

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SHEHU USMAN DAN FODIO OF SOKOTO AND SHEHU AL-AMIN EL-KANEMI OF BORNO

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the contributions and contrast between Shehu Usman Dan Fodio of Sokoto caliphate and Muhammad Almin El-Kanemi of Borno. Much is written about these two prominent Islamic scholars due to their immense contributions to scholarship, promotion of Islamic religion and good leadership. The researcher adopted the secondary methodology to gather information from articles, published books and the nets for the work. The paper discovered that even though there are many similarities among them in areas of religion, economic and politics, the two scholars differs in some approaches hence, the need for comparative study of their life styles and contributions to society. The researcher suggests religious leaders in Nigeria should learn the lesson of coexistence in a pluralistic society such as ours from these past leaders despite differences in faith.

KEYWORDS: Comparison, Contrast, Islamic Scholars, Usman Danfodio, Shehu Al-Amin El- Kanemi

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of human history has witnessed a general trend that shows a handful of incredibly outstanding personalities, who have left indelible marks in the histories of the lands and communities, wherein they lived. Shehu Usman Danfodio and Shehu Al-Almin El-Kanemi were such extraordinary leaders, teachers, reformers, and men of noble conduct, who through their gifted talents and intellectual prowess have helped to change the course of history of their people. The Religious, Political, Economic and social contributions made by these two leaders has come to stay with history in the archives of Nigeria and the world at large. If Nigeria once produced these calibre of renown leaders, why then is the nation suffering from poor governance? Chinua Achebe (1983) asserts that the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. He further argues that there is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character, land, climate, water, air or anything else concerning the Country except leadership. Iweh (1987) concurred with Achebe's submission on the fact that leadership is to a society what an eye is to the human body. By implication, Nigeria is abundantly blessed with talented leaders. If these contemporary leaders can learn lessons from past leaders such as Usman

Dan Fodio and El- Kanemi, our nation can once again be great instead of fertilizing the ground for the incessant rise in political, social and religious crises being witnessed.

The researcher employed the qualitative method which involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. The qualitative method is used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. The researcher used this methodology to gather information from published texts, articles and webs sources.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Comparative

This word means to be measured or judged by estimating the similarity or dissimilarity between one thing and another. Contrast on the other hand means a difference between two or more people or things that you can see clearly when they are compared together or put close together; the fact of comparing two or more things in order to show the differences between them. Study as used in this context implies the *act or process of applying the mind so as to acquire knowledge or understanding*, as by reading, investigating, etc

Jihad

The concept is understood in different ways by different scholars. For instance, Ayatullah (1984) defines jihad from an Arabic word meaning different things but basically implying to strive, to struggle or to use force in defence of Islam and its propagation as applied in the Quran. Ali (1986) on the other hand allege that jihad is a tool of fighting for survival hence that among the Arabs, raiding was a means of freeing oneself from want. Nzomiwu (1989) varied from the views exhibited above. To him, the term is classified into various categories, types and kinds but they agree with the basic or popular four kinds of jihad which are “Jihad by the heart; Jihad by the tongue; Jihad by the hand and Jihad by the sword.

Pluralistic Society

The International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences (2001) defines a pluralistic society as a society that embraces diversity in terms of religion, social groups, values, and political powers, where different groups are equally entitled to develop freely and engage in the political process.

Leadership

While Gary Yukl (2006) defines leadership as “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives”. Peter Northouse (2010) on the other hand defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal”.

SHEHU USMAN DANFODIO OF SOKOTO

Birth, Childhood and Education of Shehu Usman Danfodio

According to Balogun (1981), Usman Ibn Fodio was born at Maratta, on December 15, 1754. His father was Muhammad Ibn Salih, known generally as Fodio. His mother was Hawwa Bint Muhammad Ibn Usman. Uthman belongs to the Fulani ethnic group which had migrated from Futa Toro in Senegal and settled in the Hausa city- State of Gobir (Balogun 1979). It is recorded that Uthman's birth was prophesied by a Fulani woman saint called Umm Ham. She predicted that:

A saint who will reform religion, revive the Sunna and establish a community. He will be followed by those who agree with him, and will be renowned far and wide. Both the common people and the nobles will adhere to his command, and those connected with him will be known as the Jama'a. Their sign is that they will not tend cattle as is customary with the Fulani. Whoever witnesses that time should follow him (Balogun 1979).

This assertion made by Umm Ham brings to mind what Prof. Nengel had earlier stressed in his lectures on the "Jihad", that in Islam, the advent of a Mahdi is expected at the end of every century. According to (Al- Islam.Org), *Al-Mahdi*, "The Rightly Guided One", is the name given to the restorer of religion and justice who, according to a widely held Muslim belief, will rule before the end of the world. Although, the term *Mahdi* as such does not occur in the Qur'an but is derived from the Arabic root *h-d-y* commonly used in the Qur'an with the meaning of divine guidance. Such a one was and is expected to revive and purify the religion from all adulterations the religion must have passed through over the years (ibid).

When dan Fodio was a child, his parents settled in Degel, where he eventually started his activities as a young adult. His early education included Arabic, memorization (hifz) of the Qur'an, Maliki jurisprudence, and Muslim traditions. His life was marked by the influence of his teacher, Jibril B. Umar, a prominent Sufi scholar who initiated dan Fodio into the Qadiri Sufi order. Sufism played a considerable role in dan Fodio's life and career (Balogun 1976). As a youth, Uthman Dan Fodio received his education under the feet of such talented scholars like Jibril (Martin 1976). Later he followed the Muslim traditional pattern of study which comprises the memorization of the Quran, rudimentary reading and writing, translation of the Quran, some knowledge of the hadith, law, grammar rhetoric and simple arithmetic. Ahmad Abdullahi Ibrahim (2017) concurred that after finishing at home his basic studies of reading and writing Arabic, memorization and translation of the Quran, some knowledge of hadith and jurisprudence, grammar and arithmetic, Uthman obtained the advanced knowledge of Shariah sciences from specialized professors of the subjects such as Shaykh Abdul Rahman Ibn Hammadah, his maternal uncle Uthman Bidduri, Muhammad Sambo, Muhammad Ibn Rajab, and Jibril

Ibn Umar. Uthman was said to have moved from one Professor to another in order to receive these branches of knowledge (Balogun 1979).

The young Uthman was described as of exceptionally high moral character with great intellectual gifts and of vivid eloquence (Hussayn Abdul Qawi, 2024). Two of his teachers, al-Haji Jibril B. Umar and Bidduri exerted so much influence on his life. He imitated and followed Jibril for nearly two years where his life was moulded in deeds and states. It was from this teacher that Uthman picked up the idea that eventually resulted in his successful Jihad against un-Islamic practices that abounded in Hausa land during his time (Qawi 2024).

His Preaching and Hijrah

Uthman Dan Fodio started to preach and teach at the age of twenty (al-Sa'di, 1898). According to his brother's account (Balogun 1979), the content of his curriculum includes prosody, theology, Grammar, mysticism, law, Quaranic exegesis, Hadith and Arithmetic. He stressed that the common people should only study the basic knowledge necessary for carrying out their daily religious obligations and leave the details to the Ulama. In addition, he further stressed that a person does not need to study all the sciences before he can become an educated person, rather, anyone who knows any branch of knowledge is considered a learned person in that field and he should go ahead and start teaching the knowledge acquired to people.

His missionary activities started at Degel and after some time he went out on preaching tours. His first visit was to Kebbi where he made some converts. He later on met the Sultan Bawa and asked for support. From here, he took his brother Adbdullah and his assistants and made for Zamfara. After five years of mission work, he returned to Degel and continued preaching to his Kinsmen (Bello 1957).

His Jihad

With a large followership, Uthman decided to break with the established government of the land. In an effort to prevent this ugly development of a separate Muslim group in his kingdom, the Sultan Yunfa made an attempt to kill Uthman in Alkalawa the capital of Gobir (Waldman 1965). Further tension broke out when Danfodio's disciples forcibly freed some Muslims who were disciples of the Hausa scholar, Abdul-Salem that were being taken as captives to Alkalawa. The state was now divided between Uthman and Yunfa (Crother 1978).

As a result of this development, Uthman took his companions, father, his brother Abdullah, and his son Muhammed Bello and fled to Gudu on the Western frontier of Gobir. This flight was considered a hijrah in imitation of the prophet Muhammed from Mecca to Medina (Masud 1986)

At Gudu, Dan Fodio un-willingly accepted the title of Amir al- muminin (commander of the faithful) and then proclaimed a Jihad against unbelievers (Hunwick

1966, Abiola 1984) Kaura (2004) further argued that Uthman had a genuine reason for declaring the Jihad. They pointed out that at this time, the Hausa leaders practiced slavery, received bribes in courts, mixed Islam with paganism, and there was corruption in appointments to offices. Besides, merchants complained bitterly of heavy market taxes, while nomads hated the tax on cattle. These vices prepared a fertile ground for the Jihad to spread like wild fire during the Harmattan. People welcomed the Jihad, supported it and promoted it without fear or pretence (Abiola 1984, Kaura 2004).

Many authors identify and discussed some of the observable remote and immediate Causes of the Jihad as polluted religion and the desire for its purification. Milsome (1979) states that Usman dan Fodio's jihad was aimed at reviving Islam in Hausa land towards the orthodox line. The Fulanis accused the Hausa rulers of polytheism and other un-Islamic practices. As Adeleye (1971) affirms, it was circumstances like these that brought about the tension which precipitated the Jihad.

Other Scholars viewed as factor the horrible and unfriendly Environment. The general state of Hausa land was that of oppression and suppression of the masses. Milsome (1979) notes that Usman dan Fodio alleged that corruption was widespread in the Hausa government with appointments being based on bribes, rather than merit. Clarke (1982) confirms the fact that Hausa land before the jihad was that of extortion and oppressive taxation. Nwanaju (2008) concurs that the pre-Jihad Hausa state was that of an environment where slave trade thrived. They raided their neighbours to the south and west for the acquisition of slaves. From the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, the use of human beings for slavery was very popular in Hausa land. Sulaiman (1986) on the other hand identifies a ceaseless interplay between the forces of decay and regeneration in Hausa land before the Jihad. Lenshie and Ayokhai (2013) affirm that the repressive nature of Hausa people particularly Gobir rulers, by their actions showed them as wicked in a land considered the home of Islam.

The quest for freedom and thirst for wealth: Some scholars such as Abiola (1984) said that many factors combined to make the Fulani people take up arms against the Hausa states. Apart from the aim of reforming Islam from its fast fading fame and glory, the political interest of wresting power from the Hausa rulers who they could not imagine lording policies over them and the quest for wealth were said to be other factors for the outbreak of the Jihad. Abiola (1984) states that the Fulani group wanted to become economically independent and set also their eyes on the Caravan routes across the Sahara Dessert which the Hausa kings controlled as they knew this route would fetch them a lot of money if they take charge.

Another observable cause of the Jihad was tribalism and mutual suspicion. Abubakar (2003) noted that divisions on ethnic lines between the Fulbe people who were mostly nomadic herdsmen and the ruling agrarian Hausa people cause the rivalry. The groups did not only have different dominant occupations but also their societies were differently structured. The population was increasingly growing, making it increasingly

difficult for the Fulbe to move their herds. This increased tensions over limited land and the migratory ability of the Fulbe group threatened their neighbours.

Hunger for political empowerment was another factor that ignited the Jihad. The thirst for political engagement motivated the outbreak of the Jihad as observed by many authors. Adeleye (1971) observed that politically the Fulani tribe had lived in Hausa land for centuries yet they were not considered for political appointments. A great number of learned Fulani men suffered the disabilities of second-class citizens. These treatments became the remote causes of the Usman dan Fodio's 1804 Jihad; and because the remote causes were not checkmated due to weak and clueless leadership; they gave room for the immediate and full blown outbreak of the war.

Khalid (2012) identifies fidgeted leadership as another factor that caused the Jihad. He stresses that in 1789, Usman dan Fodio was invited by Bawa the king of Gobir to celebrate Id al Kabir at Magami. Bawa planned to kill Fodio during the celebration. Fodio honoured the invitation and went to Magami with a thousand followers. When the king saw the population that accompanied Fodio, the king quickly changed his mind and instead tried to win the followers of Fodio over to himself by offering them gifts. Afigbo (1999) argues that the popularity of Usman dan Fodio among the populace was a threat the kings of Gobir could not manage and attempted to seize Usman dan Fodio to punish him. He asserts that the Hausa states proceeded to attack every Fulani element within and outside Hausa land. Another factor has to do with how Usman dan Fodio released his kinsmen who were slaves under the Gobir rulership. It was against the king's wish. Thus, the Fulani group rallied round their kinsman who initiated the war (Afigbo 1999).

Another factor that brought about the Jihad was the wicked leadership of the ancient Gobir land which was reluctant to face the reality of the masses' suffering. Kaura (2004) observed that there were increased oppression and exploitation of the talakawa (commoners) by the Masu sarauta (rulers). These oppression and exploitation were perpetuated through the collection of numerous taxes and levies, occasional confiscation of peasant property, forced labour, compulsory military service and enslavement. Usman dan Fodio was said to have repeatedly contacted the king of Gobir, Bawa Jan Gwarzo concerning the evil activities and the social decadence prevalent in the area but the king paid no attention. Usman dan Fodio's confrontation of the evils in Hausa land made him become more popular.

In addition, the attempt at the lives of Usman Dan Fodio and his allies led to the Jihad. According to Crowder (1978), the persecution started from Bawa between 1789 and 1790, to Nafata who ruled between 1794 and 1801 and down to Yunfa in 1801. It culminated in the threat to Usman dan Fodio's life by Yunfa and with his attack on Abdulsalam, a reliable disciple of Usman dan Fodio who resided at Gimbassa in 1801. The stage thus became set for an open confrontation between Usman dan Fodio's followers and the king of Gobir. Kaura (2004) concurred that confrontation ensued as Gobir's army attempted to wipe out the Islamic community at Gudu in 1804. In the battle

that followed, the Gobir's army was defeated by the mujahhidun led by Abdullah the brother of Usman dan Fodio who was the Amir al-Jaish-commander of the armed forces.

After the Jihad and the consolidation of the Hausa land under his control in 1810, Uthman moved to Sifawa where for five years he devoted himself to scholarly pursuits. Before he withdrew from active conduct of affairs, Uthman divided the newly won empire into two. The eastern part with Gwandu as its headquarters under his brother Abdullah and the western part with Sokoto as its headquarters placed under his son Muhammed Bello (Balogun 1987). Uthman Dan Fodio (who was a prolific writer), retired to continue writing Islamic literature (Balogun 1987). This great revolutionist later passed away after a year's illness on April 20th 1817 and was succeeded by his son as the Amir al-Muminin (Quintana 2010).

SHEHU AL - AMIN EL-KANEMI OF BORNO

Shehu al-Hajj Muhammad al-Amîn ibn Muhammad al-Kanem was born in Murzuk in 1776. His father, Muhammad Ninka, was a well-known local Kanembu *mallam* ('Islamic teacher') from Fahi, a village near Mao in the Kanem Province of the Kanem-Bornu Empire (Brenner 1973). His mother was the daughter of a wealthy Arab trader from Fun. He spent much of his early years in Murzuk, where he was taught the Qur'an by his father. To further his studies, he travelled to other places, including Tripoli, to study under various scholars (Isichei 1997).

Louis Brenner (1973) affirms that Al- Kanemi received his training when he was a youth. He pursues the normal course of study for young boys. After learning the Quran and studying some of the standard books of law, he travelled to other places such as Tripoli to further his education under various scholars. He later accompanied his father to Medina on pilgrimage. Though, his father died while in Medina, al- Kanemi stayed back for ten years pursuing further religious studies (Brenner 1973). Ajayi (1972) explained that, on his way back to Murzuk and Kanem, he stayed in Ngala with his first wife, Yamba, and their son, Salih. Later, he was joined by two Shuwa Arab mallams, Muhammad Tirab of Baghirmi and Ibrahim Wadaima of Wadai, whom he had met during his travels. In Ngala, he quickly amassed a large number of students and further increased his influence by marrying a daughter of the *Mai* (ruler) of Ngala.

In order to understand and place the account of El-Kanemi into its proper social political and religious context, it will be wise to consider the political structure and religious situation of the empire within the period under consideration. The *Mai* (ruler), also called "the commander of the faithful" was at the helm of leadership. His cabinets consisted of various religious officers including the Imams, judges and other scholars known as the Shettima (Ajayi 1972). The ruling class was composed of the ruler, his family, many titled freemen and slaves owned by the *Mai* to work on the land and during warfare. The religion of Islam had reached an advanced level of development in Borno by the 1800 (Ajayi 1972).

Rudim (1829) observed that the empire of Borno had a history that extended over a period of one thousand years. That its early history was linked with the Kanem Empire of which Borno was a province. He confirmed that the empire became a centre of Islamic civilization by the middle of the 13th century. (Cohen 1967; Brenner 1973; Cohen and Brenner 1974) affirmed that the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19 centuries brought about the Saifawa to a position of decline. They declared that these periods witnessed a lot of problems ranging from decline in economic prosperity, political instability, maladministration, emergence of weak leaders to the throne and weak military policies. These situations exposed Borno to an unprecedented vulnerability to enemies. These circumstances caused former dependencies and vassal states to rebel against the Saifawa overlords (Clarke 1982). States like Baghirmi, Wadai and Mandara used this opportunity to declare independence (Trimingham 1962; Clarke 1982). The military equally became overstretched and its efficacy declined. The ascension to the Saifawa throne by Mai Ahmad Ibn Ali who was aged, blind and feeble coupled with the rising of powerful and ambitions internal and external powers worsen the situation of the empire (Trimingham 1962; Brenner 1973; Clarke 1982). With this condition, the resident Fulani elements in Borno's western dependencies immediately capitalized on the situation and receive a flag from Uthman Ibn Fodio and waged a rebellion of Jihad against the Saifawa in 1808. As a result, the capital of Borno, Birni Ngazargamo was sacked and the Mai, Mai Ahmad Ibn Ali was driven from his throne to become a fugitive (Trimingham 1962; Brenner 1973; Cohen and Brenner 1974; Sa'ad: 1980; Clarke 1982).

Later, the fugitive Mai Ahmad Ibn Ali was succeeded by his son, Mai Dunama Ibn Ahmad Ibn Ali who himself suffered another attack by the Fulani under the leadership of Gwoni Muktar and latter Ibrahim Zaki in 1811 (Trimingham 1962; Sa'ad 1980). Like his father, Mai Dunama also fled the capital, Ngazargamo and took refuge in the territory of Muhammad al-Kanemi, a Kanumbu scholar resident in Ngala (Trimingham 1962; Brenner 1973). On both occasions of these Fulani attacks, El-Kanemi offered to assist in fighting back the "Fulani invaders" and consequently reinstated the Saifawa Mais on their throne. In spite of his power and influence up to this period, El-Kanemi was literally the "de facto" ruler of Borno in that he did not assume full position of leadership but had stuck a seal for himself as an insignia of authority in 1814 (Brenner 1973). His rise to prominence reduced the power of the beleaguered Saifawa rulers in Borno and introduced the preparatory grounds for El-Kanemi to focus more attention on consolidation and expansion of Borno's power so as to attain its lost glory and supremacy in the Central Sudan balance of power (Cohen 1967; Brenner 1973). The major task of his government was centred on establishing a formidable well equipped and motivated military. To achieve this, he entered into alliances with powerful military states such as the Ottomans, Fez, Wadai, Baghirmi, Murzuk and the local sedentary communities such as Buduma, Kwoyam, Shuwa Arab etc ((Trimingham 1962; Brenner 1973; Cohen and Brenner 1974;

Sa'ad 1980). The aim behind this was to develop the military might of the kingdom and have strong effective allies who could support him whenever the need arose.

EL-KANEMI'S MILITARY STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Al-Kanemi took over power as the de facto ruler of Borno in the second decade of the 19th century as he ruled side-by-side with the Saifawa rulers. He was pragmatic on the issue of establishing a formidable military organization. His experience with the Saifawa rulers who came to seek for his support on several occasions showed him that a formidable military was a necessity. Cohen and Brenner 1974 assert that El-Kanemi's first assignment was to re-organise the military formations and personnel in the system. He made some administrative changes to ensure complete loyalty and allegiance from the provincial areas of Borno. He removed the Galadima in Nguru which was the headquarters of the western frontier of Borno and the centre of command and control and transferred it to Bursari in the north. The reason for this change was to bring the command closer to his newly established capital, Kukawa for effective administration and supervision. Brenner (1973) and Cohen and Brenner (1974) assert that with these changes, the influence, office, power and title of Galadima as governor of the western frontier of Borno and Kaigama (who was also the Commander in-Chief of the imperial army) ceased to exist.

The recalcitrant attitudes of some of the Galadimas to the administration partly caused the change in the system. For example, Galadima Umar, the son of Galadima Mai Dunama was in constant conflict with al-Kanemi over the execution of Sarki Dan Hauwa, the ruler of Gumel, a vassal state of Borno (Trimingham 1962; Brenner 1973; Sa'ad 1980). This development later led to the change in office to that Kachallah as the Commander-in-Chief of the imperial army. Brenner (1973) however observed that the change took effect during the reign of Shehu Umar.

During El-Kanemi's reign, issues of defence and administrative responsibilities were sensitive matters of the state. Such concerns were taken care of by the "council". The council members were not ordinary men but very important scholars who took part in El-Kanemi's strategic plans in the affairs of Borno. They participated in decision making such as military appointments, postings and the conduct of war. More importantly, these officials participated in wars themselves. El-Kanemi adopted another strategy in confronting his enemies before the war. He did not directly confront his enemies without their prior knowledge (Trimingham 1962; Brenner 1973). He communicated by correspondences (as an educated ruler) with most of his neighbours before going to war with them to justify the legality or illegality of the action that might or must have been taken (Brenner: 1973). For example, he exchanged several correspondences between Borno and some of her neighbours like Sokoto and Gumel (Brenner 1973; Sa'ad 1980). Physical confrontation was seen as the last resort when intellectual diplomacy failed, and

all avenues toward peace exhausted. He never allows sentiments, empty rivalries and envy to influence his actions against his foes (Cohen and Brenner 1974).

These qualities enabled al-Kanemi to painstakingly assessed issues that were capable of causing trouble among kingdoms before taking actions. He used this approach in various correspondences between Borno and other empires especially with the Sokoto Caliphate, Fezzan, Gumel and Wadai. (Tijani 2010). Apart from his intellectual ingenuity, El-Kanemi equally used mysticism as part of the strategy for military fortune in wars that took place between Borno and the Fulani forces. In this, strategy, against the Fulani Jihadists, al-Kanemi employed spiritual means by secluding himself in prayers for forty days for the success of Borno soldiers. According to Brenner (1973), a certain formula was written on a calabash and smashed down when the two warring troops were about to engage one another. It was believed that the smashing of the mystified calabash gave the Borno warriors an advantage over the Fulani Jihadists in all encounters (Brenner 1973).

Diplomacy played an immense role in Borno's defence policy. As a leader with lot of experiences that traversed across many borders, he understood the dynamics of international politics. This gave him an edge over his neighbours as a he made Borno to be inclusive in the political arena of the Bilad al-Sudan and beyond, especially with the Maghreb, Murzuk and Egypt, not only for Islamic scholarship but also for military reasons. Trimingham (1962) and Brenner (1973) explained that since Al-Kanemi understood the tactics of war to include military training, mental preparation, practical and mysticisms, arms and ammunitions, it was necessary to go into existing diplomatic alliance with his neighbours and allies to obtain the needed weapons and support. He used the Ottoman influence in acquiring weapons and personnel in subduing threats from his immediate rival neighbours such as Wadai, Baghirmi, Mandara, Ngizem etc (Trimingham 1962; Brenner 1973; Sa'ad 1980). Much is done and said of the El-Kanemi as the one who brought Borno to the lime light of success. In February 1823, a British expedition led by Major Dixon Denham and Captain Hugh Clapperton arrived in Borno. They were introduced to El-Kanemi. Dixon Denham (1826) described El-Kanemi in the following words:

Nature has bestowed on him all the qualifications for a great commander; an enterprising genius, sound judgment, features engaging, with a demeanour gentle and conciliating; and so little of vanity was there mixed with his ambition, that he refused the offer of being made sultan.

COMPARING AND CONTRASTING USMAN DAN FODIO AND EL-KANEMI OF BORNO

Similarities of the Two Scholars

One common and interesting feature about these men is the fact that both of them were great Islamic scholars in their own time; who were concerned about purifying the

religion of Islam from un-Islamic and corrupt practices. Therefore, both of them can be described as social and moral reformers.

Uthman Dan Fodio exerted a great intellectual influence which is felt till today. Indeed, he was described as a prolific writer who left behind not less than one hundred and twenty literature on Islamic religion. Equally, El-Kanemi was described as a great promoter of Islamic education. He built an equivalent of a university in Fezzan. He was a learned scholar of international repute that had a good knowledge of Uthman and other scholars.

Uthman Dan Fodio laid the foundation through his Jihad for the unification of Northern Nigeria today. Through his efforts, he urged the judges to enforce Islamic laws, tightened control over the Kokenawa administration and assisted education in the Caliphate

Like Uthman too, El-Kanemi, also fought for the unity of Borno, where he could not conquered completely, he entered into diplomatic dialogue. He also started his youthful career in a humble way. After graduation he settled among the commoners and started to preach and teach like Fodio.

Just like Uthman, El-Kanemi succeeded in transferring power from secular to religious leadership and from one ethnic group to another. For Uthman, he shifted power title from Sarki to Emir; and transferred power from Hausa to Fulani. Similarly, El-Kanemi changed power title from Mai to Shehu and transferred power from Kanuri to Shuwa.

Dissimilarities of the Two Scholars

El-Kanemi had a long standing background of an Islamic nation before Uthman Dan Fodio. That is why he was not comfortable with the attack of Uthman's Jihad on the empire of Borno. Though, Dan Fodio argued that the leaders of Borno were not practicing pure Islam. He viewed Uthman's Jihad as being political. He denied that Islam can be practiced in its purest sense in any given society in the world. He cited the instance of Zamfara where Islam was never abused but the Jihadist attacked it. That is why he accepted the challenge to halt the Jihadists from conquering Borno.

In Borno, the administration of El- Kanemi created a dual headship which divided the society and progressively weakened the kingdom in facing external forces after his death. But this was not so with Uthman Dan Fodio.

Another point of difference between El- Kanemi and Uthman is in the area of accepting half revenue from the conquered provinces. He changed the administrative structure on ground and took over the leadership. By 1815, he had gained an effective control of the government of Borno. The Mai became figure heads while power rested with El-Kanemi.

Uthman Dan Fodio was a unique scholar whose birth was prophesied by a lady saint thereby making him a divine reformer. He differs from El-Kanemi of Borno in

diverse ways. He was not after economic gain like his counterpart. Neither was he power-drunk. After the Jihad of 1804, it is clearly stated that Uthman Dan Fodio shared the Caliphate into two, with one part going over to his son, Muhammed Bello and the other part going over to his brother, Abdullah. This attitude shows humility and good leadership on the part of Uthman Dan Fodio. He left for posterity a lot of religious, political, social and economic lessons which the contemporary society can learn from.

LESSONS FOR CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN NIGERIA

Shehu Usman dan Fodio and Shehu Al-Amin El-Kanemi were pivotal figures in the Islamic history of Nigeria, each leading significant religious and political transformations in their respective regions. Usman dan Fodio, born in 1754 in Gobir, was a Fulani scholar and the founder of the Sokoto Caliphate. His revolutionary movement aimed to purify Islam among the Hausa people, who were perceived to have strayed into pagan practices. He initiated a jihad against the ruling elite, which culminated in the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate from 1804, a powerful Islamic state that significantly influenced the spread of Islam in West Africa. His teachings emphasized literacy, scholarship, and a return to the fundamental principles of Islam, which remain relevant for contemporary religious leaders in Nigeria (Hodgkin 2024).

In contrast, Shehu Al-Amin El-Kanemi emerged as a prominent Islamic leader in Borno, advocating for the reform of Islamic practices in the region during the 19th century. He was instrumental in resisting the encroachment of Usman dan Fodio's forces into Borno, asserting the independence of his emirate while promoting Islamic education and governance. El-Kanemi's approach was characterized by a blend of military prowess and religious authority, which allowed him to maintain stability in Borno amidst the broader upheaval caused by the jihadist movements. His legacy is marked by a commitment to Islamic scholarship and the promotion of a balanced interpretation of Islam that respected local traditions while adhering to Islamic principles (Muhammad 2021).

The lessons from Usman dan Fodio and Al-Amin El-Kanemi for contemporary religious leaders in Nigeria are manifold. Firstly, both leaders demonstrated the importance of education and scholarship in religious leadership. Usman dan Fodio's emphasis on literacy and the production of Islamic texts fostered a culture of learning that empowered communities. Similarly, El-Kanemi's focus on education helped to cultivate a knowledgeable populace that could engage with the complexities of faith and governance. Modern religious leaders can draw from this legacy by prioritizing education and encouraging critical engagement with Islamic teachings, thereby fostering a more informed and resilient community (Hodgkin 2024).

Secondly, the political strategies employed by these leaders highlight the need for religious leaders to navigate the intersection of faith and governance effectively. Usman dan Fodio's ability to mobilize support against perceived injustices within the ruling class

illustrates the potential for religious authority to challenge oppression and advocate for social justice. In contrast, El-Kanemi's diplomatic and military strategies underscore the importance of maintaining stability and independence in the face of external threats. Contemporary religious leaders can learn from these examples by advocating for justice and equity while also being mindful of the socio-political dynamics within their communities.

Additionally, the enduring relevance of their teachings on moral integrity and community service serves as a guiding principle for today's religious leaders. Usman dan Fodio's critique of the existing elites for their greed and corruption resonates with current calls for ethical leadership in Nigeria. Likewise, El-Kanemi's emphasis on the welfare of his people and the promotion of peace and stability remains a vital lesson for contemporary leaders facing the challenges of sectarian violence and political instability. By embodying these values, religious leaders can play a crucial role in fostering unity and resilience in Nigeria's diverse society.

CONCLUSION

The legacies of Shehu Usman dan Fodio and Shehu Al-Amin El-Kanemi offer valuable insights for contemporary religious leaders in Nigeria. Their commitment to education, their ability to navigate the complex interplay of faith and politics, and their emphasis on moral integrity and community service serve as guiding principles for modern religious leaders. By drawing inspiration from these historical figures, religious leaders in Nigeria can work towards fostering a more informed, just, and united society.

As Nigeria continues to grapple with challenges such as religious extremism, political instability, and social inequalities, the lessons from Usman dan Fodio and El-Kanemi remain highly relevant. Contemporary religious leaders have the opportunity to emulate their predecessors' strengths while adapting their approaches to the unique circumstances of the 21st century. By embracing the values of education, ethical leadership, and community service, religious leaders can play a pivotal role in shaping a future where Nigeria's diverse population can coexist in peace and prosperity.

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