



*Abubakar Zaria Ibrahim  
Ahmadu Bello University*

## **Sokoto Caliphate scholars and the classical Islamic philosophers: issues in divine command theory of ethics<sup>1</sup>**

*Abstract:* Western philosophers formulated ethical theories such as egoism, virtue, existentialism, deontology, contractualism and utilitarianism, and illustrated how these are applicable in benefitting individuals and societies in building a complete moral life. Interestingly, there existed some societies that had little or no contact with the West but which have also developed morally acceptable ideas of living. Such are, for example, the Muslims that have established kingdoms and empires all over Asia, Middle East and Africa. The ethical principles developed by these societies may be what we can call a divine command theory, which of course also exists in the West. It is a theory which follows religious beliefs and sources. The Muslims, who practice the religion of Islam, have intellectuals, scholars and thinkers who were philosophically inclined. This paper demonstrates that the Sokoto Caliphate scholars, trailing the classical Islamic philosophers, used the highest book of authority in the religion, the *Qur'an*, to explain life. The *Qur'an* is closely supported by the *hadith* [sayings, actions and approvals of the Prophet of the religion]. For the fact that the Sokoto Caliphate scholars, especially the triumvirates of Uthman ibn Fodiye, Abdullahi and Bello lived a practical life as religious and

---

<sup>1</sup> A paper first presented on the 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2016 in the Department of African Languages and Culture, University of Warsaw, Poland. I am indebted to Professor Nina Pawlak who was instrumental to my visit to the University of Warsaw on bench research. She also made meaningful contributions to the context and content of this article.

political leaders, some of their divine command ethics centred on leadership. They explain the foundation and qualities of leadership, good governance, management of public affairs and struggle against corruption. We shall attempt to apply an analytical, though historical lens to point out and analyse the ethical foundations of leadership articulated by the triumvirates

*Keywords:* Hausaland, ethics, Islam, divine command theory, culture, caliphate, leadership, good governance.

## **Introduction**

Hausaland is such a vast geographical territory which demands an historical explanation, since sharing a language implies not just the ability to communicate but also some sense of identity, a powerful cultural movement has to be discerned within this area. This cultural movement, the emergence and spread of what Sutton (1979: 179) calls 'Hausaness', should be traced to the beginning of the last millennium. The early history of Hausaland is not dependent exclusively on such general linguistic and cultural considerations. Hausaland is blessed with some written sources of its own which, though their known versions are mostly no earlier than the nineteenth century, clearly incorporate earlier traditions. Beside chronicle materials of the Hausa kingdoms (of which the Kano Chronicle is the most informative), these traditions also purport to explain, if not exactly Hausa origins, at least how a single people came to be organized from early times in this series of kingdoms, conventionally numbered as seven. These were Daura, Birni, Kano, Katsina, Rano, Gobir and Zazzau. Both the traditions and the written sources show that Hausaland had very little contact with Europe before the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate. This was an entity which emerged as a result of a socio-political, but intellectual ferment that challenged the status quo. The movement which targeted the moral being of both the leadership and the subjects, was led by Sheikh Uthman ibn Fodiye ably assisted by his brother Abdullahi ibn Fodiye and son Muhammad Bello. These three are popularly known in the academic circle as 'The Triumvirate.'

### **The early Hausa states**

Fuglestad (1978: 319) summarizes the works of great scholars who worked on the history of Hausa (A. Smith, J. O. Hunwick and H. J. Fisher) as follows: early Hausa society was made up of kindreds living in villages which were basically agricultural. In the course of time larger, though still predominantly agrarian, settlements emerged. Such a settlement was called *gari* 'town'. Some of these 'towns' grew further into walled cities or *birane* [sing. *birni*]. Compared with the settlements from which they developed, the *birane* were more cosmopolitan in outlook, and had a much more diversified economy. Concomitantly, the nature of government underwent significant changes. Indeed, whereas the *gari* had been ruled by a council of lineage heads, the *birni* became the seat of a *sarki* 'hereditary ruler', assisted by an elaborate hierarchy of office- and fief-holders.

The fifteenth century is seen as a 'watershed' for the consolidation of the Hausa states (Smith 1976: 156-158). This period witnessed the emergence of substantial city-states of Kano, Katsina and Zazzau in eastern Hausaland. It then becomes obvious that Hausaland clearly connects itself with the cultural and commercial network of the Sudan and the Sahara and its Islamizing features. If it be objected that the rapidity of these developments is partly illusory, owing to the better traditional and documentary sources for the fifteenth century, it can legitimately be replied that it was this new situation and enlargement of scale which generated the clearer and more voluminous sources, and especially a measure of literacy. This was the period when Hausaland placed itself on the world map, as Hiskett (1965: 18) has explained. Especially striking is the contrast between the mid-fourteenth century when Ibn Battuta visited Tagadda and reported on its copper-mines (Gibb 1929: 336) In fact on the whole savannah region between the Niger bend and Bornu, the early sixteenth-century account of Leo Africanus, albeit unreliable and second-hand describes six Hausa kingdoms or regions most of which are readily identifiable (Fisher 1978: 86-112). Therefore the celebrated passage in the Kano Chronicle indicating a mid-fifteenth century efflorescence marked by new cultural, commercial and political devel-

opments and external contacts in all four directions is not mere invention (Hodgkin 1975: 113-15).

The roots of Hausa society go back further than this of course; but it may be arguable that it was this middle period with its increase in tempo and a degree of cultural and commercial incorporation into a wider world that helped Hausaness to crystallize as a dominant cultural and linguistic entity — and not to develop into a series of separate tribes. This linguistic entity developed cultural tradition with social, political and economic structures. While the political formation derived from the social set up: a kinship chain from *gida* [household], *unguwa* [ward] *gari* [town] to *kasa* [land], the economy was based on occupations and trade. Within the social structure is found the religion of any group of people. The traditional religion of the Hausas therefore is in their social formation, and this is known as the *bori* cult [spirit possession]. The history of the Maguzawa is situated within that of the Hausa, and the one cannot be divorced or isolated from the other. *Bori* being a part of Maguzawa religion and culture, consequently, symbolises a part of the process of development and experience of Hausa traditional religious history (Habila and Danfulani 1999: 414). The historical process of *bori* cult spirits started with the emergence of totems, followed by a progressive introduction of a number of spirit types into the system. The expansion of commercial relations with its neighbours led to the relations between the Hausa and the Wangara who are said to have introduced Islam which resultantly changed the socio-political set-up in Hausaland.

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'qub [1462/3-1498/9] (Hunwick, 1971: 44). The Kano Chronicle reports the coming of an important group of Wangarawa clerics on route to Makkah. The leader of the clerics was Sheikh Abd al-Rahman Zagaiti, a renowned scholar held in high esteem by his people. His arrival coincided with the coming of a North African scholar of considerable repute named Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim Al-Maghili (Hunwick 1985: 324). Of the many works performed in Kano by the two eminent Sheikhs, their first major action was to cut down a huge tamarind tree where

the inhabitants of the city practised *bori* idolatry. 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 *bori* belief system, and the establishment of the Friday Mosque represented the beginning of a new trend for Islam in Hausaland (Quick 1995: 18).

The *ulama* [scholars] 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 life style 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.

The term 'Wangara' has occupied a confusing position in West African historiography. Early Arabic sources used the name in reference to Sudanese traders and particularly dealers in gold who were connected with Ghana and Mali. In this sense the name was little more than a general term for merchant, equivalent to *Juula* (Levtzion 1971: 350). These references establish the existence of Muslim commercial networks in Ghana, Mali, and adjacent areas, a development of crucial importance in the economic history of West Africa. But the term has also been used in regions further east where the term *juula* was unknown, there, at least, Wangara became the corporate name for commercial groups controlling the external trade of Songhai, the Bariba states, and the Hausa cities. The difference between Malinke and Wangara in sixteenth-century Songhai was that the Wangara and Malinke have the same origins, but Malinke is used

to designate the warriors of Mali while Wangara serves to designate the traders who trade from country to country (Lovejoy 1978: 175). In the Central Sudan the term referred to merchants and clerics from the west, although its exact meaning changed over time.

Wangara occupations reflected the emergence of a Muslim middle estate, international in outlook and urban in setting. Communities included merchants, brokers, craftsmen, butchers, legal specialists, professors of the mystical sciences, and Islamic scholars. Long pilgrimages, studying abroad, and business trips maintained contact between Muslim centres and permitted the development of widely dispersed social relationships (Lovejoy 1978: 177). Inter-marriage of clerics, craftsmen, and merchants with local people created kinship networks connecting distant towns, while endogamy within Muslim circles inhibited the admission of outsiders. Religion, occupation, and urban settlement tended to separate the Wangara from peasant society and thereby helped restrict the spread of specialized knowledge. Relations with the aristocracy were more intimate, and in most diaspora towns marriage alliances were important. Such arrangements solidified common interests between the government and the commercial sector, strengthened Islamic influence, and led to the assimilation of the immigrants Wangara as a privileged class in the Hausaland (*ibid*).

Their role included regulating trade between different cultures, a development made possible through the marginal position of merchants and commercial agents (Curtin 1975: 59-109). This role facilitated exchange within regions, particularly since the merchants themselves promoted a common identity which transcended mere parochial interests. Religion, dress, language, inter-marriage, and similar social values ensured the maintenance of this identity, often to the point where a sense of belonging to a common class or estate developed. The language of the trade system was Songhai. However, in the Hausa country the use of Songhai had disappeared by the eighteenth century, at the very latest. Hausa gradually replaced it as the commercial tongue, thereby reflecting the emergence of a dominant Hausa economy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During this period a number of exceptional rulers “altered the character of

Hausa development, by introducing or confirming Islam and weaving it into the fabric of statecraft” (Fisher, 1977: 241-330). The society benefitted from Islamic religious knowledge from these merchants. But most importantly, the rulers benefitted considerably from the expansion in long-distance trade which affected Hausaland at that time, and which became really significant in the sixteenth century. However, during the following centuries the influence of Islam declined, and many rulers reverted to ‘animistic’ practices.

### **Oppression in Hausaland and the intellectual revolution**

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. Sheikh Uthman ibn Fodiye’s people were built on this character at the heart of Hausaland. By the beginning of the 17th century there was a rising awareness of Islam among the peasantry (Maishanu and Maishanu, 1999: 123). Indigenous Muslim scholars in the area had started composing their works on various aspects of Islamic sciences. There also had emerged, before the *jihad* [holy war], centres like Kalamburdu, ‘Yandoto, Katsina and, later Degel the home of the Sheikh, all of which were noted for their Islamic learning. A group of scholars had also kept on the itinerant tradition of Islamic learning, moving from one place to another, combing the whole length and breadth of the region. As Islamic awareness increased, these scholars became more and more critical of their society; attacking the existing dispensation with all its iniquity and un-Islamic attitude.

In 1750 Imam Muhammad ibn al-Hajj ‘Abd al-Rahman-al Barnawi composed *Shurb al-Zulal* [Drinking pure water], a poem which had these general acts of iniquity as its subject matter. It was a direct reflection of what was going on in the society. Fifty-six years later, Sheikh Uthman ibn Fodiye was to confirm, in his *Kitab al Farq* [The Book of Difference], these acts of oppression. Al-Barnawi is quoted to have said:



And everything which is taken by the judge in return for his judgment, leave it, even if the judgment is lawful: do not eat it.

And the like of this is the gift of the governors, for all of it is unlawful profit from error.

And everything that is taken from a Muslim by force in the market, what is taken thus is illegal.

There is nothing which enters the belly more evil than usury. Therefore flee from it, and strive to avoid it. (Hodgkin 1975: 207f.)

In the western part of Hausaland, Sheikh Jibril ibn Umar had earlier launched an unsuccessful *jihad*. This shows the extent to which scholars had become restive and disenchanted with the hole set up in the region, and their desire to bring about change and reorganise the society on the basis of Islamic law and ethics. What Jibril ibn Umar failed to achieve was achieved some years later by one of his students, Sheikh Uthman ibn Fodiye.

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] (Augi 1984:235).

By 1800 half a century of warfare engulfing most of Hausaland must have had serious consequences on both the state and society in the region. War and instability were antithetical to the pursuance of commerce and industry that have been the life-line of Hausaland. States in the area generally turned more autocratic and arbitrary. Apart from the insecurity to which the peasantry was subjected, the subject people were also over-burdened with heavy taxation and extortion by the ruling class. In some states the kings were not only oppressive to the peasantry but even the nobility, a class that had en-

joyed relative security and prosperity in Hausaland was not spared (Maishanu and Maishanu 1999:122).

In Gobir, which was at the epicentre of activities in this period, life was very difficult and unbearable for the common man. Apart from heavy taxation the peasantry was forcefully conscripted, in what is popularly known as *gargadi* [warning], to fight for the state. Failure to serve in the army was always visited with severe consequences including the forfeiture of property to the state. These were not the only aberrations taking place. Others were seizure of property of the peasantry called *kamuwa* [conscription] by the landed gentry as well as perversion of justice in favour of the rich and the strong (*ibid*). These were largely the factors which led to the outbreak of hostilities between the Sheikh's followers, known as the *jama'a* and the Hausa aristocracy. The skirmishes eventually culminated into what the *jama'a* accepted as *jihad* which resulted in the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate under the leadership of Sheikh.

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 *Qur'an*, 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* [especially when it is an expression of an action] or *hadith* [especially when it is a verbal explanation]. 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 world. The task of interpreting and, sometimes, implementing these principles was entrusted to the Muslim scholars. Al-Tabrizi wrote that the Prophet Muhammad, himself, in describing the *ulama* said that:

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. (Tabrizi [Al-Tabrīzī], 1961: 74).

An important fact is that great centres of learning have been established in Hausaland by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Yola 2004: 46). Places like Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, ‘Yandoto, Zamfara and Zaria among others were flourishing with scholars. The major contradiction, however, was that by the time the Sokoto Caliphate scholars came on the scene, the intellectual activities in the area were on the point of declining. Notwithstanding, the Sokoto scholars had their training in their localities without having to travel far (*ibid*, 47). They received their intellectual refinement from their kith and kin. Sheikh Uthman, who led the revolution and his brother Abdullahi, had studied under highly qualified teachers such as Jibril bin Umar of Agades, Muhammad al-Maghuri, Muhammad al-Firabri, Sheikh Sulayman, etc. They studied subjects which included Arabic language and literature, Qur’anic recitation and exegesis, Islamic history, and rational science which included logic (*ibid*, 47f.).

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 (Quick 1995:59). 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, *qadis* [judges], 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 *shari’a* or not. Some of these scholars justified their position based on the concept of the acceptability of ‘*urf* [the customs of the people] which Islamic law does not entirely erase (*ibid*).)

However, many of the *mallamai* avoided the courts and spent their time teaching and preaching in the countryside. They became highly critical of the ruling class and increasingly aware of their responsibility to apply their Islamic ideals to the society. 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 (*ibid.* 110). New calls to social and political reform were therefore circulating by the end of the eighteenth century, and young seekers of knowledge began to echo the call for an ideal Islamic society.

As for the role of women by this period in general, they 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*, *attajirai*, and the *mallamai* appear to have been put into *purdah* [seclusion], and allowed to live a life of luxury (Smith 1978: 42). By the end of eighteenth century, it appears that the overall position of women in Hausaland was in a state of steady deterioration. Sheik Uthman ibn Fodiye in his *Kitab a-Farq...* described the oppressive condition of women under the Hausa rulers thus:

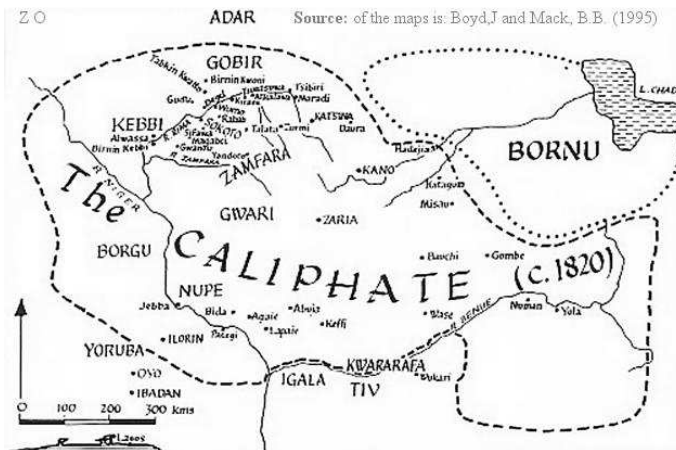
One of the ways of their government is to take what women they wish without marriage contract.

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.

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 (Hiskett 1963: 7-11).

These were the features in Hausaland by this period and no doubt were the reasons which called for the social revolution resulting to the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate.



### Establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate

Several reasons are attributes to the emergence of the Sokoto Caliphate. First is the breakup of the state system and authority in Hausaland. Second, Islamic culture, nurtured and sponsored by sufficiently widespread knowledge of the tenets of the religion and its practices appealed to a wide section of the populace. The scattered *jama'a* within them had learned men who taught and explained, not

only rituals but also the rights and duties of both the citizens and the leaders. In this environment, it was possible to sensitize not only the gentry but also the peasantry as to the evils of illegal tax regime, inappropriate appointments and corrupt luxuries in the palaces. This led to a coherent value system solidly grounded in Islamic knowledge and experience. The body of *ulama* moved round the area in an austere way of life common to the peasant, the herder and the scholar, converging to create an autonomous and self-sufficient community (Tukur 2004: 6-8). Third, the timely presence of a revolutionary reformer of the calibre and personality of Sheikh Uthman ibn Fodiye who was able to attract enough students and followers from a community out of the wider community of Islam including Tuareg, Hausa and Fulani (Last 1967: 32). The caliphate was established after the war which brought down the *sarakuna* of Hausaland. This ensued when the Sheikh, after observing the social decay and the excesses of the rulers, began an astounding sensitization of the general public.

He studied the private writings of Sheikh Jibril and was instructed in his private conceptions of Islamic application (Abdullahi 2013: 566). 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” (*ibid.*). The main thrust of the Sheikh’s teaching appears to have been the expounding of the fundamentals of Islam and correcting the bad practices that had developed over the centuries in Hausaland. The preaching and sensitization activities of the Sheikh, as may be expected, were not welcomed by the *sarakuna*. He began his campaigns outside of his home base at Degel by journeying to Kebbi. There he encouraged the people to not only reform their practice of the faith, but also to drop local customs 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 that were contrary to Islamic lifestyle. This combination of religious preaching and calling for social change gave him instant notoriety and allowed him to affect large numbers of people (Hiskett 1963: 223).

In Zamfara he summoned the people to Islam and corrected the 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. He also confronted the issue of male/female relationships and the exclusion of women from Islamic education (Kani 1983: 33 and Hiskett, *ibid*). For this the Sheikh also started having conflict with some of the *ulama*. He also, travelled west to Kebbi with his companions and wandered all over the region reaching the river Kwara (middle Niger) and Illo. His most important work at this period was *Ihya al-Sunnah wa Ikhmad al-Bid'a* [The Revival of the Sunna and the Nullification of Innovations], written in 1793 C.E. (Balogun 1967: 68)

It was popularly reported that during the festival of Eid Adha in 1788 C.E. the *sarki* of Gobir, Bawa Jan Gwarzo, invited all the *ulama* of his kingdom to a place called Magami. He gave them gifts, which the Sheikh refused to collect but made some demands instead. These were five, thus:

- i. to allow me to call to Allah in your country;
  - ii. not to stop anybody who intends to respond to my call;
  - iii. to treat with respect any man with a turban;
  - iv. to free all (political) prisoners; and
  - v. not to burden the subjects with taxes
- (Last, M. 1967:7 and Kani, 1983: 36).

Bawa agreed to these demands but died the following year and the new leadership was not ready to accommodate the Sheikh and his followers. However, he believed that he had the obligation to change evil with his hands or in *jihad*. By 1794 C.E. therefore, he began to urge his *jama'a* [community] to equip themselves with weapons for war such as this was part of the *sunna*. This move frightened the rulers of Hausaland and *Sarki* Nafata of Gobir made a public proclamation in the marketplace, thus:

- i. Nobody except the Shehu in person was allowed to preach;
- ii. no more conversions to Islam would be allowed and those who were not born Muslims should return to their former religion;
- iii. men should not wear turbans and women should not wear veils (El-Masri 1963: 444 and Hiskett 1963: 107).

These commandments represented the extreme in oppressive measures for the Sheikh and his *jama'a*, for they were a community of scholars whose primary mission was to propagate the religion of Islam and explain its fundamentals and laws. Moreover, by this period the situation in Hausaland was anything but Islamic; the rulers had turned into autocrats, justice was subverted and in fact the *shari'a* law in most cases disregarded. In some of his works like *Nur al-Albab* [Enlightening the Minds] the Shehu accused Hausa rulers of heathenism. In 1216- 17 A.H. (1802-3 C.E.) when Yunfa, the son of Nafata, became *sarkin* of Gobir he intensified the war against the Sheikh by trying to assassinate him at Alkalawa in 1803 C.E., and then attacking one of the sections of the *jama'a* under the Sheikh's student Abd al-Salam (Hiskett 1963: 107). The Sheikh wrote *Masa'il Muhimma Yahtaju ila Ma'rifatihā Ahl al-Sudan* [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 *hijrah* [migration] and *jihād*. In this treatise five main points were made by the Sheikh as follows:

- i. That the foundation of the religion of Islam is the application of the *shari'a* law;
- ii. that it is incumbent upon Muslims to follow an Imam, or a Caliph;
- iii. that the *hijrah* (migration) from the land of unbelief (*balad al-kufr*) to the land of Islam (*balad al-Islam*) is obligatory;
- iv. that those who support the unbelievers should be regarded as themselves unbelievers; and



v. that the *jihad* against the unbelievers as well as the apostates (*Murtaddun*) is obligatory (Arnett 1992: 98-9).

This exemplified his transition into political writings that were necessary to deal with the crisis of his community. It appears that by 1804 people were coming from all over Hausaland to Degel to receive the Sheikh's teachings. It is also clear that his students had reached the point of being qualified to teach, preach and defend themselves against the oppression of the *sarakuna*. (El-Masri 1963: 44). Thus, when the *jihad* started against the Habe [as Hausa people were called by the Fulani] rulers of Hausaland, the Shehu had laid a solid foundation of Islamic education and awareness. He had addressed the immediate needs of the masses of the people and set the pace for a new era in the relationship of Islamic scholarship to the state.

Thus when the hostility of *sarkin* Gobir Yunfa became so apparent, the Sheikh did what was incumbent upon him and that was the *hijrah*. On 21st of February, 1804 the Sheikh embarked upon his famous *hijrah* to Gudu. This did not go down well with *sarkin* Gobir Yunfa, who continuously attacked the *jama'a*. The *jama'a* eventually appointed the Sheikh, who had previously been the imam and amir, as Commander, in order that he might put their affairs in order, (Hiskett 1963: 108). This therefore, marked the official beginning of the *jihad* which had two major objectives: (i) to free from the grip of superstition and corruption prevailing in the society of the time and to teach true Islam; (ii) to spread knowledge among the people through teaching and writing (Hamid 1979: 181).

At the decisive battle of Tafkin Kwatto Yunfa fled while the *jama'a* army gathered a lot of booty. This defeat was a morale booster to the *jama'a* and soon the Sheikh wrote the *Bayan Wujub al-Hijrah ala al-Ibaad* [The Hijrah Obligation on People] and *Wathiqat Ahl al-Sudan* [Letter to the People of Sudan Area] which were widely circulated throughout Hausaland and beyond. These represented the formal declaration of *jihad* by Sheikh Uthman ibn Fodiye. It embodied all the major points raised in *al-Masa'il al-Muhimmah* and much more. In it was indicated that the status of a

country is that of its ruler: “[...] If he is a Muslim his country or town is a Muslim country and if he is not so also is his country or town ...it is unlawful for Muslims to live in a non-Muslim country. That *jihad* against non-Muslims including renegades is compulsory and the seizure of government from them is lawful” (Imam 1966: 26f.). With the initial military action over, the various major towns of Hausaland and beyond were knitted together to become emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate covering about 100,000 square miles (Yola 2004: 1). In the emirates the flag bearers were confirmed in their positions as *amirs* while Sheikh Uthman ibn Fodiye retired to Sifawa to a life of asceticism and scholarship; producing tracts and manuals that were to serve as guides to the education, moral and political developments of the Caliphate. It is quite clear that the whole movement was led by Sheikh Uthman ibn Fodiye, but it is important to note that he was ably assisted by his younger brother, Abdullahi ibn Fodiye and by one of his sons, Muhammadu Bello. The three came to be known as the triumvirate who changed the socio-political, and to some extent, the economic settings of Hausaland.

### **Ethics in the Caliphate**

Ethics involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behaviour. Ethical theories are usually divided into three general subject areas: metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. Metaethics, on one hand examines where our ethical principles come from, and what they mean. Are they merely social inventions? Do they involve more than expressions of our individual emotions? Metaethical answers to these questions focus on the will of God, the issues of universal truths, the role of reason in ethical judgments, and the meaning of ethical terms themselves. Normative ethics, on the other hand takes on a more practical task, which is to arrive at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. Applied ethics, however, involves examining specific controversial issues, such as abortion, infanticide, animal rights, environmental concerns, homosexuality, capital punishment, or nuclear war (Fieser, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/ethics/>).

The *jihad* was an intellectual movement, involving the idea and

conception of ethically disciplined society as evident in the writings and teachings of its leaders, as such its focal point is normative ethics. The establishment of the caliphate affirms an Islamic government. The apparatus of an Islamic government, as in Islamic governments elsewhere, is the *shari'a*. The ethical principles of the caliphate were founded on the *shari'a* law. The *shari'a* is “a body of religious values, expressed functionally and in concrete terms, to direct man’s life... it is the trodden path to good life.” (Rahman 1966: 100). Islam is a religion that originated from the Arab world. An area where culture and tradition apparently differs from those obtained in Hausaland. It is obvious that some of the Arab tradition and probably culture have been accepted as part of the religion. The case of number of months which are adopted and confirmed by the *Qur'an*, and the turban (head gear) which becomes the *sunnah* of the Prophet are clear examples. Locality, therefore, arguably looms larger as an issue for Muslims than the followers of any other religion. Strictly tied to the Arabic and the Arabian Peninsula by a genealogical theory religious practice, Muslims elsewhere also conceive of their religion in highly universalistic terms. Muslims’ dual disposition towards practical and doctrinal universalism, the historical particulars of an Arabian revelation, leads to two complementary types of practice: struggles to define the universal qualities of the religious, and efforts to develop distinct identities, local by definition, with respect to these universal qualities. In their application of the *Qur'an* and *hadith*, therefore, the Sokoto scholars had to consider their dual cultural positions. Any culture which does not conflict with the *shari'a* was therefore allowed. In *Najmu al-Ikhwaan* (Enlightening Brothers) Sheikh Uthman ibn Fodiye wrote that:

The religion of Allah is simple, and the explanation of what Allah has bestowed on us is as blessing in this age, involving religion of the world. In explaining that... Allah has said “*Allah wants you to have ease; and He does not want to make things difficult for you.*” *Qur'an* 2:185 and “*Allah has not made any difficulty for you in religion.*” *Qur'an* 22:78. And the Prophet peace be on him, said “*Religion of Allah the*

*exalted is easy (so), and He does not want you to have difficulty.”* (Othman vol. III, 2013: 241)

As political leaders Sokoto Caliphate scholars gave some considerable amount of attention to the ethics of leadership, applying their interpretation of the divine command. The term ‘The Divine Command Theory of Ethics’ is similar to ‘The Ontological Argument’ in that there is no unique entity deserving of that title. Rather, there is a multiplicity of premises, each of which is appropriately taken to be a divine command theory. The strongest versions are, if not the finest, at least defensible. That is, according to these versions moral predicates, such as ‘is obligatory,’ are to be defined in terms of such theological predicates as, ‘is commanded by God,’ or moral properties, such as the property of being obligatory. Perhaps the most famous defender of this sort of divine command theory is Euthyphro (Wierenga 1983: 387).

The attempt by the Sokoto scholars was no doubt an attempt to address the menace of oppression and exploitation of the masses, which was the first objective of the *jihad* set out to achieve. They pinned the principles of leadership down to its foundations, qualities, good governance, management of public affairs and struggle against corruption. (Bobboyi 2011: 1-13). Imam al-Shafi'i the founder of the Shafi'ite “school” of law, one of the four schools traditionally recognized as legitimate within Sunni Islam, explicates and defends a particular type of reasoning in ethics and the systematic theory of practical justification that he develops falls within the domain that is normally describe as divine command ethics. Al-Shafi'i is therefore, a pivotal figure not only to the history of *usul al-fiqh*, but also in the history of Islamic ethics. According to Ignaz Goldziher, Joseph Schacht, and others, he is the decisive figure in the early development of the theory of *usul al-fiqh*, the “principles of jurisprudence” (Kelsay 1994: 101). Thus, al-Shafi's thought may be, and usually has been, analyzed with a view toward understanding his unique contribution to Islamic legal theory.

In line with the above, Sheikh Uthman's ethical ideals asserts that leadership is founded on justice, service to the people, goodness,

God's trust, moral responsibility exemplary conduct and accountability. Justice, according to Sheikh Uthman ibn Fodiye, comprises of Prophetic and terminological. (Othman vol. I, 2013: 69). What Prophetic justice entails is that the leader should bring close to him the people that are knowledgeable, men who give counsel and rational opinion. Terminological justice has to do with the policy which kings use to apply before the coming of Islam and which was approved and emphasized by the Prophet. For a leader gains victory over his enemies according to his justice over his people, and is defeated in his struggles according to his injustice. It was on the basis of such policy that the leader administered the affairs of his people, so anyone that abandoned it had the possibility of his sovereignty destroyed (*ibid.* 72).

Abdullahi ibn Fodiye's consideration of justice as one of the foundations of leadership is that "leadership is representing Allah [the Exalted and the Most High] and his Prophet [peace be upon him]. Therefore, nothing is of more advantage than it and nothing is more difficult than it" (Abdullahi 2013: 161). If the leader does justice the fear of Allah will help him in cutting the veins of his soul's interests. On the other way round, if he does injustice, the soul's desire will destroy him by cutting the veins of his piety. The leader is under obligation to observe justice by restoring to everyone his right. It is all the same whether that right is extracted from the leader or others. It is the interest of justice to treat any two disputants equally with the regard to their entry into his court, the way they sit, the way he looks at them, the way he addresses them, and in all matters relating to them without showing favour to either of them. The leader must sit in audience everyday where people, especially women and children can reach him. It is not enough for him to rely of the civil servants else he becomes like a staircase to the landlord or holder of cow horns to those milking (*ibid.* 164f.). That is to say that if the leader does not have some time to listen to the people the officials he appointed could use their positions to exploit the masses in his name.

Muhammad Bello, however, echoed that the Prophet said "Any man who arbitrates between two opponents and commits injustice [should bear in mind that] the curse of Allah is on all unjust people."

He also said to his companions, “There are three people on whom Allah will not look on the Day of Resurrection: a ruler who tells lies, a fornicating old man, and a braggart poor man.” He one day said that “A day will come when you will conquer some part of the East and the West, and they will both be in your hands. All those who will take public office will be in hell fire, except those who fear Allah the Glorious the Most High, and have followed the path of piety and discharge their duties honestly.” Bello continues to write that the Prophet, may the blessing and peace of Allah be upon him, also said, “Any servant of Allah appointed to take charge of the affairs of his people who cheats or refuses to give them good advice or fails to treat them sympathetically, will be denied access to paradise by Allah.” He also said: “Whoever is appointed to the charge of affairs of Muslims and he fails to protect them as much as he would protect his own household, will certainly take his seat in hell.” He also declared, “Two men from my community will not have my intercession: an unjust ruler and loathsome heretic who always overstep the prescribed limits.” He said further that “He who will suffer the greatest torture on the Day of Resurrection is the tyrannical ruler.” (Bello vol. II, 2013: 259-262). From the above, for Bello, justice is judging between disputing parties impartially and correctly, telling the truth, being pious, discharging ones duties in an honest manner, abstaining from cheating, advising people on doing good and treating them with sympathy. It also involves the leader protecting his subjects at all cost and in all conditions and must not be a tyrant.

Moreover, he reiterated that there are seven fundamentals to politics, the attainment of which equates to justice. Two of the seven have to do with the leader, two concerns his cabinet and public servants, and the remaining three have to do with the citizens. These are fear of God, simplicity, scholarship, instructing cabinet and civil servants to be just, demanding love and compassion from and between the citizens, creating jobs, and making impartial appointments (*ibid.* 263-268).

Justice, to the triumvirates, means political action in accordance with all the various aspects of the *shari'a*. As a result, Divine Law has a significant role in determining the political system predicated

upon the Islamic conceptualization of justice. The Sokoto Caliphate reflected this commitment. Hence, Bello states that their “...essence derives from the meaning of justice. Justice is the whole of politics” (Bello vol. II, 2003: 263). This, however, strongly suggests that the concept is ethically significant in leadership. Moreover, the way the concept was handled by the Sokoto scholars suggest that a number of desirable ends are seen as dependent for their achievement on the application of one aspect or another of this ethical guide. It is in fact the application of justice in a given environment that leads to achieving the desired end. Justice, therefore, is regarded as instrumental to the endurance of the caliphate. It is obviously necessary for the security and well-being of mankind as a whole. The scholars’ understanding of this necessity made them emphatically declare such comments like “a kingdom can endure with unbelief but not with injustice” (Othman vol. III, 2013: 182 and El-Masri, 1978: 7), “Victory is gained through justice and defeat comes through injustice” (Othman vol. III, 2013: 195 and El-Masri, 1978: 14), “You should know that there are two kind of policies: there is an unjust policy which is prohibited by law, and a just policy which helps people regain their rights from the unjust person” (Abdullahi vol. III, 2013: 33). In *Al-Gaith al-Wabl* [ Heavy rainfalls] Bello says “Justice and mercy safeguard the kingdom” and “The basis for the well-being of the world is justice.”

The scholars stipulate a close connection between prevalent justice and effective leadership, because it is needed if government is to be effective. They connected success in government with making justice prevail by insisting that only the best of men should be entrusted with leadership, “The closest to God among you is the just leader. The most distanced from God and most hated is a leader who is an oppressor” (Bello vol. II, 2013: 260). They reject the ascendancy of a greedy leader and do not accept the making of his tyranny in the statement that “Authority given to those unfit for it is oppression...” (Bello vol. II, 2013: 263f.). Moreover, when a leader is told to “...base his judgement on the testimony of competent and honest witness” (Abdullahi vol. III, 2013: 164), and when he is given to understand in the clearest possible language that “when a gift finds its

way to a man of authority, justice and goodness will find their way out of him” (*ibid.* 163) we should realise that the essential process of leadership is under scrutiny. The advice to a person in leadership position to “use your discretion more of this or less of that till the scales are balanced” (*ibid.* 33-36), the categorical statement that “the stronghold of a king is his impartiality” (Othman vol. III, 2013: 65-73), and the exhortation to him to obey the laws his government has enacted so that he does “not let his action fall short of his words” (Abdullahi vol. III, 2013: 33-36) also suggest that the operations of leadership is under examination.

The concerns of the Sokoto scholars show that justice is an ethical good in its own right, not as a means to another desirable end. Leaders are implored to treat any two warring parties equally because such action is in the interest of justice, to recognise that all people are equal before the law so that they do not exempt anybody from the severity of law, to perceive justice simply as the cause of good and to regard whatever results in the establishment of the rules of law as desirable. When justice as impartiality is seen as a means to securing an end, reward in other worldly terms becomes, in the sphere of ethical religious interest, the hardest currency.

Another foundation of leadership according to the triumvirates is service to the people. In *Bayan Wujub al-Hijra...* the Sheikh’s perception is that service to the people by the leader, through welfare, is more effective than the use of force. It has been said that the crown of a leader is his integrity, his stronghold is his impartiality and his wealth is [the welfare of] his people. There can be no triumph with transgression, no rule without learning and no leadership with vengeance (Hiskett, 1963: 13). Abdullahi, in *Diya’al Hukkam fiy maa lahum wa alaihim* [Guide to Judges on their Rights and Responsibility] posits that the governor has to see to the welfare of his people. He must not think that he is the owner of the province over which he is made to govern, whereby the land becomes his personal property which he can give to whom he likes and refuse to give to those he dislikes. Such action is misguided and belongs to the *jahiliyya* [ignorance] period. He should realise that he has been entrusted to take charge of people only for the purpose of looking after their religious



and temporal interests. (Abdullahi, 2013: 184f.). Bello's position on this is that whoever is tempted by Allah with *wilaya* [public office] should exert himself in discharging its obligations. Although it can be a misfortune, it is nevertheless one of the greatest blessings. Any person, who discharges his obligation [well] and thanks the Benefactor (Allah), will acquire an endless happiness the like of which never exists. On the other hand, any person who could not discharge his obligation and thank the Bestower [Allah] shall suffer an endless fortune, which can be compared only to disbelief in Allah the Most High (Bello vol. II, 2013: 259). He supported this with two narrations of *Hadith* which show the significance of service to the people by a leader. These narrations say that:

(1) *One day of justice [serving his people well] by a leader is better than seventy years of act of worship.* (2) *On the day of resurrection, there would be no shade but that of Allah. Seven categories of people shall enjoy that shade. [the first among them] a leader who is just (in service) to his people.* (*ibid.* 259f.)

Service to community is an ideological system of intelligent men in power. The whole of their action has to have the achievement of some community service as their underlying nature. Thus Abdullahi's suggestion is very critical because it emphasises the community-oriented facet and the public aspect of the *jihad*. It might have appeared to him that an effective way of doing that is to go beyond the Sheikh's idea of 'good work'.

Sheikh Uthman ibn Fodiye's ethical idea about doing 'good' by a leader is unambiguous from the explanations in *Bayan Wujub al-Hijra...* He shows that goodness [*ihsan*] is keeping to honourable manners. Since God knows that not everybody prospers through justice alone, but also stands in need of goodness which is superior to justice, He has enjoined the both. The citizens, therefore, stand in relation to the leader in three categories thus: the old, the young, and those in-between. The leader must treat the old like his parents, the young like his children, and those in-between like his brothers and

sisters. Let him then be dutiful to his parents [the old], affectionate to his children [the young], and generous to his brothers and sisters [those in-between] (Othman vol. III, 2013:72f.). This idea has a concern for lightening the burden of state and religious duties of the masses and limiting the inconveniences and threats of power and authority is bound to cause to them. As such, Bello in the Second Fundamental of his *Usul al-Siyasah* [Principles of Leadership] quoted the *Qur'an* verse which says:

*It is in the mercy of God that you became easy going for them. Were you too strict, of hardened heart, they would have dispersed from you. (Qur'an 3: 159)*

His exegesis to this is that the Amir, the Imam or the governor should be of simple character with inclination of forgiving spirit, avoiding anger, favour and transgression. He should have the best of instincts such as patience, bravery and the spirit of generosity. In the case where he is not easy going with the inclination for forgiveness and frequently prone to anger, it is feared that his people would disperse from him (Bello 2013: 264). In the Seventh Fundamental, moreover he specifies that the leader should be gentle in treating his people, not burden them with unnecessary things, deal with them according to their circumstances, and be tolerant about things which are not forbidden by the *shari'a*, not to be strict about the obligation of forbidden things pertaining which there is no consensus. He refers to two *Hadith* in which the Prophet said:

[1] *Whatever thing I kept quiet about, that is a bonus for you.*

[2] *Whoever takes responsibility in the affairs of my ummah and makes things difficult for them, O Allah make things difficult for him and whoever takes responsibility in the affairs of my ummah and becomes merciful with them, O Lord be merciful with him. (ibid. 268)*

By giving these examples, Bello articulates that “the Prophet understood the rules from Allah better than anyone else, but he treated the

masses according to their varied capacities. He absorbed the foolishness of the Bedouin Arabs, the disturbances of the hypocrites... he used to leave the faithful ones with their faith and shoulder them with responsibilities based on the strength of their faith.” That is why, according to Bello, of the Prophet’s attitude God said in the *Qur’an*:

*Verily a messenger has come to you from among yourselves. Your suffering pains him, [he is] very keen about you, very passionate and merciful about the believers. If they turn their back say: “God is sufficient for me, no deity but Him, on Him I have relied. And he is the Lord of great throne” (Qur’an, 9: 128f.)*

Bello’s point here is that duties the necessity of which is not absolutely agreed upon by the community should not be imposed on people, because that will be harsh on them. The leader should be good by acting towards the people with grace and guiding hands. When variations became manifest on matters which are mere legislation by man, for instance those matters which the *ulama* have enacted by using their own senses, the leader should pardon people and take it easy on them. Abdullahi reiterates that people should be enlightened with laws according to the needs of the situation in time and place to make things easy for them.

Moral responsibility is another ethical foundation of leadership that gains some consideration from the Sokoto scholars. A nation with morally upright citizens is more likely to be productive than one in which people’s character is appalling. Being supportive to each other and self-effacing also creates love and happiness in a community. To a large extent it is the responsibility of the leader to discipline his subjects towards attaining these entire moral traits. In *Usul al-Siyasah*, therefore, Bello shows that the leader should order his people to observe justice, goodness, and avoid doing injustice to each other. They should also love and do good deeds and hate evil and stay away from it. In essence, the moral value and the conduct of the leader is a reflection of the ethical value of the conduct of his people. “If they behave well, therefore, in the sight of their Beneficent Mas-

ter, the Glorious and the High, He will inject mercy in the hearts of their leaders to be good to them. On the other hand, if they disobey their Lord and seek to corrupt the world, He will cause their leaders to subdue and consequently ill-treat them.” Bello refers to the *Qur’an* and the *hadith* saying:

*As such we set the oppressors against one another because of what they are wont to have. (Qur’an, 6: 129)*  
*You would be given leaders in accordance with your behaviour –hadith (Bello vol. II 2013: 266)*

Exemplary conduct takes the next segment of the Sokoto scholars’ examination of the ethical foundation of leadership. This is to be expected because a revolutionary movement like one which led to the establishment of the caliphate should place high premium on ethical trait that is connected to self-sacrifice. Such trait like exemplary conduct may be accomplished through abstinence, moderation and asceticism. The *sheikh* condemns the pre-*jihad* Hausaland leaders for luxurious lifestyle, bodily pleasure and overindulgence in eating while he praises moderation in personal conduct and undemanding way of life (Hiskett 1963: 27). Abdullahi is emphatic that government must cut any expenses which “cause damage to the treasury” (Abdullahi vol. III 2013: 161). He enjoins that authority is a curb to the willful soul of men, so every leader should put on the mantle of dignity whether in town or in country. The leader manifests the love of what is excellent, and of worthy people; despise corruption and corrupt people. He should adorn his body, perfume his breath, and make comely his apparel with adornments that are permissible without imitation or reducing the treasury into bankruptcy. The leader should not decorate himself with gold, silver, voluminous silk because to do that is shameful, ignoble and improper.

The leader’s eyes should be downcast though his gaze should be searching and his glances should be observant. While meeting any group or individual the leader is warned to approach men with due courtesy. In the words of al-Maghili, Abdullahi refers thus:

Laugh not loudly ever for only the blind do,  
thus to increase his blindness.  
Be covetous of silence always  
for seldom is the talker safe.  
If you must speak, be brief and clear.  
Be humble against the time of death  
and so forestall regret. (*ibid.* 165ff.)

Bello's position on exemplary conduct reflects in his advice to Umarun Dallaji that "the *Amir* should be abstinent in his worldly life" (Bello vol. II, 2013: 263). His reference to the tradition of Caliph Umar ibn Khattab of stipulating to newly appointed administrators not to wear expensive clothes, not to ride the best of horses, and not to eat specially prepared food (*ibid.* 265f.) is a clear testimony of the puritan ethics of the triumvirate. Abdullahi's final words pertaining to exemplary conduct is that "...leaders should not use their offices and resort to acquiring wealth and fame instead on concentrating on their public duties" (Smith [nd]: 6).

Accountability is the last ethical foundation of leadership, from the arguments of the Sokoto scholars, which this paper attempts to discuss. There is an element of accountability where justice becomes an obligation which "God seeks from a ruler", by way of the leader's justification of his stewardship. Bello, in *Usul al-Siyasa* explicate that the greatest trial is for someone to be a leader or a king. He would be asked to give a full account of his leadership. The servant would have to give account for his words, actions and affairs being a leader, he would also have to give account of his people. Giving account of himself alone is enough, let alone giving account of his people. He therefore said:

Whoever is placed in obscurity by Allah should praise Him, for he had lightened for him the burden of responsibilities for which he should be accountable. He is one of those with easy account, saved from the troubles of this world, as there is nothing in it but censure; otherwise he shall have nothing but torture in the world to come. (Bello vol. II, 2013: 259).

Bello emphasises that “it is for this reason that the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with him, says in a *hadith*:

*May I tell you what leadership is all about? [the companions said] Yes, O Messenger of Allah. He [then] said “Blame is its begging, regret is its middle, and the third part is punishment in the hereafter.” (ibid. 259).*

The picture here is that of un-despotic community which holds citizens including the leaders, to account for the responsibility given them. Without accountability, one can imagine the possibility of leadership so virtuous as to exercise prerogative always and only to truncate public good. Such prerogative power allows the leader as executive to act against the laws. The argument is that an iniquitous leader could apply his selfish interest to transgress thereby bringing about loss of people’s rights.

### **Conclusion**

Our discussion attempted to show that the Sokoto scholars have structured some principles which can practically make the leaders of, not only their time but beyond, live a morally responsible official and private life. The philosophy of the enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong is entrenched in the Sokoto Caliphate as a result of the triumvirates understanding of the fundamental duty of any Islamic reformer. This supports our argument for divine command ethics in their method. Sulayiman (1986: 47) reflects how in his *Al-Amr bil ma’ruf wa al-nahy anil-Munkar* [Commanding the Good and Forbidding the Bad], Sheikh Uthman ibn Fodiye deals with three broad matters: looking at the call as a historical social necessity, proposing basic guidelines for discharging that duty, and the issue of armed confrontation. As a man who strives for righteousness he gathered people through intellectual and administrative ethics to the path of right. Two related factors have made the Caliphate’s fate possible: conscious and disciplined political leadership and intellectually conscious and accountable public workers. Such conditions obviated the

emergence of legitimate and stable leadership that could ensure discipline among the masses. Socioeconomic development and political change would extricable intertwine. And in many instances leadership seems to have preceded social change. Together with capable lieutenants in the person of Abdullahi and Bello, their intension to determine the religious nuances to be of comparative primacy within Hausaland made them ideological revolutionaries before 1800. The scholars show a deeper and more profound understanding of human society as well as the ability to act justly by virtue of moral superiority. The disciplined leadership of the Sheikh, the scholarly tradition they generally represent and the divine command ethics they particularly used flourished through their writings which served to guide the governors or emirs and other officials they appointed throughout the Caliphate for a social change which aimed for the good of all.

### **References:**

- Abdullahi, F., Yahya, A.B. et.al, 2013, *Selected Writings of Sheikh Abdullahi bn Fodiyo, Vol. I-III*, Gusau: Iqra' Publishing House.
- Al-Tabrizi, 1961, *Mihkat al-Masabih*, Damascus.
- Arnett, J., 1992, *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani*, Kano: Government Printers.
- Augi, R.A., 1984, "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, Zaria.
- Balogun, I.A.B., 1967, "A Critical edition of the *Ihya al-Sunnah wa Ikhmad al-Bid'a* of Uthman Dan Fodio", Ph.D. Dissertation, University of London.
- Bello, S.M., Yahya, A.B. et.al, (2013). *Selected Writings of Sultan Muhammadu Bello, Vol. I-III*, Gusau: Iqra' Publishing House.
- Bobboyi, H., (ed.), 2011, *Principles of Leadership according to the Founding Fathers of the Sokoto Caliphate*, Abuja: Centre for Regional Integration and Development.
- Curtin, P.D., 1975. *Economic change in precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the era of the slave trade*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- El-Masri, 1963, "Life of Shehu Usman b. Fodio before the *Jihad*",

- Journal of Historic Sources of Nigeria* 2, no. 4, pp 6-16.
- Fieser, J., *Ethics. An encyclopaedia of philosophy articles written by professional philosophers*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/ethics/>
- Fisher, H. J., 1978, "Leo Africanus and the Songhay conquest of Hausaland", *International Journal of African Historical Study* XI, 86-112.
- Fisher, H.J., 1977, "The eastern Maghrib and the Central Sudan", [in:] Roland Oliver (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Africa*, III Cambridge: University Press, pp. 8-21.
- Fodiye, Muhammad Bello (ca. 1806). *Principles of Politics: Being the Translation of Usul Al-Siyasah by Muhammad Bello b. Uthman b. Fodiye*. Trans. Shehu 1978. A Publication of the Sokoto Caliphate Bicentenary Conference, Baraka Press, Abuja.
- Fodiye, Muhammad Bello b., *Infaqul Maisuri (The Rise of the Sokoto Caliphate)*, translated by E.J. Arnett in 1922, Kano.
- Fodiye, Shaykh Abdullahi b., *Diya'al Hukkam (Guide to Administrators)*, translated by M. Hiskett in 1963, Kano.
- Fodiye, Shaykh Abdullahi b., (n.d.1), *'Idha' al-Nusukh*.
- Fuglestad, F., 1978, "A Reconsideration of Hausa History before the Jihad", *The Journal of African History* 19(3), pp. 319-339.
- Habila, U. and Danfulani, D., 1999, „Factors Contributing to the Survival of the Bori Cult in Northern Nigeria”, *Numen* 46(4), pp. 412-447.
- Hamid, A.A.A., 1979, "Contributions of the Sokoto Jihad Leaders to Qur'anic Studies", [in:] Usman, Y. B. (ed.). *Studies in the History of the Sokoto Caliphate*, New York: Third Press International.
- Hiskett, M. (ed.& trans.), 1963, *Tazyīn al-waraqāt* [by 'Abdallāh Ibn-Muḥammad Ibn-Fūdī], Ibadan: University Press.
- Hiskett, M., 1965, "The historical background to the naturalization of Arabic loan-words in Hausa", *African Languages Studies*, VI, pp. 18-26.
- Hodgkin, T., 1975, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, London: Oxford University Press.



- Hunwick, J.O., 1985, "Songhay, Borno and the Hausa states, 1450-1600", [in:] A.F.A. Ajayi and Michael Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, Harlow: Longman, pp. 323-370.
- Hunwick, J.O., 1971, "The Dynastic Chronologies of the Central Sudan States in the Sixteenth Century: Some Reinterpretations", *Kano Studies New Series* 1, 1 pp. 40-55.
- Ibn Battuta, 1929, *Travels in Asia and Africa*, (translated and edited by Gibb, H. A. R.) London: Broadway House.
- Imam, I., 1966, *Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio*, Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation.
- Kani, A.M., 1983, *The Intellectual Origin of the Sokoto Caliphate*, Ibadan: Iman Publications.
- Kelsay, J., 1994, "Divine Command Ethics in Early Islam: Al-Shafī'i and the Problem of Guidance", *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 22 (1), pp. 101-126.
- Last, M., 1967, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, London: Longman.
- Levtzion, N., 1971, "The Western Maghrib and the Sudan", [in:] R. Olivier (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Africa*, vol. 3, Cambridge: University Press, pp. 331-462.
- Lovejoy, P., 1978, "The Role of the Wangara in the Economic Transformation of the Central Sudan in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries", *The Journal of African History* 19(2), pp. 173-193.
- Maishanu, H.M., Maishanu, I.M., 1999, "The Jihād and the Formation of the Sokoto Caliphate", *Islamic Studies* 38 (1), pp. 119-131.
- Yahya, A.B. et.al, 2013, *Selected Writings of Sheikh Othman bn Fodiyo, Vol. I-III*, Iqra' Publishing House, Gusau.
- Smith, A., [nd], "Notes on Leadership from *Al-Wilayat* of Abdullahi bn Fodiyo", [in:] A. Smith, *Abdullahi bn Fodiyo, Diyā' al Wilāyāt*.
- Smith, A., 1976, "The early States of the Central Sudan", [in:] J.F.A. Ajayi, Michael Crowther (eds.). *History of West Africa*, vol. I, London: Longman, pp. 152-195.
- Smith, M.G., 1978, *The Affairs of Daura: History and Change in a Hausa State, 1800-1958*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

- Quick, A.H., 1995, “Aspects of Islamic Social Intellectual History in Hausaland: Uthman Ibn Fudi, 1774-1804 C.E.”, PhD Thesis, University of Toronto, Canada.
- Rahman, F., 1966, *Islam*, London: Weidenfield and Nicolson.
- Sutton, J., 1979, “Towards a less Orthodox History of Hausaland”, *The Journal of African History* 20(2), pp. 179-201.
- Tukur, M., (2004). *Leadership and Governance in Nigeria: The Relevance of Value*, London: Hudahuda Press/Hodder & Stoughton.
- Wierenga, E. (1983). “A Defensible Divine Command Theory”, *Noûs*, 17(3), 387-407.
- Yola, J. H., 2004, *Philosophy among the Sokoto Scholars*, Kano: Benchmark Publishers.