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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا

## Chapter Twelve

### On An Indication of the Essence of What the *Shehu* Taught the People in His Lectures

**R**ealize that the essence of what he taught the people could be divided into five divisions. **The first division:** concerned what the *shari`a* has obligated, which are the foundations (*al-usuul*) and the branches of the outward and inward (*al-furu` t-thaahir wa l-baatin*). Allah willing proper mention of this will be forthcoming. **The second division:** concerned urging people to adhere to the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. **The third division:** concerned discrediting the delusions of the mere amateurs in knowledge (*at-tulaba*) whose ignorance had deluded them.

**The *Shehu*** found in these lands many factions. Among them was the faction about whom al-Hassan al-Yusi spoke. They are a faction who studies the ideas from the instigation of some *Imams* regarding the speculative arguments in the science of *tawheed*. They caution people from being ignorant of this and they also castigate people for having affiliation (*taqleed*) with the scholars in that. They go around questioning people about their beliefs (*`aqeeda*). They hold them responsible for giving the correct answers and then endeavor to explain the correct answers. Sometimes the people being questioned stumble in their inability to express what is on their hearts. Sometimes their tongues are befuddled from the perplexity of the expressions of *tawheed*. Sometimes they are ignorant of some of what is objectionable in the realm of beliefs (*al-`aqeeda*). In any case these amateurs in knowledge regard them as infringing the boundaries of *tawheed*. And when they are not blaming them, they spread the idea that the common people are ignorant and disbelievers. They then spread the idea that corruption has occurred in the beliefs of the people (*`aqaa'id 'n-naas*).

They set out to teach the doctrine of beliefs to the common people utilizing the language and technical terminology established and created by their faction, based upon the perimeters established in the books of the theologians (*al-mutakallimuun*). They also spread the idea among the people that whoever is not preoccupied with the science of *tawheed* in accordance with the manner in which they teach it, then that person is disbeliever. They also spread the idea that the sacrificed meats of the common Muslim are not to be eaten, nor are they to be married, out of fear that they will be among those who do not know the science of *tawheed*. They do not stop there, rather after having brought shame upon the common Muslim, Allah afflicted them with trying to bring shame upon the elite among the scholars of the Muslims, as well. Their false condemnations include the jurists of their times among the people of knowledge and religion. Among these whom they condemn are among the scholars who are rightly guided. However they accuse them of being in error (*dalaal*), even though they may not claim that the common people are in error. The tribulations of

this faction ignited and started a fire that caused the smoke of their ignorance to accumulate until it had almost engulfed the entire region of the *bilad 's-sudan*.

**Then the Shehu** arose against them and Allah extinguished the fires of their tribulation by means of him. By means of the illumination of the *Shehu*, Allah exposed the darkness of their smoke. The *Shehu* showed the falsity of their school of thought (*madh'hab*) and uprooted the tree of their errors from the earth until their ideology became obscured. He produced many treatises refuting them, which amounted to more than fifty works. There occurred many conflicts between him and them where it was witnessed that he successfully refuted them in the best manner. He was able to unveil the path of truth and reality. And all praises are due to Allah for that.

**Likewise**, he refuted another faction from among the amateurs in knowledge who happened upon certain books of jurisprudence, the comprehensibility of which they had not been guided to. As a result of their ignorance, they set about passing legal decisions (*fatwaa*) based upon isolated and less acceptable opinions of the scholars. Some of them came upon books whose authors were bizarre and unusual. They would then pass legal decisions based upon what they read in these books. Some of them would take legal rulings from the books of the most loathsome nature.

**Likewise**, he refuted another faction which had become prevalent in these lands who made false claims and pretended to have unveiling of hidden knowledge, even though they had not even withdrawn themselves out of the grip of *satan* and their own corrupt passions. Many of these false claimants knew nothing of what was incumbent upon them from the individual obligations (*furuud 'l-`ayaan*). Out of their ignorance they happened upon some of the books of the science of spiritual purification (*tassawwuf*). They then shrieved their huge *nafs* into the attire of dignity and asceticism as a means of conjuring the rubble of this world's life. Out of jealousy and stupidity they would fight those who resembled them from among the true and false *Sufis*. Some of them knew nothing of the path of *tasawwuf* but only pretended to that in order to prevail upon this world and to pilfer its vanities.

**Al-Hassan al-Yusi** said in one of his lectures, "There occurred in the city of **Siljimesa** that the word was spread that there had appeared one night a man in the outskirts of town. The people began to hurry to him in large numbers. Thus, we, too, went out to meet him, when some people began saying that this man was a saint. And others said that he was the unique saint of the time (*saahib 'l-waqt*). When we reached that part of the town we found that people had gathered around him from every region. Even the *Amir* of the city, **Muhammad ibn as-Shareef**, came out in his royal boat. When the people became too many and their numbers became too exhaustive for the man, he sought permission to take leave of them. He entered into an old tomb in the graveyard. While there he would put his hand out the door in order for the people to kiss it. Whenever the people would kiss his hand and leave, they would find that all their needs had been taken care of. We, too, kissed his hands and left. After some days we heard that he had traveled to another part of the town and had accidentally fallen into a well and died. It became known later that he was a person afflicted and employed the *jinn*. As a result of this he was destroyed.

**There** are many people like him. We relate this story to you so that you may realize and be alert against those whose states are similar. For how many are there who pretend that they have attained good while there is no good in them except insanity, dementia, satanic whispering or bewilderment?! However, the desolate, deceived and ignorant fall prey to them.

“You are not the first to traverse with your deceptions like the moon

Whose dazzling temptations conceal and cover green feces and filth.”

Those who resemble him in stupidity and corruption have spread in these times.

“An object draws its like towards itself

Like the birds which flock with its own species.”

**Stupid people** are usually deceived, except those whom Allah has protected. Like, for example, what happened in the year 1060 *hijra*, when I climbed a mountain from the mountains of **Maskuura**. There a man from the west settled among the people of that mountain. He became renowned for his poverty. People then built a retreat for him and they began to bring gifts and to offer him services. There was also among the people of that land a young man, about whom the people disputed concerning his reputation. This young man began to live in the retreat with this man. At this point many of the students began to have misgivings about the affair of this ascetic. During one night fall the so-called ascetic began being affectionate with the young man, even to the point of entering his hand into hidden areas of his clothing and fondling him. The young man then concealed himself from the man in the retreat. When the night darkened the so-called *murabit* stood, approached the young man and got busy with him doing corruption. (We ask Allah ta`ala for pardon!). Then the so-called ascetic realized that the people knew what he was really about, he then fled their town. When the news reached the brothers of the young man, they followed after the so-called ascetic but were unable to find him. It is not known what became of this man. There were many like him.

**Among** the strangest things which occurred in this town of Siljimesa is what our brother in Allah, the righteous protected friend of Allah, **Abu Abdullahi Muhammad ibn Abdullahi Taahir as-Shareef**; who was known as **Ibn Ali**, may Allah be pleased with him, informed us about. “A man once came to our country and made fun with the brothers (meaning the nobility among the city of **Siljimesa**). The people considered him to be a righteous man and began show their acceptance of him. Then a certain man came to him and he swore that he could help him reach **Mecca** and make the pilgrimage with him, in the blinking of an eye. He continued to make this claim until a group from among the noblemen of **Siljimesa** agreed to test his claims. They decided to conceal themselves near him and send forward one of their members who had with him five hundred *mithqaals* of gold. The made who was being tested said to him: ‘O Sidi! These prayers are too burdensome for me. Will you mind if I not perform them?’ Then the nobleman further tested him by leaving the gold in front of him that caused the man to become exceedingly joyful. At this the other noblemen came out suddenly and beat him and abused him driving him out of the town. Later, some of the noblemen journeyed to one of the remote regions in the *Maghrib* where they passed a water spring. There they found the very man they had driven out. He was a Jew from among the Jews who were known to live in that region! We ask Allah for protection and well-being!

**What** is intended by these stories is that you should be on the alert because there is no doubt that we are in the last times in which corruption gets the upper hand over righteousness, corrupt passions prevails over the truth and heretical innovation

prevails over the *sunna* - except for those whom Allah ta`ala has singled out and they are few.

“This is the time about which we were warned

In the words of Ka`b and in the words of Ibn Mas`ud.

When this persist and no one speaks to rebuke

When no one will cry for the dead nor be happy about a new born.

In this age the truth has been rejected all together

While injustice and immorality in these times are not rejected.”

**Rather**, it is an age where mankind wishes not to remain because it has become like the saying of the Prophet, upon him be blessings and peace, “*There is no time coming except that the time after it will be more evil than it.*” Thus, it is necessary for people to strive hard. We ask Allah to provide us with the ability to take care of the good of what remains from our years and that we clear ourselves of what has passed. Truly, Allah is Generous and Bountiful. Thus, it is essential to be attentive to having a good opinion of the servants of Allah especially what is apparent from them of good and to pay no attention to the faults of people.

**It has been related** in the prophetic traditions: “*There are two traits above which there is nothing better than them: having a good opinion of Allah and having a good opinion of the servants of Allah. There are also two traits under which there is nothing worse than them: having an evil opinion of Allah and having an evil opinion of the servants of Allah.*” For whoever follows after the faults of his brother, Allah will follow after his own faults, even into the recesses of his own home. For showing opposition without necessity is an offense, and following every body and his brother is error. This is testified to in the words of our chief, **Ali ibn Abi Talib**, may Allah ennoble his face, “People are three types: [1] the divinely blessed scholar; [2] the seeker of knowledge on the path of salvation; and [3] the riffraff who follows every body and his brother.” For whoever has his uprightness established for him and his knowledge and scrupulousness is sound - then it is obligatory to follow him. Whoever is known for good, it is obligatory to honor him based upon his station and to surrender to him in his states. Whoever removes the attire of modesty from his face, it is necessary to rebuke him. For when heretical innovation appears and the scholars are silent, then upon them is the curse of Allah. Showing deference is the safe path. This issue is vast and it cannot be discussed properly except in a single text. However, what we have mentioned here is as a hint in order for these things to be shunned. To Allah belongs the affair in the beginning and the end.”

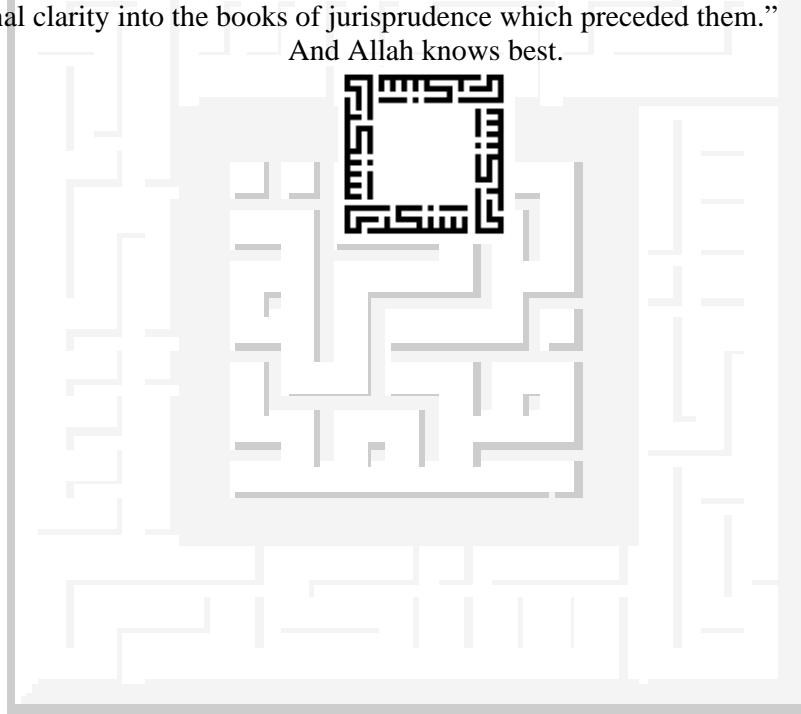
**The fourth division**: concerned destroying satanic innovation and refuting abominable customs. **The fifth division**: concerned disseminating the sciences of the *shari`a*, defining the problematic issues in them, bringing advantage by clarifying obscure issues and precisely specifying the peculiar issues in the areas of the sciences. This division is the main topic which the *Shehu* used to discuss with the people. The majority of his beneficial books and brilliant publications concerned this division. In his lectures he persisted in eliminating the problematic issues from the religion from the minds of the students to the delight of those who desired this. He rectified those problematic issues and created a clear description of the uncertainties and extremities which pervaded this age.

**Al-Abasani** said, “Our *shaykh*, Abu Abdullahi, use to say in his lectures, ‘If in the lectures of learning one does not get a clear picture of uncertainties of knowledge, then there is no benefit in sitting in his lectures.’ He also said in verse:

‘If in the lectures of a person one does not receive even a small point  
Of stipulating a clear picture of the problematic issues in religion  
Then avoid his circle and look to your own soul and make strenuous effort  
Never neglect it for in neglecting the soul lies the ugliest of traits.”

**The publications of the Shehu** comprised of beneficial knowledge as well as obscure and unusual issues. He worked to clarify the problematic issues, to make perceptible difficult topics and simplified areas that were incomprehensible. His many publications brought about many benefits which were plain and numerous advantages that were brilliant. **Abu Abdullahi** use to say, “Publications only enter into being of benefit to a person after death when they include in them bringing benefits into obscure issues. If not then these publications only lead to the loss of real advantage. What we mean here by ‘bringing benefit into obscure issues’ is bringing additional clarity into the books of jurisprudence which preceded them.”

And Allah knows best.



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