Chapter Two

On the Obligation of Giving Sincere Advice to the Ruler

Realize that giving sincere advice to the Muslims, especially the leaders, is among the practices (sunnan) of the Messengers. It has been related in a prophetic tradition narrated by Muslim on the authority of Tamim ad-Daari, may Allah be pleased with him that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said:

("الدین النصیحة")

“The deen is sincere counsel.” It was said to him, “With whom, O Messenger of Allah?” He said:

1 Probably one of the best texts composed on the concept of sincere advice (naseeha) due to its conciseness was that composed by Shaykh Abdullahi ibn Fuduye called an-Nasaa'ihi Fi Ahammi al-Masaalihi which he authored on a Thursday, the 20th of Jumad ‘l-Akhir in the year 1242 A.H. (1826 C.E.). He arranged the text into an introduction and five chapters. In the introduction Shaykh Abdullahi explains the general meaning of the prophetic tradition cited below, and in the five subsequent chapters he explains what each of the five categories mean and entail. He clarified that his book was a summarization of Shaykh Abu’l-Abass Ahmad ibn Ahmad Zaruuq famous text called an-Naseehat’l-Kaafiyya. Allah willing we will present this wonderful text of Shaykh Abdullahi to the reader so that you can have a more comprehensive understanding of the principle of sincere advice.

2 For a brief biography Imam Muslim see the introduction footnote # 18, www.siiasi.org. This prophetic tradition was also related by Ahmad in his Musnad, Abu Dawud, and an-Nisaai on the authority of Tameem ad-Daari, as well as at-Tirmidhi and an-Nisaai on the authority of Abu Hurayra, and Ahmad in his Musnad on the authority of Ibn Abass; by al-Bukhari in his Tarikh and at-Tabarani in his al-Awsat on the authority of Thawbaan; by al-Bizaar on the authority of Ibn Umar.

3 He was Abu Ruqayya Tamim ad-Daari ibn Uus ibn Kharija ibn Sawd ibn Jadhema al-Lakhami al-Filistini ad-Daari. He reached Medina in the ninth year of the hijra and accepted Islam from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. When he accepted Islam he said to the Prophet: “O Messenger of Allah, indeed Allah will manifest you over the entire earth. Grant me a village from the house of Lahm.” He said: “It is yours.” And he had it written for him. Later, Tamim came with this letter to Umar and showed it to him who said: “I was a witness to this letter, so see that it is fulfilled.” Imam al-Layth related that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said about this land grant: “There will not be against you a subsequent repeal of this.” Thus, it is a land grant which remains in their hands to this day. He narrated many prophetic traditions and was known for his intense worship of Allah and recitation of the Book of Allah. Among his merits is that Allah ta’ala revealed: “And those who possess knowledge of the Book.” Qatada said that this verse was revealed about Salma, Ibn Salaam and Tamim ad-Daari. Ibn Sireen said: “The Qur’an was gathered during the time of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace by Ubayy, Uthman, Zayd and Tamim ad-Daari.” Abu al-Muhliba said: “Tamim ad-Daari used to seal the Qur’an every seven days.” Al-Munkadir ibn Muhammad related on the authority of his father who said: “once Tamim ad-Daari slept one night failing to wake up for the night prayers, and as punishment for he did he went for an entire year standing the whole night in prayer.” He died in the year 40 of the hijra.

4 In the narrations of Ahmad on the authority of Tamim ad-Daari its states: “Verify the religion is sincere advice: to Allah, His Book, His Messenger, to the leaders of the Muslims and the common among them.” In the narration of at-Tabarani on the authority of Thawbaan it states: “The head of the religion is sincere advice to Allah, His religion, His Messengers, His Book, to the leaders of the Muslims and to Muslims in general.” In the narration of at-Tirmidhi on the authority of Abu Hurayra
“With Allah, His Messenger, His Book, the leaders of the Muslims and their common people.”

Ibn Hajr al-Haytami said in his al-Fat’hu ‘l-Mubeen regarding the above words: ‘... the leaders of the Muslims (al-a’immat al-muslimeen),’ these are the events of Islam which are not guided by knowledge; and by surrendering to the ascetics in those matters in which there is no objection.’ What Shaykh Abdullahi meant by the ascetics (yagars) are those servants of Allah ta’ala who have turned completely from this life and have withdrawn from their hearts everything besides Allah ta’ala.” Imam Muhammad ibn Abd’r-Rahman said in his Tuhfat’l-Ahwadhi: “Sincere advice with Allah is soundness of belief regarding His Oneness and sincere intention in His worship. Sincere advice with His Book is acceptance of It and acting in accordance with It. Sincere advice with His Messenger is acceptance of his prophethood and messengership, and compliance with what he commands and prohibits. Sincere advice to the leaders is by obedience to them regarding the truth and not revolting against them with the sword when they act tyrannical. Sincere advice to the common among the Muslims is by guiding them that which has their general welfare in it.”

5 Shaykh Abdullahi ibn Fuduye said in his an-Nasaa’ihi: “Realize that sincere advice is a part of Imaan, and the achievement of sincere advice is among the signs of absolute certainty. The most ignorant of people is he who causes his soul to be forsaken until he enters his grave. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: ‘The intelligent man is the one who restrains his soul and entertains false hope regarding Allah’. He upon him be blessings and peace said: ‘The religion is sincere advice.’ They said: ‘With whom O Messenger of Allah?’ He said: ‘With Allah, His soul and His Book, the leaders of the Muslims and their common’. Ibn Fuduye said in his an-Nasaa’ihi: “Sincere advice with his Book is by following His commands, giving victory to his religion, and surrendering to Him in His judgments. Sincere advice with his Book is by following his Sunna, honoring those near him, and by showing compassion for his Umma. Sincere advice with His Book is by being attentive to Its verses, following Its commands, and perfecting Its recitation. Sincere advice to the common among the Muslims is by taking care of their affairs, by establishing their respect, and by giving assistance to them in all their circumstances whether in bringing benefit or warding off dangers. Sincere advice to the elite among the Muslims is by being obedient to the amirs except in that which there is unanimous agreement regarding its prohibition; by having belief and confirmation in the scholars except in those matters which are not guided by knowledge; and by surrendering to the ascetics in those matters in which there is no objection.”

6 Imam Abu Sulayman al-Khataabi said: “Sincere advice is the desire for good for the person to whom advice is being given.” He also said: “Sincere advice is a comprehensive word whose meaning is to gain control of that portion which brings good to the one to whom advice is given. This word, *naseeha* is a succinct noun and comprises conciseness of speech. For there is no single word in the Arabic language which fulfills the expression in the meaning of this word... The Arabic language does not have a word which gathers together the good of this world and Next as the word *naseeha* (sincere advice).” Imam an-Nawwawi said: “The word *naseeha* is taken from the mending (*nasaha*) that a man does to his clothing when he sews them. Thus, the Arabs resembled the actions of the one giving advice to a person, to one who makes corrections in worn clothing. It is also said that the word is taken from the purification (*musihat*) of honey when it is being screened of wax. Thus, the Arabs resemble the purification of speech from all forms of deception to the cleaning of honey of extraneous matter.”

Abdullahi ibn Fuduye said in his an-Nasaa’ihi: “Realize that sincere advice is a part of Imaan, and the achievement of sincere advice is among the signs of absolute certainty. The most ignorant of people is he who causes his soul to be forsaken until he enters his grave. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: ‘The intelligent man is the one who restrains his soul and entertains false hope regarding Allah’. He upon him be blessings and peace said: ‘The religion is sincere advice.’"
khulafa or their representatives (nuwwaab) regarding what accords with the truth. This includes praying behind them, making the jihaaad with them, giving the obligatory alms (sadaqa) over to them when they request it when they are just. It also includes avoiding withdrawing from obedience to them even when they are oppressive. It includes making supplication for their correction and assisting them, admonishing them and reminding them of Allah and His judgments. It includes giving excellent preaching to them, but with compassion and kindness. It includes teaching them about those things they may be heedless of and about that, which may have not reached them concerning the rights of the Muslims. It includes making the hearts of the people fond of showing obedience to the ruler and avoiding deceiving them with lies and undue praise. It includes being sincere towards the scholars (al-`ulama) by accepting what they have related, following them in the judgments, having good opinions of them, lauding them, showing respect for them and fulfilling what is obligatory for them based upon the rights which are known to be unanimous among them.”

At-Tartushi said in his Siraaj’l-Muluuk: “Sincere council to the leaders means assisting them in what they are responsible to establish, admonishing them during their heedlessness, guiding them during their slips, and teaching them what they are ignorant about. It also means warning them about those who desire to harm them, informing them of the character of their actions, encouraging them to pursue

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6 The al-Fat’h'l-Mubeen is a commentary upon the al-Arba`een of Imam an-Nawwawi by the above mentioned Shaykh Ahmad ibn Hajr al-Haythami [d. 974 A.H.].

7 This principle is extremely important today in a globalize society where the some subjects of a Sultan and those under his authority live in distant lands, sometimes under the political jurisdiction of the non-Muslims. It is in these circumstances that the regional amirs and jurist who reside in that land are obligated to inform the Sultan about the real social, political and religious concerns of that community. The principles of the social contract (mu`ahida), emigration (hijra), military struggle (jihaaad), and their feasibility in these times cannot be held back from the Sultan. The role that international law plays in the protection of national minorities and the rights that international law provide for national minorities to be associated with their members outside of the nation-state in which they reside as well as the cultural, intellectual and linguistic rights which states are required to provide in order to guarantee the protection and proactive participation of national minorities within the state. All of these concerns are obligations which the Sultan must be aware of because without them, then those under his jurisdiction would be in a collective state of disobedience.

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9 He was Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Waleed ibn Khalf ibn Sulayman ibn Ayyub al-Fihri al-Andalusi at-Tartushi al-Maliki. He was a learned scholar, jurist, spiritual exemplar and the Shaykh of the Maliki school of thought during his time. Ibn Shakwaal said: “He was a learned Imam, ascetic, scrupulously pious, extremely humble, possessed little of this world and was content with what was sufficient.” Ibrahim ibn Maliki said: “Our Shaykh Abu Bakr’s asceticism and worship was more extensive than his knowledge.” In addition the above mentioned Siraaj’l-Muluuk, at-Tartushi composed works on the prohibition of singing, on asceticism, on differences of opinion among the jurist, on heretical innovations and inventions, on filial piety, on the principles of jurisprudence as well as on answering questions put to him by the Jews of Egypt. He was the strongest opponent against the Ihya `Uluum `d-Deen of Imam al-Ghazali. He died in Alexandria, Egypt in the month of Jumad 'l-Ulaa in the year 125 of the hijra.

10 The Siraaj’l-Muluuk by the above mentioned Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Waleed al-Qurshi al-Fihri al-Maliki at-Tartushi is a collection of the biography of the Prophets, the narratives of the awliyya, the admonitions of the scholars, the wisdom of the sages, and the extraordinary tales of the khilafis. He composed the text for al-Ma`muun ibn al-Batanikhi one of the wazirs of Egypt. It is arranged into sixty four chapters. According to the scholars a ruler never hears from this text except that he orders it to be transcribed, nor does government minister listen to it, except that he makes it his constant companion. By studying the text the wise man can dispense with researching into the lives of the sages, and the rulers can dispense with having to consult wazirs.

11 Here ends folio 10 of manuscript A after 25 lines of colophon.
the needs of their subjects, remedying their shortcomings in taking care of the needs of their subjects, helping them in all words against them, and opposing those hearts that are against them.”