

Research Article

Perspective of Prophetic and Islamic Medicine in Sokoto Caliphate and Their Potentials to Modern Medicine

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Abstract

The noble Scholars of Sokoto caliphate had left an important legacy on Prophetic and Islamic medicine which is evidenced in a number of works they had written. They realized the significance of health to the life of the people and hence produced valuable literature on medicine. The objective of this research paper is to analyze some of these literary works of the Jihad Scholars contextually and show the potential of the knowledge to the field of human medicine. Despite the significance of these works by the Jihad Scholars, yet they have not been given due regards and consideration in our contemporary period. To achieve the objective of this research, analytical method and content analysis of some relevant works on medicine were employed. Some of the results of the findings show that a number of these medicinal literature are very much relevant in the modern field of human medicine. In view of this, there is need for both the government and other relevant stakeholders to come in, support and provide sponsor for the proper utilization of this legacy with a view to augmenting the health policies in the society particularly by both the government and other non-governmental organizations. The paper provides an insightful analysis of the contributions of Sokoto Jihad scholars to the field of human medicine, emphasizing their relevance to modern medical practices. It highlights the works of the Jihad Scholars across various branches of medicine, including pharmacology, surgery, community health, and epidemiology. The paper emphasizes for the contemporary relevance of these works, suggesting their integration into modern educational curricula, among others.

Keywords

Prophetic, Islamic, Medicine, Sokoto, Caliphate

1. Introduction

This paper analyses different works written on Prophetic and Islamic medicine in some areas of Sokoto caliphate. There were different scholars who took interest in documenting and writing a number of medical manuscripts during the period of the caliphate. They wrote extensively in the field comprising different types and aspects of medicine. Manuscripts were written based on Islamic and Prophetic medicines and other traditional sources of medicine that conform

to the teachings of Islam. Thus; Islamic and Prophetic medicine comprises combinations of recommended herbs, other natural substances both solid and liquid, incantations (*Ruqyah*), recommended supplications, some recommended acts and some precautionary measures, among others. This paper examines some authors of Prophetic and Islamic medicine in the caliphate and theoretical analysis of their authored medicinal manuscripts. In this regard, authors of Prophetic

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and Islamic medicine in Sokoto caliphate refer to the three founders of the caliphate (i.e Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye, Shaykh Abdullahi bn Foduye and Sultan Muhammad Bello), their companions, tutors, disciples, and other Muslim scholars of their contemporaries and beyond.

2. Meaning of Concepts: Prophetic and Islamic Medicine

Islamic and Prophetic medicines are often used interchangeably due to their originality from the same root. It is however pertinent to note that some scholars are divided as to the actual meaning of the two terms. The distinction between the two (2) terms outlined by some scholars and researchers are based on historical, methodological, background, sources, and other perspectives. In a general perspective, *Al-Tib al-Nabawiy* (Prophetic medicine) refers to the curative treatments and preventive medicine reported in the Prophetic guidance and practice. [1] A number of scholars and researchers tend to differentiate between Islamic and Prophetic medicine. In one of the definitions, Prophetic medicine is defined as a science that combines all that has come to us from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on matters concerning medicine, including verses of the *Qur'ān*, *Aḥādīth* of the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah (SWT-) be upon him), the prescriptions of the Prophet ﷺ as he administered treatment to some of his Companions when they asked him for cures, or when he instructed them on some remedy, his advises relating to healthy living of a human being pertaining to his food and drink, his dwelling and marriage, also covering the injunctions related to medicine and medication, the etiquettes to be observed and the legal responsibilities of the practitioners.¹This definition clearly denotes Prophetic medicine as it came directly from the Prophet (SAW).

Based on the historical perspective, Prophetic Medicine was developed during the time of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and includes herbal lore, hygiene and dietary practices and exercise regimes while Islamic medicine is the body of medical knowledge and practice which began in the early Islamic period and which is being currently practiced by Muslim physicians in Muslim and non-Muslim countries. [2]

It is clear that both Islamic and Prophetic medicine denote medical treatment, healing and other related health aspects that conform to the teachings of Islam. On the other hand, the two terms differ in some respects which relates to time frame, sources, methodologies, and practice, among others. It can therefore be submitted here that Islamic medicine is more general as it can include both the two while Prophetic medicine is only peculiar to the medicinal related matters reported from the Prophet (SAW).

2.1. Importance of Prophetic and Islamic Medicine

Prophetic and Islamic medicine played significant role in the maintenance, prevention and curative health care services delivery since the early period of Islam. Both Prophetic and Islamic medicine had impacted positively on the lives of the Muslims physically and spiritually. Both have significantly played vital roles in the following areas of health care, healing and treatment:

2.1.1. Spiritual Health Care

Islamic and Prophetic medicines are peculiar in dealing with spiritual medicine. Spiritual ailments that affect the heart and the physical body are mostly treated by employing Prophetic and Islamic medicine. It is similarly evident that these types of diseases are prevalent in the modern age and reasonable numbers of people are been afflicted especially through magic, sorcery and the devils among the Jinn. It is also vital to note that modern medicine gives little attention or provide no cure for such illnesses in most cases. This proves the fact that the society in our contemporary age needs the system of Prophetic and Islamic healing method to address such challenges. In this regard, this researcher refers to a great legacy of Islamic medicine left behind by the Sokoto Jihad leaders. Sultan Bello for instance wrote a number of books dealing with spiritual medicine providing both diagnosis and the treatments. The following books are good examples: *Al-Tibb al-Nabawy*, *Ujalat al-Rakib fi al-Tibb al-Sa'ib*, *Al-Mawarid al-Nabawiyyah fi Masa'il al-Tibbiyyah*, and *Kitab Al-Rahmah fi al-Tibb wa al-Hikmah* though not the actual author but relied heavily on it in his medical practice, among others.

2.1.2. Psychological Health Care Services

Islamic medicine in particular is more peculiar in addressing some psychological ailments than the modern medicine. This is because; psychological problems are very wide and include some spiritual ailments that cannot be treated by the use of modern medicine such as Jinn related illnesses and some spiritual diseases of the heart.

In most cases, modern medicine does not recognize spiritual ailments as is the case in Islamic medicine. Some ailments are related to Jinn and evil eye which require spiritual treatments according to the teachings of Prophetic medicine. At this point, this research paper emphasizes on the importance and relevance of the medicinal books of the Jihad Scholars in addressing the rampant cases of psychological disorders in the society.

2.2. Brief History of the Sokoto Jihad Leaders

These were the founders of the caliphate, their tutors, disciples and other Muslim scholars who wrote on medicine

1A. A. Hussein., et-al. "Prophetic Medicine, Islamic/Prophetic medicine, Traditional Arabic and Islamic/Prophetic medicine (TAIM), op.cit, p 63

during the period of the caliphate. In this respect, attempt is made to give brief account of some of these authors and their relevant works on medicine. It is pertinent to note that some scholars do not have works specifically on medicine but had also written a chapter(s), a section (s) and or even a paragraph dealing with certain aspect(s) of medicine in Islam. This research paper therefore does not neglect them but has also put them down in this discussion for maximum benefit.

2.2.1. Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye and His Brief Biography

Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye was born in Maratta in the land of Gobir in the year 1754 CE (Christian Era)/1168AH (After Hijrah) to a renowned family of Musa Jakolo who settled in Birnin kwanni. His father was Muhammad Foduye who was a pious scholar, a writer, teacher and an Imam of his community. He learnt the Qur'an from his father and his mother Hauwa also played her part in his elementary education. [3] The Shaykh moved to other scholars under whom he furthered his studies namely; Uthman Binduri, Muhammad Sambo, and Shaykh Jibril bn Umar, among others. Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye started teaching and preaching at the age of twenty (20) after acquiring and mastering some important basic Islamic sciences. Thus at this stage, he was fully involved in learning, teachings and preaching.²

The Shaykh was said to have written about a hundred books on different aspects of religion, government, culture, poetry, logic, rhetoric, economy, trade, law and society. He was indeed a scholar and poet in the classical Arabic tradition. [4] Since his childhood, the Shaykh was in the midst of different text books and manuscripts which were carefully written and copied from other books which came in from North Africa. Others were said to have been brought in by the Pilgrims who returned back from Hajj. In his writing, the Shaykh used mostly Arabic and Fulfulde languages. [5] Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye wrote extensively on different aspects of Islamic learning and thus he did not leave any aspects untouched. He kept on producing literary works that remain relevant till day. He was influenced by the Timbuktu system of Islamic education which became the centre of Maliki Juristic scholarship by 14th century.³ The Shaykh provided some chapters and sections dealing with some aspects of Prophetic and Islamic medicine.

2.2.2. Shaykh Abdullah bn Foduye and His Brief Biography

He is Abdullahi bn Muhammad bn Uthman bn Salih bn Harun bn Muhammad Gardo bn Muhammad Jabbo bn Mu-

hammad Sambo bn Ayyub bn Alasiran bn Buba Baba bn Musa Jakolo. He was born in about 1181 AH (1767 CE) in Hausaland. He studied and memorized the Qur'an under his father, Muhammad, who was known as "Fodiyo" which means "the scholar" in the Fulfulde language. He was raised religiously, studying various sciences and devoted his life to inviting non-Muslims to Islam and Muslims to the Sunnah, studying, teaching, waging jihad, travelling the spiritual path of inner excellence, and establishing Islamic governance. He learned from his full brother, Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye, and studied and specialized in the sciences of theology, jurisprudence, Arabic, legal philosophy, *Quranic* exegesis, and many others, especially the Sciences of Intellectual Reasoning (*ulum al-aqli*) and medicine. [6] Shaykh Abdullah bn Foduye also wrote on variety of subjects and produced literary works on some aspects of Prophetic and Islamic medicine in some of his works.

2.2.3. Sultan Muhammadu Bello and His Brief Biography

His full name is Muhammad Bello bn Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye (1195-1253AH/1781-1837CE). He was the third son of the Shaykh born into a reputable family renowned for learning and piety. He received his elementary education under the guardianship of his parents in which he learnt Arabic Alphabets, memorization of short verses of the Qur'an, study of Islamic elementary text books, and the skill to write the Qur'an on the slate. The Sultan studied *Tafsir* under his father, Hadith and the book titled *Insan al-Kamil* and other branches of Islamic sciences. Sultan Muhammad Bello specialized in different Islamic sciences including medicine, Qur'an, Hadith, *Tafsir*, Islamic Jurisprudence, *Tasawwuf*, Arabic language, Syntax, Grammar, Rhetorics, Prosody, among others. [7] Sultan Bello started authorship at the age of twenty (20) and before the commencement of the Jihad, he wrote a number of manuscripts. It was gathered that before his death, he wrote about one hundred and twenty (120) books. [8] Some of the scopes of his write up included medicine, politics, law, administration, warfare, Sufism, history, and Jurisprudence.

2.3. Literary Works of Sokoto Jihad Scholars on Medicine

The Jihad Scholars' literary works on medicine and other related matters on health are quite reasonable in number. This section provided a highlight of some of these relevant works according to their authors.

2.3.1. Shaykh Uthman bn Foduye

The Shaykh was not known to have written a specific independent work on medicine, however, this research paper has analyzed certain sections and chapters of his works which discussed rulings, guidance and some ethical con-

² Ibid

³ For Further details, see A. H. Quick, Aspects of Islamic Social Intellectual History In Hausaland: 'Uthman Ibn Fodi, 1774-1804 C. E., A Thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Department of History, in the University of Toronto, National Library of Canada, 1995, p. 93

ducts relating to personal hygiene, circumcisions, preventive health, established Islamic procedures for food and drink, medicine and supernatural matters, among others. These works include:

- a. *Ihya' al-Sunnah wa Ikhmad al-Bid'ah*(Reviving the Sunnah and suppressing the innovation)
- b. *Nur al-Al-Bab*(Enlightening Minds) [9]
- c. *Bayan al-Bid' al-Shaytaniyyah Allatiy Ahdathaha al-Nas fiy Abwab al-Millah al-Muhammadiyyah*(Explanation on Satanic Innovation Invented by (some) People into the Religion) [10]

2.3.2. Shaykh Abdullahi bn Foduye

He wrote the following works on medicine:

- a. *Wird al-Adhkar wa al-Da'wat Mimma Yaqra' Fi al-Sibah wa Sa'ir al-Awqat*
- b. *Dawa'u al-Waswas*(Cure of the Satanic Whispering) [11]
- c. *Mutiyyat al-Zaad ila al-Ma'ad*(Provision for the Hereafter) [12]
- d. *Masalih al-Insan al-Muta'allaqah bi al-Adyan wa al-Abdaan*(Benefits for Mankind Regarding the Religions and Bodily (Medicine related matters) [13]
- e. *Diya' al-Ummah fiy Adillat al-A'immah*

2.3.3. Sultan Muhammadu Bello

Some of his literary works on medicine are as follows:

- a. *Al-Tibb al-Nabawi*(Prophetic Medicine)
- b. *Tanbih al-Ikhwan ala Adwiyat al-Didan*(Educating the Brothers on the Healing and Treatment of Worms)
- c. *Al-Tibb al-Hayyinu fiy Auja'i al-Ayn* [14]
- d. *Al-Qaul al-Manthur fiy Bayan Adwiyat Illat al-Baathur*(Standing Verdict on the Treatment of Piles)
- e. *Risalat al-Amrad al-Kilya wa Ilajuha*
- f. *Ujalat al-Rakib fiy al-Tibb al-Sa'ib*
- g. *Al-Qaul al-Sina*
- h. *Kitab al-Rahmah fiy al-Tibb wa al-Hikmah*

The above were some of the literary works the Jihad Scholars wrote on medicine. The following section below provided some of the content analysis of some of these works.

3. Theoretical Perspective of Some of Their Works on Medicine

In this context, the researcher provided a theoretical content of some selected works irrespective of their authors. In this regard, the selected works were analyzed based on the themes of their content as discussed below.

3.1. Ihya' al-Sunnah wa Ikhmad al-Bid'ah

This book was written by the Shaykh when he returned from his tours and settled at his home Degel. It is one of the Shaykh's practical guides to establishing Islamic lifestyle

and destroying the customs contrary to the Islamic way. The book was written to address different aspects of socio-religious and economic aspects of life including health matters to ensure that they conform to the provisions of the *shari'ah*. The book contained some sections which deal with the violations of the *sunnah* related to personal hygiene, circumcision, preventive health, established Islamic procedures for food and drink and general medicine. He also provided the Islamic rulings and guidance on how to conduct oneself on such matters. On maintenance of good health of one's body, the Shaykh identified one of the bad practices by women during his time which was taking certain medicine or some other measures in order to get fat. According to the Shaykh:

Eating (taking some medicinal herbs or foods) to get very fat is an abominable act. Some women take special measures to fatten themselves up. This is a prohibited innovation by the consensus of the scholars because it makes one unable to observe some of the compulsory acts of *Ibadah* properly. It is also harmful to the health and well being of the woman. [15]

This clearly shows how the Shaykh was very much concerned with the health condition of his followers ranging from preventive and curative health. The medicine referred by Shaykh here excludes the approved natural foods that are recommended to be taken in order to improve one's physical health. In *Nur al-Al-Bab* and *Bayan Bid'ah*, the Shaykh discussed some innovations introduced in matters of healing and *Ruqyah*.

3.2. Spiritual Medicine

In some of his writings, Shaykh Abdullah bn Foduyehas addressed an important aspect of medicine which is much peculiar to Prophetic medicine. As discussed earlier, spiritual divine medicine is employed for the treatment of both physical and spiritual diseases through the recitation of some approved portions from the Qur'an and Ahadith of the noble Prophet (ﷺ). Some of the works under this category include:

3.2.1 Wird al-Adhkar wa al-Da'wat Mimma Yaqra' Fi al-Sibah wa Sa'ir al-Awqat

In this treatise, Shaykh Abdullahi bn Foduye has extensively discussed a number of supplications and *Adhkar* which are effective for the treatment of both physical and spiritual diseases such as pain, fear, doubt, anxiety, depression, difficulty, among others. According to the Shaykh, the work was composed mainly for the daily remembrance and supplications to be recited from dawn to sunset. [16] Shaykh Abdullah recorded these supplications and *Adhkar* emphasizing on their significance to the life of a believer. He outlines them sequentially ranging from *Isti'adha*, *Bamalalah*, *Surah al-Fatihah*, *Surah al-Ikhlās*, *Mu'awwidhatain*, *Ayat al-Kursiyy*, and other supplications which were reported in the

Traditions of the noble Prophet (ﷺ).

In fact, Shaykh Abdullah bn Foduye has realized the importance of these supplications and *Adhkar* which cut across all human dealings and man's desire for the cure of his physical and spiritual ailments.

Other important works under this category include: "Cure For the Whispering of the Shaytan *"Dawa'u al-Waswas"* which contains spiritual medicine against the evil of the *Shayaatin* and evil doers and "Provision for the Hereafter (*Mutiyyat al-Zaad ila al-Ma'ad*)" which deals with Prophet medicine.

Shaykh Abdullahi bn Foduye was actually concerned in this regard with the spiritual benefits of these supplications in the life of Muslims. This is found relevant because supplications are part of the teachings of Prophetic medicine. It is believed that Shaykh Abdullahi has written a number of manuscripts relating to supplications and *Ruqyah*. Some of his works were also written on physical and body related medicine and preventive and curative medicine like his *masalih al-insan* and *Diya' al-Ummah*, among others.

3.2.2. Divine Spiritual, Natural and Curative Medicine

Under this category, Sultan Muhammadu Bello wrote some works like his *Tibb al-Nabawiy* [17] which contains both spiritual and curative medicine. It is a book based on the guidance of the noble Prophet (ﷺ) concerning medicine known as Prophetic medicine. Sultan Muhammad Bello divided the work into three major sections. The first section discusses purely divine spiritual medicine; the second section examines the natural Prophetic medicine while the last section elaborates on the Prophetic medicine which combined both natural and divine spiritual medicine.

On health education, preventive and curative medicine, the Sultan composed *Tanbih al-Ikhwan ala Adwiyat al-Didan*. [18] The work specifically focused on intestinal worms. In a general highlight, the book discusses the symptoms, preventive measures, medical treatments, prescriptions and dosage of different medicines including the types of foods recommended for intestinal worms' patients. In the introductory section, Bello highlighted some common causes of intestinal worms such as over eating, rotten fruits, contaminated foods, foods not cooked properly, and drinking spoiled milk, among others. Sultan Bello also identified two types of worms: large and small worms and the nature of each type and their symptoms. He further explained different methods of preparing some concoctions for treatment of worm diseases.

As can be seen above, Sultan Bello has provided clear insight about the nature of worm diseases, method of its treatment and some preventive measures. The most interesting thing is that, some of the modern findings on worm diseases confirmed some of his scientific discoveries on the same subject particularly on the classifications of worms and its nature.

4. The Potential of the Knowledge to the Field of Human Medicine

The bulk of knowledge inherited from the medicinal works of the Sokoto Jihad Scholars can be of great relevance in the field of human medicine. Some of their works deal with a number of aspects or branches of medicine peculiar to human medicine such as pharmacology, surgery, community health, epidemiology, obstetrics and gynecology, among others.

The above are some of the major branches of medicine that the modern medical doctors do specialize on. Most of these aspects of medicine were also dealt with in the books of the Sokoto caliphate scholars. According to an oral source, Sultan Bello for instance had established a local healing center at Marinar Korino for the diagnosis and treatment of different types of ailments including what is today known in modern medicine as surgery. [19] Both Sultan Bello and his uncle Shaykh Abdullah bn Foduye wrote on epidemiology in their medicinal manuscripts such as *Diya' al-Ummah fi Adilat al-A'immah* and *Tanbih al-Ikhwan ala Adwiyat al-didan*, among others. On community health, their medicinal books were clear attestation to their effort in health care service delivery to their followers. A number of letters were written to different communities on health guidelines and medical solutions by these scholars some of which were documented. Other aspects of medicine were also taken care of in their books relating to pathology, pharmacology, dentistry, ophthalmology, among others. As a matter of fact, these medicinal documents are still very much relevant in the field of human medicine. They can be translated, edited and accommodated in the current medical and health educational curriculum from primary up to tertiary levels.

5. Conclusion

Conclusively, this paper has analyzed the theoretical aspect of medicine in the books written by the scholars of Sokoto caliphate. These works are numerous written on variety of subjects on medicine. They discussed different types of diseases and their medical treatments. These diseases comprise spiritual and physical ailments. They provide comprehensive explanations on various types of medicine ranging from physical, spiritual and compound medicine. In fact, the Sokoto Jihad Scholars have written significant number of literature on medicine and its different branches some of which were discussed in this paper. This fact confirms the level and the rate at which these noble and reputable scholars dedicated their time and resources in documenting these literary medicinal works for the benefit of their community. There are other works of great importance on medicine that were not captured in this paper but were treated in the second seminar paper which examines the practice and application of Prophetic and Islamic medicine in the caliphate. They

wrote these important works for several reasons. Some of their aims include assisting people to treat various ailments prevalent among the Muslim *Ummah* in Hausaland. They also aimed at educating and enlightening the populace on some preventive measures with a view to preserving and promoting their health. They wished to guide the public on the approved means of healing and medication that conform to the teachings of Islam with a view to avoiding un-Islamic forms of medication. More importantly, their main aim was seeking the pleasure of Allah (SWT).

Abbreviations

SWT	Subhanahu Wata'ala
SAW	Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam (Peace Be Upon Him)
CE	Christian Era
AH	After Hirah (Migration of the Prophet (SAW) from Makkah to Madinah)

Author Contributions

Mukhtar Umar Dagimun is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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