



THE ROLE OF *IZALAH* IN EFFACING THE '*URF*' OF
HAUSA/FULANI MUSLIM FAMILY IN GOMBE,
NIGERIA

BY

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ABSTRACT

This research aims at finding out the achievements of the *Izalah* organization in eradicating the family customs and marriage traditions of the Hausa/Fulani tribes in Gombe metropolis which contradicts with the *Sharī'a* of Islam. These activities in respect to the 'Urf marriage and family set-up in Gombe metropolis have not been studied before. The research adopted the qualitative phenomenological survey approach. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and open-ended survey questions were distributed to the eleven wards of the Gombe metropolis. This method was adopted to get in-depth information of the efficacy of *Izalah* reformatory da'wa on 'Urf in marriage within the study area. A documentary content analysis was used to triangulate the results of the research. The *Izalah* organization has been involved in the reformation of certain practices that contradict the *Sharī'a* of Islam in Northern Nigeria in the past, especially in the area of this study. The data revealed adequate efforts made by the organization in rectifying some of the 'Urf in marriage and family set-ups which contradict the Islamic *Sharī'a*. An example can be seen in the increasing level of women's education and embracement of proper Islamic attire for Muslim women. The research attempts to place Islam's acceptability of valid 'Urf as one source of shar'iah of *mu'āmalāt*. It also attempts to explore how the Hausa/Fulani tribes understand the concept of '*Ādāt al-Muhakkamā*' in relation to marriage and family set-up. The *Izalah* method of *da'wah* has assisted the Hausa/Fulani to perceive anything that is not mentioned in either the Qur'ān or the Sunnah as *bid'ah*. However, despite the effort of the *Izalah* organization on enlightenments and exhortations, the research found some variances between the Hausa/Fulani customs and the Islamic injunctions on marriage preparation and family set-up. Some of these are caused by the absence of strong Islamic values, greediness and smugness while others are attributed to the method of educating the family adopted by the *Izalah*. Based on this, the research recommends the need for the *Izalah* organization to re-strategize its methods of *da'wa*, so as to tilt more towards the Islamic tenets of *da'tyah* in order to achieve its aims and objectives.

ملخص البحث

يهدف هذا البحث إلى معرفة إنجازات منظمة "إزالة-Izalah" في القضاء على عادات الزواج والعادات الأسرية التي تتعارض مع الشريعة الإسلامية في قبائل الهوسا وفولاني في مدينة غومبي، والتي لم يتم البحث حتى الآن - حسب علم الباحثة- في أنشطتها فيما يتعلق بأعراف الزواج والعائلة في مدينة غومبي من قبل. اعتمد البحث طريقة إستقصاء الظواهر النوعي، وتم إجراء مقابلات شبه-منظمة وتوزيع استبيانات حرة داخل إحدى عشر حي تحت ولاية مدينة غومبي. وقد تم اعتماد هذه الطريقة من أجل الحصول على معلومات عميقة لقياس فعالية "إزالة-Izalah" في الدعوة لإصلاح أعراف الزواج في داخل منطقة الدراسة، واستخدم تحليل المحتوى الوثائقي للثبوت من نتائج البحث. شاركت منظمة "إزالة-Izalah" في إصلاح الممارسات المتناقضة مع الإسلام في شمال نيجيريا في أحيان كثيرة وفي منطقة البحث أيضاً، وتكشف البيانات التي تم جمعها جهوداً جيدة بذلتها المنظمة لتصحيح بعض من أعراف الزواج والعائلة والتي تتعارض مع الشريعة الإسلامية، فعلى سبيل المثال يمكن أن ينظر في ارتفاع مستوى تعليم المرأة وتبني الزي الإسلامي الصحيح للمرأة المسلمة. يحاول هذا البحث إلى وضع قاعدة قبول الإسلام للأعراف السليمة كمصدر للتشريع في المعاملات، كما يحاول استكشاف كيفية فهم قبائل الهوسا وفولاني لمفهوم العادات المحكمة فيما يتعلق بالزواج وإنشاء الأسرة. ساعدت طريقة منظمة "إزالة-Izalah" في الدعوة قبائل الهوسا وفولاني على فهم أن أي شيء لم يذكر في القرآن أو السنة هو بدعة. ومع ذلك، على الرغم من الجهود المبذولة من قبل منظمة "إزالة-Izalah" في التنوير وإعطاء المواعظ، وجدت الدراسة بعض الفروق بين أعراف قبائل الهوسا وفولاني وبين تعاليم الإسلام في عادات الإعداد للزواج وإنشاء الأسرة سببها غياب القيم الإسلامية الصلبة، والطمع والتعجرف في حين يرجع البعض الآخر إلى الطرق التي اعتمدها منظمة "إزالة-Izalah" في تثقيف الأسرة. وبناء على ذلك، يوصي البحث منظمة "إزالة-Izalah" بضرورة إعادة وضع استراتيجية أساليب الدعوة من أجل تحقيق أهدافها وغاياتها ولتكون أكثر انسجاماً مع المبادئ الإسلامية للداعي.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my late mother, father and grandmother who gave me the virtue of education ...

To my aunty and her late husband, Muhammad Ibrahim Hassan, who enthused me...

To my husband, who supported me on the front line wholeheartedly...

To my daughter, who has been patient with my absence...

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AS	Alaihi/ha As-Salām
HIV	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
JBWIS	<i>Jamā'atu Izalatil bid'a wa Iqāmatil Sunnah.</i> (The Society for the Removal of Innovation and Establishment of the Sunnah)
SAW	Sallal lāhu alaihi wa salam- Peace and blessing of Allah be upon him
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund (formerly- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund)
VOWODAN	Voice of Widows' Orphans and Divorcees Association of Nigeria

LIST OF NON-ENGLISH TERMS

<i>Aqīda al-Ṣaḥīḥah bi Muwāfaqa al-Sharī'a</i> =	The Orthodox theology in Agreement with the Sharī'a
<i>Alaihi al-Salām</i> =	Peace be upon him
<i>Amarya</i> =	Bride
<i>Aqīdah</i> =	Religious belief
<i>Al-Ijbār</i> =	Forced Marriage.
<i>Bilād al-Sudan</i> =	Land of the blacks
<i>Bid'ah</i> =	Innovations/Aberration in Islam
<i>Biki</i> =	Social networking of gift exchange during marriages and naming ceremonies
<i>Da'wah</i> =	Calling to the way of Islam
<i>Du'a</i> =	Supplication
<i>Dokke</i> =	Gifts
<i>'Endam</i> =	Kindness among kinship
<i>Fatwā</i> =	Juristic verdict
<i>Hakkilo</i> =	Common sense/ Care
<i>Hadānah</i> =	Custody
<i>Ibādah</i> =	Worship
<i>Izār</i> =	Piece of white cloth
<i>Īla'</i> =	Verbal repudiation of marriage contract/ vow of continence
<i>Jamā'atu Izalatil bid'a wa Iqāmatil Sunnah</i> =	The Society for the Removal of Innovation and Establishment of the Sunnah
<i>Jamā'at al-Nasr al-Islam</i> =	Society of Nasr al-Islam

<i>Jawāmi' al-Ahkām</i> =	General rulings
<i>Jihād</i> =	Strive
<i>Khams al- Ṣalawāt</i> =	Five daily Ṣalat
<i>Kafā'a</i> =	Social compatibility
<i>Kayan Daki</i> =	House hold utensil and furniture which parents decorate their daughter's room at matrimonial home
<i>Khul'I</i> =	Divorce at the instigation of the wife
<i>Kishiya</i> =	Co-wife
<i>Mawaddah wa raḥam</i> =	Love and mercy
<i>Munyal</i> =	Patience
<i>Masājid</i> =	Mosques
<i>Maulūd al-Nabi</i> =	Birthday of the Prophet
<i>Maulūd</i> =	Birthday
<i>Mai Tatsine</i> =	The Curser
<i>Muharramāt</i> =	Prohibited acts
<i>Mahr/ Ṣadaq</i> =	Dowry
<i>Nafaqa</i> =	Maintenance
<i>Pulāku</i> =	Modesty
<i>Qawā'id al- Sharī'ā</i> =	Legal principles
<i>Qawā'id al-Fiqhiyyah</i> =	Legal Maxim
<i>Ramadhān</i> =	Month of Fasting
<i>Semteede</i> =	Reserve
<i>Ṣadaqatul jāriya</i> =	Ongoing charity
<i>Tafsīr</i> =	Exegesis of the Qur'ān
<i>Tafwīd</i> =	Delegation of the right of divorce

<i>Ṭuruq</i> =	Path of the Ṣūfis (Ṣūfis Order)
<i>‘Ummah</i> =	Muslim community
<i>‘Ulama’</i> -	Islamic scholars
<i>Uwar Gida</i> =	Mother of the house- senior wife
<i>Wazīfah</i> =	Devotional recitation of litanies
<i>Wasīqat al- Ikhwān’</i> =	Document of brotherhood
<i>Walī</i> =	Guardianship
<i>Zakāt</i> =	Fiscal charity
<i>Zina</i> =	Fornication

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

Table of the system of transliteration of Arabic words and names
Used by the International Islamic University Malaysia.

b = ب	z = ز	f = ف
t = ت	s = س	q = ق
th = ث	sh = ش	k = ك
j = ج	Ṣ = ص	l = ل
ḥ = ح	Ḍ = ض	m = م
kh = خ	Ṭ = ط	n = ن
d = د	Z = ظ	h = هـ
dh = ذ	‘ = ع	w = و
r = ر	gh = غ	y = ي

Table 1: Transliteration

Vowels: a = i = ا = و
 Long vowels: ā = آ Ī = ي ū = و
 Diphthongs: ay = اي aw =

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The flexible Islamic law aims at correcting and enhancing the well-being of man on earth by developing and shaping his honor and dignity in all aspects of life. One of such methods is the modification, correction and elimination of some prevailing customs and traditions that have crept into the family institution. This is because not all customs and traditions adhere to Islamic dictates. Rather, people marry and set-up families according to their customs and traditions, irrespective of their acceptability in Islam. Based on this, Muslim scholar's stipulate conditions for the validity or otherwise of any custom. As customs change with the passage of time, the conditions are the yardsticks to measure their compatibility or rejection.

The *Jihād* of Usman Dan Fodio in Hausa land which finally resulted in the establishment of an Islamic emirate, was mainly against the repugnant innovations and pagan customs. The nature of the family system among the Hausa/Fulani of Northern Nigeria after the *jihād* is characterized by adherence to Islamic values, good conduct, and respect for Islamic traditions.¹ The emirate promoted respect for the Islamic family system and all its features. Ultimately, the *jihād* resulted in the application of the Islamic criminal law.²

¹ Henry Fredrick Charles Smith "A neglected theme of West African history: The Islamic revolutions of the 19th century." *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 2 no. 2 (1961): 169-185. Cf. Ibrahim M. Zakyi, "Islam in Africa: The Impact of Dān Fodio Reforms on the Muslim Family," *Hamdard Islamiscus*, Vol. xxix, No.2, (2006):69-79; John Spencer Trimmingham, *The Influence of Islam upon Africa*, 2nd edn., (London: Longman Group Limited, 1980), 48-103.

² Ibrahim Suleiman. *A Revolution in History: The Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio*, (London, Mansell, 1986). Cf. Muhammad Al-Hajj, "The Fulani concept of jihad Shehu 'Uthman Dan Fodio," *Odù: Journal of Yoruba and Related Studies*, Vol.1, no.1, (1964), 45-58; Finn Fuglestad, "A reconsideration

By and large, the application of social changes achieved by Dan Fodio *Jihād* witnessed a gradual diminishment. The advent of the British colonial system eroded most of Islamic commitments to its values and identities. The British intelligently tried to derail the cultural identity of Hausa/Fulani.³ As a result, they embraced the western lifestyle that has little or no respect for the marriage system. Consequently, the practice of the Islamic family system gradually started to weaken. Ostentation and false pretense began to rob the Muslims of the comfort of daily life. The customs that Dan Fodio waged war against were not far away from people's practices. In addition to that, the foreign domination of western cultures took a position with its bogus and glitzy systems.

To rectify such problems and come up with a lasting solution to the old contradictory customs, some Muslim scholars considered reviving the family life of the Muslim Ummah in the study area. The task of preaching and enlightenment campaign against all conflicting practices with Islamic injunctions, sprang from some scholars notably the late sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi. Accordingly, the explanations given by this scholar in his book-*Al-'Aqīdah al-Sahīḥah bi muwāfaqati al-Sharī'ah* as utilized by one of his students-Ismā'il Idris led to the emergence of the *Izalah* as an Islamic Organization.⁴

of Hausa History before the jihad," *The Journal of African History* Vol. 19, no. 3, (July 1978): 319-339. < <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-african-history/article/>> DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002185370001619>. Viewed on 4th February, 2017.

³ Azeez Adekunle Olabiyi. *Izalatul Bid'ah Movement in Nigeria* (1973-2003), (PhD theses, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 2006), 6.

⁴ Abubakar Gumi & Isma'il Tsiga. *Where I stand*, Spectrum books, (Ibadan, 1992), 155-163. Cf. Muhammad Sani Adam Modibbo, "Survey of Muslim groups in Plateau state of Nigeria." *NRN Background Paper* 4 (2012); Kane Ousman, *Muslim Modernity in Post-colonial Nigeria*, (Boston: Brill, 2003), 85; Alexander Thurston, *Interactions between Northern Nigeria and the Arab World in the Twentieth Century*, (2009), 52.

Today, *Izalah* movement is one of the largest Islamic organizations not only in Northern Nigeria but in the entire country and even in the neighboring countries.⁵ The organization is active in the propagation of Islam and adherence to the Sunnah of the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). The movement has made noticeable progress in shaping the family system in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet. The unethical attitudes exhibited in all sectors of human life begin from the family unit. Charity, they say, begins at home. When the home is not well-balanced, the larger society pays the prize. And finally, it affects the progress and development of the society⁶. Therefore, it becomes of great interest to find out the efforts of *Izalah* movement on the family system among Hausa/Fulani in Gombe.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

About a century after the *jihād* (reformative war) of Dan Fodio in Nigeria, social change witnessed a gradual diminishment. The advent of the British colonial system has eroded most of Islamic commitments to the values of Islam. Consequently, the Islamic identity started to change in Nigeria and the Hausa/ Fulani are infused with other cultures which are not relevant to Islamic teachings.⁷ Moreover, during the colonial rule, Muslim scholars were not given opportunity to propagate Islamic awareness in the study area. Many ways to contained Islam and prevent its spread and proper implementations, were

⁵ Dauda Abubakar. "The Giving and Receiving of Zakat: Anthropological Analysis of Relationship between the Wealthy' and 'Needy' Citizens in Jos, Nigeria." In *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol.3.no.9, (May 2013): 289-296. > www.ijhssnet.com< Retrieved on 9th October 2016.

⁶ Ime N. George & David E. Ukpong, "Combating the 21st Century Family Challenges in Nigeria for Social Stability through Family Counselling Services," *Developing Country Studies*, Vol.3, No.4, (2013),> <http://www.iiste.org> < Viewed on 8 March 2015.

⁷ Azeez Adekunle Olabiyi. *Izalatul Bid'ah Movement in Nigeria (1973-2003)*, (PhD theses, university of Ibadan, Nigeria, 2006), 6.Cf. Kane Ousman, *Muslim Modernity in Post-colonial Nigeria*, (Boston: Brill, 2003).

and are the priority of colonialism.⁸ So, they embraced the traditional lifestyle in which customary practices overshadow the Islamic injunctions on marriage system. Therefore, the practice of the Islamic family system gradually started to weaken. Thus, a lot of the Muslims reverted to their non-Islamic practices and degenerated to the lowest retreat.

From the end of 20th century to the beginning of 21st century, majority of Muslims in Northern Nigeria became less conscious of their Islamic identity. Hence, they reverted to the non-Islamic ways of living and thinking. As a result of that, some organizations came into existence taking upon themselves the responsibility of protecting the purity of Islamic traditions and society, from the cultural erosion imposed on it by the colonialism.⁹ One of these organizations is the *Jamā'atu Izālati al -Bid'ati Wa Iqāmati Sunnah* (Society for Removal of Innovations and establishment of the Sunna) popularly known as *Izalah*, founded through the ideas of late Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi.¹⁰

The *Izalah* engaged in many activities to eradicate traditions which they deemed contrary to Islamic teaching on the one hand, and to revive Islamic way of life among Muslims in Nigeria in general, and Gombe in particular. Some of the *Izalah* activities are preaching, exhortation, teaching, establishment of *Masājid* (mosques) and Islamic schools. In addition to that, *Izalah* initiated programs such as enlightenment of the

⁸ Kehinde Faluyi, "The economics of the Sokoto Jihad", In, *Hamdard Islamicus*, Quarterly journal of Studies and Research in Islam. Vol. XIV, no.1, (1991): 29-42. Cf. Umar, Muhammad Sani. *Islam and Colonialism: intellectual responses of Muslims of Northern Nigeria to British colonial rule*. Vol. 5. (Brill: 2006); Reynolds, Jonathan. "Good and bad Muslims: Islam and indirect rule in Northern Nigeria." *The International journal of African historical studies* 34, no. 3 (2001): 601-618.

⁹ Muhammad Sani Umar, "Changing Islamic Identity of Nigeria from the 1960s to the 1980s: From Šūfism to Anti-Šūfism." In *Muslim Identity and Social change in sub-Saharan Africa*, edited by Louis Brenner, (London: Hurst & Company, 1993), 159. Cf. Alexander Thurston, *Interactions between Northern Nigeria and the Arab World in the Twentieth Century*, (2009), 52

¹⁰ Ibid. P.p.166-169. An explanation of the emergence, organizational structure and methods of reformation by the *Izalah* movement is given in chapter two.