyūṭi is a widely used set of Hadith traditions.

⁶⁸Among the popular Arabic authors studied in Hausaland was the ninth century Nāṣir al-Dīn ibn Muḥammad al-Samarqandī who compiled a collection of Hadith relating to death, the interrogation in the grave, the Resurrection, Judgement Day, Hell Paradise, etc.

⁶⁹Palmer, S.M.,113.
The twenty-fifth Sarki (1565-1573 C.E.) actually began studying these higher works of Islamic learning and enforcing Islamic sciences on his sons. This trend, if continued, would have created a learned ruling class in Kano and might have changed the course of Islamic development in Kano. The Kano Chronicle describes the Sarki’s endeavour as follows:

Abu Bakr busied himself only with the religion (of Islam). He disdained the duties of Sarki. He and his chiefs spent their time in prayer. In his time the eunuchs and mallams became numerous. Kano was filled with people... Abu Bakr was the first Sarki who read the book As-Shifa at the house of Dan Goronduma Kursiya. He was the Sarki who made the Princes learn the Quran. This he did because of his own sons. They read Quran well, and the reading was in the middle of Shaban. Every morning after sunrise, the Princes assembled. The Sarki came out after early morning prayer. He had seven sons, each of which read a seventh of the Quran and then made supplication. He gave his sons great wealth.

In the early sixteenth century, Sarkin Katsina, Ibrahim Maje was able to enforce strict observance of Islamic practices as a result of a proliferation of Islamic scholars in Katsina during his reign. The List of Kings of Katsina states:

There were those who did not marry; He ordered them to marry. There were those who did not pray; He ordered them to pray. If there were a home which did not have a mosque at the door, he would say, bring me the householder be he a protected person or Muslim. He ordered places of worship to be built in every village.

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Shaban is the month before Ramadan in the Islamic calendar. It is reported that the Prophet Muhammad used to spend days in fasting and prayer during this period. It is considered to be a holy period by Muslim scholars and mystics. This also testifies to the extent of the Sarki’s connection with Islamic norms and practices.

Palmer, S.M., 114, 115. Changes have been made in the translation of Palmer to reflect the actual text.
...In his time there were many learned men. 72

Despite the personal display of piety of some of the Sarkis of the leading cities of Hausaland and the presence of learned men as advisors, Islam was not able to completely eradicate the Iskoki belief system and its practices. On the contrary, the palaces remained strongholds of various cults of the Iskoki under the senior women of the Sarki and his concubines. The rites of installation of a new Sarki involved flagrant fetishistic practices in the Soron Bawada (Hall of Bawada) of Katsina and other places. In some cases, members of the royal family patronized shrines of the Iskoki.73 During the reign of Mohamma Zaki, son of Kisoki, the twenty-seventh-Sarki of Kano (1582-1618 C.E.), Tchukana and Dirki were begun. This meant that the Quran would be covered with goat’s skin. Afterwards cowhide was used for the purpose, as many as forty skins in later times. The covered Quran then became an object of veneration which according to their belief could bring the people benefit or protect them from harm.74 The Sarki was apparently trying to fulfil the immediate spiritual needs of his people in a manner that would be acceptable to the traditional Iskoki based norms.

In addition to this, the twenty-ninth-Sarki, Kutumbi (1623-

72 Palmier, S.M., 81; and Yusufu Bala Usman, The Transformation of Katsina 1400-1883, (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press Ltd., 1981), 25. For a more detailed translation of the text, I have consulted both translations.

73 Y.B.Usman, Katsina, 28.

74 Palmier, S.M., 116.
1648 C.E.) introduced for the first time the collection of **Jizya** known as **Jangali** to be taken from the Fulbe.\(^7\)

However, these practices must have had the opposite effect on the learned men of Islam, who, by the mid-seventeenth century, began to emerge as leaders of their community, distinct from the **Sarki** and his forces.\(^7\) Islam began to make new incursions into the ranks of the common people through itinerant scholars and mystics who based themselves in the rural areas. Evidence of these clerics, their scholarly clans, and their following can be found in the genealogies of the Sokoto jihadists of the nineteenth century who mostly came from the countryside.\(^7\)

The presence of these learned men and mystics in the rural areas led to the formation of settlements which formed new spheres of influence outside the royal courts of the major cities of Hausaland. From these independent spheres, Islamic knowledge was disseminated and ideas were formulated which challenged the status quo and set the stage for the religious upheaval of the

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\(^{75}\) **Jizya** is a tax taken from 'the people of the Book' in an Islamic state.

\(^{76}\) Palmer, *S.M.*, 118, 119. The *Kano Chronicle* places the coming of the Fulbe to Hausaland during the reign of Yakubu, the son of Abdullahi Burja (1452-1463): "In Yakubu's time, the Falata (Fulbe) came to Hausaland from Mali bringing the science and knowledge of Divinity (Tawhid) and Etymology. Formerly our scholars had, in addition to the Quran, only books of the Law and the Traditions (Hadith). (S.M., 111)

\(^{77}\) Y.B.Usman, *Katsina*, 27.

nineteenth century.

THE QUIETIST TRADITION

In the early development of Islam in Hausaland, the seventeenth century chronicle, *Asl Al Wangariyin* revealed the entrance of a large Mande clerical party coming out of Mali on route to Makka led by Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān Zagaite. Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān, had migrated together with the descendants of the tribes that were connected to his great grandfather. There were 3,636 erudite scholars among his followers according to one tradition or one hundred and sixty scholars, in addition to the common people, according to another tradition. His leadership and the time and place of his appearance, link him not only to the Mande heritage of migration and trade, but also to the Jakhanke clerical dispersions from their ancestral areas west of

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79 The *Asl al Wangariyin* refers to 'Abdur-Rahman as a descendant of 'The Shaykh', an apparent reference to Al-Hajj Sālim Suware, the progenitor of Mande clerical tradition. The passage reads as follows:

Then the Shaykh, may God be pleased with him, emigrated together with 160 tribes from this land to a western land called Mali. He lived there with these tribes until he became famous and acquired predominance over the land by the efficacy of his sacred blessing (baraka). It is because of this that the offspring of the Shaykh and his followers were associated with this land: I mean Mali. They were commonly known as Wangara Mali.

Then they multiplied and dispersed in the land eastward and westward so widely that it was alleged that there was no land in the West that was not inhabited by the Wangarawa. ...Among the descendants of 'The Shaykh' there was Shaykh 'Abdur-Rahmān. (M.A. Al Hajj, *Asl al Wangariyin*, 9-10.)

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Hausaland.

The Jakhanke, according to Lamin Sanneh were a Serakhulle or Soninke people who acquired the Mande language and cultural patterns. They called themselves Ahl Diakha (Jagha' or Dia), i.e., the people of Diakha, the ancient town of Masina. They did not distinguish themselves as a separate ethnic group, but they maintained a remarkable consistency as a clerical order. All of the widely dispersed Jakhanke communities looked to a common ancestor, al-Hajj Sālim Suware, also known as M'bemba Laye Suware, an undoubtedly historic figure who lived around 1147-8 C.E. Ivor Wilks had suggested 1500 C.E. to be the approximate time of the appearance of al-Hajj Sālim, but according to Sanneh this date would be too late to account for the many developments in West African Islam which can be directly traced back to him. Al-Hajj Sālim appears to have migrated from Diakha-Masina to Jafunu to the west where he spent thirty years. He was accompanied by numerous students, family members, qabila (clan) members, sympathizers, and disciples. According to al-Hajj Soriba, a Senegalese Jakhanke scholar and informant for Lamin

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82 Lamin Sanneh, "Origins of Clericalism", 55.

83 Ibid, 56, 66.

Sanneh, over one hundred gabîlas were with al-Hajj Salim. 85 After their stay in Jafunu, the Jakhanke migrated to the west where they founded a clerical settlement, Diakha-Bambukh. From this settlement and others, founded in earlier times, highly developed Manding mercantile communities developed. These communities benefited from the lucrative gold trade of this region, and carried out Islamic missionary work alongside their trade. 86

Philip Curtin felt that the Jakhanke were devout Muslims who were primarily motivated by trade. 87 According to Lamin Sanneh, the Jakhanke, in their own accounts saw their community as a clerical corporation, occupied by (al qirā'a) diligence in learning, (al harth) farming, and (al safar) travel and mobility. They were never organized as an actual commercial collective, but assigned members of their community to carry out their trade. 88

Paul Lovejoy stated:

Jakhanke clerics were not the only Islamic specialists in the area; nor were their activities divorced from trade. Rather, they participated in both the religious and economic spheres under the corporate rubric 'Wangara', which included those who played a key role in the social, religious and commercial life of Songhay and the Central Sudan; namely the merchants

85Lamin Sanneh, "Origins of Clericalism", 58.
86Ibid., 58.
88Lamin Sanneh, Jakhanke, 19.
and professionals in the middle estate of Muslims.89

Al-Hajj Sālim Suware was one of the scholars who exercised a profound influence over the Jakhanke clerics by not only establishing the physical base of education and community development, but also, laying down the principles of their traditions.90 Local Jakhanke sources tell us that he spent most of his life in peaceful, missionary tours, making the Pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj) several times. These activities fell under the broad Jakhanke category of al-Safar (travel) and led to the establishment of new mosques, the upgrading of existing mosques, the founding of Jakhanke educational establishments, and the recruitment of students.91 Education was at the heart of the Jakhanke clerical enterprise, for the leading savants, in the tradition of Al-Hajj Sālim, regularly conducted missionary tours and carried a large following along with them on their journey. These students (tullāb) were trained to carry on the Jakhanke legacy and teach the basics of Islamic learning. They also made up a large part of the work force who would enable the Jakhanke agricultural bases (al-harth) to support clerical activity.92 Slaves were also either purchased, received as pious gifts, 


90Sanneh, Jakhanke, 23. This was made by the Jakhanke, themselves, according to Sanneh.

91Sanneh, Jakhanke, 19.

92Ibid, 150-3.
inheritance, or rewards for clerical services. They were put to extensive use on the agricultural bases to relieve the students of physical labour.\footnote{Ibid, 222.}

In the tradition of al-Hajj Sālim, the Jakhanke clerics took part in divination, special prayers (\textit{Du‘ā}), and healing. These activities, which would fall under \textit{al-Qira‘a}, had a profound influence on the West African Muslim and non Muslim populations. From the time of the birth of a new child, the Jakhanke cleric was called upon by his host community to perform a naming ceremony (In Arabic: \textit{‘Agīgah}). The words of the \textit{Basmalah} or the \textit{Kalima Shahāda} were softly read into the ears of the child and the cleric would spit into the ears of the newborn.\footnote{Sanneh, \textit{Jakhanke}, 187. \textit{Basmalah} is ‘In the name of Allah’, and the \textit{Kalima Shahāda} is the testimony that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger.} This \textit{Du‘ā} constituted protection from the evil forces of the spirit world. Later, the Jakhanke cleric would be called on at many different points in the life of the community for varying degrees of protection. On special occasions such as \textit{‘Īd al-Adha} (the festival of the sacrifice), the cleric would be called on to make special prayers. In times of drought or calamity, the cleric would lead the ruler and his people in \textit{Salāt al-Istisqā} (prayer for Divine intervention in the weather) or \textit{Salāt al-Istikhāra} (the prayer of Divine choice in matters of the world).

Along with the various types of \textit{Du‘ā} known to the Orthodox Muslim world, the Jakhanke distinguished themselves with a type
of spontaneous prayer that could include non-Muslims. This may have developed as a result of their prolonged presence among non Muslims, and the fact that the daily five prayers of Islam and the Friday prayer which could only be performed by Muslims, might have appeared exclusionary to those of other traditions. Mungo Park, the famous European traveller, who visited West Africa in the eighteenth century noticed this practice and wrote of the Mande clerics (Jakhanke) the following:

On the first appearance of the new moon, which they look upon to be newly created, the Pagan natives, as well as Mahomedans, say a short prayer; and this seems to be the only visible adoration which the Kafirs offer to the Supreme Being. This prayer is pronounced in a whisper—the party holding up his hands before his face; its purport (as I have been assured by many different people) is to return thanks to God for his kindness...At the conclusion, they spit upon their hands, and rub them over their faces.95

In addition to this, the Jakhanke, according to Yves Person, "believed that all just men, even animists, could be saved if they had led exemplary lives. These men would be admitted to Islam after death in a sort of purgatory called the Tabakoroni".96 This peculiar concept that separated the Jakhanke from almost all previous Islamic thinkers and clerical groupings may also have come about as a result of their frequent interaction with non Muslim people.

The Jakhanke’s greatest legacy from al-Hajj Sálím was his principled disavowal of jihad as an instrument of religious and


96Yves Person, "Samori and Islam" in Willis, Studies, 261.
political change. Al-Hajj Salim is reported to have preached to a wide spectrum of Believers and non-Believers during his travels. He emphasized the necessity of peaceful witness in the propagation of Islam, while adamantly opposing the use of violence. This was a significant development for West African Islam and along with the necessity for neutrality that grew out of the Jakhanke's long distance travelling and business involvement formed the basis of a spiritual, yet pragmatic quietest tradition. The Jakhanke deplored involvement in war or in secular political activity. They withdrew from the mainstream of the societies they encountered and concentrated on building "islands of Islamic thought and prayer". They forged unity in their own ranks and developed strong educational institutions.

This tradition of withdrawal and pacifism could very well be the reason for the absence of Jakhanke from most of the significant West African jihads, especially in the nineteenth century. It may also have lead to the development of a class of scholars who compromised the principles of Islam in order to maintain a state of peace and harmony with their non-Muslim hosts. This compromise, if coupled with a traditional religion whose influence over its people was deeply rooted, could lead to a superficial form of Islamic monotheism which recognized the oneness of God, yet confirmed or encouraged the superstitions and practices of the traditional way of life. This state of affairs

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Lamin Sanneh, Jakhanke, 21.

As in the case of the Iskoki belief system of Hausaland
in other parts of the Islamic diaspora, led to a confrontation with Islamic scholars who claimed a purist approach to the spread of Islam and viewed compromise with non-Islamic belief systems as unjustifiable syncretism and, an act of hypocrisy or disbelief.

Jakhanke neutrality did not detract from the profound effect that they had on the spread of Islam in this region. It was probably a great asset. Military conquest, in most cases, lead to hostility and bitterness and often become an impediment to the acceptance of a new faith. Jakhanke pacifism was fluid and non-confrontational but did not exclude them from aggressive Islamic preaching or resistance to un-Islamic practices. The Jakhanke were known to actively oppose disbelief in God. The case of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmān Zagaite is a clear example. These are all rudimentary aspects of the process of Islamization. The Jakhanke played an important role in the growth of Islamic ideas and institutions in Hausa society without the use of the sword. Their experience with numerous cultures and environments enabled them to understand their hosts and lead them gradually into a state of Islam. Their acceptance of honest non-Muslims as pious people deserving Paradise probably endeared them to the people of the traditional religions that they encountered. Therefore, the Jakhanke clerics and those who followed their trend of pacifism and political neutrality should be seen as a primary, important factor in the early development of Islam in Hausaland. They should not be all classified in the category of ‘venal mallams’ who compromised Islam and ushered in corruption.
CHAPTER 2

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE SHEHU'S TIME

"Evidence relating to economic and social conditions in Hausaland from early times down to 1214/1800 is not abundant. What there is comes mainly from the Kano Chronicle; from works in Arabic, Fulfulde and Hausa by the Muslim Fulani authors; from the accounts of travellers from Europe and the Middle East who visited the countries on the borders of the west and central Sudan and later penetrated in increasing numbers into the area; and from oral traditions, especially the remembered praise-songs to Habe chiefs and courtiers."\(^99\)

This chapter will give an overview of the traditional religious system and its relationship to Islam during this period, the relationship of the rulers to the ruled, the status of women, and some of the significant customs.

THE TRADITIONAL BELIEF SYSTEM

From very early times, the religious and political systems of Hausaland were solidly bound together. Islam and the Iskoki belief system were the most powerful religious systems

\(^{99}\)Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 83, 84.

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influencing society. The Iskoki belief system had penetrated agricultural, pastoral, and nomadic life. It affected people in their hunting, fishing and societal pursuits. It influenced their political outlook by being the justification for the authority of the Sarki and other leaders.¹⁰⁰

The Hausa concept of Iskoki and the influence of these spirits over human life was similar to other traditional belief systems found among West African people. According to this belief, the Iskoki were to be found everywhere, in the water, the sky, the hills, the forests, the savannah, the desert, and the habitats of human beings.¹⁰¹ The number of Iskoki were said to be infinite, but some of them were known by a specific name and frequent a specific place. This place could be a tree, a river, a rock, an ant hill, a well or a hill, according to the liking of the Iska (spirit). The Iskoki worshippers performed sacrifices of fowl, goats, sheep, or the appropriate animal to appease the Iska and furnish the spirit with the blood needed for its sustenance.¹⁰² Powerful Iskoki were known to inhabit trees, especially the baobab, the acacia, and the tamarind trees. The spirits could be either beneficial to human beings or harmful. The evil Iskoki generally inhabited the bush, away from human

¹⁰⁰Augi, Gobir Factor, 226.


¹⁰²Ibid, 29.
presence, while the good spirits could even be protectors of human settlements as in the case of the famous patron snake of Daura town which occupied a well. Most of the time, in their spiritual dimension, the Iskoki were said to inhabit their city of Jangare. This city was said to be in the east, but according to one of the informants of Joseph Greenberg, it was located in the vicinity of Argungu in Western Hausaland. Others have identified their principal dwelling to be in a well next to a baobab tree near the town gate of Baw’da in the south of Kano province.

Ceremonial Cults of the Iskoki

Individual ceremony

Any believer in Iskoki could approach the spirits for obtaining benefit or protection against evil. The Boka (spirit medium), would be called upon to pacify a spirit that was believed to have caused an illness or done an obvious harm. Appropriate sacrifices would be made, according to the needs of the particular Iska.

Some individuals practised a more sinister form of spirit worship by cultivating a relationship with evil bush spirits who could be brought into a compound by having available an animal

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105 Greenberg, Sudanese Religion, 29.
sacred to the particular spirit. In secret ceremonies, *Iskoki* believers would spill the blood of the sacred animal and summon the evil spirit to bring harm to their enemies.\(^{106}\)

**Family Rituals**

Above the individual rites were the family rituals for the *Iskoki*. The head of the family would assume the role of priest and perform a series of sacrifices appropriate to the specific kind of activities carried out by the family. If iron working were the chief occupation of the family, an anvil would become the sacred object and sacrifices would be done over it. The sacrificial animal would have its throat slit with an iron knife and the blood drained into a special hole. The primary sacrifice included a sheep, a goat, or a chicken. The main occasions of family ritual were the beginning of the agricultural season, the hot season before the rains, and the beginning of the harvest season.\(^{107}\)

**Public Ritual**

The public ceremonies were an elaborate form of the family rites. The kings, traditionally, sacrificed for the welfare of their people. In Kano, the sacrifices were carried out in three sacred places. The first was at K'ofar Ruwa, or the gate of water, near the ancient palace of the Kutumbawa kings who ruled prior to Muhammad Rumfa (1463-1499 C.E.). The second sacrificial area was the well of Mayburgami, and the third was a grove known

\(^{106}\) Ibid, 48.

\(^{107}\) Ibid, 44, 45.
as Kurmin Bak’ in Ruwa (the grove of the black water), near Jakara, a stream which ran through Kano. The chief men of the villages were summoned to witness the sacrifice which was carried out according to the specific need. The high point of the ceremony occurred when a black bull was sacrificed to appease the chief spirit.  

**Bori cult**

*Bori* 109 generally applies to spirit possession, where the *Iskoki* enter their worshippers and communicate through them to other people. Possession may occur during a Bori ritual involving music, rhythm and group presence. 110 The possessed person speaks the language of the spirit and takes on its particular characteristics. If the *Iska* is Kure, the male hyena spirit, the possessed person will howl, but if the *Iska* is Duna, the person will bark like a dog. Recovery occurs when the person sneezes. 111

**Iskoki Belief and Islam**

Above the world of the Iskoki, according to Hausa traditional belief, was a high and distant god who did not interfere in the mundane affairs of human beings. By the late

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108 Ibid, 46.

109 the plural is ‘borurruka’.


111 Ibid, 32, 33.
eighteenth century, the high god called Ubangiji, was clearly identified with Allah and the Iskoki were seen as an order of spirits or Jinn. This form of syncretism allowed those associated with Iskoki to remain nominal Muslims and still relate to the Iskoki for their practical survival. Arabic words came into usage as synonyms for Iskoki: Aljan (feminine, aljana, plural, aljana; say’dan (from the Arabic, shaytan or devil); iblis (feminine, iblisa, plural, iblisay) from the Arabic, Iblis, the proper name for the Devil in Islamic tradition. The high Iska became Sarkin Aljan, and his chief minister was called Waziri. Other major Iskoki were Dan Mūsa (the son of Moses), and Malam AlHaji (the learned Pilgrim), both feared and given great reverence. The jinn were associated in Islamic tradition with insanity which was believed to be a form of possession. Thus, the insane person was called majnūn (lunatic) in Arabic and Islamic terminology. In Hausaland, Iskoki ritual sacrifices were employed by the masses of common Muslims as a means of appeasing the evil jinn whose new name only served as a mask for the original concept of Iskoki spirit domination.

Along with the changing cosmology on the individual level came a form of syncretism on the state level. Since the Iskoki belief system provided the main justification for authority

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112 Usman, _Transformation of Katsina_, 68. Jinn is the plural for Jinni in the Arabic language. They are believed by Muslims to be a separate spirit creation made from smokeless fire. They are both good and evil.

113 Ibid, 30, 32, 37.
before the coming of Islam, Hausa rulers exploited both systems to effectively gain or maintain state power.\textsuperscript{114}

In Kasar Katsina, the emergence of Muhammad Korau, in the fourteenth century, as Sarkin Katsina at one level represented a victory for the cult of Iskoki over the ancestor cults around the tombs of Durbi-ta-kusheyi. The legitimacy of Korau was based on his identification with the earth cult around Inna.\textsuperscript{115} Inna was the Iska (spirit) of the earth, the Mother, for the people living in the area of Kasar Katsina, so the acceptance of this deity established for Korau a strong foundation for his dynasty. This, of course, was carried out in contradiction to the espoused Islamic belief in pure monotheism which, although being a dominant force, had not yet penetrated all levels of society. Korau's successors maintained this syncretism, encouraging Islamic practice yet maintaining Iskoki legitimacy. By the eighteenth century, the majority of the population had come to identify with Islam, yet the cult of Inna remained a powerful factor in rural life where the relationship of people to nature was so important. The rural people were preoccupied with maintaining a balance with the natural phenomena, so they put their trust both in a centralized God and a centralized spirit of Mother Earth.\textsuperscript{116} The following liturgy displays this

\textsuperscript{114}Augi, The Gobir Factor, 233.

\textsuperscript{115}Usman, Transformation of Katsina, 67. Inna in the literal Hausa sense simply means mother and can be used for any women about the age of one's own mother.

\textsuperscript{116}Ibid, 70.
In Zamfara, the Iskoki belief system remained firmly entrenched in all levels of society even though Sarkin Zamfara Aliyu dan Daka gave instructions in the 1670’s for mosques to be built throughout the countryside.\(^\text{117}\). The call for collective...
worship was a solid step toward Islamization but neither Sarki Aliyu nor any of the succeeding Sarakuna were known to have given any active support towards the spreading of Islam as a way of life among their people. By the eighteenth century, the practising Muslim population was confined to the cities and the power of the Iskoki was deep rooted in the social and political fabric of society.\(^{119}\) Abdullahi Ibn Fudi, brother of the Shehu and a scholar in his own right, described Zamfara as "a land over whose people ignorance was supreme; the majority of its people had not smelt the scent of Islam".\(^{120}\)

In Kebbi, where Islamisation began in the sixteenth century, Muhammad Kanta, the first Islamic ruler who openly professed the oneness of God, did not abandon his Tsafi (Iskoki based) beliefs and practises. Kanta maintained special animals to sacrifice to Inna at one of the gates of Surame. He was also reported to have appointed two Islamic officials, Limamin Ciki and Limamin Leka, but there is no indication that he ever empowered them to enforce or spread Islam.\(^{121}\) The Tsafi practices in Kebbi included sacrifices to water and land Iskoki at special rocks and places throughout the countryside. Individual, family, and public Iskoki rituals were openly carried

\(^{119}\)Ibid., 324.

\(^{120}\)Abdullah ibn Fudi, Tazvin Al-Waraqat, translation by M. Hiskett, (Ibadan University Press, 1963), 86.

out with no opposition and the installation of the head of state till the end of the eighteenth century was dependent on the Iskoki ceremony.\textsuperscript{122}

Such was the state of affairs in Hausaland during this era. Shrines or fetish objects could be found in and around the homes, settlements, and palaces of the people in Kano, Zaria, Katsina, Gobir and throughout the land. Most of the rural people had their own Iska which satisfied their personal needs. For many of the townspeople, however, Islam provided the basis on which trust was established, business was carried out, and community life was organized. The Iskoki belief system was used as source of magic and superstition or a treatment for a spiritual disorder and the basis of their relationship to authority. \textsuperscript{123}

\textbf{THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE RULERS TO THE RULED}

The earliest form of society in Hausaland appears to be that of small agricultural communities organized around crop production. The leadership of these hamlets was based on family units whose individual head was responsible for all matters outside of agriculture. This leader whose role was only slightly predominant was the direct descendant of the founding ancestor(s). The most commonly used title for this ancient office was 'priest chief' or 'earth priest'. His role was to be an intermediary between the living and the deceased ancestors or the

\textsuperscript{122}Ibid, 123, 124.

\textsuperscript{123}Ibid, 71.
local spirits who had a direct effect upon the earth. 124

With the introduction of the use of iron into Hausaland, presumably in the early part of the first millennium A.D. and the centralization of Iskoki religious ritual around large hills, such as Dutsen-Dala near Kano, conditions became favourable for the growth of small towns (garuruwa). Here it is probable, according to Abdullahi Smith, that the overall leadership was invested in a Sarkin Gari (king of the town) whose main authority was still connected to agriculture and whose political base was still the kinship ties and family units that had been established in the town.125

Recent evidence now supports the notion that the leadership of the small towns did not evolve into a centralized form at this point, but became a 'dual' institutional structure/contrapuntal paramountcy.126 This occurred when an outside force of either conquerors, scholars or merchants established a type of


125Abdullahi Smith, "The Early States", also found in A Little New Light, Selected Historical Writings of Professor Abdullahi Smith, (Zaria:Gaskiya Corporation Ltd., 1987),100.

126See papers presented to the Conference on the History of the Central Sudan before 1804, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1979.
'kingship', yet could not totally overcome the indigenous priest chief leadership. The king and the priest chief worked within the same system for the same ends, and a struggle ensued for power and authority. 127

The outside force (usually Muslim by the sixteenth century) won control of the town and expelled the traditional ruler to the countryside where a new power base was developed with its own type of autonomy. After a long series of wars, and in some cases internal coups, the urban states succeeded in gradually incorporating the once defiant countryside into a wider state. New towns were built and the old ones were refortified to protect the centralized government.

There were many other factors that could have also played a key role in bringing about the emergence of states in Hausaland. One of the main ones appears to be the growth of cities (birane) in strategic locations. These cities developed as a result of the influx of diverse people from the outside, as opposed to inner growth from a population explosion. They also appear to be primarily founded in areas of fertile land, as in the case of Kano, which rests on some of the most productive land in Nigeria; or in a strategic position for trade, as in the case of Katsina which served as a terminus on the edge of the Sahara desert. 129

Another feature, also essential to the importance of the

127 Finn Fuglestad, "Hausa History", 324-5.
128 Murray Last, "Early Kingdoms", 223.
new states was the availability of iron ore which enabled the inhabitants to produce more advanced farming implements and weapons. This led to rapid economic and military development and empowered the leadership of the birane to expand their spheres of influence. The birni (city), in all cases, was invariably fortified with a wall, since it was in competition with other birane or needed to be protected from an outside invader. The wall surrounded the city, providing protection against a protracted siege and a refuge for the people of the surrounding countryside. The earlier towns were not necessarily fortified and lacked the sophistication and the universal nature of the birane.\textsuperscript{130} In addition to this, the larger birane by virtue of their size and diverse population also afforded a thriving centre for the Iskoki based religious sites, which, as in the case of Kano became a magnet of attraction through its abode of Tchunbuburai and other places and objects of veneration.

The most significant aspect of the evolution of Hausa states, for this study, was the development of political authority. Urban life in Hausaland with diversity and size demanded a more complex form of government. The developing birane necessitated a host of leaders to manage different aspects of economic, social, and political life. Power was given to officials such as Magajin Gari (manager of the town), Sarkin Kasuwa (king of the market), Sarkin Kofa (gate keeper), Mai-Unquwa (ward head), and Sarkin Turawa (chief of the Arab

\textsuperscript{130}Ibid., 101.
traders). All were under the overall leadership of Sarkin Kasa who had his seat of authority in the capital city. His authority extended to the whole of the countryside including the farmlands, towns, and all who recognised his superiority.\textsuperscript{131} It should be noted, however, that despite the apparent authority of the Sarki, the power of the custodians of the Iskoki based belief system was never totally curtailed. On the contrary, as earlier mentioned in the case of Kano and Katsina, many of the rulers had to resort to traditional rituals to overcome their obstacles and the priest chiefs still had a key role in succession to power. As a consequence, the institution of Sarki became a more evolved form of 'sacred animistic kingship'.\textsuperscript{132}

In addition to this, according to Abdullahi Mahadi in his study of the Sarauta system and the state of Kano, the distribution of wealth, an important source of personal and regional power, was not equal. It fell into the hands of a select few who used it to control land, farm implements, and weapons. This enabled a single ruler to gain the upper hand over those who did not possess this power and establish himself and his dynasty.\textsuperscript{133} In Kano, Bagauda, the first Sarki (999-1063 C.E.), was not only associated with the introduction of indigo plants

\textsuperscript{131}Ibid., 102.

\textsuperscript{132}Finn Fuglestad, "Hausa History", 339.

\textsuperscript{133}Abdullahi Mahadi, "The State and the Economy: The Sarauta System and it's Roles in Shaping the Society and the Economy of Kano with Particular Reference to the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries", (Ph.D. diss. Bayero University, 1982), 159.
and the art of weaving, but known for the distribution of gifts to the local cult priests and leaders. This gained him control over the inhabitants of the surrounding settlements, for the people were in awe of the Iskoki based shrines and their custodians.  

The Sarauta political system became not only a dynastic form of rule, but also a type of feudalistic hegemony. It depended on the service of its populace who, in turn, depended on the wealth of the Sarki. A successful Sarki was one who controlled his land, its people, and its produce, and surrounded himself with courtiers (Fadawa) and high officials who, not only assisted him in the military and political affairs of the state, but also became powerful fief holders and in some cases actual kingmakers.

Hausa society became divided into two main categories, the ruling class (Masu Sarauta) and the general populace (Talakawa). Sharp differences developed between the Masu Sarauta and the Talakawa for the Talakawa lacked political and military power and had limited upward mobility. The Talakawa (in this general sense) could be divided into Attajirai (wealthy business people), Mallamai (Islamic scholars and clerics), Bayi (slaves), and the general populace (Talakawa proper).

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134 Ibid., 159. Also see Kano Chronicle, 98, 99.
135 Abdullahi Smith, Early States, 102.
136 Murray Last, "Early Kingdoms", 223.
137 Augi, Gobir Factor, 236.
Although there is a paucity of detailed information about the social and political relations of these groups, an attempt will be made to present a general picture of the state of these affairs in Hausaland leading into the eighteenth century.

The Masu Sarauta were responsible for the general administration of their kingdoms. They had the authority to prescribe taxes, punish their subjects, and mobilize armies for the defense of the state. They defended the borders as well as expanded the territory by having sole monopoly over the army, the implements of war, and the maintenance of calvary. They were virtually the sole owners of horses, except for a few wealthy businessmen who reached the height of influence. The Masu Sarauta supervised the building and maintenance of the walls, giving them undisputed supremacy in the cities. Their influence was felt throughout the countryside as well, where they owned large slave estates, settled disputes between the people, protected the trade routes, and often collected taxes from the caravans that passed through their territory.\(^{138}\) In order to carry out their functions, they developed, as previously mentioned, a class of palace officials, many of whom were taken from the Talakawa class. Slaves, especially, were known to rise in ranks and become powerful members of the court.

The palaces of the Masu Sarauta represented the height of luxury in Hausa society. The rulers dressed in the finest materials, often embroidered in gold. They owned well trained

\[^{138}\text{Ibid, 237.}\]
stallions and ate a variety of delicacies, many originating from recipes from the Middle East or North Africa. They maintained a large retinue of domestic servants, concubines, eunuchs, musicians, drummers, and entertainers. Their palaces were the sites of local festivities such as wrestling and boxing matches which were held in large open areas in front of their complexes. But fierce rivalry developed between the ruling classes of the major cities of Hausaland, and with no force to check their authority, the Masu Sarauta, known as the Habe kings by the Fulbe, mobilized their subjects to settle their disputes or fight in wars.

Attajirai, or the wealthy merchant class, were an influential section of Hausa society by the eighteenth century. Although information about this group is scanty for this period, the large concentrations of wealth built from commerce in Kano, Katsina, Gobir, and Kebbi suggests that there were large numbers of merchants in the cities. They earned their wealth primarily through long distance trading and lived a lifestyle comparable to the ruling class. They tended to concentrate in the cities, although there appear to have been some wealthy pastoralists who had large herds of animals and wealthy farmers, as in the case of the farming elite of Zamfara. The wealthy merchants were known to control large households of wives, slaves, and concubines and have access to huge tracts of land. Despite this

139 Ibid, 237
140 Ibid, 239.
wealth, they were not politically empowered to affect any meaningful change in society.

The Mallamai class of Islamic scholars, by virtue of their knowledge and usage of the Arabic language became a highly influential part of society. By the eighteenth century, they had become almost sole arbiters of Islamic religious practices and social customs. There were Mallamai who were patronized by the State and spent their time in the courts of the Sarakuna (kings) of Hausaland. One vivid example was the scholars of the court of Kebbi who had come to occupy important places next to their rulers. ¹⁴¹ The court scholars were used to educate the children of the noble class and to advise the Sarki in matters of importance. They served as court scribes, Qādis, and state spiritual advisors. Their Arabic linguistic ability was an invaluable resource for correspondence and praise poetry in Arabic as well as local vernaculars. Their spiritual intervention often went beyond mere teaching and preaching to justifying the status quo or rationalizing the edicts and practices of the rulers, whether they were in conformity with Islamic Sharia or not. Some of these scholars justified their position based on the concept of the acceptability of ‘Urf or the customs of the people which Islamic law does not entirely erase.

Many of the Mallamai avoided the courts and spent their time teaching and preaching in the countryside, as in the case of the Torodbe scholars mentioned earlier. They became highly

critical of the ruling class and increasingly aware of their responsibility to apply their Islamic ideals to their society.\textsuperscript{142} The chief objective of these scholars was to impart their knowledge to their disciples and foster a strong moral upbringing. They established schools throughout the countryside and often in the urban areas. They were highly respected, along with the wealthy merchants but lacked the political or military power to enforce what they believed or taught. This growing network of scholars who by virtue of the Pilgrimage to Mecca and the scattered communities of Muslims throughout the Western, Central and Eastern Sudan, were in contact with new ideas from all over the Muslim world, began to form a more focused group. New calls to social and political reform were circulating by the end of the eighteenth century, and young seekers of knowledge began to echo the call for an ideal Islamic society.

The Talakawa or the general populace was the majority in Hausaland during this period. They provided the labour force for the society and carried out most of the services needed to support the ruling class and, in some cases, the Mallamai and Attajirai as well. Mervyn Hiskett divided the Talakawa into three sections. His divisions were firstly, Yan Birni or the people of the town and city whether free or slave. They consisted of craftsmen, shopkeepers, artisans, petty traders, members of other service industries and beggars. The beggars in some cities formed

\textsuperscript{142}Ibid, 242.
powerful guilds and received assistance from the institution of **Zakah**, which had existed in Muslim Hausa society. Some of the beggars were also blind and as a means of offering a service to society they became proficient in Arabic praise poems or vernacular religious songs.\(^{143}\) There were also several categories of slaves among the townspeople. Slaves served in their masters houses or became special functionaries of the rich and powerful. There were eunuchs who were apparently either captured in that condition or operated on, presumably, by non Muslims, as Islam forbade castration for any reason.\(^{144}\) There were slaves who were born into slavery and those captured in war raids or bought in the market. They represented the lowest category in society but often gained upward mobility through association with the ruling class. On occasion, they ended up owning their own slaves and wielding great power but limited authority in society.

The next division was rural population who lived, in some cases, far from the cities, and were administrated by ‘village headmen’ who acted as the representatives of the urban leadership. The rural people included peasant farmers who lived on small agricultural holdings and farmed their own land, often with the help of slaves. This hard labour would usually find the owner, his sons, and their slaves side by side and there was little social or economic distinction between them. Larger

\(^{143}\)Mervyn Hiskett, *Development*, 98.

\(^{144}\)Ibid., 98; Augi, *Gobir Factor*, 244.
farming units could also be found in the countryside which were usually owned by merchants and noblemen and produced large amounts of cereals for the local market and middle distance trade.\textsuperscript{145} The rural complex also included the people of the \textit{rumada} or slave villages which were owned, for the most part, by larger, absentee slave owners from the noble and merchant class. It appears, however, that the slaves enjoyed a considerable amount of freedom, being able to own their own plot and being subject mainly to the taxes of their masters.\textsuperscript{146}

The last group was the nomads or people of the ruggage, the Fulbe cattle encampments, who lived in the grazing grounds, a great distance from the cities and towns of Hausaland. They were subject to their own leadership in matters of grazing rights but often had to come into the cities to trade with the townspeople. The ruling class was responsible to maintain balance between the farmers, townspeople, and the nomads. Farmers were known to accuse the nomads of trampling over their property or fouling their water supplies. Their land claims were often in dispute, and by the eighteenth century the practice of enclosing the farming areas was common.\textsuperscript{147} This may have led to the resentment that existed among the nomadic Fulbe, especially by the eighteenth century.

\textit{The Excesses of the Masu Sarauta}

\textsuperscript{145}Ibid., 99; Augi, \textit{Gobir Factor}, 244.

\textsuperscript{146}Ibid., 100; Ibid., 245.

\textsuperscript{147}Mervyn Hiskett, \textit{Development}, 105.
The Kano Chronicle, in describing the Habe rulers of the eighteenth century, presents a gloomy picture of tension and exploitation. The need for absolute power and authority seemed to have blinded the rulers to their responsibility as leaders and set them in opposition to almost every other group in Hausa society. The thirty-seventh Sarki, Mohamma Sharefa, son of Dadi (1703-1731 A.D.) was a powerful ruler who enhanced Kano's political influence throughout the Hausa states, but he also introduced a number of taxes into his government which could have appeared to the general populace to be institutionalized robbery and extortion. Among them were Jizya of maidens on marriage, and Jizya on the Kurmi market.¹⁴⁸

Of the thirty-eighth Sarki, Kumbari, the son of Sharefa, the Kano Chronicle discloses practices which profoundly affected the economy of the largest trading centre in Hausaland.

Mohamma Kumbari was active in collecting Jizya from the Kasua Kurmi (market), so that the market was nearly killed. The next year he collected Jizya in Kano and made even the mallams pay. There was so much disturbance that the Arabs left the town and went back to Katsina, and most of the poorer people fled to the country.¹⁴⁹

The Sarki had destabilized almost his entire population, by, not only endangering, financially, the Attajirai, and the Mallamai, but also persecuting the general Talakawa and the visiting Arab merchants.

¹⁴⁸ For the reference, see Palmer, S.M., 123.
¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 124.
The Shehu, in his famous work *Kitab al-Farq* \(^{150}\), corroborated the reports of the *Kano Chronicle* and provided details of the deteriorating relationship between the Masu Sarauta and their subjects in the eighteenth century. He stated,

One of the ways of their government is succession to the emirate by hereditary right and by force, to the exclusion of consultation.

And one of the ways of their government is the building of their sovereignty upon three things: the people's persons, their honour, and their possessions; and whomsoever they wish to kill or exile/ or violate his honour or devour his wealth, they do so in pursuit of their lusts, without any right in the Sharia.\(^{151}\)

The Habe rulers levied a series of taxes on the nomadic people, the townspeople and those who involved themselves in prayer. *Kitab al-Farq*, again, serves as a primary source for the description of these dreaded impositions.

One of the ways of their government is their imposing on the people monies not laid down by the Sharia, being those they call *janghali*, *kurdin qhari*, and *kurdin salla* \(^{152}\).

About the market, the Shehu wrote the following:

One of the ways of their government is what the superintendent of the market takes from all the parties to a sale, and the meat which he takes on each market day from the butchers, and they call this *tawasa*.

\(^{150}\)Mervyn Hiskett, "*Kitab al-Farq: A work on the Habe Kingdoms attributed to 'Uthman Dan Fodio*", (London: B.S.O.A.S., vol. 23, 1960). Although the Sokoto jihadists were in opposition to the Habe rulers and, therefore, not inclined to objectivity, the testimony of the *Kano Chronicle* and other documents attest to the open corruption of the Habe ruling class.

\(^{151}\)Ibid., 567.

\(^{152}\)Ibid., 567. Jangali was the hated cattle tax imposed on the Fulbe. *Kurdin qhari* was a tax on the townspeople, and *kurdin salla* was a tax levied at the time of Islamic celebrations of prayer, *Id ul fitr*, *Id ul Kabir*, etc.
And one of the ways of their government is the cotton and other things which they take in the course of the markets and they call this *aghama*.

One of the ways of their government is the taking of people’s beasts of burden without permission to carry the Sultan’s food to him. Whoever follows his beast to the place where they unload it, they return it to him, but he who does not follow, his beast is lost, and they call this *kamuwa*.  

In describing life in the countryside, the Shehu wrote:

One of the ways of their government is to impose tax on merchants, and other travellers.

One of the ways of their government, which is also well known, is that one may not pass by their farms, nor cross them without suffering bad treatment from their slaves.

One of the ways of their government which is also well known is that if the people’s animals go among their animals, they do not come out again unless they give a proportion of them, and if the Sultan’s animals stray, and are found spoiling the cultivated land and other things, they are driven off.  

In addition to these oppressive measures, the Habe rulers openly disregarded Islamic law and injunctions.

One of the ways of their government is to change the laws of God...whoever dies in their country, they take his property, and call it ‘inheritance’, and they know that it is without doubt injustice.

One of the ways of their government is to compel the people to serve in their armies, even though they are Muslims, and they call it *gharghadi*, and whosoever does not go, they impose upon him a money payment.

One of the ways of their government which is also well known, is that if you have an adversary (in law) and he precedes you to them, and gives them some money, then your word will not be accepted by them, even though they know for

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153*Ibid.*, 568. Another proof of the objectivity of the Shehu’s criticism of the Habe rulers was his usage of the phrase "which is well known" and his inclusion of the actual names that they labelled their practices.

a certainty of your truthfulness, unless you give them more than your adversary gave.

One of the ways of their government which is also well known is that they will not abandon the custom which they found their forebears practising, even though it is evil.

One of the ways of their government is the putting of dust upon the head of the one who greets them.\textsuperscript{155}

According to Yusuf Bala Usman, the traditions of Katsina record an instance which almost provoked a political crisis. Two princes, sons of Sarkin Katsina Tsagarana (c.1767-1768 C.E.), killed the son of one of the Attajirai of Gambarawa during a quarrel over a girl. The people of the city demanded that the princes be executed, but Tsagarana refused to carry out this punishment on his own children. A major confrontation was averted by a \textit{fatwa} \textsuperscript{156} given by a Mallam of Yandoto. The Mallam pointed out the possibility of the payment of \textit{Dia} (blood money) and the fact that in this case it would also be an added blessing to the family of the victim if they accepted it.\textsuperscript{157}

The \textit{Hikayat Gozo}, an anonymous, unpublished document, gives us another look at Katsina in the late eighteenth century. Katsina was considered to be the most cultured, intellectual city in Hausaland.

On the whole what caused the government to pass to the Fulani other than that the rich men boasted of their houses full of gold and silver? Every rich man had a square house which they filled with gold and silver, and the result was that it was a

\textsuperscript{155}Ibid., 568 and 569.

\textsuperscript{156}A formal legal decision given by a \textit{Mufti} who bases his ruling on Islamic law.

\textsuperscript{157}Usman, \textit{Transformation of Katsina}, 59.
city of vainglory. It had seven gates and in it were seven places of treasure... And the kings tried to evade the consequences of this by giving wealth to the Mallamai and the Mallamai tried to evade the consequences by means of charms for fear of disorder and the killing of one another...\textsuperscript{158}

The Position of Women

Women, traditionally, in the Western Sudan have played a very powerful role in religion and culture. Special positions with special titles were reserved for female members of the ruling dynasty. The leader of women, a sort of Queen mother was called by different names and given various functions, according to the region.\textsuperscript{159} The following are examples of the varying names and functions of the leading woman.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inna</td>
<td>Gobir</td>
<td>In charge of royal marriages, and mother of the town, tax collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarauniya</td>
<td>Abuja</td>
<td>Bori cult leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambara</td>
<td>Azbin</td>
<td>Leading entrepreneur \textsuperscript{160}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magajiya</td>
<td>Daura</td>
<td>Leading court official, heir apparent, military official \textsuperscript{161}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 60. \textit{Hikāyat Gozo} is an unpublished manuscript taken from the collection of Sir Richmond Palmer, a former British colonial administrative officer first posted in Katsina in 1905. It can now be found in the Northern History Research Scheme at A.B.U., Zaria, Nigeria (Ms. 191).

\textsuperscript{159} Jean Boyd, \textit{The Caliph's Sister, Nana Asmā'u (1793-1865), Teacher, Poet, and Islamic Leader}, (London: Frank Cass, 1989), 42

\textsuperscript{160} Jean Boyd, \textit{Nana Asmā'u}, 42.

\textsuperscript{161} Sa’ad Abubakar, "Amīna of Zazzau, Exploits and Impact in the Savannah Region of Nigeria", \textit{KANO STUDIES, New Series}, no.2
In Hausaland, women played such a leading role in the early historical development, that the name of cities such as Daura, Zaria, Katsina, and others were taken from female leaders.\textsuperscript{163} By the sixteenth century, Bakwa of Turunku became the first woman ruler (Sarauniva) of Zazzau and probably the whole of Hausaland. Her daughter, Amina was appointed 'heir apparent' and became familiar with the politics of the court, the importance of the military, and the wiles of the marketplace.\textsuperscript{164} In 1569 C.E., Bakwa died leaving the rule to her younger brother Karama, who was succeeded by Amina in 1576 C.E. Queen Amina embarked on an ambitious campaign of conquest and expansion to the west and the south. She became famous as a relentless conqueror who only spent a few months at a time in her capital, and as a builder of cities and walls. She ruled for thirty years and left a vast and wealthy

\textsuperscript{162}Jean Boyd, \textit{Nana Asma'u}, 107.

\textsuperscript{163}Aliyu Hamza Darma, \textit{The Contribution of Learned Women to Islamic Education}, M.A. diss., Bayero University, 1982), 18.

\textsuperscript{164}Sa'ad Abubakar, \textit{Amina}, 102.
Women, in general, were not given such a prestigious position. They were called on to assist in farming, tree crop gathering, water and fuel gathering and carrying, as well as caring for small livestock around the homestead. They spun, wove, and processed foodstuffs in addition to preparing food, looking after children and performing the intimate duties of wives. Some women pursued small trades and became fixtures in the marketplace, while others practised spirit possession, medicine and more secret arts. Only the women of the Masu Sarauta, Attaiirai, and the Mallamai appear to have been put into seclusion, or purdah and allowed to live a life of luxury.\textsuperscript{166}

By the eighteenth century, it appears that the overall position of women in Hausaland was in a state of steady deterioration. The Shehu in his Kitab al Farg described the oppressive condition of women under the Habe rulers with the following:

One of the ways of their government is to...take what women they wish without marriage contract.

One of the ways of their government is to place many women in their houses, until the number of women of some of them amounts to one thousand or more.

One of the ways of their government is to devour the alms of women who are subject to their authority.

\textsuperscript{165}Ibid., 104. Most of Sa‘ad’s information was taken from an anonymous collection of traditions relating to Amīna called Amīna Sarauniyar Zazzau, Zaria, 1954.

\textsuperscript{166}M.G. Smith, The Affairs of Daura, (Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1978), 42.
One of the ways of their government is that (a man) puts the affairs of his women into the hands of the oldest one, and every one (of the others) is like a slave-woman under her.¹⁶⁷

In a Fulfulde poem written for the common people, the Shehu directed a criticism at the condition of married life in general by describing the oppressive ways of mature married men:

They fail to dress, house and feed their wives adequately, they show favouritism between one wife and another and make unwise and hasty marriages without due thought... They revile their wives... and beat them excessively... They do not educate them and if they divorce them, they spread malicious tales about them thereby ruining their chances of remarriage. ¹⁶⁸

Some Prominent Customs of the Fulbe

Circumcision

Although circumcision was a practice considered to be compulsory for Muslim men throughout the Muslim world, it was performed as an initiation rite by the Muslim and non-Muslim Fulbe. The ceremony was carried out in large groups between the ages of seven to nine. Boys were expected to demonstrate their bravery and endurance by not crying during the operation. The young initiates spent days in the bush after the ceremony and lived in a special shelter outside their parents compound till the wounds healed.¹⁶⁹ Clitoridectomy does not appear to have

¹⁶⁷Mervyn Hiskett, Kitab al Farg, 567, 568.

¹⁶⁸Jean Boyd, Nana Asmā‘u, 5. This poetry was obtained by Jean Boyd from the personal collection of the Waziri of Sokoto, Dr. Junaidu. Alhaji Muhammadu Magaji translated a selection of poems on matrimonial issues into Hausa, and the original MSS were filed, labelled, and returned to the Waziri’s archives.

¹⁶⁹Ahmad Tahir, Social Writings, 144.
been widely practised in Hausaland, but the constant interaction with the Nile valley, especially during Pilgrimage season, made it an issue of interest to the scholars of Islam.

**Soro, the Discipline Ritual**

Male youth eligible to marry were required to show their strength publicly, by subjecting themselves to a beating with a supple stick while stripped to the waist. During the ceremony, girls of marriageable age formed a circle around the young men to witness their endurance. Any display of weakness or emotion would earn the ridicule and contempt of the public.\(^{170}\)

**The Gani Festival**

Among the nomadic Fulbe, young men who had undergone the Soro ritual were allowed to choose young women without marriage and engage themselves in dancing and sexual relations for one month’s duration. Even married couples participated in this affair provided that the young women had not already become pregnant. This practice was highly repugnant to the ‘Ulamā and the settled Fulbe, and caused the break up of many marriages.\(^{171}\)

**Inheritance**

At the death of a Fulbe man, his property was inherited by his younger brother who also married his wife and took responsibility for his children. In the absence of a younger brother, the oldest son would inherit the property and look after the children. He did not have the right to marry his deceased

\(^{170}\)Ibid., 145.

\(^{171}\)Ibid., 145.
father's wife, however, and would be expected to help the children get a start in life in order to protect the family lineage.\textsuperscript{172}

**CONCLUSION**

The eighteenth century in Hausaland has been depicted by many scholars as a sort of "dark age" or era of decline.\textsuperscript{173} Although our understanding of this period is limited, the sources do afford us a picture of a society in the process of change. The traditional religion and Islam had become totally integrated in most of the cities, yet scholars, armed with Islamic conviction and having no attachment to the ruling class were proliferating in the countryside. \textit{Iskoki} based customs that had no relationship to Islamic law were openly practised in the courts and throughout the villages. The ruling families were living in luxury while the masses could only afford the basics of life.

The seeds of revivalism planted by early Islamic scholars and fostered, periodically, by Hausa rulers, only needed young activists willing to resurrect them among the common people and the scholars. The Fulbe, in particular, were ready for economic and political change. They were forced to submit to oppressive taxes and by virtue of their mobility and resentment could easily become a catalyst for revolution.

The preceding look at the social and political context of the eighteenth century is only an overview of aspects of a very

\textsuperscript{172}Ibid., 147.

\textsuperscript{173}Levtzion, \textit{Eighteenth-Century}, 16.
complicated society that has yet to be fully understood. The following chapter will delve into the background of the mind, and thoughts of the socio-political revivalist, Shaykh ‘Uthmān ibn Fūdi.
CHAPTER 3

THE BACKGROUND OF THE SHEHU'S IDEAS AND WRITINGS

Shaykh 'Uthmān ibn Fūdi, also known as Shehu Usmanu dan Fodio, was born at Maratta 174, somewhere near Konni in December of 1754 C.E. He was descended from Musa Jokollo (his eleventh ancestor), who migrated from Futa Toro to the country of Konni with his following in about the middle of the fifteenth century.175 They constituted a Torodbe scholarly clan and had moved east in search of a peaceful land to establish their base.176 Seven generations of the Shehu's ancestors remained at Konni until Muhammad S'ad moved to Maratta after Muhammad Damka, the ruler of Konni raided them, killing about forty scholars and taking women and children captives. Later, the Shehu's family migrated from Maratta to Degel which would eventually become the centre of his community.177 The life, personality, and ideas of the Shehu were vital to the transformation of Hausaland. He was an Islamic scholar who transcended the world of ideas and became

174Presently located in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

175See the Introduction to Tazvin Al-Warasat, translated by Mervyn Hiskett (Ibadan University Press, 1963), 5.

176Wazir Al Junaid, Dabt Al Multagatat, 12.

the leader of an actual state. What distinguishes the Shehu, however, is the fact that throughout his life he never left the arena of thought. He continued to write, producing treatises that reflected his stage of development and implementation of ideas. He was a product of a long line of Islamic scholars who traced their scholarship to the generation of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad in the first Islamic state of Medina. Their method of teaching and transmission, which in West Africa was epitomised by the Timbuktu system of Islamic education, was similar to Islamic learning in many of the major cities of the Muslim world. A brief look at the Timbuktu system, the educational background of the Shehu, the scholars who affected his thinking, and his life between 1774-1804 C.E., is essential in understanding his perspective on the socio-political state of affairs of his time. This will also enable the reader to better appreciate the Shehu’s contribution to the social intellectual history of Hausaland.

THE INFLUENCES ON THE SHEHU’S THOUGHT

The Timbuktu System of Islamic Learning

Despite a lack of detailed sources on the early establishment of Timbuktu, it appears that this important trading centre was founded as an exclusively Islamic settlement by Tuareg tribesmen around 1100 C.E. It was later incorporated into the
empire of Mali around 1325 C.E. As Islamic learning gained
more uniformity in the region, Timbuktu by virtue of its
excellent location and its constant flow of merchants and
scholars became a centre of Maliki juristic scholarship by the
fourteenth century. The system of learning developed in the
schools of Timbuktu may have been predated by the scholarly
settlements of the Wangara or Dyula. It has been suggested above
that the ancient town of Dia produced a long line of Islamic
scholars such as Al Haji Salim Suware.

The Islamic educational system of Timbuktu appears to have
incorporated the Wangara system from early times, and then
distinguished itself in complexity and depth of thought for a
number of reasons. The first was the fact that the Timbuktu
tradition was constantly receiving new input from North Africa,
Egypt, and the Middle East. More prestigious lines of
transmission of the original Islamic traditions were added to
existing scholarship, and therefore, further extended and
certified the validity of the teachings being dispensed. This was
extremely important to the scholars of Orthodox Sunni Islam, for
the basis of knowledge was the direct transmission from the

178 Abd al-Rahman Al-Sadi, Tarikh al-Sudan, edited and
translated by O. Houdas, Paris: 1898-1900, reprinted in Paris:
Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1966, 20-21; Elias N. Saad, Social History of
Timbuktu, the role of Muslim scholars and notables 1400–

179 Elias Saad, Timbuktu, 58. The Maliki school of Islamic
jurisprudence was taken from the traditions of Imam Malik ibn
Anas (d. 795 C.E.), one of the four most distinguished Imams of
Islamic law.
Quranic text, the **Hadith** literature, and the traditions of the Imam of the school of Jurisprudence.\(^{180}\)

Secondly, the presence of a large body of scholars allowed the student to specialize and study under more than one teacher. By the sixteenth century over one hundred and fifty teachers, each having his own Quranic school flourished in Timbuktu. This achievement, coupled with the presence of hundreds of Imams, Judges, and mystics attracted the attention of learned people all over the Muslim world.\(^ {181}\) The third distinguishing factor was the fact that the curriculum for attaining the status of scholar was not confined to the reading of a specific set of scholarly works and their commentaries. The student would enrol in a Quranic madrasah to obtain the basic skills of Arabic reading, grammar, and writing along with the basic knowledge of Islamic doctrine and jurisprudence. Then, if qualified, he would move on to a specialized system of *durūs* or lessons given by a recognized master in a specific field of knowledge.\(^ {182}\) The student or *tālib* (seeker) would enter into a special relationship with his master which would involve not only tutorial but an actual living experience. This was the concept of *mulāzama* whereby the student not only attended lectures, but acted as an assistant or, in some cases, a servant to the learned scholar. If the master was living

\(^{180}\)The Hadith were the sayings and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad which were recorded by his companions and formed the basis of Sunna, the second source of the Sharia.

\(^{181}\)Elias S'ad, *Timbuktu*, 89.

in difficult economic circumstances, he could employ the student to work on his farm or handle his petty business transactions. Therefore, seeking out a master was a complex process which could involve kinship, familial, and economic ties. The acquisition of direct knowledge from a master or shaykh led to an *ijāza* (teaching permit) which would be given to the student after meeting a set of requirements. A scholar in any part of the Muslim world would be initially judged on the quality of his *ijāzas* as they represented the level of scholarship that was imparted to him. There was no age limit for the seeking of knowledge and often the student would enter a *mulāzama* relationship with a master at the age of thirty or forty. A sincere student would often display the character and qualities of his master as well as the scholarship. This type of transmission was the basis of the spread of Islamic revival into different parts of the Muslim world, as scholars would converge on centres of learning, spend a period of time seeking knowledge, and return to their respective areas carrying a new perspective on Islamic theory and practice.

The Academic Sciences of the Timbuktu system

The academic sciences of the Timbuktu system of education were of two main categories. The first and most decisive for the foundation of Islamic learning included Quranic exegesis (*tafsīr*), sayings and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad

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184Ibid., 61; El Masri, *Life of Shehu*, 436.
(hadith), Islamic jurisprudence (fīqh), and the study of the sources of sharia (usūl). Emphasis was placed upon the governance of society and the character and conduct of individual Muslims. The teachings could range from ethical standards to precise legal principles and laws. The first three subjects were required of all students, but the last subject, usūl was only attempted by the students who had the aptitude and ability to specialize in the law.

The other category of academic science was the subjects connected to Arabic language and Islamic doctrine. These included Arabic grammar (nahw), literary style and rhetoric (balāghah), logic (mantiq), and doctrinal theology (tawḥīd). Along with these subjects would be added the science of astronomy, history, the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (ṣeera), mathematics (especially for use in inheritance), medicine (especially Prophetic medicine taken from Muhammad’s traditions), and in some cases special teachings of mystical doctrine (tasawwuf or sufism).¹⁸⁵

An advanced student could be involved in teaching and learning at the same time. In this way, a complex system of education was developed which by its very nature was dynamic and capable of absorbing new ideas and trends. Close teaching and learning would often lead to marriage as the students would occasionally be incorporated into the extended family of the master, thereby linking the family of the master to that of the

¹⁸⁵Elias S’ad, Timbuktu, 74-75.
student. Timbuktu was a meeting ground for scholars of the Tuareg, the Songhai, the Malinke, the Fulbe, the Berber, the Arab, and other groupings. It solidified the pre-eminence of the Maliki way and revitalised the chains of transmission to the heartland of the Muslim world. The Shehu ‘Uthmān, the Torodbe, and the scholars of Hausaland in the eighteenth century were, also, products of this system.

THE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF THE SHEHU

The Shehu began his education in his own home by studying the rudiments of Arabic during his reading and memorization of the Quran which he accomplished at the feet of his own father, Muhammad ibn Sālih, a well known Torodbe scholar. Then he learned Al ‘Ishrīnīvāt and similar works from his Shaykh, ‘Uthmān, known as Biddu al Kabawi. In accordance with the influence of Timbuktu system of education, he learned Arabic grammar and syntax from Al Khulāsā and other works from Shaykh ‘Abd al Rahmān ibn Hammāda. He read Al Mukhtasār with his paternal and maternal uncle ‘Uthmān known as Bidduri. This Shaykh was

186 This work was compiled by ‘Abd al-Rahmān Al-Fazāzi, one of the well known, North African scholars. It is one of the basic works of praise of the Prophet used in the Western Sudan.


188 This work called Alfiyyat Ibn Mālik was an abridgement of Al Kāfiyyah Al-Shāfiyyah written by Ibn Mālik al Dimashqi (d.672 A.H., 1273 A.D.).
apparently highly learned and pious, and according to the Shehu’s brother Abdullahi, had a reputation for commanding righteousness and forbidding evil. The Shehu was reported to have imitated him in character and deeds by accompanying him for two years and moulding himself according to the Shaykh’s example.189 This quality of commanding righteousness and forbidding evil meant that the Shaykh was not satisfied with imparting knowledge but he applied his beliefs to the environment around him. During these two years, another Shaykh and maternal uncle, Muhammad Thanbu, also left a strong impression of the importance of being precise in reporting Islamic knowledge and meticulous in storing information. He apparently learned and memorised most of what he read for he knew the Commentary of Al Karashi 190 by heart and would correct the Shehu whenever he made a mistake or let something slip without looking at the book.191

At this stage in his education, the Shehu was sent away in the tradition of mulâzama where the student accompanies and often serves the master of a specialized area of Islamic sciences. He went in search of knowledge to Shaykh Jibril ibn ‘Umar and accompanied him for a year until he reached the town of Agades. Under this learned scholar, the Shehu qualified in theology, usûl al-Figh (the foundations of the Islamic law), and Arabic grammar


190Al Karashi was a famous Maliki scholar who commented on Al Mukhtasar.

191Abdullahi ibn Füdi, ‘İdâ’ al Nusûkh, 563.
and syntax. He also studied the private writings of Shaykh Jibril and was instructed in his private conceptions of Islamic application.\textsuperscript{192} The influence of these teachings on the Shehu was so great that he wrote:

If there be said of me that which is said of good report, then I am but a wave of the waves of Jibril.\textsuperscript{193}

Shaykh Jibril appears to have been travelling and continued on to Mecca for the Pilgrimage. The Shehu returned home to his family. This short stay with Shaykh Jibril had a profound affect on the Shehu and further strengthened his desire to apply his knowledge to society and bring about real change. The Shaykh Jibril had attempted a Jihad in the Air region and had been expelled by the Tuareg. He also had been preaching reform in Hausaland which greatly annoyed the Hausa Sarakuna.\textsuperscript{194}

After this experience, the Shehu studied Qur’anic exegesis (\textit{tafsir}) with the son of his maternal and paternal uncle Ahmad ibn Muhammad al Amin as well as Shaykh Hashim al Zamfari who completed the explanation of the whole Quran. Then he mastered the science of \textit{Hadith} (prophetic traditions), completing the whole of \textit{Sahih al Bukhari},\textsuperscript{195} from his uncle Muhammad ibn Raj ibn Mudibbi. The sources are not clear at this point in the life

\textsuperscript{192}Abdullahi ibn Fūdi, ‘Īdā‘ al Nusūkh, 566.

\textsuperscript{193}Ibid., 566.


\textsuperscript{195}\textit{Sahih al-Bukhari} is considered by the scholars of the Sunni schools to be the most authentic set of traditions after the Quran itself.
of the Shehu, but Abdullahi ibn Fūdi in his description of the Shehu’s education reported that the Shehu studied under numerous masters of Islamic sciences.  

Throughout his career, the Shehu remained loyal to the basic teachings of Maliki jurisprudence, but his broad Islamic education gave him the ability to benefit from the different schools of Islamic jurisprudence (Madhāhib) and a wide variety of scholars. He was highly influenced by Shaykh 'Abd al-Wahhāb Al-Sha’rānī (d. 937 A.H.) a famous Islamic scholar who followed the Shafi‘i school of jurisprudence and was renowned for his flexible approach to the other schools.

The Shehu also benefited greatly from the ideas and writings of Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (1445-1505 C.E.), the prolific Egyptian scholar who was known to have taught many West African students and corresponded with the rulers and sultans of the Western Sudan. He advised them how to rule their subjects and how to avoid un-Islamic practices.

Another Islamic scholar whose writings and life made a profound impact on Shehu was Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm Al-Maghili. Many of his works were still in circulation in

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196Ibid., 565.

197Muhammad ibn Idrīs, Al Shāfi‘i was an Islamic scholar and jurist (767-820 C.E.). He was a student of Imām Mālik ibn Anas, founder of the Maliki school of thought. Imam Al Shafī‘i’s rulings formed the basis of a new and widely accepted school of thought called the Shafi‘i school.

Hausaland and the Shehu drew heavily upon his philosophy of enjoining right and forbidding evil. He found parallels between the socio-political conditions of nineteenth century Hausaland and sixteenth century Songhay. The Shehu was quoted to have said,

If you contemplated what has been said by Al-Maghili on Sunni 'Ali and his supporters and what judgement has been passed on them, you would understand beyond any doubt that these are the same (political and social) circumstances in which we have found the Sultans of Hausa, their supporters, and their neighbours to the West and the South.199

TRAVEL, STUDY, AND PREACHING, 1774-1804 C.E.

At the age of twenty, in 1188 A.H./1774-5 C.E., the Shehu began a new phase in his scholarly life. He had become confident enough and sufficiently well grounded in Islamic sciences to preach as well as study.200 During the week, he taught his students Islamic sciences such as Hadith, Tafsir, Fiqh, etc., and, on the weekends, he lectured to the general public. His brother, Abdullahi, came to study with him during this period and later became his trusted assistant. The main thrust of the Shehu's teaching appears to have been the expounding of the fundamentals of Islam and correcting the bad practices that had

199 A.M. Kani, Intellectual Origin, 55. The original quote can be found in 'Uthman ibn Fudi, Na'im al-Ikhwan (N.H.R.S.).

developed over the centuries in Hausaland. He confronted rigidity and extremism among the scholars and false claims made by pseudo-mystics. From the outset, the Shehu distinguished himself from many of the traditional scholars by his concern and interaction with the common people. His brother, Abdullahi, a great scholar in his own right explains in Tazvín al-Waraqát,

> Then we rose up with the Shaykh (Shehu) helping him in his mission work for religion. He travelled for that purpose to the east and the west, calling the people to the religion of Allah by his preaching and his poetry in other languages and destroying customs contrary to Muslim law.

He began his travels outside of his home base at Degel by journeying to Kebbi. There he also encouraged the people to not only reform their practice of the faith, but also to drop local customs that were contrary to Islamic lifestyle such as grave worship, the veneration of trees and objects, sorcery, indecent exposure, free mixing of males and females, unlawful bowing, unfair business practices, and un-hygienic personal habits. This combination of religious preaching and calling for social change gave him instant notoriety and allowed him to affect large numbers of people. The Shehu was not in the habit of visiting the rulers, but when his following became too large he decided to visit the Sultan of Gobir, Bawa Jangwarzo, a powerful and warlike chief. The Shehu, according to Abdullahi ibn Fudi, explained the

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202 Abdullahi ibn Fudi, Tazvín Al-Waraqát, 85.

203 Ibid., 86.
true Islam to the Sultan, commanding him to observe it and establish justice throughout his lands.\textsuperscript{204} This interaction with the ruler of Gobir appears to have had a positive effect on the preaching activities of the Shehu, for he soon afterwards left for Zamfara where he stayed for five years summoning the people to Islam and correcting extreme positions of the scholars such as considering Muslims to be unbelievers for minor faults in their faith and refusing to regard schools of Islamic jurisprudence other than the Maliki tradition. In Zamfara, the Shehu confronted the issue of male/female relationships and the exclusion of women from Islamic education.\textsuperscript{205} He focused on correcting the bad innovations that had developed in the people’s daily lifestyle and bringing to life the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad as a practical solution. Near the end of the year 1202 A.H.(1788-9 C.E.), the ruler of Gobir, Bawa, sent word to the Shehu and the scholars of his country to assemble at his court in a place called Maghami, during the festival of ‘Īd ul-Aḍha.\textsuperscript{206} Although some sources allude to the fact that Bawa had intended to kill the Shehu and his followers, the Shehu managed to confront the Sultan, refusing a bribe of five hundred mithqals of gold and insisting on five demands:

1. To allow me to call to Allah in your country.

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\textsuperscript{204}Abdullahi ibn Fūdi, \textit{Tazvīn Al-Waragāt}, 86; Hiskett, \textit{Sword of Truth}, 43.
\textsuperscript{206}Abdullahi ibn Fūdi, \textit{Tazvīn Al-Waragāt}, 88.
\end{flushright}
2. Not to stop anybody who intends to respond to my call.
3. To treat with respect any man with a turban.
4. To free all (political) prisoners.
5. Not to burden the subjects with taxes.\textsuperscript{207}

Sultan Bawa agreed to these demands and among the prisoners
freed was Abarshi, the Prince (or Sultan) of Zamfara.\textsuperscript{208} This
move by the Shehu was extremely significant in that it displayed
his active involvement in the affairs of the people to whom he
was preaching. Surely the freeing of a leading member of the
Zamfara elite would endear him to the leadership of that region
and spread the news of his authority. The demand for a removal of
taxes from the masses of the people would bring the reality of
his presence and effectiveness in prohibiting evil into every
home in the countryside. The Shehu also solidified his ability to
preach openly and took pressure off his students and followers
who were known for the wearing of turbans in accordance to the
\textbf{Sunna} of the Prophet Muhammad. Sources also state that all of the
scholars present at Maghami, who numbered over a thousand, joined
the ranks of the Shehu's following. Bawa died the following year,
1789-90 C.E. \textsuperscript{209}

After completing his object of preaching, forbidding evil,
establishing the \textbf{Sunna} and the community, the Shehu returned to
Degel around 1791-2 C.E. Hausa tradition contends that the Shehu
gave private lessons to Yunfa, the son of the Sultan of Gobir,

\textsuperscript{207}Ibid., 88; El Masri, \textit{Life of Shehu}, 441.

\textsuperscript{208}El Masri, \textit{Life of Shehu}, 442.

\textsuperscript{209}M. Last, \textit{Sokoto Caliphate}, 7; A. M. Kani, \textit{Intellectual
Origins}, 36.
Nafata, and assisted him in getting to the throne. Sultans, hoping to gain favour and seize power, were supposed to have visited the Shehu at Degel in order to greet him. During this period, he, also, travelled West to Kebbi with his companions and wandered all over the region. They reached the river Kuwarra (middle Niger) and Illo, further to the West. After preaching and teaching the religion, they returned to Degel. They continued their preaching tours by visiting Zauma where the people, including the ruler, were highly affected by the message. After this journey, around 1793 C.E., there is no more mention of travel until the famous Hijra of 1804 C.E. It appears that people were coming from all over Hausaland to Degel to receive the Shehu’s teachings and his students had reached the point of being qualified to preach and teach themselves. The Shehu concentrated on disseminating knowledge to his eager students and addressing the needs of the large groups of people who came to embrace his leadership. He composed a number of long poems in Fulfulde and wrote a number of books in Arabic. The most

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210 M. Last, Sokoto Caliphate, 8.

211 Zauma, according to Hiskett could be either east of Gumi, in Kano region, or in Niger (see footnote #6 in the translation of Tazvin Al-Waraqat, 96).

212 Abdullahi ibn Fūdi, Tazvin Al-Waraqat, 96, El Masri, Life of Shehu, 442.

213 Mention is made of the death of their maternal uncle Muhammad Thanbu just after their return. This occurred in April, 1793 C.E. (Tazvin Al-Waraqat, 96.)

214 El Masri, Life of Shehu, 442.
important work of this period was *Ihya al-Sunnah wa Ikhmād al Bid‘a* (The Revival of the Sunna and the Nullification of Innovations), written in 1793 C.E.\(^{215}\) The depth of analysis and insight into the affairs of Hausaland and the Islamic solutions to pressing problems distinguishes this work from all others.

By 1794-5 C.E., Sultan Bawa and his successor Yaqub were dead. The power of Gobir, inherited by the new Sultan Nafata, was on the decline and the power of the Shehu and his followers was on the rise. The Shehu’s son, Muhammad Bello, in his *Infāq Al Maisur*, records that the kings of Hausaland began to persecute the community of the Shehu and confiscate their property.\(^{216}\) In this period, the Shehu had a mystical experience which he described as a meeting between himself, the Prophet Muhammad, Shaykh ‘Abd-al Qādir al-Jilānī\(^{217}\), and a host of saints. The Shehu reported later that he was given a green mantle, a special turban, and ‘the sword of truth’ that he was supposed to unsheathe against his enemies. This symbolised for the Shehu the acceptance of the obligation to change evil with his hands or in Jihad.\(^{218}\) By 1794 C.E., the Shehu began to urge his Community

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\(^{217}\)The twelfth century Sufi mystic and founder of the Qadiriyya Order.

\(^{218}\)Hiskett, *Sword of Truth*, 66. The original source is the *Wird* of Shehu ‘Uthman ibn Fodi, 2–4.
(Jamā‘a) to equip themselves with weapons of war as this was part of the Sunna. This move frightened the rulers of Hausaland and Sultan Nafata made a public proclamation in the marketplace.

1. Nobody except the Shehu in person was allowed to preach.
2. No more conversions to Islam would be allowed and those who were not born Muslims should return to their former religion.
3. Men should not wear turbans and women should not wear veils.  

These commandments represented the extreme in oppressive measures for the Shehu and his Jamā‘a for they were a community of Islamic scholars whose primary mission was to propagate the religion of Islam and explain its fundamentals and laws. In 1216-17 A.H. (1802-3 C.E.), Yunfa, the son of Nafata, became Sultan of Gobir. He intensified the war against the Shehu by trying to assassinate him at Alkalawa in 1803 C.E., and then attacking one of the sections of the Jamā‘a of the Shehu under his student ‘Abd al-Salām.  

The Shehu wrote Masā’il Muhimma Yahtāju ilā Ma‘rifatuhā Ahl al-Sūdān (Important Questions that need to be Known by the People of the Sudan) in 1802-3 C.E., wherein he explained the obligation of the Muslims to leadership, Hijra (migration) and Jihad. This exemplified his transition into political writings that were necessary to deal with the crisis of his Community. By 1804 C.E., the beginning of the Jihad against the Habe rulers of Hausaland, the Shehu had laid a solid foundation of Islamic education and awareness. He had addressed

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219 Abdullahi ibn Fūdi, Taṣyīn Al-Warqaṭ, 107; El Masri, Life of Shehu, 444-5.
220 Ibid., 107; Ibid., 14.
the immediate needs of the masses of the people of Hausaland and set the pace for a new era in the relationship of Islamic scholarship to the state.

THE SHEHU'S STYLE OF WRITING

Shehu 'Uthmān ibn Fūdi distinguished himself from most of the Islamic scholars and authors of the nineteenth century Sudan. His writings were known for their simplicity and clarity of thought. He had become proficient in Arabic language through his intensive study of Arabic grammar, syntax, rhetoric, and poetry. His knowledge of Islamic sciences was comparable to any other leading scholar of his time, yet he stood out for his well documented use of Islamic sources and his ability to address the issues of different levels of society. The Shehu was not writing in a vacuum, but he tailored his preaching and writing to meet the needs of the situation that he was confronting. Besides his Arabic writings, he was known to have produced works in Fulfulde and Hausa (Ajami). Most of these writings, which number about four hundred and eighty on issues relating to teaching and destruction of bad customs alone, were done in the form of poetry. He was also known to have preached in Tamajek, one of the Tawāriq languages.221

Unlike other scholars in Hausaland such as Abdullahi ibn Fūdi, his brother, or Muhammad Bello, his son, he did not write on a wide variety of topics. They were known to have written on prosody, rhyme, grammar, philology, medicine, and history, but

the Shehu restricted himself to the pure religious sciences of aqidah (fundamentals of Islamic faith), fiqh (Islamic law), and tasawwuf. He wrote in a simple but classical Arabic style that would not confuse any student of the Arabic language. His books were filled with quotes from the classical sources of Islamic science, the Quran and the Sunna, as well as the opinions of well known scholars. This frequent use of other sources is actually considered by many orthodox scholars to be a higher form of writing because it leaves less room for subjective analysis and depends more on totally acceptable sources. The Shehu was quoted to have said:

Nothing is my own, in all that I elaborated for you. I am only following the footsteps of traditional scholars to bring to your notice what they have said. I have never mentioned anything without ascribing it to its author. If you wish, you can look up every book which I have copied.  

So the Shehu wrote to meet the need of the hour and to equip his followers with the information necessary to understand and eradicate the customs and teachings that were in opposition to Islamic Sharia. His writings were like textbooks that could be used by his students as the basis for their own instructions. They were in some cases like the notes of speeches or the answers

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223 Khalīl Maḥmūd, "The Arabic Literary Tradition in Nigeria", Unpublished paper written at Ibadan University Library, April, 1976, 12; El Masri, Bayān Wujūb al Hijra, 14; Original quote taken from 'Uthman ibn Fudi, Nasā'īh al Ummat al Muḥammadiyya, manuscript preserved in the Ibadan University Library (82/113).
to questions given by the Shehu during his preaching tours. This form of writing gives us not only an idea of the Shehu’s position on certain pertinent issues, but it also gives us insight into how he approached socio-political problems. By analyzing the Shehu’s poetry and Arabic writing in the light of the actual circumstances of his times, the student of History will be able to view the Shehu not only as an Islamic scholar, but as a socio-political activist who actually changed the ideas and lifestyle of Hausaland.

CONCLUSION

The Shehu was uniquely equipped to bring about profound change in the nineteenth century Sudan. His education was classical, on the highest level of the Timbuktu tradition. His approach had mass appeal, in that he identified with the people outside the Habe courts and began to demand serious changes in their social, economic, and political conditions. It is important to remember that his main thrust in the formative years of 1774-1804 C.E. was to establish the basis of authentic Islamic education, to correct the extremist elements among the scholars, and to destroy the un-Islamic customs of the whole society. This approach brought about an adverse reaction from those in authority. The Shehu was prepared to undergo the consequences of his actions. The formative period laid the foundation for his eventual hijra, jihad, and formation of a vast Islamic state. The effects of his message will be better understood through an in depth analysis of his early teachings. The hundreds of books and
poems produced by the Shehu and the scholars of the Sokoto Caliphate and preserved until now are a testimony to their popularity and importance. They produced an intellectual revolution that radically changed the ideas and customs of Hausaland to such an extent that writings circulated in the nineteenth century are still being read, analyzed and applied to Hausa society today.
PART TWO:

ANALYSIS
CHAPTER 4

THE SHEHU’S COMMENT ON SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS IN HAUSALAND

On Reviving the Sunna and Destroying Innovations

Of the many books and poems, produced by the Shehu during the first thirty year period of his teaching and preaching career (1774-1804 C.E.), \textit{Ihyā' al-Sunna} was the first major work in Arabic. It appears to have been written at a crucial time after Shehu had returned from his tours and settled in Degel.\footnote{I. Balogun, \textit{Life and Works}, 49; idem, \textit{Critical Edition of Ihyà}, 36.} The missionaries who were left in the cities where the Shehu had taught were in need of a work that would refresh their memories about what he had preached. \textit{Ihyā' al-Sunna} provided a textbook summary of key areas of Islamic life that contained the essence of Shehu’s mission and needed to be emphasized. It was so vital that chapters from it were later made into separate works to stress their importance. For instance, the Shehu wrote \textit{Wathiqat al-Ikhwān} \footnote{Full title: \textit{Wathiqat al-Ikhwān li tabyin dalīlat wujūb ittiba‘ al Kitāb wa al-Sunna wa al-Ijma' wa dalīl ijtināb al-Bid'ā liman yudāvin bi din al-Islām wa al-dalīl 'ala wujūb ittiba‘ al-kitāb} (The Exposition of the evidences which oblige following the Kitāb (Al Quran), the Sunna, and the Ijma’ (the unanimous consensus of the scholars of Islam) as well as the evidence for the avoidance of innovation for he who follows the religion of Islam, and the obligation of following the Book);
explain the importance of establishing the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad as the basis for Islamic lifestyle. He also wrote *Bayān al-Bid‘a al-Shaytaniyya* ²²⁷ during this period to further expose and villify the local customs and practices that were contrary to Islam. Another work of primary importance was *Kitāb Nūr ul-Albāb* ²²⁸ which addressed the problems of a broad cross section of society and responded to a variety of questions. The Shehu also produced poetry in the local languages to explain these works to the masses of the people and was very careful to clearly illustrate his thoughts orally and in public. Muhammad Bello described his preaching method as follows:

When he (the Shehu) reached a meeting of people, he would greet the audience in a loud voice which all could hear. On climbing the pulpit, he would greet them again three times, politely, and gracefully. Then, he would ask them to listen, and would never get angry or bored, though he was burdened with a group of ill mannered common people who did not listen when he asked them to, and did not stop.


²²⁷Full title: *Bayān al-Bid‘a al-Shaytaniyya allatī ahdathahā al-nās fī abwāb al-Milla al-Muhammadīyya* (Exposing the Satanic innovations that the people have perpetrated in the domains of the community of Muhammad).

²²⁸This work, although not dated, appears to have been written in the period before 1804 C.E. The beginning includes a pre-jihadic phrase: " (This book)...is useful, if Allah wills, for those who rely on it. I have laid the foundation in it for the rule of the Hausaland." Also, jihad is not mentioned anywhere in the book.
talking when he asked them to desist. Then he would give his
talk in a loud, audible voice, never directing his speech to
one person apart from the others. He was never frightened by
his audience even though it may contain some famous shaykhs
or rival scholars. He would preach to the whole congregation
in areas that would benefit them regardless of the
consequences. And if a question was asked in the course of
his talk, he would stop and answer it. 229

From the outset, the Shehu in his writing of Ihya al-Sunna
made his intentions very clear:

Let the critic of this book know that my intention in it
is the revival of the Sunna of Muhammad and the destruction
of Satanic innovation...My intention is neither to bring
shame upon the people nor to engage in finding faults with
them. 230

The Shehu went to great lengths in his writings to prove
the importance of following the Quran, the Sunna, and the
Ijmã"231 as a basis for all decisions. He defined the linguistic
meaning of Sunna as "the way, customs, or practices". In his
Islamic usage, it meant "That which was promulgated not through
the Quran, but by the Prophet, himself, from his actions,
sayings, and silent approval." 232 Therefore, the Sunna, in this
sense, was the ideal practice that a Muslim could decide to
follow in all aspects of life. If the Prophet Muhammad was the
best example for Muslims, then choosing his path would be the

229Muhammad Bello, Infaq al Maisur, 67.

230Shehu ‘Uthmân ibn Füdi, Ihyā‘ al-Sunna wa Ikhmād al-Bida‘,

231Quoting from Al Suyūṭi in his work, Al Nigāyah, the Shehu in
Ihyā‘ al-Sunna, 12, defined the Ijmā‘ as "The agreement of the
Jurists of any period on the ruling for a new occurrence in any
time period."

232‘Uthman ibn Fudi, Ihyā‘ al-Sunna, 11.
most desirable action and choosing another would be the most detested.

The Shehu, then, distinguished the Sunna from Bid'a (innovation in religion) with the following quote from Shaykh Ahmad Zarrouq in his work ‘Umdat-al-Murid al-Sadiq (The Support of the True Seeker):

The reality of Bid'a, according to the law, is that it is an innovation in the Islamic way of life that appears to be part of it but it is not; whether this be theoretical or actual. This is based on the saying of the Messenger of Allah, " All innovations are Bid'a, and all Bid'a will take you astray." 234

Then the Shehu added,

The scholars have clarified the meaning in the above mentioned Hadith. It refers to the changing of an Islamic judgement with the belief that it will gain the pleasure of Allah, but it actually does not. It does not refer to any innovation, especially if the Law of Islam encompasses it. 235

To further clarify the concept of Bid'a, he divided it into five sections:

Wajib (compulsory) by Ijma': As in the case of the writing and preservation of the Quran and the Sharia when it was feared that they would be lost.

Muharram (prohibited) by Ijma': As in the case of illegal taxes or putting ignorant people in positions of authority in front of scholars because they (the ignorant) are the descendants of the one who held the position.

Mandub (recommended): As in the case of the establishment

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233 Ahmad b. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. ‘Isa b. Zarrouq Al Fāsi (846-899 A.H./1442-3-1493-4 C.E.). He was a follower of the Shadhiliya Tariqa of taṣawwuf whose students later formed a Tariqa after him, named Zarrouqiya.

234 Ibid., 14.

235 Ibid., 14.
night prayers in the month of **Ramadan** (Tarāwih Salāh).

**Makruh** (undesirable): As in the case of specifying particular days for religious holidays by performing special types of worship at that time.

**Mubah** (permissible): As in the case of having beautiful clothing or homes.\(^{236}\)

He concluded this discussion by stressing that only the prohibited and undesirable forms of **Bid‘a** should be avoided \(^{237}\) and that all Muslims, male or female, should take seriously what he had brought forward. He wrote:

> If you have become certain from what I have said of the obligation of following the **Kitāb**, the **Sunna**, and the **Ijmā’** then let the weight of your deeds conform with them. For every religious duty you intend to perform, ask those who know whether it is **Sunna**, so that you may carry it out, or **Bid‘a** so that you may leave it alone.\(^{238}\)

Therefore, **Ihya al-Sunna** and the works that were produced from it should not be viewed as merely textbooks of Islamic theology or law, but the Shehu’s practical guide to establishing Islamic lifestyle and destroying the customs contrary to the Islamic way. They represent the social commentary of an Islamic scholar who saw society through the eyes of his scholastic training and orientation.

Shehu quoted copiously from many classical scholars of Islamic jurisprudence in his discussions on **Sunna** and **Bid‘a**. His greatest influence seemed to have come from Shaykh Muḥammad ibn

\(^{236}\)Ibid., 18-20; I. Balogun, *Critical Edition of Ihya*, 84, 85.


\(^{238}\)Ibid., 13.
al-Hajj al-‘Abdari (d. 1336-7 c.e.) who wrote al-Madkhal\textsuperscript{239} for
his fourteenth century North African community. In some places, Shehu
clearly quoted from this text, but in others he put the
ideas of Ibn al-Hajj in his own words. This method, at first
.glance, may appear to be the work of a ‘prolific copier’, but in
the context of the Shehu’s development, it was a logical
strategy. The Shehu was a young scholar faced with tremendous
criticism from a well established, conservative group of learned
men. By basing his arguments and focus on the Ijma’ and the
precedents set by well known Islamic authorities, the Shehu was
protecting himself from his opposition. In the classical sciences
of exegesis (tafsîr) and fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), the most
authentic works were always considered to be those which leaned
most heavily on proofs from the Quran, the ḥadîth, the sayings of
the companions of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the leading scholars
of the succeeding generations.

In addition to this, the Shehu would end most of his
sections by introducing his own direct views, saying "Qultu" (I
say). These statements would confirm the concepts of the
previously mentioned scholars and emphasize for the reader the
Shehu’s direct contribution to the subject.\textsuperscript{240}

\textsuperscript{239}Muhammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Hajj, al-‘Abdari (d. 1336-7
c.e.), al-Madkhal, (Egypt: Sharika Maktaba wa Maṭba’ā Muṣṭafa al-

\textsuperscript{240}In reviewing this section in the light of al-Madkhal of Ibn
al-Hajj, the present author found that the Shehu did not copy the
sections verbatim but used only a few selected portions of Ibn al-
Hajj’s extensive work. Therefore, the Shehu’s originality was in
choosing the specific precedents set by earlier scholars and
The format in this period, therefore, was very academic and sometimes repetitive, but its importance lies in the content, which delved into the most intimate affairs of the lives of the Islamic community of Hausaland.

In Personal Hygiene

In the fifth chapter of *Ihya al-Sunna*, the Shehu began his exposition on practical Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) by delving into one of the most sensitive areas: personal cleanliness and the practices of relieving nature. He stated that the basis of relieving nature should be to follow the way of the Prophet Muhammad by doing the following:

Do not face the direction of Makkah nor put one's back towards it.\(^{241}\)

Say the appropriate prayers said by the Prophet at this time.\(^{242}\)

applying them to his own community.

\(^{241}\)Shehu was orienting his followers to a fundamental concept of Islamic lifestyle. The demand that a Muslim be constantly "Makkah-centric". This meant that all Masjids and places with prayer areas should be built facing Makkah, so that the prayers could be performed facing the Qibla (direction of Makkah). Even toilets should not be constructed facing Makkah, in order to not insult the direction of prayer by facing it in relieving nature. This type of directional consciousness was intended to strengthen the international unity around the centre of prayer and help the believer to constantly remember his Creator.

\(^{242}\)Among the Sunna prayers, mentioned by Shehu, to say on entering the toilet area are: "O Allah, I seek refuge in you from the evil of male and female Jinn". Muslims believed that the Jinn inhabited the toilet areas, so spiritual protection was needed before entering that area. Another prayer said on finishing was the following: "All praises to Allah who made this food in a good form and brought it out of me in its bad form." In another version the prayer read: "All praises to Allah who has provided me with the tasty part (of the food), brought out of me the coarse part of it, and kept in my body the nutrients from it."
Do not lift up your clothing until you near the ground, unless there is nobody present.

Clean your private parts after relieving your nature with either water or a smooth stone. It is preferable, however, to use both.\textsuperscript{243}

Never use the right hand to touch or clean your private parts.\textsuperscript{244}

The Shehu, then went on to explain that not cleaning oneself properly could lead to punishment in the hereafter, since the Prophet Muhammad was given a vision of a person being punished in his grave for not cleaning himself properly after using the toilet. He also highlighted that evil innovations had crept into the practices of the Muslim world. He then wrote:

Concerning what the people have innovated in the sphere of

(Ibid., 47, 48)

\textsuperscript{243}Uthmān ibn Fūdi, \textit{Ihyā al-Sunna}, 47, 8; \textit{al-Madkhal}, I, 26-9. The concept of using the stone and the water dated back to the Prophet Muhammad, himself, who praised the people of Quba in al-Madinah al-Munawwarah for using both after answering the call to nature. The stone acted as toilet paper does today and the water gave an extra cleaning of the unclean materials. A recent study done in Srinagar and Delhi showed that Muslim women who washed regularly after using the toilet had no cases of cervical cancer, as opposed to those who did not. Forty percent of cancer cases in India are cervical, mainly caused by poor hygiene. The study appeared in \textit{The Times of India} (June 27, 1994) and was discussed in \textit{Crescent International} (Markham, Ontario) vol. 23, no. 12, Sept. 1-15, 1994, 7. Shehu was bringing the highest level of Islamic hygiene to his people.

\textsuperscript{244}K.A.A.Balogun, \textit{Sawq al-Umma}, 110. Shehu's emphasis on the use of the right hand for clean activities is also part of the training of the Sunna. According to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, the right hand should be used to eat, shake hands, or carry out any ceremonially pure activity. The left hand should be used for cleaning filth or involving in any ceremonially unclean activity. This type of orientation would also prepare the people of Hausaland to be in contact with Muslims from the heartland of Islam who were also oriented to function with this type of discipline.
relieving nature is the following:

The person relieving his nature is often totally naked and is seen by other people. This is a prohibited innovation by the consensus of the scholars...

Moving one’s bowels in the churches, synagogues, and houses of worship of the non-Muslims. This is a prohibited innovation as it leads to their doing the same action in our Masjids...

To pull hard on one’s penis is a prohibited innovation for it is harmful to the body and the penis is like a teat in that it gives off liquid if it is pulled. This leads to uncleanness and loosens up the urinary passage. 245

To come out among other people to clean oneself while holding the penis in hand under the clothing is an undesirable innovation 246...If the person has a dire necessity to meet other people immediately, he should put a piece of cloth on his private parts and then come out. After he has totally relieved himself, he should clean himself properly.

To exceed the limits in cleaning oneself after relieving nature by cleaning the inside of the anus with the fingers. This is an undesirable innovation and the actions of the worst of people. 247

Concerning the acts of ceremonial purification, Wudū,

245Urine is considered to be one of the ceremonially unclean substances which has to be removed from clothing or the place of prayer before engaging in worship.

246‘Undesirable,’ in this translation, refers to the Arabic word Makrūh which in Islamic law is the action a little better than Harām which is being translated as ‘prohibited’. The difference between the two levels in Islamic law is that the doer ofHarām will be punished for his action in the next life unless he makes repentance.

Ghusl, and Tayammum, the Shehu stressed that they should be done in accordance to the Sunna without adding or subtracting from the original practices of Islam. He noted that among the evil innovations that had entered Hausaland in the performance of ablution was the following:

Pouring too much water over the parts of the body is a prohibited innovation by the consensus of the scholars. Especially those who consider it to be a higher form of religion.

The sound of spitting out water when washing the mouth is an undesirable innovation.

Following evil prompting (whisperings) that may come from the devil in order to comfort one's self. Especially, if the person thinks that following the prompting is a higher form of religion.

Exceeding the limits in wiping the ears is an undesirable

\[248\text{Wudu (basically) means the minor ceremonial ablution done before praying or circumambulating the Ka’ba in Mecca. It includes rinsing the mouth and nose; washing the face, hands, arms, and feet; and wiping the head. It is preferable for a Muslim to be in a state of Wudu all of the time. Ghusl (basically) is the major ceremonial washing done on entering Islam, after sexual intercourse or after nocturnal sexual emission. It includes washing the unclean areas, making Wudu, and putting water over the entire body. Tayammum is the symbolic performance of Wudu or Ghusl done in the absence of water performed by tapping the earth, a stone, wood, etc. and wiping the face and arms.}

\[249\text{The obvious wisdom in conserving water in a desert climate is that water is the essence of a clean, healthy society. If the religion is being used to waste the water, a real problem could develop. Shehu made it clear that washing more than three times is a waste and should be avoided completely. Ihyā al-Sunna, 54, 55.}

\[250\text{Shehu was trying to bring total concentration to his followers in their performance of prayer by advising them to avoid listening to any voices or evil prompting that may occur while making prayer.}

105
innovation because wiping itself is a reduction.\textsuperscript{251}

This intimate critique of society, taken from the Quran, the Hadīth and the sayings of the classical scholars of the Muslim world, shows that the Shehu focussed on areas that would bring about more than an intellectual change in the minds of the people. He wanted to alter their social behaviour. He emphasized cleanliness, and modesty as the basis of personal care and interpersonal relations. This emphasis was in direct line with the Sunna which commanded Muslims to cover their private parts and most of their bodies, and to avoid looking at the nakedness of any person, dead or alive. Islam was in total opposition to sexual relations before marriage, so the Shehu stressed outward modesty as a type of protection. The concept of ceremonial purity and impurity (Tahāra wa Najāsa) is also highly visible in Islamic jurisprudence. The Shehu’s keen accentuation on the awareness of what is clean and how to stay away from what is unclean was an Islamic jurist’s way of preparing his people to carry out their religious duties properly. Worship in Islam requires the proper intention and ceremonial purity. It was also a method of raising their standard of living, as most of the materials considered to be ceremonially impure were, in fact, hygienically impure and

\textsuperscript{251}Ibid., 56, 57. Shehu reminded his followers that too much pressure in wiping the ears could even cause bleeding to occur and damage the person’s hearing. This, of course, defeats the whole purpose of prayer which is supposed to be a means of lightening the person’s earthly burdens. This discussion can also be found in ‘Umdat al-Murid al-Sadiq.
causes of disease.

The Shehu’s advice to have tolerance with non-Muslims, especially in regards to their houses of worship, was probably a very wise strategy in a land filled with Iskoki worship and powerful cult leaders. It also shows his early approach in the formative stage of his message. He was not in a position to change the practices of unbelief with his hands, so he chose a path of moderation and apparent acceptance.

In Menstruation and Childbirth

In approaching the area of menstruation and childbirth, the Shehu highlighted the general guidelines of the Sunna. He followed this with a commentary on some of the bad practices plaguing women in Hausaland. This is an area that did not have much detailed commentary from the sources of Sharia. It left a lot of room for the customary habits of the people as long as they did not clash with the spirit of Islamic law. The Shehu wrote:

Women and their husbands should make a great effort to follow the Sunna in this sphere.

Women should leave prayer and fasting during the time of menstruation. This does not include extra feminine excretions that may occur in some women...\textsuperscript{252}

It is lawful to sleep together in the same bed with a

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{252}Islamic Sharia makes a distinction between menstruation (Hayd) which is the normal monthly courses and feminine excretions (Istahâda) which is described as the liquid that sometimes, flows from the woman (usually as a sign of sickness) after the normal Hayd has been completed. Each woman is supposed to count her normal menstrual periods to arrive at an average monthly period. The amount of days may vary from person to person.
\end{footnote}
menstruating woman as long as she wears a loincloth or gown.

Sexual intercourse of any kind is not permitted, but sexual intimacy is allowable in the area above the loincloth of the woman.

When the menstrual period is complete, the woman should clean herself with cotton dipped into Musk fragrance or any other available sweet smelling fragrance...

The rules for the period of afterbirth are basically the same.

Concerning husbands: It is prohibited to divorce a woman during this period.\(^\text{253}\)

Regarding some of the evil innovations in this area the Shehu wrote:

There are some women who fast during their menstrual periods. This is a prohibited innovation according to the consensus of the scholars. In \textit{al-Madkhal} \(^\text{254}\), it states: There are women who fast during their menstrual periods and make it up again, afterwards. The doer of this act is a sinner...There are those who do not fast during their periods but starve themselves. They break their fast with only a date or something like it, thinking they are getting reward from Allah. Both actions are innovations. The woman is sinning in her religion by doing it. Her condition in Ramadan in menstruation is the same as in any other month.

Prayer during menstruation is also a prohibited innovation by the consensus of the scholars, just as fasting.

Leaving pray during the time of female excretions (\textit{Istahada}) is the same...\(^\text{255}\)

Putting the hand inside the private parts in order to clean them after menstruation is a prohibited innovation.

\(^{253}\)Ibid., 61-3; \textit{Sawq al-Umma}, 112.

\(^{254}\)Ibn al-Hajj, \textit{al-Madkhal}, II, 64.

\(^{255}\)In the case of \textit{Istahada}, the Muslim woman is supposed to clean herself before prayer and perform it. If liquid is flowing, she is supposed to put cotton or cloth in the area and complete her prayers.
It is harmful to the woman and her husband, in that the water that reaches the inside of the vaginal area with the fingers makes it loose, cold, and too wide. The Sunna is that she should clean herself like a virgin and no more...

Also, some women stay inactive for forty days after childbirth, even though there blood has stopped flowing. This is a prohibited innovation...²⁵⁶.

The Shehu’s observation again displays an unusual concern for the personal behaviour and well being of his people. It also alludes to the fact that he must have had dialogue with women on this issue; either through his own marital relations or the interaction he had with other women during his preaching tours. The Shehu took the position of Islamic Sharia which did not look upon female excretions or menstruation as a total impurity. In some religions, menstruation is considered a serious impurity and women must leave their homes during their monthly courses. Other societies, overlooked menstruation and even allowed sexual intercourse. The Shehu took the position that the monthly courses prevented women from involving in formal worship or sexual intercourse, but did not exclude them from normal activities. This type of detailed analysis about a subject that appeared to be totally left out of daily or academic discussion in Hausaland, must have given a broader scope to the relevance and appeal of the Shehu’s teachings.

In Circumcision and Female Infibulation

The practice of female infibulation was known to have been

²⁵⁶Ihya al-Sunna, 64-66. These quotes were not found in al-Madkhali.
practised in Africa, especially along the Nile river before the spread of Islam out of the Arabian Peninsula in approximately 619 C.E. Islam re-established circumcision as the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad, but Muslims living along the Nile incorporated female infibulation into their religious practices as though it was an important or necessary part of Islam. By the nineteenth century in Hausaland, female infibulation must have been known to the Muslims, as the centuries old trade routes linking Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia, to the Western Sudan were strengthened by the yearly Pilgrimage to Mecca. Scholars and merchants were constantly importing new goods and ideas from the East.257

The Shehu, in Ihya al-Sunna, gave an in depth analysis of circumcision and its position in Islam and in Hausaland. He began by establishing that it was an established part of the Sunna of Muhammad. The Sunna also included trimming the hair under the armpits, above the private parts, and on the mustache, as well as combing, dyeing and grooming the hair on the head, and growing the beard. The Shehu emphasized that cutting the hair and leaving only a tuft, wearing wigs, wearing tattoos, widening the gap in the front teeth, and plucking the eyebrows were not part of the Sunna and should be strictly avoided.258


258Uthmān ibn Fūdī, Ihvā al-Sunna, 217. It is interesting that Shehu extended the section on circumcision to include the Sunna of the personal appearance. He was trying to give the limits of how a Muslim man or woman should groom themselves and appear in public. Tattoos, scarification, and widening the gap in the teeth were practices that had existed in Hausaland and much
The Shehu explained that circumcision for boys should be completed between the age seven and ten, and that it was a strong Sunna practice for men and allowable for women. 259 His description of the actual circumcision is as follows:

For men, it is the cutting of the foreskin...and for women it is the cutting of the closest part of the skin (clitoris) which is on top of the vagina. This should not be abused for there is a hadith about Um 'Atiyya where the Prophet said, "Take only slightly and do not go to extremes for it is better for the countenance (or face) of the woman and the relations with the husband." In other words, do not exceed the limits as it is better for her personality and their sexual relations which will be more pleasurable during intercourse. The clitoris expands with the penis at the time of excitement and this increases sexual desire and fulfillment. If there is no clitoris, the opposite will happen.260

The Shehu's clear, simple, yet deep discussion of the limits of circumcision in the Sunna has far reaching implications. Female infibulation and genital mutilation have caused countless hygienic, social, and marital problems for women of the Western and Eastern Sudan for centuries. Shehu, in accordance to the Sunna, considered these actions to be changing the creation of Allah and actions of the Devil. Prohibiting wigs or hair extensions was also a very private matter, but not for Shehu who wanted to inform his people of every Islamic ordinance. If Islamic teachings could affect even the most intimate, personal practices of the people, Shehu would be constructing a strong foundation for the Muslim personality which could, then, be prepared to make the outward, external changes in society.

259 The position of the Maliki and Hanifi school is that circumcision is a Sunna practice for men and only optional for women. The Shafi'i school placed more emphasis on women, saying that it is 'honourable'. None of the schools of jurisprudence allowed female infibulation. See the Fatwa no. 212 of Shaykh Husayn Muhammad Makhkuf, dated 1, Shaban, 1368 A.H. in Al-Fatāwa Al-Islāmiyya min Darul-Iftā al-Misriyya, vol. 2, 1981, 449.

260 'Uthmān ibn Fūdī, Ihvā al-Sunna, 221. This quote was not found in al-Madkhal and appears to be the direct words of the Shehu.
in the areas where it is practised. Infection, abdominal pains, miscarriage, fear of sexual intercourse and childbirth, psychological trauma, prolonged animosity, and resentment are only a few of the bad side effects. The fact that Hausaland after the nineteenth century has not been plagued by this harmful custom has to be attributed, to some extent, to the stand of the Shehu whose writings eventually reached all sections of the Sokoto Caliphate and became the standard of the leading people in the region. Many writers today have either ignored or not been made aware of the actual presence of detailed Islamic insight and analysis in this highly volatile subject. A survey of the literature written about Hausaland in the nineteenth century shows only cursory looks being given to this important sphere. The Prophet Muhammad, himself, was known to have answered the most intimate questions for his companions. Islam, therefore, was looked upon by many subsequent scholars as a way of life that by its very nature would delve into all issues.

The Shehu did not stop at his prohibition of evil practices concerning women, but continued on in his chapter on circumcision to look at the practices in Hausaland for the men. He added:

Also, in the area of circumcision, intimidating young boys so they do not cry at the time of circumcision is a prohibited innovation by the consensus of the scholars...

Postponing young boys who are old enough for circumcision until others reach the age limit for circumcision, then circumcising them all on one day all together. This is a prohibited innovation if it leads to postponing the boys till the age of puberty. If it does not reach this extent, it is still an undesirable innovation.
Gathering the young boys together in the desert for the operation is a prohibited innovation for it is unsafe and could lead to the loss of the youth...

This also includes gathering women together in one house at the time of female circumcision. The women play prohibited games and shake their anklets and bracelets while singing. This is a prohibited innovation.\(^{261}\)

The Shehu's stance in this regard put him in direct opposition to the Fulbe who had established special manhood rites and tests of strength not known to the Islamic lifestyle.\(^{262}\) He appeared to be determined to oppose any practice that was clearly outside of Islamic limits or harmful to the people. To strengthen his argument he declared in one of his Fulfulde poems entitled, *Modinore* (The Instructive One):

\[
\text{Wad nazaru he fi mo julniki} \\
\text{Sukabe, don bo tauroya be majjuki.} \\
\text{Be kulna kon inke kon mboyan be,} \\
\text{Be zama boido dum jalede mabbe} \\
\text{Be moba kon to ladde ton kon kaura,} \\
\text{Ko ngele wartata he maire hoira.}
\]

Take, for instance, the question of circumcision of youth, here too, you will find them ignorant. They instil fear into them so that they must not cry, For indeed, he who cries will be ridiculed. They gather them in the bush together, And no (child) will leave until he heals.\(^{263}\)

In *Kitāb Nūr ul-Albāb*, the Shehu, again, highlighted the Fulbe manhood rituals along with other practices considered un-Islamic by the Sharia. He wrote:

\(^{261}\)Ibid., 223, 224.

\(^{262}\)See Chapter 3 of this thesis, under 'Some prominent Customs of the Fulbe'.

\(^{263}\)Taher, *Social Writings*, 210. The poem is dated 1204 A.H./1789 C.E.
And among the affairs that have caused a general calamity in these lands is what the ignorant do by slaughtering sheep in order to comb wool into their hair, and sacrificing the strange offspring of their cows and sheep. They also punish their youth for disobeying parents and not respecting elders in a manner that is not allowed by the law. They go with their youth into the desert and illegally punish them. These acts are peculiar to the Fulani tribe who live in these lands, and they are prohibited in the Quran, the Sunna, and the agreed upon consensus of the scholars.

The Shehu’s discussion on the manhood rituals of the Fulbe leads to a greater question of the rites of passage and the conception of manhood and womanhood, which he appeared to be really focusing on. The Shehu pointed out constantly in his writings that "the worst people" are those who frighten the youth to refrain from crying during circumcision, or who gather together at the time of circumcision to laugh, play or eat food. Exposing young men and women to public embarrassment or basing

264 It is interesting that he referred to his own tribe as Juhhāl (ignorant people), a term which in Arabic carries a derisive meaning. The Shehu has been often referred to as a Fulbe leader who lead a Fulbe revolution against the Hausa states. (See J. Spencer Trimingham, A History of Islam in West Africa, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 200; E.W. Bovill, The Golden Trade of The Moors, (London, 1958); E.J. Arnett, The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani, (Kano, 1922). Here, he appears to be determined to challenge some of his tribe’s established cultural practices. His criticism follows the same trend as his general comments on Hausaland. He focuses on a personal practice, in this case, the combing of lambs wool into their hair, then he expands to practices that are harmful to family relations, and finally he addresses those customs that have religious significance. The choosing of a special, abnormal animal for sacrifice was a practice used by many people who tried to satisfy their spiritual deities through the shedding of blood. It was shunned by Islamic law which requires the sacrifice to be only for Allah and the sacrificial animal to be normal in its physical constitution. The Shehu’s sharp criticism for his people did not endear his message to their tribal leaders in the early period. It placed him in opposition to all of their customs that were contrary to Islam.

265 Ibid., 17.
the worth of a young person on physical endurance was, in the
eyes of the Shehu, a practice of ignorant people. The youth
should be left alone to cry, for in it there is great blessing.
He quoted Muhammad ibn Yusuf ibn Sālim ibn Ibrahīm al-Zāghawī in
his Risāla to support this position. Muhammad declared:

The moaning of a sick person is Tasbih (glorifying Allah),
his shout is Tahlīl (repeating the formula—There is no god
but Allah, his breathing is charity, his sleep is worship,
his moving from side to side is Jihād fi Sabīl-Allah, and
his reward will be written from the best that he does while
he is in good health.²⁶⁶

The rites of passage in the Shehu’s conception seemed to be
connected to the implementation of the Sunna in the life of the
young person as opposed to the ability to withstand pain. The
Sunna for the Shehu required circumcision as an act of
purification and preparation for mature sexual relations. The
Sunna required the young person to study and implement Islamic
lifestyle and take on responsibility as duty to Allah and the
community. This strict application of Islam within the context of
Hausaland would put the Muslims under the Shehu’s guidance at
odds with the existing Hausa/Fulbe/Tuareg cultural systems, and
create a community that had more than a theoretical unity. It
would be a culture unto itself, based on the principles of Islam
yet slightly affected by the temperament of the different ethnic
groupings.

In Marital Relations

The Shehu wrote about the corrupt practices surrounding

²⁶⁶‘Uthmān ibn Fūḍi, Ihvā al-Sunna, 222.
some of the foundations of Islamic marriage (nikāh) like the dower, the sexual union of the man and the woman, and the secrecy of marital affairs. He, again, quoted from leading authorities of the Muslim world, stressing to the scholars of Hausland what had happened in other lands. He declared:

One of the innovations in the area of marriage is that acquaintances or relatives take the dower of the woman. This is an undesirable innovation according to the consensus of the scholars.

Also, the marriage reception (walima) which is united with corrupt rituals and practices is a prohibited innovation. Do not assume, however, that this is an attack on the concept of walima for it is a Sunna according to the Sharia.

Another form of innovation is the taking of a gift by the wife from her husband in order for him to sleep with her. This is a prohibited innovation for it appears like adultery or prostitution.\(^{267}\)

According to Islamic law, the dower belongs exclusively to the bride, herself, and cannot be taken from her without her permission. It served, not only as a symbol of the bridegroom’s ability to provide for her (which was one of his primary responsibilities), but also furnished wealth for the bride which she could rely on in the event of divorce. The dower could be livestock, clothing, gold and silver, or any viable form of wealth. The amount was never fixed by Islamic law and varied according to the economic condition of the country and the status of the bride’s family. The bride and her family had the right to negotiate the amount but were encouraged by the Sunna to keep the amount within reasonable limits. The Shehu’s protection of the

\(^{267}\)Uthmān ibn Fūdī, Bayān al-Bid’ā al-Shaytaniyya, 23, 24.
bride’s right to her dower validated her right to private property and empowered her in her marriage. Islamic law allowed Khul'a, a form of divorce initiated by the woman, wherein the bride could leave the marriage from her own desire, if she paid back the dower or part of it. If the bride did not possess her dower than she did not have this valid recourse to separation.

By trying to distance the Walima from all forms of corruption, the Shehu was raising the institution of marriage. The Walima was supposed to be a time of celebration, joy, and relaxation. The Prophet Muhammad, himself, encouraged chanting and dancing on this occasion. Because of the proximity between the need for people to relax themselves and celebrate, in general, and the temptation of listening to lewd singing, engaging in sexually provocative dancing, and partaking of drinking of intoxicating beverages, the Shehu was very clear in setting the limits of entertainment at the time of the Walima. Apparently, a newly wedded woman, in Hausaland, had to be given certain gifts before she would agree to talk to the bridegroom. This was known in Hausa as sayen baki which literally means "buying the mouth". The Shehu felt that it lowered the concept of marriage to involve only the material aspects and took away from the spiritual aspects of marital life.\(^{268}\)

The Shehu’s concern for the proper union of men and women took him into the most intimate sexual affairs of marriage. He wrote:

\(^{268}\text{Taheer, Social Writings, 208.}\)
Sexual intercourse while being watched is a prohibited innovation for the act is private and intimate and involves the intimate parts of the body which should be covered.

Also, approaching the wife for sex, suddenly, before fondling and playing with her in preparation for intimacy is a prohibited innovation.

Also, grunting noises and worthless speech during sexual intercourse is a prohibited innovation.

Performing the sex act in the anus of the woman is also a well known prohibited innovation...

It is even an undesirable innovation for a man to picture another woman in his mind while he is having sex with his wife. This makes him think he is having sex with the other woman! The same rule would apply for the woman for she will imagine that the other man is having sex with her.

Also, if the husband informs other people about what went on in his bed between himself and his wife, this is an undesirable innovation for it leads to making the other men desire the woman. The same would apply to a woman who described her night with her husband to other women.269

This intimate look into the marital affairs of the people of the Muslim world and the guidance in improving them displays the immediacy and relevance of the Shehu’s message. He seemed to be concerned about strengthening the relationship between married couples. Sexual relations should be private and sensitive. The man should prepare his wife for intercourse by playing with her and not demeaning the relationship by entering her anus or involving her in useless speech. The Shehu was very careful to mention that women also played an important role in the sexual bond and they should be conscious of their responsibilities to this intimate union. The Shehu penetrated the inner core of the

marital relationship by showing his community proofs that they should retain the honour and respect for the sexual partner even in thoughts. Even to imagine another person while having sex was a forbidden act and could lead to an imagined illegal sexual relationship!

Stability in the family units could bring stability to the whole society. As previously mentioned, even Sarki Muhammad Rumfa, who could be considered one of the most Islamically progressive early rulers of Hausaland, fell drastically short of Islamic limits in the area of marriage. He was known to have had a thousand wives and to have been totally oblivious to their Islamic rights, yet he was still revered in Kano.

In the Area of Food and Drink

One of the most important areas of social contact for any society is the activity of eating and drinking. At the time of eating, social status is recognized, thanksgiving is often made, and group identity is confirmed. In large family units, eating can serve as one of the only occasions when every member of the family is present. Parents assert their authority through feeding, children develop etiquette and often learn the basics of survival over dinner. News is shared, questions are asked and sometimes, decisions are made. The Shehu presented for his followers important aspects of the proper system of Islamic etiquette in the area of eating and drinking and used this highly relevant discussion to establish principles for inter-personal relationships. He stressed on eating together and sharing food.
Even if a family had a servant, the servant should share the food with them and sit with them. Each person should try not to lean on their arms while eating and always use their right hand. When the vessel of drink is being passed around, it should go counterclockwise (i.e. to the right), the drinker should not breathe into the vessel nor put his mouth directly on a water skin. If the liquid is milk, he should rinse his mouth out after drinking, in accordance to the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad, who said, "Milk has a type of grease in it." All of the vessels of food and drink should remain covered when not in use.\textsuperscript{270}

Concerning the bad practices surrounding eating and drinking the Shehu wrote:

Food and vessels that are reserved specially for the man are a prohibited innovation, if pride and arrogance are intended from it. If having this special arrangement is the normal way of life, it is an undesirable innovation.\textsuperscript{271}

\textsuperscript{270}Ibid., 244-246; Ibn al-Hajj, \textit{al-Madkhal}, I, 209-211. These principles in group eating have important social and health implications. By stressing the importance of the servant eating with the greater family, the Shehu may have been trying to break down class consciousness. The Prophet Muhammad had also pointed out that a servant should eat the same food and wear the same clothes as his master. Using the right hand and passing the vessels to the right confirmed the Islamic system of using the right side for clean, pure activities. The left hand which was used for the toilet would not enter the food.

\textsuperscript{271}The Shehu further related that group eating increases the benefits and blessings that people get from each other. It also serves as a protection from any special harm that was meant for a particular person. In Hausaland, (the Shehu mentioned) women were in the habit of putting spells on men through potions mixed in with their food. This practice could not be carried out if the targeted man ate in a group. Also, the person who eats by himself often will be seen as an arrogant person so people of knowledge and intelligence should avoid falling into this category. (Ibid., 248.)
Also, eating with spoons or other utensils is an undesirable innovation.\textsuperscript{272}

When eating, taking another mouthful before swallowing the previous one is an undesirable innovation.

Joking around while eating is also, an undesirable innovation.

Talking too much over food or refraining from talking completely.\textsuperscript{273}

Also, eating without having something to drink present is an undesirable innovation.

Making loud noises in chewing or in gulping down liquid is an undesirable innovation.

Some women take special measures to fatten themselves up. This is a prohibited innovation by the consensus of the scholars because it causes the person to drop some of the compulsory acts of Islamic lifestyle. It is also harmful to the health and well being of the woman.\textsuperscript{274}

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\textsuperscript{272}The Shehu, on the authority of \textit{al-Madkhal}, reasoned that eating with utensils was not only going against the established tradition of eating with the hands set by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, but it also was a form of class distinction in Hausaland at the time. From the health point of view, the Shehu felt that using the utensil was not recommendable (in group eating) for the utensil was used to take the food from the group plate, then it entered the mouth (picking up residue from the saliva), then it was put back into the plate. The residue of the mouth could affect the food in the group area in an unhealthy way.

\textsuperscript{273}The Shehu appeared to be trying to strike a balance and make eating a relaxed gathering that did not upset the people involved in eating. This type of eating could very well have a good affect on digestion which can be upset at the mention of emotional or disturbing topics.

\textsuperscript{274}The Shehu’s rationale for opposing the forced fattening of women, taken directly from \textit{al-Madkhal II}, 65–70. This practice was in contradiction to the Sharia, it was a waste of wealth, it caused unclean things to come from the body of the woman in prayer, it caused the women to be so fat that they exposed their bodies without a just cause, and it caused women to be so fat that they could not stand up or bow properly in prayer. These were all impositions on Islamic lifestyle which were not excusable if caused intentionally.
Taking on too many expenses in order to facilitate guests.\textsuperscript{275}

The Shehu, here, again, clearly showed his concern for the social and religious well-being of his followers by bringing clearly established Islamic precedents for food and drink. He appeared to be trying to weed out bad local practices and develop a sophisticated form of eating etiquette that would distinguish the Muslim families and lead to healthier interactions.

\textit{In the Affairs of the Masjid (Mosque)}

Regarding the houses of worship and the practices and customs that had developed in Hausaland through Iskoki forms of devotion, the Shehu made a strict interpretation of the Sunna. He declared that the masjid should be strictly used for performing prayers, learning the teachings of Islam, and reciting the remembrances of Allah. All of the Sunna practices of the Prophet in entering (with the right foot), sitting, worship and exiting (with the left foot) should be followed. He was confronting a people who had been practising a pervasive form of spirit worship that could be highly personal or collective. He wrote:

\begin{quote}
The masjids are the Houses of Allah, so it is not befitting for the worshipper to busy himself in anything other than the worship of Allah. In a Hadith it states, "Whoever sits in a masjid has visited Almighty Allah, so it is the right
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{275}Islam demanded that a Muslim always be prepared to feed a guest if they came by his house and to put up a traveller for three days. It appears that in Hausaland during this period, people were putting themselves in debt in order to impress other by having guests over their houses. This practice was rejected by the Shehu, for owing debts was considered to be dangerous in the eyes of Allah.
of the visited to be respected by his visitor"... 276

Concerning the innovations, the Shehu appeared to be targeting customs and organisation of the Iskoki belief system which was known to encourage religious shrines and places of devotion in every housing complex. He presented his followers well established Mālikī precedents for the proper development of the masjids by writing:

Among the innovations in the affairs of the masjid is establishing too many in one location. This is an undesirable innovation. 277

Spreading carpets or using fans in the masjid is an undesirable innovation.

Raising the voice in it, even in teaching, is an undesirable innovation.

Having storytellers in the masjid is also an undesirable innovation. 278

Also, calling the people to prayer in a group with one voice is an undesirable innovation.

Sounding the call to prayer over and over again from the same masjid at early morning prayer is an undesirable innovation.

And also, calling the people to prayer with other words, different than the normal words of the call (Adhān) is

276 Uthmān ibn Fūdī, Ihvā al-Sunna, 70; similar statements on the Sunna and Bidʿa of the masjid can be found in al-Madkhal, I, 38-60.

277 The Shehu explained that one of the signs of the last days would be a large number of mosques and few praying people. Islamic lifestyle stressed group worship and unity. He may have been trying to discourage individuals or smaller groups from starting their own mosques when they were not necessary. This would ensure the cohesiveness of his following and the unity of the ideas and practices that would be emanating from the mosque.

278 Ihvā al-Sunna, 73-75. This position was taken from the words of Imam Mālik, himself, and found also in al-Madkhal.
The Shehu's call for the prohibition of storytellers in the masjid is a very important step for the establishment of a purer form of Islamic lifestyle. Storytellers and griots in the Western Sudan were traditionally the custodians of history and national customs. Their basic medium of transmission was oral testimony. By establishing the study of Arabic and Islamic literature as the main source of learning, the people would be more capable of being receptors of written Islamic ideas. The impact of the local traditions and beliefs would consequently be curtailed. It must be noted, however, that the Arabic Qassās (storyteller) does not necessarily apply to the griot who carried the historical stories of the founding of empires, the lineages of people, or significant events in the history of the region. The Shehu, here, appears to be focusing on storytellers who distracted the worshippers by telling stories of low moral quality. This stance, as explained in al-Madkhal, was similar to the Islamic position of the Prophet Muhammad, himself, and that of the many succeeding Islamic scholars throughout the Muslim world.

At the same time, the Shehu appeared to be overly austere in his call for the prohibition of putting carpets in the masjid or using fans. This could be attributed to his zeal to implement the literal Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad, whose masjid was described as being very simple and totally void of any decoration; or due to his own Fulbe cultural preference for

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279 Ibid., 75-77.
animal skins or the bare earth.

Regarding the Birth of a Child and Blood Sacrifice

The birth of a child was an important occasion for Muslims as well as the traditional Iskoki spirit worshippers. The Shehu took a very strict stand on the application of the Sunna in this regard. He emphasized that the sacrifices for the newborn should be strictly done in the name of Allah and that the ceremony should be simple, focusing on naming the child, seeking blessings for this life, and distributing the meat to the poor and the needy.  

The Iskoki spirit worshippers were known to put great emphasis on appeasing the spirits through the sacrifice of specific animals at specific places. They revered special objects and connected the flow of blood at the right time, for the sustenance of the Iska, with the success and protection of the sacrificer. The Shehu criticised un-Islamic practices at birth which were practised in North Africa and other parts of the Muslim world by writing:

If you said, "What is the ruling for what some women do who put the knife that they cut the navel of the newborn baby with, by its head? " I would say that it is an undesirable innovation... If the mother gets up she carries the knife with her. She will do this for forty days on the justification that it is protecting her from being harmed by the Jinn.

Also, a caution should be taken against the practice of some of the women. If a mother leaves her child at home for an emergency and does not have anyone to sit with the

280 Ibid., 180.

281 See Chapter 3 of this thesis.
child, she leaves a jug of water and some iron.\textsuperscript{282}

As previously mentioned, Iskoki worshippers had substituted the Jinn for their local spirits in order to continue their religious practices within an Islamic lifestyle. The Shehu was confronting this belief at the most basic level in order to make a complete break with the Iskoki system. He wrote:

And among them (the unbelievers) is he who claims to be a Muslim and performs the duties of Islam, but along with this he writes the names of Allah or the Quran on unclean substances such as the bones of the dead and the heads of dogs; or writes the names of Allah and the Quran with blood of animals butchered in sacrifice; or writes the names of Allah and the Quran and washes them with water, and then splits the skin of a snake and mixes them together. This is also an unbeliever, upon whom the laws of Islam do not apply. \textsuperscript{283}

Use of the ninety nine names of Allah as a means of blessing and protection is a practice found throughout the Muslim world. Deification of the names, however, would be considered as un-Islamic by Islamic jurisprudence. The usage the Shehu mentions above appears to be directly connected with the Iskoki practice of using blood sacrifice as a means of gaining the favour of the spirit world. Writing the names of Allah or the Quran was a preferred act in Islam, but not on the bones of the dead, the

\textsuperscript{282}Ibid., 180,181; Ibn al-Hajj, \textit{al-Madkhal}, III, 291. Spirit cults and fear of the Jinn at the birth of a child were common throughout the Middle East and Africa.

head of a dog, and other Islamically unclean substances. The combining of these elements although it may have served as a connecting measure for the local spirit worshipper, was considered to be sacrilegious by the Shehu. He, therefore, classified it as disbelief.

In Medicine and the Supernatural

In the field of medicine and the curing of ailments, the Shehu maintained that the best cure was that which conforms to the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad. He recommended that Muslims should follow the traditional Islamic method of seeking cures to ailments by first, praying to Allah and invoking His blessings and then applying the necessary medicine. This medicine could include reading the words of Allah from the Quran or special prayers of the Prophet, in case of headaches, the evil eye, or spiritual maladies; and drinking honey for stomach ailments. The Shehu also prescribed some of the well known medical practices allowed by the Prophet Muhammad in his time and accepted as the Sunna. They included the cupping of blood, non-intoxicating forms of snuff, and cauterization.²⁸⁴

Concerning the un-Islamic forms of medicine in Hausaland, the Shehu declared:

Regarding what the people have innovated in the area of medicine and incantations is seeking cures by using unclean substances (najāsa)²⁸⁵ for internal or external

²⁸⁴ Uthmān ibn Fūḍi, Iḥyāʾ al-Sunna, 260-262.

²⁸⁵ Najāsa is defined as ceremonially unclean substances in Islamic law. That would include human urine and faeces, the mouth and saliva of a dog, the body and flesh of swine, alcoholic
treatment. This is a prohibited innovation according to the consensus of the scholars.

Also, seeking cures through the use of foreign words that are unknown to the people. This is a prohibited innovation in the Maliki school of jurisprudence. 286

The Shehu, then brought a detailed description of this practice found in Al Madkhal of Ibn al-Hajj. He wrote:

And in Al Madkhal, it states, "If a person is stung or bitten by a snake or a scorpion, some people take a knife and put it on the place where the poison has reached. This is made known by the person who was bitten when the knife is passed over his body to the place of the bite. They then, speak in a foreign unknown tongue."

In Al Madkhal, it also prohibited anything that resembled this act. That would include the unknown things that are written on paper, or engraved into the ceiling or the wall. It is believed that this would give protection from magic, the evil eye, bedbugs, fleas, ants, snakes, scorpions, rats, etc...This is prohibited by the Sharia and is an unacceptable act, even if some benefit could come from it. 287

By trying to bring the medical practices of Hausaland into conformity with the Sunna, the Shehu was addressing a sensitive area which every person whether rich or poor would be profoundly affected by. The Iskoki spirit system had incorporated a system of cure through its sacrifices, invocations, and rituals. If Islam were to gain real supremacy in Hausaland, it would have to provide solutions to the real problems of life. The Shehu must have been well aware of this fact for he tried to connect even the most minute detail of lifestyle to the belief in Allah and beverages and intoxicants, etc.

286 Ibid., 263.

287 Ibid., 263.
the following of the Sunna. His guidance on medicine was very orthodox and followed methods taken directly from the Prophet Muhammad’s time.288

In a very clear and precise manner, the Shehu distinguished between Islamic medicinal cures and Iskoki or magical cures. He established that seeking cures through blowing into knots or using other magical formulas such as reading incantations on salt or metal are undesirable practices that had to be eradicated. 289 This was not medicine for the orthodox Muslim but considered to be magic (Sihr in Arabic). The Shehu also confronted the people who claimed to be Muslims but involved themselves in magic and secretive arts not known to the average person or to the Sharia of Islam. He strengthened his argument by declaring:

And among them is he who claims to be a Muslim and performs the duties of Islam, but along with this he throws cotton or other things on a stone or in the road or under the trees or in the crossroads, or wherever else this is thrown. This is an unbeliever upon whom the laws of Islam do not apply.290

288 Although the Shehu only mentioned a few of the Prophetic remedies, his son Muhammad Bello, who developed into great scholar in his own right, wrote a number of detailed works which were taken from well known Arabic sources. He prescribed remedies for piles, worms, eye diseases and a number of maladies which he listed alphabetically along with their cures, (Murray Last, A Note on Attitudes to the Supernatural, 8). Some of Bello’s works include: Tibb al-Hayvin; al-Qaul al-Manthûr fî Bayân Adwiyat ‘Illat al-Basûr; Tanbih al-Ikhwân ‘ala Adwiyat al-Dîdân; and Talkhîs al-Magâsid al-Mu’arrada fî’l-Adwiyâ al-Farîda.

289 Ibid., 264.

290 Within Islamic Sharia, the practice of casting spells on people by throwing special objects around their homes or on the road, and the seeking of protection through charms and special formulas was considered to be magic and a form of disbelief. The Shehu, here, appears to be warning his followers against a
And among them is he who claims to be a Muslim and performs the duties of Islam, but along with this he bewitches people and separates two people who are friends or a man from his wife. This is also an unbeliever upon whom the laws of Islam do not apply.291

And among them is he who claims to be a Muslim and performs the duties of Islam, but along with this he measures the Quran by beating on a tambourine. This is an unbeliever upon whom the laws of Islam do not apply.292

Magic and the secret arts have always been a source of great fear and superstition in almost all societies. Hausaland was no exception. The Iskoki belief system, although having very open practices and a world view shared by people throughout Africa, contained forms of secret cult worship and practices. The average person in Hausaland seemed to have been very pre-occupied with the fear of spirit possession or attack. Bori mediums, as previously mentioned, were highly influential, even with the ruling classes, and were constantly consulted for predictions and protection against adversaries and evil forces. The use of secret practices and unknown languages therefore, was a specialization that had tremendous leverage on all levels of society. The Shehu specific practice of the secret arts practised in Hausaland.

291The separating of a man from his wife or a friend from another friend is considered by Islamic law to be one of the most dangerous forms of magic. In second chapter of the Quran, verse 102, mention is made of this form of magic and its origin in ancient Babylon. The Shehu, again, decisively condemned the act, even if it is done by a Muslim and warned his followers that not only is the person a disbeliever but the laws of Islam do not apply to him. This implied that if the person died or were killed, the normal rituals of ceremonial washing (Ghusl), and funeral prayer (Janaza) would not be performed and none of the other Islamic responsibilities (like paying off the debts) would be shouldered by the Muslims.

292‘Uthmān ibn Fudi, Nūr-ul-Albāb, 4, 5.
adopted a firm stance against all manifestations of these practices writing:

O my brothers, beware of using magic such as incantations, spells, and letters with an unknown meaning, as well as writing Allah’s name, the Quran, or the Prophets’ names in order to bring love or enmity between people... And anything connected to magic and is used to gain some benefit or ward off evil is disbelief. Allah, the Most High, has said, "The magician will never be successful, no matter what skill he attains." (Quran, 20:69) 293

Other Local Customs of a Religious Nature

In the first part of his book, Kitāb Nūr-ul-Albāb, the Shehu critiqued a number of other local practices that had very serious implications. He listed them in a very simple style and left the explanation to the student or teacher who probably had some familiarity with his detailed discourse. He also classified the people of Hausaland as three types, declaring:

Know, my brother that the people in this land are of three kinds. One group that performs the acts of Islam and does not show any deed of the unbelievers. You do not hear from them anything which is devoid of Islam, and they are pure Muslims over whom the law of Islam has taken effect.

Another group is mixed. They perform the actions of Islam, but you see the actions of the unbeliever and you hear in their speech that which is devoid of Islam. These are pure unbelievers upon whom the laws of Islam do not apply.

And another group who have never smelled the scent of Islam and do not claim it. The ruling for them is very clear to all.

And if you say, "Explain for us the signs of the mixed group that we may be aware of them", I would say, "I will show you (with the permission of Allah) their actions by which they became unbelievers, since it is the mark by which they are known." 294

293'Uthmān ibn Fūdi, Wathīqat al-Ikhwān, 76, 77.
294'Uthmān ibn Fūdi, Nūr-ul-Albāb, 1-3.
In the Veneration of Trees

The tree was an important symbol of natural power and concentration of spiritual forces for the Iskoki worshippers. Blood sacrifices and other religious rituals were carried out under the shadow of many a great tree in Hausaland. Islam required the believer to renounce the divinity of natural objects and focus solely on the Creator. In this light, Shehu wrote:

And I say (and all success is with Allah), among those who are mixed is he who claims to be a Muslim and performs the duties of Islam, but along with this he exalts trees and stones by sacrificing to them and giving alms, or pouring a type of paste on them. This is an unbeliever upon whom the laws of Islam do not apply.\(^{295}\)

The Shehu was challenging the syncretism that had developed over the centuries, by criticising the people who tried to carry out both forms of religious practice simultaneously. In specifying exaltation, sacrifice, alms giving, and the paste pouring ritual, he was trying to eliminate some of the main religious activities held around the venerated trees. This would have a profound effect on the core of Iskoki religious practices. It was also Shehu’s clear confirmation of the destruction of the sacred trees carried out by Al-Maghili, the Wangarawa, and other Islamic scholars who eradicated this form of idolatry.

In Denial of the Resurrection

\(^{295}\)Ibid., 4. This ruling is probably taken directly from The replies of Al-Maghili to the Questions of Askia Al-Haji Muhammad. The Shehu added "the pouring of a type of paste on them (the trees)" which appears to be Hausa-specific. This again shows that the Shehu was guided by the precedents set by earlier Islamic scholars but was applying them to Hausaland. See J.O. Hunwick, Shari'a in Songhay, 77.
Belief in the resurrection of the dead and the Day of Judgement is one of the fundamental principles of the Islamic faith. Many spirit based belief systems denied the resurrection of the dead and a final time of accounting. Addressing this issue, the Shehu wrote:

And among them is he who claims to be a Muslim and performs the duties of Islam, but along with this he denies the resurrection of the dead and says there is no resurrection after death. This is also an unbeliever upon whom the laws of Islam do not apply. \(^{296}\)

The Shehu, above, established a clear demarcation between the two belief systems by linking denial of the resurrection with the state of disbelief. The concept of the afterlife and its rewards and punishments was considered fundamental to the shaping of an Islamic consciousness by Muslim theologians. The Shehu, again was pointing out the contradiction of one who claims to practice Islam yet denies its basic beliefs.

In Claiming the Knowledge of the Unseen

The knowledge of the unseen and the future was traditionally one of the most important attributes of the Creator in Islamic literature. Therefore, people who claimed to see into the future or control the destiny of others were considered by the scholars of Islam to be heretics. One of the most powerful claims of the custodians of the Iskoki shrines or the practitioners of the Bori rituals was the ability to communicate with the spiritual world and gain mastery over the knowledge of

\(^{296}\)Ibid., 3.
the unseen. The classical Arabic term for soothsayer (kāhin, plural-kuhān) applied perfectly to the Hausa concept of spirit medium, in that their methods and claims were exactly the same but the names were different. The Shehu confronted this issue saying:

And among them is he who claims to be a Muslim and performs the duties of Islam, but along with this he claims to know some hidden knowledge in writing or in the sand or by the conditions of the stars or by the tales of the jinn or by the sounds of birds or their movements... This is an unbeliever upon whom the laws of Islam do not apply.

And among them is he who claims to be a Muslim and performs the duties of Islam, but along with this he comes to the soothsayers (kuhān) and asks them about his affairs and believes in what they say. This is an unbeliever, upon whom the laws of Islam do not apply.  

The Shehu was condemning the soothsayers and the people who visited the soothsayers in order to gain knowledge of the future. He also, defined some of the more common methods of fortune telling by mentioning the use of writing, sand, stars, jinn, and birds. Meaning and direction were gleaned from numerical configurations, formations of heavenly bodies, and the sounds of birds and other creatures that would appear at certain times and become harbingers of evil fortune or glad tidings. The Shehu condemned all forms of these practices in his attempt to build a society based on the submission to Allah. This was a direct continuation of the rulings of Al-Maghīlī who set a precedent in the Western Sudan by condemning the soothsayers in

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297Ibid., 3, 4.

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his "Replies to Askia". 298

By depriving the soothsayers and custodians of the local shrines of their authority in spiritual affairs, this Islamic precedent was also changing the power base. The Islamic scholars would become the intermediaries or religious advisors whose responsibility was to respond to the hopes and fears of the people with suitable answers for their questions concerning the knowledge of the unseen, death, and the hereafter. This would ensure a leading role for the Islamic scholars and give them a type of spiritual authority.

Other Customs that have caused a General Misfortune in Hausaland

In the second part of Nūr-ul-Albāb, the Shehu mentioned a category of customs that were having a severe effect on Hausaland. He described the state of affairs as a Balwa, which in Arabic, could refer to a trial, a tribulation, an affliction, a misfortune, or a calamity. He viewed the problem to be so widespread that it engulfed the whole population. His writing in this section took on a tone of urgency and emotion, unlike many of his other early writings which were very calm and academic. This emphasis leads the reader to believe that he regarded the eradication of these affairs to be of extreme importance to the establishment of Islamic character, social dealings, and lifestyle. The following are some of the most relevant issues in this category.

298 J.O. Hunwick, Shari‘a in Songhay, 89.
Following Christians, Jews, and Forefathers in Holidays and Rituals

In trying to bring the lifestyle and habits of the people of Hausaland into an Islamic rhythm, the Shehu dealt with the issue of establishing holidays, rituals, and traditions. He confronted the so-called Islamic scholars as well as the people, in general, concerning their special days and many of their special forms of worship. He wrote:

Among the affairs which have caused a general misfortune in this land is their (the 'Ulama\textsuperscript{a}) saying that this day is a righteous day and that day is evil. Actually, all of this is a fabrication and falsehood, and a prohibited innovation which is contrary to the Sunna of our Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless him and grant him peace), and the Sunna of the Prophets and Messengers (peace be upon them). None of the pious scholars in the previous generations, or Imam Mālik or Imam Shafi'i or Imam Abu Hanifa or Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal or their colleagues proceeding or following them ever said that! This is nothing but a lie taken from the books of the Jews and the Christians who replaced and altered the Books and put the path of the Prophets behind their backs. And they followed their desires and led many astray by diverting them from the right path...And it is not permissible for anyone to follow the Jews and the Christians because they are all unbelievers...And it is not permissible for anyone to make a judgement based on the judgement of the Jews and the Christians before they accepted Islam...But some people say, "All days belong to Allah and a day, itself, can neither benefit nor harm us. Furthermore, we found our fathers doing it and so we will do the same." This is a grave error and a prohibited innovation, and repentance and seeking forgiveness from Allah is obligatory! \textsuperscript{299}

The Shehu seemed unusually preoccupied with affect of the culture of the Jews and the Christians on Islamic society. Christian or Jewish influence had not openly reached Hausaland by this time, yet the Shehu quoted directly from Ibn al-Hajj to

apparently forewarn his people. In other writings, he was so intensely against taking on Christian culture that he forbade his followers to imitate them in any way. He questioned the excuse of claiming that celebrating a special holiday or performing a special ritual is the way of ‘our forefathers’. His writings reflect the projections of a scholar who was profoundly influenced by the writings of his predecessors, even to the point of mentioning holy days and festivals that were not yet practised in Hausaland. He further wrote in this regard:

And among the affairs that have caused a general misfortune in these lands is the preference for unimportant duties such as prayers at night and on special days, acting on false dreams, and forsaking clear knowledge such as performing prayers on the first Thursday in Rajab, during the night of the middle of Shaban, or the night of the twenty-seventh of Rajab. Also, paying farewell to Ramadan, or prayer on the day of 'Ashūra, or prayer at the grave, or prayer for parents, or weekly prayers, and on every day and night in which it is preferred. All of these actions are false and fabrications against the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him.300

The Shehu was addressing the foundation of the people’s concept of religion. Is it permissible for them to carry out acts that are unimportant and leave those deeds that were done by the Prophet, himself? This was a very personal way to confront the issue of religiosity, for the family celebrations and the special occasions of a people are one of the most sensitive aspects of their culture. The Shehu, then, took his attack on duplicity in religion another step saying:

And among the affairs that have caused a general misfortune in

300Ibid., 16.
these lands is the pursuit of superfluities and different lesser acts with the expectation of salvation, despite the fact that they are engaged in prohibited acts, sins and mistakes which they must desist from. Inevitably, many of them neglect the obligatory duties and increase the supererogatory acts and rush to carry them out.  

The problem of the performance of supererogatory acts in preference to the obligatory acts is a very academic question. For the scholars of Islam, it was one of grave importance since failure to carry out the obligatory acts would, in their eyes, bring the wrath of Allah on the people and retard the progress of Islam as a dominant way of life. By establishing the obligatory acts, a Muslim is forced to place his own cultural preferences behind the dictates of Islamic law. This brings about a real change in lifestyle if consistently implemented. Shehu was building his revival of Islam from the roots of the consciousness of his people by questioning their most private affairs and trying to bring them in line with the Sharia.

Grave Worship

One of the fundamental benefits that religion provides is the feeling of protection and security. Throughout Africa and much of the world, people have approached their religious leaders for ways to defend themselves against evil and gain blessings and good fortune. In some cases, even the dead who were considered to be pious were invoked or revered in their graves. Seeking intercession (Shafā‘a) or blessings from the dead was considered Haram (forbidden) by Islam. The Shehu confronted the issue of

301Ibid., 16

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seeking blessings at the grave directly, and considered it to be a major obstacle to the spiritual development of Hausaland. He declared:

And among the affairs that have caused a general misfortune in these lands is seeking blessing by praying at a grave and building a masjid over it. That is because it is not permissible to pray at the graves or erect masjids over them. One does not wipe the graves (to seek blessings) either, since that is an act of the Christians. One should not anoint oneself with water from the grave or take up dust that is in it, for blessing is sought only by visiting the grave.303

The Shehu also opposed giving special gifts and food made for the dead. He wrote:

And among the affairs which have caused a general misfortune in these lands is what they do in the way of...alms-giving for the dead...Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Madyunī 304 said in his commentary to Fath al-Jalil, "Spending a night with dead people is nothing but the practice of people of ignorance; likewise the food which they make for the dead on the seventh day which they hope will bring nearness to Allah for the dead and His mercy. This is an innovation which was not in what proceeded us, nor was among that which the ‘Ulamā praised. They said that it was not fitting for a Muslim to imitate an

302 This can also be considered as an eradication of ancestor worship where the dead ancestors were considered to be part of the spirit world which still had an affect on the world of the living. Islam established that the dead had entered a Barzakh or spiritual zone of existence which was totally separated from the world of the living. Muslims were encouraged by the Sharia to pray for their ancestors and to perform acts of devotion that would benefit them in their graves. The Shehu, in this section, separated this act from praying to the dead at their graves. This was a forbidden act. Concerning the veneration of ancestors, the Shehu throughout his writings mentioned al-Salaf al-Salih (the righteous predecessors) who established Islamic law and developed the various sciences of Islam. He focused on reading and following their writings as opposed to communicating with them or seeking benefits or protection from them.

303 Ibid., 15, 16.

304 A Maliki scholar of the Berber Zenaga (Yusuf Wali, Translation of Nūr-ul-Albāb, 36)
Unbeliever, and every person should stop his family from attending such occasions.  

**Illegal Business Practices**

For the people of Hausaland, trade has always been a very crucial factor in their existence. Internal trade was carried on among the Hausa from the earliest times and was one of the key factors in the emergence of the urban centres of commerce, handicrafts, and later political power. Hausa people also greatly benefitted from commercial contact with their neighbours and itinerant merchants travelling to and from their lands. The Fulbe, themselves, developed a symbiotic relationship with the Hausa by selling their dairy products, meat and manure, while purchasing the Hausa agricultural products and handicrafts. Business dealings, therefore, were one of the most important interpersonal relations for the people of this region.

The Shehu, therefore, considered any deviation from Islamic norms in business affairs to be a serious obstacle in the path of the establishment of Islam. He based his position on direct quotations taken from al-Maghili in his *Replies to Askia* by writing the following:

And among the affairs which have caused a general misfortune in these lands is what they are doing by cheating in sales, such as mixing milk with water, etc. This also includes the one who buys an item, takes possession of it, and goes away with it before he pays its owner its price. When he regrets having done this or cannot gain a profit in selling it, or when the original owner asks for the money, he says to him, 'Take your property or wait till I sell it'.

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And among the affairs that have caused a general misfortune in these lands is cheating in measuring by adding or reducing. This is prohibited in the Quran and the Sunna and the Ijmā', for the method of measurement in Islamic law is for the measurer to place the scale evenly and then pour the amount to be measured into it with caution, until it is completely full. While this is going on, he should not add weight to it, support it, shake it, or trick anyone. The scale should be balanced in its position and the desired amount should be poured into it until it fills up naturally.

And among the affairs which have caused a general misfortune in these lands is the lack of standardization in the measures. This is prohibited. It is compulsory in Islamic law to standardize the measures large and small until they are all uniform. It is not necessary that the whole land agree on the measures, but the establishment of equivalency in each village is necessary so they will be uniform.  

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The Shehu, also presented al-Maghīli's precedent for the distribution of wealth in the extended family, and encouraged fair practices even behind the closed doors of the household by writing:

And among the affairs which have caused a general misfortune in these lands is the lack of distribution of inheritance according to the Book of Allah, Most Glorious and Most High, the Sunna and the Ijmā'. On the contrary, what they do is that when there is an elder heir, he takes possession of all that is bequeathed saying, 'This property belongs to my brothers and I have assumed the position of my father.' Nobody will resist him in this, until after his death when the strongest will take possession of what remains. This is prohibited in the Quran, the Sunna, and the Ijmā'. 308

CONCLUSION

The social commentary of the Shehu revealed in this chapter is only part of what he produced in the formative phase


308 Ibid., 21, 22; J.O. Hunwick, Shari‘a in Songhay, 85-88.

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of his career as an Islamic scholar and revivalist. The Shehu never made the pilgrimage to Mecca nor travelled any long distance away from Hausaland. His years of academic training and the chain of knowledge from the scholars of the Western Sudan to the scholars of the Middle East enabled him to comment on the customs of his region from the eyes of the classical sources of Islamic law. He quoted extensively from the classical sources and seemed to be intent on showing his followers the precedents set in earlier Islamic communities. His theological position was strict yet very much in tune with his environment. Few have tried to analyze his social critique and the solutions to practices that he believed were unprogressive and dangerous to Islamic development.

Hausaland had been frequented by Islamic scholars for over five hundred years and social activists had appeared at varying times. The Shehu was confronting religious practices that were well established for centuries, and superstitions and traditions that seemed to be part of the natural terrain. He, therefore, was destined to meet opposition, even from the ranks of those who also claimed Islamic scholarship. This would be one of his greatest challenges, as we shall see in the next chapter. The task of restructuring the ideas and concepts that pervaded the very foundation of Islamic thought in Hausaland.
CHAPTER 5

THE SHEHU’S IDEAS ON FUNDAMENTAL ISLAMIC BELIEFS AND STANDARDS

The Shehu’s Confrontation with Extremist Scholars

In the course of the formative years, the Shehu laid emphasis on translating his ideas into the language of the common people and ensuring through his public preaching that they had a general knowledge of the basic teachings of Islam. His concept of a Muslim was one who confirmed the basic ‘Confession of Faith’ or Shahâda (There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger). He stated in Ihyâ al-Sunna:

The Consensus of the Scholars has confirmed that whoever affirms the ‘Confession of Faith’ should be dealt with in accordance to Islamic Laws. He may intermarry with Muslims and lead the prayers. The animals that he slaughters are lawful to eat, his inheritance is lawful for Muslims and he may inherit from them, and he should be buried in the graveyard of the Muslims.309

In a Fulfulde poem, called Njibduji, the Shehu declared:

Alhamdu lillahi e fin din go;
wurtinoye njibdu e han’doyego
Mi silminoyi Gidado Kanndinado;
E’onfuh yo latido yo kannditado;
Nufare’am yimango’en njibduji.
Jibudi wobbe yo di ngediliji.
Njibdu go’o darido La’ilaha
inke yo kefero nane safaha.
Wondo yo non da juldo fuu to simtriri;
Ko daroyaki ina warta kafiri.

309‘Uthmân ibn Fûdi, Ihyâ al-Sunna, 41.
The English translation is as follows:

Allah be thanked for one's being awakened;  
For being led out of wrong interpretation by being guided.  
I salute the Beloved One, the Noble Guide;  
And whoever that is properly guided.  
My aim is to compose for us on wrong interpretations;  
which have confused some and are infectious.  
One wrong interpretation is, that he whoever stops at  
Lā ilāha ⁹¹⁰ is to be termed an unbeliever, is utter  
nonsense. If that were so, then every Muslim, if he says the  
shahāda; even if he does not stop short would become an  
unbeliever... ⁹¹¹

The Shehu also maintained that all people were born in a  
natural, God-fearing state and the basis of human life was  
submission to the Creator. He quoted Shaykh ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-  
Sha‘rānī (d. 973 A.H.) ³¹² from his al-Qawā'id al-Kashfiyya (The  
Illuminating Principles) to strengthen his views saying:

I heard our Shaykh, Shaykh-ul-Islām Zakariyya, May Allah  
have mercy on him, say, 'The beliefs of the common people  
are sound according to the Consensus of all of the competent  
scholars. They are Muslims even if they did not look at  
the books of the Mutakallimūn ³¹³ because Allah, Most

³¹⁰This is the first part of the Shahāda, and it means 'there  
is no god'.

³¹¹Alhaji Garba Saidu, "The Significance of the Shehu’s  
sermons and Poems in Ajami, in Studies in the History of the  
Sokoto Caliphate: The Sokoto Seminar Papers, edited by Y.B. Usman  
(Department of History, A.B.U., Zaria, 1979), 206.

³¹²Al-Sha‘rānī was known for his efforts to reconcile the  
different schools of Islamic jurisprudence. He was one of Shehu’s  
main sources of Islamic judgements.

³¹³The philosophers of ‘Ilm al Kalām, a philosophical trend  
that entered Islamic theology probably around the eighth century  
A.D. with the introduction of the philosophy of Wāsīl ibn ‘Atā  
(d.748 C.E.). He began the Mu’tazilite school of thought which  
took its distance’ from the Orthodox scholars and later  
incorporated Hellenistic and Persian logic in its use of applied  
reason and rational arguments to understand Islamic theology  
(Cyril Glasse, The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam, (San Francisco:  
High, has maintained them in the natural Islamic state of submission to the Creator either by teaching people through their parent or by natural inspiration.\textsuperscript{314}

Because of the Shehu’s tolerant, inclusive approach to Islamic theology and education, he was confronted with fierce opposition and bitter criticism from extremist elements among the scholars and students of Hausaland. This led him to author a number of works to defend his teachings and neutralize his antagonists. In describing this crisis, Muhammad Bello wrote:

He (the Shehu) found in these lands a group like the group mentioned by al-Hasan al-Yusi\textsuperscript{315}. They are a group who looked into the words of the Imams who inspired people to study the science of Tawhid (Unity of God), and warned them not to be ignorant of it nor to blindly follow others. This group began to ask the common people about what they believed and burdened them with having to know the correct answer. They may have found people who couldn’t answer properly, or refused to respond, or were ignorant of an important part of the Faith. They even assumed people were attacking the Faith even when they did not, and called them ignorant or unbelievers. Then they began to spread the news that corruption has appeared in the faith of the common people. Their solution was to require the common people to study the faith in their format, using their phrases and the method of the Mutakallimun. It became known among the common people that whoever did not study Tawhid under their system was an unbeliever... They did not stop there, but they attacked the jurists and scholars of their day... the Shehu not only wrote over fifty works in refutation of this group, but he also confronted and debated them bringing

\textsuperscript{314} Uthman ibn Fudi, Kitab Tanbih al-Talaba ‘ala anna Allah Ma’ruf bil-Fitra (Instruction to the Students that Allah is Known to People, Naturally), Centre for Islamic Studies (C.I.S.), University of Sokoto, 3.

\textsuperscript{315} Shaykh al-Hasan al-Yusi (1631-1691) was a famous scholar of Morocco (Middle Atlas) who responded to a group of 'Ulamā from Sijilmasa who anathematised the common people on the basis of their inability to explain the unity of God on the basis of 'ilm al-kalām. Al-Yusi regarded this position as extremism and wrote Al-Muhādrāt (The Lectures).
forth the reality and the truth.\textsuperscript{316}

The actual, intended identity of this group of extremist Mutakallimūn has not been clearly pointed out in the available literature of the Shehu or his contemporary scholars until the present. M.A. Al Hajj thought that they were those 'Ulamā who had vested interest in preserving the established order. They were denounced as 'Ulamā al-Sū (venal scholars) by the Shehu and were motivated by personal, opportunistic intentions.\textsuperscript{317} Ahmad Kani divided the group into three categories: the fanatics who anathematized the laymen on the basis of scholastic theology, the venal scholars who tried to justify political corruption, immorality, and all sorts of evil, and those who placed themselves as the sole arbiters of religious practice and social behaviour.\textsuperscript{318} F.H. El-Masri did not connect the Mutakallimūn to the government, but thought that they were mostly young students (referred to as talaba) who emerged in the context of the current wave of renewal.\textsuperscript{319}

Current research suggests that the Mutakallimūn, in the Shehu's opinion, were not limited to Hausaland nor of contemporary origin. Louis Brenner, in a recent study, felt that the Shehu was describing the inheritors of an Islamic tradition

\textsuperscript{316}Muhammad Bello, \textit{Infāq al-Maisur}, 68, 69.


\textsuperscript{318}A.M. Kani, \textit{Intellectual Origin}, 62

\textsuperscript{319}El Masri, \textit{Bayan Wujub al Hijra}, 20.

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dating back to the writings of the fifteenth-century Algerian
scholar Muhammad ibn Yusuf Al-Sanusi (d.1486 C.E.) who wrote a
short treatise known as Al-‘Aqīda al-Sughra. This small book had
an enormous effect on Islamic theological thought in north and
west Africa by simplifying complex theological issues and
focusing on the obligations of the common Muslim and the related
question of who was in a state of Islam. It gained great prestige
when it was commented on by Shaykh Aḥmad Baba al-Timbukti (d.
1627 C.E.) and later Muhammad ibn Aḥmad Baghayogho al-Wangari (d.
1655 C.E.). By the nineteenth century, it had been translated
into Fulfulde, in which it was known as Kabbe, and was being
taught by Fulfulde speakers from Futa Jallon in the west to
Baghrimi in the east.320 Brenner speculated that advocates of
these doctrines known as Kabbenkoobe and persons of similar
orientation were the group in question. He objected to Al-Hajj’s
allusion to venal scholars and their possible association with
the Hausa kings, stating that the primary sources did not
substantiate this claim.321

All of these well founded speculations and the writings of
the Shehu suggest that this group represented a trend in Islamic
theological thinking in nineteenth-century Hausaland that
appeared amongst the scholars and the students, whether they were
the Fulfulde speaking Kabbenkoobe or other 'Ulama from the Hausa

320 Louis Brenner, "Muslim Thought in Eighteenth-Century West
Africa: The Case of Shaykh Uthman b. Fudi", in Nehemiah Levtzion,
Eighteenth-Century Renewal, 44-46.

321 Ibid., 44.
or the Tuareg. The Shehu did not specify the language or identity of his opposition but divided them into categories and countered their ideas.

In his work *Nasā‘ih al-Umma al-Muhammadīyya*, the Shehu stressed the importance of the scholar’s intentions for entering into scholarly debate and discourse. He emphasized that the correct intention is not to exploit the weaknesses of people or to expose their mistakes but to give sincere advice. He warned scholars and students against anathematizing people without a solid basis, saying:

> You should know that we do not anathematise anyone except by means of a passage of the Quran, a passage from a Hadith Mutawātir, or the Consensus of the scholars (Ijmā’). This proof should verify that the statement in question can only come from a disbeliever.\(^ {323} \)

The Shehu divided the extremist scholars and students into four major categories. He stated:

> There are four Satanic factions that have appeared in our Sudanic lands. The first is a faction that denies, fundamentally, the existence of disbelief in our Sudanic lands. The second faction considers people to be disbelievers based on their beliefs. The third faction considers people to be disbelievers based on committing sins. The fourth faction is made up of the followers of blameworthy customs. \(^ {324} \)

**The First Faction**

The first faction of scholars and students refused to even

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\(^ {322} \) This is a saying of the Prophet Muhammad which is authentic and reported by a large number of reliable Sahaba (companions of the Prophet). It is considered to be on the highest level of authenticity by the scholars of Hadith.


\(^ {324} \) Ibid., 1.
recognize the existence of Kufr (disbelief) in Hausaland. They considered all of the people in the region to be Muslims even if they clung on to polytheistic customs, like the veneration of stones, trees, and sacred places. The Shehu declared that if the reader had the least amount of intelligence and reason he could see the folly of this argument, for there were groups of people who never entered into Islam in Hausaland and could not be considered believers.  

325 He constantly referred to this faction with contemptuous terms such as juhhal (ignorant people), aghbiya (stupid people), and dullal (lost ones). The usage of such offensive terminology for scholars shows the depth of the feeling felt by the Shehu, whose language was usually very academic and unemotional.

The Second Faction

This faction, according to the Shehu, was the group who anathematised the common Muslims on the basis of their not learning the religion and the methods of debating and defending it from the books of the Mutakallimûn.  

326 He declared:

...there has appeared in these, our Sudannic lands, a group of talaba who accuse the ordinary Muslims of unbelief, and who say that anyone who does not read the books of 'Ilm al-kalâm is an unbeliever. Nothing but delusion has convinced them of that. The spurious argument which led them to that (conclusion) is based upon what they found in the books of 'Ilm al-kalâm to the effect that whoever believes such and such is an unbeliever. They have a low opinion of the beliefs of the ordinary Muslim and they accuse them of unbelief because (they claim) that the faith which they hold

325 Ibid., 4. See, also, Chapter 5 (above) for a detailed analysis of un-Islamic customs in Hausaland.

326 Ibid., 9.
in their hearts is far from what is found in the books of 'Ilm al-kalām.\textsuperscript{327}

These scholars and students whom the Shehu, throughout his writings, referred to as talaba represented the trend of extremism influenced by the writings of Al-Sanusi. The Shehu took great care in defining their mistakes and refuting their arguments. He explained that the authentic scholars of the past (al-Salaf al-Sālih) did not learn the philosophy of 'Ilm al-kalām in order to enter into disputes or disprove the faith of any person. They investigated this knowledge to counter the people who were using philosophy to attack Islam.\textsuperscript{328} The problem with the present day scholars and students, he argued, could be summed up with the following:

Whoever reflects on this question should know that the danger of falling into anathematization surrounds the students who study under a teacher who learned from the books of 'Ilm al-kalām without being aware of the true nature of affairs. He teaches them that the rule of Islamic law is based on superficial matters.\textsuperscript{329}

The Shehu, then, compiled a work which proved that Shaykh Al-Sanusi had changed his views after writing his first book and accepted the approved position of the Sunni scholars, of not

\textsuperscript{327}`Uthmān ibn Fūdī, Mawādi' awhām al-talaba fī kutub 'ilm al kalām li-'ulamā' al milla, (University of Ibadan, MS 82/119), translation found in Louis Brenner, The Case of Shaykh Uthman B. Fudi, 44.


\textsuperscript{329}`Uthman ibn Fudi, Kitab Irshad, 25.

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anathematising any Muslim for not learning the theories of 'Ilm al-kalām. In a later treatise written in 1810 C.E. called Hisn al-Ifrāh min Juyūsh al-Awhām, the Shehu summarized his rebuttal of the Mutakallimūn by saying,

...This argument is false and illusory according to the Ijmā' (consensus of scholars). The Imam, exceptional scholar and Jurist Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Qununi (d.1375 C.E.) stated in his Sharh al-'Umdah lil-Nasafi (the Explanation of the Support of Al-Nasafi), "Their school of thought (al-Mutakallimūn) is proven false by the fact that the Prophet Muhammad did not do such a thing in his time, nor did Abu Bakr Al-Ṣiddiq during al-Riddah. Moreover, Umar did not demand this during his caliphate, even when he conquered Iraq and was confronted by the Zātīt and the Anbaṭ people who were known for their ignorance and lack of understanding. As a matter of fact none of the companions of the Prophet or his successors till the present day have ever made such a demand."

The Third Faction

The third faction, took the position of anathematising Muslims for committing major sins, such as women taking off their veils, men marrying more than four wives, or people neglecting the orphans. This belief was considered extremely dangerous by the Shehu who openly condemned its purveyors and linked them to the Kharijījītīs who anathematised Muslims and consigned them to

330 F.H. El-Masri, Bayān Wujūb al-Hijra, 20. This treatise of Shehu known as Rujū' al-shaykh al-Sanusi 'an al-tashdīd ilā al-taglīd was in the possession of El Masri at the time of the writing of his book, Bayān Wujūb al-Hijra in 1978 A.D. Copies can now be found at SHB, CAD-591, NHRS-151/2.

331 During the caliphate of Abu Bakr, just prior to the death of the Prophet Muhammad, a large number of Arab tribes especially those near Yamamah in central Arabia, apostasized and refused to pay zakat (the annual poor due tax). This general rebellion or apostation was known as Al-Ridda.

eternal punishment in the fire of hell for committing even minor sins. It appears that this brand of takfīr or anathāmetisation was imported into Hausaland by the Shehu’s teacher Shaykh Jibrīl ibn ‘Umar who, according to El-Masri, obtained ijāza from the Shafi‘ī lexicographer and scholar, Muhammad al-Murtaḍā al-Wāsiṭī al-Zābīdī (1732-91 C.E.) in Cairo on his way back from his second Pilgrimage to Mecca in the late 1770’s. Shaykh Jibrīl transferred his understanding to the Shehu through direct teaching and poetic correspondence which was carried by the Shehu’s brother Abdullahi, who spent a longer time (at that point) with Shaykh Jibrīl. The Shehu respectfully corrected his teacher and Shaykh, by writing:

I say to the apparent understanding of the words of the Shaykh (Jibrīl)... "that anyone who commits a major sin is a disbeliever (kāfir) even if he does not consider his action to be lawful. Also, to leave the Sharia, change Islamic laws, or imitate the actions of forefathers in their former state of ignorance is disbelief according to Ijmā‘." - This is Sharia that I am not aware of... therefore I have restricted anathāmetisation to ‘legalization of sins’. Perhaps the Shaykh has a position in this matter that we have not come across, for he has been an enormous, well fortified sea of knowledge in restricting anathāmetisation to the legalization of sins. It is also well known in the school of Sunni thought that nobody can be accused of disbelief in the committing of sin that is considered to be an obscenity, according to the Quran and the Sunna, except when it is accompanied with polytheism, or knowingly made legal.

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335 ‘Uthmān ibn Fūdī, Shifā’ al-Ghalīl fīmā ashkala min Shaykhī Shūyukhīnā Jibrīl (Curing the Ill-will that has issued from the Words of our Leading Teacher, Jibrīl), (N.H.R.S., J.M. 1/13), 341-347, Idem., Nasā’īh al-Umma al-Muhammadīyya, 22.
Throughout this very sensitive criticism and rectification, both the Shehu and Abdullahi, in his poetry 336, were very careful to openly praise Shaykh Jibril for his valuable contribution to Islam in the Western Sudan and his shining example of courage and sincerity. They also separated that which was understood from Shaykh Jibril's words from his actual practice. The Shehu stated:

The Shaykh (Jibril) was motivated to do what he did by great compassion for the Muslim Umma. The proof of the fact that the Shaykh did not actually consider Muslims who commit sins as disbelievers but was just being harsh and strict, is the fact that he involved himself in the marriages of these people, ate their meat, and had other dealings with them. If he had considered them to be disbelievers, he would not have involved himself with them at all.337

He then warned his followers not to misinterpret his words, saying:

My Brethren, beware of developing suspicion about this blessed Shaykh. Do not misconstrue what I have said in opposing his words. You should not think that I am censuring him...I only opposed him in order to give sound advice to the Muslims.338

The Fourth Faction

The last faction was the group who, according to the Shehu, were following the blameworthy customs that they found their parents, leaders, and Shaykhs involved in. They were not in the habit of making repentance for following these customs nor

336See Abdullahi ibn Füdi, Tazvîn al-Waragât, 90-93.
338Ibid., 26.
recognizing their faults. Their condition was objectionable and totally false, the Shehu concluded. Their customs were numerous but customs alone should never supersede the Sharia or the Ijma'.\(^\text{339}\) He listed as some of the evil customs: entering homes without permission, women not covering themselves in front of their husband's brothers, men and women of marriageable status going out unaccompanied, marriage parties and other ceremonies followed by corrupt practices, refusing to give inheritance to wives or any female member of the family, and bowing and humiliating oneself in greeting a superior person.\(^\text{340}\)

Again, the Shehu showed that he was very sensitive to the complicated issues of Islamic jurisprudence that were being debated in Hausaland. He stressed that those who carried out these acts were to be considered fāṣiq (a disobedient sinner) unless they were legalizing their actions or trying to bring ridicule to Islamic Sharia.\(^\text{341}\)

**Conclusion**

In concluding his analysis of the weaknesses and deviations of the scholars of Hausaland, the Shehu declared that their greatest spiritual sickness was hubb ul-dunyā (loving the life of this world). He felt that the essence of opposing these groups was to follow the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad. He summarized very precisely how to reverse their ways and ideas by saying:

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\(^{339}\)Ibid., 29.

\(^{340}\)Ibid., 40-52.

\(^{341}\)Ibid., 51.
Opposing the first faction is carried out by anathematising those who rule the Sharia with their disbelief, either by not having entered into Islam or exposing their disbelief in word or deed. Opposing the second faction is carried out by not anathematising Muslims based on their beliefs unless disbelief appears in their words or actions. Opposing the third faction is carried out by not anathematising Muslims based on their sins. Opposing the fourth group is carried out by leaving all of the blameworthy customs.  

The Shehu's Guidance to Scholars and Students

One of the Shehu's greatest contributions in bringing about a profound change in the status of scholars and scholarship in eighteenth and nineteenth century Hausaland was to re-define the concept of an authentic Islamic scholar and provide the 'Ulama with the intellectual tools to criticize their own condition. By reforming the scholars, the Shehu intended to not only weed out the corrupt elements among them, but also bring about the transformation of the whole society. Most of his writings during this formative period contained a section devoted to the methodology of change, especially from within the individual. Real change, for the Shehu, had to come about initially within the 'Ulama who, by virtue of their position as interpreters of Islamic law, could rapidly bring about change in the masses of the people. Of the importance of the condition of the 'Ulama, he wrote directly to his scholarly brethren saying:

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342 Ibid., 62.

343 Shehu's use of the terms 'Ulama (scholars) and Tullab (students) are distinct in some cases and interchangeable in other cases. In this analysis, they are both regarded as a part of the same distinct scholarly class in Hausaland.
O my Brother, know that the well being of the community is connected to the well being of its scholars. The corruption of the community is connected to the corruption of its scholars.\footnote{Uthmān ibn Fūdi, Manhai al-‘Abīdīn, translated by Professor M.S. El-Garh, (C.A.D./Institute of African Studies: University of Ibadan, 7, no. 1, 2, December, 1971), 29. This work was based on the writings of the famous Jurist al-Ḥarīth al-Muḥāsibī (d. 343 A.H.).}

In his treatise, Manhai al-‘Abīdīn, the Shehu attempted to outline some of the key factors that lead to the corruption of the character of the Ulāmā and the solutions needed to effect a lasting change. In his distinct method of confronting real worldly problems using the language and style of Islamic scholarship, he focused on key weaknesses in the human personality which would hinder the development of a totally committed Islamic scholar, mystic, or leader. This kind of critical analysis and resolution shows that the Shehu’s concept of transformation was not superficial or politically motivated at this time. He was confronting the injustices in society from the roots of the problem which, if transformed, would affect the entire structure.

The Danger of Great Wealth and Position

As previously mentioned, many of the scholars (Mallamai) had become so close to the rich and powerful that they were actually part of the ruling class of Hausaland in the eighteenth century. They benefitted from the exploitation and taxation of the poor and either shielded the ruling class with religious rationalizations, or turned their backs to injustice in the name
of Islamic other-worldliness. The Shehu, whose religious training and family tradition placed him outside of the direct royal sphere of influence, was trying to foster independence of personality in the ‘Ulama and dependence on the Creator. He wrote:

O my Brother, I warn you against amassing wealth to exceed others. You should stick to what is sufficient of the permissible things and then consume it with the intention of serving (Allah)...The Companions of the Prophet Muhammad used to inherit legal wealth and then leave it in fear that it would corrupt their hearts.

O my Brother, if the collection of wealth for the purpose of philanthropic deeds had been better than forsaking that wealth, nobody would have surpassed Muhammad (the Prophet) in this virtue. 345

O my Brother, Satan suffers prolonged grief when obedience to Allah is carried out. Satan has his schemes. He quietly appeals through the love of praise, glorification, and ostentation; the love of high positions; and the following of one’s passions. So if you are tried through praise and recommendation, do not accept it. This is harmful to the religion. 347

Wealth was considered, by the Shehu, to be a means of fulfilling earthly needs and responsibility, but not an object of life. Shehu seemed to be advising the ‘Ulama to remain aloof from the struggle or desire for wealth in order to be protected from corruption. In order to institute Islamic injunctions and not fall victim to bribery or fear of poverty, as many of the scholars of Hausaland appear to have done, the sincere scholar,

345The Prophet Muhammad was known to have given away all of his wealth and never maintained more than his bare necessities.

346‘Uthman ibn Füdi, Manhaj al-‘Abidin, 30.

347Ibid., 32.
in the eyes of Shehu, would have to shun the temptations of the ruling class and seek comfort and ultimate pleasure in the life after death. This outlook would foster a kind of independence in the scholars and enable them to make decisions based purely on the texts of the Sharia and not the necessities of the particular time that they found themselves living in.

The Vice of Praise

In the domain of the ruling class, praise and exultation played an integral role in seeking favour with people in powerful positions or gaining control over the vain and the haughty. Poets and praise singers were part of the royal entourage and allegiance was often displayed by acts of open self humiliation. The Shehu's advice to the 'Ulama was to distance themselves from anything that falsely raised their status or inflated their feelings of self worth. He stated:

O my Brother, if people feel satisfied by the words of praise do not yourself feel satisfied with them. Be afraid of praise since it has a sweetness which rises to the heart and only a few are safe from it, for surely there are amongst people those who perform their deeds for the sake of Allah not desiring by their deeds any but Him. But then, when their virtuous deeds become apparent and they are praised for them and honoured, Satan causes them to taste some sweetness (of that praise).

O my Brother, if you are tested by the sweetness of praise, struggle to refute that from your heart by hating it and by genuine fear of it...

O my Brother, it is unbecoming of the mind to rejoice at anything tied to this world, so how can one rejoice at vain praise?...Do not think that you are worthy of praise, lest you cause yourself to perish and the blessings will go away from you and your covers will break open and your hidden
shames will become apparent. 348

The Shehu, in the language of Islamic scholarship, was giving his followers a profound lesson in the dangers of leadership. Praise and glorification have always been used as a means of control over individuals who fall victim for their false sense of security. The Shehu wanted his followers to concentrate on the cause and the ultimate goal of their journey in life. He was asking his people to focus on the Creator and not the rewards of this world. They would then be able to focus on instituting Islam in their lives instead of gaining a reputation or a position in the ruling class.

Obstinacy and Unnecessary Disagreements

One of the great obstacles in the path of intellectual progress and development throughout the Muslim world was the overemphasis on the differences between the schools of Islamic philosophical and legal thought. The Shehu’s use of sources favoured those scholars who took a liberal, inclusive approach to Orthodox Islamic thought. He tried to mould the kind of personality that would be emotionally and intellectually ready for new ideas or different Islamic methods of confronting issues. The conflict of different views would create challenges and fertilize one another. In this regard, he stated:

O my Brother, I warn you against obstinacy, for there is no good in it and all types of evil are assembled in it. Nothing is more despicable in the sight of Allah than obstinacy.

348Ibid., 45, 46.
O my Brother, the types of knowledge and worship and all that with which we try to approach Allah, may he be exalted, are plenty. The sensible person occupies himself with that which Allah has imposed on his heart, and his limbs and in the knowledge of piety and all the apparent and hidden conditions and in working in goodwill and in sincerity of action.

O my Brother, I warn you against searching about for points of disagreement. Among the people before us were brothers who agreed on matters concerning Allah, but when they were tested by searching and digging deep (in these matters), they became different sects. So leave delving into and searching into areas of disagreement. This is a deep sea in which many people before us have drowned. Hold fast to that which the Muslims have agreed on, concerning Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, His prescribed limits, the laws of His religion, and the limā' of the righteous predecessors (Salaf). In that there is truth and guidance. 349

Concerning the four major schools of Islamic jurisprudence, the Shehu wrote a treatise called *Hidayat-ul-Tullāb* (The Guidance of the Students) wherein he expounded on the basis of the founding of the schools and the acceptability of not being totally restricted to one particular way. He wrote:

All that was originally brought by the Lawgiver (the Prophet Muhammad), peace and blessings be upon him, is not defined as a school of thought of anyone. It is the Sharia. All Muslims must follow it as well as anyone who calls to it.350

Surely Allah, Most High, did not compel anyone to stick to a particular recognized school of thought. We have also not heard of any of the scholars of the Salaf commanding anyone to imitate a particular school...351

All of the great Jurists would not follow their own words if they contradicted the Quran, Sunna, or

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349Ibid., 33, 34.


351Ibid., 2.
The Shehu followed these statements with a highly sensitive discourse which encouraged the Muslims to follow a school of Islamic jurisprudence, but allowed them the flexibility to leave it if they found proof of a better position from another scholar. This type of approach to Islamic law had profound implications inside and outside of Hausaland. The Schools of Islamic jurisprudence, although having developed from very apolitical teachings taken from the leading jurists in the centuries after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, had become the basis for legal codes and Islamic lifestyle in the leading Islamic empires and caliphates of the world. The Hanafi school of thought had become the way of the people of Turkey, India, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. The Maliki school had become the way of the Muslims of Andalusia, North Africa, and the Sudanic lands. The Shafi'i school had become the way of the Muslims of Egypt, East Africa, Southern Arabia, and Southeast Asia. The Hanbali school had become the way of the Muslims of Syria, parts of Iraq, and the Arabian Peninsula. By breaking

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Ibid., 3.

Shaykh 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha‘rāni, one of Shehu's chief sources of Islamic thought was renowned for his liberal approach to different schools of law. He is reported to have embraced the Shafi'i school (while being Mālikī), but later became neutral. (A.M. Kani, Intellectual Origin, 54).

This school of thought was founded by Abu Hanifa al-Nu'mān ibn Thābit ibn Zuta (700-767 C.E.)

The school of thought founded by Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d.855 C.E.)
down the barriers of the school of thought, the Shehu was also breaking down nationalism which had developed around the application of Islam. He was also preparing his followers to make Hijra to other lands, if necessary, for they would be flexible enough to appreciate other applications of Islam and could adjust to new environments.

The Shehu was very careful to never refute his school of thought and he warned his followers to be careful not to follow a scholar into a decision that contradicted the established sources of law.\textsuperscript{356}

\textit{Self Criticism}

The Shehu's constant reminder throughout his writings in the formative period was that change begins from within the individual. The ‘Ulama, before anyone else should be on constant personal vigil and ready to correct any faults that manifested from their actions. In this respect he wrote:

O my Brother, when people are filled with anger against the one who speaks ill of them, be not like them. Struggle to train yourself to accept criticism with satisfaction, in spite of the dislike and bitterness which naturally rises to the heart and from which only few are safe.

Harken, O my brother, to that which is hidden in the souls. Do you find sadness at the word of praise like that which you find at the word of blame? Do you find anger against he who speaks well of you like you find against he who speaks ill of you?...

O my Brother, the truth of belief will never be complete until he who blames you and he who praises you are equal in your judgement at the time of claiming their rights. So be satisfied with the blame and be satisfied with the one who criticises. Be merciful to him and say special prayers

\textsuperscript{356}Uthmân ibn Füdi, \textit{Hidâyat-ul-Tullāb}, 4-6.

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for him and respond to his needs if you are truthful. 357

The Shehu must have realized that to bring about meaningful change in the Ulama and then in the society would require strong criticism and self analysis. He, consequently, ended this treatise by giving his readers a detailed prescription for handling criticism and controlling pride and the need to be praised.

Correcting Misconceptions

In his highly informative work, Hisn al-Ifhām, the Shehu summarized some of the chief areas of misunderstanding that had to be corrected in order to bring about a revival of Islamic consciousness. He challenged the Ulama to confront their weaknesses and stop making excuses. The following are a few of the most relevant areas that he covered 358:

And among their misconceptions is that some of them have attributed the inability to accomplish to an act of dependence on Allah.

And among their misconceptions is that some of them have attributed the love of leadership to the love of calling to Allah.

And among their misconceptions is that some of them have attributed exaggeration to Ijtihād. 359

And among their misconceptions is that some of them have attributed humiliation to forgiveness.

And among their misconceptions is that some of them have attributed wastefulness to generosity.

357 Uthmān ibn Fudī, Hidāyat-ul-tullāb, 47.

358 In each case Shehu wrote that each practice was false according to the Ijma’.

359 Uthmān ibn Fudī, Hisn al-Ifhām, 122.
And among their misconceptions is that some of them have attributed arrogance to dignity. \footnote{360}{Ibid., 123.}

And among their misconceptions is that some of them have attributed fear to gentleness.

And among their misconceptions is that some of them have attributed bribery to gift giving. \footnote{361}{Ibid., 124.}

The Shehu was clearly delving into the hidden areas of the psyche of the Ulama in order to challenge the very essence of all that they had shielded themselves with in order to maintain their status quo. He appeared to be focusing on scholars who were under the control of the ruling class. Inability, love of leadership, exaggeration, humiliation, wastefulness, arrogance, fear, and bribery were some of the qualities of subjugated scholars who served rulers known to imposed high taxes on their subjects yet wanted to be accepted as Muslims. Such appeared to be the case in Hausaland where independent thinking, speaking out, shunning bribery and wealth were not qualities that would endear the scholar to the ruling class.

This kind of language was intense and could be highly offensive for well established court scholars. The Shehu, apparently, wanted to bring about radical change and produce the type of leadership that would be able to confront the authorities and the un-Islamic customs that had become acceptable to society.

The Sins of the Heart

The Shehu’s prescription for revival of the scholarly
spirit of the *al-Salaf al-Sālih* did not stop at inward misconceptions but penetrated the innermost sanctuary of the individual, the heart. He advised the scholars to purify their hearts saying,

O my Brother, when people avoid overt sins only, you should examine very carefully the sins of the heart, for those are the ones that bring perdition. Amongst those are feelings of security and despair, belittling of sin, delaying of repentance, persistence in disobedience, dissimulation, ostentation and pride, love for the adornment of this world, envying in wealth and position, disdain at appearing humble..., despising the masses, glorifying and beseeching the rich while pushing away and disdainfully treating the poor, envy, hatred, and suspicion of people, and eavesdropping and treachery. 362

Here, the Shehu paid particular attention to keeping his connection to the masses of the people. He warned his students of not only the dangers of ostentation, pride, and the love of the adornment of the world, but also the dangers of disdain at appearing humble, despising the masses, and flattering the rich while oppressing the poor. Al-Maghili had constantly repeated in his *Taj*, "Moreover, the height of affliction is the isolation of the ruler from the subjects." The Shehu seemed intent on creating the type of leadership that would not fall into this trap. He did not restrict himself in his teaching to the scholarly class as did many of his peers, but he tried to disseminate his teachings among the masses of the people of Hausaland. He translated many of his Arabic works into Hausa, Fulfulde and other local languages and encouraged the common people to seek knowledge of their faith while staying away from bad customs and ignorant


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behaviour. In his Fulfulde poem, *Datal Janna* (The Path to Paradise) which was a work of the same title and content as his Arabic work *Kitāb Tarīq al-Janna*, the Shehu taught the common people the purity of belief and urged them to put the basic fundamentals of Islam into their lives. The following is a portion of this poem:

Kulol Allahu tokkugo dum O Umri
He accugo dum O harmini renu haddi
Mo tokkayi wakkatije fu bo’catako
Ibadajiji madum fu yo guddi

The fear of Allah is to obey His command
And avoid what He forbids (and) observe the divine law
He who does not observe the prescribed times of prayers
His religious practices will always remain incomplete. 363

The Shehu’s quest for inner purity and his insistence for inner purification amongst the ‘Ulama and the masses must have kept him pondering in one of the most problematic arenas of Islamic scholarship, the unification of the outward manifestations of Sharia in the lives of the Muslims and the inward manifestations of spiritualism and mystical experiences.

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The Shehu’s Concept of Islamic Mysticism

The Introduction of *Tasawwuf* in the Western Sudan


364 Scholars have differed in their understanding of the root of *Tasawwuf* (Sufism, Islamic mysticism). The most agreed upon etymology is that *Tasawwuf* is from the Arabic root of *Suf*, meaning wool. This denoted the wearing of woolen garments and devoting oneself to a life of mysticism. Other etymologies are as follows; Ahl al-Suffa, (devotees of a special area in the Prophet’s mosque in Medina, during his lifetime), Al-Saff al-Awwal (the first row in the prayer lines), Safwāna, a type of
Evidence of Islamic mysticism can be traced back to the practices of the Prophet Muhammad, himself, who was described in Islamic literature as being both a highly ascetic yet distinctly mundane leader. He left his followers a vast amount of oral tradition describing spiritual life and the knowledge of the unseen. His companions and the next generation disseminated his teachings throughout the known world. Some of these early Muslims focused on the affairs of State and the expansion of Islamic hegemony while others pursued the mystical path. Describing early Islamic mysticism (Tasawwuf), Ibn Khaldun wrote:

This is one of the religious sciences which were born in Islam. The way of the Sufi was regarded by the former Muslims and illustrious men (the Companions of the Prophet), the Successors and the generation which came after them, as the way of truth and salvation. To be assiduous in piety, to give up all else for Allah's sake, to turn away from worldly vanities, to renounce pleasure, wealth, and power, which are general objects of human ambition, to abandon society and to lead in seclusion, a life devoted solely to the service of Allah—these were fundamental principles of Sufism which prevailed among the Companions and the Muslims of olden times. When, however, in the second generation and afterwards, worldly tastes became widely spread, and men no longer shrank from such contamination, those who made piety their aim were distinguished by the title Sufi or Mutasawwif.  

Although Tasawwuf, as a distinct philosophical trend in Islam did not really consolidate itself until the last half of

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vegetable, Banu Sufa, a bedouin tribe, Safwat al-Kifä (a lock of hair on the nape of the neck), and Sufiya (passive form of I of the root, Safâ', to be purified). See Encyclopedia of Islam, edited by M. Houtsna, Wensink, H.A.R. Gibb, etc - vol. 14 (S-Z), Leyden, 1934), 681.

the ninth century A.D. after the caliphate of Al-Ma‘mūn (813-833 C.E.) in Iraq, the earliest significant presence of Tasawwuf in the Western Sudan appears to be at the end of the fifteenth century A.D. The Qādirīyyah order which had spread to North Africa and became established in Morocco by 1450 C.E., was spread into the Eastern Sahara by the Sanhaja and the Kel-Es-Sug. They dispersed into the desert and established Agades in the Ahir region as a stronghold for Tasawwuf. From Agades their influence penetrated the Niger region and eventually entered Hausaland.

In the Western Sudan, the Qādirīyyah order was introduced by the gadiriwah order founded by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī (d. 1166 C.E.) in Baghdad was the first tarīqa (order) to emerge in the Muslim world. Until then the path had been relatively undifferentiated, although groupings had formed around particular spiritual masters called tawā‘if. With al-Jilānī the tradition began in Sufism of looking back to a particular teacher and considering him as a watershed in method and doctrine. The Qādirīyyah is widespread from India to the Western Sudan and has incorporated a variety of expressions and practices. (The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam, 321).

Two groupings of Berber speaking Tuaregs, often called īnīlīsmen. Some of the Kel-Es-Sug claimed Maghribī Shurafā (Prophetic nobility) descent.

Mervyn Hiskett, Development of Islam, 244-246.
Kunta, a powerful, saintly family of Zawāya clerics.\textsuperscript{370}

According to a claim in the silsila (chain of authority) of the Kunta, their ancestor, Sidi Aḥmad al-Bakkāʿi (d.approximately 1515 C.E.) was initiated into the Qadiriyyah order by Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm Al-Maghīli. The teachings then spread quietly among the followers of the Kunta and were later disseminated in the Middle Niger and beyond. Despite the dispersion of Qādiriyyah ideas in independent zawāya throughout the Western Sudan, it was not until the last half of the eighteenth century that this Tarīqa in its West African (Kunta) form became fully organized.\textsuperscript{371} Sidi Al-Mukhtar Al-Kabīr Al-Kunti (d.1811 C.E.) succeeded his master Sidi ʿAlī ibn al-Najīb in 1756/7 C.E. as the khalīfa of the Qādiriyyah of the Sahara. He, then developed his own spiritual formula of prayers (Al-Awrād al-Qadiriyyah al-Mukhtarīyyah) and consolidated the brotherhood by sending his emissaries throughout the Western Sahara, the Sahel, and farther inland to Futa Jallon and the Upper Niger.\textsuperscript{372} From the writings of the Kunta, it appears that the influence of Sidi al-Mukhtar extended over a vast portion of West Africa. His followers could be found throughout the entire region of Air (Ahir), and Katsina in the east, to Tuwat in Southern Algeria and Wadi Darʿa in Southern Morocco and to the south as far as


\textsuperscript{371}Ibid., 347.

\textsuperscript{372}Levtzion, Eighteenth-Century Renewal, 33, 34.
Sidi al-Mukhtar gathered the traditions of Shaykh ‘Abdul Qādir al-Jilānī and added his own prayers (ad‘iyya) and recitations. He developed his own approach to Tasawwuf and stressed the critical need for its study and dissemination. He emphasized the inner struggle for closeness to Allah which could be gained only through a Shaykh, but did not bind his disciples to one particular Shaykh or wirk (prayer formula). Among the most significant aspects of Sidi al-Mukhtar’s Tasawwuf was that he did not consider zuhd (asceticism) to be detachment from the world, but detachment of the heart from the need for the world. He encouraged his followers to increase their riches, as wealth was the cornerstone of dignity, authority, and respect. He also reconciled Tasawwuf with Fiqh, being a scholar of high repute himself, and was very careful to reject taqlid (blind adherence to one school of Islamic jurisprudence) and narrow thinking. 

The Impact of Tasawwuf on Hausaland and the Shehu

Despite the mention of Al-Maghili in the silsila of the Kunta clerics, there is no documented evidence to support his role in the first entrance of Tasawwuf in Hausaland. Furthermore, the extant writings of Al-Maghili to the leaders and scholars of the Western Sudan are primarily works of politics,

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373 A. A. Batran, An Introductory Note, 349.

374 Ibid., 348; Levtzion, Eighteenth-Century Renewal, 34; A. M. Kani, Life and Works of ‘Abd Al-Qādir, 94, 95.
administration, and jurisprudence.\textsuperscript{375} Al-Maghili, at that point in time, may have been more involved in laying a foundation for the existence of Islam as a state than in insuring the spiritual purity of the individual.

Solid evidence for the entrance of \textit{Tasawwuf} into Hausaland has not been found. It can be assumed that contact had been made before the eighteenth century, for the pilgrimage route across the savannah of the Western Sudan and the constant economic and academic interchange between the Muslim people (such as the \textit{Kunta} and the \textit{Ineslmen} clerics) would have given Borno and Hausaland exposure to this widely disseminated Islamic science. According to Hausa tradition, the \textit{Qādiriyyah} was established in Hausaland by Abdullahi Sikka, a scholar who lived around 1660-70 C.E. He had obtained the \textit{wird} in the \textit{Fezzan} and is said to have been a student of Shaykh Shams al-Dīn al-Nājīb ibn Muhammad of Anusamman, near Takedda. This meant that he was under the influence of the \textit{Inelsmen Qadiri} tradition.\textsuperscript{376}

Shaykh Jibrīl ibn 'Umar was initiated into the \textit{Qādiriyyah} order by Shaykh Muhammad al-Murtada al-Zabidi. He had also been initiated into the \textit{Khalwatiyyah} \textsuperscript{377} by accepting the \textit{wird} in

\textsuperscript{375}A.M. Kani, \textit{Life and Works of 'Abd Al Qadir}, 97.

\textsuperscript{376}Mervyn Hiskett, \textit{Development of Islam}, 246.

\textsuperscript{377}The name derives from \textit{khalwa} (a spiritual retreat). A widespread Sufi order that was founded by Shaykh 'Umar al-Khalwati (d. 1397 C.E.). The foundations of this order are considered to be voluntary hunger, silence, vigil, seclusion, \textit{dhikr} (invocation), meditation, maintaining a state of ritual purity, and binding one's heart to the spiritual master. In the 16th century it spread to Egypt and other parts of Muslim Africa. \textit{(The Concise}
from Ahmad al-Dardir (d. 1787 C.E.) in Cairo. It was Shaykh Jibril who initiated the Shehu and his brother ‘Abdullahi into the Qādiriyah order and later the Khalwatiyyah. This meant that not only did the Shehu come under the general influence of the Kunta teachings that were disseminating throughout the Western Sudan at that time, but he had a direct connection to the well established Middle Eastern orders through his Shaykh, Jibril who came out of the Agades tradition and made direct personal contact with the leading scholars of the heartland of the Muslim world.

The Shehu mentions Sidi al-Mukhtar in his al-Salāṣīl al-Qādiriyah (The Mystical Chains of Authority of the Qādiriyah) with great respect, saying:

> We have received this wīrd from many who have received it from Sidi al-Mukhtar. It is one of the most venerable awrād, in that it surpasses all others and its possessor will die in the best state no matter what he has done.

Despite the Shehu’s admiration for Sidi al-Mukhtar and Sidi’s open support for the cause of Shehu, the Shehu was

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Encyclopedia of Islam, 221).

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378Levtzion, Eighteenth-Century Renewal, 32.


380Muhammad Bello in his Infāq al-Maisur, reported one of Sidi al-Mukhtar’s students, Wāḥib al-Amawī, said: "One day the Shaykh (al-Mukhtar) appeared and said, " The complete saints today are three. One is an Arab who lives beyond Syria. His light is the light of La ilāha illa Allah (the shahāda). The other is a Fallati (Fulbe) in the lands of the Sudan, Uthmān ibn Fūdi. His light is the light of the seal of the Messenger of Allah which is on his left shoulder. The other one has the light of the heart of
not formally initiated into the Qādiriyah-Mukhtarivvah order
till 1812 C.E., when Shaykh Alfa Nuh ibn Tahir, a disciple of
Sidi al-Mukhtar and a mystic scholar of great repute formally
brought the wīrd to Hausaland. The Shehu's main early
connection to the knowledge of Tasawwuf came through Shaykh
Jibrīl whose militant approach to changing society, radiated
throughout all of his teachings.

Tasawwuf in this early formative period had not taken the
form of powerful Tariqas with their own ideology and social or
political goals. It appears to have been a spiritual methodology
for preparing scholars and initiates to face the difficulties of
life and the suffering of establishing Islamic values in society.
Shehu and his followers were not restricting themselves to one
set of prayers or one specific form of Tasawwuf. Despite this
flexibility, the Shehu was regarded as a Qādiri Sufi since his
spiritual bonds were expressed more closely with Shaykh al-Jilani
than any of the other Awlivā (saints). His mystical experience
with Shaykh al-Jilānī in 1794 C.E. was a turning point for his
career. The symbolic blessing of the Prophet Muhammad, himself,
through the auspices of Shaykh al-Jilānī who (as previously
mentioned) conferred on the Shehu, in a dream, objects indicative

\[\text{Infaq al-Maisur, 224.}\]

\[\text{A.A. Batran, An Introductory Note, 350.}\]

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of spiritual and moral authority, meant that it was through *Tasawwuf*, that Shehu and later his followers were spiritually strengthened and his decision to begin the jihad was officially endorsed.

*The Shehu’s Approach to Tasawwuf*

Throughout the writings of Shehu on *Tasawwuf*, the reader senses the sober cautiousness of a scholar of Sharia. The Shehu’s strong academic grounding in the Quran, the *Sunna*, and the mainstream Islamic sciences seemed to act as an anchor keeping him within the limits of the Islamic Orthodoxy. He continued to display his methodical, well documented style of clearly defining the subject matter, always leaving room for the scholar to apply the teachings to his particular circumstance, but being very particular to avoid the most controversial, vague areas (in this case—*Sufi* mystical philosophy). In defining the basis of *Tasawwuf* and its relationship with other forms of Islamic knowledge, the Shehu wrote:

> O my Brother, know that the types of knowledge that are compulsory upon you are three. The knowledge of *Tawhid*, the knowledge of Sharia, and the secret knowledge or the knowledge of the heart...The compulsory part of the knowledge of *Tawhid* is the amount needed to understand the basis of the religion...Concerning Sharia, you should have knowledge of everything that is mandatory for you to perform such as purification, fasting, prayer, etc... Concerning secret knowledge, you should know all that has been made compulsory or prohibited in gaining awareness of the greatness of Allah, sincerity, the right intentions,

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*382* The green mantle, the special turban, and the sword of truth.
integrity, and action.  

The Shehu defined the basis of *wilāya* (Sufi sainthood) as a state which was not out of the reach of the ordinary, knowledgeable, practising Muslim by saying:

> Know, my Brother, that the principles and conditions of *wilāya* are based on adhering to the Quran and the Sunna, leaving desires and *bid'a*, enhancing the respect for the Shaykhs, considering the rest of creation to be non-existent, persistence in reading the prescribed prayers (*awrād*), and leaving allowable concessions in religion.  

He, then quoted Sahl ibn 'Abdullah:

> Our principles for (*wilāya*) are based on six things, the Book of Allah and the Sunna of His Messenger, eating *halāl* (permissible foods), refraining from harming anyone, avoiding sins, repentance, and fulfilling obligations.  

In his treatise, *al-Tafrīqa*, the Shehu stated that the crucial factors in the discussion around *Tasawwuf* can be summarized in four parts:

1. Reminding the inner self of praiseworthy character and purifying it of blameworthy characteristics.
2. Purging the deeds and the general condition by purifying the inner self through good character and staying away from blameworthy characteristics.
3. Realizing this purity in the general state of the individual and his dealings.
4. Realizing the higher levels of spirituality and spiritual knowledge.

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383 Uthmān ibn Fūdī, *Kitāb Tarīq al-Janna min Asrār Kalām Abī Hāmid al-Ghazālī*, copies of this work can be found at Ko, NAK, and other institutions in Nigeria.

384 Uthmān ibn Fūdī, *Kitāb Usūl al-Wilāya* (printed with Hausa translation by the Ministry of Education of Northern Nigeria), 2. A copy can also be found in NAK and Kano (BU), 197.

385 Ibid., 3.

386 Uthmān ibn Fūdī, *al-Tafrīqa bayna 'Ilm al-Tasawwuf li‘l-Takhalluq wa ‘Ilm al-Tasawwuf li‘l-Taḥaqquq wa Madākhil Iblis* (The Difference between Sufi Knowledge for Character building and Sufi
He qualified the position of the *sufi* in relationship to the scholar of jurisprudence (*faqīh*) saying:

> The view of the *faqīh* is broader than the view of the *sufi* therefore the rejection or disapproval of the *sufi* by the *faqīh* is correct but the rejection of the *faqīh* by the *sufi* is incorrect.  

*Tasawwuf*, therefore, in the view of the Shehu was not a separate spiritual discipline that could be properly experienced or understood by itself. It was another level of knowledge within the broad framework of Islam. He divided *Tasawwuf* into two levels. The basic level was the character building and purifying stage which every Muslim should involve himself in (*Tasawwuf li'l-Takhalluq*). The next level was the stage of spiritual realization (*Tasawwuf li'l-Tahqquq*). This was reserved, according to the Shehu, for the students and scholars who had developed themselves to the point where they could benefit from a profound spiritual encounter.  

It must be emphasized here again that the Shehu was very careful in his writings on *Tasawwuf*, at any level, to avoid any area that he considered to be outside of the limits of Sharia.

Knowledge for Spiritual Realization and the Inroads of the Devil), (History Bureau Library, Sokoto, access no. 310), 3. This work, although recommended to the present author by Dr. Ahmad Muhammad Kani of Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto, Nigeria, was classified by Professor John Hunwick in his *The Central Sudan Before 1800: Biographies and Bibliographies* as a "Work of uncertain or doubtful attribution". Therefore, the statements taken from the text have been checked with the more clearly authentic works before being used in this thesis.

387Ibid., 2.


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Bid'a and Extremism in Tasawwuf

In his major work on Sunna and Bid'a, Ihvâ al-Sunna, the Shehu stressed that the practice of Tasawwuf should always be approached through the methods of the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad, and that all actions and prayer formulas should be verified through his example. The Shehu pointed out that true spirituality is realized through some of the following:

Everyone should follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad in all that they do in this area.

Awareness of Allah by practising all of the deeds of Islamic lifestyle, whether they be compulsory acts or optional.

Awareness of Allah by avoiding all of the prohibited actions whether they be minor or major. Also, avoidance of the undesirable actions...

Avoidance by the worshipper of thinking that he is better than anyone else, for he does not know how he will end his life.

And taking on all of the aspects of Iman (faith) which is... divided into more than sixty parts. 389

Bid'a, on the other hand, occurs when the practitioner of Tasawwuf does not use the Sunna as his guide, but involves himself in practices that are inconsistent with Islamic values. He listed some of them as follows:

Some of the people tie themselves up with iron or rope, or burn their bodies with fire in order to strengthen themselves through hardship. This is a prohibited innovation by Ijmâ' for it is harmful to the person.

Also, secluding oneself without having medical reasons is prohibited by the agreement of the scholars.

389 'Uthman ibn Fudi, Ihvâ al-Sunna, 270, 271.
Also, listening to music for spiritual upliftment with musical instruments that have been prohibited by the majority of the scholars is well known to be a prohibited innovation. 390

The Shehu was making a penetrating critical analysis of the degeneration of Tasawwuf in other parts of the Muslim world and trying to protect his followers from falling into it. According to The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam, "The Qâdiriyyah order in the Arab west was called the Jilâlah and its practice was marked by an intrusion of "folk" Sufism which resulted in the corruption of the hadra (sacred Sufi procession) into trance dancing, and an emphasis on unusual states of mind. These special states of mind were supposed to bring about prodigious feats but usually proved detrimental to any coherent spiritual development. Their ecstatic dancing was accompanied by flute and drum music and often performed in public." 391 The Shehu explained that these practices were not found in the Sunna and therefore should be avoided at all costs.

Following this "sober" approach to Sufi practices, the Shehu qualified his position by confirming his cautious acceptance of the unusual spiritual claims of the Awliva 392. He stated:

And among the Bid'â is the denial of the miracles of the Awliva. This is a prohibited innovation according

390 Uthmân ibn Fûdî, Ihyâ al-Sunna, 272-275.
392 Wali, plural Awliva, can also be defined as the friend of Allah, meaning the Muslim who has come close to Allah through his sincerity, prayers, or actions.
to the Ijma’. The learned people have even said that the denier of miracles may have a terrible end.

Also, if an unqualified person claims these miracles, it is a prohibited innovation according to the Ijma’. The learned people have even said that the one who makes these claims may have a terrible end.

Also, the one who looks into the books of kashf (illumination) and cannot even distinguish between a small ant and an elephant has committed a prohibited innovation.

Looking into the books of the people of kashf is not permissible except for the scholar who knows the Book of Allah and the Sunna of His Messenger. He will consequently, take from them what his reason leads him to and avoid that which is not clear. He will be saved from it and not practice it.

Another Bid’a is to act on spiritual inspiration or voices heard during spiritual illumination without subjecting them to the Book of Allah and the Sunna of His Messenger or the rules set up by the Salaf (orthodox scholars). This is a prohibited innovation according to the Ijma’.

Also, the claim that the wali has reached the level where he is no longer responsible to carry out the open practices of Islam. This is a prohibited innovation according to the Ijma’. 393

The Shehu’s guidelines were very much in line with his main sources Shaykh al-Ghazali, Shaykh Aḥmad al-Zarrouq, Shaykh al-Sha’rāni, Sidi al-Mukhtar, Shaykh Jibrīl ibn ‘Umar, etc. They were all known to have avoided the extreme, un-scholarly approach to Tasawwuf which relies more on dreams and personal inspiration than well founded Islamic reason and guidance. What is significant in the Shehu’s approach, however, is his all inclusive way of including the discussion of Tasawwuf with the discussion of other very mundane Islamic practices. He represents a clear, flowing balance between Sharia and Hagiqa (the Sufi term

393 ‘Uthman ibn Fudi, Ihya al-Sunna, 277.
for the inner reality). He also challenged the extreme elements in the Muslim world by condemning Islamic mysticism without Sharia and Sharia without spirituality. The following is an example of one of the many arguments that Shehu used to confirm his position:

...There is no Tasawwuf without Fiqh because you cannot know Allah’s external rules without it. There is no Fiqh without Tasawwuf for there is no consequence in Fiqh without true inclination (to Allah). And there can be neither of them without Iman (faith), for none of them are valid without it. Therefore, it was said, "Whoever practices Tasawwuf without understanding Fiqh has committed heresy, and whoever understands Fiqh but does not practice Tasawwuf has become a disobedient sinner, but whoever combines the both of them has reached the true reality (statement of Imam Malik ibn Anas). 394

The Shehu’s Practical Application of Tasawwuf

The Shehu endeavoured to present Tasawwuf in a practical, realistic manner by separating levels of spiritual involvement. The specialized level, Tasawwuf li’il-Tahagguq, did not appear, from his writings, to have been his major focus in the formative period. Reference to the system of Shaykh-Murid (master-disciple), in the Sufi sense, can be found in his writings such as al-Salâsil al-Dhahabiyya, al-Salâsil al-Qadiriyyah, Tabshîr al-Umma al-Ahmadiyya, and others. Contrary to his highly orthodox position concerning Bid’a and Sunna that is found in a number of his early writings, the Shehu entered into areas that would have been considered problematic to orthodox scholars of the Salafi approach to Islamic faith and jurisprudence such as Ibn

394 Uthmân ibn Fûdi, al-Tafrîqa, 2.
The Shehu endorsed the Qâdirî concepts of total submission to the Shaykh, transferral of spiritual power through sacred objects, and Tawassul. He believed that the awrâd of Shaykh al-Jilâni were sacred formulas that would unleash spiritual powers given to Shaykh al-Jilâni and the Awliya.

Despite these apparently, un-orthodox beliefs, the Shehu never claimed to reach any stage that implied the sūfî union with God, nor did he accept any of the fantastic claims that were being made around Hausaland concerning his spiritual achievements. His most oft repeated description of Tasawwuf was a system of purifying and controlling the lower self in order to achieve true sincerity and devotion to Allah. He once said:

The relationship of Tasawwuf to Islam is the relationship of the soul to the body. It is actually the sacred place of Ihsân (righteousness).

Ihsân, for the Shehu, was the essence of Tasawwuf. Every Muslim, especially those who were learned, should constantly wage an internal jihad (struggle) to defeat his lower self and establish an Islamic character. He wrote, as usual, in the

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395 For a detailed study of the Salafi critique of Tasawwuf, see Ibn Taymiyyah’s Furgân, previously mentioned.

396 Spiritual connection with Allah through the auspices of the Shaykh. This was considered Shirk (polytheism) by Ibn Taymiyyah, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1787 A.D.), and other Salafi (sometimes known as Wahhabi) scholars.

397 Uthmân ibn Fûdî, al-Salâsîl-al-Dhahabiyya, 26-30.

398 F. H. El-Masri, Bayân Wujûb al-Hijra, 5. It was also claimed that Shehu could fly, walk on water, and had become a qutb (pivot) upon which the universe rested.

399 Ibid., 2.
language of a scholar, but appeared to have been trying to develop a spiritually pure Muslim, prepared to take on the greater challenges of establishing Islamic lifestyle. He discussed concepts that were crucial factors in the interpersonal relations of people, and if viewed outside of a purely "religious" framework, represented the guidance of a scholar who was fully aware of the socio-psychological conditions of his times. In his works, 'Ulūm al-Mu'amala, 'Umdat al-'Ulama, and Shifā al-Nufūs, the Shehu categorized and defined the destructive evils of the self and the practical solutions for avoiding or curing them. Among the main types he mentioned were conceit, pride, anger, envy, and showing off.

Purification of the Heart from Conceit ('Ujb)

The Shehu viewed conceit to be one of the main evils that destroy the personality of the individual and ruin his relations with others. He stated:

Conceit is one of the blameworthy characteristics which is prohibited to have...It brings great harm, for it leads to pride, forgetting of sin, presumption about acts of worship, forgetting the blessings of Allah, self deception, feeling oblivious to the punishment of Allah, feeling falsely pure and special in the eyes of Allah, and feeling self justified by intellect, opinion, and

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405 Uthmān ibn Fūdi, Kitāb 'Ulūm al-Mu'amala (Zaria: Shina Commercial Press, a translation was done by 'Aisha 'Abd ar-Rahmān at-Tarjumāna, Handbook on Islam (England: J & P Weldon Ltd., 1978); Idem, Kitāb 'Umdat al-'Ulama, (N.A.K.); and Idem, Shifā al-Nufūs, translation found in Yakubu Yahaya Ibrahim, The Contribution of Shaykh 'Uthmān Ibn Fodi to the Field of Tasawwuf with reference to his Shifā al-Nufūs, M.A. dissertation, Bayero University, Kano, 1987. There are numerous other places in the writings of Shehu were reference is made to this area. These are the main works referred to in this thesis.
knowledge.\textsuperscript{401}

He divided conceit into two categories. The conceit about that which people achieve in life and the conceit about that which people have no power over (i.e. lineage, physical beauty, etc.). Regarding the cure, the Shehu wrote:

As far as its cure is concerned, know that the cure for each fault is its opposite. The cause of conceit lies in pure ignorance. The cure is recognition and knowledge which is exactly opposite to ignorance...You suppose that your actions came about through your own power, but where does your power come from? Action is only possible through existence, and through the existence of your knowledge, will, power, etc. All that is from Allah, not from you because He is the One who created power and then gave power to the will, set causes in motion, distributed obstacles, and facilitated action. One of the marvels is that you can be conceited about yourself, and yet you do not reflect on the generosity of Allah. \textsuperscript{402}

Purification of the Heart from Pride (Kibr)

The Shehu placed great emphasis on the understanding of the reality of pride and its danger. Some of the highlights of his long discourse on the subject are as follows:

Concerning the reality of pride, know that there is inward and outward pride. Inward pride is a characteristic within one's self and outward pride is that which appears through the limbs (Takabbur)...Its root is a feeling within which produces satisfaction and confidence at seeing yourself above the others who are being scorned...When the proud person exalts his own value in relationship to others, he scorns the one below him...If it is very extreme, he may refuse the other's service and not consider him worthy to stand in his presence...When the proud person teaches, he is rude to his students, looks down on them and rebukes them. ...He looks at the common people as if he was looking at donkeys...It is impossible to be humble, and humility is the first of the characteristics of those who truly fear

\textsuperscript{401}Uthmân ibn Fûdi, 'Ulûm al-Mu'âmala, 47.

\textsuperscript{402}Ibid., 49, 50.
Allah... It is impossible to remain truthful..., abandon envy, contain hatred..., offer friendly counsel... or accept good counsel while there is any self-importance in the person.  

The Shehu divided the cure into two parts, the knowledge cure and the action cure. He stressed that the knowledge cure was to know and recognise yourself and your Lord. People should reflect on the simplicity of their creation from nothing, to a tiny drop of sperm, and then to a full grown adult. They should also constantly remember that human existence is subject to great change. At any moment, a person could become hungry, thirsty, sick, or wounded. One should also reflect on how people desire objects and food which lead to their destruction, and often shun remedies which lead to their recovery from illness. Death is inevitable for all people and it leads to a reversion to an inanimate state from whence we originated. After all this, he wrote, "How can anyone whose state this is be arrogant? A moment of freedom from grief is better than arrogance." His action cure was to "humble yourself to others in a controlled unnatural manner until it becomes natural for you."  

Purification of the Heart from Anger (Ghadab)  

Regarding anger, the Shehu wrote:  

The essence of anger is boiling of the blood of the heart in seeking revenge. If a person is angry at someone lower than him, his blood expands and rises to the face, making it red. If he is angry at someone higher than him, his blood contracts from his outer skin to his heart and turns to sorrow. He, then, becomes pale. If he is uncertain of the  

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404 Ibid., 60, 61.
station of the other person, his blood stays between contraction and expansion.  

The Shehu put anger into three categories. The first was insufficient anger, which leads to the lack of feeling and the inability to even protest Haram (prohibited things). The second and most serious was excessive anger, which could affect a person so severely that he becomes blind and deaf to those around him. In this case, anger could lead to a change of colour, intense shaking of the extremities, garbled speech, foaming at the mouth, and an ugly countenance. It causes the angry person to speak with insulting language, and obscenity such that rational people are ashamed to use. It causes the angry person to strike, tear, maim, or kill if he is able to. If the object of the excessive anger departs, it may cause the angry person to turn on himself, slapping his face, tearing his clothes, or harming his body. Its effect on the heart is to fill the angry person with resentment, and envy, and cause him to divulge secrets and harm others in despicable fashion. The third kind of anger was that which was balanced. For the Shehu, this was praiseworthy, for the person was guided by his intellect and his religion and only became moderately angry when the Sharia required.

The Shehu’s knowledge cure for anger was to reflect on the virtues of controlling anger, to reflect on the results of anger in this life, to reflect on the ugliness of your form when angry,

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405 Ibid., 63; Idem, Shifā al-Nufūs, 85, 86.
406 Ibid., 64-66; Idem, Shifā al-Nufūs, 86-89.
to reflect on the cause of seeking revenge, and to fear the punishment of Allah in the next life. His action cure was to seek refuge in Allah from the devil at the time of anger, sit down if you are standing, lie down if you are sitting, and perform ablution (wudu) or take a complete bath (ghusl), if necessary.  

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Purification of the Heart from Envy (Hasad)

The Shehu considered Hasad to be one of the most serious diseases of the heart which had to be eradicated in order to develop proper relations among people. He stated:

Concerning its reality, know that envy derives only from blessings. When Allah bestows a blessing on your brother, it can produce in you one of two conditions. One is that you despise the blessing and want it to be taken away. This condition is called envy...The other condition is that you do not want the blessing to be taken away from him, but you desire the same blessing for yourself. This is deeming someone to be enviable. Envy is anger at Allah’s preference for one person over another.”

The knowledge cure, for the Shehu, was to recognize that envy is only harmful to the envier. The envied person is raised in rank in the sight of Allah and cannot be harmed by mere envy alone. The envier will always be filled with grief and sorrow and will be punished in the next life. The action cure was to make yourself do the opposite of what the envy demanded. If the envy makes you arrogant, than be humble. If the envy makes you withhold giving to others, than you should increase in giving.

407Ibid., 67, 68; Idem, Shifa al-Nufus, 89, 90.

408Ibid., 68, 69; Idem, Shifa al-Nufus, 90.
Purification of the Heart from Showing Off (Riyā')

The Shehu explained in his writings that riya comes from the Arabic (ru'vā), to see. Its essence was the seeking of a high station in the hearts of people by "showing off". Riyā, for the Shehu, was one of the most elusive and dangerous qualities of a diseased heart for, it could be extremely subtle. It appears through showing off with the body, with clothing or appearance, with words or oratory, with actions, especially religious practices like salah and hajj, or just by associating oneself with people of high rank in order to win favour from them.

The cure, the Shehu explained, was to recognize that Riyā' was part of a person's nature from childhood. It has to be attacked from the roots. Love of praise, fear of criticism, and greed for the property of others, all have to be driven out of the heart. The action cure is to repel it immediately, whenever it comes to mind, and to force oneself to conceal acts of worship until the heart is content with only Allah knowing that they have been done.410

Spiritual Remedies

The Shehu, using the framework of Islamic theology, was trying to bring about the reformation of the character and the social dealings of his followers and then, society. His analysis of the above-mentioned diseases of the heart and others that he

409Ibid., 72, 73; Idem, Shifā al-Nufūs, 94-98.
410Ibid., 74-77; Idem, Shifā al-Nufūs, 104-106
listed, such as miserliness, love of position, false hope, suspicion, and despair, were so penetrating that they could probably apply to people of other faiths and nations as well. His spiritual remedies centred around the consciousness of God (taqwa), repentance (tauba), dependence on Allah (tawakkul), contentment (rida), patience (sabr), fear of the wrath of Allah (khauf), hope in the mercy of Allah (rajā), and abstinence (zuhd). In his treatise, al-Tafriga, the Shehu summarized the main areas of weakness in people through which Iblis (Lucifer) could enter the heart of a Muslim and corrupt his character. They were as follows:

1. Covetousness and jealousy.
2. Anger and uncontrolled desires.
3. Greed and ambition
4. Excessive love of food and drink.
5. Haste, except in necessary acts of worship.
6. Wealth, if it exceeds the amount needed to fulfil basic needs.
7. Fanaticism for School of Islamic jurisprudence or the following of one’s own whims.
8. Hatred and contempt for those who disagree with our opinion.
9. Burdening the common people with pondering about the essence and descriptions of Almighty Allah more than is absolutely necessary.
10. Holding suspicion against Muslims. 411

The knowledge of these areas of moral corruption and the use of the above-mentioned spiritual remedies were part of the Shehu’s practical approach to curing the diseases of the heart. His description of the problematic areas and their action remedies were dispensed in a simple, practical manner, reflecting his concept of revival which started with the inner core of

411‘Uthmān ibn Fūdī, al-Tafriga, 4-5.
society, the individual.

Therefore, Shehu’s brand of \textit{Tasawwuf} should not be looked at as a spiritual discipline that separated the practitioner from reality and worked only on the inner existence, but a practical part of his system of Islamic education. He intended for all of his followers to enter the realm of character building \textit{Tasawwuf} and reserved the higher spiritual states only for those who were well grounded in Islamic knowledge. The importance of this kind of training would eventually manifest itself, when the Shehu’s community was forced to make Hijra and engage in Jihad. Strong faith in Allah and commitment to Islam combined with a desire for the hereafter over this world would give his followers the will to sacrifice their materials for the cause of Islam. Fostering unity, sincerity, humility and higher Islamic qualities would help his followers overcome differences and focus on their struggle. Many Historians have attributed the success of the Shehu’s Jihad to the military viability of his forces, but this look at aspects of his intellectual and moral training show that his early work in character building must have played a great role in the triumph and longevity of his struggle.
CHAPTER 6

ASPECTS OF THE SHEHU’S CONCEPT OF ISLAMIC SOCIETY

The writings of the Shehu in the formative period, while greatly involved in the realm of ideas, were written, primarily, in response to living circumstances that he and his followers were facing. In fact, some of his treatises were so highly focused that it is possible, along with the writings of his colleagues, to form a general picture of the opposing forces or the actual incident that brought about the Shehu’s reply.

The Issue of Women in Society

In the land of Zamfara, the Shehu found himself under a bitter attack. Abdullah ibn Fūdi, in his Tazvīn Al-Waraqāt, described the events, saying:

They used to come to the Shaykh’s gathering mingling with their women. He segregated them, teaching them that mixing together was forbidden, after that he taught them the laws of Islam. Certain devils of men were in the habit of spreading it about that the Shaykh’s gathering was a place for the coming together of men and women.\footnote{Abdollahi ibn Fūdi, Tazvīn Al-Waraqāt, 86.}

A certain scholar named al-Muṣṭapha Gwoni took the open offensive and in poetic form demanded that the Shehu prohibit women from attending his sessions. Free mixing, he felt, was Islamically incorrect. The Shehu asked his brother, Abdullah, to respond to

\footnote{Abdollahi ibn Fūdi, Tazvīn Al-Waraqāt, 86.}
this veiled assault in verse. Abdullahi wrote:

0 you who have come to guide us aright
We have heard what you said. Listen to what we say...
Indeed devils, if they come to our gathering,
Spread evil speech, exceeding all bounds!
We have not had promiscuous intercourse with women, how
should that be!
We have warned (others against this); on the contrary, I
said we agreed.
That it was thus. But I do not agree that
their being left alone to go free in ignorance is good,
For the committing of the lesser evil has been made
obligatory.
Ignorance pardons, even though it were disobedience.
We found the people of this country drowning in ignorance;
Shall we prevent them from understanding religion? 413

This exchange of words typifies the kind of circumstances
the Shehu found himself in during this period. People of his own
scholarly class were opposing the appearance of women at public,
education-oriented gatherings, while according to Tazvīn Al-
Waragāt, men and women freely mixed for a variety of other
reasons. This type of response and the apparent general lack of
education in Hausaland in the eighteenth century must have
infuriated the Shehu, for he wrote a number of strong comments
and works on the status and condition of women, in
particular.414

413Ibid., 87.

414In addition to, Nūr ul-Albāb, Ihvā al-Sunna, and Kitāb
Irshād, I have also consulted the following works for the Shehu’s
specific comment on this issue: 'Uthmān ibn Fūdī, Wathiqat al-
Jawāb ‘ala Su‘al Dalīl Ma‘nī Khurūj al-Nisā wa al-Muwālāt wa
Ziyādat-ul-Bayān (A Treatise in reply to the question of
restricting women from going out, and al-Muwālāt (allegiance,
clientage), and other issues) (Ibadan, 82/535); Idem, Irshād al-
Ikhwān ‘ala Jawāz ittiḥādh al-Majlis li ajl Ta‘līm al-Niswān
‘Ilm Furūd al-a`yān min Din Allah ta‘āla al-Rahmān (Guidance for
the Brethren on the Permissibility of Holding classes for
Indecent Exposure and Loose Mixing

In a Fulfulde poem entitled Boneji Hausa (The Troubles of Hausaland), the Shehu stated:

Goddi boneji mairi reube njangata
balli di mabbe bo kurum be cuddata.
Wodbe benteje fede sabal sabal
hayya e be yimbe ngala e dou datal.
Wodbe mabbe tunndoyi less gulli;
Njofi gabaje he nano ko halli.
Burtube mabbe keutani kaddajee
gabaje wai kebai moje cuddaje.

Goddi boneji mari bo ko doggoye;
Besdo tawa e suhrite e yiggoyo.

Goddi boneji mairi Jillotirki;
worbe e reube tokka tarotirki;
Worbe e reube mobodo e nyalla;
be cankito kowa yo geddo Allah.
Jemna kadin be kaura be kira;
E non fa be mabbide basira.
Be mobodo fagere dou mugore;
neddo fuh gido be yi’i najore.
Worbe e reube fuh kadin e chingini;
Kowa kuru kuru ngitoi e ‘y ullini.
Worbe e reube fuh kadin e kellida;
Hafukani e dippita e lenngida.

The English Version:

Another trouble of it (Hausaland), is that women do not learn;
Their body they never cover (properly).
Some of them hand bante aprons loosely blowing;
Oh! these people are not on the right path.
Some of them wear these below their waists;
Leaving their chests exposed, lo, hear you, this evil practice.
The best ones (actually) wear wrappers;
But allow their chests unclothed.

Another trouble of it from which one has to flee;

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Teaching Women their individual Obligations from the Religion of Almighty Allah, the most Merciful) (N.H.R.S., 4/2-5); and Idem, Irshād al-Ikhwan ilā Ahkam Khurūj al-Niswān (Guidance to the Brethren as to the Laws concerning the Going Out of Women) (Ibadan, 82/388).
The stripping off of a nursing mother and washing her in the open.

Another trouble of it is that of mingling; Men and Women, excited embrace each other. Men and Women then enjoy the company of one another for the whole day; They disperse (at the end) when each of them has become a sinner to God. They assemble at a place with evil intention; He who sees them (at that stage) has seen senselessness (by itself). Men and Women then lying down (half naked) in the open; Each of them with shameless dazzling eyes bulging out. Men and Women then keep on clapping their hands; jumping up and down, turning round and sideways staggering.  

One of the issues that greatly concerned the Shehu about Hausaland was the general indecency in clothing and the loose mixing of the sexes. This area was usually one of immediate need to the revivalists of Islam, since Islamic law required that men and women dress with extreme modesty and avoid sexual relations of any kind except in marriage or the relationship of a man to his ‘right hand possession’. The Shehu further described the situation as follows:

And among the affairs that have caused a general calamity in these lands is the loose mingling of men and women in the markets and on the roads as well as not secluding a woman from the brother of her husband, or the son of his maternal uncle, or his friends. Also, calamity has been caused by exposing the genitals of not only free

\[^{415}\text{AlHaji Garba Saidu, "The Significance of the Shehu’s Sermons and Poems in Ajami", Sokoto Seminar Papers, 203-205.}\]

\[^{416}\text{The term right hand possession is the literal Arabic translation for name of the war captive who comes into the possession of a Muslim. Concubine and slave are also used.}\]

\[^{417}\text{The word awra here means not only the genitals but the area that should be covered according to Islamic law.}\]
people but also woman in bondage.\textsuperscript{418}

Many of the societies of the Western Sudan faced a similar challenge with the demands of Islamic law. Ibn Battuta (1304-1377 C.E.) had listed as one of the weaknesses of the Muslims of Mali and the Western Sudan, a tendency to allow nakedness throughout their society. During his visit to Mali in the reign of Mansa Sulaiman, who ruled from 1337 to 1359 C.E., he recorded the following:

And among their bad practices is the fact that their servants, female slaves, and young girls expose themselves to the public naked. I witnessed many of them like this in Ramadan.\textsuperscript{419}

The Shehu confronted the issue by not only condemning the indecent exposure of free people but also women in bondage. He emphasized the Islamic limits of the male and the female, even in the same family, by touching on one of the most neglected rules of Islam, the relationship of the wife to her husband’s brothers and other men who would more than likely have free access to her inner apartments. Exposing this relationship would also imply, to the scholarly person, that all other relationships outside of the permitted inner family should not lead to intimate contact or more than normal bodily exposure. The Shehu was apparently stressing not only to scholars and students, but to the whole society that even the most detailed aspect of sexual behaviour must be guarded in order to establish Islamic life in Hausaland.

\textsuperscript{418}Ibid., 16.

\textsuperscript{419}Ibn Battuta, \textit{Rihlat Ibn Battuta}, (Beirut: Dar Sadir Press, 1968), 691.
This style of mentioning the general problem and focusing on a detailed aspect of it, was an Islamic method of closing the door to any breach of the law by highlighting the less significant aspects. The Shehu was totally convinced that indecent exposure and unlawful contact between men and women was one of the root causes of sexual immorality.

Women in Education

In his Kitāb Nūr ul-Albāb, the Shehu lashed out at the bad treatment of women and the lack of education and guidance. He wrote:

This is a chapter regarding the affairs that have caused a general calamity in these lands, I mean Hausaland, which are increasing, and are a general crisis in other lands also. Among them is what many of the ‘Ulama of this land are doing by leaving their wives, daughters, and slaves neglected like animals, without teaching them what Allah has required of them in their ablution, prayers, fasting, and other areas. And they have not taught them what has been made permissible for them in questions such as business transactions and what is similar. This is a major error and a prohibited innovation. They have dealt with them like a dish which they use until it is broken and then throw it into the garbage or some unclean place. How strange it is that they leave their wives, daughters, and slaves in the darkness of ignorance and teach their students morning and evening! This is nothing but their own error for they teach their students ṭiyā (showing off) and vanity. This is a grave mistake for the education of wives, daughters, and slaves is compulsory while the teaching of students is optional. 420

Subsequent to this penetrating criticism, the Shehu turned to the Muslim women and incited them in one of his most revolutionary statements saying:

O Muslim women do not listen to the words of the lost, misguiders who deceive you by ordering you to obey your husbands without ordering you to obey Allah and His

420 ‘Uthmān ibn Fūdī, Nūr ul-Albāb, 9, 10.
Messenger (May the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). They say that the happiness of a woman lies in the obedience to her husband. This is nothing but the fulfilment of their desires and objectives by requiring what neither Allah nor His Messenger have made compulsory on you in the first place like cooking, washing clothes, and other things that are nothing but what they want. At the same time they are not requiring of you that which Allah and His Messenger oblige for you in obedience to Allah and His Messenger. 

This statement must have carried far reaching implications, for the Shehu was questioning not only the general authority of the husband over his wife, but also the specific duties of the Muslim woman. He was challenging and potentially upsetting the very core of the relationship between men and women. His words, in a land that based its morality and everyday life on injunctions coming from Islamic sources and interpreted by learned people, were a type of empowerment for the women.

In his treatise, Tanbih al-Ikhwan 'ala Jawaz, the Shehu went to great lengths to show the permissibility in Islamic law for women to come out for seeking knowledge, providing their husband could not give them the proper education, himself, and the place of learning was free from intimate mixing of men and women. He also advocated the idea of setting aside a special time for the women and the children to be able to speak directly to the local scholar without the presence of men. This was a practice of the Prophet Muhammad, who in the early days of Islam did not prevent women from coming to the masjid and dedicated special time to their education. Al-Maghili had similarly encouraged the Amir to set aside a time to hear the complaints of women and children in

\[421\text{Ibid., 10, 11.}\]
In addition to this, the Shehu even encouraged women to learn how to do business according to Islamic principles and how to carry themselves in the market place. He wrote:

If it were said, "Women do not have knowledge about these affairs (business), and they cannot find learned people to take their place most of the time." The answer is that it is incumbent on a woman to strive to gain knowledge about these affairs, in the same way that it is incumbent upon her to know about her religious duties such as ablution, the ceremonial bath (ghusl), prayer, and fasting. She should also know how to purchase her necessary goods.  

This type of encouragement, although obviously aimed at changing the quality of the relationship between men and women, should not be interpreted as a type of revolutionary women's liberation in the Western sense of the word. The Shehu was very careful to temper most of his treatises on this topic with a reminder that the woman should be basically obedient to her husband. This obedience, however, had conditions. The Shehu stated:

Yes, it is compulsory for the wife to obey her husband, both in secret and in the open, even if he is a lowly person, whether free or in bondage. It is prohibited for her to go against her husband, unless he orders her to disobey Allah, the most High. Then it becomes incumbent upon her to refuse him for there is no obedience to the created being who disobeys Allah.  

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422 Uthmān ibn Fūdī, Tanbīh al-Ikhwān ‘ala Jawāz, 2-5; Bedri, Taj, 23.

423 Uthmān ibn Fūdī, Ihvā al-Sunna, 208.

424 Uthmān ibn Fūdī, Nūr ul-Albab, 11. The Shehu was paraphrasing a famous Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, where he said, "There is no obedience to the created being (person), when that created being (person) disobeys Allah." In other words, a
Concerning the movement of women in the society, the Shehu wrote in his treatise, *Irshād al-Ikhwān ilā Ahkām Khurūj al-Niswān*, that he found the people in Hausaland tending toward one of two extremes. The first was the position of not putting any restrictions on the movement of women, whether they were fulfilling a legal need or not. This, he explained, represented the majority of people. The second extreme was the position of totally restricting all movement of women outside of their homes regardless of whether their leaving was based on a valid Islamic reason or not. This group represented only a tiny minority of the population.  

The Shehu tried to adopt a balanced, moderate position by first clarifying that whenever a woman had a religious or worldly necessity, she was allowed to leave the house. Aside from necessity, she should not, he emphasized, leave her home except for one of the following twelve reasons:  

1. She can leave her home for the purpose of seeking the knowledge of the compulsory parts of her religion.  
2. She can leave her home to answer the call of nature if there were no facilities for the toilet within the family compound, and

Muslim can disobey his leader if the leader goes against Islamic law, or a woman could disobey her husband if the husband orders her to do something which is against Islam.

426Ibid., 2, 3.
if she was dressed properly according to the Sharia.\textsuperscript{427}

3. She can leave her home for the purpose of performing her compulsory prayers in the local masjid, provided that there is no danger to her person or her moral well being. The Shehu specified that a beautiful woman should stay at home to avoid any illegal contact, an average looking woman is preferred to stay home, and an older woman could move freely except in times of danger.\textsuperscript{428}

4. She can leave her home for the attendance of Jumu'a Prayer (friday prayer). This permission was given with the same conditions of the compulsory prayers.\textsuperscript{429}

5. She can leave her home for the attendance of the two ‘Īd prayers, ‘Īd Ul-Fitr and ‘Īd Ul-Adha.\textsuperscript{430}

6. She can leave her home for Salāt-ul-Istisqā’ (prayer for rain). \textsuperscript{431}

7. She can leave her home to attend the funeral services provided she dressed according to the Sharia and did not loose control of herself by doing loud wailing or any other prohibited act. The Shehu took exception to women visiting graves and only allowed it

\textsuperscript{427}Ibid., 14, 15.

\textsuperscript{428}Ibid., 14-16.

\textsuperscript{429}Ibid., 19, 20.

\textsuperscript{430}Ibid., 20. This permission included the same conditions for the age and beauty of the woman as the compulsory prayers.

\textsuperscript{431}Ibid., 21. This permission included the same conditions for the age and beauty of the woman as the compulsory prayers.
for those who were in the most dire need. ⁴³²
8. She can leave her home to perform the Pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj), providing she fulfils the conditions of going to Hajj, ⁴³³ and she has the ability to attempt such a hazardous journey. ⁴³⁴
9. She can leave her home to attend a marriage ceremony or reception, provided the people being married are family, friends, or invited her. There should not be any prohibited practices such as lewd dancing, illegal mixing of men and women, etc. at the wedding. ⁴³⁵
10. She can leave her home to carry out business or to buy her household or personal necessities, provided there is nobody else to do it for her and that she does not enter the areas of the marketplace where there is the possibility of moral corruption or illegal mixing of the sexes. ⁴³⁶
11. She can leave her home to attend the law court. Young girls and older women are allowed to freely move in and out of the court, but the judge should set aside a special day to handle the

⁴³²Ibid., 21. This permission also contained the same conditions for the age and beauty of the woman as the compulsory prayers.

⁴³³A Muslim must be mature, sane, free, and have the wealth and means of travel in order to perform the Hajj. A woman should also be accompanied by a mature member of her immediate family or her husband (mahram) or be part of a protected group of women.

⁴³⁴Ibid., 24, 25.

⁴³⁵Ibid., 25, 26.

⁴³⁶Ibid., 27, 28. The same conditions for the age and beauty of the woman in the compulsory prayer were applied to this permission.
cases of the women who did not fall in the two, above mentioned categories. This will prevent corrupt acts and illegal mixing of the sexes.\textsuperscript{437}

12. She can leave to socialize, providing that she interacts with her family, and female friends.\textsuperscript{438} She should not be socializing with men outside of her inner family. This is strictly prohibited by the Sharia. She should also travel with her mahram family members or a protected party of women.\textsuperscript{439}

These twelve categories should be understood in the light of the initial allowance for 'necessity' as being some of the many options a woman could have for going out. Necessity is a broad term which covers any act which the person feels they have to carry out in order to maintain their faith or any aspect of their material life.

\textit{Conclusion}

The views of the Shehu on the role and status of women must be analyzed within the context of his society, and his education as an Islamic scholar. His stress on education even at the expense of the authority of the husband in the home was a radical departure from the practices of the \textit{'Ulama} of his times. Although

\textsuperscript{437}Ibid., 29, 30.

\textsuperscript{438}The Shehu had given some detail on how a woman should carry herself indoors and outdoors by saying in his \textit{Ihya al-Sunna}, 297, "A woman should not sit at home in her worst clothing and then if she wants to leave the house, she looks for the best clothing and jewellery that she owns and puts it on. This a prohibited innovation."

\textsuperscript{439}Ibid., 30, 31.
Islam had entered Hausaland centuries before, the real consciousness of Islamic modesty and separation had not been widespread among the masses of the people. The Shehu’s call for the education of women and improvements in the relationship between men and women was revolutionary, in the sense that it would bring about a change in what the people had been accustomed to. His call for veiling, travelling in groups, or protected parties of women at Hajj was not new, but in complete conformity to the early practices of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula.

In retrospect, it could be said that the efforts of the Shehu in changing the condition of women in Hausaland did bring about a radical change and enlightenment among the women. Although their freedom of movement must have been seriously curtailed by his call for controlled activity, the quality of life and the level of education among the women must have improved. A number of highly educated women were developed through the Shehu’s educational system. Jean Boyd lists forty-eight known women scholars in the Shehu’s time. Six of these scholars have poetry that still survives. They include Nana Asma’u, the daughter of the Shehu, her sisters Hadiza, Fātima, Hafsatu, Ṣafiya, and Maryam, and their cousin ‘Aisha. It could actually be argued that an upsurge of women’s scholarship took place during this period, for Nana Asma’u established women’s educational organisations on the level of the village and helped to train women to disseminate Islamic teachings throughout


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Hausaland. 441 She produced treatises and poetry in three languages: Arabic, Fulfulde, and Hausa.442 Her interests included health, education, Sharia, women and Bori, the family, history, Eschatology, politics, and theology. In 1860 C.E., she wrote a twenty-four verse poem in Hausa, on women and Bori, called Rokon Ruwa. The following are some of its verses:

v.12 Repent (the sins) of witchcraft, Bori and gambling. Hell will be the reward of those who indulge (in these sins).

v.21 Do not go where there is immoral (Bori?) drumming for men and women mix together on these occasions.

v.18 Do not allow drumming at weddings (to accompany depraved dancing).

It is sinful worldliness and (wilful) forgetfulness.443

On women and education she wrote in a Fulfulde poem called, Sonnore Hawa’u (1860 C.E.):

v.8 As for myself, I taught them about religion, turned them from error and told them about their essential religious obligations,

v.9 Like ritual ablution, prayer, alms, Hajj, the fast, all of which are compulsory for adults.

v.10 I taught them what is permissible in the Faith, and what is forbidden, so they would know how to act.

v.11 I instructed them to distance themselves from prohibited sins such as lying, meanness, hatred, and envy.

v.12 Adultery, theft and self esteem, I said, they should repent because these things lead to perdition.

v.13 The Yan-Taru (Asma’u’s disciples) and their children are well known for their good works and peaceful behaviour in the community.444

After the death of Muhammad Bello, Nana Asma’u became one

441Aliyu Darma, The Contribution of Learned Women, 55.

442Jean Boyd in her report to the conference, Islam in Africa: The changing Role of the ‘Ulama, held at Northwestern University (March 29-31, 1984, listed fifty-two works of Nana Asam’u in Arabic, Fulfulde and Hausa.

443Ibid., 128, 129.

444Ibid., 127, 128.
of the senior scholars of the Sokoto Caliphate. **Amirs** came for her advice and she is spoken about in admiration up until today by the women of Hausaland. Jean Boyd's description of Nana Asma'u gives us an insight into her complex role as an influential woman in the Sokoto Islamic legacy. She wrote:

Asma'u was by far the most prolific writer and influential woman to have emerged in the western Sudan during the nineteenth century: what is more, her influence carried over into the world of men. Her voice was the traditional one of women, 'she was so kind...her charity was a thousand fold'. But she carried it to the places where decisions were made. She was not a surrogate man; she led no troops on the battlefield like Queen Amina, was in charge of no tax collectors like the Inna, in her role as the Sarki's aide, and headed no religious cult like the Inna in her role as head of the Bori. She made stringent and apt observations in her political verse as a wearer of the Shehu’s mantle, but remained decorously within the confines of her home.445

The Shehu, within the limits prescribed by the Sharia, was striving to improve the condition of women and raise their status in the Islamic society that he was trying to create. His insight into the intimate affairs of men and women and his penetrating critique 446 of their unbalanced relationships is clear proof of his concern and active involvement. Writers, such as, I.A. Ogunbiyi 447 have tried to classify the Shehu’s efforts in women’s affairs as reactionary and oppressive. This type of comment displays a lack of understanding of the context of the Shehu’s time and his perspective as an Islamic scholar. The Shehu

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445Ibid., 99.

446See the section on Marital Relations in Chapter five of this thesis.

should not be compared to nineteenth or twentieth century liberals of the Islamic world, but judged within his own social milieu.

The Dynamics of Struggle in the Development of Islamic Society
The Role of Jihad

The period of the late 1790’s was a turning point in the development of the Shehu’s community. Prior to this time, the Shehu had confronted the wrong ideas and practices of the scholars and people of Hausaland by providing an extensive insight into the corruptions that had developed in the Islamic community and the solutions offered by the Quran and the Sunna. This early phase of the Shehu’s development could be looked upon as a type of quietest period, wherein Shehu had no intentions of being involved in confrontation but employed a non-violent educational approach until the circumstances of the confrontation with the authorities of Gobir forced him into a new phase. Louis Brenner in his article, "The case of Shaykh Uthman B. Fudi", building off the conclusions of M.A. al-Hajj, F.H. El-Masri, and Murray Last, supported this stand. Brenner felt that although there is a tone of militancy in the Shehu’s writings before 1794-5, he evolved at that time from an insistent teacher and preacher into a more militant jihadist. He suggested that the Shehu’s major work, Tkhâ al-Sunna, was completely apolitical and contained nothing which gave the slightest hint of jihadist intention or any direct antagonism against the state. He
concluded that the Shehu was a quietest in his early stages and later became a more militant political figure when his opposition changed from the 'Ulamā to the rulers of Gobir.\textsuperscript{448}

This conclusion can be refined, however, in the light of the Shehu's analytical approach to Islamic sources and the broader definition of jihad, which includes the inner jihad as well as the outer forms of jihad. The Shehu's life, academic background and writings reveal, that he not only mentioned the possibility of jihad before 1794 C.E, but was actually involved in what he felt was a type of jihad from the beginning of his preaching. Since the early days of the Shehu's training, he was exposed to teachers who were not only Islamic theorists but socio-political activists. His uncle, Shaykh Bidduri and Shaykh Jibrīl were known for their struggle to forbid evil around them, engage in jihad, and institute Islamic law. His exposure to \textit{Tafsīr al-Jalālain, Sahīh al-Bukhārī}, and the Prophetic Seera (Biography) would have given him clear knowledge of the life of the Prophet Muhammad and his evolution from a preacher of the oneness of God into a political head of state. El-Masri placed the first mention of jihad in a work entitled \textit{Hidayat al-Tālibīn} where the Shehu refers to the evolution of the Muslim community through five points stated by the Prophet Muhammad, himself.\textsuperscript{449}


\textsuperscript{449}According to El-Masri, the style and contents of this work make it an early compilation. See \textit{Bayān Wujūb al-Hijra}, 21.
In Sawq al-Umma, another work probably written before 1794 C.E., the Shehu included a chapter called "The Book of Jihad" where he encouraged his followers to prepare for war by being familiar with weapons and being aware of the experiences of the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions in their numerous campaigns. Among the many Hadith traditions mentioned in this chapter were the following:

Abu Huraira reported: "A man came to the Prophet Muhammad and said, 'O Prophet, tell me the deed which is equal to jihad (in reward).' The Prophet said, 'I cannot find any'."

Abu Sa'id was also reported to have said that the Prophet was asked, "Who is the best person?" The Prophet said, 'A believer who fights in the cause of Allah with his soul and his property.' 'Then who?', he was asked. The Prophet said, 'A God fearing person who does not harm his people.'

Abu Huraira also reported that the Apostle of Allah said, 'There are one hundred levels in Paradise which Allah has prepared for those who fight in the way of Allah. The distance between two levels is like what is between the sky and the earth.'

Therefore, jihad, for the Shehu, could also be looked upon as a process. From the outset, the Shehu was involved in a jihad b'il Qawl (a struggle with the word). He very aggressively struggled against the evils within the personality and culture of his people, then moved on to the outward social evils within the family, the marketplace, the masjid, and the Islamic institutions.

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450 El-Masri, Bayān Wujūb al-Hijra, 21. The manuscript of Ḥidāyat al-Tālibīn can be found in Ibadan University Library, (Ib. 82/158).

451 Uthman ibn Fudi, Sawq al-Umma, 150.

452 Uthman ibn Fudi, Sawq al-Umma, 147-148.
of learning. He was fully aware that the "ultimate jihad" involving the lives and the properties of the Muslims could eventually result, but he did not enter that arena of struggle. The conditions were not existing. However, when his followers had developed into a jamā‘a and the pressure came from the authorities of Gobir, he followed the well-defined Sunna in setting the stage for confrontation, jihad, and the formation of a dynamic Islamic state. The Sunna required the believers to call to righteousness and prohibit evil, pledge their total allegiance to a righteous leader, make Hijra to an abode of Islam, and defend themselves physically if they were attacked by the unbelievers.

**Commanding Righteousness and Forbidding Evil**

The first significant discussion which the Shehu wrote in apparent expectation of a possible confrontation with the Gobir authorities was his Kitāb al-Amr bi‘l-Ma‘rūf wa al-Nahi an al-Munkar. This treatise, although undated, must have been written in the early 1790’s, for its discussion of jihad and community reveal a turning point in the internal dynamics of the Shehu and his following. The main focus of this work was to emphasize the necessity of commanding righteousness and forbidding evil (al-Amr bi‘l-Ma‘rūf wa al-Nahi ‘an al-Munkar). This concept, which had been established earlier in the Western Sudan by militant Islamic scholars like Al-Maghīlī, was a type of three staged struggle against evil, whose highest level was to stop

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453 El-Masri, Bayān Wujūb al-Hijra, 23.
evil with force, then, if that was not possible, to speak out against it. If that was not possible, the Muslim should hate it in his heart. \textit{Al-Amr bi'i-l Ma'ruf wa al-Nahi 'an al-Munkar} can express itself on an individual, household, community, national, or international level. The Shehu explained that it was \textit{fard kifaya} (collective obligation), but that every Muslim was responsible to forbid evil in his own way and was a sinner if it was not carried out collectively.\textsuperscript{454}

The Shehu in a highly pragmatic style warned the Muslims that although \textit{jihad} does not need the presence of an \textit{Imam}, for it really begins with the individual struggle against corruption and evil, if the activity of prohibiting evil and calling to Islam leads to fighting, they should rally around a leader.\textsuperscript{455} He reminded them of hasty jihads, such as that of Ibn Tum\text{"a}rt of Morocco (1077-1130 C.E), which led to the destruction of the common people.\textsuperscript{456} Leadership should be qualified and balanced. He described the conditions for Islamic Imamate with the following:

The Imam should be Muslim, male, of sound mind and judgement, just, honest, and courageous. He should be well grounded in the principle studies of the religion, and not liable to

\textsuperscript{454}Uthm\text{"a}n ibn F\text{"u}di, \textit{Al-Amr bi'i-l Ma'ruf wa al-Nahi 'an al-Munkar}, N.H.R.S./ 16 P.--P.119/11, 1-3.

\textsuperscript{455}This was a new strategy in the writings of the Shehu and showed the point of transition, where an \textit{Imam} or \textit{Amir ul-Mu'minin} would be needed to guide the community through the inevitable conflict.

\textsuperscript{456}Ibid., 14, 15.
shake by misfortune or the blows of fate.\textsuperscript{457}

This type of discourse is not the discussion of a quietest scholar who is oblivious to confrontation and the political atmosphere around him. The Shehu was preparing his community for the real possibility of conflict and all out war. He must have been also trying to calm down impatient elements within his following and foster a sober, methodical approach to \textit{jihad bi'\textsuperscript{l} sayf} (struggle with the sword). The presence of a stable, learned Imam as the commander of the faithful would unite the scattered forces of change in Hausaland and provide the direction needed to institute real Islamic transformation.

In 1794,5 C.E., the Shehu’s mystical encounter with Shaykh ‘Abdul Qādir al-Jilānī fortified him spiritually and enabled him to openly encourage his followers to prepare for war. In a Fulfulde poem, he wrote:

\begin{quote}
Njoge bahe modon worbe mete bo metali, 
Zama metali he bahe yo Sunna Muhammadu. 
Njoge labbe modon fu yo Sunna Muhammadu, 
He kafaje den bo kaza yo Sunna Muhammadu.
\end{quote}

The English Translation:

Keep your quivers, O men and wear turbans, 
For, indeed, turbans and quivers are (part) of the \textit{Sunna} of Muhammad. 
Keep you spears as well, for it is the \textit{Sunna} of Muhammad; 
So also are swords (part) of the \textit{Sunna} of Muhammad.\textsuperscript{458}

\textit{Hijra} and \textit{Al-Muwālāt} (allegiance, clientage)

\textsuperscript{457}Ibid., 17.

\textsuperscript{458}Taher, The Social Writings, 86. From the poem "Sunna Muhammadu", Gime Fulfulde: 1, compiled by Al-Amin Abu-Manga and Ibrahim Mukoshy (Kano: Bayero University, n.d.), 121-125.
In the year 1803 C.E., the Shehu wrote *Masá'īl Muhimma vahtable ilā Ma'rifatiḥah ba'd al-Talaba* (Important Questions that some of the Students need to be aware of).\(^{459}\) This work constituted the first major discussion of Hijra and the political relationship of Muslims and non-Muslims. It appeared at a time when tension between the Shehu's community and the Gobir authorities was very high. The Sarki Yunfa was harassing Muslims and the real possibility of a clash was at hand. According to Abdullahi ibn Fūdī, in 1802-3 C.E., Yunfa invited the Shehu to the palace and he went together with Abdullahi and another friend, Umaru al-Kammu. During the audience Yunfa suddenly seized a musket, aimed it at the Shehu, and fired. Miraculously, as it seemed to those present, the weapon flashed in the pan and scorched the chief, causing him to leap back in alarm. After the incident the Shehu and his companions returned to Degel.\(^{460}\)

The Shehu, then, made a concerted effort to re-assess the socio-political realities of his predicament.\(^{461}\) His tone was changing from that of a concerned Islamic scholar who felt the necessity to critique his society to that of a determined leader ready to take control of the forces of radical change. This new phase should not be looked upon as a type of unexpected political


\(^{460}\)This incident is reported in detail in *Raud al-Jinān* by Gidado dan Laima, and found in Mervyn Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth*, 70-71.

metamorphosis, but as a predictable development in the life of an outspoken activist whose habit was to confront the issues around him. The *Masā'il Muhimma*, also brought out the Shehu’s deep respect and commitment to the writings and analysis of Shaykh al-Maghili whose influence had been so powerful in the early days of Islam in Hausaland.

Fourteen problems are addressed in *Masā'il Muhimma*, each having its own importance and relevance to the actual events that were taking place. The following is a summary of the highlights of these issues:

1. The Shehu began his treatise by stating that Islam is based on understanding and clear-sightedness, but anyone who follows his own views is contradicting the Sharia. He urged the Muslims to unite their opinions around the Sharia and the clear proofs of Islamic sources.\(^{462}\)

2. In the second question, the Shehu explained that the Muslims should not be left neglected but they should take a pledge of allegiance (*bay'a*) to an Imam if that person can be located. He quoted Shaykh al-Maghili, who, in his answers to Amir Askia emphasized the compulsory nature of this act. The Shehu was clearly changing the level of commitment of his following from dedication to knowledge and practising the *Sunna*, to submitting


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to specific Islamic leadership.\textsuperscript{463}

3. The third question dealt with the critical nature of hijra. The Shehu explained that it is compulsory upon Muslims by ijmā', and there are clear verses in the Qur'an commanding the believers to make hijra from the land of disbelief to the land of Islam, from the land of bid'a to the land of Sunna, or from the land of sin to the land of obedience (to Allah). This migration becomes necessary not only in cases of oppression and physical attack, but even if a Muslim is not able to practice his religion properly.\textsuperscript{464} The Shehu was urging the people to reject the prohibitions and commandments of the Gobir authorities and unite with other members of his jam'a in another location.

4. The fourth question raised was the issue of al-muwālāt. The Shehu divided the allegiance and clientage of Muslims to non-Muslims into three parts. He wrote:

Allegiance to unbelievers is three types. The first is a kind of relationship which constitutes kufr according to the ijmā'. It is the establishment of relations, close involvement and affection with unbelievers because they are unbelievers and in animosity to Islam...The other type is sinful but it does not constitute disbelief. That is the establishment of a relationship with the unbelievers in order to gain benefit from their wealth...The third type of al-muwālāt is that which occurs as a result of fearing them. It appears on the tongue of the person but is not really in the heart. It is permissible according to the ijmā'.\textsuperscript{465}

The Shehu stressed at this sensitive point in his career

\textsuperscript{463}Ibid., 3.

\textsuperscript{464}Ibid., 3-5.

\textsuperscript{465}Ibid., 7.
that the Muslims should not humble themselves to unbelievers. They should be polite to all people but show strength and fearlessness to those who opposed them. One of the most obvious forms of outward humiliation was the shameful bowing and acts of submission that the common people had to perform in front of the nobility. According to Islamic law, Muslims were only allowed to bow down to the Creator in prayer. Respect was supposed to be given to superiors in other less demeaning ways. Ibn Battuta had noticed un-Islamic practices such as these during his visit to Mali. He recorded that the common people on entering the presence of the king or the nobility, would throw themselves to the ground, put dust on their heads, and not rise until given permission to do so. 466 The Shehu approached this subject, conclusively (in Kitāb Nūr ul-Albāb), saying:

And among the affairs that have caused a general calamity in these lands is what they have made as proper behaviour in greeting their leaders like bowing. This overly exaggerated bowing of the head in greetings is prohibited by the majority of scholars... 467

He later wrote another important treatise on al-muwālāt called al-Amr bi Muwālāt al-Mu'minīn wa al-Nahy 'an Muwālāt al-Kāfirīn in 1812 C.E. which confirmed this principle of the independence and self-rule of the Muslim umma. This declaration could also be interpreted as the right to rebel against a government that rules contrary to Islamic Sharia.

5. The fifth question looked at the status of the wealth of

466 Ibn Battuta, Rihlat, 689, 691.

467 Uthmān ibn Fūdi, Nūr-ul-Albāb, 23.
Muslims who are living by choice in the land of the unbelievers. The Shehu chose the Islamic judgement that since they were under the authority of the unbelieving ruler their wealth would be part of the general booty of war and be put in the bayt ul-māl (treasury house).

6. In the sixth question, the Shehu distinguished the wealth of the unbelievers who had an association with the Muslims by stating that it is haram (prohibited) to confiscate it.

7. The seventh question dealt with the ruling on waging jihad against the unbelievers and the legal difference between waging jihad against unbelievers and apostates. The Shehu felt that waging jihad against the unbelievers was fard kifāya and a duty of the head of state and the collective body of the Muslims. To define what constituted unbelievers, he quoted Shaykh al-Maghili in his answers to Amir Askia Muhammad:

The unbelievers are three types. The first are those who are clearly in disbelief by their origin like the Jews, the Christians, the Majūs (Magians), or people like them who have inherited disbelief from their parents. The second type are those who were originally Muslim, then apostated from Islam and entered a religion of disbelief. The third type are those who claim to be Muslims but we have ruled that are unbelievers because they have displayed openly that which is displayed by unbelievers.468

The Shehu, then, separated the ruling for an unbeliever and an apostate by stating that there was no difference of opinion between the scholars of Islam concerning the fact that the wealth and families of the unbelievers are all confiscated by the Muslims in a state of war. The apostate, however, was originally

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468Ibid., 9, 10.
a Muslim, so his family is left alone but his wealth becomes property of the Muslims. This is the position of the majority of the scholars of Islam.469

8. The eighth question looked into the issue of fighting those who made war on the Muslims, as well as the Muslims who were under their authority, and those criminal elements who were terrorizing the Muslims lands. The Shehu took the strict position of putting all of these types into the same category, the category of war. He ruled that the danger of the destruction of Muslim lands and the corruption and fear that accompanies an attack by any of these elements justified not distinguishing between those who are Muslim or not. They are all under the leadership of unbelievers.470

9. In the ninth question, the Shehu ruled that if the enemy attacks a town, it is compulsory on all people who have the slightest ability to defend themselves. Even women, slaves, and those who live in the vicinity should use all means to repulse the attack.471

10. The tenth question concerned the status of the Fulbe (Falata) in the Sudannic lands. Is it permissible to take them as slaves? The Shehu ruled that it is not allowed to take the Fula as slaves unless it was proven that they were unbelievers in their origin.

469 Ibid., 10.

470 Ibid., 11, 12.

471 Ibid., 13, 14.
Their overwhelming religion at this time was Islam.\textsuperscript{472}

11. The eleventh question looked into the status of captives from countries that were known to be Islamic. The Shehu ruled that they should not be taken slaves unless it was proven that they were originally unbelievers who were living in these lands.\textsuperscript{473}

12. In the twelfth question, the Shehu discussed the basic principle in possession of goods. If the owner of the possession is not known, than it is permissible to own it, but if the owner is known, it is prohibited to take control of it.\textsuperscript{474}

13. The thirteenth question looked at business dealings with oppressors. The Shehu ruled that if their wealth was gotten through prohibited means like stealing or extortion, it is not permissible to have any interaction with them whether it be in business, accepting gifts, eating food, or wearing their clothing. If some of their wealth was gotten through permissible methods, than it is allowable to exchange with them only in very restrictive circumstances.\textsuperscript{475}

14. In the last question, the Shehu emphasized that it is not permissible to frequent the places of the rich and material minded or the oppressors. This would bring humiliation to Islam

\textsuperscript{472} Ibid., 14

\textsuperscript{473} Ibid., 15.

\textsuperscript{474} Ibid., 15.

\textsuperscript{475} Ibid., 16.
and put a scholar in the very dangerous position of giving in to his material desires. The rich and powerful should come to the scholars and not the opposite.476

The Masā'il Muhimma was a not a theoretical discussion of Islamic jurisprudence, but a detailed plan of action and reaction. It addressed the real issues of war: loyalty, the necessity for fighting, the status of prisoners of war, the division of the spoils of war, and the proper conduct and material relations during the times of crisis. No doubt must have remained in any of the Shehu’s followers that the period of teaching and peaceful preaching was at an end. The Shehu was prepared to confront the authorities of Gobir or any ruler who stood in his way.

A year after the writing of Masā'il Muhimma, the Shehu and his community made the famous hijra. This was the major turning point in the relationship between the Shehu’s followers and the Gobir authorities. It was also a major turning point in the ideas and writings of the Shehu. He geared his subsequent works to the needs of hijra, war, and later caliphate. Numerous letters were written to the Muslim leaders urging them to support the jihad, and declarations were sent to the Hausa kings exhorting them to recognise the rule of Islam in Hausaland.477 One of the most significant extant documents written by the Shehu in this tense

476Ibid., 17.

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period was Wathiqat Ahl al-Sūdān ⁴⁷⁸, the manifesto of jihad, which was circulated throughout Hausaland. The Shehu, signing the document as Amīr al-Mu‘minīn, summarized his previous works on hijra, jihad, al-muwālāt, and enforcement of Sharia and added the need for the appointment of judges. What is interesting to note here is that in such trying circumstances, he remained true to his methodical style of confirming his declarations with the proof of the Ijmā‘, and showing concern for the ideological repercussions of what he was attempting. From the many concise yet powerful statements in Wathiqat Ahl al-Sūdān, he wrote:

...the anathematizing of Muslims on a pretext of heretical observances is unlawful by ijmā‘.

And the anathematizing of Muslims for disobedience is unlawful by ijmā‘.⁴⁷⁹

The Shehu, even in the face of war and the power of the Hausa kings, warned his followers against extremism in the realm of concepts and ideology. This is the mark of a scholar who was true to his scholarship and concerned about the intellectual condition of his people, despite his entrance into the struggle for political hegemony.


⁴⁷⁹ A.D.H. Bivar, Wathiqat Ahl al-Sudan, 240.
GENERAL CONCLUSION

This work has been an attempt to look at the Shehu, Uthman ibn Fudi as an intellectual and social activist as well as an Islamic scholar and a jihadist leader. The Shehu was part of a long tradition of scholarship which prided itself in being directly connected to the original teachings of the Prophet Muhammad of Arabia. His early study of Arabic language, Quranic exegesis, Hadith literature, and Islamic sciences gave him a classical Islamic outlook on history and the necessities of daily life. He embodied his ideas and set out at an early age to teach the people of Hausaland what he had learned. His writings followed the classical methodology of an Islamic jurist (fagih), but he remained a teacher till his death. Despite his rigid method of constantly quoting Islamic sources to prove his point, the Shehu was concerned with common social problems of local people. He fortified his Arabic writings with poetry and discourse in Hausa, Fulfulde and other local languages. He spent long hours sitting with people from all walks of life, even women and children, in order to convey his message to the masses.

An in-depth look at the writings of the Shehu in his formative period of 1774-1804 C.E., reveals that he brought to the scholars of Hausaland precedents set by well known classical scholars from North Africa and the heartlands of the Muslim
world. These works entered the most intimate areas of intellectual thought and social behaviour. The Shehu’s strict academic training did not inhibit him from looking into the local customs and un-hygienic practices that had developed in the Muslim world and studying the practical Islamic solutions.

Hausaland in the eighteenth century was a highly complex society with highly developed social, religious, and political institutions. Despite the presence of Islam for over four hundred years, traditional patterns were maintained either openly or in a pseudo-Islamic form. The Shehu spent his early years of preaching in confronting the local customs and providing Islamic alternatives.

Therefore, the Shehu’s eventual success in the jihad which toppled the main rulers of Hausaland and instituted the Islamic system of Amirate cannot be properly understood unless sufficient study is given to the formative phase of his career. It was in that period that the character of the Shehu’s followers was moulded and fortified. It is during the early period that the groundwork was laid for the eventual acceptance of Islamic rule. The Shehu succeeded in taking religion out of the study circle or mosque and putting it into the everyday life of the people. He succeeded in making the study of the Quran and the Sunna, a relevant activity that could provide viable solutions to daily needs.

The Shehu also succeeded in remaining consistent with the most orthodox application of the Sunna in bringing about social
and eventually political transformation to his society. The Prophet Muhammad had taught monotheistic theology and character building in Makkah for thirteen years, then he migrated to Al-Madinah and formed an Islamic state which eventually overcame all of the opposition of Arabia. The Shehu taught and preached for approximately thirty years, made hijra, and formed a community that eventually overcame the bulk of the opposition in Hausaland. The Shehu aggressively struggled for change from the beginning of his mission: first a change from within (the individual, the family and the community), then a change in ideology and outlook, and finally a change in the political structure of the society. He was consistent to his teachers: Shaykh Jibrīl, Shaykh Bidduri, Shaykh al-Maghīli and others. They had fought for social and political change and the Shehu from an early stage must have known that he may have to violently confront the rulers of Hausaland.

Another outstanding achievement of the Shehu was his approach to Tasawwuf. He did not adopt the extreme of totally rejecting Tasawwuf as an irrelevant esoteric Islamic science. Nor did he blindly accept the bid'a and non-Islamic philosophy and practices that had crept into many of the classical tarīgas. His success was to blend the outward and inward aspects of Islamic teachings and confine Sūfi thought and practices within the boundaries of the Sharia. This enabled him to focus on the kind of Tasawwuf that developed the character of the people and purified the leadership of blameworthy traits that would lead to
their corruption and the destruction of the community. His Tasawwuf fortified him in the time of crisis with "the sword of truth", instead of encouraging him to leave the material world and focus only on the higher reality of God. His writings and speeches lead the present writer to believe that his community was not a Sufi movement, but a highly orthodox (Sunni) jamā‘a which used the teachings of Tasawwuf to train its following and facilitate specialized members to strive for higher spiritual states within the context of the teachings of the Sunna.

The Shehu was not a reformer who wanted to alter the social and political behaviour of his people to fit the needs of his circumstances. His movement was one of tajdid (revival) where the original principles were revived in a modern sense. His emphasis on women’s issues was not designed to "liberate" women in a western sense but to give them the rights promised to them under the classical Islamic sharia. So, his willingness to confront local, grassroots issues and refer to the Ijmā‘ for his solutions prove that he intended to develop a classical form of Islamic order that would be acceptable and relevant to the people of Hausaland.

These findings place the Shehu, not only in the category of significant political movers of history, but also in the category of those intellectuals who had a profound impact on the customs, interpersonal relations, and intellectual heritage of their people. The Shehu’s involvement in the social aspects of his people’s lives and his concern with the intellectual well being
of the scholars and students is part of the legacy of the Sokoto jihad and its resultant caliphate. The Shehu trained a large group of male and female scholars who saw their role as teachers, social activists, and leaders. Further studies should reveal even more evidence of the contributions made by the men and women of this movement and the profound affect they had on the history and culture of Hausaland.
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