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Sawq'l-Umma Ila Ittiba`s-Sunna



Mobilization of the *Umma* Towards Following the *Sunna*

By

The Right-Acting Scholar-Warrior the Sword of Truth the Pious Inviter to the Way of his Lord
The Light of the Age the Renewer of the Religion the *Amir'l-Mu'mineen*

Shehu Uthman Dan Fuduye'

May Allah engulf him in His mercy Amen

Introduction Translation, Annotation & Commentary by

Shaykh Muhammad Shareef bin Farid

Named *The Desire for Illumination and Completion of Blessings Through A Commentary Upon the
Mobilization of the Umma Towards Following the Sunna*

May Allah pardon him and forgive his teachers, parents, family, and children - Amen

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I dedicate this book to my children
Alfa Umar, Modibo Muhammad, Ahmad Mazin, *Shehu* Uthman, *Nana* Tasneem,
Abd'r-Rahman, Fatuuma Mo'ina and Musa Jokolli

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Raising the Lamp of Truth by Mentioning the Harmonious Biography of the Sword of Truth

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, may Allah send blessings upon our master Muhammad his family and Companions and give them much peace.

This is a small fragment on the biography of the author, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, may the mercy of Allah be upon him. I arranged it based upon the pattern established in the famous Fulfulde` poem of the *Shehu* called *Yimre` Tanaasabuje`* (the Song of Comparison), in order to take *baraka* with his poem and with him, may Allah be merciful to him. He was *Shaykh al-Islam*, the symbol of erudition, the spiritual scholar, the spiritual savior, the discloser of the highest spiritual ranks, Abu Muhammad Sa`d, **Uthman ibn Muhammad** ibn Uthman ibn Saalih ibn Haarun ibn Muhammad Ghurdu ibn Muhammad Jubba ibn Muhammad Sanbu ibn Maysiran ibn Ayyub ibn Buba Baba ibn Abu Bakr ibn Musa Jokolli ibn *Imam* Dambube` at-Turuude'. *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` was born on Sunday, the 3rd of *Safar* in the year 1168 A.H. (circa December 15th, 1754 C.E.) in a land called Maratta in present day southern Niger.

Shehu Uthman was well known in the language of Hausa as *Dan Fodio* meaning the 'son of Fuduye`'. The meaning of *fuduye`* or *fodio* in the language of Fulfulde` means 'the jurist', this denotes that his father Muhammad was a majestic scholar renowned for his piety and erudition. As for the mother of the *Shehu*, she was Hawwa bint *Sayyidat* Fatima bint Muhammad as-Shareef ibn Abd's-Samad ibn Ahmad as-Shareef ibn Ali al-Yanbui` ibn Abd'r-Razaq ibn as-Saalih ibn al-Mubaarik ibn Ahmad ibn Abu'l-Hassan Ali as-Shadhili ibn Abdallah ibn Abd'l-Baar ibn Tamim ibn Hurmaz ibn Hatim ibn Qusay ibn Yusef ibn Yusha` ibn Wardi ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Isa ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hassan as-Sabt ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib and Fatima az-Zahra the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and upon his pure family and pleasing Companions. Wherever I have mentioned the '*Shehu*' in this commentary, it is meant by that *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, may Allah be merciful to him.

The above mentioned ancestor of the *Shehu*, Musa Jokolli was the one who emigrated with his ethnicity, the people of *Turuude* fleeing with their religion from the tribulations of their people in the lands of Futa Toro. He with his ethnicity subsequently reached the lands of Konni in Hausa land. The origins of the *Turuude* are from the Christians of *Ruum* and before that from the *Banu Isra'il*. The armies of the Companions reached them and their king accepted Islam and married his daughter to Uqba ibn Nafi`, the Companion, military commander and *Amir* of the west. It was from this marriage that the famous Fulbe` ethnicity called *Turuude* were born. They are the most important ethnicity regarding the dissemination of the religion of Islam, its sciences and its civilization in the whole of the *Bilad as-Sudan*. More than a third of the captured and kidnapped Blacks imported from West Africa into the Islands of the Caribbean, Central and South America and especially the southeastern states of the United States of America from North Carolina to east Texas were from this ethnicity, and are known today as the Gullah and Geeche Nations.

Realize that the *Shehu* was reared from a young age to invite people to Allah. He dove deeply into the sciences; from studying with his mother and father; then with the many teachers of his father and mother's family. From there he studied from the many teachers from his ethnicity, the *Turuudiya* after which he journeyed throughout the regions of the western and central *bilad's-Sudan* seeking extensive knowledge from the teachers and scholars from among the Tuareg, Hausa, Arab, Zaberma, Songhay, Kanuri and other ethnicities until he became the pivot of knowledge in his time. It is said that the number of his teachers were no less than 300 scholars. As a result Allah ta'ala favored him with *baraka* that He has given to only a few from among His protected friends.

Among the most prominent scholars who had major impact upon the spiritual training of the *Shehu*, were his father, *Shaykh* Fuduye` Muhammad ibn Uthman from whom he took the recitation of the *Qur'an*, its exegesis and its fundamental sciences. Among them was his maternal and paternal uncle, *Shaykh* Uthman Bindhuri ibn al-Amin ibn Hamm ibn `Aal from whom he took the science of jurisprudence

and with whom he studied the al-Mukhtasar. This *shaykh* was famous for righteousness, commanding the good and forbidding evil. Among them was his maternal uncle *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shaykh* Abdullahi, the grandson of the erudite *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Sa`d, from whom he took the science of jurisprudence having studied with him al-Kharashi's renowned commentary upon the al-Mukhtasar. Among them was *Shaykh* Abu Umar Jibril ibn Umar, from whom he took many licenses in the books of prophetic traditions, jurisprudence, and some spiritual chains in various Paths of *tasawwuf*. Among them was his maternal and paternal uncle, *Shaykh* al-Hajj Muhammad ibn Raj ibn Modibo Dittu ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, from whom he took the science of prophetic traditions, and listened to his reading of the entire al-Jaami` as-Saheeh of al-Bukhari. He also took from him license in it and in the remainder of the books of prophetic traditions. And there were many others from his teachers and scholars.

As for the scholars of the past who had the greatest influence upon the development of the *Shehu*, they were: *Shaykh* Muhy`d-Deen Abd`l-Qaadir al-Jaylani, *Shaykh* Ahmad al-Baydawi, *Shaykh* Ahmad ar-Rufai`, *Shaykh* Ibrahim ad-Dusuqi, *Shaykh* Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Shaykh* Abd`r-Rahman as-Suyuti, *Shaykh* Abd`l-Kareem al-Maghili, *Shaykh* Abu`l-Hassan as-Shadhili, *Shaykh* Ahmadu Baba at-Tinbuku, *Shaykh* al-Muhaasibi, *Shaykh* Abd`l-Wahaab as-Sha`rani, *Shaykh* Ibn`l-Hajj, *Shaykh* Mukhtar al-Kunti al-Kabeer, *Shaykh* `Izz`d-Deen ibn Abd`s-Salaam, *Shaykh* Muhy`d-Deen Ibn `Arabi al-Hatimi, *Shaykh* Abd`l-Kareem al-Jili, *Shaykh* Abu`l-Abass Ahmad Zarruq al-Barnusi, *Shaykh* al-Ujhuri, and others. It was from these right acting scholars, Knowers of Allah and *awliyya* that the *Shehu*, took the overflowing of sciences and gnosis, directly or indirectly, and he pursued their spiritual methodologies until Allah made him attain what they had attained which is the spring of the Muhammadan illumination. Thus, by means of the *baraka* of these excellent individuals, may Allah be pleased with them, there dawned in the heart of the *Shehu* deep love and yearning for our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace which had no ending, termination and limit. He said himself in his famous poem ending in the letter *daal*.

I swear by the *Rahman*, I possess not a single excellent trait,
 I am only totally encompassed in the love of Prophet Muhammad
 I give a description of the affliction of my longing for him, which is plain to see
 For me there are no enjoyments without visiting that Master
 I have become exhausted yearning to hasten to his grave
 Truly for me, there are no pleasures and joys in life without Muhammad.
 He is the sun of illumination, the crown of guidance, the sea of generosity
 Indeed there is no good except in following Muhammad.
 He is the downpour whose blessings encompass all creatures
 Rather, the entire creation of Allah is less than Muhammad.
 If I had traveled to Tayba, I would have obtained the object of my desires,
 Being completely covered in the dust of the sandals of Muhammad.

It goes without saying that visiting the grave of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace is among the highly commendable actions, as *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` said in his Diya`l-Hukaam: "It is obligatory upon every Muslim not to let his years pass without making the pilgrimage to the House of Allah or without visiting the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Al-Fazaazi said: "For when the religion is incomplete, then there is no *dunya*." That is to say, it is not complete without the pilgrimage and visiting the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace." This is an issue which is well known with the common and the elite. However, the phrase 'visiting the grave of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace' has a specific meaning with the Realized ones because his grave, upon him be blessings and peace with them are the defunct *sunnan* practices which are necessary to be revived. The meaning of 'visiting' with them is 'resuscitation' and 'renewal' of his *Sunna* which has died, by him choosing the *Sunna* and giving preference to it over his own desires and passions until his desires and whims die and there only remains in him the *Sunna* of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This is indicated by the prophetic tradition: "Whoever revives my *Sunna* has given life to me. Whoever gives life to me will be with me in Paradise." Thus, the meaning of his words: 'For me there are no enjoyments without visiting that Master; I have become exhausted yearning to hasten to his grave' is that he found no enjoyment in any path short of giving life to the *Sunna* of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. For the Muhammadan sun had arisen in the heart of the *Shehu* until he did not see the shadow of his soul, nor the stars of anyone besides him upon him be peace. This is the foundation of the roots of the spiritual Path to Allah ta`ala. About this *Shaykh* Abd `l-Qaadir al-Jaylani, may Allah be merciful to him said in his Fat`hu `r-Rabbaani, "The true *sufi* is one whose inner and outer have been purified by following the Book of Allah and the *Sunna* of His Messenger. The more his purity increases,

the more he emerges from the ocean of his own existence. He comes to abandon his own will, choice and volition - all because of the purity of his heart. The foundation of uprightness is following the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in his words and deeds. The more the servant's heart is purified, the more he will see the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in his sleep, commanding him to do something and forbidding him to do something else... He comes to be with the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, as far as his inner content is concerned. His heart then becomes trained and disciplined with the Prophet and in his presence, upon him be blessings and peace. His hand comes to be in his hands. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, then becomes the one to be consulted concerning Allah, as the doorkeeper before Allah's presence." It was with this objective that the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him annihilated himself into the character traits of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and his *Sunna* in words, deeds and courtesies until the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace became the doctrine of belief (*ʿaqeeda*) of the *Shehu*, his *madh'hab* and his spiritual path to his Lord; and no other. It is about this that he said in his poem:

The heights of the stars have set by means of his elevation,
 Who can reach the exalted ranks of Muhammad?
 There is no intimacy except in visiting his grave,
 There is no abundance except in proximity to Muhammad.
 We tower above all creatures by means of his eminence,
 We have become chieftains among them by the power of Ahmad.
 The withdrawing of our tears have overflowed by his love,
 The sins of our disobedience are wiped out by Muhammad.
 How many straying in darkness have been guided by him?
 For his illuminations, reside in the heart of every unifier."

It is the unanimous agreement of the scholars that this poem marked the beginning of the affair of the spiritual and social reformation of the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him. For in the beginning of his affair until its end he followed upon the modus operandi of our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in his character, *Sunna*, and love for him. Thus, the life of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` became like the life of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Allah ta'ala made resemblance between the *Shehu* and the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, as evidence of His favor and bounty towards him. This is in accordance with what the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said himself in his Fulfulde` poem called: "The Song of Comparison":

Mee`tuu dum Ghanam yattuayghu Allah
 Ghanam ya`taaghu yimbi kuni`minaami
 Muhammadu sayniraami hiduu waraayi
 Meettee Allah nuuni`ri sayniraami

It means: "I say in gratitude to Allah in mentioning the favors which He has granted me. For Muhammad's coming was foretold before his appearance. All praises are due to Allah likewise was I foretold before my appearance." Proof of this is what was narrated on the authority of reliable sources from the righteous and saintly woman Umma Hani al-Fulaatiya as it was cited in the *Infaq'1-Maysuur* of *Sultan* Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`: "There will appear in this region of the *Sudan*, a *wali* from among the protected friends of Allah. He will renew the *deen*, revive the *Sunna* and establish the religion. The fortunate people will follow him and his remembrance will be spread throughout the horizons. The common people and the elite will obey his commands. Those connected to him will be known as the *al-Jama`at*. Among their signs is that they will not heard cattle, as is the custom of the Fulani. Whoever encounters that time should follow him." From this as well is what the erudite scholar of the lands of Birghima, *Shaykh* Waldeedi al-Fulaati said: "I announce to you the coming of a time of a *wali* from among the *awliyya* of Allah who will appear in these lands. He will renew the *deen*, revive the *Sunna* and establish the religion. Whoever encounters him should follow him. His sign is that he will first make the *jihad* with his tongue until the fortunate people follow him. Then he will make the *jihad* with the spearhead. He will have dominion over these lands and drive out the ruler of Bornu from his land in the same way he drove us from our lands, and he will control them."

For Allah favored *Shehu* when he was young with spiritual unfolding and sublime miracles due to his passionate love for the Prophet of mercy, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and his intense desire to follow him in all of his movements and stillness, until the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace became his actual teacher and spiritual guide on his spiritual journey. Thus, Allah opened to him the secret of secrets in the meaning of his words, upon him be blessings and peace:

“Whoever gives life to my *Sunna* has given life to me. Whoever gives life to me will be with me in Paradise.” As a result there dawned upon him the illuminations of Muhammad from all existing things until he actually sat in his presence upon him be blessings and peace during his sitting in every assembly of knowledge and the radiance of the Prophet, upon him be blessings and peace emanated upon him from every, scholar, teacher and spiritual guide. The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said in this regard in his famous Takhmees:

O he for whom the heavenly assemblies have been invested

O he for whom the veils of Divine majesty part.

O he whose face is as luminous as the sun

I have come to you with errors, indeed you are my recourse
Redeem me, save me; it was for this reason that you were originated.

I swear by your high standing, your name has been transcribed in the Torah

By your generosity everything into richness is transformed

By your light everything under your illumination moves

By your love the *nujaba* towards you are spiritually gravitated.

I swear by my sins that I have begun to flee towards you.

This was his spiritual state from the time of his youth until he attained the age of manhood. He, himself, said in his Tahdheer'l-Ikhwaan Min Ad`aai'l-Mahdiyya: “The most that I know about myself is that Allah ta`ala established me in a spiritual presence, where spiritual states emanated upon me from the time I was a young boy until I reached the age of thirty one. Then I was pulled by a spiritual gravitational state which emanated from the lights of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace as a result of the *baraka* of sending blessings upon him, until I was in his very presence, and which caused me to weep. I then had a strong desire to recite the poem which Abu Sufyan ibn al-Harith, may Allah be pleased with him eulogized the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace with after his death. Then the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace ordered me to recite it in his presence...When I had recited it and reached in my words the place in the poem which says: ‘And he has guided us, thus we do not fear error * befalling us since the Messenger is our Guide’; the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: ‘Stop here.’ I then stopped and he then gave me the Good News by his words: ‘I am your Guide upon the Path of the religion, for you will never be in error’. This Good News was more excellent to me than this world and all that is in it.” Thus, his affair in calling people to the religion began. In the year 1187 A.H. [circa 1772 C.E.]; he journeyed throughout the lands receiving education in the sciences while teaching what he learned to the people. This was his methodology in education and giving instructions; for when he sat with a scholar and studied with him an issue from the issues of knowledge, memorized it and understood its content; he would immediately set out to teach that issue to his wives, children, close companions and friends. As a result there emerged a community (*jama`at*) revolving around him, where his companions increased in knowledge with his increase in knowledge. About this he said in his Ihya`s-Sunna: “Most of the people are ignorant of the *shari`a*. Thus, it is incumbent that there be in every mosque and quarter in the town, a *faqih* teaching the people their *deen*. Likewise in every village it is incumbent for every *faqih* who has completed his individual obligations (*fard`ayn*) and is now devoted to the study of his collective obligations (*fard kifaya*) that he go out to the people neighboring on his town in order to teach them their *deen* and the obligations of their *shari`a*. He should take along with him provision which he will eat, and should not eat from their food because most of it is doubtful (*shubahat*). If one person does this, then the sin falls off the remaining people; otherwise all of them will carry the burden of the sin. As for the scholar the fault comes from not going out and as for the ignorant their fault comes from not seeking knowledge. Every common person who knows the conditions (*shuruuq*) of the prayer must teach it to others. If he does not, then he shares in the sin. It is well known that mankind is not born knowledgeable of the *shari`a*, therefore the responsibility of propagating it falls upon the scholars. Whoever has studied a single legal issue is one of the learned ones in it. Thus it is incumbent upon him to teach it to others if it is one of the individually obligatory duties. Otherwise, he will have a share in the sin.”

With this the *Shehu* clarified his methodology in learning and teaching. For he began with himself, then he taught his wives, blood brothers and sisters, his children, his nephews and nieces and the remainder of his near kin. He then went on to disseminate knowledge and *baraka* throughout the lands. He also said about this in his Ihya`s-Sunna: “It is therefore the duty of every Muslim to begin with himself and to get used to practicing the obligatory duties and avoiding forbidden practices. He should then teach that to his

wives and relatives. He should then precede to his neighbors, then to the people of his quarter, the inhabitants of his town, the surrounding suburbs of his city, and so on to the furthest part of the world. If a near one undertakes this duty, it falls off those who are furthest away. Otherwise everyone who is able to do so should go out - be he near or far away. This is the foremost concern to he whom the matter of his *deen* is important.”

It was with this intention that the *Shehu* arose and began to give life to the *Sunna*, destroy heretical innovation, and motivated the servants towards repentance from disbelief, disobedience and heedlessness. It was this which induced him at that time to compose the above mentioned famous poem in Arabic which he began with:

Is there for me a way to travel swiftly towards *Tayba*,
To visit the tomb of the Hashimi Muhammad?

On that occasion he was twenty years old. He explained in this poem of his that his spiritual path was constructed upon adherence to the Muhammadan *Sunna* outwardly, behaving in accordance with the Muhammadan character inwardly, persistence in sending blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace with the tongue and heart; and yearning and passionate desire to encounter the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace in dream visions and the waking state. It is due to this that the *Shehu* attained a special station in the illuminations of Muhammad; and thus Allah ta`ala reinforced him with the sending of blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, which he was persistent in doing without boredom, fatigue, and slackening.

Thus, during the period of 1187 to 1204 A.H. [circa 1772 to 1790 C.E.], *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` made strenuous effort in spiritual discipline and struggle by means of his following the *Sunna*, adherence to the Muhammadan characteristics, earnest passion for the Prophet, upon him be blessings and peace and continuance sending of blessings upon him, until he attained the second spiritual station which was the Great Unveiling. As a result, innumerable miracles unfolded for him to the point where he became well known for them among the people. It was during this period that the *Shehu* listened to the reading of the entire Saheeh of al-Bukhari and received license in it and in the rest of the books of prophetic traditions from his maternal and paternal uncle *Shaykh* al-Hajj Muhammad ibn Raj, in the year 1200 A.H. [circa 1786]. His age at that time was thirty-three. He said about this in his *Fulfulde`* poem:

Miji`adaka ghuddi jirsaba jiddanimma
Meettiya Allah duudum jiddinaama
Wa`ashiy ghuddi ma`aji dikashfuwadda
Meettiya Allah duudum jiddinaama

It means: I remain silent about mentioning other Divine favors. It is modesty which silences me. All praises are due to Allah for what I remain silent about. I also remain silent about the Divine favors of miracles. All praises are due to Allah for what He has given to me of miracles. His son, *Sultan* Muhammad Bello also said about this in his Infaq`l-Maysuur: “The *Shehu* possessed miracles which were innumerable and countless, which can only be enumerated in a collection devoted purely for that. If the circumstances were not constricted on us, I would have transmitted some of what I witnessed myself from his miracles. However, if Allah permits me I will one day compose a separate book dedicated solely to that, and all praises are due to Allah.”

Regarding this also, *Shaykh* Mua`allahyede ibn Abd`l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa said in his Nabdhat Yaseera: “In the handwriting of my father it is said that the *Shehu* reached the rank of independent judgment (*ijtihaadiyya*). Whoever peruses his books like the Sawq`l-Umma and the Umdat`l-Ulama will know this. The spiritual functions which the *Shehu* were given were seven, for Allah ta`ala provided advantages with each of these functions increase and miracles and with the last one the greatest of spiritual ranks. My father, Abd`l-Qaadir, may the mercy of Allah be upon him enumerated them for us: ‘The first was the rectification of his intention initially and desiring the Continence of Allah ta`ala, which resulted in excellent acceptance and the spreading of his renown. Second was a peaceful heart and showing compassion towards people, which resulted in ardent love from people and excellent praise from them. The third was teaching the obligations from *tawheed*, *fiqh* and *tasawwuf* which resulted in unveilings of the realities of *tawheed* which were not given to anyone. The fourth was the eradication of heretical innovations and the establishment of the *Sunna*, which resulted in victory, sufficiency and political sovereignty. The fifth was the resolving of problematic issues and the removal of illusions which resulted in the perfection of inner vision in the religion and piercing comprehension. The sixth was ardent love of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, esteeming the sanctity of prophethood with the highest form of esteem and having passionate love for him with the utmost limit of adoration, which

resulted in radiant spiritual illumination, recurrent *baraka*, Divine assistance and being triumphant. The seventh was making intermediacy by means of the *awliyya* and entrance into their spiritual paths, which resulted in their support and presence in his affairs, and safety from the destructive traits of the age’.”

The bottom line is that many among the companions of the *Shehu*, and his children composed many poetic songs and books in non-Arabic and Arabic regarding the sublime miracles which were openly manifested by him. Thus, the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him became a perfected individual and a subjugator of his soul and all those around him by the permission of his Lord, where there manifested in him, the words of Allah ta`ala: “*Verily Allah has subjugated to you what is in the heavens and what is in the earth, and He has lavished some of His manifest and hidden favors upon you.*” In this regard he himself, said in his *Kitab’l-Wird*: “When I attained the age of thirty-six Allah removed the cloak from my eyes, the burden from my hearing and smell, the dullness from my taste, the thickness from my hands and the heaviness from my feet. I could see the far like the near and hear the far like the near. I could smell those who worshipped Allah with the sweetness of their scent and the stench of those disobedient with the foulness of their odor. I could recognize what was permissible in food by taste before it reached my throat and I could recognize the prohibited in the same manner. I could then take with my two hands what was far from me while remaining in my place. I could walk with my two feet the distance which a fleet horse could not travel in years. This was a favor from Allah which He gives to whom He wills. I was then made familiar with my entire physiognomy; every organ, bone, nerve, muscle, and hair follicle. I was made to understand each of these from their distinctive grade and function.” The *Shehu* became what the Realized ones of China call *chih-sheng* (‘an utmost sage’), that is to say a perfected friend of Allah, who is a *waliy* from the *awliyya* of Allah to whom Allah subjugates the whole of creation from his own soul, his physiognomy, and the rest of created existing things.

This authority (*taskheer*) emanated from the illuminations of Muhammad which are the traits of uprightness. The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him cataloged these in his Tareeq'l-Janna where he said their roots were fifteen: [1] knowledge which comprised those obligations that are incumbent upon every responsible person to know from the foundation of the religion, jurisprudence and spiritual purification; [2] repentance from all sins between a person and his Lord and between that person and other creatures of Allah; [3] austerity in worldly matters except out of necessity; [4] solitude from people except during times of prayer and other religious advantages; [5] making war against Satan and taking defense against his tricks; [6] struggling against the corrupt soul and bridling it with the bridle of fearful awareness of Allah; [7] reliance upon Allah in matters of daily provision; [8] leaving matters over to Allah during times of endangerment; [9] contentment with the decree of Allah; [10] patience during afflictions; [11] adherence to fear of Allah at all times; [12] adherence to hope in Allah at all times; [13] negating showing-off through sincerity; [14] negating conceited arrogance by recognition of the favors of Allah ta`ala; and [15] adherence to praise and gratitude for the abundant blessings of Allah azza wa jalla. These traits of uprightness emerge from the illuminations of Muhammad which are in affect the Straight Path when Allah ta`ala says regarding him, upon him be blessings and peace: “*Indeed you are among the Messengers, upon a Straight Path*”; and His words: “*Guide us to the Straight Path*”; that is to say guide us to the Light of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, who encompasses the traits of uprightness.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said in his Tareeq'l-Janna that whoever conducts himself in accordance with these traits of uprightness will have subjugated to himself forty favors, twenty in this world and twenty in the Hereafter. As for those of this world's life they are: Allah will mention him with adulation; He will show His gratitude towards him; He will demonstrate His love for him; He will be his Guardian; He will be the Guarantor of his provision; He will be his Helper; He will be his intimate companion; he will be given honor in his soul and will not encounter humiliation; he will be granted an elevated spiritual resolution; he will be given an enriched heart; his heart will be guided by the Light of Allah to sciences and secrets; his breast will be expanded and will not be constricted by anything from the hardships of this world; he will have respect in the hearts of people; he will be given love in the hearts of people; he will be given a universal *baraka* which will emanate into the earth on which he treads and the place where he resides; the earth from the land and sea will be subjugated to him until if he desires he can fly in the air, walk upon water, cut across the vast earth in a moment; animals will be subjugated to him; he will not ask Allah for anything except that He will grant it; he will be given leadership and prestige at the Door of Allah where people will seek him out as a means to Allah ta`ala through service to him, his supplications, eminence and *baraka*; and the answering of his supplications from Allah ta`ala until even if a notion crossed his mind he would find it has come into existence by the permission of Allah. By reason of conducting oneself in accordance with these traits, Allah ta`ala makes him a Vicegerent in His creation. For these miracles did not manifest for the *Shehu* except from the niche of the Light of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. For by means of adherence to the *Sunna* outwardly and inwardly, there were made subservient to the *Shehu*, the entire creation, even the rulers in the different lands. He as a result became the center of *baraka* for the rulers, who continued to take him as a means to Allah ta`ala, sought their desires from the miracles of his supplications and taking from his *baraka*.

In this regard, the teacher Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` mentioned in his Tazyeen'l-Waraqaat as an example of this subjugation (*taskheer*) which occurred for the *Shehu* on Friday, the day of the *Eid'l-Adhaa*, the 9th of *Dhu'l-Hijja* in 1204 A.H. [circa August 20th 1790 C.E.] when Bawa sent word to all the scholars of his land that they should meet together with him on the *Eid'l-Adhaa*. At that time he was at his place called Maghami, north of Kiyawaa. *Wazir* Gidadu said in his Karamaat as-Shaykh: “When we gathered together before him, and he said what he had said, and gave alms to the scholars which was excessive; then the *Shehu* stood before him and said: ‘Indeed I and my *jama`at* are not in need of your wealth; however I request from you five matters: [1] that you leave me to invite the people in your land to Allah; [2] that no one be prevented if someone desires to accept my invitation; [3] that respect be given to everyone who wears the skull cap and turban; [4] that you free political prisoners; and [5] that you repeal all taxes which are harmful to the subjects’. The ruler accepted his request saying: ‘Indeed I grant you what you ask and am content with everything that you desire to implement in our country.’ All praises are due to Allah for that, and we returned to our land establishing the religion, while the scholars returned to their land with their ill begotten wealth.” Along with this, Allah ta`ala placed under his control all the stratum of the cities from their scholars, the people of industry, professional guilds, military and warfare as well as huge confederations of the communities of Islam, as it will be mentioned, Allah willing.

Among his miracles also is what Allah ta`ala gave of spiritual openings for him when he reached the age of forty, similar to what Allah ta`ala gave of spiritual openings to our Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and dispatched him as the Seal of the Prophets and the *Imam* of the Messengers, at the beginning of his fortieth year. Correspondingly, Allah ta`ala gave a spiritual opening to *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` and made him the *Imam* of the *Awliyya* as he said in his Fulfulde` poem called The Song of Comparison:

Muhammad jawtataaki sifaaji muudumu
 Manaasaba urdi ma`kuni meer`uraami
 Umuuwaardee wunaai` majjuyaybi`aa
 Hitaadi ghutaami nuun`iri nandinaami

It means: It is not possible to attain the attributes of Muhammad in their entirety, but I have been scented from the fragrance of being in conformance with him. For he is my leader and I will never go astray. It was in the year which I was made a branch of him that I also was made to resemble him. *Wazir* Gidadu said in his Rawdat`l-Janaan that the causative factor of this Divine favor was the passionate desire of the *Shehu* towards the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, which induced him to take an oath and covenant not to speak with people for an entire year from the day of the *mawlid* of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, which is the 12th of the month of *Rabi`l-Awwal* until the *Rabi`l-Awwal* of the following year. At the completion of that covenant after one year, Allah ta`ala illuminated his heart with the Lights of Muhammad as he himself said in his Kitab`l-Wird: “When I reached the age of forty-one, five months and a few days, Allah attracted me into His presence. I found there the master of men and *jinn*, our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and with him were the Companions, the Prophets and the protected friends of Allah (*awliyya*). They then welcomed me and sat me in the middle of their gathering. Then the savior of men and *jinn*, my master Abd `l-Qaadir `l-Jaylani came with a green cloak trimmed with the statement **Laa ilaha illa Allah Muhammadun rasuulullah**, and a white turban designed with the chapter, 'Say He Allah is One.' He gave these to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, who placed them on his breast for a while. He then gave them over to Abu Bakr `s-Sidiq, then to Umar `l-Farruq, then to Uthman Dhu `n-Nurayn, then to Ali (may Allah ennoble his face!) and then to Prophet Yusef, upon him be peace. Yusef then returned them to my master Abd `l-Qaadir `l-Jaylani, who then dressed me in them with their permission. They said to him, 'Dress him and tie the turban on him and name him with the name which is special to him.' He sat me down, dressed me, tied the turban on me and called me by the name *Imam `l-Awliyya*. He commanded me to do good and forbade me from indecency. He then girded me with the Sword of Truth and commanded me to unleash it against the enemies of Allah; and then he commanded me with what he commanded me.” This great spiritual opening and Divine attraction occurred in the year 1208 A.H. [circa 1794 C.E.].

Regarding that also, *Amir`l-Mu`mineen* Muhammad Bello said in his Infat`l-Maysuur: “He (the *Shehu*) informed me of the time when he obtained the divine attraction by means of the *baraka* of the prayer upon the Prophet (*as-salaat `ala `n-nabiyy*), may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He was persistent with this without boredom, laziness nor laxity. As a result, Allah assisted him with the overflowing of illumination (*fiyd `l-anwaar*) by means of *Shaykh* Abd `l-Qaadir `l-Jayli, may Allah be pleased with him, and his grandfather the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He then witnessed the astounding things of the unseen kingdoms (*`ajaa`ib `l-malakuut*) and realized the mysteries of the kingdom of power (*garaa`ib `l-jabaruut*). He witnessed the phenomena of the Divine Attributes, Names and Essence. He became acquainted with the Guarded Tablet (*al-lawh `l-mahfuudh*) and untied its remarkable secrets. The Absolute Being gave him to drink the sweetness of inviting people to Him and crowned him with the crown of direction and guidance to Him. Then a voice from the divine presence called out once: “O mankind answer the call of the inviter to Allah!” It then recited the verse: “*Turned aside from it is he who is turned aside.*” Then the Absolute Being returned him to the place of consciousness in order that the station of guiding others and inviting them can be given to him. Sometimes the lights of majesty (*anwaar `l-jalaal*) would overcome him and seize him. Sometimes the lights of beauty (*anwaar `l-jamaal*) would release him and set him at ease. This was along with the fact that he was among the people of firm establishment (*at-tamkeen*) and permanent stations (*al-maqaamaat*), not among the people of transient states or the newly arrived. He then established what the Absolute Being created him for. He made him deserving of inviting people to Him and of being a guide to Him. He thus began calling people to Allah and guiding them to Him.”

Just as the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace encountered rejection, hatred, and disbelief from the people of Mecca and others among the Arab tribes, likewise the *Shehu* encountered rejection, hatred and repudiation from the people of his land. About this he said in his Fulfulde` poem:

Muhammad muaydu turraaji deembi`ayi
Meettiya Allah duuduun`iri tafaami
Uhu`shidiraayi ghu`tu hiduu ghiyaadum
Meettiya Allah duuduur duutuyaami

It means: Indeed Muhammad encountered harshness from people. I praise Allah that this also is what I encountered. He upon him be peace never treated people malevolently. I praise Allah that it was with this conduct which I followed. *Shaykh* Muhammad Mua`allahyede ibn Abd`l-Qadir ibn Mustafa said in his *Nabdhat Yaseera*: “Realize that *Shehu* Uthman, may the mercy of Allah ta`ala be upon him was reared upon the religion of Allah, along with the fact that he possessed tremendous character, a noble nature and was stalwart in the religion. He never behaved with the rage of ignorance, even against those who deserved it. He used to honor the elderly and show compassion to the young. It was the unanimous agreement of the people of his time that they had never seen anyone with more excellent character than him. One of the scholars once asked one of his sisters who was close to him: “By what merit did this man become superior to all the people?” She said: “I never saw him do acts of worship more than any of your acts of worship. I only witnessed from him excellent character which was not equaled by anyone of the people, except the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. In this manner he was superior to everyone.”

Regarding this, *Sultan* Muhammad Bello said in his *Infaq`l-Maysuur*: “When the *Shehu* clarified the path, guided the successful and cleared the road for the travelers; the worldly people from among the evil scholars and rulers blindly continued in their repression. They only feared the demise of their system, the lost of their markets and their deterioration in the eyes of those who were guided. Consequently, these rulers and scholars began to harm the *Shehu's jama`at* by seizing their wealth. The simple-minded among them endangered the lives of the Muslims and began to cut off their paths of earning their living. They used to hinder everyone who had some relationship with the *Shehu*, although the followers of the *Shehu* did not raise any objection to them. It never crossed the oppressors` minds that they were doing any wrong to the Muslims because the majority of the followers of the *Shehu* were from among the most powerless of people who had never known true political honor or social respect.”

Just as the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace made the emigration (*hijra*) taking flight with his religion from tribulations, when he was at the beginning of his fiftieth year, likewise the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him made the emigration at the beginning of his fiftieth year. He said about that in his Fulfulde` poem:

Unuddiri deena wanafiyyu da`yri ufirmaa
Meettiya Allah nuun`ira kuuranaami
Sabaaba fifuna tuhi`furbi `iwuaymuu
Meettiya Allah dun`ir `iwranaami
Gha`uuwi firnaabu subbiraya `uayni
Meettiya Allah tuun`ir `uayninaami
`Aran saffuuri sitteena `ufirnaa
Meettiya Allah duun`ir firniyaami

It means: The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace invited the people to the religion and manifested the Divine Unity in their hearts. After that he was forced to make emigration. All praises are due to Allah that the people likewise drove me out. The cause of his emigration was as a defense against slaughter. All praises are due to Allah that He saved me from that. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace emigrated east then north. All praises are due to Allah likewise was I saved. In the beginning of his sixth decade, may Allah bless him and grant him peace he emigrated with his religion. All praises are due to Allah that it was at that age in years that I too was saved. For the *Shehu* made the emigration from Degel in the year 1218 on the 10th of *Dhu`l-Qa`ida* [circa 1804 C.E.]. He and all those who listened to his teachings and obeyed him fled with their religion eastward to a place called Kuri Naghindu, then from there to a place called Timbaa, then from there they fled northward to Kalmaalu, then to a place called Farkhaaji, then to Ruwaawuri, until the *Shehu* reached Gudu. His age at that time was 51.

Just as Allah ta`ala gave permission to our Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace to establish the military struggle soon after the emigration and granted him a decisive victory in the Battle of Badr and in four subsequent battles after it; and after that the Battle of Uhud occurred in which many Muslims attained martyrdom, like our master Hamza ibn Abd'l-Muttalib and others; likewise this too happened to *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` as he recounted in his Fulfulde` poem:

Yubaawu firun `uhuddiranaa jihaadi
 Meettiya Allah nuun`ir keetaninaami
 Himiy haraam `ufuddunuyaa jihaadi
 Meettiya Allah duunur fuddanaami
 `Uhuri juureeji deenfu yunasru yaadi
 Meettiya Allah Meehbu fu nasranaami
 `Arankabi wartinuaybimu laabri ghuughaa
 Meettiya Allah duunbiru laabnunaami
 Yubaawu du`umfu jarraba mi`ami juulbi
 Meettiya Allah duuhi`iy mi`amuyaami

It means: After the emigration of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace military struggle was prescribed for him. All praises are due to Allah likewise was this prescribed for me. It was in the sacred month that his military struggle began. All praises are due to Allah that it was at this time that my military struggle began. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace engaged in five military engagements after which those who drove him out from Mecca could not reach him. All praises are due to Allah that my military engagements reached the same number. In all five encounters the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was given victory over the disbelievers. All praises are due to Allah I too was given victory in the first five military encounters. By means of these military engagements the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was made manifest over his enemies. All praises are due to Allah that I too was made manifest in the first five battles. Then after these victories tribulations appeared which adversely harmed the Muslims. All praises are due to Allah for the tribulations which occurred for me in that time as well.

Shaykh Abd'l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa said about this in his Mawsuufaat as-Sudan:

The *Shehu* fought in five military campaigns
 Consecutively with the praise of the Lord of the Throne
 And during this time we received news of the disbelievers
 Who were under the command of Yunfa, the father of tribulations
 All of the disbelievers of the land of the Blacks had gathered
 With hatred against the People of the religion and those of spiritual excellence
 While Yunfa had dispatched letters throughout the lands
 In order that they could give him assistance against the servants of Allah
 Along with the people of Gobir were those of Katsina
 Joined by the Tuaregs as well as the `Awadir equally
 They all gave mutual assistance to one another and came
 To the land of Kwotto which was the rendezvous for all those who came
 The flag of the Party of Allah by the Absolute Being had been elevated
 On that day disbelief and injustice were completely humiliated
 And Abdullahi came with massive amounts of troops
 Along with a division of soldiers who were true hearted on the battlefield
 He was the first among them who had fired
 The arrows of *Jihaad* in the encounters against the others
 The whole battle zone became impassioned and heated
 They drew near one another and the disbelievers lined up
 The corrupt ones began to prance and whoop and yell
 While the righteous shored up their ranks and then made the *takbeer*
 They all then engaged one another and the dust darkened the sky
 And then and there that fire of theirs was completely extinguished
 Then the people of Gobir turned on their heels in flight
 For nothing detoured any of them from fleeing the battlefield
 Their ruler even left behind his shoes, and likewise
 His cupola as well as his armor completely vanquished

He even left behind his throne and drums all together
 As well as his sword, while he was perplexed in complete fright
 All of their devices of government and instruments of war were found
 On that day the people of Gobir had nothing to be thankful for
 And the Muslims showed severity in the lands of disbelief
 Against the tyrants and against the governments of the oppressive

Regarding this also *Sultan* Muhammad Bello said in his Infaq'l-Maysuur: "This battle (Tabkin Kwotto) was the greatest encounter between the disbelievers and us, because it was like the recurrence of the day of Badr, the 'Day of the Criterion, the Day of the encounter of the two opposing parties.'" He likened the battle of Tabkin Kwotto to the day in which distinction was made between Truth and falsehood and the day of the encounter between the Party of Allah and the party of Satan, meaning the Day of Badr. Likewise, the teacher Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` likened this battle in the same vein in his Tazyeen'l-Waraqaat:

And there was nothing except that I saw that their waterless cloud
 Had cleared away from the brilliantly shining sun of *Islam*
 By the help of Him who helped the Prophet against the enemies

As for the tribulations which afflicted the *Jama`at* after the initial victories over the disbelievers, it is a reference to the battle of Thunthuwa as was mentioned in the Mawsufaat as-Sudan:

(The disbelievers) pounced upon the homes of the Muslims
 After that, then they were forced to turn tail and flee
 However, they killed a company among the scholars
 During the battle at the initiation of the encounter
 Among them was the *Imam* Mumman Sanbu
 And many of them were from the people of Jubbu
 Those killed among them was the learned Sa`daara
 The master of the sciences of grammar and historical narratives
 And Zayd, Ditti, then Daadan whose lineage goes
 To Dumaamu, mentioning these suffices the one astonished
 Other than these were those who had memorized the *Qur'an*
 And the students of knowledge, the possessors of certainty
 May Allah shower His pardon upon all of them
 And make our love for them a means of intercession for us
 The martyrs at Tsunthuwa can not be counted
 Due to the extensiveness of their numbers which were innumerable.

Just as Allah ta`ala gave victory to our Prophet, upon him be blessings and peace against the disbeliever through the conquering of Mecca and then firmly established his feet over all the Arabs and others; likewise did Allah ta`ala give victory to *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` as he said himself in his Fulfulde` poem:

'Utimaninaama 'eena 'ujaaluyeyya'ay
 Meettiya Allah miyambu dijaalinuyaami

It means: Allah ta`ala completed His promise to His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace that He would give victory to him against his enemies. All praises are due to Allah for His victory to me against my enemies as well. For Allah ta`ala firmly established the *Shehu* and the Muslim along with him with victory, triumph and the establishment of the religion in the traces of the footprints of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said in Najm'l-Ikhwaan: "As for what will clarify what Allah ta`ala has conferred upon us in these times of religious and worldly blessings, so that the people of these times can be grateful for them. This will make us and them worthy of increase, because Allah ta`ala says: 'If you are grateful, He will increase you in blessings.' We also clarify these blessings so that every person of insight may know that we are following in the footsteps of Muhammad the Chosen Prophet, in all affairs. Realize, O Brothers! that Allah ta`ala, has conferred upon us in these times: [1] a clear explanation of what is to be believed in (*aqeeda*) from the religion of Allah; [2] a clear explanation of what is to be done (*amal*) from the religion of Allah; [3] a clear explanation of what is to be avoided (*tark*) from the religion of Allah; [4] a clear understanding of what is highly recommended (*mubaah*) from the religion of Allah; [5] He has conferred upon us the removal of obscurities (*shubuhah*) from the religion of Allah; [6] He has conferred upon us the favor of commanding all that is good (*amri bi'l-ma'ruf*); [7] forbidding indecency (*nahyi 'an 'l-munkar*);

[8] frightening the people to cause them to leave disobedience of Allah; [9] giving good tidings to the people to urge them to the worship of Allah; Then He conferred on us [10] the favor of making the emigration (*hijra*); [11] the nominating of an *Amir'l-Mu'mineen*; [12] the taking up of the instruments of *jihād* which are cavalry horses, arrows, longbows, spears, swords, shields, armor, belts, helmets and other military equipment. He then conferred on us [13] the favor of making the *jihād* with them; [14] the appointing of prime ministers (*wazir*); [15] appointing of the *amirs* over the military; [16] the establishment of the public treasury (*khaazin*); [17] the appointing of regional *amirs*; [18] the appointing of government secretaries (*kaatib*); [19] the appointing of ambassadors (*rusul*) to foreign kingdoms; [20] taking civil servants (*khudaam*) for domestic affairs; [21] appointing of the judiciary (*qadaa*); [22] appointing of the *amirs* responsible for executing legal punishments (*huduud*); and [23] the appointing of the *Amir* of pilgrimage (*hajj*). Thus, these 23 characteristics are the fundamental rites of *Islam*. And there number is like the number of years of the mission (*risaala*) of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. We are grateful to Allah who has favored us with the manifestation of these fundamental Islamic rites during these Last Days.”

Thus, Allah ta'ala conferred upon the *Shehu* and his armies successive consecutive victories. For, in the month of *Ramadan* in the year 1220 A.H. (1805 C.E.) Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` conquered Kano. Yandoto was conquered in the month of *Dhu'l-Qa`ida* in the year 1220 A.H. In the year 1221 A.H. (1806 C.E.) the country of Katsina was conquered. Then military engagements occurred between the Muslims and the people of Bornu where many encounters occurred in order to give victory to the Muslims. In the year 1222 A.H. (1807 C.E.) the first battle of Alkalawa occurred, however the Muslims were unable to conquer it, having killed only about twenty of their knights. Then Maadamu was conquered as well as the town of Kanu just on the borders of the land of Kiyawa, as well as innumerable military garrisons in the remainder of the lands. In the 1223 A.H. (1807 C.E.) the second battle of Alkalawa occurred, where Allah completed the conquering, victories, and political sovereignty for the Muslims. As a result the power of the disbelievers in the remainder of the lands of Hausa diminished. Some of the rulers of their lands repented at the hands of the *Shehu*, while others followed him whole heartedly. Thus, the affair of the country was firmly established where even the bordering regions became pacified and to Allah belongs the praise.

In the year 1224 A.H. (1808 C.E.) the Muslim armies crossed the river to the south and as a result many countries and military garrisons were conquered and they returned safely with much spoils of war. In the month of *Ramadan* in the year 1224 A.H. the *Shehu* moved from Gudu to Sifawa and the Muslim armies reached the land of Zaberma and Gurma in which they were able to conquer and gain much spoils of war before returning. On their return they passed the lands of Nupe` which they also attacked. In the same year Bornu was easily conquered. Likewise many victories occurred in the lands of Nupe` at the hands of *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Bukhari ibn *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` and his paternal cousin, *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` in which they gained tremendous amounts of war spoils. In the same year the battle of Gobir occurred in which it was conquered at the hands of *Amir* Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu*. From the years 1225 A.H. until the year 1226 A.H. (1809-1811 C.E.) the armies of the Muslims spread throughout the lands of the enemies gaining many victories, wealth and spoils. In the year 1227 A.H. (1812 C.E.), *Malam* Musa, the *Amir* of Zakzaki arose with a powerful army and attained many victories. In the year 1228 A.H. (1812 C.E.), a man by the name of Hami appeared in the lands of Maaghangha claiming that he was the *Mahdi*. Eventually he was seized and crucified. In the year 1229 A.H. (1813 C.E.) the armies of the Muslims reached the lands of Borghu, vanquished the enemies and then returned after having attained many victories. In the year 1230 A.H. (1815 C.E.) the *Shehu* relocated from Sifawa to Sokoto and established it as the capital of the Sokoto Caliphate. At the hands of his son, Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, on Monday the 5th of *Jumad't-Thani* in the year 1230 A.H., Sokoto was settled and caused to prosper. As a result it became the Dome of Islam in the lands of the Blacks until the Day of Standing. In the last part of the same year *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` made military engagements against the lands of Borghu, conquered it and killed its ruler. *Amir* Muhammad ibn Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` was among the oldest of the sons of the brother of the *Shehu*. These victories occurred during the autumn season in the last part of the year 1230 A.H. As a result of these successive consecutive victories, the Uthmani Sokoto Caliphate became by the *baraka* of the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him the greatest of the governments in the lands of the Blacks; may Allah establish its pillars and assists its *Sultan* until the Day of Judgment. From these blessings and victories the scholars were unified regarding *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` being the 11th Rightly Guided *Khalif* who had transcended the inward and the outward, who had gathered together the two ranks of knowledge and

governmental authority and who had successfully achieved the mastership of the inward and the political authority of the outward. Under his authority fell all of the Central *Bilad as-Sudan*, parts of the Lower *Bilad as-Sudan* and most of the Upper *Bilad as-Sudan*, and all praises are due to Allah for that.

All during this period the *Shehu* continued to compose useful scholarly works. From the year 1188 A.H. (1772 C.E.) until his last years, the *Shehu* composed innumerable texts, beneficial works and majestic poetry in every discipline from the sciences of *tawheed*, *fiqh*, *tasawwuf*, the principles of jurisprudence, its branches, politics, and legal judgments. He never composed a book unless there was a need for that book for his *Jama`at* in resolving their problematic issues and in admonishing the Muslims. Among his most important compositions were: this book in your hands the Sawq`l-Umma Ila Ittiba` as-Sunna, the Umdat`l-Ulama, the Umdat`l-Muta`abideen wa`l-Muhtarifeen, the Mirat`t-Tullab, the Ihya`s-Sunna wa Ikhmad`l-Bida`, the Hisn`l-Afhaam Min Juuyush`l-Awhaam, the Tarweeh`l-Umma and others. These books proved that the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him had attained the rank of independent judgment as well as *mujaddid*.

Among his scholarly works in the area of the foundations of the religion and scholastic theology were: the Usul`d-Deen, the Ruju` as-Shaykh as-Sunusi `An at-Tashdeed Fi at-Taqleed, the Kifaayat`l-Muhtadeen, the Tahqeeq al-`Isma, the Shifa` `l-Ghaleel Fi Kulli Ma Ashkala Min Kalaam Shaykhinaa Jibriil, and others.

Among his scholarly efforts in the area of the outward branch of the religion regarding jurisprudence and the individual obligations were: the Umdat`l-Bayaan, the Uluum`l-Mu`amilat, the Umdat`l-Ubaad, the Bustan`d-Du`a, the Qawa`id as-Salaat, the Aqsam`d-Deen, the Targheeb `Ibaadallah Fi Hifdh`Uluum`d-Deen, the Tahqeeq`l-Imaan wa`l-Islam, the Iqtibas`l-`Ilm and others.

Among his scholarly productions in the area of the inward branch of the religion regarding spiritual purification in character reformation and spiritual realization they were: the Nuur`l-Awliyya, the Tareeq`l-Janna, the as-Salaasil ad-Dhahabiyya, the Riyaadat as-Saalikeen, the Usul`l-Wilayat, the Kitab at-Tasawwuf, the as-Salaasil`l-Qaadiriyya, the Talkhees Kitab al-Haarith al-Muhasibi, the Sawq`s-Siddiqeen, the Jami`l-Khasaa`is, the Tabsheer`l-Umma`l-Ahmadiyya, the Tafriqa Bayna at-Tasawwuf Li`t-Takhalluq Wa Bayna at-Tasawwuf Li`t-Tahaqquq, and others.

Among his scholarly works in the area of commanding the good and forbidding evil, the removal of heretical innovations and destructive customs were: the Uddad ad-Daai`, the Hukm`l-Jahal Bilad `l-Hausa, the Ajwiba`l-Muharira, the Bayan`l-Bida` as-Shaytaniyya, the Nuur`l-Albaab, the Tanbeeh`l-Afhaam, the Tahdheer`l-Ikhwaan and others.

Among his scholarly efforts in the area of the politics of the *Umma*, and the removal of social problems were: the al-Amr bi Muwaalat`l-Mu`mineen, the Tamyeez `l-Muslimeen Min`l-Kaafireen, the Bayaan Wujuub`l-Hijra `Ala `l-Ubaad, the Tamyeez Ahl`s-Sunna, the Tanbeeh`l-Ikhwaan, the Nasaa`ih`l-Umma`l-Muhammadiyya, the al-Fasl`l-Awwal, the Usul`l-`Adl, the Tanbeeh`l-Hukaam, the al-Farq bayna Wilaayat`l-Islam Wa Bayna Wilaayat`l-Kufr, the al-Masaa`il `l-Muhimma, the Kitab`l-Jihaad, the Wathiqaa Ila Ahl as-Sudan and others.

Among his scholarly works in the area of chains of authorities and spiritual lineage regarding the recitation of the *Qur`an*, the books of prophetic traditions, exegesis, the principles of jurisprudence, jurisprudence, the four schools of thought, linguistics, prosody, eloquence, litanies, daily recitals, and other than these, they were: the Asaaneed`d-Da`eef, the Asaaneed`l-Faqeer and others.

Among his scholarly efforts in the area of litanies and spiritual recitals which were specific to him were: the Kitab`l-Wird, the ad-Dalaa`il, the al-Hirz, the al-Munaajaat, the ad-Du`aa, the Daa`irat`l-`Awniyya, the Ism Allah`l-`Aadhim, the Hizb`l-Fidaa and others than these which come to about one hundred scholarly works in all, as *Sultan Muhammad Bello* and others mentioned. The books of the *Shehu* *Uthman ibn Fuduye`* are extremely advantageous for the people of his time and those of our time, as I will clarify for you, Allah willing.

Among his scholarly productions in the area of the affair of the Hour, the signs of the End of Time and its preconditions were: the al-Khabr`l-Haadi Ila Umuur al-Mahdi (the Transmitted Guidance to the Affairs of *al-Mahdi*), which he arranged into ten explanation regarding the issues of the *Mahdi*, may Allah be pleased with him; the al-Mahdhuuraat Min `Alaamaat Khuruuj al-Mahdi (The Adversities from the Signs of the Appearance of *al-Mahdi*), in which he narrated ten prerequisites regarding the issue of the *Mahdi`s* appearance, in which is also cited some of the secrets of his appearance; the Muddat`d-Dunya (the Extent of This World`s Life), in which he clarified five issues regarding the extent of the time of this world; the al-Amr`s-Saa` (the Affair of the Hour), which he arranged in an introduction and seven subjects; the Tanbeeh`l-Umma `Ala Qurb Hujuum Ashraat as-Saa` (Admonition of the *Umma* Regarding the

Nearness of Appearance of the Signs of the Hour), in which he placed ten chapters regarding the signs of the Hour, the signs of the End of Time, its prerequisites, and specifically the issue regarding the appearance of *al-Mahdi* in the End of Time.

The Relationship of the *Shehu* to the Awaited *al-Mahdi* and Their Mutual Resemblance

In this realm, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` had a special connection which no one else among the Islamic reformers shared. For in the same way that he resembled the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, as we cited; he also possessed resemblance with the Seal of the Muhammadan Saints, the Awaited *Imam al-Mahdi* expected in the End of Time. *Shehu* Uthman, may Allah be merciful to him was among the last of the manifestations of the saying of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: "I make a covenant with you that you will be fearfully aware of Allah, adhere to my *Sunna*, and the *Sunna* of the Rightly Guided and Guiding *Khalifs*. Hold to them stubbornly, even if there is appointed over you an Abyssinian servant. Listen to him and obey him, for every heretical innovation is an error." He was also among the last of the manifestations of his words upon him be blessings and peace: "The mercy of Allah is upon my vicegerents." It was said: "What are your vicegerents?" He said: "Those who give life to my *Sunna* and teach it to the people. Whoever gives life to my *Sunna* has given life to me. Whoever gives life to me will be with me in Paradise." For *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` was the 11th of the 12 promised Rightly Guided *Khalifs* who had transcended the inward and the outward, who had gathered together the two ranks of knowledge and governmental authority and who had successfully achieved the mastership of the inward and the political authority of the outward. He was the *mujaddid* of the religion in the 12th century of the *hijra*. For no one after him has or will attain and transcend his spiritual station in social reformation, saintliness, knowledge, military struggle, Islamic government in the outward, spiritual axis in the inward, gnosis, and Divine stations, except *al-Mahdi*. It is this reality which induced the *Shehu* to say: "There will be no *mujaddid* between me and the *Mahdi*, except that he will be concealed." This means that what Allah favored the *Shehu* with of joining the spiritual station in inward mastership and the outward Caliphate will not be realized again by anyone until the Awaited *Mahdi* appears, because he is the Seal of the Rightly Guided *Khalifs* and the Seal of the Muhammadan *Awliyya* in the End of Time. "That is the bounty of Allah which He gives to whoever He wills, for Allah is Vast Knowing."

Regarding this the *Shehu*, may Allah be merciful to him, mentioned in the completion of the above mentioned Fulfulde` poem called 'the Song of Comparison' where he described the correlation and connection between himself and *al-Mahdi*, as well as his resemblance to him. This bond between them clearly distinguished the *Shehu* from the rest of the Islamic reformers (*mujaddiduun*) which appeared throughout the history of Islam. In this poem the *Shehu* said: "*Muhakkaamaa munaasaba bumu Mahdi * Meetti Allah duudum dukkaraami*"; which means: 'I have also been granted attributes in resemblance to the *Mahdi*; I thank Allah for what I have been granted. He said: "*Mibi`tuudum ghanam yatu`ayghu Allah * Wunaagham simbbidinghu kukabanaami*"; meaning: 'Let me declare them in gratitude to Allah, not because of any power of mine have I attained what has been assigned.' He said: "*Useeniruyaama kankubu yisuughardhaki * Meetti Allah meembu dissayniraam*"; meaning: 'He too was foretold in prophecy before his coming; I thank Allah that my coming too was prophesied.' He said: "*Zamaan ma`an yudum zamunuumu Mahdi * Meetti Allah duunubbana ghadduyaami*"; meaning: 'Our time is a time of a *mahdi*; I thank Allah at this time too have I been sent.' The meaning of his words: 'Our time is a time of a *mahdi*' means in this case 'a reformer' (*mujaddid*) because every *mujaddid* is a *mahdi* for his time. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said as it has been related by Abu Dawud, al-Bayhaqi and others on the authority of Abu Hurayra: "Indeed Allah ta`ala will raise for the benefit of this *Umma* at the head of every century one who will renew for it its religion." For the *mujaddid* is the one who arises in every age who protects the religion on behalf of this *Umma* by reconstructing its principles, reinforcing its *Sunnan* and elucidating them to mankind. There is no doubt that *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` was like that. It is also conceivable that what he meant by 'a time of a *mahdi*' is a time for the establishment of the religion beneath the banner of Caliphate, as the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said in a narration from Ahmad, Abu Dawud, at-Tirmidhi, Ibn Maja and others on the authority of al-`Irbaad ibn Saariya: "I advise you to have fearful awareness of Allah; to hear and obey even when an Abyssinian servant has been placed over you. For those of you who live on after me, you will witness much discord; however obligatory upon you are my *Sunna* and the *Sunna* of the righteous, rightly guided (*mahdiyyeen*) *khulafa*. You should hold firmly to these and do so stubbornly; and beware of contrived affairs, because every contrivance is a heretical innovation, and every heretical innovation is an error." He, upon him be peace, only meant by his words 'the righteous rightly guided *khulafa*' those who in their

spiritual Path act in accordance with his spiritual Path, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in making *jihad* against the enemies, strengthening and reinforcing the rites of the religion and the like. There is no doubt that the *Shehu* was like that.

The *Shehu* went on to say in his poem: “*Lateefu ghutaydu Mahdi naki’aju burnaa * Meetti Allah kanjum burnuyaami*”; meaning: ‘With gentle nobility is *Mahdi* clothed; I thank Allah that with this am I too clothed. He said: “*Ulamantaaki maa fitinaaji binaghi * Meetti Allah duununye` lammunaami*”; meaning: ‘He will only be appointed when disorder prevails; I thank Allah that at such a time have I been appointed.’ He said: “*Uwurtinataaki maa tawujangha’aaji duudee * Meetti Allah duununye` ghurutinaami*”; meaning: ‘He will only be sent when oppressors abound; I thank Allah that at such a time have I been sent.’ He said: “*Jida’ayri fataraa mudeena u’umminu’ayti * Meetti Allah duumbu u’mmunaami*”; meaning: ‘At a time of religious decline will he arise; I thank Allah, that at such a time have I arisen.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa buru Faatimyyu * Meetti Allah kanujja’am filannaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi*, is his descent from *Fatima*; I thank Allah that from this descent have I originated.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa laa baneeghu anddal * Meetti Allah kanudu’im falinnaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is the purifying of learning and the acquisition of knowledge; I thank Allah that learning I too have purified. He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa duqqayghu dunyaa * Meetti Allah meembu didughinaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is the shunning of the world; I thank Allah that I too have been made to shun it. He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa barraaghu raayu * Meetti Allah meembu dibarrinaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is the trustworthiness of his opinions; I thank Allah that regarding veracity of opinion that I too am established.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa al’aada dujyu * Meetti Allah duudum dujjanaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is the overthrow of false customs; I thank Allah for it is these too which I have overthrown.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa bidu’aaku maa’aynaa * Meetti Allah duwwadam andinaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is the suppression of innovation; I thank Allah for what I have been made to suppress.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa nudhu’ayghu deenaa * Meetti Allah duwwadam andinaami*”; meaning: A mark of *Mahdi* is his calling for religion; I thank Allah that it is to this that I have called mankind. He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa nudu’ayghu tu’tay * Meetti Allah meembu duna`atuyaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is that his call will be answered; I thank Allah that regarding my call I too was answered. He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa Qur’an janagha’ay * Meetti Allah kanijum shukliraami*”; meaning: ‘A concern of *Mahdi* is that the *Qur’an* should be studied; I thank Allah that this too has been my concern.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa yahdinghghu sunnaa * Meetti Allah duuduun ghihudinaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is the reviving of the *Sunna*; I thank Allah for it has been what I have revived.’

The *Shehu* went on to say in his poem: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa nighru’ayghu * Meetti Allah duuwwadu na’irni’aami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is his efficiency; I thank Allah that I have been efficient.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa yu`uhdu yaadu * Meetti Allah meembu difunduyyaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is his self-discipline; I thank Allah that I have been self-disciplined.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa ya’naari sinddiy * Meetti Allah meembu dighi’tinaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is that the good intention will be encouraged; I thank Allah that it too that I have encouraged.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa lullarghu khayr * Meetti Allah duuduru lullanaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is his reputation for goodness; I thank Allah that with this reputation have I been established.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa `adilaaku keeta * Meetti Allah kanjum keetanaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is the justness of his judgments; I thank Allah that this has been the mark of my judgments.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa yuku’aydu banfiye * Meetti Allah meembu diku’aydinaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is his gentle disposition; I thank Allah that in my disposition I have been gentle.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa yuseeyuji julbe’ * Meetti Allah meembu dishayruyaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is his being the source of joy; I thank Allah that I too have brought them joy.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa julbe’ yutiddayee * Meetti Allah meembu ditidduwaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is the dignity he brings to the Muslims; I thank Allah that I too have been for the Muslims a source of dignity.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa laamaadu deenaa * Meetti Allah duudum lammunaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is his being appointed *Amir ‘l-Mu’mineen*; I thank Allah that for this have I been appointed.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa saluyeebi kirsee * Meetti Allah duubu bikirsinaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is his fighting of those who reject the faith; I thank Allah also for those I have fought.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa fijeebi dujjay * Meetti Allah duubu bidujjamaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is the overthrow of highway robbers; I thank Allah these too have I overthrown.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa yuuwadan jihadi * Meetti Allah meembu duun badaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is that he will wage *jihad*; I thank Allah for with this have I been charged.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa nasaraaku * Meetti Allah duufuna burnuyaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is being clothed with victory; I thank Allah that with victory

have I too been clothed.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa tuujaaji juhdi* Meetti Allah duumbun shughirraami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is being accompanied by flags; I thank Allah towards this have I been led.’ He said: “*Kuday binddaabu sa`afu Allahi jaydum * Meetti Allah kanjam binaddanaami*”; meaning: ‘What is inscribed on them is **Laa ilaha illa Allah**; I thank Allah that upon my flags this too I inscribed.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa fuuftinaghu julbe’ * Meetti Allah meembu fuuftiraami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is the fulfillment of his words; I thank Allah that my words I have fulfilled.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa wulwuyayghu futtaa * Meetti Allah meembu difuttinaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is easing the lot of the Muslims; I thank Allah that likewise, to their lot have I brought ease.’ He said: “*Ku Mahdi undiraa yudu`aaghu * Meetti Allah meembu dijaabeeyaami*”; meaning: ‘A mark of *Mahdi* is the answering of his prayers; I thank Allah that my prayers too have been answered.’ He said: “*Milaa taakee mi Mahdi kidttuyaadu * Yudum tuffuuji ma`kkuni burnuyaami*”; meaning: ‘I am not the awaited *Mahdi*; It is his mantle with which I have been clothed.’ He said: “*Meeyankiru yaayee mi Mahdi ghu`u zamaanu * Meetti Allah meembu didukkaraami*”; meaning: ‘I do not deny that I am a *mahdi* for this time; I thank Allah for this privilege which I have been granted.’ He said: “*Zamaanu fukaa yu`adder naaghu Mahdi * Shahaada hihaybu duu`adam tiseemnyaami*”; meaning: ‘Every epoch has allotted to it a *mahdi*; Openly or secretly, so I have been taught.’ He said: “*Miduudi jiwuudi Mahdi kidittuyaadu * Yudum wadittaandimimu nanddinaami*”; meaning: ‘Regarding the existence of the awaited *Mahdi* I am certain, that is why I have been made to know him whom I have been made to resemble.’ He said: “*Meetti Allah yemre’ tanaasabuuje’ * Bu timmi sharkadi mufirun Imaami*”; meaning: ‘I thank Allah for this poem of comparison; It was completed in the year 1224 (1808 C.E.) from the flight the *Imam*.’ Finally he said: “*Misilmeenee Muhammadu urdu dujuulbayee * Munaasaba ma`aku urdu mu`um uraami*”; meaning: ‘I send peace upon Muhammad, with whose scent of resemblance I have received, with its scent have I been scented.’

It is clear from this blessed poem that the *baraka* of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` is continuous, unceasing, and interrelated with the Awaited *Imam* al-Mahdi. It is in that purview that *Sultan* Muhammad Bello said in his Infaq`l-Maysuur when the *Shehu* had dispatched him to one of the eastern regions with his message: “I inform you of the Good News of the appearance of the *Mahdi*, and that the *Jama`at* of the *Shehu* are his vanguard and forerunners. For this *jihad* will not cease, Allah willing until it reaches the *Mahdi*.” *Sultan* Abu Bakr ibn *Shehu* Uthman said in his famous Risaala: “The *Shehu* informed me in person that the *Jama`at* of the military garrisons from the people of the *Sudan* will relocate to the Nile river and to the lands of the *Hijaz* either themselves or through their descendents. They are the true remnant of the people of the *Shehu*, and in them is his light and *baraka*. They are the ones who will join with *Imam* *Mahdi* and give him the oath of allegiance. With them will be the flags of the *Shehu* and their spiritual stations with Allah will be immense.” The Knower of Allah, *Shaykh* Mua`allahyede ibn Abd`l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa said: “As for (the *Shehu*’s) beginning, it started with invitation, then teaching, then *jihad*; which was conditioned with the *khilaafa*, and representative *emirate*. As for his secret, it was a subtle spiritual magnetism which comprised the vestment of the *Mahdiyya*, and was made plain with spiritual unseen presences which reinforced him from unseen forces such as Angels. For this *jihad* is connected with the affair of the *Mahdi*, upon him be peace, a matter which was transmitted to us from the *Shehu*, may Allah be pleased with him.” I myself, once asked my master *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Amin ibn Adam about the meaning of the statement of the *Shehu* that his *jihad* will not cease until it reaches the *Mahdi*, because as it is today, military struggle is not being established by any of his *Jama`at* in *Sudan*, *Niger*, *Nigeria* nor in any place where his *Jama`at* exist. So how can his *jihad* be continuous until the appearance of the *Mahdi*? He said to me: “His *jihad* began with the tongue, which was the invitation to Allah, commanding the good, forbidding evil and teaching. Then with the pen, which was the dissemination of beneficial sciences through the production of scholarly works. Then with the sword, which was the actual establishment of the religion and the formation of the Islamic Caliphate. Now we have returned to the beginning of the *jihad* of the *Shehu*, which is that of the tongue, and the pen; for it will not cease until the appearance of the *Mahdi* who is the Companion of the Sword.” Our evidence for this is in the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him: “Indeed the true *mujahid* is the *mujahid* with his sword and pen. I swear by the One in whose Hand is my soul, it is as if they are shooting them with showers of arrows.”

In the year 1232 A.H. (circa 1816 C.E.) the sickness which eventually led to the death of the *Shehu* began. In that same year the affair of Ghaagara happened and the catastrophic events that resulted from that. In the month of *Muharram* in the year 1232 A.H. the military engagement against Baanaghu began where the disbelievers kept the armies of the Muslims at bay for a night, after which the disbelievers were defeated and were forced to turn on their heels. In that year also the armies of the Muslims reached

Balagha, defeated them and returned. In that year also Muhammad al-Bukhari ibn *Shehu* led a military engagement into the southern regions in which he gained many victories and much spoils of war. On the 3rd of *Jumad'l-Akhir* in the year 1232 A.H. (circa April 29th 1817 C.E.) the light of the age, renewer of the religion, *Amir'l-Mu'mineen*, the *Imam* of the *Awliyya*, the Sword of Truth, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, died may the mercy of Allah ta`ala be upon him, illuminate his grave and benefit us from his *baraka*. His age at that time was 63, like the age of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace when he died. All praises are due to Allah and gratitude to Him for causing the *Shehu* to resemble the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace in death as He made him resemble him throughout his life. For we praise Allah thanking Him for His favoring us with this blessing from one among our ancestors. We praise Allah for him in every year, month, day, night, hour, and moment; and we say as our *Shehu*, may Allah engulf him in His mercy said:

“We praise Allah that our time is a time of illumination
 A time of the removal of darkness from over the world
 We praise Allah that our time is a time of victory
 A time of the humiliation of the party of the disbelievers
 We praise Allah that our time is a time of glorious honor
 A time of joyfulness for the party of those who surrender to Allah
 We praise Allah our company is the faction of Abd
 Al-Qaadir the redeeming spiritual master of the knowers of Allah
 We praise Allah that our time is a time of revival
 Of the Way of the master of all the Messengers.”

And I say as an appendix to his poetic verses, taking blessings from his *baraka* and making intercession with his miracles:

We praise Allah that our forces are the forces of the Sword
 Of Truth Uthman the spiritual master of the reformers of the religion
 We praise Allah that our troops are the vanguard
 To the *Mahdi*, the spiritual master of the Righteous Caliphs
 We praise Allah that our litany is sending blessings
 Constantly upon Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets
 We praise Allah that our behavior is the character
 Of the one who was sent as “*a mercy to all the worlds*”
 We praise Allah, and the last of our supplications
 “*Is all praises are due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds*”.

Apart of giving praise to Allah and showing gratitude for him is by being thankful for His causative factors such as the Prophet, parents and spiritual teachers, by obeying them and following in their footsteps. It is in this regard that whoever takes any of the litanies of the *Shehu*, his spiritual recitals, enters under a chain from his spiritual chains, holds to his books and methodology, or enters under the oath of allegiance to him from one of his vicegerents or under the spiritual covenant of a *Shaykh* from his spiritual path; for he is redeemed in this life and the Hereafter. This is especially true for the one who studies and delves deeply into his books in these times. For every problematic issue, tribulation, heretical innovation and affliction which has occurred in these times of ours, I have found its solution and remedy in his books and in the works of the scholars from his comrades, companions, children, and grand children. He himself said in his *Najm'l-Ikhwaan*: “Preoccupy yourself with the study of the scholarly works of my brother, Abdullahi, because he is mainly concerned with preserving the outward letter of the *shari`a*. And preoccupy yourselves with the study of the scholarly works of my son, Muhammad Bello, because he is mainly concerned with preserving the science of the politics of the *Umma*, based upon their personalities, objectives, times, places and conditions. Finally, preoccupy yourselves with the study of my scholarly works because I am mainly concerned with following the middle way between the two. All of our works are a detailing of what was generalized in the works of the previous scholars. The works of the previous scholars are a detailing of what was generalized in the Book and the *Sunna*.” From this it is established that his methodology, *baraka* and reformation movement will not cease until the appearance of *Imam* al-Mahdi. For the methodology of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` is the vanguard to the methodology of the Mahdi, which is the explanation of the Book and the *Sunna* as they are in reality, the clarification of the teachings of the previous scholars of the *Sunna* and the certification of the spiritual paths of the People of the Divine Reality.

The Sawq'l-Umma Ila Ittiba` as-Sunna

Prior to discussing the merits of this blessed text, I would first like to clarify my objectives in composing this commentary, discuss something about my methodology, and to mention something about the views of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` on the different opinions of the scholars of Islam. Realize, that the help of Allah towards His servants is in accordance with the scope of their intentions. For when intentions are made pure and sincere regarding every action, then few actions will suffice a person. It has been related in all the sound collections of prophetic traditions on the authority of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace who said: "Every action is based upon its intention, and a person will only have what he intends. Thus, he who makes the *hijra* to Allah and His Messenger, then his *hijra* is for Allah and His Messenger. However, whoever makes the *hijra* for some worldly matter in order to obtain it, or for some woman in order to marry her, then his *hijra* is for what he made it." This prophetic tradition is one of the fundamental elements of the religion of Islam, and establishes that all actions which a person does whether insignificant or immense, whether infinitesimal or colossal are all judged by the objectives in its beginning. Ibn al-Hajj elucidated this in a superb manner in his famous *al-Madkhal* that although a person performs a single action, he can intend within that single action a multiple of objectives, thus expanding the spiritual benefit of that singular action to include all the spiritual benefits which his multiple objectives embrace. Subsequently, he is able to perform a single action, which is expanded to embrace the benefits of many actions due to his multiple objectives. It is with this meaning that it is known that the greatest of people in spiritual station and those who have gathered the most spiritual good and *baraka* is due to purity and vastness of their intentions.

As I will mention in the beginning of the commentary: "I have composed this commentary in order to make manifest what I have extracted from the secrets of this revered book as well as the spiritual openings embodied in adherence to the *Muhammadan Sunna* in order to disseminate its sublime blessings and overflowing advantages." What I mean by this is my first objective is to place myself at the service of my spiritual guide, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, may Allah engulf him in His mercy, because every sincere disciple is required to place himself at the service of his *Shaykh*. Thus, in composing a commentary on the *Sawq'l-Umma* it is my way of being at his service by seeing to it that the beneficial knowledge that he bequeathed to us benefits others. Indeed, it has been established in the prophetic traditions that when a person dies he leaves only three things which will benefit him after he is gone: [1] beneficial knowledge; [2] an on going charity; and [3] a righteous child who supplicates for him. My objective in commenting on the *Sawq'l-Umma* is in order to meet all three of the above spiritual advantages, ultimately so that the *Shehu* will be rewarded in his grave, at his resurrection, and in every realm after it until he sees the Face of His Lord in the Highest Abode in Paradise. Secondly, within the *minhaj* of the *Shehu* is the important principle that within the *Sunna* of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace constitutes the most decisive means for attaining spiritual openings with Allah ta`ala and knowing Him as He should be known, since the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace is the most perfect and beloved of Allah's creatures, whose gnosis of Allah ta`ala is the most perfect. This follows that following him in his *Sunna* with the intention of knowing Allah ta`ala, constitutes the highest and most noble spiritual Path to Allah ta`ala. The *Shehu* himself stated explicitly in his *Fulfulde`* poems that it was the *Sunna* that he truly loved, it was the sole preoccupation of his entire preaching career; and that it was his *wird* (litany) by which he attained spiritual openings in the Gnosis of Allah ta`ala. My objective in commenting upon the *Sawq'l-Umma* is to clarify this fact for those whom Allah ta`ala has illuminated their inner vision. Thirdly, there is no obligation for someone who is deficient in knowledge such as me to teach others, because I am not one of 'the horsemen' of the immense affair of learning who are required to disseminate knowledge to the world. However, I am obligated to disseminate knowledge to my nearest of kin, especially my immediate family, such as my wife, children, my siblings, and parents. This is an obligation. Subsequently, my objective in making this commentary upon the *Sawq'-Umma* is in order to teach my nearest of kin the fundamentals of the religion as demonstrated in the Living *Sunna* of our beloved Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. My main concern, as I stated in the dedication of the book, are my children: Alfa Umar, Modibo Muhammad, Ahmad Mazin, *Shehu* Uthman, Abd'r-Rahman, Nana Tasneem, Fatuma Mo`inna and Musa Jokolli; that they know their religion from the perspective of the Living *Sunna* of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Fourthly, my objective is to restore the highest and purest expressions of the African Islamic heritage and culture which was forcibly taken from the millions of Muslims in the western hemisphere who are the descendents of enslaved African Muslims kidnapped and stolen from their Muslim homeland and cultural heritage. The *Sawq'l-Umma* constitutes a portion of the vast Muhammadan Lights which were bequeathed to our African

Muslim ancestors, thus it is an act of reconnecting the ties of kinship, by allowing our people to engage with the Living *Sunna* through the prism of our own righteous ancestors. Indeed, the *Shehu*, himself said: “it is necessary and obligatory for every reasonable believer to follow the traces of their believing ancestors, to follow the Way of their righteous grandfathers and imitate them.” To this day, the United States has maintained a secret policy of assuring that the African American Muslims remain fundamentally disconnected from their Muslim brothers in the African continent. My objective in commenting upon the Sawq’l-Umma is to reconnect the descendents of enslaved African Muslims, (who are now admittedly the fastest growing Muslim population in the world), to Allah, His Messenger and his living *Sunna* through the eyes of their own righteous ancestors from whom they were cut off from spiritually, intellectually, culturally, politically and economically for many centuries. Finally, my objective in commenting upon the Sawq’l-Umma is in order to be included in the *baraka* which the *Shehu* infused in the book by his all-encompassing supplication when he said: “Therefore, I ask Allah, the Mighty Lord of the Tremendous Throne, that He make this work purely for His Generous sake and that He make it a proof for us and not against us; may He send down upon us His blessings on the Day of Standing before Him and at the time when mankind decomposes in their tombs; may He by means of this book benefit all that read it, explain it to others, write it down or incite others to it. Lastly, I seek from anyone who comes upon this book and gains some benefit from it, that he associate me closely in his devout supplications that Allah may benefit me by it in this world and in the Hereafter; and success is with Allah.” These are my stated objectives in composing this commentary which I have named: **Tawq’l-Lum`a wa Itmaam`n-Ni`ma Fee Sharh `Ala Sawq’l-Umma Ila Ittiba` as-Sunna**: (The Desire for Illumination and Completion of Blessings Through A Commentary Upon the Mobilization of the *Umma* Towards Following the *Sunna*). I pray that Allah ta`ala will allow me to realize my objectives and complete my intentions, since every action is based upon its objective and the final goal of all ends are comprised within the objectives in their beginning.

As for my methodology in commenting on this blessed text, I have placed it in the footnotes of the book, with the complete text subsumed in the commentary. Thus, it is what scholars call ‘a commingled commentary’ where the expressions of the text of the book are combined with the commentary. I distinguished the text from the commentary by my idiom: “The meaning of his words, may Allah bless him and grant him peace”; regarding the words of the Messenger of Allah; or: “The meaning of his words, may Allah be pleased with him”; regarding the words of male Companions; or: “The meaning of her words, may Allah be pleased with her”; regarding the words of female Companions. I have placed in the commentary what I have extracted from the many commentaries upon the sound prophetic traditions, like: the Fat`h `l-Baari of *Imam* Ibn Hajr al-`Asqalaani, the Sharh as-Saheeh`l-Bukhari of *Imam* Ibn Bataal al-Maghribi al-Maliki, the Umdat`l-Qaari of *Imam* Mahmud ibn Ahmad al-`Ayni, the Sharh As-Saheeh Muslim of *Imam* Ibn Sharaf an-Nawwawi, the al-Ikmaal Fee Sharh Muslim of *Qadi`Iyad* ibn Musa al-Maliki, the Hashiya `Ala Sunan an-Nisaai` of *Imam* Abu al-Hassan as-Sindi, the Aaridat `l-Ahwaadhi Fee Sharh at-Tirmidhi of the traditionist Ibn al-`Arabi al-Maliki, the al-Urf as-Shadhi `Ala Jaami` t-Tirmidhi of the reformer Ibn Ruslan al-Balqini, and other than these from the commentaries. Along with that I have quoted from the books of jurisprudence from all the *madhaahib* of the *Imams* of independent judgment because this was the methodology of the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be with him, in his foundational legal methodology, as it will be discussed. I have also taken reliance in legal issues in most cases on the Umdat`l-Bayaan Fee `Uluum Allati Waajibat `Ala `l-`Ayaan of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, his Mirat`t-Tullab and the Diya `Uluum `d-Deen of the erudite scholar of the Black Lands, *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye`. Whenever I make a reference to the definition of words, in most cases I relied upon the reknown Lisaan`l-`Arab of Ibn al-Mandhuur al-Ifriqi. Whenever I cited a *Qur`anic* verse, and desired to give its exegesis, I referred back to the exegesis of the afore mentioned *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` in his Diya at-Ta`weel Fee Ma`na at-Tanzeel. Throughout my commentary I make reference to the books of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, his blood brother, *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye`, and his son *Sultan* Muhammad Bello ibn Uthman ibn Fuduye`, may Allah ta`ala be merciful to them. I follow this with citing the remainder of some of the books of the scholars from our *Jama`at* because this is my methodology and path in discernment of the sciences of the religion, as the *Shehu*, may Allah ta`ala be merciful to him commanded us. After that, I have placed in this commentary what I took from my many teachers in sciences and *baraka*, may Allah reward them with good, increase them in absolute certainty, guidance and secrets in this life and the Next. Finally, in citing the narrators of the traditions, I endeavored to give a brief biography about them, citing their *kunya*, names, and lineage along with a mention of some of their merits. My purpose in this is to infuse the commentary with *baraka* and mercy because it has been transmitted that the mercy of Allah descends with the mentioning of the righteous; and there has never existed a more righteous generation than those who

kept the company of the Best of creation, preserved his *Sunnan* and transmitted them to the succeeding generations, may Allah ta`ala be pleased with them.

As for the view of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` regarding the differences of opinions of the scholars of Islam, for in this sphere was situated the pivot of his methodology, because he was bound to the idea that the religion of Islam was easy, and believed whole heartedly that all of the *madhaahib* of the scholars of independent judgment were correct and constituted Paths leading to Paradise. His key evidence in that being the words of Allah ta`ala: “Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire hardships for you.” And by His words: “And He has not made the religion as a source of difficulty for you.” The proofs for the *Shehu*, from the *Sunna* were two prophetic traditions related by al-Bukhari in his Saheeh. They were the words of the Prophet, upon him be peace: “Verily the religion is easy. No one is overly strict in the religion except that he is overcome. Therefore be broad, be as close as you can to what is perfect, and rejoice in the good that is with you. And seek assistance from Allah with extra acts of worship in the early mornings, evenings and with something in the last part of the night.” And his words upon him be peace: “Be facilitating and do not be difficult; and give good news to others and do not alienate people.” The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be with him said in his Najm`l-Ikhwaan: “Abd`l-Aziz said in the ad-Durar`l-Multaqataat: ‘Apart of the generosity of Allah ta`ala is that the scholars disagree. For when one is strict another is facilitating. For the religion of Allah is easy. The one whose knowledge is strong and his gnosis is sound, then he is strict on himself but facilitating towards the people.’ Ruwaym said: ‘Apart of the wisdom of a wise man is that he is broadminded when it comes to his companions in the matter of legal judgments, but astringent upon himself in the same; for being broadminded comes from tracing the sources of knowledge, while being astringent against oneself is apart of scrupulous piety.’ *Shaykh* Abu Is`haq as-Shatibi said: ‘The foremost with me is that in every legal issue where the scholar of a particular *madh`hab* has two views; he should cause the people to act in accordance with one of them, even when it is the least of them in prominence, so not to cause them distress. This is even when in the past they followed him in what was strict in the beginning and he himself continues to behave this way. This is because if they attempt to take on a burden greater than that it will be the cause of confusion for the common people and will open the door for disputation among them’. Abd`l-Wahaab as-Sha`raani said in his al-Yawaaqee: ‘I heard my master Ali al-Khawaas, may Allah be merciful to him say: Behave with all of your endeavors in accordance with all of the views of the scholars. This is because acting in accordance with two views is better than casting aside one of them. In this way you will rarely ever conflict with the teachings of the scholars. For whoever arrives at the station of spiritual unveiling will find that none of the *Imams* of independent judgment have ever gone outside of the Book and the *Sunna* in any of their teachings. He will innately perceive that all of their teachings are actually beams from the rays of the light of the *shari`a*. This is because all of them followed upon the tracks of the Messengers. For this reason it is obligatory for you to have faith and accept the validity of what the scholars of independent judgment extracted, even when these are in conflict with the *madh`hab* of your *Imam*.’” It is in accordance with this meaning that the *Shehu* composed his books such as the Mirat`t-Tullab, the Umdat`l-Ulama and this blessed book that is in your hands.

The scholars and righteous during the time of the *Shehu* and those who came after him all agreed that the work Sawq`l-Umma Ila Ittiba` as-Sunna is the most important of the above mentioned three books which proved that he had attained the rank of independent judgment (*mujtahid*). The Sawq`l-Umma with regard to the prophetic traditions of the *Sunna*, is a reference book for the schools of thought of the *mujtahiduun* in their independent judgments and legal extractions. For the *mujtahiduun* did not have an opinion in the issues of worship or social transactions except that the legal foundation of their views can be found in the sound prophetic traditions which the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him recorded in this blessed book. One of my teachers once said to me: “The book Sawq`l-Umma with regard to the individual obligations is similar to the al-Muwatta of *Imam* Malik ibn Anas, and is a reference for the Risaalat of Ibn Abi Zayd or the al-Mukhtasar of Khalil ibn Is`haq.” This is because he established in it the soundest narrations from the Lawgiver, may Allah bless him and grant him peace based upon the arrangement of these above mentioned books. It is also a compendium of the prophetic traditions like the Buluugh`l-Maraam, the al-Umdat and the al-Muntaqa.

It must be understood that the *Shehu* was an *Imam* in the science of prophetic traditions, its jurisprudence, legal rulings and disciplines. He received this science from the soundest of paths and from the highest paths of transmission. He dove deeply into the science of commentary upon the prophetic traditions, the science of the circumstances of the narrators of prophetic traditions, the science of abrogated prophetic traditions and those that abrogate them, the sciences of the causative factors of the advent of the

prophetic traditions and their times. He possessed superb familiarity with the science of the interpolation of the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, the science of the fabrication of prophetic traditions, the science of metaphors and indications within the prophetic traditions, the science of peculiar expressions within the prophetic traditions as well as the profound science of warding off repudiation of the prophetic traditions. *Shaykh* Abdullahi al-Katsinawi said in his Daa'iraat 's-Shaykh that the *Shehu*, may Allah be merciful to him possessed chains of authorities in the narrations of al-Bukhari, Muslims, Abu Dawud, at-Tirmidhi, an-Nisaa'i, Ibn Maja, the Muwatta of Malik ibn Anas, the Musnad of as-Shafi', the Musnad of Abu Hanifa, the Musnad of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the Musnad of ad-Daarimi, the Musnad of Abduh ibn Humayd, the Musnad of al-Haarith, the Musnad of al-Bizaari, the Musnad of Abu Ya'ala, the Musnad of al-Handhali, the Musnad of at-Tirmidhi, the Musnad of al-Bizaazi, the Musnad of al-Baghdadi, the Musnad of Yahya, the Musnad of Abd'r-Razaaq, the as-Shifa of 'Iyad ibn Musa, the al-Mushaariq, the al-Musaabeeh, the al-Mishkaat, the as-Shimaa'il 'l-Muhammadiyya, the al-Jamee's-Sagheer, the Sunan of ad-Daraqutni, the Sunan of Abu Muslim, the Sunan of Abu Sa'id, the al-Musanif of Abu Shayba and others from the premiere books of prophetic narrations.

The people of the prophetic traditions and others from the people of knowledge agree that the best of these books of prophetic traditions are the two sound collections of al-Bukhari and Muslim. Al-Qanuuji said in the Medinat 'l-Uluum: "The *shaykhs* of prophetic traditions from the early community agree that the soundest of the books after the Book of Allah ta'ala is the Saheeh of al-Bukhari and the Saheeh of Muslim. The sounder of these two is the Saheeh of al-Bukhari." It is for this reason that the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him gathered in the Sawq'l-Umma the issues of the Divine unity, jurisprudence and military struggle from these two sound collections. He may the mercy of Allah be upon him said in the introduction to this text: "I have only cited in this book the traditions of the two authentic collections (as-Saheehayn): al-Bukhari and Muslim due to the consensus of the *Umma* regarding their acceptability." What he is saying is what *Imam* an-Nawwawi said earlier in his commentary upon Muslim: "It is the agreement of the scholars that the soundest of the books after the Noble *Qur'an* are the two Saheeh collections: the Saheeh of al-Bukhari and the Saheeh of Muslim. Both are met from the *Umma* with acceptance. The book of al-Bukhari is considered the sounder of the two and the most beneficial of them. Muslim himself was among those who took benefit from it, although he was known that he had no equal in the science of prophetic traditions. It is the preponderant view of the majority of the scholars that al-Bukhari is the most preferred of the two. The prerequisites of both collections is that only prophetic traditions which were unanimous regarding their reliable transmission back to a known Companion were related; in which their was no disagreement regarding their trustworthiness; and whose chains of authority were contiguous and not cut off. If two Companions narrated two narratives of the same prophetic tradition or more then it was considered good. Also if there was only a single narrative of the prophetic tradition, but if its path of transmission was sound going back to that narrator, then they would relate it."

For al-Bukhari and Muslim never related a prophetic tradition except if it contained no defect, thus there was no doubt in advancing the soundness of the transmission of their collections before others. Al-Farabri transmitted on the authority of al-Bukhari that he once said: "I never entered a prophetic tradition in the Saheeh except after making *istikhaara* to Allah ta'ala and its soundness was thoroughly verified." Likewise, Muslim said: "I used to show my book to Abu Zar'a, and each time he indicated that there was a defect in a prophetic tradition, I would discord it." It is for this reason that the *Shehu* only cited in this book from the two *shaykhs*, except in two issues. The *Shehu*, said: "Al-Bukhari is considered more authentic than Muslim in the view held by the majority of the scholars (*al-jamhuur*)." This means that the majority of the scholars agree on giving preference to the Saheeh of al-Bukhari over that of the Saheeh of Muslim. However, it has been transmitted from some of the scholars of the Maghrib that they considered the Saheeh of Muslim more superior; borne by the fact of its excellent context, the quality of its composition and arrangements. Thus, whoever comprehends the prophetic traditions which the *Shehu* cited in the Sawq'l-Umma from the perspective of the interpolation of the scholars will know that it is an extract from the beams of the light of the Lawgiver, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. If the legal rulings surrounding the prophetic traditions cited in the Sawq'l-Umma are understood, as well as their objective, jurisprudence and interpolations, Allah will illuminate his inner vision from the spring from which the scholars, jurists and *mujtahiduum* drank.

The *Shehu* divided the Sawq'l-Umma into twelve books after its introduction, in which he cited 3 prophetic traditions. They are: the Book of Belief in which he cited 15 prophetic traditions; the Book of Purification in which he cited 21 prophetic traditions; the Book of Menstruation in which he cited 9 prophetic traditions; the Book of *Tayammamu* in which he cited 7 prophetic traditions, the Book of Prayer

in which he cited 60 prophetic traditions; the Book of *Juma`a* in which he cited 7 prophetic traditions; the Book of Prayers of Fear, the Two *Eid*, Rain and Eclipse in which he cited 17 prophetic traditions; the Book of the Deceased in which he cited 8 prophetic traditions; the Book of Obligatory Alms in which he cited 8 prophetic traditions; the Book of Fasting in which he cited 10 prophetic traditions; the Book of Pilgrimage in which he cited 29 prophetic traditions; and finally the Book of *Jihaad* in which he cited 38 prophetic traditions. The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said: “The expressions from the narrations of al-Bukhari are more prominent in this book than those of Muslim, even though both contribute to what is largely desired in meaning.” He cited in these books 232 prophetic traditions: 207 from the Saheeh of al-Bukhari; and 23 from the Saheeh of Muslim. Although he said that he only cited from the two Saheeh collections, however he made an exception in that in two prophetic traditions. The first being what he narrated in the section on the superogatory prayers regarding the four *raka`at* performed before the *`asr* prayer, where he said: “I have not come across the evidence of four *rak`ats* before the *`asr* prayer in the two Saheeh collections. However it has been related by an-Nisaa`i from a tradition on Ali ibn Abi Taalib, may Allah ennoble his face.” The second exception is what he narrated in the Book of the obligatory alms where he said: “I have not come across the amount to be paid for cattle in the two Saheeh collections.” He then cited a prophetic tradition regarding this from the narrations of at-Tirmidhi on the authority of Mu`adh.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him also said: “I have the narration of al-Bukhari by direct transmission (*sama`an*), unlike the narrations of Muslim, although I have license (*ijaa`at*) to transmit it.” Thus he received all of the prophetic traditions cited in this book either through direct transmission (*sama`an*) or by license from five scholars; the most important of them being his maternal and paternal uncle al-Hajj Muhammad ibn Raj ibn Modibo ibn Hamm ibn `Aal. *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` said in his Ida`n-Nusuukh: “He (the *Shehu*) learnt the science of prophetic traditions (*al-hadeeth*) from our maternal and paternal uncle, al-Hajj Muhammad ibn Raj ibn Modibo ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, reading with him the entire Saheeh of al-Bukhari, while I listened. Then he gave us license (*al-ijaa`a*) to pass on all the narrations that he received from his *shaykh*, Abu`l-Hassan Ali al-Madini, whose origin was from Sind.” He also said in his Tazyeen`l-Waraqaat: “I then returned to my country and discovered that *Shehu* Uthman had already left traveling to al-Hajj Muhammad ibn Raj in order to study al-Bukhari, so I followed after him. When I reached there I found that he had not yet begun the study, therefore we entered together in the reading of al-Bukhari. He (al-Hajj Muhammad ibn Raj) recited it to us while we listened. This was in the year 1200 A.H. and Allah knows best.” This is the meaning of the *Shehu`*s words: “I have the narration of al-Bukhari by direct transmission (*sama`an*).”

Shaykh Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` said in poetic verse in his Ida`n-Nusuukh praising this blessed teacher:

“From my maternal uncle, al-Hajj ibn Raj, Muhammad
We listened to al-Bukhari’s Saheeh, the Perfumed.
And the remainder of the books of prophetic traditions he gave us license
By what he received on the authority of Ali in the city of Yathrib

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him cited his chain of authority in the al-Jaami` as-Saheeh of Bukhari in his Asaaneed`l-Faqeer where he said: “As for the al-Jaami` as-Saheeh of Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Isma`il al-Bukhari, our *shaykh*, Abu Muhammad Muhammad ibn Raj ibn Modibo Dittu ibn Hamm ibn `Aal ibn Muhammad Jubbu ibn Muhammad Sanbu ibn Maasiran related to us by means of his entire recitation of it in the town of Mornona in the year 1200 A.H (1786 C.E.) in the month of *Rabi`l-Awwal*. He then again gave us license for it on the authority of Abu`l-Hassan as-Sindi al-Madini by direct transmission through the reading of Abd`r-Rahim al-Mujaawir in the *Ribat* of Qaraabisha in the Prophet’s Mosque from the chapter regarding the poem of the servant girl until the end of the text. He then said: ‘Then I read it again with him from the beginning of the book until the above mentioned chapter. He said: ‘Our teacher the above mentioned Muhammad al-Hayyat informed us in the Noble Mosque of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his Companions and grant them peace while the greater part of it was read to him and I listened and the remainder he gave us license in it on the authority of *Shaykh* Abdullah ibn Salim al-Basri with his license; on the authority of *Shaykh* Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn `Ala`d-Deen al-Balbali al-Misri, with his reciting of part of it, his listening to the greater part of it and receiving license in the remainder; on the authority of Abu`n-Najaa Salim ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Ali al-Qeeti, with his reading of the entire text to him; on the authority of the *Shaykh`l-Islam* Abu Yahya Zayn`d-Deen Zakariyya ibn Muhammad al-Ansaari, with his reading of the entire text; on the authority of the traditionists of his age Shihab`d-Deen Abu`l-Fadl Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Hajr al-`Asqalani, with his

reading of the entire text; on the authority of the professor Ibrahim ibn Ahmad at-Tanuukhi, with his listening to the entire text; on the authority of Abu'l-Abass Ahmad ibn Abi Talib al-Hijar, with his listening to the entire text; on the authority of as-Siraj al-Husayn al-Mubarak az-Zabidi al-Hanbali, with his listening to the entire text; on the authority of Abu'l-Waqt Abd'l-Awwal Isa ibn Shu`ayb as-Sajzi al-Hawari; on the authority of Abu'l-Hassan Abd'r-Rahman ibn Madhfar ibn Dawud ad-Dawuudi, with his listening to it; on the authority of Abu Muhammad Abdullah ibn Ahmad as-Sarakhsi, with his listening to it; on the authority of Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Yusef ibn Matr ibn Salih al-Farabri, with his listening to it; on the authority of the traditionist and *Amir'l-Mu'mineen* in the science of prophetic traditions Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Isma'il ibn Ibrahim ibn al-Mughira ibn Bardizba al-Bukhari al-Ja'afi." The *Shehu* received the license for the al-Jaami` as-Saheeh with the above mentioned chain of authority twice from *Shaykh* al-Hajj Muhammad ibn Raj. He also received it from *Shaykh* Abu'l-Amana al-Hajj Jibril ibn Umar in seven distinct chains of authorities, as well as from his son, *Shaykh* Abu't-Tawfeeq Umar ibn Jibril ibn Umar, with the same chains of authorities, except by way of the Judge *Shaykh* Ibrahim ibn Musa Ghabir al-Kunawi. *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye`, may Allah be merciful to him cited this chain of authority to *Shaykh* Jibreel ibn Umar in his Diya 's-Sanad in an abridged form by his words:

"Jibreel gave us license in it

The euidite pilgrim, the content, the noble-minded
On the authority of Murtada, who was al-Mizjaji
Muhammad, the one who precisely manifested the methodology
On the authority of Ibrahim, and him on the authority of al-Lahuuri
And him on the authority of Muhammad ar-Ridaa, the reknown
On the authority of his father, on the authority of Ahmad at-Taawuus
On the authority of Yusuf al-Maanuus, the one who lived an advanced age
On the authority of Ibn Shaadhabakhta al-Farghaani
On the authority of Ibn Shaahaan, who was known as al-Khutlaani
On the authority of al-Firabri on the authority of al-Bukhari
And he was the most elevated, the sole objective of the reciter."

The *Shehu* also received license in the al-Jaami` as-Saheeh of al-Bukhari on the authority of *Shaykh* Abd'r-Rahman ibn *Shaykh* Muhammad also by way of the Judge *Shaykh* Ibrahim ibn Musa Ghabir al-Kunawi. He also received the same license from *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Muhammad, who was known as Bu`tughu also from the Judge *Shaykh* Ibrahim ibn Musa Ghabir al-Kunawi.

As for the chain of authority of the *Shehu* in the Saheeh of *Imam* Muslim, he also cited in his Asaaneed'l-Faqir: "As for the Saheeh of Muslim ibn al-Hijaj whose lineage was from Qushayr and who resided in Naysabur; we were given license in it by our teacher Abu Muhammad Muhammad ibn Raj [that is al-Hajj Muhammad ibn Raj ibn Modibo Dittu ibn Hamm ibn ibn `Aal ibn Muhammad Sanbu ibn Maasiran]. He received it from his teacher Abu'l-Hassan as-Sindi through direct transmission from the reading of Abd'r-Rahman with the same chain of authority of al-Bukhari up until the *Shaykh'l-Islam* Zakariyya ibn Muhammad al-Ansari, who received it from the traditionist Abu Nu`aym Ridwan ibn Muhammad al-`Uqba with his reading of the entire text to his teacher as-Sharf Abu't-Tahir Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Abd'-Lateef ibn al-Kuwayk; who received the entire text through direct transmission with the reading of the traditionists Ibn Hajr in four assemblies, with the exception of the assembly of its completion. He received it on the authority Abu'l-Faraj Abd'r-Rahman ibn Abd'l-Hadi al-Hanifi al-Muqdasi through direct transmission the entire text from Abu'l-`Abass Ahmad ibn Abd'd-Daa'im an-Nabulusi. He received through direct transmission of the entire text from al-Haram Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn al-Fadl ibn Ahmad al-Farraawi; who said Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn `Isa al-Juluudi informed us through direct transmission, saying; Ibrahim ibn Sufyan an-Naysaburi informed us through direct transmission...He was Abu Is'haq, the ascetic worshipper who was well known for the answering of his supplications; and was among those who kept the company of Muslim; who said: 'Muslim completed the reading of his book with us in the month of *Ramadhan* in the year 257 A.H'." This is the meaning of the *Shehu's* words: "...unlike the narrations of Muslim, although I have license (*ijaazat*) to transmit it." He also received the license in the transmission of the text from *Shaykh* Abu'l-Amana Jibril ibn Umar in four distinct chains of authority, as well as from his son, *Shaykh* Abu't-Tawfeeq Umar ibn Jibril ibn Umar, with the same chains of authority. *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` summarized this in his Diya 's-Sanad by his words:

"And on his authority from the *sanad* of Abd'l-Haqq
To Ahmad ibn Ahmad al-Faa'iq

On the authority of his teacher Muhammad ibn al-Khazariy
 On the authority of Ahmad as-Suufi he received these narrations
 On the authority of the daughter of Kindi on the authority of at-Tuusi
 On the authority of al-Faraawiy, the spiritually pleasing youth
 On the authority of his teacher *Imam* Abd'l-Ghaafir
 On the authority of al-Khaluudi, the glorious *Imam*
 On the authority of Ibn Sufyaan, the ascetic jurist
 On the authority of Muslim, may he be ennobled from the Illustrious Creator.”

As for the chain of authority of the *Shehu* in the as-Sunnan's-Sughra of the traditionist Abu Abd'r-Rahman Ahmad ibn Shu`ayb an-Nisaai'; he said in his Asaaneed'l-Faqeer: “As for our chain of authority in the narration of as-Sunnan's-Sughra which is also called al-Mujtaba; our teacher Abu Muhammad Muhammad ibn Raj informed us giving us license on the authority of his teacher Abu'l-Hassan as-Sindi with the same chain of authority of al-Bukhari to *Shaykh'l-Islam* Zakariyya ibn Muhammad al-Ansari. He received it on the authority of az-Zayn Ridwan ibn Muhammad with his reading of the entire text to him; on the authority of al-Burhan Ibrahim ibn Muhammad at-Tanuukhi directly; on the authority of Ab'l-`Abass Ahmad ibn Talib al-Hijaar with his listening to it from Ab Talib Abd'l-Lateef ibn Muhammad ibn Ali al-Qibti giving him license; on the authority of Abu Zar`a Tahir ibn Muhammad ibn Tahir al-Maqdasi through direct transmission of the entire text; on the authority of Abu Muhammad ibn Abd'r-Rahman ibn Ahmad ad-Duni through direct transmission. He said: ‘al-Qadi Abu Nasr Ahmad ibn al-Hussayn al-Kisari informed us saying: the traditionist Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Is`haq ibn as-Sunni ad-Daynuri informed us saying: the author, the traditionist Abu Abd'r-Rahman Ahmad ibn Shu`ayb an-Nisaai' informed us...’ The *Shehu* also received license to transmit the as-Sunnan's-Sughra from *Shaykh* Abu'l-Amaana Jibril ibn Umar and his noble son, Abu't-Tawfeeq Umar with their chains of authority going back to the author. *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` said about this in an abridged form in his Diya 's-Sanad:

“And on his authority from our *sanad* to Ibn Hajr
 On the authority of the teacher Tanuukhi Ayyub al-Abar
 And on his authority with the *isnaad* to Ibn al-Jazariy
 On the authority of the grandson of the descendent of as-Saawma`iy al-Athari
 And he on the authority of Abu as-Sabr on the authority of al-Iraqi
 As well as on the authority of Abu `Amr, by unanimous agreement
 And these two on the authority of the teacher the *Imam* as-Salaf
 Transcribed o the authority of his teacher ad-Duuz al-Wafi
 He on the authority of Abu Nasr, who was Alaynuuri
 And he on the authority of Abu Bakr, the illustrious *Imam*
 Who was known in context as Ibn as-Sunni
 On the authority of an-Nasaai', the *Imam* of the Art.”

As for the chains of authorities of the *Shehu* in the narration of the al-Jaami` al-Kabeer of at-Tirmidhi; he said in the above mentioned book: “Our teacher Abu Muhammad Muhammad ibn Raj narrated it to us giving us license; on the authority of Abu'l-Hassan as-Sindi al-Medini through direct transmission with the reading if Abd'r-Rahim. He in turn said: ‘I read the entire text to *Shaykh* Muhammad Hayyat in the mosque of the Prophet, upon him be the best blessings and most perfect peace. He received it from *Shaykh* Abdallah ibn Salaam with license to transmit it; on the authority of Abu Abdallah al-Balwali through direct transmission with the reading of the erudite `Isa ibn Muhammad al-Maghribi on the authority of the illuminated Ali ibn Yayha az-Ziyaadi on the authority of as-Shihab Ahmad ibn Muhammad ar-Ramli on the authority of az-Zayn Zakariyya on the authority of al-`Izza Abd'r-Rahim ibn al-Furat directly and with license to transmit it on the authority of Abu Hafs Umar ibn al-Hussayn al-Muraghi; on the authority of al-Fakhr ibn an-Najari on the authority of Umar ibn Tabriz al-Baghdadi, who said: ‘Abu't-Fatah Abd'l-Malik ibn Abu Sahl al-Karukhi informed us saying: al-Qadi Abu `Aamir Mahmud ibn al-Qasim al-Azidi narrated it to us in its entirety, saying: Abu Muhammad Abd'l-Jabbar ibn Muhammad ibn Abdallah ibn Abu'l-Kharaaj al-Jiraahi al-Marwazi informed us saying: Abu'l-`Abass Muhammad ibn Mahbub al-Mahbubi al-Marwazi saying: the traditionist and proof Abu `Isa Muhammad ibn `Isa ibn Surat at-Tirmidhi narrated and transmitted the entire text to us.’” The *Shehu* also received the chain of authority and license to transmit the al-Jaami`'l-Kabeer fom his teacher Abu'l-Amaana Jibril ibn Umar and his noble son Abu't-Tawfeeq Umar ibn Jibril with the same chain of authority. This *sanad* to *Shaykh* Jibril ibn Umar was summarized in the Diya 's-Sanad of *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye`, by his words:

“On his authority from our *isnaad* which is transcribed
 To al-`Asqalaani on the authority of at-Tanuukhi
 He on the authority of Abu Masuur al-Baghdadi
 On the authority of Abd`l-`Aziz, the master of accuracy
 On the authority of al-Karuukhi on the authority of at-Taryaqi
 On the authority of al-Khiraakhi as-Sabbaaq, the spiritually pleasing
 On the authority of Ibn Mahmud on the authority of the *Imam*
 At-Tirmidhi, the one who possessed the most exalted spiritual stations.”

It was from these chains of authority that the *Shehu* narrated the Sawq`l-Umma Ila Ittiba` as-Sunna. Some of the scholars believe that the *Shehu* composed the text in the year 1208 A.H. [circa 1794 C.E.] during the period just prior to composing his famous Ihya`s-Sunna wa Ikhmad`l-Bid`a, because this was his habit in composing scholarly works. In fact, all of the books of the *Shehu*, were spiritual overflowings which reflected the circumstances of his spiritual states. As we mentioned earlier, it was during this period that Allah ta`ala supported him with overflowing spiritual illuminations due to the *baraka* of constantly sending blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. As a result Allah pulled him into His presence and he witnessed some of the amazing realities of the unseen kingdom and realized some of the mysteries of the kingdom of power. Allah unveiled for him the Presence of the Divine Acts, Names and Attributes. He witnessed the mysteries of the Divine Essence. He was allowed to look upon the Guarded Tablet and unlock some of Its remarkable symbols. He became by the praise of Allah among the Protected Friends of Allah ta`ala. He was allowed to drink from the cups of nearness to Allah, and was dressed in the adornment of direct gnosis of Allah and His love. The Absolute Being crowned him with the crown of Divine assistance and guidance, and made him worthy to invite people to Him and give guidance to the common as well as the spiritually elite. For the *Shehu* never composed a text during this illuminating period of his life except that the people were in need of it in their religious and worldly life. During this time, the *Shehu* encountered all types of disbelief, corruption, abominable and atrocious customs which had pervaded the *Bilad`s-Sudan*, to the point that it was rare to find people whose faith in Allah was sound or who worshipped Allah properly. It was rare to find a person who knew the science of Divine Unity, performed the prayer, the obligatory alms, the fast and the remainder of the acts of worship properly. As a result, the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him rose up in order to give sound advice to the servants regarding the religion of Allah. He abolished destructive customs, destroyed satanic heretical innovations, and gave life to the Muhammadan *Sunna*. He taught the people the individual obligations, pointed the way to Allah, and guided them towards obedience to Him. He removed from them the darkness of ignorance and removed problematic issues from them. Thus, the *Shehu* composed the Sawq`l-Umma as a cure for their sicknesses as he himself said in his Ihya`s-Sunna: “Realize that what saved the *Umma* from discord was the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, being among them. And nothing will save them from its appearance after him except by means of the revival of his *Sunna*. Therefore, the revival and adherence to his *Sunna* is obligatory upon you forever. And you should avoid heretical innovation because all good is contained in adherence, while all evil is contained in heretical innovation.”

As a result the *Shehu* composed the Sawq`l-Umma in order to rally mankind and return them back to the orbit of Divine Unity, the foundation of jurisprudence and the source of the Divine reality; which is the *Sunna* of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He said in his Tarweeh`l-Umma: “Abd`l-Wahaab as-Sha`raani said in his ad-Durari`l-Manthuura Fi Bayaan Zubud`l-Uluum al-Mash`huura: “Verily Allah has only made each of His servants responsible for what the *shari`a* has explicitly established. And what the worshipping human and the dedicated believer means is that they behave in accordance with what is clear (*sareehan*) from the Book and the *Sunna* and not that which is drawn out through legal extraction (*laa istinbaatan*). This is because every thing extracted through legal reasoning is not apart of the infallible divine law (*bi shar`i ma`suum*) of Allah ta`ala. These extractions are simply to bring ease to His servants. It is for this reason that there have emerged differences in their legal extractions but not in the clear unambiguous proofs. Allah ta`ala says: “*If it was from other than Allah then you would find in It many differences.*” This means due to the diversities in their temperaments and make up. What is meant by the knowledge of Allah is that which Allah ta`ala has clearly enacted as law, since this is the knowledge which the servant will be questioned about in the Hereafter. In all of this, there is no harm nor is there any difficulty for anyone acquiring it, since it comprises simply performing so-and-so and avoiding so-and-so. Nothing hampers the least of the common people from understanding this, which is contrary to what has been enacted by the scholars of independent judgment (*al-mujtahidun*) from among

the *imams*. For no one will be questioned about these issues in the Hereafter. Further in them are many difficulties and hardships and requires the expanse of a lifetime and the suspension of causative factors in achieving this level of knowledge as is well known.” He also said in the same text: “It also mentions in the ar-Risaalat ‘l-Mubaarak: “Among the matters that cause the jurist to become exhausted during their juristic decisions is their being preoccupied with understanding the compounded ideas of one another, their pronouncements and considerations until they eventually exceed the infallible true *shari`a* and forsake comprehension of its pure secrets. For this reason, if they were to abandon all of the ideas other than that of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and neglected to act with anything regarding them, then there would be no harm upon them in this world or the Hereafter. For all of the teachings of the scholars are not free of three conditions: [1] either it conforms clearly to the narrated *Sunna*. In this case the favor is with the *Sunna* and the scholar of independent judgment is like one who narrates it. [2] Either it clearly contradicts the *Sunna*. In that case it should be abandoned and one should act in accordance with the *Sunna*. Finally, [3] either it is not apparent whether it conforms or not, or whether it contradicts it, then the best condition is to cease acting by it and neglecting it, except when it leans to that which is encompassed by the religion. Like, for example the ideas of the prohibition of the use of hashish and the remaining things that seizes the mind but does not intoxicate. Thus, acting in accordance with this in that case is superior in weight (*arjah*), even though the *shari`a* has not clearly enacted that.” For this reason the *Shehu*, composed the Sawq‘l-Umma Ila Ittiba`‘s-Sunna, initially so that it can be a source text and a reference for the jurists in their independent judgment and legal extractions; secondly that the one middling in knowledge may know with certainty that the differences among the jurists are indeed a mercy, because their disagreements return back to the teachings of the one who is “*a mercy to all the worlds*”, our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace; and thirdly that it can act as a fundamental text for the common Muslim in their doctrine of beliefs and worship.

The merits of the Sawq‘l-Umma Ila Ittiba`‘s-Sunna are innumerable and immense because it is a support with regard to clarifying the boundaries of the science of Divine Unity (*tawheed*) and belief; it is a proof regarding the explanation of the legal rulings of the individual obligations; it is a reference book for the jurists, and more importantly it is a drinking place for the people of the prophetic traditions, who are the People of Allah ta‘ala, the People of certainty. They are more knowledgeable of the religion of Islam than others, as it has been narrated by at-Tirmidhi and Ibn Hibban on the authority of Ibn Abass who said that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “O Allah be merciful to my vicegerents.” We said: “O Messenger of Allah who are your vicegerents?” He said: “Those who narrate my prophetic traditions and teach them to the people.” In another narration: “Those who give life to my *Sunna* and teach it to the people. Whoever gives life to my *Sunna*, has given life to me. Whoever gives life to me, will be with me in Paradise.” Thus, whoever studies the Sawq‘l-Umma and comprehends everything in it from its prophetic traditions, its legal rulings and teaches it to the people, will be included among the Vicegerents of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace from the people of prophetic traditions, may the mercy of Allah be upon them.

Among the merits of the Sawq‘l-Umma also is that it includes its author, those who study it, peruse it, transcribe it and urge others to it among the people about whom the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said that they will be the nearest to him and those most deserving of his intercession; as it was related by at-Tirmidhi and Ibn Maja on the authority of Ibn Mas‘ud: “The foremost of the people with me on the Day of Judgment will be those who sent the most blessings upon me.” Ad-Daarutni said regarding the meaning of this prophetic tradition: “It is the companions of the prophetic traditions who are the people who send the most blessings upon him.” This is because when one of them narrates a prophetic tradition from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, it is necessary that he also sends blessings upon him when his name is mentioned in that prophetic tradition. And when he sends blessings upon him once Allah then sends blessings upon him ten times, wipes out ten errors, and raises him ten spiritual degrees, as it has been narrated in the prophetic traditions. These are his merits when he studies or recites a single prophetic tradition. So how is his circumstance when he studies or recites 232 prophetic traditions in which the name of our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace is mentioned, and what is in them of the sciences which it is obligatory for every responsible person to know? This is his circumstance when a man studies or recites the Sawq‘l-Umma by himself. It has been related by al-Bazaar on the authority of Abu Hurayra who said that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Whoever send blessings upon me in the secret recesses of his soul, Allah will send ten blessings upon him, wipe out ten evils and raise him ten spiritual ranks.” From this we know that the meaning of the words of ad-Daarutni: “It is the companions of the prophetic traditions

who are the people who send the most blessings upon him”; that the reward for the one who sends blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace during the narration of the prophetic traditions is more superior to the reward of the one who sends blessings upon him outside of it, because his sending blessings is augmented with the reward of seeking knowledge and giving life to the *Sunna*. If this is his reward when he studies or reads the Sawq’l-Umma by himself, then how will his reward be if he studies and reads the Sawq’l-Umma in the assemblies of knowledge with the *Jama`at*? For the least of his reward is augmented with the reward of all those in the assembly from humans and *jinn*, and Allah knows best.

For the merits of the Sawq’l-Umma Ila Ittiba`’s-Sunna are innumerable because it enters its author, those who study it, peruse it, transcribe it or urge others to it among the group of the people of prophetic traditions who are the People of Allah ta`ala and His Protected Friends the *Budalaa*. It has been related by *Shaykh* Abu’l-Fat’h Nasr ibn Ibrahim al-Maqdasi in his Kitab’l-Hujja`Ala Taarik’l-Muhja with his chain of authority going back to Ahmad ibn Hanbal that it was once said to him: “Does Allah really have *abdal* upon the earth?” He replied: “Yes.” It was then said: “Who are they?” He said: “If the people of prophetic traditions are not the *abdal*, then I do not know that Allah has *abdal*!” For the people of the prophetic traditions are the notable *Awliyya* of Allah by whom Allah ta`ala raises affliction and hardships from His earth. It is to this that the *Shehu* indicated in one of his poems that adherence to the *Sunna* was his spiritual Path and his litany *wird*:

Sunna giduyamu kanku kuuru yaymi * Kanku bitayma kanku beeridi yaymi

It means: “It is the *Sunna* that I truly love. It is the orbit of my preoccupation. It is the theme of all my preachings and it has become my spiritual litany.” For whoever desires to gather the doctrine of belief of the *Shehu*, his legal school of thought and his spiritual Path and journey to Allah in a single idea, he should refer back to the above poetic verse. For then he will be acquainted with objective of the *Shehu* may Allah be merciful to him in authoring the Sawq’l-Umma Ila Ittiba`’as-Sunna. It is undisputable refutation in these times against some of those in academia who claim that it is not necessary to adhere to the Living *Sunna* in all affairs. It is repudiation against those who deny the veracity of the *madhaahib* of the *Imams*. It is denial of those who blindly adhere to a single *madh`hab* as if the other schools of thought were paths leading to error. It is a clarification that the real and authentic spiritual Path to Allah ta`ala and His gnosis is through forcing the *nafs* to adhere to Living *Sunna* inwardly and outwardly; and that the actual Guide and the *Shaykh* of all the *Shuyuukh* on the Path to Allah ta`ala is our master Muhammad, upon him and his pure family be the best blessings and most perfect peace. This Absolute Spiritual Guide on the Path to Allah ta`ala cannot be reached except through the sacrificing of the *nafs* and the reviving of Muhammadan *Sunna* in its place; as he upon him be blessings and peace said: “Whoever revives my *Sunna* has given life to me. Whoever gives life to me will be with me in Paradise.” And by his words upon him be blessings and peace: “The mercy of Allah is upon my vicegerents.” It was said: “What are your vicegerents?” He said: “Those who give life to my *Sunna* and teach it to the people. Whoever gives life to my *Sunna* has given life to me. Whoever gives life to me will be with me in Paradise.” In another narration: “O Allah be merciful to my vicegerents.” We said: “O Messenger of Allah who are your vicegerents?” He said: “Those who narrate my prophetic traditions and teach them to the people.” All this means is that the scholars of the *Sunna*, may Allah be pleased with them are the People of Allah on His earth, for no one knows Allah as he should be known except them. There is no door which is opened to direct knowledge of Allah except their door. It has been related in the Tarteeb’l-Mudaarik of *Qadi`Iyaad*: “Once a man asked Malik about a matter from the science of the inward, and he became angry and said: ‘The science of the inward, no one knows it except the one who knows the science of the outward. For whenever one knows the science of the outward and acts in accordance with it, then by that Allah will open for him the science of the inward; and that cannot happen except with the opening of his heart and its illumination’. He then said to the man: ‘Obligatory upon you is the plain and clear religion, and beware of false constructs of the spiritual path. Obligatory upon you is that which you know, and leave alone that which you do not know’.” There is no way to the inward of affairs except through their outward, and no one can realize the divine realities except from the direction of knowledge of the *shari`a*, which is the science of the outward. For no one is more knowledgeable of the science of the outward than those who revive the *Sunna*, teach it to the people and transmit its prophetic traditions. This is because they have become the Companions of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace by means of their very breadths.

Corroborating this view the *Shehu*, may Allah be merciful to him said in his Asaaneed’l-Faqeer: “Al-Haafidh at-Tirmidhi once said: “Oh one who is critical of me due to my preoccupation with the prophetic traditions; the people of the prophetic traditions have superseded everyone since they have a special relationship with the Chosen One. The people of the prophetic traditions are the people of the

Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Even though their breadths have never mingled with his breadths yet they have attained companionship with him.” Ibrahim ibn Adham once said: “Verily Allah wards off affliction from this *Umma* by means of the excursions of the people of the prophetic traditions.” Whenever one of the notable *Imams* saw the people of prophetic traditions he would recite the following poetic verse:

“Welcome to those whom I love dearly
For Allah the Possessor of sublimity I love them most
Welcome to a righteous people the fearfully aware
Dazzling faces and the beautification of every noble assembly
O seeker after the knowledge of the Prophet Muhammad
There is no similarity between you and those beside you.”

The traditionist Abu Tahir as-Salafi once said regarding the people of prophetic traditions:

“The religion of the Prophet and his law which is narrated
And the most sublime knowledge which results from his traditions
Whoever is preoccupied with it and with disseminating it
Among creatures, then his influence and traces will never be wiped away.”

It has been related on the authority of Ibn Abd’l-Barr with his chain of authority going back to Abdallah ibn Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal on the authority of his father who used to say in poetic verse:

“The religion of the Prophet Muhammad has its traditions
The best of what is bestowed to the young knight is narrated traditions
The science of prophetic traditions and its people cannot be reckoned
For mere opinion is like night and the prophetic traditions are like the day
Perhaps the young knight may be ignorant of the paths of guidance
While the Sun has appeared plainly giving off bright illuminations.”

It is from these above superb sayings that we are able to understand the merits and *baraka* of the Sawq’l-Umma Ila Ittiba`’s-Sunna of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, may the mercy of Allah be upon him. This is because both the common people and the spiritually elite are able to be included in the meaning of the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace as it was narrated in the prophetic tradition of Usama ibn Zayd, may Allah be pleased with him: “Those who carry this knowledge is a barrier against every person who acts contrary in his deviations. They negate the warped misconceptions of the deviants, the plagiarism of the charlatans; and the false interpolations of the ignorant.” And in another narration on the authority of Ibrahim ibn Abd’r-Rahman al`Idhari: “This knowledge is inherited by every person who wards off those who act contrary in his deviations, who negates the warped misconceptions of the deviants, the plagiarism of the charlatans and the false interpolations of the ignorant.”

Regarding the merits of the people of prophetic tradition and by extension the merits of the Sawq’l-Umma, *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` said in his Siraj’l-Bukhari:

“All praises are due to Allah who has chosen
For His illumination the servants of the prophetic traditions of the Chosen One
They are his vicegerents who deliver
From him to the *Umma* which has been transmitted
The people of his blessings, they are those who ward off
By means of knowledge, thus were they named by the Messenger
They negate the misconceptions of the deviants from him
They possess luminosity based upon the supplication from him
Which include knowledge of the verses which have legal rulings
And an established *Sunna* which is continuous and persistent
And straight forward obligation and other than these
Spiritual Bounties taken on the authority of the Messenger
May Allah bless him as long as the religion of Islam
Is exalted over all other religions, and give him peace.”

These words of *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` are invaluable because they clarify the superiority of the people of prophetic traditions and firmly establish the *baraka* comprised within this book, the Sawq’l-Umma Ila Ittiba`’s-Sunna of my master *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, may the mercy of Allah be upon him. Furthermore, in the mere reciting and study of the Sawq’l-Umma contains much *baraka*, because the *Shehu* placed in it an answered supplication which is guaranteed by his words: “I ask Allah, the Mighty Lord of the Tremendous Throne, that He make this work purely for His Generous sake and that He

make it a proof for us and not against us; may He send down upon us His blessings on the Day of Standing before Him and at the time when mankind decomposes in their tombs; may He by means of this book benefit all that read it, explain it to others, write it down or incite others to it. Lastly, I seek from anyone who comes upon this book and gains some benefit from it, that he associate me closely in his devout supplications that Allah may benefit me by it in this world and in the Hereafter; and success is with Allah.” Thus, when we examine the sound prophetic traditions which have been cited in the text and what they comprise of the legal rulings of worship, doctrine of beliefs and social behavior, by means of these it necessitates the realization of complete illumination, Vicegerency, deliverance of the message, uprightness, and the supplication of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This is because he, upon him be peace said on the day of the Farewell Pilgrimage as related in many unbroken narrated prophetic traditions: “Allah will cause to flourish the affair of the one who hears a prophetic tradition from me, memorizes it until he delivers it to another. For perhaps, a person delivers a jurisprudential issue to one who is more jurisprudential than himself, and perhaps the carrier of a jurisprudential issue is not actually a jurist”; as related by at-Tirmidhi on the authority of Zayd ibn Thabit. In another narration on the authority of Anas ibn Malik he, upon him be peace said: “Allah will cause to flourish, the one who listens to my words, and do not add anything to it. Three things will never cause a fellow Muslim to go astray: sincerity of actions for Allah, giving sound advice to those who possess authority and keeping to the *Jama`at* of the Muslims; for their supplications encompass beyond themselves.” Primarily, in each of the above two narrations is the good news for the people of prophetic traditions that they have obtained the supplications of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. The meaning of ‘flourish’ (*nadaara*) in these narrations means excellence and splendor. What is meant is that Allah ta`ala distinguishes him with magnificence and jubilation because he endeavors in the radiance of knowledge and reviving the *Sunna*. For he is rewarded in his supplications by what is connected to his circumstances and actions, based upon the meaning of his words, upon him be peace: “their supplications encompass beyond themselves.” This actually means that their supplications are proficient and encompasses them from every direction, which means their supplications are answered by means of the bounty of being preoccupied with the prophetic traditions of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Further, in the Sawq`l-Umma is a third of knowledge because it contains in it the established *Sunna*. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said as related in the narration of Abu Dawud, and Ibn Maja on the authority of Abdallah ibn Umar and Ibn al-`Aas: “Knowledge are three kinds: a verse of legal rulings; an established *Sunna* or a confirmed obligation. What is beyond these is superfluous.” In another narration of al-Hakim he upon him be blessings and peace said: “Knowledge are three kinds and what is outside of these is superfluous: a verse of legal rulings; an established *Sunna* or a confirmed obligation.”

It has been related by Abu Nu`aym ad-Daylami that he upon him be blessings and peace said: “Whoever holds to my prophetic traditions, understands them, and memorizes them, will come on the Day of Judgment with the *Qur`an*. Whoever neglects the *Qur`an* and my prophetic traditions has forfeited this life and the Hereafter. My *Umma* has been commanded to take hold of my words, to obey my commands and follow my *Sunna*. Whoever does so is then content with the *Qur`an*.” Ibn `Uyayna said: “There is no one from among the people of prophetic traditions except that his face will be radiant as a result of this prophetic tradition.” All of this indicates the bounties and merits comprised in the book Sawq`l-Umma Ila Ittiba`s-Sunna.

The universal advantage which this blessed text has for the entire Muslim *Umma* is obvious for anyone whom Allah ta`ala has illuminated his heart with spiritual insight. However, another important advantage which this text has particularly for the millions of descendants of enslaved African Muslims in the west kidnapped and dislocated from their Islamic homeland, is that it constitutes a means of reconnection with the Ways of our Fathers and is a fulfillment of the Divine Prophecy from our father Abraham that we would be returned to the righteous customs of our ancestors. The Sawq`l-Umma Ila Ittiba`s-Sunna is a means by which the African Muslim can revitalize his religion through the eyes of his own fathers with a unadulterated line back to the Living *Sunna* of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. It is the most miraculous rediscovery that the African Muslim communities in the Diaspora of the west can experience. In this respect the *Shehu*, may Allah be merciful to him said in his last testament to the *Jama`at* called al-Wasiyya:

“I am but a leader of his people who guides them towards what is virtuous in their affairs, and inviting them to the religion of Allah; seeking by means of that His forgiveness, His mercy and desiring by that His pleasure; following the ways of my fathers and imitating the traces of my grandfathers who have passed. This is because our ancestors were the people of uprightness, guidance, learning, and struggle in the Way of Allah against the enemies of the religion; in order to make it wide and to deliver it. I am doing this following

the command of the Prophet and answering his call when he said, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: "Deliver the message from me even if it is just a single verse...This is our inheritance and the inheritance of our grandfathers. We are upon that mission without being kings and rulers who practice oppression and injustice. And those who follow me in that then they are from me, and if not, then not! So that all those who love me from the brothers, the descendents and loved ones, rather all those who follow my commands and are content with my teachings and have answered my call – may know that ...it is necessary and obligatory for every reasonable believer to follow the traces of their believing ancestors, to follow the Way of their righteous grandfathers and imitate them. For this reason, I have chosen to imitate my grandfathers in adhering to the *Sunna* strongly so that I can be a guide to what is good like they were. For the one who guides to what is good is like the one who does that same good and will attain the reward of those who act on it"

It is in this regard, that for the descendents of the enslaved African Muslims in the western hemisphere, the Sawq'l-Umma is an unequivocal answer to what Dr. Sherman Jackson accurately defined as the 'threat of double-consciousness' and resolves in one swoop the question of self definition, identity construct and the internationally recognized right of self determination; while at the same time it unites us under the banner of the Living *Sunna* along with the rest of this blessed *Umma* of Muhammad, may Allah be merciful to us and all of them. These advantages are consequential to the principle of establishing the *Sunna*. For political victory, economic sufficiency and social prominence are the by products of revitalizing and following the *Sunna*. In this regard Allah ta`ala says: "*We desired to favor those who were oppressed in the earth, to make them leaders, to make them inheritors and to establish them firm in the earth, in order to show Pharaoh, Hamaan and his forces from among the collaborators what they feared most.*" This principle cannot be over emphasized due to its important relationship with the issue of universal social transformation and the eventual overturning of the present dominant culture by the immense events of the End of Time.

Finally, there are 232 prophetic traditions narrated in this blessed book which firmly establish the knowledge of Divine Unity (*ilm 't-tawheed*) and the sciences of social behavior (*ulum'l-mu`amilaat*). And in these prophetic traditions lay the foundations and fundamental principles of the schools of thought of the scholars of independent judgment. It is for this reason that some of the scholars have said that this blessed book is a proof that *Shehu* Uthman in Fuduye`, may the mercy of Allah be upon him attained the rank of *mujtahid* and reformer in the sciences of the religion which comprise the sciences of *Imaan*, *Islaam* and *Ihsaan*. We at the Sankore` Institute of Islamic-African Studies International present the Sawq'l-Umma Ila Itiba`s-Sunna in order that you may rectify your doctrine of beliefs, firmly establish your worship and realize your gnosis of your Lord around the Pole of Existence, our master Muhammad, upon him from Allah be the best blessings and most perfect peace, and all praises are due to Allah the Lord of the worlds.

Shaykh Muhammad Shareef bin Farid Shareef
Thursday, 19th *Muharram*, 1430 [15- 01-2009]
Zunyi, People's Republic of China

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