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

This excellent poem by the mystic and sage *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa ibn Muhammad at-Turudi, who was famous as *Dan Tafa*, was composed when he was merely 17 years old in 1236 A.H. (1821 C.E.). It is a poem, or song regarding the meanings of the technical terminologies of the People of *tasawwuf*. It is a poetic achievement, not only testifying to the extraordinary linguistic skill of this young African sage, but it also demonstrates the high level of spiritual attainment that he had attained just four years after the death of his grandfather, the *Amir'l-Mu'mineen* and reformer *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye', may Allah be pleased with both of them.

The referent for this poem is from the profound and renown text on the science of the meanings of the technical terminologies of the People of *tasawwuf*, the al-Insaan al-Kaamil Fi Ma`rifat al-Awaakhir wa 'l-Awaa'il by the learned sage *Shaykh* Abd'l-Kareem ibn Ibrahim al-Jili as-Sufi, which he composed in more than sixty chapters. The teachings of the text was transmitted to *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qaadir ibn al-Mustafa from his chief teacher and guide, the mystic sage, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye', who in turn learned the text from his erudite father, the *Shehu*, may Allah be pleased with them.

Years later at the age of fifty *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qaadir ibn al-Mustafa recalled in his al-Kashif wa 'l-Bayaan:

"I took this book by means of transmission from my spiritual master, the righteous teacher, the ascetic sage and Knower of Allah ta`ala, my maternal uncle, Muhammad Sanbu. And in turn, he took it by means of transmission from his father, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye', may Allah be merciful to both of them. Due to his frequent study of the issues of the book, he benefited me exceedingly and majestically. Then, I myself, began a deep study of the text repeatedly until I completely possessed it, edited it and extracted from it innumerable rare extractions. Among them was a poem which I composed regarding the technical terminology of the book based upon its chapters, composed in thirty verses. I then, composed a commentary upon this poem with reliable teachings. Among these works of mine extracted from this book is a poem I composed which was like an introduction to the study of the text, which I lost many years ago. Among them also was a small tract that I composed in about three folios in which I assembled much advantage. And there were other works of mine as well. The bottom line, is that Allah gave me openings in this book, which He had not given to others. Rather, there is no one in these times, after my above mentioned spiritual master, who had hit upon the secrets which I had become acquainted with from studying this book."

The first composition the *Shaykh* composed explaining the secrets of the al-Insaan 'l-Kaamil was the poem referred to above in thirty stanzas; which is this present work. *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qaadir composed the poem just after he had completed his spiritual training with *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu and had attained the station of teaching *shaykh* in the Path of *Tasawwuf*. It is commendable that at such a young age

he was able to reach an advanced level in understanding the mystical teachings of the sages, after only three years of training with his *shaykh*. He said in his Bayaan at-Ta`budaat which he composed in 1840 C.E. when he was sixty four years old:

“Realize that the first time I began to follow him and became acquainted with him from the perspective of the spiritual path was in the year 1234 A.h. (1819 C.E.), about two years after the death of *Shehu* Uthman. At that time I was fifteen years old. The time between this first relationship and my attaining the level of spiritual mastery (*tashyeekh*) was only three years. From that moment he continued to show me his spiritual states and guide me with the subtlety of his teachings, until I eventually became completely guided on the spiritual path and was able to be acquainted with all the customs of the divine realities (*rusuum 'l-haqaa'iq*). And there occurred as a result, amazing matters which I will not speak about here. So have a good opinion or do not even ask about the affair. Then he ordered me after that to place myself in the service of the outward sciences and to be preoccupied with reading the books of this issue...At that time I used to study with him the same sciences of the spiritual path and divine realities as we did in the beginning. However, I would study other sciences with others beside him.”

It was when *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qaadir had completed the three years spiritual training with his maternal uncle, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu, that he composed this excellent poem and it exemplifies clearly through the sophisticated level of its poetry as well as the depth and complexities of the technical terms he employs, that he had attained a rank in the path of *tasawwuf* which few people before him had reached. And this was at the young age of 17. In order to truly grasp the level of the discourse of the poem the reader has to understand that the science of *tasawwuf* is divided into two levels. The first level is a science which is obligatory upon every Muslim and does not require the need for a teaching *shaykh*. *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, may Allah be merciful to him delineated this first level in his Fat'h'l-Basaa'ir when he said:

“As for the science of spiritual purification (*'ilm 't-tasawwuf*), it is also divided into two divisions: The first division is related to the reformation of character (*at-takhalluq*) and it is the abandonment (*at-takhalli*) of every blameworthy trait from the heart - like conceit (*'ujb*), pride (*kibr*), unjust anger (*ghadab bi'l-baatil*), envy (*hasad*), greed (*bukhl*), showing off (*riya'u*), the love of rank (*hubb'l-jaah*), the love of wealth (*hubb'l-maal*) in order to boast, false hope (*amal*), and having an evil opinion of the Muslims (*isa'at d-dhann*). It also includes the endowment (*at-tahalli*) of the heart with every praiseworthy characteristic - like repentance (*tawba*), sincerity (*ikhlaas*), fearful awareness (*taqwa*), patience (*sabr*), doing without (*zuhd*), reliance (*tawakkul*), leaving matters over to Allah (*tafweed*), contentment (*ridaa*), fear (*khawf*), and hope (*rajaa*). This division is apart of the individual obligations (*furuud'l-'ayaan*) as al-Ghazzaali explained in his Ihya `Uluum 'd-Deen and as Abd 'r-Rahmaan as-Suyuuti explained in his Itmaam 'd-Diraaya Sharh an-Niqaya.”

What is clear in the poem of *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa is that he had attained a level which transcended the reformation of character and composed an introduction to the second level of the science of *tasawwuf* which the *Shehu* defined as 'gnosis' (*ma`arifa*), and which was closed to those who had not completed the reformation of their characters. At this level of the science of *tasawwuf* the aspirant was required to have a spiritual guide, at least at the beginning, until he/she had attained the desired goal of spiritual unveiling.

The *Shehu* explained in the same above mentioned text:

“The second division of the science of *tasawwuf* is related to spiritual certitude (*tahaqquq*) and includes the knowledge (*ma`rifa*) of the spiritual states (*ahwaal*) of the disciples (*murids*), the permanent spiritual stations (*muqaamaat*) of the protected friends (*awliyya*), the knowledge of the self manifestation (*tajalli*) of the Acts, the knowledge of the Divine Names and the self manifestation of the Divine Essence (*tajalli ad-dhaat*). This division is not only among the collective obligations (*furuud 'l-kifaaya*), but part of this science is specifically established for the *awliyya* - without dispute. The responsibility for explaining the first division related to character formation (*takhalluq*) fell to men like *Imam* Abu Hameed al-Ghazzaali and *Imam* al-Muhaasibi. Whoever wants to follow this should take them as an example. The responsibility for explaining the second division which is related to spiritual certitude (*tahaqquq*) fell to men like *Shaykh* Abu 'l-Hassan as-Shadhili, may Allah be pleased with him - as Ahmed az-Zarruq clarified in his *Qawaa'id 't-Tasawwuf*.”

Here we have an example of an 17 year old African sage simplifying and putting in poetic verse a level of spiritual discourse which is normally closed to the common people. His familiarity with the technical terminologies of the People of this level of spiritual certitude indicates the advanced degree of spiritual discourse which had become common place among the African Muslims in general and in the Fodiawa family in particular. In his Shukr'l-Waahib he outlined what he and the Fodiawa clan had attained from gnosis and other transcendent spiritual sciences when he said:
“Realize that we have transmitted texts

About its methodology from the discipline of reliable teachers
Then our understanding was inundated by the help of the Lord of Truth
In this science luxuriantly and abundantly based upon sound verification
Like the science of Divinity and the science of the essences
The science of the Attribution, Qualities and then the Divine Essence
The science of the Self Manifestation of the Divine Names
And Attributes which is the matrix of the learned scholars
The science of Divine Power, Will, Knowledge and Life
The science of the Mother of the Book, Its essence and celestial properties
The science of the spirits and the unseen kingdoms
The science of the Spirit of all spirits in the kingdom of power
And other than these among a portion of the Divine Realities
From which we were prepared by means of heightened understanding.”

Shaykh Abd'l-Qadir posits the idea that the Fodiawa clan, especially those closely associated with *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` had been granted a specific and in some areas an exclusive understanding and means to articulate spiritual unveiling. In previous generations the People of Unveiling couched and sometimes hid their gnosis of Allah within a highly technical vocabulary whose comprehension required a spiritual guide to unlock its mysteries. Any perusal of the famous Futuhaat'l-Makiyya of *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Arabi al-Hatimi; or the al-Insaan'l-Kaamil of *Shaykh* Abd'l-Karim al-Jilli demonstrates that this level of spiritual discourse was inadvertently and intentionally embedded and sealed within a labyrinth of technical jargon designed to keep out the common people as well as those who were spiritually unprepared. However, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` and his disciples broke the seals of these enigmatic spiritual sciences. They made them accessible to the members of their clan and to those who would inherit from them.

In my humble opinion I believe that this spiritual ability was a proof from Allah ta`ala regarding the fulfillment of the Divine Promise to Prophet Abraham regarding his descendents, especially those who would be ‘lost’ and disconnected

from their physical and spiritual homeland, as the Turudbe` Fulbe` were. The proof of their connection with their ancient ancestor, Abraham had to transcend mere DNA verification, but had to be evidenced in their unique inherited gnosis of their Lord and His creation. These 'Lost and Found' children of Abraham were able because of the blessing of the Promise to scale spiritual heights which others found difficult. Their abilities to not only comprehend the veritable oceans of the world of spiritual unveiling, but also their uncanny abilities to articulate these sciences in the most simple means possible, was the single proof of their ancestry. According to the great *Qaadiri* mystic of Timbuktu *Shaykh* Mukhtar al-Kunti al-Kabir, sainthood and the knowledge which accompanies it is acquired in three ways: [1] through spiritual discipline; [2] divine attraction; and [3] through inheritance. The spiritual stations and gnosis which resulted from inheritance meant that the line of descent from the very beginning of the people retained the state of *wilaayat* (sagehood-saintliness) as a right of birth. The *Torah*, the *Zabuur*, the *Injel* and the *Qur'an* are all unified on the reality of the Spiritual Promise vouchsafed to our ancestor Abraham and his descendents. This favor is what incited the envy and jealousy of *Iblees* who inspired his cohorts to jealousy, envy and hatred of Allah's People. The fact that this gnosis of Allah ta`ala persisted in spite of, or even because of this envy and jealousy is the proof of Allah's favor and Promise to Abraham and his 'Lost and Found' children.

Our spiritual guide the late *Waziri* Junayd ibn Muhammad al-Bukhari in his *Dabt'l-Multaqataat* gives a hint of the level of the inherited spiritual unveiling which the Fudiawa clan had mastered when he said:

"The house of Aal was the most numerous of the children of Musa Jokolli. It was a house famous for piety, good and knowledge, the memorization of the *Qur'an*, the learning of various sciences and acquaintance with its secrets and mysteries. This learning ability was a mystical secret which was passed among them from generation after generation until it became outwardly manifest with *Shaykh* Muhammad, who was known as Fuduye`, may Allah be pleased with him."

Thus, there was an intentional persistence of the transmission of gnosis and unveiling of esoteric knowledge as well as the mastery of Islamic exoteric sciences which as *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir ibn Mustafa said in his *Kitaab'l-Uhuud wa'l-Mawaathiq*: 'moved freely among them at will.' It is this phenomenon which explains why *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir ibn Mustafa was able to complete the spiritual path (*suluuk*) within a short period of three years, and then at the young age of 17 be able to elaborate and simplify such a profoundly complex text such as the *al-Insaan'l-Kaamil*.

What is more overwhelming is that this young African sage was able to articulate these advanced ideas in the form of poetry. Poetic meter is far more difficult to express than prose. In fact, although the use of poetry in the Muslim world was widespread from the beginning of Islam with such great poets as Hassan ibn Thabit, the master of the poets of the believers and who was assisted in his poetry by the Holy Spirit; yet poetry was also frowned upon. Poetry since before the advent of Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was associated with the magicians and shamans of the Arabian peninsular. The ability to master language and compose poetic meter was considered in the early Arabic world as a form of sorcery. It in this context that the *Qur'anic* chapter called *as-Shu`ara* (the Poets) was revealed where Allah ta`ala says: "*Shall I not inform you about those to whom the Shayateen descend? They descend upon every sinful lying scandal monger, to whom they narrate listening, and most of them are liars; and the poets who are followed by the factions.*" This disdain for poetry and poets was exemplified by *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` in his *Tazyeen'l-Waraqaat* where he said: "I composed in the time of my youth, non

Arabic and Arabic poems to which no attention was paid; because poetry to the natural poet is like phlegm in the chest of a chesty man, which he must cough up. As-Shafi` said:

‘The eloquent poet is a black snail casting his slough
And his poetry is like his mucilage and spittle.’

Formerly, I used to compose many poetic verses, but I abandoned them and left them neglected and forgotten, not recording them or informing anyone of them because of my knowledge that there was no benefit in them in religion for the most part.”

Thus, the composition of poetry to many of the scholars was a form of playing or jesting. The composition of poetic verse on a particular subject was a way that the poet demonstrated his proficiency and mastery of that subject. Because if he could compose poetic verses regarding that subject, it meant that he could compose more compelling prose on the subject as well. It is in this light that this poem by *Shaykh* Abd’l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa on the technical terminologies of the People of *tasawwuf* must be understood. At the age of 17 *Shaykh* Abd’l-Qaadir wanted to demonstrate that he not only mastered the fundamentals of the advanced levels of *tasawwuf* but that his mastery of it was so acute that he was able to compose merely thirty stanzas which included the entire lexicon of this science in a simple and accessible manner and which disclosed the secrets hidden in an advanced text, such as the al-Insaan’l-Kaamil of *Shaykh* Abd’l-Karim al-Jilli. After first composing this poem elaborating the complex technical terminologies of al-Jilli’s work, some months later he composed a commentary upon it as he himself said: “Among them was a poem which I composed regarding the technical terminology of the book based upon its chapters, composed in thirty verses. I then, composed a commentary upon this poem with reliable teachings.” In the year 2000 I came across the poem and its commentary together from a manuscript which originated from the town of Salame`, which is the text before you now. The other works which *Shaykh* Abd’l-Qaadir composed on the meanings within the al-Insaan’l-Kaamil were his al-Kashif wa’l-Bayaan and his Kashif al-Ghitaa, both which unraveled some of the complex and problematic issues in the text. He composed other commentaries and abridgments of the al-Insaan’l-Kaamil as well, however, these two along with this present poem and its commentary are the most widely known of *Shaykh* Abd’l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa’s works.

Knowledge of Allah ta`ala is the purpose of existence. The gift of Knowledge of Allah ta`ala is having gnosis of His creation as it is in reality. This accurate observation of creation results in the development of a precise picture of the cosmos in all of its modes of existence. This in turn leads to a pure cosmology, exact scientific approach, an organic technology and holistic medicine which are meticulous, merciful and humane. It is this reality which highlights the extent of the crime committed against the African people through the process of European slavery and colonialism, because it destroyed the very basis of the development of Africa, which was its unique mode of transmission of knowledge. In fact, the denuding of African sons and resources was a crime against humanity because with the death of these esoteric sciences, it led to the devolution in the transmission of knowledge as a whole; and paved the way for the inferior reductionist and mechanistic science of the west which has plagued the entire biosphere and the human environment.

I first completed the transcription of the Arabic along with its editing on Wednesday, the 21st of *Dhu’l-Qa`ida* in the year of 1427 of the *hijra* (approximately the 12th of December in the year 2006 C.E.). Subsequently, I completed the translation of this text from Arabic to English on Thursday night, 17th of *Rabi’ Thani* in the year 1428 of the *hijra*, (approximately May 4th, 2007).

This poem Mandhuumat'l-Mustalihaat as-Suufiyya is arguably the first text which *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa ever composed on any subject. And just as he began with gnosis of Allah, it is important for us to return to that same Source and return to what one Australian writer called a more holistic and organic approach to creation, science and medicine in order to repair substantial harm to human and planetary well-being. Allah ta`ala says: “*We belong to Allah and to Him is our Final Return*”, thus it is from His perspective that everything is known and understood as it is in Reality. *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa offers us an introduction to this crystalline mystical perspective in this concise but comprehensive poem.

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