



## Intellectual Contributions of Two Viziers of Shaykh Uthman Bin Foduye: Shaykh Abd Al-Allah Bin Foduye and Sultan Muhammad Bello

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### Abstract

As it is evident right from the time of prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to date, there have been great personalities who played significant roles in various human endeavors for the development of either community or the entire humanity, many Muslims as well as non-Muslim writers were eager to write account about their lives or otherwise. Shaykh Abd al-Allah b. Foduye and Sultan Muhammad Bello did their best in positively changing the condition and situation of their society. The effort of those heroes was recorded and are still being studied by writers and researchers. For example, both Shaykh Abd al-Allah and Sultan Muhammad Bello have different books like that of *Tauhid*, *Ulum al Qur'an* and *Hadith* to enable their followers to understand their motives.

**Keywords:** Intellectual, Viziers, Shaykh Abd Al-Allah B. Foduye, Muhammad Bello.

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## The Selected Intellectual Contribution of Two Viziers of Shaykh Uthman B. Foduye (Shaykh Abd Al-Allah B. Foduye, Sultan Muhammad Bello)

### Introduction

As it is evident right from the time of prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to date, there have been great personalities who played significant roles in various human endeavors for the development of either community or the entire humanity, many Muslims as well as non-Muslim writers were eager to write account about their lives or otherwise. Shaykh Abd al-Allah b. Foduye and Sultan Muhammad Bello did their best in positively changing the condition and situation of their society. The effort of those heroes was recorded and are still being studied by writers and researchers. For example, both Shaykh Abd al-Allah and Sultan Muhammad Bello have different books like that of *Tauhid*, *Ulum al Qur'an* and *Hadith* to enable their followers to understand their motives.

Waziri Abd al-Allah b. Foduye wrote several books in different fields of knowledge. Some of the books treat religious matters while others dealt with politics and many issues.

#### (i) *Belief in the Oneness of Allah*

Tawhid is the first obligation that all messengers of Allah called people to and it is the foundation of their invitation. Allah the Most High says:

And indeed, we sent to every nation a Messenger (saying) Worship Allah and avoid the Tāghūl<sup>1</sup>

Tawhid is the greatest right of Allah upon His servants. In the two authentic books (Bukhari and Muslim), It is narrated from Mu'adh that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

<sup>1</sup> Ch:6, V:36. Taghūt, (fal se deities) that are worshipped besides Allah

The Right of Allah upon the servants is that they worship Him and not to associate anything as a partner with Him<sup>2</sup>.

The realization of *Tawhid* is the path to happiness in this life and in the Hereafter. Opposing *Tawhid* is the path to misery and grief while the realization of *Tawhid* is the path to uniting the Muslim nations and the unification of their ranks and their power. Defects in *Tawhid* are the cause of sectarianism and division<sup>3</sup>. To realize the objectives of *Tawhid*, the 'Wuzard' of the Sokoto Caliphate wrote books and treatises to ensure the unity of the *Ummnah* without division Wazir Abd Allah in his books<sup>4</sup>, explained the concept of *Tawhid* as to purify the testimony of faith by believing in Allah alone and direct all aspects of worship and devotion to Him.

He also explained the six articles of faith as that which constitute the basis of the true creed with which Allah sent His Books and with which He sent His Messenger, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He further explained Iman as belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His messengers, the Last Day and belief in Destiny; the good of it and the bad of it. From these articles, emanates all that a Muslim should believe in with regards to Allah's rights, the Day of Judgment and all matters pertaining to the unseen. He also discussed the basic and recommendable attributes of Allah and His messengers and what negates the attributes<sup>5</sup>. He further explained that the Muslim should believe in all messengers without exception and the Prophet Muhammad is the best of all messengers and whoever denies the Messenger-ship of any among them has denied all. He explained further the major components in the belief in messengers, narration of the unseen, like the trials in the graves, the torment or the bliss therein and the belief in all that will be witnessed on the Day of Judgment, such as the bridge set over the Hell-fire, the Balancing, Reckoning, reward and punishment, the passing of results to the successful by their right hands while the wretched disbelievers by their left hands behind their backs<sup>6</sup>

Wazir Bello has some chapters on *Tawhid* which he had written<sup>7</sup>. Bello discussed the issue of *Takfir*. In this book, he explained that *Takfir* can only be established by using Shari'ah yardstick<sup>8</sup>. He further listed three conditions to be taken into consideration before passing the judgment of *Takfir* on a believer. Firstly, for someone to attribute negative attributes to Allah, such as laziness or death or associate partner to Allah would terminate the testimony of faith. Secondly, if someone falsifies the Messenger-ship of the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or believes that he is not sent to the whole of mankind will terminate his belief. Thirdly, what the scholars unanimously agreed on such act will never happen except from a disbeliever. For example, if someone prostrates to anyone other than Allah deliberately and in his own will like going to Church to worship and putting cross round one's neck or hanging it. If a believer admits doing any of the aforementioned, he has absolutely tempered with his faith, because knowing what tempers with one's faith is obligatory upon every believer<sup>9</sup>.

He further explained the position of Mu' tazilites and Qadariyyah (belief that man should be the author of his own acts) and Jabriyyah (believe that man has no authority to his own action). According to them, if these acts are the creation of Allah, how can man be held responsible for his acts and deserve punishment for his sins? They wondered how it would be considered as justice on the part of Allah that, after creating a man helpless and later called him to account for his sins and send him to hell fire. He finally concluded that they would never be confirmed as infidels<sup>10</sup>.

This book was written by Bello to explain the type of people in his society and the stand of Sokoto Caliphate on the issue. Bello classified the people of Hausa society into five categories, viz, the devout Muslims, nominal Muslims, and apostates, those who were born as disbelievers and lastly those who transgress<sup>11</sup>.

## (ii) *Ulum al -Qur'an*

<sup>2</sup> A. Mujahid, et-al, The Concise Collection on Creed & Tauhid, Darussalam Publishers & Distributors, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 2002, p.230

<sup>3</sup> Mujahid, et-al, The Concise Collection on Creed & Tauhid, P...290

<sup>4</sup> A. Foduye, Taqrib al ma'ni, Alhaji Dan-Ige, Tsamiyar Yaru, see also, A. Foduye, Al Nasihat bi Taqribi ma' yajibu ala ammatai al ummah, Alhaji Dan Ige, Tsamiyar Yaru, nd.

<sup>5</sup> M. I. Talata Mafara, Daular Usmaniyya, Rayuwar Malam Abdullahi Danfodiyo da Gwagwarmayarsa, Masco Dynamics Ventures, Kaduna, pp. 18-19

<sup>6</sup> Talata Mafara, Daular Usmaniyya, Rayuwar Malam Abdullahi Danfodiyo da Gwagwarmayarsa, Pp...18-19

<sup>7</sup> M. Bello, Mifi'ah al-Sid'ad ft Aqsami ahli hadhihi al bilad., Abu Bakr Alt, Dogarawa

<sup>8</sup> Bello, Mifi'ah al-Sid'ad ft Aqsami ahli hadhihi al bilad

<sup>9</sup> Bello, Mifi'ah al-Sid'ad ft Aqsami ahli hadhihi al bilad

<sup>10</sup> A. A. Y.Qadhi, An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'an, Al-Hidayah Publishing and Distribution, United Kingdom, p. 18

<sup>11</sup> Y.Qadhi, An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'an, P,,18

This refers to the sciences of the Qur'an which deal with the knowledge of those Sciences that have a direct bearing on the recitation, history, understanding of the Glorious Qur'an. It is, therefore, a vast field of Islamic scholarship and one that is of primary importance<sup>12</sup>.

Thus, for example, recitation deals with the science of recitation according to rules and regulations, the different rendering in reciting the Qur'an, the blessings of reciting the Qur'an, and the etiquettes of its recitation<sup>13</sup>.

History of the Qur'an deals with the stages of revelation of the Qur'an the compilation of the Qur'an the art and history of writing the Qur'anic script (*Rasm al-musha*), and the preservation of the Qur'an<sup>14</sup>

With regards to its understanding, the Qur'anic sciences cover the causes of revelation (*Asbāb al Nuzūl*), the knowledge of the Makkan and Madanian revelations, the knowledge of the various letters (*ahruf*) it was revealed in, the understanding of its abrogated and the unabrogated rulings and verses (*Al Nāsikh wa al Mansūkh*), the knowledge of the various classifications of its verses (*Muhkam and Mutashābih, Am and Khāṣ, Muṭlaq and Mugayyad*, etc), the knowledge of the inimitable style of the Qur'an (Ijaz al-Qur 'an), the knowledge of its interpretation (Tafsir), the grammatical analysis of the Qur'an (*I'rab al -Qur 'an*) and the knowledge of those words whose usages have become uncommon over time (*Gharīb al-Qur'ān*)<sup>15</sup>

It has been said that the knowledge of °Ulum al-Our'an is in reality the knowledge that one is required to know in order to properly interpret the Our 'an. Therefore, to call this branch of Islamic knowledge "The procedure and methodology of Interpretation (Ilm Uṣūl al-Tafsir) instead or "Ulm al-Qur 'an would not be far from the truth. However, Qur'anic Sciences also include topics that have very little or no bearing on Tafsir, such as the compilation of the Qur'an and the development of the script of the Qur'an. Therefore, the Sciences of the Qur'an as a discipline are more general than Ilm Uṣūl al Tafsir (the Science of the foundation of Qur'anic interpretation.

By looking at the aforementioned introduction, it can simply be concluded that the Wuzarā' had written on *Ulum al-Qur'an* to enable their followers and the entire Muslims realize the wealth of knowledge that exists with regards to the Book of Allah. It is also to enable them better understanding of the Qur'an, in that they will be familiar with the history of its revelation and collection, and the various aspects that aid its comprehension. In other words, they will be equipped to further increase their knowledge and to learn more about their religion. It also increases their belief, because they will realize the beauty of the Qur'an and the great blessings that they had been given through its revelation. Lastly and most importantly, they I'll be able to defend the Qur'an against its enemies, since they will be equipped with the true and pristine knowledge of the Qur'an unadulterated by the prejudices of its opponents.

In the field of *Tafsir, Tajwid and Qira'at* (recitation), *Wazir °Abd Alah* was not left behind. He wrote six books in the field of °Ulum alOur'an, two of them are on *Tafsir* and the remaining are on other areas in Ulum al-Our'an<sup>16</sup>.

Talata Mafara quoting *Hamīd that Abd Allāh b. Foduye* started his works on this field before the beginning of the jihad. The first book he wrote was *Miftāh al Tafstr* in 1209 AH, which is a 120-page book and also summarized it under the title "*Sulālat al-Miftāh* in 1210 A/H, into 50 pages. In 1211 A/H, he wrote two other books on this field. They are *Nailus Suli min Tafsir al- Rasul* and *Al Farā'id al-Jalila*<sup>17</sup>. The first book, is a summary of the last chapter of *Al-Itqan* the book of *Suyuti* and the later book is *Fara'id al-Jalilah* Which is in verses is the summary of the book of *Shawshāwi*<sup>18</sup>.

The two books of Tafsir came up when the people of Kano obliged him' to teach them the religious obligations- on his intended journey to Makkah. There he wrote the book of *Diyā al Hukkām*, and within this period around 1220 A/H. he also wrote *Diyā al Tawīl* an ma *āni al Tanzil*<sup>19</sup>.

When he observed that *Diyā al Ta'wil* was above the stardard of his students, he summarized the book and named it *Kifāyat al Du 'afa 'i al-Sūdan ft Tafsūr al-Qur 'an*,<sup>20</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Y.Qadhi, An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'an., P.,,18

<sup>13</sup> Y.Qadhi, An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'an., P.,,18

<sup>14</sup> Y.Qadhi, An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'an., P.,,18

<sup>15</sup> A. A. Y. Qadhi, An introduction to sciences of the Qur'an, opcit, p. 19

<sup>16</sup> M.I. Talata Mafara, Daular Usmaniyya Rayuwar Malma Abdullahi Danfodiyo da Gwagwarmayar sa (Book 2), opcit, P. 20

<sup>17</sup> A. Hamid (ed), *Alfaro'id al jalilah wasa id al fawa'id al jamilah fi Ulum ai Qur'an*, Mulyi al din Yasār, Kano

<sup>18</sup> M.I. Talata Mafara, Daular Usmaniyya Rayuwar Malam Abdullahi Danfodiyo da Gwagwarmayar sa (book 2), opcit p.

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<sup>19</sup> Talata Mafara, Daular Usmaniyya Rayuwar Malam Abdullahi Danfodiyo da Gwagwarmayar sa,P...21

In *Diya'u al-Ta'wil*, he discussed the ten Qirā'āt, while in *Kifāyat al-Du'afā' al-Sūdān* he restricted himself to *Riwayāt Warsh* and *Oird'āt* are particular renderings of reciting the Qur'an. They are named after the Qurrā (reciters) who recited the Qur'an in those particular manners and were famous as being the leaders in this field. They represented the various ways that the companions learnt the Qur'an from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They differed from each one another in rendering various words, pronunciations, and rules of recitation (*tajwid*).<sup>21</sup> See also the explanation about the ten *Qirā'āt*.<sup>22</sup>

Abd Allāh b. Foduye has chosen *Riwayāt Warsh* in *Kifāyat al-Du'afā' al-Sidan* to direct his students to the Madhhab of their Imam, that is, Imām Malik, who followed the *qird atu Nafi i*, through *Riwayāt Warsh*.<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, Imam Malik recited the Qur'an in the qira'at of Nafi', and showed his likeness to the qira'at and recommended it by this statement, indeed, the qira'at of Nafi' is Sunnah.<sup>24</sup>

Talata Mafara stated that Shaykh Abd Allah did not write *Diya al Ta wil*, until after consulting sixty books on °Ulum alQur 'an, and he cited the examples of six books namely, *Al Muharrar al wajiz fi Tafsi kitāb al Aziz of Ibn Atiyyah*, *Tafsīru Ahkām al Qur'an of Ibn al-Arabi*, *Amwar al Tanzil wa Asrār al-Ta 'wil of Baidawi*, *Lubdb al Ta'wil fi ma'āni al-Tanzil of Khāzin*, *Al Jawāhir al Hisan ft Tafsi alQur 'an of Abd al-Rahman Tha' ālabi* and *Tafsi Ghayat al Amāni of Kurāni*.

### (iii) Hadith Studies

The Qur'an and Sunnah are the two sources and authorities in Islam and are to be taken together as the sources of Shari 'ah. Hadith as the second source of Shari 'ah supplements and explains the Qur'an. Searching for its knowledge has become necessary and the centre point for the scholars of Hadith to concentrate on teaching the field. Wazir Abd Allah was not left behind. Some of his

works on textual studies of Hadith and also on the Science of Hadith are: *Nail al-Maram*, *Al Mawā' iz* and *Al Targhib wa al-Tarhib* etc. He also wrote on Mustalah al-Hadith, including *Siraj al-Ikhwān* and *Misbah al Rāwi*.<sup>25</sup>

In the book of Miṣbāh al Rwī, he discussed different topics in different chapters of the book, starting from the definition of Hadith, its classifications, the authentic Hadith, like Hadith Hasan and Sahih, weak Hadith, fabricated Hadith, Hadith mursal, mauguf, and illah.. He also discussed the Rijal of Hadith (narrators of Hadith),<sup>26</sup>

<sup>20</sup> M.I. Talata Mafara, *Daular Usmaniyya Rayuwar Malam Abdullahi Danfodiyo da Gwagwarmayar sa* (book 2), opcit. P.21

<sup>21</sup> A. A. Y.Qadhi, *An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'an*, opcit. P. 196

<sup>22</sup> Here are the ten authentic Qirā'āt and the Ourrā' after whom they are named. The first seven are the one that Abu Bakr b. Mujahid preserved in his book, and which al-Shāṭibi versified in his famous poem known as al Shāṭibiyyāh. Nāfiu al-Bakr b. Mujahid preserved in his book, and which al-Shāṭibi versified in his famous poem known as al-Shāṭibiyyāh. Nāfi u al-Madani. Ibn Kathir al-Makki, Abū 'Amr, al-Baṣriy, IbnĀmir, al-Shāmi, Aṣim, al-Kūfi, Hamzah, al-Kūf, Al-Kisa'i. These are the seven reciters whom Ibn Mujāhid compiled in his book *Kitāb al-Qirā'āt*. Of these, all are from non-Arab backgrounds except Ibn Āmir and Abu Amr. The following three Qurrā' completed the ten authentic Qira'at. Abū Ja'far, al-Madaniy, Ya'goob, al-Basri and finally Khallāf. All of these ten qirā'āt have authentic, Mutaovāi chains of narration," traced to the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Each qird 'āt, is preserved through two students of the Imam for that qirā'āt. Of course, these Qurra' had more than just two students; the reason that the qirā'āt are preserved through only two is that Abū Amr, °Uthmān b. Sa'ūd, better known as Imam al Dani; selected and preserved the recitation of the two best students of each Qat in his book, *Kitāb al Taysir f al Qirā'āt al-Sab i* Each of these students is called raw i (narrator), and they occasionally differ from each other. Thus, although other rawāt (narrator) also narrated each qirā'ah, only the recitation of two main Rawiydn (narrators) have been preserved in such detail. References to the recitation of other Rawiy are, however found in the classical 'works of qirā'at. These rawāt learnt the qird at from their Imam, and each preserved some of the variation of the recitation of the Qārt. Sometimes, the Qār taught different qirā'āt to each Rawt. Hafṣ quoted 'Aṣim as saying that the qira'at he taught him was that of Abū 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulamiy from Ali b. Abi Talib, while the one that he taught Abu Bakr b.Ayyāsh (ie Shu'bah, the other rawi of Aṣim was that of Zirr b. Hubaysh from Ibn Mas'ud)

<sup>23</sup> A.A.Y. Qadhi, *An Introduction to the Sciences of the Quran*, opcit., p. 1971, see also, M. I. Talata Mafara, *Daular Usmaniyya Rayuwar Malam Abdullahi Danfodiyo da Gwagwarmayarsa*, opcit. p. 22

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> M.I. Talata Mafara, *Daular Usmaniyya Rayuwar Malam Abdullahi Danfodiyo da Gwagwarmayarsa*, opcit. Pp. 24-25

<sup>26</sup> Talata Mafara, *Daular Usmaniyya Rayuwar Malam Abdullahi Danfodiyo da Gwagwarmayar sa*, pp. 24-25

Wazir Muhammadu Bello had not written anything in the area of Mustalah al Hadith, except on Textual Study, he wrote a book title *Al-Budâr al-Zâhirah fimâ yudrà bihâ al-mutafarriqah*. This researcher shares the same opinion with Talata Mafara who indicated this in one of his books titled, *Rayıwar Muhammadu Bello da Gwagwarmayar sa*<sup>27</sup>

## Conclusion

The contribution of viziers is not a new phenomenon. It started from the earlier Prophets, like Prophets Musa and Dawud (peace and blessings of Allah be upon them) up to the period of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

It is not easy to mention all the activities of Shaykh Abd al-Allah b. Foduye and Sultan Muhammad Bello. However, they were pioneers who were responsible for the education and general intellectual activities of the Caliphate, the greatest legacy left by these two viziers is knowledge. literary revolution that accompanied the Sokoto state jihad movement had transformed the entire structure and fabric of the societies under the Caliphate. On the whole education become the guard stick for all opportunities in the state and knowledge was a leader to attain respect and higher dynasty. Thus, schools were widely established for the education needs of all the people in the society.

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<sup>27</sup> M.I. Talata Mafara, *Daular Usmaniyya Rayuwar Sarkin Musulmi, Muhammadu Bello da Gwagwarmayarsa*, pp. 24-25