

SANKORE'

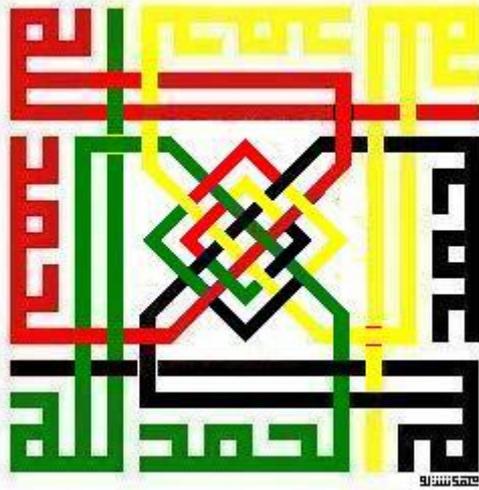


Institute of Islamic - African Studies International

شُكْرُ الْوَاهِبِ الْمُفِيضِ لِلْمَوَاهِبِ

للعارف الربّاني

الشيخ عبد القادر بن مصطفى بن محمد الترودي



Showing Gratitude to the Benefactor for the Divine Overflowing Given to Those He Favors

by

The Gnostic Sage the Illuminated Erudite

Shaykh Abd'l-Qadir ibn Mustafa at-Turuudi

edited, annotated, and translated by

Shaykh Abu Alfa Umar MUHAMMAD SHAREEF bin Farid

with a commentary called:

'Ilaawat'l-Muttaalib Fee Shukr'l-Waahib al-Mufeeda'l-Mawaahib

(The Increase of the Spiritual Aspirant in Gratitude of the Benefactor for the Divine
Overflowing Given to Those He Favors)

Copyright © 1435/2013 Muhammad Shareef

**Published by
SANKORE'**



Institute of Islamic - African Studies International

www.siiasi.org

The Palace of the Sultan of Maiurno

Maiurno, Sennar, Sudan

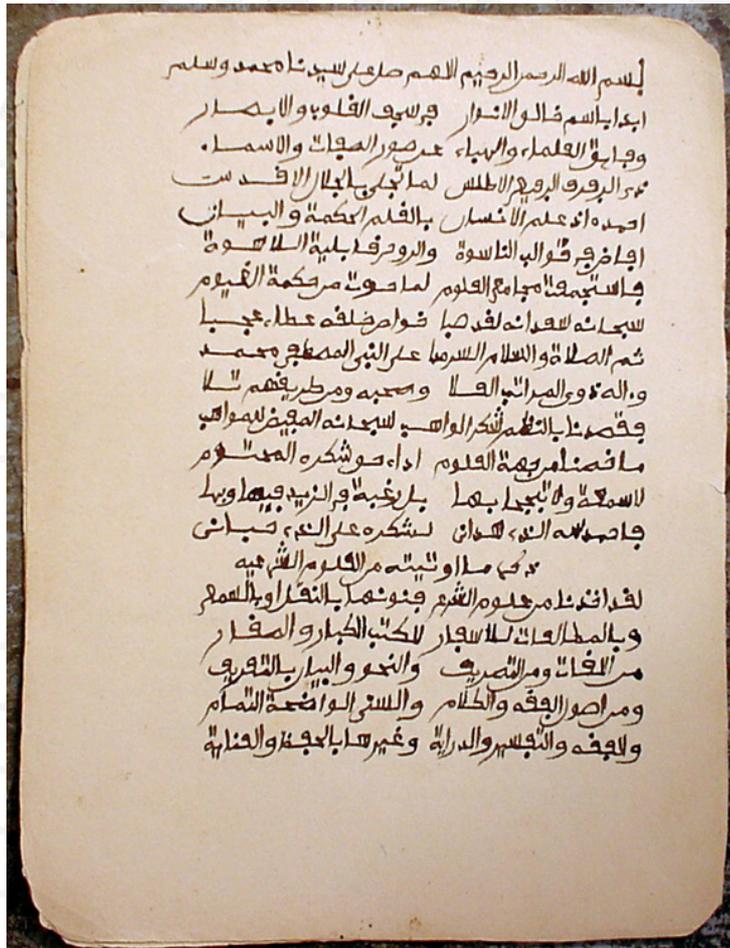
Book design by Muhammad Shareef

The cover design is the expression '*al-hamdullillahi*' (All praises are due to Allah), written in block *kufic* script, using the four colors: yellow, black, green and red. Each of the colors corresponds with the four seasons: august, winter, spring and summer; the four temperaments: hot/humid, cold/humid, cold/dry and hot/dry; and the four elements: air, water, earth and fire. Each of the four realities have seven Arabic letters which correspond to them, which indicate the seven days of the week and the 28 days of the lunar month, excluding the day the moon disappears represented by the 29th letter which is *laam/alif* (ل). The motif encloses a *hausa* 'wise man knot', which represents all inclusive knowledge. This in turn, encloses the *hatumere`* (seal) or paranormal square which represents existence (*al-kawn*), with three intersecting squares enclosing an empty center, which represents the Perfect Human (*insaana kaamil*). The '*al-hamdullillahi*' is the first articulation of the macrocosmic human and the '*al-hamdullillahi*' is the last articulation of the 'microcosmic human as he enters the Paradise of Gnosis of its Lord. Thus, the motif represents eternal praise of Allah for endowing humanity with all inclusive knowledge of existence.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or otherwise, without written permission of the publishers.

The first edition of this text was published in 1991. The second edition with the commentary was published in 2013.

Institute of Islamic-African Studies International



Folio 1 of the manuscript *Shukr'l-Waahib* of *Shaykh Abd'l-Qadir ibn Mustafa* from the private library of *Shaykh Muhammad Bello ibn Abd'r-Raaziq ibn Uthman ibn Shaykh Abd'l-Qadir ibn Mustafa* in Maiurno, Sennar, Sudan. The scribe of this manuscript was *Shaykh Abd'r-Rahman ibn Uthman ibn Shaykh Abd'l-Qadir ibn Mustafa*, who was known as *Shaykh Ya'bana*. The type of paper was the traditional intergenerational type which Dr. M. Abd'l-Baqi al- Kunari and Dr. J. M. Bloom described so accurately in their brief but monumental studies. The paper used is an Italian import with the legendary 17th century *tre lune* (three crescent moon) watermark. This type of paper had been re-imported into the regions of the *Bilad 's-Sudan* since the 13th century up until the time this manuscript was transcribed in the later part of the 19th century. The size of the manuscript is 60 centimeters in length by 45 centimeters in width [60 cm x 45cmw]. The dimension of the inscription is 55 centimeters in length by 32 centimeters in width [55 cm x 32 cmw]. There is an average of 20 lines of colophon on each of the four folios which this manuscript comprises. The type of ink is a brownish-black ink made from burnt date stones and gum Arabic. The style of writing is the sharp and tightly stylized *Jihadi* script which was born in the 19th century in the unified Hausa confederation of the Sokoto Caliphate. The central location of Hausaland between the luxuriant civilizations of Songhay in the west and Kanem-Borno in the east; is what produced this pragmatic cursive shorthand style. It was thus born out of a combination of the western *Tinbukti-Andalusi* style prevalent from Kumasi to Merrekesh and the Sus al-Aqsa and the royal eastern *Barnawi-Ifriqi* style which spread as far as Sennar and Mecca in the east and was highly regarded among the booksellers of Tunis, Tripoli, Cairo and Alexandria. The quality of the scribal hand is even, clear, consistent and strong but streamlined and concise; like the art of war after which it was named – *jihadi*. It thus, can be counted among those forms of writing which developed with the advancement of swordsmanship, like those of the Japanese bushido samurai culture and the scholar-warriors of WuDang mountain.

SANKORE'

شُكْرُ الْوَاهِبِ الْمُفِيضِ لِلْمَوَاهِبِ

Showing Gratitude to the Benefactor
for the Divine Overflowing He Gives to Those Favored

Institute of Islamic-African Studies International

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَي سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَسَلِّمْ

In the name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful, O Allah send blessings upon our master Muhammad and grant him peace¹

¹ **In the name of Allah, the Beneficent the Merciful**, may Allah bless our master Muhammad, his family and Companions and grant them abundant peace. “*All praises are due to the Allah the Lord of the worlds*”; “*who has guided us to this and we would not have been guided had He not guided us.*” The best blessings and most perfect peace be upon the Seal of the Prophets, the Master of the Messengers, our chief Muhammad, who is the first breaking of the dawn of the lights of Divine Oneness; the first appearance of the sun of the secrets of Lordship; the splendid full moon of the eternal divine realities; the bridegroom of the presence of universal compassion; the essential light and radiance of every Messenger; the fundamental secret and guidance of every Prophet; the quintessence and core of every *wali*; and the impetus and zeal of every *saalih* and upon his family and Companions who inherited his spiritual ranks and stations and upon those who follow them in reviving his Living *Sunna* as long as existence rotates around its Axis. Says the most bereft of the slaves of Allah, the one deficient in knowledge and good deeds, deformed in body and speech, chained by sins and heedlessness, Abu Alfa Umar Muhammad Shareef bin Farid; one of *the lost* descendents of our forebear Abraham, *and then found* by means of the *baraka* of our master Muhammad, may Allah bless them and grant them peace. By means of Muhammad what was disconnected physically, emotionally, and spiritually has now been rejoined under our common ancestor *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, may Allah engulf him in His mercy. To continue: This is a review and examination of the **Shukr’l-Waahib al-Mufeeda’l-Mawaahib** (Showing Gratitude to the Benefactor for the Divine Overflowing Given to Those He Favors) by one of Black Africa’s leading mystics, *Shaykh* Abd’l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa. I first came upon this metaphysically luxuriant poem in the month of *Ramadan* in the year 1406 A.H. (May 1986) while residing in the home of one of the author’s great grandchildren in Maiurno, Sennar, Sudan, my teacher *Shaykh* Muhammad Bello ibn *Shaykh* Abd’r-Raaziq ibn *Shaykh* Uthman ibn *Shaykh* Abd’l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa. He showed it to me one night after the *tawaareeh* prayers and requested that I read it. He said that his paternal uncle, *Shaykh* Abd’r-Rahman al-Ya`bana ibn Uthman told him that this poem was a summarization of all the exoteric and esoteric sciences which were bequeathed to the *Fudiawa* in general, and to his immediate family in particular as it reached its pinnacle with his great grandfather, the historian, the *Amir*, and mystic, *Shaykh* Abd’l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa. This divine overflowing (*fayd ilaahiy*), as the author called it, was bequeathed to him from his erudite and saintly mother *Sayyidat* Khadijatu bint *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, and her brother, his maternal uncle the saintly *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`. It overflowed from these siblings from their spiritually magnetized mother, the mystical, pious and learned wife of the *Shehu*, *Iyya Gharka* A`ishatu Ghabindu bint *Shaykh* Muhammad Sa`d ibn Abdullahi ibn Muhammad ibn Sa`d ibn Muhammad Ladan ibn Idris ibn Maasiran, who received it from her husband, the *Shaykh* of all the *Shaykhs* *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn *Saaliḥ* may Allah be merciful to all of them. When I initially read the text, I realized that it was a tantalizing glimpse of all the essential mediated and unmediated sciences bequeathed to humanity within the epistemology of Islam. The poem not only gives a depiction of the extent of erudition of African Islamic traditions but it also gives us an indication of the extent of the crime which

was committed against the purveyors of these intellectual and esoteric traditions. Walter Rodney was correct to look at the arrested development of Africa as a result of the trans-saharan, trans Atlantic, trans Indian ocean slave trades and European colonialism past and present. The kidnapping and enslavement of a large portion of Africa's labor force and the redirection of what remained of this labor force in the interest of Europe, is the primary factor behind the present crisis in Africa. After reading this work by the author and then studying his other works in depth, I realized that the key cause for Africa's present developmental problems was not only the denuding of the key drivers of development (labor and resources); but also the destruction and eroding of the African ethical and spiritual ideals. It is the higher sacred traditions which are the drives of the machinery of civilization. When these die then all the ancillary human drives such as education, scientific discovery, health care, manufacturing, agronomy die as well. If the sublime ethical and spiritual values conveyed in this poem could have developed and grown into a principle of social development, then much of the inhumanity of man against himself and everything else could have been pre-empted. At the time I received this work; I was a young accolade and could not recognize most of the sciences referenced in this poem. This was in spite of the explanations later given by *Shaykh* Muhammad Bello ibn Abd'r-Razaaq, *Shaykh* Abu Bakr Basambu, *Shaykh* Umar ibn Ahmad Zaruuq and *Shaykh* Muhammad Bello ibn Abdullahi. In 1991 I composed a biography of *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa (who I will refer to throughout the remainder of this text as Dan Tafa, or 'the poet') in which I made a brief analysis of the technical terminologies of the poem and included a translation of it as an appendix to that study which I entitled: *"The Life and Times of Shaykh Dan Tafa: A Continuity of the Turudbe` Intellectual Traditions and Their Role in Nation Building in the Western Sudan"*.



Shaykh Bello ibn *Shaykh* Abd'r-Raaziq ibn *Shaykh* Uthman ibn *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qaadir Dan Tafa

In the year 2000 I had the honor of meeting one of the premier authorities on *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, Prof. Ahmad Kani in Sokoto, who was the first to introduce the poet to international academic circles, but who dove deep within the poet's spiritual traditions by being initiated in them at the hands of Dan Tafa's learned descendants at Salame'. With Prof. Kani, I briefly discussed some of the larger implications of the poem within African cosmological thinking and hermeneutics. After ten years of trials and tribulations in the US, emigration and resettlement in the Middle Kingdom of China, I was stimulated by an indebt study of several works of the Chinese Muslim mystic, *Imam* Wang Tai-yu; and could not help but notice the parallels between his mystical language and ideas to those of the mystical vision depicted in this poem. My hobbling attempts at decoding the difficult traditional Mandarin of three of the *Imam's* works coincided with the 2006 Sino-African accord held in Beijing that year. The joint political, economic and cultural exchanges proposed during this historic week long meeting, is what induced me to reexamine this poem in the light of the improved and robust Sino-African relationships. Thus, this obvious trudging effort on my part will occasionally indicate the points of discourse between African and Sino Islamic mystical ideas. This concept is rarely discussed in western academic circles; as if to create a kind of cultural and intellectual apartheid between ideas which would naturally merge and develop into a vital and transformative spiritual tradition. These global links between the sacred spiritual traditions of Africa and Asia are becoming clearer as occidental cultural and spiritual traditions continue to self destruct and atrophy. In this regard I am indebted to the writings of W. Chittick, Toshihiko Izutsu, Sachiko Murata, Tu Wei-Ming and the scholar-warrior Thomas Cleary; who have been the intellectual point guards in delineating the dialogue and interchange between what Samuel Huntington correctly described as the only two civilizations capable of challenging and eroding the imperial objectives of western civilization. Today, we are witnessing a 're-orientation', (pun intended), of the ideals of non-western civilizations and the eroding of the fault lines of western civilization. Thus, this study is a form of praise and gratitude to Allah ta'ala for the spiritual unveilings He bequeathed to the sages of Islamic Africa and China and for His redeeming us by means of the *baraka* of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye'. In point of fact, it was through China and her people that I was able to return back to Africa, figuratively and physically, fulfilling a dream-vision (*ru'ya saadiq*) I had of the Prophet. (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) back in April of 2002. I am indebted to the people of China for hosting me for seven years, but particularly to my doctor and wife Amina Fei Meng, the daughter of Gu Zhong for looking after me in an environment free of the kind of mental and spiritual stress that shortens the lives of many of my people in the western hemisphere. My seven year sojourn in the Middle Kingdom taught me that – '*dreams do indeed come true*'. Now, being back in Africa, on what Europeans used to call the 'slave coast', and what many refer to as the epicenter of the African 'vodoun' paranormal traditions; I was able to complete this task in the milieu in which the poem was originally composed. Today Benin is a place where African traditional religions, African Islam and Africanized Christianity are vying with one another for the hearts and minds of its people. What is more amazing is that an internal dialogue is taking place in Benin in the form of inter-faith marriages creating an interesting Africanization of the sacred traditions. It is within this numinously loaded environment that I have gained a new appreciation of the spiritual power of this poem and the place that the extra-sensory still plays in this mysterious continent. In addition to my previously stated goal, my aim is also to garner the *baraka* of the author, and that of his ancestors by uncovering

and highlighting their unique contribution to mediated and unmediated mystical sciences in Islam, since by merely mentioning the righteous, the mercy of Allah descends. The *Shehu* said in his last testament to his community that it is an obligation for a people to know, consult with and revive the sacred traditions of their righteous forebears. Cheik Anta Diop described this historical consciousness as one of the most important elements in the defense of a people from all forms of cultural and spiritual aggression. The African revolutionary, Amilcar Cabral described this historical consciousness as a necessary empowering political act. For me personally, as a descendent of enslaved Africans in the western hemisphere and as a member of the most successfully domestically colonized national minority in the world; historical consciousness constitutes the first breath of life – a resurrection so to speak; and a fulfillment of Divine prophecy. Thus, a return to the upward paths of our African Muslim ancestors acts not only as a means of harvesting the rich spiritual legacy they bequeathed to us, but it constitutes an act of liberation and self determination. Merely, being able to know and interact with the best of our African Islamic traditions is proof that the objectives of western slavery, colonialism and imperialism failed. Although I may fall way short of the sublime values which produced this excellent poem, I can still say as a poet once said:

“Verily I, even if I have not attained their *baraka*
Yet, I will still mention them often and extensively
For repetition of their remembrance is an enjoyment
Itself, and incites the rider to continue on and redouble his effort
It is enough for me even if I am left all alone after them
For verily by means of them, I entreat and cling to Him”

In composing this study, I have intentionally avoided the ‘objectification magic’ of western academics, the perennialist or their approaches in analyzing the text. I have done this in order to avoid what Muhammad Hassan Askari rightly described as a reductionist and anthropomorphic deprecation of our sacred traditions. The eurocentric may deduce from this work no more than what R.A.Schwaller deLubicz lamented in his Esoterism and Symbol: “Those who profess to reveal the esoterism of each teachings are charlatans. They may try to explain the implications of a certain word or formula as with a conventional secret, but with regard to sacred science, they will never be able to do more than put one word in place of another, and at best this will be bad literature replacing a simple idea.” Well, I promise to tread lightly. I have also avoided at all cost, the neo-pharasees trend which is now afflicting this *Umma* from the west in the form of the ‘*salafist*’, who due to their spiritual impotence and failure to gain access into the unseen kingdoms (*‘aalim ‘l-ghayb*); anathematize what they can never understand. The one who remains ignorant of a thing becomes its enemy. The existence of unmediated esoteric knowledge in Islam is unequivocally established by the words of Allah ta’ala when He says regarding Musa and his encounter with al-Khadr: “*Then they discovered a slave from Our slaves whom We had given mercy from Us and whom We had taught knowledge directly from Us.*” This decisive verse was corroborated by many narrated traditions; such as that related by ad-Daylami on the authority of Abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Indeed among the sciences are those which are like a form concealed. No one knows it except the knowers of Allah. Whenever they articulate this science, no one denies it except the people of heedlessness in Allah.” It has been related in the Saheeh of al-Bukhari on the authority of Abu Hurayra who said: “I have taken two containers of knowledge from

the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. As for one container, I have disseminated it among the people. As for the other container, if I disseminated it, then this neck of mine would be severed.” There are many other proofs from the Book and the *Sunna* which establishes the existence of outward exoteric knowledge and inward esoteric knowledge within Islam. The fact that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him believed in these two modes of comprehension as this poem demonstrates is sufficient reason to examine his claims. Without making judgment of the author, I simply will classify and catalog the diverse sciences which he claimed mastery of. I take at face value that the poet knew exactly what he was talking about in this poem, and where the technical mystical terms used by the poet seem nebulous and indefinable, I believe that is intentional on his part. He said in his *al-Uhuud wa'l-Mawaathiq*: “I have taken an oath and covenant to obscure what is with me from the sciences of the spiritual realities and secrets (*'uluum 'l-haqaa'iq wa'l-asraar*) and to conceal my works regarding these. This is because these sciences are an exalted class of science specified for the spiritually elite and are only designated for those who are spiritually prepared from among the People of Allah.” Consequently, if this study fails to lift the veil from the ideas that the poet sought to keep concealed, then it is a testament of the poet’s capacity to keep the language of the People of Allah unassailable. It is also an admission of my own ignorance and inability to scale the wall erected by the poet, (may Allah be merciful to him and provide us with his *baraka*). This study, therefore, is not a ‘reductionist dissertation’, a deconstruction, a critique or an attempt to gain the approval of academia or their authorization. My occidental critics will no doubt cry: ‘Hagiography!’ Technically, they would be right, but from a *Sudanic* perspective this form of narrative hagiography is the core of most if not all African sacred traditions. This science of transmission developed into an extraordinary form of recording and information retrieval in the ancient kingdom of Mali under the function of the griot (*ndele*). The ‘griots’ duty is to transmit the traditions of the people in such a way that the people are inspired to act upon them and revive them. Therefore, this study is an internal dialogue with the author about the depth of our African Islamic spiritual and intellectual intuition. It is my own discourse with my African Muslim ancestors, even though they bequeathed to us a level of knowledge which we may not have the capacity to understand. Nevertheless, like the audacity of a ‘prodigal son’ returning home, I have entered this dialogue/palace more from a curiosity for what was bequeathed to us, than an actual understanding of the wealth of this spiritual inheritance. I pray that the obvious flaws and errors will be seen and overlooked as the kind of mistakes that a ‘prodigal son’ will of a necessity make. If this study turns out to be an intentional intrusion into a guarded and ‘locked room’ of knowledge, then I pray that the *Sultan* of this palace of wisdom be generous enough to forgive this ‘*ali baba*’. Being that this treasure belongs to our African Muslim ancestors, it is thus a right to all African Muslims of the diaspora whose forebears were kidnapped and enslaved in the western hemisphere. It is said that when a person reads the work of an author, he is in affect communicating with him. Thus, this commentary is my own private conversation with the author in order to elaborate on some of the obscure terminologies using the language and demarcation of the People of gnosis. If the commentary is incomprehensible, then the fault is with my own musings on a poem written in such a manner to make it inaccessible to all but the masters of this discipline. The gist of the commentary is to establish in the heart of the reader that gnosis in all its forms can only result from having fearful awareness of Allah ta’ala, as

the master of existence, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Whoever acts on what he knows, Allah will cause him to inherit knowledge that he did not know.” ‘*Taqwa*’ (fearful awareness of Allah) has its proof and fruit by which it is known, and they are gnosis and direct witnessing of Allah ta’ala. Righteousness and fearful awareness of Allah which does not lead to direct experiential knowledge of Him, is nothing but self righteousness and arrogance. The mere denial of direct knowledge of Allah, and gnosis of His creation is decisive evidence of the lack of fearful awareness of Him and being bereft of genuine righteousness. The one who remains ignorant of a thing becomes its enemy. The grandfather of the poet, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye’ said in the conclusion of his *‘Umdat’l-Ulama*: “This special science (*‘ilm’l-kashif*) is the goal of all knowledge. It is the science of the champions of truth (*as-siddiqun*), those who are brought nigh (*al-muqarrabun*) and the Prophets (upon them be peace). They do not speak about this science except by means of enigmas (*ar-ramz*) and hints (*al-iimaa’i*) by way of summerization (*al-ijmaal*) and comparison (*at-tamthil*) as a science from them because of the inability of the intellects of most of mankind to understand it. Since the scholars (*al’ulama’a*) are the inheritors of the Prophets, there is no way for them to relinquish the way of adherence and imitation. Nothing from this science of unveiling will be opened up to the one who possesses two qualities: [1] innovation (*al-bid’a*) and [2] pride (*al-kibr*). And everyone who is in-love with this world or is persistent in following his corrupt passions will never be able to realize or implement this knowledge, even though he may be able to realize and study the remainder of the religious sciences. And the least punishment against the one who rejects this science is that he will never be endowed with anything from it. And whoever does not have a share of this science, it is feared for him an evil ending (*su’u ’l- khaatima*). Finally, the least share that a servant can have of this science is belief (*at-tasdeeq*) in it and surrendering it over to its people (*tasleemuhu li ahlihi*).” This form of comprehension cannot be negotiated through mere reasoned verbal discourse. It can only be experienced; as the Chinese sages say: “The Way that can be described is not the real Way.” Ultimately, this is the theme which the poet, Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to him sought to convey, and I will try and stay true to that principle. Allah ta’ala says: “*Have fearful awareness of Allah and Allah will teach you.*” What this means is that the acquisition of knowledge comes from Allah ta’ala as a result of placing one’s neck underneath ‘the Two Feet’ of Allah. In the language of the People of Allah, the ‘Two Feet’ of Allah is a referent to His commands (*awaamir*) and prohibitions (*nawaahi*). Adherence to the commands of Allah and avoidance of His prohibitions comprises the essence of *taqwa* (fearful awareness of Allah), the fruit there of which is mastery of the self and intimate knowledge of Allah ta’ala. *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye’ said in his *Tareeq’l-Janna*: “The phases of fearful awareness (*manaazilu’t-taqwa*) are three: [1] fearful awareness from idolatry (*taqwa `an’s- shirk*); [2] fearful awareness from heretical innovation (*taqwa `an ’l-bid’a*); and [3] fearful awareness from disobedience (*taqwa `an ’l-ma`asiya*). Imam al-Ghazali added to these [4] the fearful awareness from excess (*taqwa `an ’l-fuduul*).” In the same text the *Shehu* said: “...he who desires to have fearful awareness of Allah (*yattaqiya Allah*), is that he must restrain the five limbs because they are the roots. They are the eyes, the ears, the tongue, the heart, and the stomach. One should guard them by preserving them from what danger is feared for them in the matters of the *deen* like disobedience (*ma`siya*), prohibitions (*haraam*), excess and extravagance (*fuduul wa israaf*) in permissible things. If you succeed at preserving these limbs, it is hoped that it will be enough for the rest of the pillars of

the self.” When fearful awareness is achieved, Allah ta`ala promises that He will teach that person. This means that Allah will open in his heart a yearning for beneficial knowledge and the need to sit in the presence of those who ‘Know’, who will by the permission of Allah open the doors of knowledge of *Iman*, *Islam* and *Ihsan*. Then Allah will open his heart to unmediated knowledge of Him which is the most superior of the sciences and the purest forms of comprehension. The gnostic *Shaykh* Abu`l-Abass Ahmad ibn Mustafa al-Alawi said: “This knowledge is the noblest of the sciences because it is ennobled by the nobility of what is known. Its value is commensurate with the immense value of what it is connected to, since it is connected to the Essence of the Eternally Self Subsistent. By Allah! This science has procured a level of nobility above which there can be no increase, and all the remaining sciences in relationship to it are its slaves and servants.” This poem by Dan Tafa is a testimony to the nobility of Knowledge of Allah above all knowledge. In his Ma`rifaat`l-Haqq the poet said: “This realm of experiential knowledge of Allah is the path exclusive for the People of Allah because it emerges from the purification of the heart (*tasfiyyat`l-qalb*), the disciplining of the character (*riyaadiyat`l-akhlaaq*) and spiritual struggle (*al-mujaahida*). This is the path of the protected friends (*al-awliyya*) and the Gnostics (*al-`Aarifeen*). It is the path of the source of certainty (*ayn`l-yaqeen*), rather it is the very truth of certainty (*haqq`l-yaqeen*), and more precisely, it is the very reality of certainty (*haqeeqat`l-yaqeen*).” This science is the inward counterpart of the outward quest of the scholar/warrior – the *samurai*, but where the Shogan is reason and the Emperor is the Absolute Being. It is the *Sunna* of Allah ta`ala that He never takes an ignorant *wali*, except that He teaches him. Again *Shaykh* Ahmad al-Alawi said in his al-Manhi`l-Quduusiyya Sharh al-Murshid al-Mu`een Bi Tareeq as-Suufiyya: “Allah never takes an ignorant *wali* except that He teaches him. He first begins by instructing him about Himself, and then about His judgments. As for the remainder of the sciences, they are not a prerequisite for the soundness of saintliness (*wilaayat*). They are only a prerequisite in his perfection, and include the sciences such as grammar, morphology, rhetoric, eloquence, the science of linguistics and what resembles that from the sciences which most of the *sufis* have no concern for due to the elevation of their resolve and the nobility of their rank with Allah ta`ala.” The Shukr`l-Waahib of Dan Tafa is astonishing proof that Allah does not take a *wali*, except that He instructs him and teaches him about Himself. More importantly it is an indication that Allah ta`ala fulfilled His promise to Abraham, upon him be peace, by making the hearts of his descendents the depositories of His secrets. *Shaykh* Dan Tafa delineates in this poem the entire range of the sciences which Allah ta`ala had bequeathed to him and his forebears among the *Fudiawa* ethnicity and defines the blessings that will remain with them until the appearance of the *Muhammadan* Seal, *al-Mahdi*. In his Dabt`l-Multaqataat *Waziri* Junaydu ibn Muhammad al-Bukhari tells us of an intergenerational transmission of knowledge and gnosis among the *Fudiawa* which became apparent with *Shaykh`Aal* ibn Muhammad Jubba and his brother *Shaykh* Muhammad Ghurtu ibn Muhammad Jubba, which was then ignited under the leadership of *Fuduye`* Muhammad ibn Uthman. It is well known that this mastery of mediated and unmediated knowledge exploded with the children of *Fuduye`* Muhammad, particularly with *Shehu* Uthman ibn *Fuduye`* and *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn *Fuduye`*, and it finally inundated the horizons under the generations that followed them. This was particularly true in the person of *Shaykh* Dan Tafa; as one Hausa poem song during that period attest: “Verily a cloud has settled on Allah’s earth. A cloud so dense that escape from it is impossible. Everywhere between the Kordofan

(the Nuba mountains) and Gobir and the cities of the Kindin Tuareg, are the settlements of the dogs of the Falata (*Fulbe*); serving Allah in all their dwelling places; in reforming all districts and provinces, ready for the future Bliss. So in this year of 1214 (1799), they are adhering to their benevolent theories.” The Shukr’l-Waahib by the great grandson of *Fuduye`* Muhammad, is evidence that there was a conscious preservation and transmission of a canon of knowledge and metaphysics which constituted a collective and communicative memory that encompassed the broadest realm of Islamic epistemology and mysticism. This intergenerational historical consciousness consisted of three integral factors without which it could not and cannot persist: [1] knowledge (*ilm*); [2] saintliness (*wilaayat*); and [3] sovereignty (*khilaafa*). Each of these factors supported one another in a symbiotic liaison which gave birth to a rearward and forward looking spiritual and secular government which saw itself as the herald and final link to the appearance of the Seal of the Muhammadan Saints (*al-Mahdi*) and the heavenly descent of the Seal of the Universal Saints (Jesus the son Mary). In his al-Uhuud wa’l-Mawaathiq *Shaykh* Dan Tafa said: “I have taken an oath and covenant not to reveal the knowledge of secrets by which Allah established this Sokoto sovereignty. The authority in this government is not befitting to anyone in this community except for the one whom this secret has become an established fact. For this secret moves freely among them as it wishes, so realize that.” This assertion by *Shaykh* Dan Tafa indicates that this unique historical consciousness which comprise of knowledge, saintliness and sovereignty would persist until the End of Time. The Shukr’l-Waahib was composed as a form of praise and gratitude to Allah for this blessing, since continuity and persistence in all its domains are dependent upon giving thanks and praise. The author indicated this in a couplet which I believe is the secret (*sirr*) of the poem where he said: “So, all praises are due to Allah who by means of His praise * Has completed and perfected in us the righteousness of His divine support.” What this reveals is that the foundation of the three treasures: knowledge; saintliness and sovereignty that were given to the entire *Fudiawa* which would guarantee their persistence, revolves around being in a constant state of praise (*al-hamd*) and gratitude (*as-shukr*). Thus, it is with the praise of Allah and gratitude to Him for His countless blessings to us that I composed this admittedly dense and somewhat compact commentary. I have named it Ilaawat’l-Muttaalib Fee Shukr’l-Waahib al-Mufeeda’l-Mawaahib (The Increase of the Aspirant in Gratitude of the Benefactor for the Divine Overflowing Given to Those He Favors). I arranged it in sixty-six footnotes in concurrence with the numerical value of the Majestic Name – ALLAH tabaraka wa ta`ala. I ask Allah that He make it purely for His sake, by the rank of our master Muhammad, upon him be the best blessings and most perfect peace. Allah willing, I will try and define the legal and technical terms utilized by the poet as they were conveyed to me, while at the same time, I will try and make the poem relevant to the time in which we are in. I hope the reader will be able to distinguish between my transmission of the sacred traditions and my own personal comments about the relevance of these traditions.



An old manuscript delineating the ancestry of the poet, Dan Tafa, through his mother to the Prophet, may Allah bless all of them and grant them peace. It was photographed from the archive of my teacher, *Shaykh Bello ibn Shaykh Abd'r-Raaziq ibn Shaykh Uthman ibn Shaykh Abd'l-Qaadir Dantafa* in the Blue Nile town of Miaurno, Sennar, Sudan. As for the author, he was the Gnostic jurist, poet, historian, the *Amir* and *mujaahid*, the perfected sage Abu Muhammad Mu'ayallide, Abd'l-Qaadir, known as 'Dan Tafa' (the son of Mustafa). His father was the founder and rector of the Islamic University of Salame', the jurist, traditionist, linguist and *Amir* Mustafa ibn Muhammad at-Turuudi ibn Ibrahim ibn Musa ibn Uthman ibn 'Aal ibn Muhammad Jubba ibn Muhammad Sanbu ibn Ayyub ibn Maasiraan ibn Abu Bakr ibn Buba Baba ibn Musa Jokolli ibn *Imam* Muhammad Danbube` at-Turuude`. His mother was the learned, saintly, jurist, translator and prolific writer Khadijatu bint *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Saalih ibn Haarun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu ibn Muhammad Jubba ibn Muhammad Sanbu ibn Ayyub ibn Maasiraan ibn Abu Bakr ibn Buba Baba ibn Musa Jokolli ibn *Imam* Muhammad Danbube` at-Turuude`. He was born on the 19th of *Dhu'l-Qa`ida* in the year 1218 A.H. (circa February, 1804 C.E.) in the village of Fankaaji. His birth was auspicious for his parents and the entire *jama`at* of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` because they were in the middle of the famous *hijra* from Degel to Gudu. The *Shehu* actually postponed continuing the journey for one day, so that his daughter could give birth to the author. Allah ta`ala says: "And those who make emigration for the sake of Allah after being oppressed, I will give them excellent lodging in this world and surely the reward of the Hereafter will be greater,

if they only knew.” Allah also says: “Those who believe, make emigration and then struggle in the Way of Allah with their wealth and their souls have immense spiritual ranks with Allah. It is these who are the achievers.” The birth of *Shaykh* Dan Tafa during the famous emigration to Gudu was the first manifestation of good fortune and achievement for the *jama`at*. It is said that the following day the *Shehu* ordered his *jama`at* to stay overnight at a place called Ruuwaaruwi in order that his daughter, Khadijatu, could recover from giving birth. It is here that the *Shehu* gave life to the night praying for the success of the *jama`at*, and made specific supplications for the well being of his daughter, and his new grandson, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa. This poem is proof of the effectiveness of the supplications of the *Shehu* and the immense spiritual ranks given *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, the first born of what was to be a new nation, as a result of the blessings of emigration. His entire life was an answer to the *baraka* of the supplication of the *Shehu*, as exemplified by his personal behavior, virtue, austerity, erudition, gnosis and his commitment to the establishment of Islamic sovereignty in the central *Bilad's-Sudan*. In 1234/1819 at the relatively young age of fifteen, he began his spiritual training with his maternal uncle, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* and composed his first biographical work called Atraab 'l-Adhaan Fee 'Ulama 'z-Zamaan. Two years later he completed his training and attained spiritual mastery, (*mushayyikha*) during which he composed his Mustalihaat 's-Suufiyya which was a versification of the main ideas of the al-Insaan 'l-Kaamil of *Shaykh* Abd'l-Kareem al-Jilli. In 1239/1824 at the age of twenty-one he composed his most important historical chronicle on the kingdoms of West Africa called Rawdat 'l-Afkaar in which he delineated the philosophy in history behind the establishment of the Sokoto Uthmani Caliphate. In 1242/1826 he composed an exposition on the problematic issues of the al-Insaan of al-Jilli called Kashif'l-Bayaan; as well as his Salwat 'l-Ikhwaan regarding a brief biography of the seven elite *awliyya* of his time among the *Fudiawa*; At that time he was 24 years old. The following year, in 1243/1827, the poet, composed his famous Ma`rifaat'l-Haqq where he extracted the secrets of a Fulfulde` poem composed by his grandfather, *Shehu* Uthman, on the eight gates through which gnosis of the Absolute Being can be attained. In 1244/1828, the poet composed another highly esoteric work called Kashif'l-Ghitta in which he explored the six key manners by which the worlds of the unseen can be known and comprehended. This was the same year that *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` died. The poet was twenty-five years old. From the period of 1245/1828 until 1256/1840 we have no record of the *Shaykh* composing any text because none of his other forty-three works are dated during that period. What is known is that he began to take on more responsibility from his father, in terms of teaching and running the daily affairs of the University of Salame`. It is also conceivable that he intensified his personal spiritual discipline and training, which naturally entails withdrawing and isolating oneself from people. It was during this period that *Sultan* Muhammad Bello died and the authority was given over to his brother, Abu Bakr Atiku. What we do know is that in 1256/1840 at the age of thirty-seven, he composed his Bayaan 't-Ta`abudaat based upon a dream vision regarding the spiritual methodology of his maternal uncle and spiritual master, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* Uthman. Two years later, his father, *Malam* Mustafa ibn Muhammad 't-Turuudi resigned from the governorship of Salame` as well as his seat as rector of the University of Salame`; and turned them over to his son, Dan Tafa. The poet was 41 years old at that time. His father then relocated to Wurno, where he lived in retirement. Two years later, in 1261/1845, his father, *Malam* Mustafa died, and his body was buried in Wurno, near his close friend *Sultan* Muhammad Bello. It

was during this period that the poet, Dan Tafa, became the most important right acting scholar of the Sokoto Caliphate. He became the axis of legal decisions, the resort of political consultation and the guide of many among the common and the elite of the Caliphate. His renown was pervasive throughout the Western *Bilad 's-Sudan*. We have on record, the German spy, Henrich Barth, who in 1268/1853 corroborated the fame which *Shaykh* Dan Tafa enjoyed at this time. In his Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa Barth said that as far as Katsina there were scholars who unanimously accepted that *Shaykh* Dan Tafa was the most learned of the present generations of the inhabitants of the Sokoto Caliphate. It was on the 24th of April of that same year that Barth had the chance to meet Dan Tafa in Sokoto, about whom he said:

“...and here I first made the acquaintance of the learned Abd e-Kadar dan Tafa, whom I was most anxious to see, in order to obtain from him some historical information...He paid me a visit in the evening, and furnished me immediately with some positive data with regard to the history of the dynasty of the Asaki, or Askia, the ruler of Songhay, which he had perfectly, in his head, and which were of the greatest importance in giving me an insight into the historical relation of the western countries of their regions with that of Central Negroland.”

The fame of the poet, may Allah be merciful to him was so wide spread, that in 1273/1859, his close friend and newly appointed Caliph, Ahmad Zaruk ibn Abu Bakr Atiku wanted to appoint him as the head of the government chancellery and chief *Wazir*; a job which his father held during the early period of the *Shehu*. There was clear opposition to this decision from the family of Nana Asmau, whose descendents held the chair at that time, subsequently this civil authority alluded him, and Dan Tafa continued to govern Salame` as its *Amir*, and manage the daily affairs of the University of Salame`, as its rector. Dr. Umar Bello tells us in his introduction to his translation of the at-Ta`areefaat of *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn *Qadi* Muhammad al-Hajj, that the poet, Dan Tafa, developed the University of Salame` into one of the leading centers of learning at that time in the entire *Bilad 's-Sudan*; which was not eclipsed until in 1860, when French imperialist invaded Salame`, driving many of its inhabitants to Sokoto, and stole away with most of the rare manuscripts of the University of Salame`. Little is known about his saintly wife, the learned Faatima bint Muhammad ibn Umar al-Kamawi, except that she was known for her erudition, and piety which she inherited from her learned father Muhammad, and saintly grandfather, the close companion of the *Shehu*, *Shaykh* Umar al-Kamawi. Similarly, little is known of his other wife, Faatima, the daughter of *Sultan* Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* Uthman. According to *Malam* Muhammad al-Amin Salame`, the poet, Dan Tafa, had nine sons and two daughters: Muhammad Mu`allahyede; *Inna* Aishatu, Ahmad Bakai`, *Malam* Talha, Muhammad Waliy, *Malam* Sulayman Daabu, *Malam* Abdullahi Bayero, *Malam* Maasiraan, *Iyya* Khadijatu and *Shaykh* Uthman. Among his key disciples who inherited his learning and piety were his children, as well as the learned and saintly *Shaykh* Uthman ibn Is`haq, *al-Qadi* Muhtasib, and others. *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, died in Salame` in the year 1278 A.H. (circa 1864 C.E.) at the age of sixty and was buried near his mother, the erudite and saintly Khadijatu, just behind the Islamic University where he spent his years transmitting knowledge, may Allah be merciful to them. May Allah illuminate their graves with His *rahma*, *baraka* and *fadl*.



The unmarked grave of the poet, *Shaykh Abd'l-Qadir Dantafa*, Salame, Nigeria

In this commentary, I will, Allah willing, highlight some aspects of his biography, merits as well as some of his teachers and the sciences he received from them. *Shaykh* Dan Tafa began his text as all the people of knowledge begin their compositions| 'with the Name of Allah ta'ala'. In doing so, he follows the pattern established by Allah ta'ala in the Primordial beginning, set by His beginning every chapter of His *Qur'an* with it and following the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace as related by Abd'l-Qadir ar-Rahaawi in his *al-Arba'een* on the authority of Abu Hurayra: "Every affair of importance which is not begun in the name of Allah, then it is severed." He then said: "**O Allah send blessings upon our master Muhammad and grant him peace.**" This is an answered supplication and a confirmed *Sunna* practice based upon the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace as related by at-Tabarani in his *al-Awsat* on the authority of Abu Hurayra: "Whoever sends blessing upon me in a book there will remain an Angel seeking forgiveness for him as long as my name is in that Book.". In another narration, he, upon him be blessings and peace said: "Whoever sends blessings upon me in a book, then there will be good fortune for what is in it." Some of the latter Maliki scholars uphold the view that those addressed in its meaning are those who write the sending of blessings upon him in their book or letter; or it means those who recite the actual blessings which is already recorded in a book or letter. This latter interpolation is broader and inspires more hope, while the former interpolation is more apparent and stronger. Some of the scholars have said that the meaning of sending blessings upon him may Allah bless him and grant him peace in a book is writing it accompanied with articulating it in order to obtain by that the reward mentioned in the aforementioned prophetic traditions. *Shaykh* Shihaab'd-Deen Ahmad al-Khifaji said in his *Naseem 'r-Riyaad*: "One of the traditionist once said: 'I used to transcribe the sending of blessings only, and then I saw the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace in a dream and he said to me: 'Will you not perfect the sending of blessings upon me in your book?' Thereafter, I never transcribed it without also verbally sending blessings and peace upon him.'"

أَبْدَأُ بِإِسْمِ خَالِقِ الْأَنْوَارِ فِي سَجْفِ الْقُلُوبِ وَالْأَبْصَارِ

I begin with the Name of the Creator of illuminations

Into the veil which envelopes the hearts and inner visions²

² The poet may Allah be merciful to him said: “**I begin with the Name of the Creator of illuminations**”; that is to say: in the name of the Creator of the lights of existence into the matrices which enclose the hearts and inner visions of the entire creation. The phrase ‘the Name of the Creator of illuminations’ (*ism khaaliq’l-anwaar*) is a reference to the majestic Name: Allah, who says: “*That is Allah, your Lord, there is no deity except Him, the Creator of everything, so worship Him, for He is Guardian of everything.*” The meaning of ‘the Creator of illuminations’ (*khaaliq’l-anwaar*) is the Creator of existing things because light is an indication of manifestation (*dhuhuur*) and manifestation is coming into being (*takween*) or existence (*wujuud*). The opposite of light is darkness (*dhuluma*) and there is no darkness more immeasurable than the darkness of non-existence (*dhulmat’l-`idam*) because it is neither manifest to itself nor manifest to other than itself. Thus, anything which accepts the attributes of existence is called light (*nuur*). Allah is called the Light (*an-Nuur*), which means He is the Necessary Existent (*waajib’l-wujuud*) upon which all existing things depend for their existence. One of the chief disciples of the grandfather of the poet, *Shaykh Muhammad Tukur ibn Muhammad* elaborated on the connection between the name of Allah *an-Nuur* and the manifestation of existence in his *Qira’l-Ahibba* where he said: “The name of Allah *an-Nuur* means the One who manifests the individualized essences (*madhhar’l-`ayaan*) from pure non existence into existence. It is said that it is an unconditional Name (*ism mutlaq*) and means the One that manifests the clear outward appearance of the quintessence of everything.” Thus, the poet uses the concept of ‘light’ to indicate absolute and contingent existence. He ta’ala says: “*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth*”; which means that He is the Necessary Existent Being whose existence is the illumination of the existence of everything in the heavens and the earth. The first of the illuminations of existence to be created was the light of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, which was the first of the Divine realities (*haqaa’iq ilaahiya*) to come into existence. This primordial light is also known as the *Umm’l-Kitaab* (the Mother of the Book) and from it Allah created all the other luminous realities (*anwaar haqaa’iq*). It has been related on the authority of Jaabir ibn Abdallah, may Allah be pleased with him, who said I asked the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, about the first thing which Allah ta’ala created. He said: “The first thing which Allah created was the light (*nuur*) of your Prophet, O Jaabir. Then He created from it every excellent thing, and after that He created every thing. At the time He created my light, He established it in the station of proximity (*maqam ’l-qurb*) for twelve thousand years. Then He made my light into four parts (*arba’ aqsaami*). He then created the Throne (*al-’arsh*) from one part, the Foot Stool (*al-kursi*) from one part, the supporters of the Throne (*hamalata ’l-’arsh*) [from one part], and the supporters of the Foot Stool (*hamalata ’l-kursi*) from a part. He then established this fourth part of my light (the light of the supporters of the *kursi*) in the station of Love (*maqam ’l-hubb*) for twelve thousand years. He then made this light into four parts. He then created the Primordial Pen (*al-qalam*) from one part, the Guarded Tablet (*al-lawh*) from one part, the Garden (*al-janna*) from one part, and the remaining fourth part of my light He established in the station of Fear (*maqam ’l-khawf*) for twelve thousand years. He then made my light into four components (*arba’ ajza’u*). He then created the Angels (*al-mala’ika*) from

one component, the Sun (*as-shams*) from one component, the Moon (*al-qamar*) from one component, and the Planetary Stars (*al-kawkab*) from a component. He then established this fourth component of my light (the light of the *kawkab*) in the station of Hope (*maqaam 'r-raja'i*) for twelve thousand years. He then made my light into four portions. He then created the Intellect (*al-'aql*) from one portion, Knowledge (*al-'ilm*) from one portion, Infallibility (*al-'isma*) from one portion, and Success (*at-tawfeeq*) from one portion. He then established this fourth portion of my light in the station of Modesty (*maqaam 'l-haya'i*) for twelve thousand years. Then Allah *sub'haanahu* gazed upon my light and out of modesty it perspired and there exuded from it 124,000 drops of light. Allah *sub'haanahu* then created from each drop of light the spirit (*ruuh*) of a Prophet or Messenger. The spirit of the Prophets and Messengers then exhaled and Allah created from their breath the light of the obedient (*nuur 'l-mu'ti'eena*) from among the believers until the Day of Standing. Then Allah *sub'haanahu* created twelve veils (*hijaaban*). He then placed my light (which was the fourth portion established in the station of Modesty) in each of the twelve veils. These veils were the veils of nobility (*karaama*), felicity (*sa'aada*), reverence (*haiba*), compassion (*rahma*), graciousness (*ra'afa*), knowledge ('ilm), forbearance (*hilm*), dignity (*waqaar*), tranquility (*sakeena*), patience (*sabr*), truthfulness (*sidq*), and certainty (*yaqeen*). When my light had appeared from the veils, Allah *sub'haanahu* placed it in the earth and it caused the earth to radiate with light from the east to the west like a lamp illuminating the darkness of the night. Then Allah created Adam from the earth and placed my light in his forehead. From him it was transferred to Seth. It was then transferred from virtuous person (*taahir*) to good person and from good person (*tayyib*) to virtuous person until Allah conveyed it to the loins of Abdallah ibn Abd al-Muttalib. From him it was transferred to the womb of my mother Amina. Then He brought me out into this world and made me the master of the Messengers and the seal of the Prophets." This is what is meant by His words: "*The likeness of His light is like a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a shining star, kindled from a blessed tree, an olive neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow forth of itself though no fire touched it. Light upon light.*" The author, may Allah be merciful to him, said that these Muhammadan Lights are placed: "**...into the veil which envelope the hearts and inner visions.**" The term '*sajaf*' (veil) in Arabic means a curtain which can be lifted and lowered or opened and closed and usually refers to a curtain which divides two adjacent rooms. These veils are the illusions of existence, creatures, this world and the soul. These are the four barriers which come between the servant and his Lord. The conduits through which humanity knows Allah are through the hearts (*quluub*) and inner visions (*absaar*). In fact it is these conduits which make human beings human/humane and distinguishes them from other animals and sentient beings. The expression '*quluub*' (hearts) is plural for '*qalb*' and in an absolute sense means 'a place for alighting' (*ma`aan*). It is a locus or focal point. Technically it has two meanings in the language of the people of spiritual unveiling. The first is a muscle which sits in the left cavity of the breast and is the center of the circulatory system in both humans and animals. Because this expression takes its etymology from the verb '*qallaba*' (to spin around an axis) this muscle is called in Arabic '*qalb*' and is responsible for distributing the blood throughout the body. The second meaning of '*qalb*' is the subtle spiritual and lordly quality in humans which has a relationship with the physical heart similar to what the contingent senses has with the limbs or the relationship that descriptions have with the things they describe. It is this meaning

SANKORE'

which is intended whenever the expression 'qalb' is mentioned in the *Qur'an* and the *Sunna*. In his masterful work, *Bayaan al-Farq Bayna as-Sadr wa'l-Qalb*, Imam at-Tirmidhi tells us that the heart is the locus of the light of true faith (*ma`adin nuur 'l-imaan*) and the light of humble submission (*nuur'l-khushuu*), fearful awareness (*taqwa*), love (*maḥabba*), contentment (*riḍaa*'), certainty (*yaqeen*), fear (*khawf*), hope (*rajaa*'), patience (*ṣabr*), and obedience (*qanaa`at*); all which are the locus/source of the foundations of knowledge (*ma`adin uṣuul 'l-ilm*) because it is like the source of water (*`ayn'l-maa*') and the physical breast is like the pond (*ḥawḍ*) in which it flows. Water issuing forth from the spring is similar to the issuing forth of knowledge from the heart into the breast. When the heart becomes attached to created things and low passions it becomes veiled. As for the expression 'absaar', it is the plural for 'basar' (sight) and is related to 'baseera' (intuitive inner perception). It too refers to the perception of the mind (*fu`ad*) and heart (*qalb*). Allah ta`ala says: "Therefore be attentive O possessors of hearts (**absaar**)."¹ It is when the heart is attached to the Absolute Being that it functions as an instrument which spins at a speed or rate commensurate with Him and the hearts capacity. This spinning eventually becomes perpetual until it reaches the sublime gates of the Present Moment. It is Here that the veils are lifted between it and its Lord. It is Allah ta`ala who lifts the veils of these illusions from the hearts and innervations. Thus, the author is indicating that it is Allah ta`ala who illuminates the hearts and inner vision of His servants so that they can know Him and recognize Him in all the matrices of existence by the lifting of the veil over their hearts and inner visions through the manifestation of His Acts, Names and Attributes. This is what is meant by His words: "Allah guides to His Light whom He wills. Allah throws similitude to mankind for Allah is Knower of all things. This Light is found in houses which Allah has allowed to be raised up and in which His Name is glorified in the morning and evening by men whom neither merchandise nor sale diverts them from the remembrance of Allah, establishing the prayer, paying the alms, who fear a Day when hearts and visions will be overturned."² This spiritual opening of the hearts and inner vision of His *awliyya* has been recurrent after the passing of our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and will continue until the appearance of the Muhammadan Seal, *al-Mahdi*, whom some of the People of Allah designate as the 'Kitaab'-Mubeen' (the Detailed Book).

The One who makes the knowers and particles transcend
The outer appearance of the Divine Attributes and Names³

³ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: **“The One who makes the knowers and particles transcend the outer appearance of the Divine Attributes and Names”**; that is to say: in the Name of the One who makes everything in creation from His Knowers to the fundamental particles of creation transcend the outer appearances of the Divine Attributes and Names which veil His Immutable Essence. The Arabic phrase ‘*ulama*’ is plural for ‘*aalim*’ and refers in a general sense to any human/*jinn* who has memorized and comprehends every *Qur’anic* verse and prophetic tradition which lay at the foundation of the sciences of *Iman*, *Islam* and *Ihsan*. However, in this context, the author utilizes the term ‘*aalim*’ to indicate a more specific significance of those who ‘know Allah’ (*aalim billahi*) through direct experiential knowledge (*ma`rifa*) as a result of spiritual unveiling (*kashif*), direct witnessing (*shahaada*) and ‘tasting’ (*dhawq*). *Shaykh* al-Hujwiri said: “The scholars of the foundations do not distinguish between knowledge (*ilm*) and gnosis (*ma`rifa*) because they say that they are the same. Except that they say it is permissible to say regarding the Absolute Being that He is ‘*Aalim*’ (the Knower) but it is not permissible to say that He is ‘*aarif*’ (knowing) because of the lack of correspondence between the two modes of knowing. As for the masters of this spiritual path, may Allah be pleased with them, they call knowledge which is connected to behavior and states, which is the knowledge that expresses their spiritual states, as ‘gnosis’ (*ma`rifa*), and they call the one who knows this an ‘*aarif*’ (gnostic). While they call knowledge which is devoid of inner meaning and free of behavior as ‘knowledge’ (*ilm*) and they call the one who knows this an ‘*aalim*’ (scholar). Thus, whoever is knowledgeable of the mere outward expressions and has memorized them without preserving their inner meanings is called a scholar. In contrast, whoever is knowledgeable of the inner meanings of things and their realities is called a ‘knower’ (*aarif*).” It is this latter mode of knowing which the author indicates by his use of the phrase ‘*ulama*’ (the knowers). He means by that the Knowers of Allah, who have gnosis of Him through the unveiling of secrets (*makaashifaat l-asraar*) and the direct witnessing of their hearts (*mashaahidaat l-quluub*) which the people of outward informational knowledge are veiled from. It has been related by ad-Daylami on the authority of Abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Indeed among the sciences are those which are like a form concealed. No one knows it except the knowers of Allah. Whenever they articulate this science, no one denies it except the people of heedlessness in Allah.” In this sense the entire creation knows Allah ta`ala in this manner of gnosis as Allah ta`ala says: “*The heavens and the sevens earths glorify Him, and those that are in them. And there is nothing except that it glorifies Him with His praises. However, you cannot comprehend their form of glorification.*” Worship, glorification and praise of Allah cannot occur except with knowledge of Allah. Knowledge of Allah precedes worship of Him. Therefore the entire cosmos shares with the Knowers of Allah among men and *jinn* in having gnosis of Him. This gnosis extends from the most immense sensory realities (*haqaa`iq hisiyya*) such as the Throne to the most infinitesimal reality such as atomic particles (*habaa`*). It is for this reason that the poet said: “The One who makes the knowers and particles transcend * the outer appearance of the Divine Attributes and Names.” That is to say, that their gnosis of Him transcends the outward aspects of

SANKORE'



themselves and the rest of phenomenal creation and they are innately aware of His Acts, the Divine Names and Attributes which are the Self Disclosure of those Acts until He acquaints them with His Immense Immutable Essence. This, in turn, induces fear, dread, awe, annihilation, eradication and severance or dislocation from the creational quintessence. It is this state and gnosis which triggers the entire cosmos from the Throne to the spread carpet of the earth and everything between them, except the rebellious among men and *jinn*, to fall down in glorification and praise of Him. In this respect, the Knowers of Allah (*'ulama billahi*) are the microcosmic human and the atomic particles (*habaa'*); what physicists now call 'dark matter' which bind the universe are the macrocosmic human. *Shaykh 'l-Akbar* said in his *Futuuhaa't'l-Makiyya*: "The atomic particle (*habaa'*) is the dark substance that originally filled the void with its essence. Then the Absolute Being made a Self-disclosure (*tajalli*) of His Name '*an-Nuur*' (the Light) upon this substance which then became 'tinged' with It, and the judgment of darkness (*dhulma*), which was its original non-existent state (*'idam*) was removed from it. It thus became described with the attributes of existence. By means of this Light it became manifest to itself and was infused with It. Its manifestation took on the form of 'humanness'. It is for this reason the People of Allah call this original atomic substance the Macrocosmic Human (*insaan kabeer*) and they call what was abstracted from it the microcosmic human (*insaan sagheer*)." *Shaykh Ahmad an-Naqshabandi* said: "The atomic particle (*habaa'*) is a substance in which Allah opened the form of the cosmos. It is the '*anqaa*' (Griffon) which is a symbolic designation for 'original matter' (*hayuuli*)." It is called 'the Griffon' because like the legendary mythical bird it cannot be seen except as an abstract representation. It is thus, an intellectual abstract which describes the original substance which binds the whole of creation, much like the basic building blocks which modern theoretical physicist call 'quarks' and 'flavors' or 'the God particle' and Allah ta'ala knows best. The bottom line is that the Knowers of Allah from among men and *jinn* to the most infinitesimal element of creation is imbued with gnosis of Allah.

ذَرِي الرَّفْرِفِ الرَّفِيعِ الْأَطْلَسِ لَمَّا تَجَلَّى بِالْجَلَالِ الْأَقْدَسِ

The One who diffuses the projection of the exalted orbit

When He manifests the Self Disclosure of His Most Holy Majesty⁴

⁴ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: **“The One who diffuses the projection of the exalted orbit when He manifests the Self Disclosure of His Most Holy Majesty.”** That is to say: in the Name of the One who raised up the summit of the diverse statures which demarcate the projection of the universal orbit and diffused them with His Most Holy Majestic Self Disclosures. The phrase ‘*rafrāf*’ is an Arabic term which indicates the demarcation of a roof, or the highest projection or limit of a thing. It takes its root from the sound of the flapping of a bird’s wings while it is in the air, so high that its precise location cannot be known. *Shaykh Abd’l-Karim al-Jilli* said in his *al-Insaan’l-Kaamil*: “The elevated projection (*rafrāf`aala*) is an expression referring to the divine realm in existence, and it is a reference to the divine element intrinsic in it. These divine projections are not one kind but many kinds, however each category is called an ‘elevated projection’ (*rafrāf`aala*) and each is an expression of the divine realm although the requisites of each may differ. From the perspective of its quintessential concern it is the source of that realm, where there is no differentiation of one from another. This is because differentiation does not occur except in the requisites of the attributes and the names. These concerns are connected to the Essence of the Absolute Being, in which there is no differentiation.” The meaning of the expression ‘universal orbit’ (*atlaas*) is the orbit below the orbit of the Footstool (*kursi*) in which there are no star or planetary systems, but it is the place in which the determined decrees of the celestial orbits are decided. The universal orbit is from among the matrices of existence. It is an essential existing orbit beneath the Footstool, but it is above all the remaining orbits. Our words ‘existing’ is a clarification that the orbits before it like the orbit of particles, the orbit of nature and their like are all derivative orbits and not essential orbits like the Universal Orbit. This particular orbit is called ‘universal’ because in it there are no stars or planets. It also does not have signs by which the duration of its rotation or the ceasing of its rotation can be known. From the dynamics of this Universal Orbit constitutes the primary engine of all the derivative orbital rotations. Its dynamic movement emanates in nature based upon a singular coordination and singular volition. It is for this reason that the cosmos remains for a long time by the Will of Allah ta`ala. Its relationship to the Footstool is like the relationship of the Footstool to the Throne in magnitude. Between the Footstool and the universal orbit is the cosmos of the elevated projection (*rafrāf`aala*), and is the highest ascent which lay between the celestial realities whose highest level is the universal orbit and the Divine realities whose lowest is the Footstool. The Footstool is the first and lowest of the Divine realities and it is the manifestation of the commands and prohibitions of Allah. It is from under the Footstool that the celestial and terrestrial realities emerge from the darkness of non-existence by the Self Disclosure (*tajalli*) of the Majesty of Allah ta`ala through His commands and prohibitions.

أَحْمَدُهُ إِذْ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ بِالْقَلَمِ الْحِكْمَةَ وَالْبَيَانَ

I praise Him since He is the One who teaches man
By means of the Primordial Pen, wisdom and acute clarity⁵

⁵ After the author discloses the secrets of the emergence of the darkness of non-existence by means of the Self Disclosure of the Light of the Acts, Names, Attributes and Immutable Essence of Allah ta'ala, he then follows this acknowledgement of Divinity and Lordship through all the matrices of existence with praise (*al-hamd*). He, may Allah be merciful to him said: **"I praise Him since He is the One who teaches humanity by means of the Pen, wisdom and acute clarity."** He does this following the *Sunna* of Allah in His Book where after the naming (*tasmiyya*) and acknowledgement of His immense esteem through His words: *"In the Name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful"*, He says: *"All praises are due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds."* Acknowledgment of the Divinity and Oneness of Allah demands praise and gratitude. As I mentioned previously, praise (*al-hamd*) and gratitude (*as-shukr*) are the axis of the poem and the causative factor for the sciences which the author was blessed with. It is as if the author is saying that praise and gratitude to Allah is what generated the infusion and inundation of knowledge and gnosis; increases it and causes it to persist with the persistence of the One being praised. Throughout the poem, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa repeatedly refers back to the concept of praise and gratitude, even in its title, as an indication that the existence of blessings, rather the blessings of existence itself revolve around being in a constant state of praise and gratitude. Allah ta'ala opens His Book with His words: *"All praises are due to Allah"* and the first utterance from the father of humanity was: *"All praises are due to Allah."* One of the poet's contemporary sages in West Africa, the *qutb Shaykh* Ma' al-'Aynayn bin *Shaykh* Muhammad Fadl ibn Maamayn, may Allah engulf him in His mercy explained the meaning of 'praise' (*hamd*) using the identical lexicon which fed the spiritual ideas of the sages of Sokoto. He said in his *Daleel ar-Rifaaq `Ala Shamsi 'l-Itifaaq*: "Praise is the commendation of the tongue with the aim of exaltation upon the Praised with the variety of His beautiful attributes. The expression 'Allah' *subhaanahu* is the name of the Essence of the Necessary Existent Worshipped who deserves the absolute right of all praises. The 'alif' and 'laam' (definite article) in the expression 'the praise' (*al-hamd*), means 'to completely require' it (*istigraaq*). This means that all expressions of praise, their ancient and recent are all firmly established for Allah; the One that all creatures in creation recognize that He is the One who created them. Even the disbelievers when they are asked about who created them, they say: 'Allah created us.' Allah ta'ala says: *'If you asked them who created them, they will say: Allah'*. He says: *'If you ask them who created the heavens and the earth, they will say: the Mighty the All Knowing created them'*; meaning the Sole Possessor of might and knowledge. Praise is in four divisions: two pre-existent praises (*hamdaan qadeemaan*) and two in-time creational praises (*hamdaan haadithaan*). The two pre-existent praises are His praises of Himself and His praises of the elite of His servants from His prophets, messengers, Angels, and the remainder of the virtuous among His servants. The two in-time created praises are the praises the servants give to Him, and the praises that some of them give to others. This means that whatever is attributed to Allah ta'ala is pre-existent (*qadeem*); while whatever is attributed to the servants is in-time creation (*haadith*)...The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: 'Praise for blessings is the assurance for its continuity'. He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: 'Praise is the head of all gratitude.' To the

extent that the servant does not thank Allah, is the extent that he does not praise Him. Allah ta'ala says: *'If you are grateful, I will increase you in blessings'*...The true significance of the expression 'the praise' (*al-hamd*) cannot be accurately described by intellects, nor can written works quite encompass it. How can this not be the case when 'praise' (*hamd*) is what opens the Mother of the Book, and it was, without doubt, the first speech that Adam uttered. Among its bounties is that it comprises eight letters, and the gates of the Garden are also eight. Thus, whoever praises Allah by means of them deserves to enter in the Garden in whichever gate he wishes." Allah ta'ala also says: *"If you were to try and enumerate the blessings of Allah, you could not number them."* Yet the poet, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, acknowledges the reason that he praises Him, seeing as Allah is the One who taught him and all of humanity by means of the Pen what he and they did not know before. The reason that *Shaykh* Dan Tafa cites the Primordial Pen (*al-Qalam*) as the first reason for praising Allah ta'ala is because It is the First of the Cosmic Realities (*haqai'a kawniyya*). Allah ta'ala says: *"Nuun. By the Primordial Pen and what they record."* Waki` narrated a prophetic tradition on the authority of al-'Amash on the authority of Abu Dhabyaan on the authority of Ibn Abass that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Verily the first thing that Allah azza wa jalla created was the Primordial Pen. He then said to it: 'Write!' It said: 'O Lord what shall I write?' He said: 'Record the decree.' Then it began to record what exist from that Day until the establishment of the Hour." It has been related by Mujaahid on the authority of Abu Umar who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Allah azza wa jalla created four things with His hand, He then said to the remaining creatures: 'Be!' and they came in to existence: the Primordial Pen; the Throne; the Paradise of Aden and Adam upon him be peace." The etymological root of 'pen' is that which one writes with. Its plural are *aqlaam* or *qilaam* and what is meant here in this context by the Primordial Pen is the first thing which was created from the Cosmic Realities. Ibn al-Mundhir al-Ifriqi said in his *Lisaan'l-Arab*: "Ibn Sayyid said: 'The Primordial Pen which is mentioned in the revelation, its how-ness is not precisely known'." Regarding those whom He taught by means of the pen there are three distinct opinions. The first is that it was Adam upon him be peace because he was the first to write. This was the opinion of Ka'b al-Ahbar. The second is that it was Idris, who was considered the first person to write. This was the opinion of ad-Duhaak. The third is that it includes every person who writes with the pen, because they did not learn this except by the instructions of Allah *sub'haanahu*. All of that is a blessing which He provides to His creatures, and He explains His blessings to them by means of instruction, as a form of perfection of His blessings for them. It has been related by *Imam* Malik ibn Anas on the authority of Rabi'a ibn Abi Abd'r-Rahman on the authority of Naafi` on the authority of Ibn Umar who said: "When Allah ta'ala revealed: *'Recite in the name of your Lord who created...'* the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said to Mu`adh: 'Write it down O Mu`adh.' Mu`adh then took the tablet, the pen and *nuun*, which is another name for ink. Then Mu`adh began to write it down until he reached the verse: *'Rather, do not obey him, but prostrate and draw near'*, then the tablet prostrated, the pen prostrated and the *nuun* fell in prostration, while each was saying: 'O Allah raise him in renown. O Allah, lighten for him his burden. O Allah, forgive him his sins'. Then Mu`adh said: 'I then fell down in prostration. I then went and informed the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and he too fell in prostration'." In the language of the People of Allah, the Primordial Pen is the First Intellect (*'aql awwal*)

based upon his words, upon him be peace: “The first thing that Allah created was the Primordial Intellect.” For these two prophetic traditions are indications of the Primordial Light of Muhammad as it was narrated by Abd’r-Razaq with his chain of authority on the authority of Jaabir ibn Abdallah That the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him grant him peace said: ‘O Jaabir, verily Allah ta’ala created from His Light the light of your Prophet before everything.’ The coming into being of creation is a disclosure of the Light of Muhammad, in one respect; the articulation of the First Intellect in one respect; and the transcribing of the Primordial Pen in one respect. Thus, the Light of Muhammad, the First Intellect and the Primordial Pen in the proliferation and hierarchy of being are the same and its mirror reflections in creation are the spiritual guides who teach and instruct mankind by means of the pen. In his Cheng-Chiao Chen-Ch`uan the Chinese Muslim sage *Imam* Wang Tai-yu referred to this aspect of the Muhammadan Reality as ‘the Scribe’ (tài shǐ-太史) of the Great Ultimate; that transforms and enacts the paired opposites of *yin* and *yang*. The ten thousand forms (or what the *Sufis* call the universal archetypes) are transcriptions of *yin* and *yang*. All of these realities manifest the bounded realm of the Root Act.(běn wèi 本爲). The Root Act is a direct reference to the Acts of Allah when Allah ta’ala says: “*He is the One who created the heavens and the earth with truth*”; where the ‘truth’ (*haqq*) here is a reference to the First Light, the Muhammadan Reality. It is for this reason that the author praised Allah for teaching humanity wisdom and acute clarity by means of the Muhammadan Reality, the First Intellect and the Primordial Pen. The expression ‘wisdom’ (*hikma*) is knowledge of the realities of things, their true descriptions, their specific qualities, and their judgments as they are; it is knowing the correlation of causes with their causative factors; knowing the secrets of the exact order of existing things; and acting in accordance with its requirements. Allah ta’ala says: “*Whoever is given wisdom has been given an abundance of good.*” *Shaykh* Lisan’d-Deen said in his Rawdat’t-Ta`reef: “Wisdom means placing a thing in its proper place.” The phrase ‘acute clarity’ (*bayaan*) here means acute awareness accompanied with eloquent articulation of that awareness. Allah ta’ala says: “*The Rahman taught the Qur’an, created humanity and taught him acute clarity*”. Ibn Abass and al-Hassan said that this ‘acute clarity’ means the names of all things. Qatada said that it means knowledge of all the languages and comprehension. Ibn Kaysaan said that it means clarification of what is permissible and what is forbidden. Al-Qurtubi said that it means the knowledge of what was and what will be, given that the *Qur’an* is a clarification of the first and the last of the communities as well as the Day of Judgment. Ad-Duhaak said that it means the knowledge of good and evil. Ar-Rabi` ibn Anas said that it means knowledge of what is advantageous and detrimental. Yamaan said that it means the knowledge of writing and calligraphy with the pen. In the latter sense the phrase ‘acute clarity’ (*bayaan*) is a corroboration of the instruction and wisdom which occurs by means of the pen. It has been related on the authority of Abdallah ibn Umar who said: “O Messenger of Allah, shall I write down what I hear from you of prophetic traditions?” He said: “Yes, write it down, because Allah teaches by means of the pen.” I say: that the meaning of wisdom (*hikma*) and acute clarity (*bayaan*) is a combination of all the above meanings and is subsumed in the all embracing concept of gnosis (*ma`rifa*) of Allah and His creation. It was this meaning which *Shaykh* al-Qunawi designated in his Mirat’l-`Aarifeen where he said: “Every being is a letter (*harf*) in a sense, a word (*kalima*) in a sense, an isolated, disjointed letter (*mufrad wa muqatta`*) in a sense, a composed utterance (*alfaz murakkaba*) in a sense, and a ‘chapter’ (*sura*) in a sense. When we consider only the essence (*dhat*) of

Which He infuses in the matrices of human nature
And the spirit the receptivity for Divine realities⁶

every being without considering its aspects (*wujuh*), properties (*khawas*), accidents (*awarid*), and concomitants (*lawazim*), as differentiated from the whole, we call it, with reference to this differentiation, ‘a letter’ (*harf*). And when we consider its aspects, properties, accidents, and concomitants in association with its essence, we call it, with reference to its association with the whole, ‘a word’ (*kalima*). And with regard to the abstraction of every being from their additions and relations, and to their distinction from one another, they are called ‘isolated, disjointed letters’ (*mufrad wa muqatta*). And with regard to the non-abstraction of beings from their additions and relations, and to their non-distinction from one another, they are called ‘composed utterances’ (*alfaz murakkaba*). And with regard to the distinction of the universal states of existence from one another, and to every being falling under one state, they are called ‘chapters’ (*sura*).” Thus, every single entity from the fundamental elements of creation to its most complex celestial realities is a letter, a word, an *ayat*, a chapter, a detailed *Qur’an* which praises and glorifies its Creator by its existence.

⁶ In this hemistich, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, explained that the realization of gnosis of Allah ta’ala is the fundamental reason for giving praise to Him. Allah ta’ala deposited His wisdom and acute clarity in the hearts of a select and distinct element of His creation, the human reality. This consignment of gnosis makes the human reality the tongue of existence through which it speaks in praising Allah ta’ala. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: **“Which He infuses in the matrices of human nature and the spirit the receptivity for Divine Realities.”** That is to say: I praise Allah for distinguishing humanity by means of the Light of Muhammad, with which He emanates the spirit of humanity (*ruuh*) with an innate preparedness (*isti`daad*) for gnosis of Him. I praise Allah for delegating humanity by means of the Primordial Pen, with which He purifies the human heart (*qalb*) and expands its capacity for gnosis of Him. I praise Allah for honoring humanity by means of the First Intellect, with which He infuses the human soul (*nafs*) with transmutation and transformation for gnosis of Him. In each case the active divine reality, the active cosmic reality and active sensory reality imprint (write) upon the receptivity of the human spirit, heart and soul and engenders in them a readiness and keenness for gnosis of Allah. Allah ta’ala says: *“It is not fit for a human that Allah speaks to him except by means of revelation, from behind a veil, or a messenger is sent to him, who receives whatever revelation He wills by His permission.”* Thus, the active principles are the manifestations (*madh’haar*) of His words: *“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah”* whose task is to: *“take mankind out of darkness into the Light by the permission of their Lord on the Straight Path of the Mighty the Praiseworthy.”* This receptivity (*qaabiliyya*) and preparedness (*isti`daad*) of the human spirit, heart and soul is like the passivity of the mother which receives the emission of the father and gives birth to ‘secrets’ (*asraar*), that is to say: gnosis of Allah (*ma`rifat Allah*). It is for this reason that the Arabs say: ‘The child is the secret of its father’ (*al-walidu sirru abeehi*). Allah ta’ala says: *“He it is who created you from a single soul and created from it its mate and He diffused from them many men and women.”* This single soul is the Light of Muhammad from one respect and its mate is the human spirit. The single soul is the Primordial Pen from another respect and its mate is the human heart. The single soul is the First Intellect from yet another

respect and its mate is the human soul. It is when these paired opposites are merged that Allah generates from them abundant offspring in the form of unveilings (*kashufaat*), spiritual openings (*futuhaat*) and secrets (*asraar*). The meaning of the expression ‘matrix’ (*qaalib*) in his words: “...the matrices of human nature” (*qawaalib ‘n-naasuut*), means a mold, a pattern or form. It takes its root from the word ‘to rotate’ (*qalaba*) and it refers to the original pattern around which an entity or being revolves. In this context the author refers to the original molds and patterns of human nature (*naasuut*). The expression human nature (*naasuut*) means the original genesis of humanity (*nashaa’ ‘l-insaaniyya*) which distinguishes them from all other creatures. When Allah ta’ala created this original human genesis and prepared it to receive the human spirit, He joined them and imbued it with life. It was then the human being became alive (*hayy*). It is with this new life that the human being became receptive for all things related to divinity (*laahut*) and thus became His vicegerent to His creation. Allah ta’ala says: “*When your Lord said to the Angels: Indeed I am creating a human from mud. So when I have fashioned him and blown into him My spirit, then you should fall down in prostration to him. Then all the Angels together prostrated; except Iblees, who was arrogant and was among those who disbelieved.*” This fashioning (*sawiyya*) and blowing (*nafakha*) was the infusing and inundating of the original human mold and spirit with the receptivity for the Divine realities (*laahuut*) referred to by the poet. It is for this extraordinary distinction that we are required to praise and thank Allah ta’ala endlessly. About this *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye’ said in *Kitaab’l-Wird*: “It is necessary for us to praise Allah to the extent which is befitting His praises as an incumbent obligation (*fardan wa wujuuban*) without end or limit (*bi ghayri tahdeed*). However, because inability (*‘ajaz*), laziness (*kasal*) and listlessness (*malal*) have been established in us, the praises befitting Allah has been reduced for us and there only remains for us to praise Him ten times. Five of these are for the purpose of actual praise of Him (*tahmeedaat*), for we praise Him for five eternal blessings (*ni`mat’l-azaliyya*): [1] We praise Him for creating us when we were nothing. [2] We praise Him for making us among the children of Adam as an exclusive favor to us above most of His creation (*tafdeelan lanaa ‘ala katheer*). [3] We praise Him for making us Muslims as a distinction for us (*takhseesan minaa*). [4] We praise Him for making us among the *Umma* of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, as a preference for us (*istifaa’an*). [5] We praise Him for giving us success in these times in reviving His way of life (*tajdeed deenihi*) as a select privilege for us (*takhayyuran*). After that we praise Allah showing gratitude for five all embracing intermediate blessings (*ni`mat’l-waasita*): [6] We praise Him showing gratitude for subjecting our limbs to us. [7] We praise Him showing gratitude for subjecting to us what is in the heavens and the earth. [8] We praise Him showing gratitude for making the Angels responsible to us in rectifying our affairs. [9] We praise Him showing gratitude for arranging the uniformity, and exact harmony of His blessings to us. [10] We praise Him showing gratitude for keeping us fearfully aware of Him and protecting us every year, every month, every day and night, every hour and every moment from the assaults of *Iblees* and his demons. We seek refuge with Allah from the rejected Satan since he claimed: *‘I will come at them from their front, from their back, from their right and their left, and You will not find most of them grateful.’* He said ‘from our front’, i.e. in front of us, because he busies us from the remembrance of Allah and from being thankful for what has passed from our years...He said ‘from our back’ because he busies us from the remembrance of Allah and from being thankful for what remains of our life. He

SANKORE'



also said, 'from our right' because he makes us avoid good deeds. He also said 'from our left' because he embellishes evil, disobedience and innovation (*bid`a*) in our hearts. We ask Allah to save us by His favor and generosity from the tricks of Satan. O Allah Amen." It is for this reason that some of the People of Allah say that giving praises and thanks to Allah is a superior weapon against *Iblees*, than seeking refuge with Allah from him and his evils (*isti`aadhan minhu wa min suu`ihi*). This is because giving praise and thanks to Allah is a proactive offensive weapon (*silaah hujuum*), while seeking refuge is a reactive defensive weapon (*silaah waqaa`ee*). The masters of the Art of War agree that the best defense is to take the offensive because it is proactive; while being on the defensive is reactive and preoccupies the person from his real goal, which is Allah ta`ala. Being in a constant state of praise and gratitude preoccupies the person with Allah and His favors and busies *Iblees* with reacting to the stoning (*rajim*) which emerges from the constant remembrance of Allah ta`ala. This is the basic strategy for victory in the war against Satan (*muhaaribat `s-shaytaan*) and it is the Way of the scholar/warrior. This was the core litany of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` and his disciples and is the causative factor for the continuance and persistence of all these blessings from all the domains which they came. The single trait of giving thanks (*as-shukr*) and praise (*al-hamd*) contains all of the myriad values benefits and gathers all the spiritual stations. For the one who holds to giving thanks and praise to Allah without the least heedlessness has obtained a rare jewel. We ask Allah ta`ala to increase us in giving praise and thanks to Him for His endless favors which can not be enumerated.

فَاسْتَجْمَعْتُ مُجَامِعَ الْعُلُومِ لَمَّا حُوتُ مِنْ حِكْمَةِ الْقِيُومِ

For, I have gathered together a compilation of the sciences
Which I gleamed from the wisdom of the Eternally Self Subsistent⁷

⁷ After praising Allah ta`ala as is befitting Him, the poet then explains the premise of his poem. He said: **“For, I have gathered together a compilation of the sciences which I gleamed from the wisdom of the Eternally Self Subsistent.”** The poet attributed the source of his learning to Allah ta`ala, for two reasons: [1] out of recognition that all good which a person receives comes from Allah ta`ala. Allah ta`ala says: *“Allah created you and your actions.”* Apart of recognition of *tawheed* is to acknowledge that Allah ta`ala is the sole cause for everything in creation. Nothing occurs in the universe except with the permission and power of Allah ta`ala. [2] The greater part of this poem deals mainly with what the People of Allah call ‘direct knowledge from Allah’ (*ilm ladnunaa*) which results from the purification of the heart (*tasfiyyat l-qalb*), the disciplining of the character (*riyaadiyat l-akhlaaq*) and spiritual struggle (*al-mujaahida*); all three subsumed in the comprehensive concept of fearful awareness of Allah (*taqwa*). Allah ta`ala says: *“Have fearful awareness of Allah and Allah will teach you.”* The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: *“Whoever acts by what he knows, Allah will make him inherit a knowledge that he did not know.”* It is well known that the scholar warriors of the Sokoto Caliphate were immersed in the mystical sciences. However, with the exception of many *Fulfulde`* poems, and a few Arabic texts, they rarely listed these sciences. We have the biographical works such as the *Infaq`l-Maysuur* of *Sultan Muhammad Bello*, and the *lida`n-Nusuukh* of *Shaykh Abdullahi ibn Fuduye`* in which they list many of the scholars, texts and chains of authorities they received in the outward sciences. Rarely did the scholars of the Sokoto polity list the sciences of the inward which they had received. The only exception that we have is that of the *Kitaab`d-Dawaa`ir* of *Shaykh Abdullahi ibn Muhammad al-Kunawi* in which he transmits some of the mystical sciences which the *Shehu* bequeathed to the *jama`at* while in Sifawa. Subsequently, this poem by *Shaykh Dan Tafa* is the only comprehensive picture we have of the level of inward esoteric sciences that were transmitted and taught by the many spiritual masters of this community. It is in this light that this poem is invaluable. We know from his own writings that his key spiritual master in the esoteric sciences was his maternal uncle, *Shaykh Muhammad Sanbu ibn Shehu Uthman* with whom he studied for three years beginning when he was 15 years old. With him he studied some of the most intricate and complex works on the science of *tasawwuf* such as the *al-Insaan`l-Kaamil* of *Shaykh Abd`l-Karim al-Jilli*, and was able to unravel some of its more problematic issues. In his *Bayaan at-Ta`abudaat* he explains the nature of his discipleship with *Shaykh Muhammad Sanbu*: *“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. (circa 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 three years only. From that moment he continued to show me his spiritual states and directed 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*

SANKORE'



service of the outward sciences and to be preoccupied with reading the books of that issue, because at that time his spiritual state was that he could not endure intermixing with people for long periods. Consequently, I continued to study with him the esoteric sciences of the spiritual path and divine realities as we did in the beginning. However, I would study other sciences with others as well.” What is clear is that *Shaykh* Dan Tafa began his initiation in the science of *tasawwuf* at a relatively young age and his training lasted for a short time before he attained self mastery. It is for this reason he could state unequivocally that his gnosis was directly from Allah ta'ala, by means of spiritual unveiling (*kashif*) and direct witnessing (*mushaahidaat*); as he said in his own words: “...I gleamed from the wisdom of the Eternally Self Subsistent.” This is an indication that comprehension of Allah is commiserate with one’s spiritual stations with Him. This comprehension comes from eight directions as he said in his Ma`rifaat’l-Haqq: [1] through the natural disposition (*al-fitra*); [2] through information attained by reported intelligence (*al-khabr*); [3] through reflection (*an-nadhar*); [4] through the contemplation and experience of majesty (*al-jalaal*); [5] through contemplation and experience of beauty (*al-jamaal*); [6] through experiencing and reflection upon the *Qur’an*; [7] through experiencing and reflection upon the prophetic traditions (*al-hadeeth*) which is synonymous with the Living *Sunna*; and [8] through experienced spiritual states (*al-ahwaal ad-dhawqiyya*). In this poem the author clarifies the knowledge of Allah that he received from these eight gates, but he also goes further to explain the elemental (*awwaliya*), rational (*`aqliyya*) and transmitted (*naqliyya*) sciences he received.

Glory be to Him perpetually Who dispenses upon
The elite of His creatures, Divine gifts which are amazing⁸

⁸ After the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, explains his objective and purpose in composing a compilation of the exoteric and esoteric sciences which Allah ta'ala opened to him, he returns back to the ultimate aim of knowledge of Allah, which is to worship and extol Him. He said: **“Glory be to Him eternally Who dispenses upon the elite of His creatures, Divine gifts which are amazing.”** That is to say, glorification by recognizing Its incomparability (*tanzeeh*) to anything besides Itself, and that none is a partner with It in Its Essence, Names and Actions. The expression ‘*subhaana*’ (glory be) is a verbal noun taken from the verb ‘*sabaha*’ (to glorify) which means to recognize a being’s incomparability to anything; and can only be utilized in a sentence as apart of an annexed genitive construction (*idaafa*) whose direct object (*maf'uul bihi*) can only be Allah ta'ala. It is for this reason that it can only be used in reference to the incomparable Essence of Allah ta'ala. The fact that it is Allah ta'ala alone who knows what is known and unknown, what is seen and what is unseen, and He discloses this knowledge to those He wills from His servants, then glorification, praises and worship of Him are incumbent upon all sentient and none sentient beings. It is for this reason that *Shaykh* al-Alusi said in his *Ruuh'l-Ma'ani* that glorification of Allah is intrinsically connected to gnosis of Allah. Allah ta'ala says on the tongue of the Angels: *“Glory be to You, there is no knowledge with us, except what You have taught us, indeed You are the Knowing the Wise.”* Imam al-Qurtubi explains to us that this statement from the Angels was there answer to Allah when He ordered them: *“Inform Me of their names”*; and they answered Him acknowledging that they only knew what He had taught them and that they are innately unable to articulate knowledge which is outside of the domain of knowledge which He established for them. It establishes that learning in all of its facets can only occur by means of instructions and that the beginning of instruction is built upon recognition of one’s ignorance, humility, devout courtesy and avoiding false claims. This Angelic answer was also acknowledgment of the superiority which Allah ta'ala had granted Adam over them in knowledge and station; seeing as Adam and those from his descendents who inherit from him are the immense vicegerent of Allah (*khalifat aadhim*) to the whole of creation. It is this knowledge of Allah which is the secret behind the origination of Adam and his species. Allah ta'ala says: *“And He taught Adam all the names.”* *Shaykh* al-Alusi informs us that the People of Allah hold that the meaning of ‘all the names’ (*al-asmaa' kullahaa*): *“...is the knowledge he was taught commensurate with the Vicegerency he was appointed to. It comprises the names of all things, high and low; essential and nonessential. It is said that they are the Names of Allah ta'ala with all things which give evidence of Him; and His Self Disclosure in them without being bound by them. It is for this reason that the People of Allah say that the Names of Allah ta'ala are unlimited (ghayr muntaha); since there is nothing which has come into existence by the power of the Benefactor except that it emerges from a Name from the Names of Allah ta'ala, and an affair from His exalted affairs; for He is the First and the Last, the Hidden and the Manifest.”* Allah ta'ala says: *“Are they the same, those who know and those who do not know?”* This question is what scholars call a question of censure (*su'aal istinkaar*) because the answer is apparent to the one asking and the one being asked. This indicates the distinction between the genesis of human vicegerency and angelic beings, because the

SANKORE'



gnosis of both engenders glorification of Allah. However, the glorification of the Adamic creature is distinct from angelic beings by the ability to articulate, define and systematize what is known. This is further enhanced with the ability to glorify, praise and worship Allah in the process of learning. That is to say, that the actual instruction (*ta'leem*) of Adam by Allah was his glorification and worship of Him. It is for this reason that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said when asked: 'What is the best form of worship': "The best form of worship is seeking knowledge." That is to say, that Allah ta'ala granted Adam a form of glorification and worship of Him which was superior to all creatures and it was hidden inside the very process of instruction. Some of the People of Allah hold the view that his creation (*khalaqa*), his formation (*takween*), the blowing into him of the spirit (*nafakha feehi 'r-ruuh*), and instruction (*ta'leem*) all happened in the same moment or realm; are synonymous and are the greatest manner of praise and gratitude for the primordial favors of the Benefactor. Thus, the mere act of Adam informing them of their names (*anbiyaa' hum bi asmaa'ihim*) was an additional form of glorification of Allah which distinguished him from all other creatures. This poem by *Shaykh* Dan Tafa is an articulation of this spiritual ascendancy given to Adam and is a recurrence of this Adamic function to know and to articulate gnosis of Allah and His creation in all of its aspects. *Shaykh* Dan Tafa was not the first to articulate and systemize knowledge of Allah, nor was he the last. This function is eternal with the eternity of the Known. In this regard there will always remain spiritually elite (*khawaas*) human receptacles of this crystalline divine knowledge.

Then may eternal blessings and everlasting peace
Be upon the Chosen Prophet Muhammad⁹

⁹ After glorifying Allah ta`ala eternally as is befitting Him for His Self Disclosure of His knowledge to the elite of His human vicegerents going back to our corporeal progenitor - Adam, the poet then sends blessings and peace upon our primordial progenitor, our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace by his words: **“Then may eternal blessings and everlasting peace be upon the Chosen Prophet Muhammad.”** Allah ta`ala says: *“Muhammad is not the father of anyone of your men.”* Ibn Abass said as it was cited in the Ghaayat'l-Amaani that the meaning of this verse is: *“The Prophet is foremost over the believers, than themselves. He is their father and his wives are their mothers.”* This opinion is absolutely sound because in the world of the Unseen he, upon him be blessings and peace is the fundamental light from which Allah created the lights of all the Messengers, the Prophets, and the righteous. Rather, all the spirits emerged from his light as we mentioned previously. In view of the fact that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace is figuratively the father of all humanity, then it is obligatory to honor him and show esteem to him as it is obligatory to honor and respect one's sensory father. It has been related by Abd'r-Razaaq with his chain of authority on the authority of Jaabir ibn Abdallah who said: *“I once said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, I ask you by my father and mother inform me about the first thing which Allah created before all things?’ He said: ‘O Jaabir, verily Allah ta`ala created from His Light the light of your Prophet before everything.”* Thus, our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was a Prophet, Messenger and the first teacher, while Adam was still being formulated. In fact, it was this Muhammadan Reality which was the reality by which Allah created Adam and taught him the Names and manifested his vicegerency. It was related by ad-Daylami on the authority of Abu Raafi` that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: *“My Umma was made into a likeness for me in the realm of water and earth; and I was taught all the Names just as Adam was taught all the Names.”* Subsequently, sending blessings and peace upon our master Muhammad is a fundamental Act of the coming into being of existence. Allah ta`ala says: *“Verily Allah and His Angels send blessings upon the Prophet; O you who believe! Send blessings and peace upon him abundantly.”* Shaykh Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` said in his Diya'l-Qawa'id: *“When Allah revealed: ‘Verily Allah and His Angels send blessings upon the Prophet’, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said to his Companions: ‘Allah has made me independent of your sending blessings upon me, however Allah the Mighty the Majestic has ordered you to do so as an ennobling miracle for you’.”* It is related on the authority of al-Hassan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib who said, it was once said: *“O Messenger of Allah, do you have an opinion on the Words of Allah, the Mighty the Majestic: ‘Verily Allah and His Angels send blessings upon the Prophet’?”* He said: *“Verily that verse is among those matters which are hidden, and if you had not asked my Lord about it I would not disclose it to you. Verily Allah, the Mighty the Majestic has appointed to me two Angels that whenever I am mentioned to a Muslim and he then sends blessing upon me that these two Angels say: ‘May Allah forgive you, and Allah and His Angels say in answer to these two Angels- Amen’.”* Shaykh Yusef ibn Isma`il an-Nabhaani said that Ibn Abass said: *“The Lord of Truth glory be to Him intends by His words that Allah ta`ala sends His mercy upon the Prophet and that His Angels*

supplicate for him. For the blessing from Allah is mercy, while the blessings from the Angels include asking for forgiveness.” Abu al-`Aliya said: “The blessings of Allah ta`ala is His praise of him with the Angels, and the blessings of the Angels is supplication.” The sending of blessings, peace, mercy and praise from Allah are from the Acts of Allah, and are eternal with the eternity of Allah ta`ala, because He is One in His Acts, Names and Essence. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, attributes the sending of blessings and peace to Allah by his use of the expression ‘*sarmadan*’ (eternal/everlasting) because it is Allah’s Acts which are eternal and everlasting. This means that there was no beginning to His sending blessings and peace upon Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. It is for this reason that he was the first progenitor of humanity and was a Prophet, when our corporeal progenitor, Adam was still between water and clay. It was related by Ibn Sa`d on the authority of Matraf ibn Abdallah ibn as-Shajir that a man once asked the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: ‘When were you a Prophet?’ He said: “While Adam was still between the spirit and the earth.” *Shaykh* Abd’l-Qadir al-Jaylani referred to our master Muhammad in this primordial reality as ‘the breaking of the dawn of the lights of Oneness, the first appearance of the secrets of Lordship, the splendid moon of the eternal realities, the bridegroom of universal mercy, the light and brilliance of every Messenger, the secret and guidance of every Prophet, the jewel essence of every sage and *wali*. *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn al-Habib said that our master Muhammad in his primordial reality is the first of the lights which overflowed from the immense oceans of the Divine Essence, the first to have entire realization in the hidden worlds and those manifest with all the meanings of the Names and Attributes, the first to give praise and abundant worship with all the varieties of worship and drawing near to Allah, the one who gives assistance in the worlds of the spirits and corporeal forms to all of existing things. It is because of this immense nature (*khuluq`adheem*) of our master Muhammad, that it is incumbent for those who attain knowledge of Allah to send unending blessings and peace upon him. Those who are not thankful of the means are not thankful of the ends. The knower of Allah *Shaykh* Maa’ al-`Aynayn said in his *Daleel`r-Rifaq*: “A part of gratitude to Allah ta`ala is showing gratitude for those by whose hands a blessing from the blessings of Allah manifest, based on the words of Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant hi peace: ‘Whoever is not thankful to people are not thankful to Allah.’ This is because showing gratitude for the intermediary is showing gratitude for what it connects to... There is no blessing more immense, vaster or more perfect than his blessing, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.” For, our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace is the means (*waseela*), the real teacher (*ustadh haqeeqi*) and spiritual guide (*shaykh haqeeqi*) of every spiritual aspirant. It is through sending blessing and peace upon him that those who attain gnosis and spiritual benefit attain what they attain. *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` said in his *Diya`l-Qawaa`id*: “Among the most important affairs is sending blessings upon the master of all spiritual masters in all times for those who desire to draw near to the Lord of the multiple earths and heavens. This is because the sending of blessings upon the Prophet draws down spiritual secrets, divine openings and purifies the inner nature from the remainder of turbidity and spiritual cloudiness. This is the case for the beginners, the ones of yearning and those who have completed the spiritual journey. The spiritual traveler (*saalik*) is advanced by means of it. The spiritual disciple (*mureed*) is disciplined and trained by means of it. And the knower of Allah (*aarif*) is given continuity by means of it after being eradicated by means of it. The sending of blessings upon the Prophet

increases the spiritual traveler (*saalik*) in spiritual strength; it increases the spiritual disciple (*mureed*) in chivalrous generosity; and increases the knower of Allah (*`aarif*) in dignified reverence. The sending of blessings upon the Prophet causes the spiritual traveler (*saalik*) to love good deeds; it causes the spiritual disciple (*mureed*) to earn spiritual states; and causes the knower of Allah (*`aarif*) to be established in stations of divine inspiration. The spiritual traveler (*saalik*) has his faith strengthened by means of the sending of blessings upon the Prophet; the spiritual disciple (*mureed*) has his certainty made abundant by means of it; and the knower of Allah (*`aarif*) has his eye witnessing increased by means of it. The spiritual traveler (*saalik*) has his illumination magnified due to the sending of blessings upon the Prophet; the spiritual disciple (*mureed*) has his secrets magnified due to it; and the knower of Allah (*`aarif*) sits firmly upon it. By means of the sending of blessings upon the Prophet the spiritual traveler (*saalik*) gains spiritual energy; the spiritual disciple (*mureed*) is protected from spiritual decadence; and the knower of Allah (*`aarif*) is disciplined on the Carpet of Nearness; and more than these from their spiritual expressions. There is no doubt that the sending of blessings upon the Prophet is among the most noble of the rites of the way of life (*deen*), under which emerges the remainder of the stations of certainty." I say: that the author's sending blessings and peace upon the Prophet is another manner of his showing praise and gratitude to Allah ta'ala, because showing gratitude for the means and favors of Allah is actually showing gratitude to Allah. It has been related by Ahmad on the authority of Ibn Mas'ud that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "The most thankful of the people to Allah are those who are most thankful to the people." There is no human being who has benefited us more than our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace has. Thus sending blessings and peace upon him is the greatest form of showing gratitude to Allah ta'ala. *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye' said in his *Diya'l-Qawaa'id*: "The sending of blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace is the spiritual ascent (*mi'raaj*), when the student does not meet a guiding *shaykh*. He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "The sending of blessings upon me is illumination in the heart, and it will be illumination upon the *Siraat*." When this illumination enters the heart darkness leaves it and the heart becomes guided. Whenever spiritual aspirations become difficult for you, then do much sending of blessings upon him, for he is the intermediate between you and your Lord the Exalted. He is the guide for us to Him. The ontological support of the entire creation from the Prophets to the *awliyya*, comes from him, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This is because all of their good deeds are shown to him, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. By means of sending blessings upon him, illumination is earned, and darkness cannot be removed except by means of illumination. What is meant by illumination is that which is related to the lower soul from impurities and what is related to the heart from reverberations of those errors which preempt the heart from good. In reality no one can achieve following his actions and character except by going to the extremes in love for him; and this cannot be achieved except by means of much sending blessings upon him. For when you love a thing you increase in mentioning it.

And his family, the possessors of exalted spiritual ranks

And his Companions, and those who follow in their spiritual Path¹⁰

¹⁰ After sending eternal blessings and peace upon the greatest means of Allah's favors to us, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, then sends the same blessings and peace upon those who benefited most from him Prophet, due to their proximity to him; by his words: "**And his family, the possessors of exalted spiritual ranks and his Companions, and those who follow in their spiritual Path**". The expressions 'aal' (family) and 'sahabi' (companion) have an inner esoteric meaning and an outward legal meaning. As for the inward referent to the 'family' of Muhammad, it can not refer to anyone besides his brothers among the Messengers and Prophets, upon them be the best blessings and abundant peace. This is because the expression 'aal' (family) has its etymology in the word 'el', which according to the *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, the learned *sharif* Muhammad Murtaḍa az-Zabidi in his *Taaj 'l-Uruus* refers to anything which has a quality regarded as inviolable (*haraam*) and sacrosanct (*muqaddas*). In Hebrew, Aramaic and Amharic the expression 'el' is a complement of a prefixed noun and has the meaning 'of God'; like when you say: *Jibr -el* (*Jibril*), *Mika-el* (*Mika'il*), *Israf-el* (*Israfil*) and *Izra-el* (*Izra'il*). Thus, the expression 'el' means 'that related to God', or it means 'a god'. The Arabic equivalent of this expression is 'ilah'. When the definite particle is prefixed to the expression it becomes 'Allah', the proper Name of the Absolute Being. Thus, the expression 'el' or 'aal' means a relationship or nearness which is sacrosanct and refers specifically to the close ties of kinship. Because the expression is rooted in that which is related to the Absolute Being, the foremost inviolable relationship to Muhammad, are his brothers from among the 313 Messengers and 124,000 Prophets, upon him and them be the best blessings and most abundant peace. Thus, sending blessings upon his family from among the Prophets and Messengers is an obligation corroborated by the Book, the *Sunna* and the Consensus. As for the outward legal meaning of the expression 'aal' (family), it includes his wives and descendents. It is said that it means those who follow him. It is said that it means his *Umma*. While the soundest opinion is that they are the people of his household to whom it is forbidden to give the obligatory alms, but to whom are granted the fifth of the spoils of war. These include the core of the Banu Hashim and the Banu Muttalib. These are the ones whom Allah chose from His creation after His prophet, blessings of Allah be upon him and all of them. In the prophetic tradition: "The obligatory alms is not permissible to be given to Muhammad and the family of Muhammad." Ibn al-Athir said: "There is disagreement regarding the family of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace to whom it is forbidden to give the obligatory alms. The majority of the scholars hold that this refers to the people of his household, which include his wives, children, Ali ibn Abi Talib and his children and descendents from Fatima the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, Ja'far ibn Abi Talib and his children, 'Aqil ibn Abi Talib and his children, al-'Abass ibn Abd'l-Muttalib and his children; and al-Harith ibn Abd'l-Muttalib and his children." He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Every supplication is veiled until one sends blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad." As for the legal judgment of sending blessings and peace upon the family of the Prophet, *Qadi* 'Iyad said in his *as-Shifa*: "There is unanimous agreement regarding the permissibility of sending blessings upon other than the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him

peace.” The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “O Allah make Your blessings and *baraka* be upon the family of Ahmad”; meaning by that his own family. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, described the family of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace as: ‘...the possessors of exalted spiritual ranks’ (*dhawi’l-maraatib’l-’alaa*), because all the elevated spiritual ranks from the time of the Prophet until our present time has been held and mastered by them; and no one who attains station with Allah can do so without having a relationship with them. This is a truth that only the ignorant would deny. The father-in-law of the poet, *Sultan* Muhammad Bello tells us in his *Miftaah ‘l-Basaa’ir* that his father the *Shehu* realized that the gateways to gnosis of Allah were the sages and savants of the family of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and them and grant them peace. For this reason he asserted that from the outset spiritual success, genuine virtue and experienced gnosis are depended upon having a dynamic and familiar relationship with the sages and scholars of descendents of Muhammad, upon him and them be peace. The *Sultan* said: “(My father, the *Shehu*), began to reflect in his heart that whoever desires to stand and make his affairs upright, this cannot be completed or perfected without having relationship with those who possessed prophetic kinship. Subsequently, he began to supplicate Allah that He would grant him from any direction with relationship with the possessors of noble prophetic kinship. Allah ta’ala then answered his supplications, for by the praises of Allah ta’ala with exactly what he asked for. This happened when the *Shehu* was in the spiritual state of Divine praise (*fee haal ‘l-hamd*) and continued until he traveled with us to a place called Mai Taaghuwa. At that time he was thirty-five years old. It was in his thirty-sixth year that he stood up to establish the commands and destroy prohibitions. It was then that Allah brought him a righteous worshiping servant who was wealthily provided for. We were all witnesses when the two men encountered one another. This man came from Yemen, but his origin was from the center of al-Medina (al-Munawarra). About this man and his reality, I myself am thoroughly aware. This all happened at the time (the *Shehu*) began to supplicate to Allah ta’ala that He would establish him firmly in His affair. Allah ta’ala answered him and gave him what he desired. It was then that this learned, pious and austere *Shareef* came.” This is what the poet meant when he described the family of Muhammad as the possessors of exalted spiritual states. As for the inward esoteric meaning of the expression ‘*sahabi*’ (companion) its etymology is from the verb ‘*sahaba*’ (to associate with, to consort with and keep the company of) and refers to every man and woman who adheres to the *Sunna* of Muhammad, his character and spiritual path as if he or her were in his company. The expression which the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace used to refer to this level of ‘companionship’ (*suhba*) is ‘*ikhwaan*’ (brotherhood) and refers to the elite among the *awliyya* until the Day of Judgment. It has been related by Abu Nu’aym on the authority of Ibn Umar that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “I long to see my brothers who will be ushered to my Pond, and I will meet each of them with a container in which will be beverage. For, indeed, I will personally give them to drink from my Pond before they enter Paradise!” It was said: “O Messenger of Allah! Are we not your brothers?” He said: “You are my companions. My brothers are those who believed in me even though they did not physically see me. I have begged my Lord that He will cool my eyes with you and with those who truly believed in me even though they never physically saw me.” Examine closely, how the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace joined his corporeal Companions with his spiritual brothers in being the

coolness of his eyes. There is no doubt that sending blessings and peace upon those who love him from among the *awliyya* is incumbent for the elite and the common alike. As for the outward legal meaning of the expression ‘*sahabi*’ (companion), it refers to every man and woman from among men and *jinn* whom Allah designated with seeing the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, listening to him, accepting *Islam* during his time, even if their companionship with him upon him be blessings and peace was a single day. The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said in his Ihya as-Sunna: “Allah `izza wa jalla chose them in order to establish His *deen* and to exalt His word... Allah `izza wa jalla singled them out with seeing their Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, with witnessing him, and with witnessing the descent of the *Qur'an* upon them fresh and brand-new. They took it directly from the mouth of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, at the same time he took it from the mouth of Jibril, upon him be peace. Allah also favored them with fighting along side the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace; assisting him and protecting him; with degrading disbelief and destroying it; and with elevating the light of *Islam* and exalting it. He ta`ala singled them out with memorizing the *Qur'an*, which descended from the heavens little by little. Allah thus made them suitable for memorizing it until they left nothing of it, not even a single letter. They then gathered the *Qur'an* together and made it easy for those who would come after them. They conquered the lands and regions on behalf of the Muslims and prepared the way for them. They also memorized the traditions of their Prophet in their hearts and authenticated them from what was sure to come of colloquial Arabic, mistakes, forgetfulness and heedlessness.” The Companions were those who inherited the spiritual Path of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace due to their keeping company with him (*suhbahu*) and became spiritually magnetized by his presence. They then transmitted the foundations of this spiritual path to the blessed generation after them and from them to every generation blessed to adhere to their *Sunnan* and Path, until our present day. This is what the poet, may Allah be merciful to him meant by his words: “...and those who follow in their spiritual Path.” This favor will continue until it reaches the Seal of the Muhammadan *Awliyya* in the personages of the master of the people of House Muhammad ibn Abdallah *al-Mahdi* and the Seal of the Universal *Awliyya* in the personage of the last of the Companions, the Messiah *Isa* the son of Mary, upon both of them be peace. Blessings and peace be upon all of them as a form of praise to Allah and gratitude for the uninterrupted favor which result from them. As for the legal ruling of sending blessings and peace upon the Companions, *Qadi`Iyad* also said in his as-Shifa: “In a tradition of Ibn Umar that he used to send blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, Abu Bakr and Umar, may Allah be pleased with both of them. This was mentioned by Malik in the al-Muwatta from a narration of Yahya al-Andalusi.”

فَقَصَدْنَا بِالنَّظْمِ شُكْرَ الْوَاهِبِ سُبْحَانَهُ الْمَفِيضِ لِلْمَوَاهِبِ

My objective with the poem is **Showing Gratitude to the Benefactor**
Glory be to Him **For the Overflowing He Gives Those Favored**¹¹

¹¹ Everything mentioned in the poem prior to this couplet is like a fundamental introduction containing in summation what will be elaborated on throughout the text. It is the custom of the People of Allah to conceal the details of their work and its secret in the introductory statements between the *basmalla* and the naming of the title of the work. They then subsume the jewel essence of the introductory statements into the name chosen for the title. Thus the details and secrets of the text are subsumed generally in its introduction; and the details and secrets of the introduction are concealed in summation in its title. They follow in this what the *Imam* and Gateway of the City of Knowledge of Allah, Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah ennoble his secret said: “Everything in all the revealed scriptures is subsumed in the four Heavenly Books. Everything in the four Heavenly Books is subsumed in the Immense *Qur’an*. Everything that is in the *Qur’an* is subsumed in the *al-Faatiha* of the Book. Everything that is in the *al-Faatiha* is subsumed in the *basmalla*. Everything that is in the *basmalla* is subsumed in the letter *ba*. Everything that is in the letter *ba* is subsumed in its dot.” The elite of the elite are able to extract the secrets of a text by reading its name. The elite are able to extract its secrets by reading its introduction. The wise and those for whom Allah desires good are able to extract its secrets from reading the detailed text. Those whose hearts are veiled would not extract its secrets even after reading the text a thousand times. We seek refuge with Allah from heedlessness and illusions. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, delineates his objective (*qasd*) and intention (*niyya*) and subsumes within this the actual title of the text, by his words: **“My objective with the poem is showing gratitude to the Benefactor glory be to Him for the overflowing He gives those favored.”** Every action is defined by its intention and ultimate objective, as the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said, as related by al-Bukhari on the authority of Umar ibn al-Khattab “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.” Thus, when a servant writes a single dot and intends by that dot to extract from it the sciences of the first and the last, then he will have the reward and compensation based upon the immensity of his intention even though his action is insignificant. Ibn al-Hajj elucidated this in a superb manner in his famous *al-Madkhal* where he describes a person who performs a single action, but intends within that single action to perform a multiple of objectives; he then enhances 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 among the People of Allah that the greatest of people in spiritual station and those who have gathered the most spiritual good and *baraka* are those whose seemingly trivial actions are purified and made vast by the purity and vastness of their intentions. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, named it ‘a poem’ (*nadham*) because it is composed in metrical poetry (*shi’r’l-mandhuum*) which is measured rhymed speech and means the kind of speech whose entire arrangement from the beginning to the end has the same rhythm, measure and

rhyme. Poetry (*shi`r*) is divided into different varieties, such as praise poetry (*madih*), satirical poetry (*hijaa`*), elegiac poetry (*rithaa`*), expository poetry (*uruud*), admonitory poetry (*tanbeeh*) etc. This poem is an expository style of poetry. The poet explains that his objective with the poem is to give thanks to Allah who favored him with overflowing gnosis of Allah, comprehension and sciences. This is because merely citing the favors of Allah is a form of showing gratitude for them, as Allah ta`ala says: “*And regarding the favors of Allah proclaim them*”; that is to say, innumerate them as a form of acknowledgement and in order to show them to others, so that they too can be in a state of praise and gratitude to Him. The expression ‘divine overflowing’ (*fayd*) is taken from the Arabic verb ‘*faada*’ (to overflow; to become super abundant). It means anything which increases until it goes beyond the prescribed limit to be contained and then it overflows abundantly (*faada faydan*). In the technical language of the People of Allah it means the constant overflowing of knowledge and the unending flood of gnosis of the Self-Disclosure (*tajalli*) of the Immutable Essence of Allah ta`ala, the Self-Disclosure (*tajalli*) of the Majestic and Beautiful Names and Attributes of Allah ta`ala, the Self-Disclosure of the Divine Acts of Allah; and the overflowing and manifestation of the multitude of divine, cosmic, celestial and terrestrial realities in the never ending unfolding of existence from pure nonexistence. *Shaykh* al-Qunawi said something similar to what the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, indicated by this couplet, in the introduction of his *Mirat`l-`Aarifeen*: “Glory be to the One who designated the essences (*‘ayyana`l-`ayyan*) by means of the overflowing of the Most Holy Immutable Pre-existence (*bi`l-fayd`l-aqdas`l-aqdam*), who brought into existence existing things (*kawwin`l-akwaan*) by means of the overflowing of the Holy Immutable Pre-existent (*bi`l-fayd`l-maqddas`l-muqaddim*), who manifested pre-existence (*adh`har`l-qidam*) by means of contingent existence (*huduuth*) and contingent existence by means of pre-existence.” This acute awareness of the Absolute Being and the Self-Disclosure of His Essence, Names, Attributes and Acts in the emergence of creation in all of its modes of being is what the poet describes as divine overflowing (*fayd*) which Allah ta`ala grants as a divine gift (*‘atiyya*) to those favored (*mawaahib*). The expression ‘*mawaahib*’ (those favored) is the plural of ‘*mawhiba*’ and implies someone naturally gifted with an advantage, such as physical beauty, natural strength, inherent eloquence or inborn excellent character traits. In this respect messengership and prophethood are inherent gifts (*hibba*) granted to specific human beings in the knowledge of Allah prior to their existence. These favors cannot be earned or acquired. In a sense saintliness (*wilaayat*) is also an inherent gift preordained for individuals who have a divine predisposition (*isti`daad*) for it. This aspect of *wilaayat* is inherited (*wiraatha*), as *Shaykh* Mukhtar al-Kunti al-Kabir delineated. However, there is an element of *wilaayat* which is causal (*iradi*) and comes about as a result of two effects: [1] a contingent divine magnetic attraction (*jadhaba*) where the sage fortuitously encounters an affair which irreversibly alters his inner spiritual state, as Abu`l-Abass Ahmad ibn Malkan al-Khadr, upon him be peace and others like him experienced; and [2] through self discipline (*riyaada*) and spiritual struggle (*mujaahida*) under the discipleship of a perfected *wali* until the soul (*nafs*) is transformed (*taghyeer*) and transmuted (*tabdeel*) through its seven stages and becomes translucent. This latter aspect of *wilaayat* is connected to the methodical science of *tasawwuf*. In many ways, this mode of attaining *wilaayat* is also an inherent gift (*hibba*) because its reality is that the servant cannot have success at self discipline or spiritual struggle regardless of his effort without first attaining success (*tawfeeq*) from Allah ta`ala. Thus, all praiseworthy

Regarding what we were singled out for with respect to sciences
For fulfilling rights include gratitude to Him as an obligation¹²

knowledge, behavior and actions are inherent gifts from Allah the Benefactor who grants them to whomever He wills from His servants by means of a secondary cause or without a secondary cause, because: “*He does whatever He wills.*” From the title of the poem, **Shukr’l-Waahib al-Mufeeda’l-Mawaahib** (Showing Gratitude to the Benefactor for the Divine Overflowing He Gives to Those Favored), *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, may the mercy of Allah be on him, is indicating that he had attained all three aspects of *wilaayat*: inherited inter-generationally from his *Turudbe`* forebears; by means of unanticipated contingent magnetic attraction; and through guided self discipline and spiritual struggle. He also explains the spiritual unveilings (*makaashifaat*) and gnosis (*ma`rifaat*) which result from these three modes of saintliness; as well as the acquired disciplines he mastered in the elemental, rational and *shari`a* sciences.

¹² After the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, explains his objective in composing the poem, he concludes by explaining its utility (*faa`ida*) by his words: “**Regarding what we were singled out for with respect to sciences; for fulfilling of rights include showing gratitude to Him as an obligation.**” *Shaykh* Dan Tafa utilized the first person plural pronoun ‘we’ (*nahnu*) to indicate that he is not just speaking of himself as an individual, but is cataloguing the sciences and gnosis granted to the sages of his *Fudiawa Turudbe`* ethnicity. The use of the expression ‘*khassa*’ (to confer upon/to favor with) indicates his view that knowledge is exclusive (*makhsuus*) and is conferred upon (*khassa bihi*) the people of distinction (*khaassa*). The people of distinction are the People of Allah in general and the sages of his immediate ethnicity in particular. Keeping with the spirit of the poem, out of gratitude to Allah ta`ala and in order to gain its *baraka* and mercy I will cite here some of the spiritually elite (*khawaas*) among the men and women of this community which stretched across seven generations. In his *Dabt al-Multaqattat* our spiritual master, *Waziri* Junaydu ibn Muhammad al-Bukhari, may Allah be merciful to him, illuminate his grave, and allow us to inherit his *baraka*, said: “The house of Aal was the most numerous of the children of (our common ancestor) Musa Jokolli. It was a house famous for piety, spiritual excellence, knowledge, the memorization of *Qur`an*, the learning of various sciences and acquaintance with its mysteries. This was a mystical secret which was passed among them from generation to generation until it became outwardly manifest with *Shaykh* Muhammad who was known as *Fuduye`*, may Allah be pleased with him.” The house of Aal referred to here were the *Turuudi* ethnicity under the leadership of ***Shaykh Aal*** ibn Muhammad Jubba ibn Muhammad Sanbu ibn Ayyub ibn Maasiran ibn Abu Bakr ibn Buba Baba ibn Musa Jokolli ibn *Imam* Muhammad Dambube` at-Turuude`. He along with his brother, ***Shaykh Muhammad Ghurtu*** ibn Muhammad Jubba embodied the historical consciousness, erudition and gnosis which were the hallmark of their entire ethnicity. In his *al-Uhuud wa`l-Mawaathiq* *Shaykh* Dan Tafa said that the exclusive mystical secrets, mastery of the Islamic sciences, personal austerity and piety moved from these two individuals and leaped between their descendents at random similar to the radiation and energy released in binary nuclear fission when the atom is split into two and then emits energy in a self-sustaining chain reaction. It is for this reason each generation of the *Fudiawa* produced two individuals: one manifest and one hidden, who collaborated in the dissemination of gnosis, erudition and the transmutation of the society. *Shaykh`* Aal

was the acknowledged leader of this community and thus his ethnicity were called during his generation the Banu `Aal or the 'House of Aal'. Similar to the Kunta family of Tinbuktu and Air, spiritual ranks were divided among the *Fudiawa* in a binary system, where there would always be an acknowledged spiritual leader in the clan, who was accompanied with a brother or cousin who acted as his spiritual minister (*wazir*), in the same symbiotic relationship that existed between the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and *Amir`l-Mu`mineen* Ali ibn Abi Talib. The similitude of the spiritual leader of the *Fudiawa* was like the Mother of the Book (*umm`l-kitaab*) and his minister was like the Detailed Book (*kitaab mubeen*), where the latter was a particularization of what was subsumed in the former. Thus, *Shaykh* Muhammad Ghurtu was the hidden companion of *Shaykh`Aal* who assisted him by particularizing and detailing the sciences, gnosis and secrets. From this binary brotherhood, the *baraka* and mastery of mystical sciences was passed to the sages of **the second generation** such as ***Shaykh Adam Kimbu ibn Muhammad Ghurtu*** who was the acknowledged leader of the house of Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Balku`u ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Uthman Sanghu ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Uthman ibn `Aal, *Shaykh* Abu Bakr ibn `Aal, the erudite *Shaykha* Maryum bint `Aal, and the extraordinary ***Shaykh Hamm ibn `Aal*** who was the *shaykh* of the scholars of his generation and the leader of the house of `Aal. From them it passed to **the third generation** of sages the many illustrious children of *Shaykh* Hamm. Among them was the leading *shaykh* of his generation, the exceptional ***Shaykh Modibo Dittu ibn Hamm*** who was the acknowledged head of the house of `Aal, *Shaykh* Musa ibn Uthman ibn `Aal who was the ancestor of the author, the miraculous sage *Shaykha* Taati bint Hamm ibn `Aal to whom Allah subjugated an entire tribe of *jinn* to her service, *Shaykh* Jibril ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, *Shaykh* Uthman ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, the pious *Shaykha* Khadijatu bint Hamm ibn `Aal, *Shaykh* al-Hassan ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, *Shaykh* Ahmad ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, the pious *Shaykha Iyya Gharka A`ishatu* Ghabindu bint Hamm ibn `Aal, and *Shaykh* Adde` ibn Hamm ibn `Aal. In the house of Ghurtu there were the illustrious ***Shaykh Sulayman Toronka ibn Harun*** ibn Muhammad Ghurtu who was the acknowledged leader of this house, the learned Ghurghu ibn Balku`u ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, the exceptional *Shaykh* Hamm Yero ibn Balku`u ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* al-Waali ibn Balku`u ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, the erudite *Inna Aminatu* bint Balku`u ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* al-Mustafa ibn Balku`u ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Jamm ibn Balku`u ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Isma`il ibn Balku`u ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Gharaabu ibn Balku`u ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Uthman ibn Balku`u ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Ibrahim ibn Balku`u ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, the pious *Shaykha* Faatimatu bint Balku`u ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, the exceptional *Shaykh* Jedo ibn Adam Kimbu ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu who was the paternal great grandfather of the *Shehu*, and *Shaykh* Ghurku ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu. From them it was passed to **the fourth generation** of sages led by the paternal grandfather of the *Shehu*, ***Shaykh Uthman ibn Saaliḥ*** ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu who was the acknowledged head of the house of Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Muhammad Julde` ibn Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, the pious and learned *Shaykha* Fatimatu Waghi bint Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, the ascetic *Shaykha* Faati bint Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, and the ascetic and learned *Shaykha`Ayshatuu* bint Saaliḥ ibn

Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu. The house of `Aal was led by the erudite jurist **Shaykh Raj ibn Modibo Dittu** ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, the extremely erudite, ascetic knower of Allah, *Shaykh* Ibrahim ibn Musa ibn Uthman ibn `Aal, the illustrious paternal grandmother of the *Shehu*, *Shaykha* Maryum bint Jibril ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Jibril ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, the learned *Iyya* Hawa bint Jibril ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, the maternal grandfather of the *Shehu*, *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, his wife the extremely erudite *Shaykha* Ruqayatu bint *Shaykh* Muhammad Sa`d ibn Daadan ibn Idris ibn Is`haq ibn Maasiraan, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn Abdullahi ibn Muhammad ibn Sa`d ibn Muhammad Ladan ibn Idris ibn Is`haq, the learned *Shaykh* Hamal ibn Ahmad ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, and the paternal great grandmother of the *Shehu*, the learned *Shaykha* Fatima bint Uthman ibn Hamm ibn `Aal. From them it was passed to **the fifth generation** of sages of the *Turudbe`* ethnicity where spiritual openings, erudition and piety overflowed and inundated the entire *Bilad as-Sudan*. They were led by a famous scholar who descended from both the house of `Aal and the house of Ghurtu and whose intellectual and spiritual achievements were so astounding that the entire ethnicity was renamed after him, 'the *Fudiawa`*'. He was the father of the *Shehu*, the illustrious **Fuduye` Muhammad ibn Uthman** ibn Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu. Along with him were: *Shaykh* `Aal ibn Uthman ibn Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu; his sister the erudite and ascetic *Inna* Kabu Fatimatu bint Uthman ibn Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu who was the mother of *Shaykha* Maymuna the wife of the *Shehu*; the wife of Fuduye`, the learned *Inna* Alfa bint *Shaykh* Mudharagha whose mother was the learned *Shaykha* Jalle` bint Faatu bint *Shaykh* Bi Sa`d; the renown *Shaykh* Bi Sa`d ibn Abdullahi ibn Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu; the famous *Shaykh* Muhammad Dikko ibn Abdullahi ibn Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu; *Shaykha* Halima bint Abdullahi ibn Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu; the learned *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn Uthman ibn Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu; *Shaykh* Muhammad Maghari ibn Uthman ibn Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu; the pious and ascetic *Shaykha* Hawwa Fushi bint Uthman ibn Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu; and the spiritual exemplar *Shaykha* Umm Hani bint Uthman ibn Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu. The house of `Aal was led by the illustrious traditionist and jurist **Shaykh al-Hajj Muhammad ibn Raj** ibn Modibo Dittu ibn Hamm ibn `Aal. Among them were: the famous *Shaykh* Uthman Bidduri ibn Muhammad al-Amin ibn Uthman ibn Hamm ibn `Aal after whom the *Shehu* modeled himself in commanding the good and forbidding evil, the erudite and saintly mother of the *Shehu*, *Shaykha* Hawwa bint Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Hamm ibn `Aal; her sister the exceedingly pious *Iyya Gharka`* Aisha bint Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Hamm ibn `Aal who was mother to the erudite judge Bi `Aal; the maternal uncles of the *Shehu*, *Shaykh al-Hajj* Muhammad Sanbu ibn Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, the learned teacher and excellent spiritual guide *Shaykh* Muhammad Sa`d ibn Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, the paternal cousin of the *Shehu*, *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, the erudite *Shaykh* Ibrahim Majji ibn Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, the father-in-law of *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye`, *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn al-Hajj Muhammad ibn al-Hassan ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, the pious and ascetic *Shaykh* Abdullahi Tuugha ibn Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, the learned jurist *Shaykh* Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Amin ibn Uthman ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, the paternal grandfather of the author *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, *Shaykh* Muhammad at-Turuudi ibn Ibrahim ibn Musa ibn Uthman ibn `Aal; the

ascetic and pious jurists *Shaykh* Muhammad Bu`tighu ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hajj Abd `r-Rahman ibn Ghiru ibn Muhammad Sanbu ibn Ayyub; and the erudite and ascetic *Shaykha* `A`isha bint Muhammad Sa`d ibn Daadan ibn Idris ibn Is`haq ibn Maasiraan. From them it was passed to **the sixth generation** of sages which witnessed an eradication of knowledge, spiritual unveilings, accompanied with a profound social transformation which altered the political, economic and social fabric of the entire *Bilad's-Sudan*. The leader of this sixth generation of what was now known as the 'House of Fuduye', was the Light of the age, the *mujaddid* of the *deen* of Islam, the reviver of the *Sunna*, the *Amir`l-Mu`mineen* **Shehu Uthman ibn Fuduye` Muhammad** ibn Uthman ibn Saalih ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu. He was accompanied and assisted by many of his siblings and maternal and paternal cousins. Among them were his blood brother, closest disciple, companion and *wazir* the most erudite of the *Bilad as-Sudan*, the **Professor Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` Muhammad** ibn Uthman ibn Saalih ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, the spiritual exemplar *Shaykh* Alfa Umar ibn Fuduye` Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Saalih ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, the unique sage *Shaykh* Muhammad Yero ibn Fuduye` Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Saalih ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, the wives of the *Shehu*: the learned and ascetic *Iyya Gharka* A`isha Ghabindu bint *Shaykh* Muhammad Sa`d ibn Abdullahi ibn Muhammad ibn Sa`d ibn Muhammad Laadan ibn Idris, *Shaykha* Juude` bint Muhammad Dikko ibn Abdullahi ibn Saalih ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, the learned and pious *Shaykha* Maymuna bint *Shaykh* Muhammad Haaj ibn Ibrahim ibn Maane` ibn Muhammad ibn Haaju bint Littiy, the erudite ascetic *Inna Gharka* Hawwa Bikaragha bint *Shaykh* Adam ibn Muhammad Agh, the ascetic and erudite *Shaykha* Khadijatu bint *Shaykh* Abu Bakr ibn Uthman al-Kaakiye`, the wives of *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye`: the learned and ascetic Fatimatu bint *Shaykh* Muhammad Sa`d ibn Abdullahi ibn Muhammad ibn Sa`d ibn Muhammad Laadan ibn Idris the sister of the *Iyya Gharka* A`isha, the wife of the *Shehu*; the learned and ascetic *Shaykha* al-Janna bint *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Muhammad Bello ibn Taandu ibn Jebbu ibn `Aal, the upright and erudite *Inna* Haawa, bint *Shaykh* al-Hajj Ghanne` ibn Duu Ghayale` ibn Muhammad ibn Haaju bint Bitty bint Jebbu, the pious and learned *Iyya* bint *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn al-Hajj Muhammad ibn al-Hassan ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, the paternal and maternal cousin of the *Shehu*, the learned *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Farabri ibn Muhammad ibn Hamal ibn Ahmad ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, the maternal and paternal cousin of the *Shehu*, *Shaykh* Mustafa ibn al-Hajj Uthman Bidduri ibn Muhammad al-Amin ibn Uthman ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, the chief scribe of the *Shehu* *Shaykh* al-Mustafa ibn Abd`r-Rahman ibn Abu Bakr ibn Umar ibn Abd`r-Rahman ibn Zaynabu bint Maghaadhe` ibn Bi Ayye`, his wife and sister of the *Shehu*, *Shaykha* Sawda bint Fuduye` Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Saalih ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykha* Ruqayatu bint Uthman Bidduri ibn Muhammad al-Amin ibn Uthman ibn Hamm ibn `Aal the wife of the saintly Muhammad Yero ibn Fuduye` Muhammad, the brother of the *Shehu*, *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Bi Sa`d ibn Abdullahi ibn Saalih ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Isa ibn Bi Sa`d ibn Abdullahi ibn Saalih ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Muhammad Adde` ibn Bi Sa`d ibn Abdullahi ibn Saalih ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykha* Hawwa bint Bi Sa`d ibn Abdullahi ibn Saalih ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Muhammad Mudi ibn Muhammad Adde` ibn Kulthum bint Ghurdu ibn Balku`u ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Jaji* Jalle` bint Muhammad Sanbu ibn Kulthum bint Ghurdu ibn Balku`u ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, *Shaykh* Ibrahim ibn Modibo ibn Toronka `Aal ibn Adde` ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, the

oldest son of the *Shehu*, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sa'd ibn *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, and a host of others. This was the generation of the *Fudiawa* which assisted the *Shehu* in the reform of the *deen* of Islam, the revival of the *Sunna* and the dissemination of Islamic erudition. From them it was passed to the **seventh generation** of sages, all of whom were leaders in their own right in diverse sciences and disciplines. Among them was the *amir* **Shaykh Muhammad al-Bukhari** ibn *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` Muhammad, the erudite *Shaykha* Safiyya bint *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` Muhammad the mother of *Shaykh* Mudegel Umar, **Sultan Abu Bakr Atiku** ibn *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, the *Shaykha* Fatimatu bint *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` Muhammad the wife of the military general Ali Jeddo, the *Shaykha* Hanna bint *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` Muhammad the wife of the *Amir* Muhammad Namoda, *Shaykha* Maryum bint *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` Muhammad. **Shaykh Modibo** ibn `Aal ibn Fuduye` Muhammad, the ascetic **Shaykha A`isha** bint Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` Muhammad, the *amir* and general **Muhammad ibn Abdullahi** ibn Fuduye` Muhammad, the illustrious sage **Shaykh Ibrahim al-Khalil** ibn Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` Muhammad, **Shaykh Ali ibn Abdullahi** ibn Fuduye` Muhammad, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` Muhammad, *Shaykh* Ghabindu ibn Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` Muhammad, the *Shaykha* Umm'l-Khayr bint Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` Muhammad, *Shaykh* Abu Bakr ibn Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` Muhammad, *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir ibn Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` Muhammad, *Shaykha* Zaynabu bint Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` Muhammad, *Shaykha* Maymuna bint Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` Muhammad, *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Alfa Umar ibn Fuduye` Muhammad, the gnostic sage **Shaykh Abdullahi Majinnu Mahye`** ibn Alfa Umar ibn Fuduye` Muhammad, and the mystic **Shaykh Danbu Ali Kashfuuji** ibn al-Bashir ibn Faati bint Kulthum binty Ghurtu ibn Balku`u ibn Muhammad Ghurtu. It was this generation which inherited the *baraka* of the *Shehu* and the earlier generations and created the high civilization of the Sokoto polity. Within this seventh generation were eight sages who were directly responsible for the education and spiritual training of the poet, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa. They were: [1] his father, **Shaykh Mustafa ibn Muhammad at-Turuudi** ibn Ibrahim ibn Musa ibn Uthman ibn `Aal; [2] his mother the learned **Shaykha Khadijatu** bint *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` Muhammad; her brother the illustrious saint [3] **Shaykh Muhammad Sanbu** ibn *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` Muhammad; [4] his father-in-law **Sultan Muhammad Bello** ibn *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Saaliḥ ibn Harun ibn Muhammad Ghurtu (who was the father of **Fatimatu**, one of the learned pious gnostic wives of the poet); [5] the learned **Shaykh Gidadu ibn Muhammad Ghari**; [6] the erudite **Shaykh Muhammad Mudi Mamari** ibn Uthman ibn Alfa Zazi ibn Modibo Ziragha ibn Ibrahim ibn Uthman Sanghu ibn Muhammad Ghurtu; and [7] the erudite gnostic **Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Bukhari** ibn Hawwa bint Hamada ibn Gharu bint Hamm ibn `Aal, the longed lived mystic [8] **Shaykh Muhammad Yero** ibn Gharu ibn Balku`u ibn Muhammad Ghurtu. It was from these illuminated individuals that the author *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir ibn Mustafa ibn Muhammad at-Turuudi ibn Ibrahim ibn Musa ibn Uthman ibn `Aal inherited a profound overflowing of *baraka*, received his intellectual training and spiritual discipline. This is ample reason for the poet to express his gratitude when he said: "...what we were singled out for with respect to sciences * for fulfilling of rights include showing gratitude to Him as an obligation." Apart of gratitude to Allah ta`ala is the fulfilling of the rights of Allah and the rights of His creatures. This means that

لَا سُمْعَةً وَلَا تَبْجُحًا بِهَا

بَلْ رَغْبَةً فِي الرَّيْدِ فِيهَا وَبِهَا

Not for fame or in order to boast due to them

But rather desiring by means of them to have increase in them

فَأَحْمَدُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي هَدَانِي

لشكْرِهِ عَلَى الَّذِي حَبَّانِي

So, I praise Allah, the One who guided me

To show gratitude to Him for the love He has shown me.¹³

fulfilling the rights one owes to teachers, spiritual guides, parents and righteous forebears is apart of the rights owed to Allah. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Those who are not grateful to people are not grateful to Allah.” Allah ta`ala says: “*Have fearful awareness of Allah about whom you will be questioned and about the wombs that bore you.*” By fulfilling the rights of those who have preceded us in the way of life (*deen*) we are able to attain relationship with Allah by means of their mediation, interconnectedness and the binding of their hearts with ours in an unbroken inter-generational chain which brings advantage to them and us in this life and the Hereafter. These are the rights and obligation referred to by the author. We ask Allah ta`ala by the knowledge, piety and *baraka* of all the sages of these seven generations as well as what Allah ta`ala favored Dan Tafa with, that Allah ta`ala will benefit us by them in this life and the Hereafter. Allah willing, I will discuss some of the sciences and books he received from them as those sciences are cited in his poem.

¹³ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him ends his introduction by explaining that his aim in classifying the diverse sciences that he received is: “**Not for fame or in order to boast due to them...**” That is to say, that neither fame (*sum`at*) or boasting (*tabahuja*) were the motivation behind his actions. The expression ‘*sum`at*’ (fame) takes its root from the verb ‘*sama`a*’ (to hear). It means to do something which people consider praiseworthy in order to attain repute and standing in their hearts. It has been related in the prophetic traditions: “Whoever desires to have repute with people with his actions, Allah will make him known by that.” Al-Azhari said: “It means that whoever desires renown with people due to his actions, Allah will then give him renowned, but will hold back his ultimate reward without giving it to him.” Some of the scholars say that it means that whoever desires repute with his actions in the hearts of people, his repute will then be his only recompense. It also means that whoever attributes some righteous action to himself that he actually did not do and claims some good that he did not perform, then Allah will expose him and manifest his dishonesty. It has been related on the authority of Jundub al-Bajali who said: “I once heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace say: ‘Whoever seeks fame by something, Allah will make him known by that. Whoever seeks to be seen for something, Allah will make him be seen by that.’” The expression ‘*tabajjaha*’ (boasting) means to ‘talk big’ like when you say: “*Huwa tamuuḥun wa yahibu ‘t-tabajjaha*” (He is ambitious and likes to talk big). It is a form of arrogance (*kibr*), conceit (*‘ujb*) and vanity (*tafaakhar*). The desire for repute and boasting go hand in hand and is a failure to recognize that favors and blessings are from Allah ta`ala. The one who desires repute by his actions and in order to boast as a result of them falsely assumes that he is the source and author of his actions. The reality is that he is in the depths of ignorance because every atom of good which a servant possesses comes from Allah ta`ala. The worst form of repute and boasting is that which is related to knowledge because knowledge is one of the Names of the Essence of Allah. Thus,

whoever vies with Allah ta`ala for that which is His right is closer to destruction than the shoe laces of his shoes. Whenever a servant is favored with a contingent blessing connected to the Immutable Essence of Allah, such as life, knowledge, power, will, sight, hearing and speaking, he is obligated to attribute these blessings to the One to whom these attributes are a necessary right (*haqq waajib*). To attribute these realities to himself or creation, and then to desire to be praised for them or worse to boast about them is the most despicable form of arrogance, and conceit. *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` said in his *Iqtibaas`l-`Ilm*: "...if your objectives in seeking knowledge are: competition with others; boastfulness and pride; seeking preference over one's friends; turning the faces of people towards you; or gathering the rubble of this worlds life - then you have only helped in the destruction of your way of life (*deen*), destroyed your soul, and sold your Hereafter for this worldly life. Your bargain will become profitless and your trade will become unproductive. Everything which you will have learned will only assist you in your disobedience and it will be a partner with you in your destruction. It will be as if you sold a sword to a highway robber that he will turn and use to rob you with. For whatever or whoever helps you in disobedience, even if it is with a single word, will have become a partner with you in your crime." The poet, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa reminds us again of the secret of his poem when he said: **"...but rather desiring by means of it to have increase in them."** Here he explains that the purpose of praise and gratitude to Allah is not only to recognize the Benefactor for His favors, but also to maintain, preserve and increase those blessings. It is as if he is saying: *"O my Lord increase me in knowledge."* Whoever desires increase in knowledge must show his gratitude for that knowledge by first recognizing its immense worth in his heart, then thanking Allah ta`ala with his tongue for guiding him to it and finally showing his gratitude to Allah with his limbs by acting in accordance with it and disseminating it to others. Allah ta`ala says: *"If you are grateful, I will increase you in blessings."* This means that when a person shows his gratitude for the immense worth of knowledge with his heart, his tongue and his limbs, then Allah will increase him in it, and give him knowledge which he did not previously possess. This is the meaning of the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: "Whoever acts upon his knowledge Allah will make him inherit a knowledge he did not know." It is this reality which induced the poet, may Allah be merciful to him to say: **"So, I praise Allah, the One who guided me to show gratitude to Him for the love He has shown me."** This means that he praises Allah desiring by that increase in reasons to praise Him. This extremely positive state rebounds upon itself like nuclear fission and multiplies and expands until as Prophet Dawud, upon him peace once said: "O my God! How can I truly thank You, when I myself am thanks to You as a blessing from You which requires me to be thankful yet again!" Allah ta`ala said: *"If you have realized that, then you have thanked Me."* Gratitude occurs between friends and loved ones. It is recognition of the favors and benefits one's close friends and relatives give you. Gratitude is the fruit of knowledge. That is to say that knowledge of the Praised and the perfections of His blessings is the drive of praise and exalting Him. When the Absolute Being acquaints the servant with Himself, He informs him that He loves him. When the servant knows that Allah loves him, he takes Him as the Beloved. The greatest sign of affection between two lovers is mutual acquaintance and secret converse. The true lover only sees what the Beloved wants him to see. He only hears what the Beloved wants him to hear. He speaks the way the Beloved desires him to speak. He only craves for what the Beloved desires and only moves to that which will earn him the

Beloved's pleasure. As a poet said: "Surrender to Salma and go wherever she goes * follow the winds of destiny and turn wherever she turns." This is the true nature of the lover and the Beloved. If a person is not willing to risk all for the Beloved then they cannot claim to be a genuine lover. This is what Allah ta'ala means by His words: "...and when I love him I become the sight by which he sees, the hearing by which he hears, the tongue by which he speaks, the hands by which he grasp and the feet by which he walks. When he asks of Me I will grant it to him and when he seeks refuge with Me I will give him refuge." When the servant attains the love of Allah demonstrated by his gnosis and acute awareness of Him, he must proclaim it to all others. Allah ta'ala says: "*Regarding the blessings of Allah proclaim it.*" There is no blessing greater than knowledge of Allah ta'ala. This poem by *Shaykh* Dan Tafa will demonstrate this assertion with brilliant clarity. *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye' said in his Tariq'l-Janna: "You should reflect on these two foundations: [1] Blessings (*ni`mat*) are only given to those who recognize the actual worth of blessings. He who recognizes its worth is one who is grateful. [2] Blessings are deprived from those who do not recognize the true worth of blessings, those who deny them and fail to show thanks for them. It is, thus, incumbent upon you to take pains in recognizing the true worth of all blessings, since Allah bestows the blessings upon you in the way of life (*deen*). Be warned of being ruined by this world's life and its rubble. Realize in reality that if you had been created from the beginning of the world and if you were to give thanks for the blessings of Islam from the first moment you came into existence until the end of time - you would still not be able to give the true thanks which is due Allah. However, it is incumbent upon you to take pains to your fullest ability in giving thanks for Allah's blessings." The Shukr'l-Waahib is a celebration and recognition of the immense value of knowledge of Allah, gratitude and thanks for the realization of knowledge of Allah, and the guarantor and encouragement for its increase. O our Lord, by means of You, increase us in knowledge of You.



My key informants and teachers regarding the cosmogony, eschatology and esoteric sciences of the poet, Dan Tafa. In back from left to right: *Shaykh* Bello ibn Abd'r-Raaziq ibn Uthman ibn *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir Dantafa, *Shaykh* Abu Bakr ibn Umar Basambu ibn Abu Bakr ibn Ahmad ar-Rufai ibn *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye, and *Shaykh* Umar Mukashfi ibn Ahmad Zaruuq. In front: Hassan ibn Uthman ibn *Shaykh* Bello ibn Abd'r-Raaziq ibn Uthman ibn *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir Dantafa

¹⁴ The etymology of the expression ‘*shari`a*’ (the divine law) is from the verb ‘*shara`a*’ (to make manifest or plain) like when you say: ‘Allah made manifest to us such a thing’ (*shara`a Allahu lanaa kadhaa*). It also has the meaning of being instituted or established and its synonym in Arabic is ‘*sannahu*’ (to establish as a custom). In ancient times the Arabs used the expression to refer to the open road (*shari`a*) which leads to the watering place for camels, or the point where the animal enters the water (*shiraa`u*). Further, it also has the meaning of ‘initiating’ or ‘beginning’ something, like when you say: ‘He commenced the affair’ (*shara`a fee `l-amri*). Thus, the term *shari`a* refers to a permanent watering place that is apparent to the eyes, or a way to water taken by both men and beasts. Its technical meaning is the divine road which has been instituted by Allah as a means or way to eternal life. Allah ta`ala says: “*He has instituted for you as law (shara`a lakum) from the way of life what He bequeathed to Noah. What We revealed to you, and what We gave to Abraham, Moses, and Jesus is that you establish the way of life (deen) and not be divided.*” It has been related by al-Hakim on the authority of Abu Sa`id al-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Indeed Allah ta`ala has three hundred and fifteen *shari`a* (ways). The Universally Compassionate says: ‘By My might, no servant from My servants comes on one of them without associating anything with Me, except that I will enter him by it into Paradise.’” Imam Ibn Jarir said in his *tafsir* that Ali ibn Abi Talib said: “Belief from the time that Allah sent Adam is bearing witness to **Laa ilaha illah Allah**, and acknowledgement of what has come from Allah to every people from their *shari`a* and methodology (*minhaaj*).” Imam Ibn `Arafa said that the *shari`a* is a way of belief or behavior which is manifest and correct in accordance with the true life-transaction (*deen*). Thus, the meaning of *shari`a* is the law of the life-transaction of Allah, which consists of obligations (*waajibaat*), prohibitions (*muhaarimat*), highly recommended matters (*mustahaabat*), reprehensible matters (*makruhaat*) and those that are permissible (*manduubaat*). The sciences of the way of life (*deen*) are divided into those sciences which are obligatory (*fard*) and superogatory (*nafal*). The sciences which are obligatory are divided into those sciences which are individual obligations (*fard `ayn*) and those which are collective obligations (*fard kifaaya*). The science of the *shari`a* is the science of the virtuous way of life (*deen*) which is the cure to the sickness of disobedience of the Knowing King.

فَتَوْنَهَا بِالنَّقْلِ أَوْ بِالسَّمْعِ

لَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا مِنْ عُلُومِ الشَّرْعِ

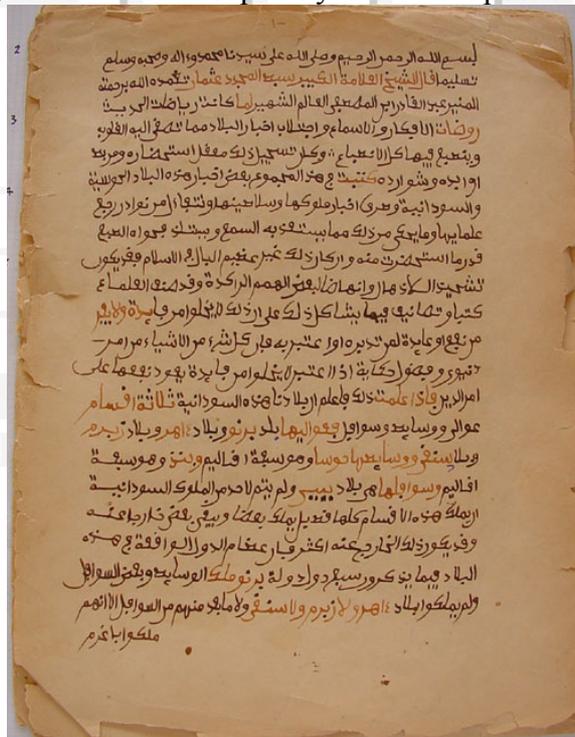
For we have taken from the sciences of the *shari`a*

Its disciplines by means of textual and direct oral transmission¹⁵

¹⁵ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him began by listing the sciences which should come before all others, and this is the science of the *shari`a*. This is because it is the foundation and the basis for the other sciences. The sciences of the *shari`a* are the diameter of knowledge which predetermines the extent of the circumference of gnosis of Allah ta`ala. Or you can say that it is the container which holds the divine realities (*haqaa`iq*). *Shaykh al-Akbar* said in his *al-Isra` Ila al-Maqaam 'l-Asra`* that the degree of spiritual unveiling an aspirant attains is based upon the scope of his knowledge of the outward *shari`a*. That is to say that the *shari`a* is the vessel which contains the *haqeeqa* and thus the more knowledge a person has of the *shari`a*, the more capacity he will have for spiritual openings and the ability to comprehend the openings he receives. It is for this reason that the disciplines of the sciences of the *shari`a* must come first. He said: “**For I have taken from the sciences of the *shari`a*, its disciplines...**” The expression ‘*funuun*’ is the plural of ‘*fann*’ (discipline) and means a variety (*anwaa`*) or categories (*asnaaf*) of a thing. The categories of the sciences of the *shari`a* are many, some of which the poet cites in the following poetic couplets. They are the linguistic sciences (*‘ilm ‘l-lughat*), the science of conjugation (*‘ilm ‘s-surf*), the science of grammar (*‘ilm ‘n-nahw*), the science of rhetorical eloquence (*‘ilm ‘l-bayaan*), the science of *Qur`anic* recitation (*‘ilm ‘l-qiraa`at*), the science of *Qur`anic* exegesis (*‘ilm ‘t-tafseer*), the science of the foundations of jurisprudence (*‘ilm usuul ‘l-fiqh*), the science of scholastic theology (*‘ilm ‘l-kalaam*), the science of the prophetic traditions (*‘ilm ‘l-hadeeth*), the science of jurisprudence (*‘ilm ‘l-fiqh*); and the science of spiritual purification of character (*‘ilm taṣawwuf ‘li‘t-takhalluq*). These are the fundamental sciences of the *shari`a* which are divided into those sciences which are obligatory upon every individual to know (*fard ‘ayn*) and those which are collective obligations (*fard kifaaya*). Allah willing we will elaborate on these differences in the coming couplets. The poet said that he learned these diverse sciences: “**...by means of textual transmission and oral transmission.**” The expression ‘*naql*’ (textual transmission) takes its root from the verb ‘*naqala*’ (to transfer/transcribe) and refers to those sciences which are transcribed in books and transmitted through textual evidence. *Imam Abd’l-Karim ibn Abdallah al-Khadiir* said in his commentary upon the *al-Lu’lu ‘l-Maknuun* of *Imam Haafidh ibn Ahmad al-Hakami*: “The expression ‘*naql*’ is knowledge narrated by means of an intermediary (*waasita*)”; i.e. the medium of textual evidence. The expression ‘*sama`*’ (direct oral transmission) takes its root from the verb ‘*sama`a*’ (to hear) and it means to receive knowledge or transmission directly from the mouth of the teacher like when you say: “I took from him orally and directly”; (*akhadtu `anhu sam`an wa samaa`an*). Thus, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him explains that he received the diverse disciplines of the sciences of the *shari`a* directly by oral transmission from his teachers and through the study of transmitted text with teachers. Among those with whom he studied the sciences of the *shari`a* were his father, the learned *Amir* of *Salame`*, *Mustafa ibn Muhammad at-Turuudi* from whom he acquired most of his knowledge as he said in his *Tarjuma Ba`d ‘l-Ulama Zamaanhi*: “...it was with him that I read the most of what I transmitted and it was from him that I took most of what I studied. Rather, it was under his guidance that I excelled and became distinguished in knowledge. It was through his spiritual overflowing that I was able to awake and

SANKORE'

attain the fragrance of erudition.” He also studied with his learned mother the gnostic Khadijatu bint Shehu Uthman ibn Fuduye` who was responsible for translating several of the fundamental books of jurisprudence such as the ar-Risaalat and the al-Mukhtasar into Hausa and Fulfulde`. In addition to his parents, his teachers from whom he learned the diverse disciplines of the *shari`a* were his father-in-law *Sultan Muhammad Bello ibn Shehu*, *Amir Muhammad al-Bukhari ibn Shehu*, *Shaykh Gidadu ibn Muhammad Garu*, and *Shaykh Muhammad Mudi Mamari ibn Uthman ibn Alfa Zazi*. It was with them that he studied the sciences by direct transmission (*samaa`an*) and by means of studying of the text (*naqlan*). It was from them that he received the keys of learning (*mifaatih`l-`uluum*) which enabled him to then proceed with his own independent studies; as he will state explicitly in the next poetic couplet.



Folio 01 of the historical work about the seven kingdoms of the *Bilad`s-Sudan* called Rawdat`l-Afkaar which the poet, Dan Tafa composed at the age of 21

And by perusing the volumes of text
Of the prominent books as well as the minor ones¹⁶

¹⁶ After establishing that he sat in the presence of the scholars and took the fundamental sciences from them either directly or through the study of the texts with them, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him then indicates that this enabled him to then pursue independent study. This is indicated by his words: “**And by perusing the volumes of text...**”; the use of the letter ‘waw’, a particle of conjunction (*harf`atf*), in this context means order (*tarteeb*) and sequence (*taraaduf*) which means that it is what follows subsequent to sitting in the presence of the learned ones. Allah ta`ala says: “*And ask the people of the Reminder if you do not know.*” This is a clear command from Allah ta`ala to seek knowledge by humbly sitting and taking transmission from the scholars. It is also a censure against taking knowledge from books alone without first receiving the keys to knowledge at the hands of the scholars. The expression ‘*mutaali`aat*’ (perusal) takes its root from the verb ‘*tala`*’ (to rise/to appear/to sprout) like when you say: ‘The sun has risen’ (*tala`at`s-shamsu*); ‘The dawn has appeared’ (*tala`a`l-fajru*); or ‘The plants have sprouted’ (*tala`a`n-nabaatu*). The expression ‘*muttali`u*’ is a high place on a mountain from which one can be exposed (*atla`u*) to everything below it. Thus, his words: “...by perusing the volumes of text...” means by examining them and studying them from the perspective of the scholars with whom he studied, based upon the principles they laid down for him, and utilizing the keys which they gave him. This form of perusing is higher than the reading of the common people, because it is approaching the text from the elevated viewpoint of the corroborated insight (*baseera*) transmitted from the scholars. The expression ‘*asfaar*’ is plural for ‘*sifr*’ which means a large book or a voluminous book. Allah ta`ala says criticizing the Jews who failed to act in accordance with the principles of the Torah which they had memorized: “...*they are like donkeys carrying voluminous books (asfaaran).*” The perusing and study of volumes of texts in the sciences of Islam, after first disciplining the soul by sitting in the company of the right acting scholars is the spiritual litany of the student of knowledge and the scholar. In fact, it is the best form of worship of Allah ta`ala. *Imam* at-Tabarani related on the authority of Ibn Umar that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “The best form of worship is comprehension of jurisprudence, and the most superior form of way of life (*deen*) is scrupulous piety.” It has been related by Abu Mansur ad-Daylami in a sound narration on the authority of Abu Hurayra, that the Messenger of Allah may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “The best act of worship is seeking knowledge.” Thus, worship, (which is an action of the heart and the limbs); cannot be truly valid without first understanding the Object of worship and formulating the means of worship. Thus, knowledge of the One worshipped and knowledge of how to worship must precede worship itself, in order for it to be sound. This must be persistent until knowledge and worship become One in the oceans of the Known and Worshipped. *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` said in his *Diya`Uluum`d-Deen*: “As for the scholar who benefits the people by his knowledge in giving legal decisions (*fatwa*), instructions (*tadrees*) or composing texts (*tasneef*), it is required of him to peruse (*mutaali`at*) and compose texts (*tasneef*). If it is possible, his time should be drowned in this, because it is the most superior action he can be involved with after the prescribed obligations and their implementation. However, it is necessary that he

should perform some form of remembrance of Allah after the *subh* prayer. After sunrise he should be preoccupied with teaching. After the forenoon, he should be preoccupied with composing and perusal of text. After the *asr* he should be preoccupied with listening to what is recited to him by his students in the areas of *Qur'anic* exegesis, prophetic traditions, or some other beneficial knowledge. After the reddening of the sun he should be preoccupied with seeking forgiveness and glorification of Allah until the setting of the sun. As for the night, the first third of it should be spent perusing the scholarly text, the middle of the night should be spent in prayer and then sleep; and finally, the last part of the night should be spent seeking forgiveness from Allah. As for the student of knowledge (*muta'allim*), performing remembrance of Allah and supererogatory acts is best for him. However, he should also be preoccupied with the same which occupies the scholar: in attaining advantage, study (*dars*), transcribing (*naskh*) the scholarly text being studied and perusing them. On the other hand, if the student of knowledge is still among the common people (*'awaam*), then his being present in the assemblies of knowledge and remembrance is better for him than reciting the litanies which we mentioned." This is because his sitting in the presence of the right acting scholars must have priority over his perusing texts, transcribing them or being drowned in acts of worship. Allah ta'ala says: "*Stop in affairs until you know the judgment of Allah in it.*" The obedience of the limbs and the humble submission of the heart has its prerequisites, its boundaries, its rules and regulations. It is this knowledge which makes worship sound. Therefore knowledge of the essential elements of worship is superior to worship itself, because the latter is not valid without the former. *Imam* al-Qurtubi said in his *al-Jaami` Li'l-Ahkaam*: "Only those who know Allah and believe in Him understand the necessity of worshipping Him, thus worship is predicated on knowledge. In fact every act of worship, rather every social and human interaction is predicated upon the priority of knowledge. It is for this reason that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: 'Knowledge is the leader of action'." The leader of a thing is made so by nature of its superior rank and is necessary for the soundness and validity of what it leads. Therefore knowledge is the most superior form of worship because worship is not sound or valid without it. Thus the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, indicates that he had passed the level of the common man and had become steeped in the station of the learned ones whose preoccupation should be the perusal of voluminous texts. He describes these works by his words: "**...of the prominent books as well as the minor ones.**" The expressions '*kubaar*' (prominent) and '*sughaar*' (minor) are two adjectives (*na'atayn*) which describe the plural noun 'books'. The expressions prominent and minor are referents to eminence and size, because a text may be minor in size but prominent in its suitability (*maqbuul*) and utility (*ifaada*) to the *Umma*; while another text may be prominent and voluminous in size but minor since it remained relatively obscure to the scholarly community and was rarely used by them in instruction and transmission. Some books are prominent in their suitability and distinction but varied in size, such as the *al-Mudawwana* which is both qualitatively and quantitatively prominent; and the *al-Akhdari* which is minor in size but prominent in its utility to Islamic jurisprudence.

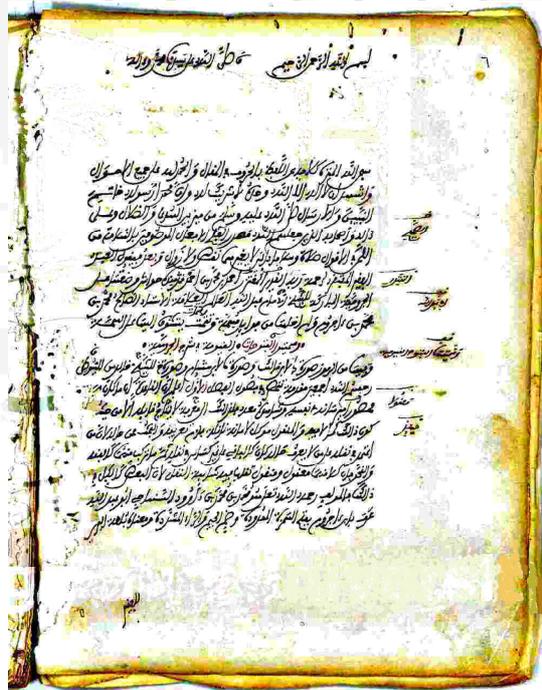
From the linguistic sciences, from morphology

And grammar, and rhetorical eloquence by deep study¹⁷

¹⁷ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him then begins to catalogue the disciplines which he had mastered from the sciences of the *shari`a* starting with the sciences related to speech (*kalaam*) and expressions (*alfaadh*) by his words: “**From the linguistic sciences...**”; the linguistic sciences (*`ilm 'l-lughaat*) as *Imam* al-Qunuuji said are those sciences whose objective is not an end in and of themselves, but are instruments (*alat*) which guard other than itself from error. They include those sciences which protect from errors in meaning or those which are a means to comprehending expressions (*lafdh*) and transcription (*kitaaba*). The sciences which help protect from errors in meaning include the science of articulated logic (*`ilm 'l-mantiq*), while those which are means to comprehending expressions and transcription include the science of literature (*`ilm 'l-adab*) and those sciences used to research into semantics (*dalaalat lisaaniyya*), philology (*fiqh 'l-lugha*) and rhetoric (*dalaalat bayaan*). The poet does not catalogue all the sciences of linguistics, but list the most important of these sciences. This is why he began the hemistich with the genitive particle (*harf khafd*) – ‘*min*’ (from) which means as as-Shurnubi said in his commentary upon the *al-Ajurumiyya* ‘the commencement or beginning of a goal in a particular location’ (*ibtida' 'l-ghaayat fee'l-makaan*) like when Allah ta`ala says: ‘...*min 'l-masjidi 'l-haraami*’ (‘...from the Sacred Mosque’). It also has the meaning of the extraction of a part from the whole. In the context of the poem, the genitive particle means ‘from among these sciences’. He, may Allah be merciful to him said: “...**from morphology**”; the expression ‘*tasreef*’ takes its root from the verb ‘*sarafa*’ (to turn a thing away from something). Allah ta`ala says: “*I will turn away from (sa`asrifuu `an) My signs those who are arrogant in the earth without right.*” The technical meaning of ‘*sirf*’ is to inflect a word, decline a noun or to conjugate a verb; and is also known as ‘*ilm 't-tasreef*’. Ibn al-Haajib said that it is the science of the foundations by which the circumstances of the morphology of uninflected and declinable words are known, and the science of the transformation of the root of a word into its various measures (*awzaan*). There is some dispute as to who was the first of the scholars to codify the science of morphology. Some say it was Abu Bakr Uthman ibn Muhammad ibn `Adiy al-Mazini al-Basri [d. 248 A.H./? C.E.]. The majority hold the view that it was Abu'l-Abass Muhammad ibn Yazid ibn Abd'l-Akbar al-Azdi al-Basri, known as al-Mubarrad [b. the 10th *Dhu'l-Hijjah*, 210 A.H./24th March 826 C.E.; d. in the month of *Muharram*, 286 A.H./903 C.E.]. His most famous work was his *Kitaab'l-Kaamil fi'l-Lugha wa'l-Adab wa'n-Nahw wa't-Tasreef* considered to be the first text composed on the subject. As for the teachers of the science of *tasreef* among the *Fudiawa* from whom the poet received this science, the first of them was his father *Mallam* Mustafa at-Turuudi with whom he studied the *al-Khulaasa* and other books of linguistics. He also studied the science of morphology with his maternal uncle *Amir* Muhammad al-Bukhari ibn *Shehu* Uthman, *Shaykh* Gidadu ad-Darir ibn Muhammad Gharu and *Shaykh* Muhammad Mudi Mamari ibn Uthman ibn Alfa Zazi. All of these scholars took the science of *tasreef* from the leading Arabic linguists of the age, *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye`, who was an absolute *mujtahid* in the science of morphology. He composed one of the greatest text ever composed on the subject called *al-Hisn'r-Raseen*. No other book has ever been composed on the science of morphology equal to the *al-Hisn'r-Raseen* of *Shaykh*

Abdullahi ibn Fuduye`. His chief students in this science were the above mentioned teachers of the poet who bequeathed to him all the linguistic sciences. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him continued: “...and grammar (*nahw*)”; which means the science that includes the principles by which the inflection and parts of speech of Arabic words are known when they are constructed into phrases. According to the scholars *nahw* is the most important of the linguistic sciences and is considered to be an individual obligation (*waajib 'ayyan*) because it clarifies the foundations of the objectives of semantics by which the agent (*faa'il*) can be distinguished from the direct object (*maf'uul bihi*), and the subject (*mubtada'*) can be distinguished from the predicate (*khabr*). The objectives and meanings of the *Qur'an*, the *Sunna*, the *ijma'* of the *Sunni* scholars cannot be known or understood without a proper comprehension of the science of grammar. The first to lay down the rules of *nahw* (grammar) was the *Amir al-Mu'mineen* Ali ibn Abi Taalib, may Allah be pleased with him. It was related by Abu 'l-Faraj in his al-Aghaani by way of Ja'far ibn Abi Harb ibn Abi 'l-Aswaad on the authority of his father, who said: “It was said to Abu'l-Aswaad: ‘From where did you take the science (meaning by that the science of grammar)? He said: ‘I have taken its boundaries from Ali ibn Abi Taalib’.” Abu'l-Aswaad described how this science was transmitted to him by Ali in a tradition which has been related by Abu'l-Qaasim az-Zujaaji in his 'Amaali: “Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Rustum at-Tabri informed us that Abu Haatim as-Sajastaani informed me that Ya'qub ibn Ihsaaq al-Hadrumi informed us that Sa'id ibn Saalim al-Baahili informed us that my father informed us on the authority of Abu'l-Aswad ad-Dawli who said: ‘I entered upon the *Amir al-Mu'mineen* Ali ibn Abi Taalib. I saw him with his head bowed in deep contemplation. I then said to him: ‘What are you deliberating about O *Amir al-Mu'mineen*?’ He responded: ‘I have heard this Arabic slang in your country, so I desired to compose a book concerning the fundamentals of Arabic language.’ I then said: ‘If you do that, you will give life to us and the Arabic language will persist among us.’ I then returned to him after three days wherein he handed me this transcription in which was written: ‘In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, and the Merciful: *al-Kalaam* (speech), the whole of it includes the *ism* (noun), the *fi'l* (verb) and the *harf* (particle). For the *ism* is that which informs about the named. The *fi'l* is that which informs about the dynamics (*harakat*) of the named. The *harf* is that which informs about the meaning, which is neither an *ism* nor a *fi'l*.’ He then said to me: ‘Proceed in the same fashion (*nahw*) and add whatever occurs to you.; and realize, O Abu'l-Aswaad, that entities (of the *ism*) are three kinds: those which are manifest (*dhaahir*); those which are pronouns (*mudmar*); and those which are neither *dhaahir* nor *mudmar*’.” This command by Ali for Abu'l-Aswad to follow him in the same fashion (*nahw*) is where the name grammar (*nahw*) took its name. As I cited previously, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him took this science as well as the other linguistic sciences from his father *Shaykh* Mustafa at-Turuudi, with whom he studied the renown grammatical work of *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` called al-Bahr'l-Muheet which was a commentary upon the famous grammar text of as-Suyuti, the Jaam`l-Jawaami, which he arranged into four thousand four hundred and forty-four poetic verses. More of his teachers in the science of grammar were his maternal uncle *Amir* Muhammad al-Bukhari ibn *Shehu*, *Shaykh* Gidadu ibn Muhammad Gharu and *Shaykh* Muhammad Mudi Mamari ibn Uthman. Among the books he studied with them were the al-Mulhat'l-Badariya of *Shaykh* Abu Hayan Muhammad ibn Yusef al-Andalusi [d. 745 A.H.]; the famous Qatr'n-Nadi Wabl as-Sadi of *Shaykh* Abu Muhammad Abdallah ibn Yusef ibn Hisham an-Nahwi [d. 762 A.H.]; and the al-

Alfiyat Fi 'n-Nahw also known as the al-Haajibiya and the al-Khulaasa of *Shaykh* Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Abdallah at-Taai' al-Jayaani, known as Ibn Malik an-Nahwi. [d. 672 A.H.]. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: “...and **rhetorical eloquence...**” The expression ‘*bayaan*’ is an infinitive noun (*masdar*) and takes its root from the verb ‘*baana*’ (to make clear or evident). It means lucidity or clarity of expression and in some sense it is synonymous with ‘*balaagha*’ (eloquence) but is broader than it. It is the science by which a singular desired meaning can be understood by means of diverse constructed syntax and it makes plain the connotations which are most ideal, since some nuances of expressions are more explicit in conveying meaning than others either through verbal expression (*ibaara*) or through writing (*kitaaba*). Some scholars consider the study of this science to be blameworthy based upon the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace as related on the authority of Abu ‘d-Darda: “Verily eloquence (*al-bayaan*) is apart of sorcery.” What he meant here is being overly eloquent and verbose in speech; or using one’s eloquence to obscure the truth and to render falsehood as acceptable. Those who maintain that the science is permissible and praiseworthy take their evidence from the words of Allah ta’ala: “*The Rahman has taught the Qur’an. He has created humanity and taught him eloquence (al-bayaan).*” In a sense the science of rhetorical eloquence is inseparable from the science of logic (*mantiq*) as I will explain, Allah willing. Abu Tahir al-Baghdadi said in his Qaanuun’l-Balaagha: “Whatever lifts the veil from a hidden meaning where it is understood and accepted by the intellect is called rhetorical eloquence (*bayaan*).” Among the books of rhetorical eloquence which the poet studied was the as-Sullam’l-Manuriq of *Shaykh* Abd’r-Rahman ibn Sayyidi Muhammad as-Saghir that he read extensively with *Shaykh* Gidadu ibn Muhammad Gharu. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him ended the hemistich by saying that he acquired these linguistic sciences: “...by deep study”; that is to say, that his study of these sciences were extensive. The reliability of this assertion can be corroborated by examining the many prose and poetic works of the author.



The al-Futuuhat al-Qayumiyya by *Shaykh* Ahmad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad at-Timbukti as-Sudani a commentary upon the famous work of syntax, inflection and grammar called al-Ajrumiyya

From the foundations of jurisprudence and scholastic theology
And a study of the clear and perfected *Sunna*¹⁸

¹⁸ After discussing the primary instruments for acquiring knowledge, which are the linguistic sciences, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, then cites the sciences to which these linguistic sciences are applied. He says: “**From the foundations of jurisprudence**”; which means among the sciences which he and the *Fudiawa* ethnicity were given in the sciences of the *shari`a* was a deep understanding of ‘*usuul`l-fiqh`*. The expression ‘*usuul`*’ is plural for ‘*asl`*’, which means the origin of a thing or its foundation and the fundamental principles upon which a thing is constructed. The expression ‘*fiqh`*’ (jurisprudence) takes its origin from the verb ‘*faqaha`*’ (to understand). Originally it meant the ability of the Bedouin to look at a herd of camel and at a glance determine which were suitable for racing, war, carrying burdens or breeding. Technically it came to mean the ability to extract legal judgments from the sources of the way of life (*deen*) such as the *Qur`an*, the *Sunna*, and the *Ijma`*. Allah ta`ala says: “*We have detailed the signs for the people so that they can understand (yafqahuun).*” It has been related by Ahmad, al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Mu`awiyya that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “When Allah desires good for someone He gives him understanding (*yafiqqahu*) in the way of life (*deen*).” Thus, the concept of ‘*fiqh`*’ means understanding or knowledge of a thing. In this context it means jurisprudence or the science of the law (*ilm`s-shari`a*). The meaning of ‘*usuul`l-fiqh`*’ is the science of the extraction of the legal judgments of the branches of the *shari`a* from its corroborated evidence, which are the *Qur`an*, the *Sunna*, the *Ijma`* (consensus) and *Qiyas* (analogy). The science of ‘*usuul`l-fiqh`*’ includes a deep knowledge of the proper methodologies in supposition (*nadhar*), discussion (*munaadhira*), debate (*jadal*) and disagreements (*khilaaf*). The first scholar to systematize this science was the *mujaddid*, Imam Muhammad ibn Idris as-Shafi`. Al-Qanuuji said that the most advantageous works composed on the science of ‘*usuul`l-fiqh`*’ were the *Irshaad`l-Fahuul Ila Tahqeeq`l-Haqq Min`l-Usuul* of *Qadi* Muhammad ibn Ali as-Shawkani al-Yemeni, and his own abridgement of the same text called *Husuul`l-Ma`muul Min`l-Usuul*. Among the texts of ‘*usuul`l-fiqh`*’ which were routinely studied by the *Fudiawa* were the *al-Kawkab as-Saati`* of Imam Abd`r-Rahman as-Suyuti, the *Jam`u`l-Jawaami` Fee Usuul`l-Fiqh* of Taj`d-Deen Abd`l-Wahaab ibn Ali ibn as-Subki, as well as the works of Imam Shihaab`d-Deen Abu`l-Abass Ahmad ibn Idris al-Qiraafi al-Maliki, such as his *Tanqeeh`l-Fusuul Fee`l-Usuul*, his *al-Ajwiba`l-Mujbira`An al-As`ila al-Muheera*, his *Anwaar`l-Buruuq Fee Anwaa` al-Faruuq* and his *al-Ihkaam Fee Tamyeez al-Fatwa`An al-Ahkaam*. They also included the works of as-Shatibi, al-Qirafi, and al-Wansharisi. The *Fudiawa* scholars responsible for advancing this science among their clan were the maternal and paternal uncle of the *Shehu*, *Shaykh* Mustafa ibn al-Hajj Uthman Bidduri ibn Muhammad al-Amin ibn Uthman ibn Hamm ibn `Aal, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, and *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye`, *Shaykh* Ali Koyi and *Shaykh* Musa ibn Abdullahi who composed his own commentary upon the *al-Kawkab as-Saati`* called *Sullam as-Saati`*. Those responsible for teaching the science of ‘*usuul`l-fiqh`*’ to the poet, were his father *Shaykh* Mustafa ibn Muhammad at-Turudi, *Shaykh* Gidadu ibn Muhammad Gharu, and *Shaykh* Muhammad Mudi Mamari ibn Uthman ibn Alfa Zazi. Al-Qanuuji said that it is essential for the student after mastering the discipline of ‘*usuul`l-fiqh`*’ that he then

preoccupies himself with the discipline of scholastic theology (*`ilm`l-kalaam*). This is why the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: “**...and scholastic theology**”; where the conjunctive particle (*harf`atf*) indicates order (*tarteeb*) and sequence (*taraaduf*). The meaning of the expression ‘*kalaam*’ (theology) takes its root from its literal meaning ‘speech’. *Imam* al-*Ijee* said in his *al-Mawaaqif*: “The science of theology (*kalaam*) is the science concerned with the establishment of religious beliefs by extracting proofs and removing doubts.” It is thus, a branch of the science of ‘*usuul`d-deen*’. *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` said in his *Fat`h`l-Basaa`ir*: “The science of *tawheed* is divided into two divisions: [1] the foundations of the way of life (*usuul`d-deen*), and [2] scholastic theology (*`ilm`l-kalaam*). As for the foundations of the way of life it is apart of the individual obligations (*furuud`l-ayyaan*) while scholastic theology it is apart of the collective obligations (*furuud`l-kifaaya*).” He also said in his *Umdat`l-Muta`abideen* quoting from *Shaykh* as-Shar`ani: “Realize O brother! that the scholars of Islam have not composed the books of scholastic theology (*`ilm`l-kalaam*) in order to establish in themselves or others knowledge of Allah ta`ala. They have only composed it as a deterrent against the opponents of the *deen* who are the natural philosophers and the *Mu`tazila*. So the scholars, may Allah be pleased with them, only sought to establish definitive proofs against them in order to return them to the beliefs (*i`tiqaad*) of what is obligatory from *Imaan* in accordance with what the Messengers came with from their Lord.” The first of the scholars of scholastic theology (*mutakallimuun*) to systematize this science was the *mujaddid*, *Imam* Abu`l-Hassan al-Ash`ari. Among the key works on scholastic theology studied and taught in the *Bilad`s-Sudan* were the *al-Laamiyya fee`l-Kalaam* of *Imam* Abu`l-Abass Ahmad ibn Abdallah al-Jazaa`iri as well as the three major works of *Imam* Muhammad ibn Yunus ibn Umar `l-Hassani `s-Sanusi, [d. 1486]. They were called the *`Aqeedat Ahl`l-Tawheed`l-Kubra*, the *al-Wusta* and the *as-Sughra* also called *Umm al-Baraahin*. These works along with their many commentaries, such as those of *Shaykh* Ahmad al-Ghaneemi al-Ansari, were studied exhaustively. *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` particularly discussed the level of study in this science with *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` when he said in his *Ida`n-Nusuukh*: “I also took from him the science of Divine Unity (*at-tawheed*) from the books of Sanusi, their commentaries and from other works. It was rare that a book of *tawheed* made it to our country and I knew about it that we did not copy it from him.” The father of the poet, *Shaykh* Mustafa at-Turuudi took the science of ‘*kalaam*’ from *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` and *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`. He in turn was the chief teacher of *Shaykh* Dan Tafa in this science. After mentioning the science of scholastic theology, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him completes the hemistich by mentioning the greatest of the sciences in advantage, the one most abundant in benefit, the most extensive of them in rank and the most majestic of them in significance – the pure Living *Sunna*. He said “**...and a study of the science of the clear and perfected Sunna**”. The expression ‘*Sunna*’ with the *Fudiawa* had a transcendent fundamental spiritual meaning, a legal meaning and a technical linguistic meaning. In his *Ihya`s-Sunna* the *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` described the technical and legal meaning of ‘*sunna*’: “...as Ahmed ibn Ali ibn Abd`r-Rahmaan al-Manjuri said in his commentary upon the *Minhaj`l-Muntakhib*: ‘The *Sunna* linguistically means a way (*at-tareeqa*) and a custom (*al`aadat*). The *Sunna* technically is a word which is a combination of a form of worship (*al`ibaadat*) and a form of proof (*al`adaalat*). The *Sunna* with regard to worship are the supererogatory acts which the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, practiced constantly, or it was understood by it that it was to be done continuously,

even when its cause was not recurrent - like the eclipse prayer (*salaat 'l-khusuuf*). And some of the Companions added: and it was publicly demonstrated to be done in congregation (*jama`at*). The *Sunna* with regard to proof is meant here everything which proceeded from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, (other than the Qur'an) pertaining to words, deeds or decisions. It is in accordance with this meaning that the realized ones (*al-muhaqqiqeen*) explained it. In the Minhaj al-Muntakhib it says: 'That about which Muhammad, the master of mankind, was silent, his words, and his deeds which were done always, or that in which he had made a decision - that is the *Sunna*'." In the context of the poem, the author utilizes the expression of '*sunna*' as a synonym of the science of prophetic traditions (*`ilm 'l-hadeeth*). The expression '*hadeeth*' (prophetic traditions) takes its origin from verb '*haddatha*' (to tell, relate or talk to someone), like when you say: '*haddathahu 'l-hadeetha*' (He related to him a narrative). According to al-Qanuuji, the science of prophetic traditions technically, refers to the narratives which come from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace; and is therefore a synonym of the science of narratives (*`ilm 'r-riwaaya*) as well as reports (*al-akhbaar*). There is some disagreement among the scholars that this science is also inclusive of the science of historical accounts (*`ilm 'l-athaar*), which are the words and actions of the Companions. The soundest view, however, is that it is the science by which the words, actions and spiritual states of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace are known and include the knowledge of how to determine fabricated narratives. It is divided into two divisions. The first is the science of the narration of prophetic traditions (*riwaayat 'l-hadeeth*), which examines the means that prophetic traditions are connected to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace with regard to pinpointing the circumstances and reliability of the narrator, and with regard to determining how the chain of authority is either connected, disconnected or the like. All of this is apart of what is known as the principles of prophetic traditions (*usuul 'l-hadeeth*). The second division is the science of the cognizance of the prophetic traditions (*`ilm diraayat 'l-hadeeth*), and examines the comprehended meanings of the actual expressions of the prophetic traditions as well as their objectives. This field is constructed upon the principles of the Arabic language and those sciences required to accurately determine the *shari`a*. which are congruent with the spiritual states of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This latter understanding of '*Sunna*', as spiritual Path is an approach which, albeit not unique to the *Fudiawa*, was nevertheless articulated in a manner not previously expressed by prior reform movements in Islam. The adherence to the *Sunna* was thus an inward spiritual reality which had immediate outward political and social ramifications. This is perhaps the reason why the son of the poet, *Shaykh Muhammad Mua'allahyede ibn Abd'l-Qadir ibn Mustafa* said in his Nabdhat Yaseera that the eradication of heretical innovations and the establishment of the *Sunna*, resulted in military victory, economic sufficiency and political sovereignty for the *Fudiawa*. In addition, for them the Living *Sunna* not only comprised the exemplary source for legal judgment, personal and social behavior and political sovereignty; but it was the core of the spiritual path and the ultimate means to gnosis of Allah ta'ala. The *Shehu* said in one of his Fulfulde` poems: "It is the *Sunna* that I truly love. It is the orbit of my preoccupation. It is the theme of all my preaching and it has become my spiritual litany." This approach to the Living *Sunna* as a spiritual path was a distinctive element of *Fudiawa* spirituality as exemplified by *Shehu Uthman ibn Fuduye`*. It was this living tradition which was bequeathed to his

And jurisprudence, *Qur'anic* exegesis and transmitted expertise

And other than these by means of memorization and diligence¹⁹

disciples, especially his son, the mystic, Muhammad Sanbu who in turn was the chief spiritual guide of the poet, as we will examine, Allah willing.

¹⁹ After discussing what he received from the sciences of '*usuul'l-fiqh*', theology (*qalaam*) and inundation in the *Sunna*, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him then mentions the last two of the fundamental *shari'a* sciences that he and the *Fudiawa* ethnicity had been given. He said: "**And jurisprudence**"; that is to say among the sciences of the *shari'a* that he was given was '*ilm'l-fiqh*'. We mentioned previously the etymology of this expression when discussing the meaning of '*usuul'l-fiqh*'. The term when it is unqualified refers to '*ilm's-shari'a*' (the knowledge of the law.) *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye' referred to it as the science of the outward branch (*ilm furuu` dhaahir*), and is encapsulated in the all encompassing term: '*al-Islam*'. He said in his *Fat'h'l-Basaa'ir*: "As for the science of jurisprudence (*al-fiqh*), it is also divided into two divisions: [1] that related to worship (*ibaadaat*); [2] that related to judgment (*ahkaam*). The division related to worship is what includes the prayer (*as-salaat*), *zakaat*, fasting (*as-siyaam*), pilgrimage (*al-hajj*) and others. All of these are individual obligations (*furuud l-`ayaan*). *Shaykh* Abu Zayd Abd'r-Rahmaan ibn `Aamir al-Akhdari, may Allah be pleased with him said: 'The first thing which is obligatory upon the responsible person (*al-mukallaf*) is to correct his *iman*, then knowledge of what will authenticate for him his individual obligations; like the judgment of prayer, purification (*at-tahaara*), and fasting.' As for the judgments established in judicial issues (*al-aqdiya*), the judgment concerning homicides (*ahkaam d-dimaa*), the legal decisions and most of what has been discussed in the *Tuhfat 'l-Hukaam* of Abu Bakr ibn `Aasim al-Qaysi - these are all among the collective obligations (*furuud l-kifaaya*), as has been explained by more than one of the scholars of the *Sunna*, may Allah be pleased with them." In the same text, the *Shehu* explains why this science is called the outward branch of the way of life (*deen*). He says that the science of jurisprudence has its judgment in this world's life indicated by the outward utterance of the *shahaadatayn* (the two testimonies), the five prayers, the paying of *zakat*, the pilgrimage and in all the outward legal issues which are permissible (*halaal*), forbidden (*haraam*), highly recommended (*mustahaab*), or reprehensible (*makruuh*) for the outward limbs such as the tongue, the eyes, the ears, the hands and the feet. In each of these outward issues it involves social behavior (*mu`amalaat*) and falls under the purview of family, witnesses, social contracts and government. The approach to the science of jurisprudence by the *Fudiawa* as crystallized and systematized by *Shehu* Uthman was based upon simplicity and clarity. Jurisprudence was a means to an end, and not an end in and of itself. It is for this reason that the legal characteristic of the civilization which emerged under Sokoto polity, was not as dogmatic or inflexible, as what emerged in the kingdoms of Songhay, the *Murabituun*, the *Muwaahiduun*, the *Mahdiyya* of the Nilotic Sudan, or what emerged later among the *Wahhabiyyun* sect. The *Fudiawa* held the view that all the diverse opinions of the *mujtahid Imams* were sound and valid and exemplified the vastness and compassion of the entire Islamic legal system. They held that being dogmatic regarding a particular school of thought over the others was counter productive, while at the same time he maintained that withdrawing from following any or all of the *mujtahid Imams* was a sin. In this regard, the *Fudiawa* held to the 'Golden Mean' of jurisprudence

since they saw themselves as the forerunners of the final *mujtahid mutlaq* who would in affect abrogate the judgment of the earlier *mujtahid Imams*. In his debates with his brother *Shaykh* Abdullahi, the *Shehu* held that the only reason that Maliki law prevailed and should be relied upon in Sokoto polity was due to pragmatic convenience; because it was the standard legal canon used for centuries in the central *Bilad's-Sudan*. He asserted that there was no moral or even legal reason, preventing jurists, judges and government officials from resorting to the other legal schools of thought. In his *Tarweeh'l-Umma* the *Shehu* asserted that the science of jurisprudence as developed by the *mujtahid Imams* is a necessary utility utilized in this life but are not apart of the infallible law (*bi shar`i ma`suum*) of Allah ta`ala which the servant will be judged by in the Hereafter. Quoting from the *at-Tabaqaat 'l-Kubra* the *Shehu* said: 'Blame falls on those who act contrary to the clear injunctions of the *Qur'an*, the *Sunna* and the consensus (*al-ijma`*) and nothing else.' It is also mentioned in the *ad-Durari 'l-Manthuura*: 'The consensus stems from those legal issues which are easy for the *Umma* to have agreed upon in the past. It is also forbidden for the *Umma* to violate it.' Among the key works of jurisprudence utilized by the *Fudiawa* were: the *Al-Akhdaari* of Abd'r-Rahman ibn Muhammad as-Saghir al-Akhdaari al-Buntyusi al-Maliki, (1512 –1585); the *Al-'Ashmawiyat* *Shaykh* Abd'l-Baari al-'Ashmaawi ar-Rufaa`ii (d. 16th century); the *ar-Risaalat* of *Imam* Abdallah ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawaan, [d. 996 C.E.]; the *al-Mukhtasar* of Diya 'd-Deen Khalil ibn Is'haq al-Jundi (d. 1365). In addition to these fundamental books of jurisprudence the *Fudiawa* scholars produced their own original works of jurisprudence, especially during the two generations prior to that of the poet. It is understandable that these new scholarly works on jurisprudence would emerge because according to the legal perspective of the *Fudiawa*, no scholarly work short of the *Qur'an* and the *Sunna* were cut in stone. Everything short of the Two Infallible sources was open to revision, review and modification. Because the *Fudiawa* saw themselves as forerunners to *Imam* al-Mahdi who would abrogate and purify the legal judgments of all the *mujtahid Imams*, they took it upon themselves to compose innumerable original text on jurisprudence which reflected this broader approach to the legal judgments in Islam. Of course the key proponent of these novel approaches after the *Shehu*, *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` and *Sultan* Muhammad Bello, was the father of the poet, *Shaykh* Mustafa at-Turuudi, about whom he said in his *Turjumaan Ba`d `Ulama Zamaanihi*: "...it was with him that I read most of what I transmitted and it was from him that I took most of what I studied. Rather, it was under his guidance that I excelled and became distinguished in knowledge. It was through his spiritual overflowing that I was able to awake and attain the fragrance of erudition." After mentioning the science of jurisprudence, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: "...and **Qur'anic exegesis...**". The expression '*tafseer*' (exegesis) takes its root from the verb '*fasara*' (to render a thing apparent). *Shaykh* al-Qanuuji said: "The science of *Qur'anic* exegesis (*tafseer*) is the science which researches into the meaning of the comprehension of the *Qur'an* based upon what is suitable to humanity and in accordance with the requirements of the principles of Arabic language. Its fundamentals are the sciences of the Arabic language, the principles of speech, and the foundations of jurisprudence, deliberation and other than these from a collection of disciplines. What can be garnered from it is a deep knowledge of the meanings of the sacred text in accordance with human requirements. Its advantage is that it provides ability to extract the legal judgments of the *shari`a* based upon sound principles, to draw out admonition from its narratives and stories, to behave in accordance with what is concealed in it of noble character,

and other than these from innumerable principles.” In his *Miftaah’t-Tafseer Shaykh Abdullahi ibn Fuduye’* defined the science of *Qur’anic* exegesis (*tafseer*) as the science by which research is made into the circumstances of the Exalted Mighty Book of Allah from the perspective of its revelations (*nuzuul*), its foundation (*asnad*), its courtesies (*adab*), verbal expressions (*alfaath*), the principles of its expressions (*qawaa’id alfaathi*), the meanings connected to its expressions, and the meanings connected to its legal judgments (*ahkaam*). Included in the science of *tafseer* is the knowledge of the Meccan and Medinan chapters, knowledge of the verses and chapters revealed while resident and those revealed while traveling; the knowledge of those verses and chapters revealed in the day and those revealed during the night; knowledge of those verses revealed during the winter and those revealed during the summer; knowledge of those verses and chapters revealed while sitting and those revealed during sleep; knowledge of those verses and chapters revealed to the earth and those revealed in the heavens; knowledge of the first verse to be revealed and the last verse to be revealed; knowledge of the causative factor of the revelation; knowledge of the abrogated and abrogating verses; knowledge of decisive legal verses and those which are allegorical; knowledge of those verses whose rulings are general and those which are specific and restricted; knowledge of those verses revealed repeatedly; knowledge of those verses whose legal judgment was postponed from its revelation, and those whose revelation was postponed from its legal judgment; knowledge of those verses revealed separately and those revealed collectively; knowledge of the methodology of the descent of the *Qur’an*; knowledge of the naming of the *Qur’anic* chapters; knowledge of the gathering of the *Qur’an* and its arrangement; knowledge of the number of the *Qur’anic* chapters, the number of its verses, the numbers of its words and letters, as well as the aforementioned linguistic sciences which are essential tools for understanding the *Qur’an*. It goes without saying that the foremost expert in *Qur’anic* exegesis (*mufaasiruun*) of the *Fudaiwa* was *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye’, about whom *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye’ said in his *’Ida’n-Nusuukh*: “I took from him the science of the exegesis of the *Qur’an* (*tafseer l-qur’an*) from the beginning of *al-Faatihah* to the end of the *Qur’an* more times than I can say.” *Shaykh* Abdullahi in turn became the far most expert in this science as *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn *al-Qadi* al-Hajj said in his *Tarikh Shaykh Mustafa at-Turuudi*: “Abu Muhammad Abdullahi ibn Fuduye’, the author of many exceptional works ...particularly his work on *Qur’anic* exegesis the *Diya’t-Ta’weel*, to which no comparable book has ever been written up to the present time, about which we have been repeatedly been informed that it has reached the extreme West and East and on which most of the commentators on the *Qur’an* in this era rely.” The father of the poet, *Shaykh* Mustafa at-Turuudi was the top student of *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye’ from whom he learned the science of exegesis. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him then mentions one of the key sciences essential for extracting legal decisions from the sources as well as by reason by his words: “**...and transmitted expertise...**” The expression ‘*diraaya*’ (transmitted expertise) takes its etymology from the verb ‘*daraa*’ (to know) like when you say: ‘*daraa as-shay*’ (‘He knew the thing). Allah ta’ala says: “No soul knows (**maa tadriy**) what it will earn tomorrow and no soul knows (**maa tadriy**) in which earth it will die.” Allah ta’ala says about the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: “Likewise have I revealed to you a spirit from My command, when you did not know (**maa kunta tadriy**) what was the Book or faith. However I made it into a light by which I guide whomever I will from My servants. Indeed you are guidance to the straight path.”

Thus, the expression is a form of detailed comprehension acquired through the medium of derivative sources or by means of a stratagem or ploy. Consequently, it is a kind of understanding connected to created beings and cannot be applied to the Absolute Being. We do not say, for example, that Allah is ‘*ad-Daariy*’ because it would infer that Allah’s knowledge is acquired through the medium of derivative causes or stratagems and would mean that knowledge is not an essential quality of His eternal Essence. The expression is a synonym of ‘*alama*’ (to know). Technically, the expression ‘*diraaya*’ (transmitted expertise) is connected to the science of prophetic traditions and means a detailed understanding of the chains of transmission of the prophetic traditions as well as their contents. The science of ‘*diraaya*’ is usually juxtaposed to the broader science of ‘*riwaaya*’ (narrated traditions), which some of the scholars include within its parameters. Because the science of ‘*diraaya*’ is connected to the science of prophetic traditions, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, conjoined it to the science of *Qur’anic* exegesis. Thus, all the subsequent sciences of the *shari’a* are dependent upon ‘*diraaya*’ and are an inclusive part of it. According to *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Ali at-Tahaanawi in his Kashaaf Istilaah’l-Funuun wa’l-Uluum the expression ‘*diraaya*’ (transmitted expertise) embraces within its scope the science of jurisprudence (*ilm’l-fiqh*) as well as the foundations of jurisprudence (*ilm usuul’l-fiqh*). The science of ‘*diraaya*’ comprises the ability to formulate what a thing is, how it is described and explained. It delineates the possibilities of a thing, determines its fixed and relative judgments regarding its intrinsic praiseworthiness or blameworthiness and is the key principle utilized by the jurists when making analogous deduction (*al-qiyaas*); determining the recognition of disagreements (*muraa’aat’l-khilaaf*), preventing harmful events before they occur (*saddu’d-dharaa’i*), and determining the consideration of the public good (*al-masaalihi’l-mursalat*). Two of the key thinkers responsible for training the poet in the sciences of ‘*diraaya*’ and the other corresponding sciences were his father, *Shaykh* Mustafa at-Turuudi and his father-in-law *Sultan* Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* Uthman. The latter laid out all the principles of ‘*diraaya*’ in his renowned work on logic (*mantiq*) called Kitaab at-Tahreer which is one of the most excellent works composed on the subject due to its conciseness. Included within the purview of the sciences of the *shari’a* is the science of history (*ilm’t-taariikh*), which, along with the linguistic sciences, is indispensable for understanding the objective and aims of the *shari’a*. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him composed at least five books on history, the most important ones being his Rawdat’l-Afkaar which was composed when he was 21 years old, and his poetic work Mausufaat’s-Sudan. Another of the subordinate sciences to the science of the *shari’a* is the science of the chancellery and record keeping (*ilm’d-dawaawen*), which the poet had mastered from his father who was among the chief scribes (*kutaab*) of the *Shehu*. This is what the poet meant by his words: “**...and other than these...**” In fact, his knowledge of chancellery, history, and the sciences of the *shari’a* was so profound that in 1859 the new ruler of the Sokoto Caliphate, Ahmad Zaruk ibn Abu Bakr Atiku ibn *Shehu*, wanted to appoint him as the Chief *Wazir*. The poet indicates that he learned all the sciences of the *shari’a* and their subordinate sciences, as he said “**...by means of memorization and due diligence.**” Here the poet is inferring that the acquisition of knowledge is first attained by memorization (*hifdh*) and precise retention (*dabt*) in the hearts, and then by means of transcription (*tadween*) and securing it (*taqyeed*) using writing (*kitaaba*). This is what he meant by the expression ‘*inaaya*’ (due diligence) and refers to instruments and tools which assist in the conservation, preservation and dissemination of knowledge.

وَمِنْ تَصَوُّفِ التَّخَلُّقِ الَّذِي لِسَالِكِ الْخُصُوصِ خَيْرٌ مَّا اخْتَدَى

From the spiritual purification of character reformation that
Is to the wayfarer of the elite, the best which can be bestowed²⁰

It has been related in a prophetic tradition whose chain of authority is weak, but whose meaning is corroborated by other sound prophetic traditions: “Knowledge is a prey and writing is its trap. Therefore, may Allah be merciful to you, trap your sciences by means of writing.” Here ends folio 1 from the manuscript.

²⁰ All of the sciences mentioned above are inclusive within the sciences of the *shari`a* in the technical sense of the word. This is because the sciences of the *shari`a* are synonymous with the sciences of jurisprudence (*ilm`l-fiqh*) which are apart of the sciences of the outward branches of the way of life (*uluum furuu` dhaahir*). After delineating these sciences the poet, may Allah be merciful to him then discusses the science of *tasawwuf* (spiritual purification) which he and the *Fudiawa* had mastered at the hands of preeminent spiritual masters. He said: “**From the spiritual purification of character reformation...**” That is to say: that among the sciences which he had learned from among the sciences of the *shari`a* is the science of *tasawwuf`t-takhalluq`* which *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` in his *Fat`h`l-Basaa`ir* delineated as the first of the two divisions of this science. Originally the expression *tasawwuf* takes its root from the verbal noun *saafa* (lucidity/purity) and is the opposite of muddiness (*kadar*). The source for this spiritual clarity (*tasfiyya*) is the person of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. As early as the 1st century of the *hijra*, *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Hassan as-Shaybaani was asked about *tasawwuf* and he replied: “It is imitation of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.” Although the belief that the essence of *tasawwuf* comprised simply following the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace inwardly and outwardly until the spiritual aspirant became purified (*saafa*) of his own volition, passions and the barriers between him and the Absolute Being was not novel; the *Fudiawa* placed renewed emphasis upon the interpersonal relationship between the aspirant and the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This was reflected in the words of *Shaykh* Abu`l-Hamza al-Baghdadi who once said: “There is no guide to the path to Allah ta`ala except in following the Beloved Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Whoever makes his soul adhere to the courtesies of the *Sunna*, Allah will illuminate his heart with the light of direct experiential knowledge of Allah. For there is no spiritual station more noble than following the Beloved Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace in his commands, deeds, words and character.” This statement with the sages of the *Fudiawa* was formulaic and constituted the key distinction which they contributed to this ancient science. *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` reiterated this in his *Akhlaaq`l-Mustafa* where he coupled spiritual clarity with following the inner character traits of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He said: “Whoever emulates him in these traits will become spiritually lucid (*saafa*).” That is to say, that whoever emulates the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace in his praiseworthy character will have his heart cleansed and purified. The Arabic word *saafa* (to purify) is from the root ‘purification’ (*safiyya*) which means to be lucid, clear and untainted by anything. Technically *tasawwuf* is the purification of the heart of the servant from hatred, envy, polytheism, vanity, consumerism and other blameworthy traits which cause turbidity in the heart. Regarding the two divisions of *tasawwuf*, the *Shehu* said: “...it is

divided into two divisions: [1] 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-Ghazali explained in his Ihya `Uluum 'd-Deen and as Abd 'r-Rahmaan as-Suyuti explained in his Itmaam 'd-Diraaya Sharh an-Niqaaya. [2] 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 (*maqamaat*) 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-Ghazali and *Imam* al-Muhaasibi. Whoever wants to follow this path should take them as an example. The responsibility for explaining the second division related to spiritual certitude (*tahaqquq*) fell to men like *Shaykh* Abu 'l-Hassan as-Shadhili, may Allah be pleased with him - as Ahmed Zaruq clarified in his Qawaa'id 't-Tasawwuf.” As we cited earlier the *Fudiawa* were the masters of the two divisions of *tasawwuf* and composed innumerable texts discussing the transformation of character, and actually succeeded in guiding many spiritual disciples (*mureeduun*) to their Goals. The first of the teachers of the poet in the science of spiritual purification through character transformation was his father, *Shaykh* Mustafa at-Turuudi, the senior student and scribe of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`. *Nana* Asmau bint *Shehu* Uthman painted a picture of the profound character of *Malam* Mustafa in her eulogy of him: “He possessed noble character, loved his kinsmen and cared for all people, men and women alike. He was gracious, generous to his neighbors, full of compassion towards those he knew...He honored visitors, treating them well...He had deep consideration for people, sustaining them in times of crisis. He was very courageous, the very opposite of a coward.” There was also the maternal grandmother of the poet A`isha Ghabindu bint Muhammad Sa`d ibn Abdullahi ibn Muhammad ibn Sa`d, the senior wife of the *Shehu*, about whom the poet said in his Salwat'l-Ikhwaan: “Among the spiritually elite of the *jama`at* were the spiritual master, my maternal grandmother, A`isha, the wife of *Shehu* Uthman and mother of my uncle and spiritual guide, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu. She possessed an abundant share in righteousness, spiritual excellence and was preeminently skilled in this affair of *tasawwuf*. *Shaykh* Abdullahi Mujin Mahwi narrated that she possessed exalted spiritual states and high spiritual stations. She attained the highest levels of austerity, virtue, inherent scrupulous piety, extensive spiritual struggle and perfect discipline. The bottom line is that she was among the righteous servants of Allah and among the select of the obedient sages of this *Umma*.” Muhammad Bello said about her in his an-Naseehat 'l-Wadee`at: “She used to ask the righteous to supplicate that Allah would provide her with sincere repentance. She used to say: ‘Until now

repentance has not been made sound for me’.” This perfected saint bequeathed the science *taṣawwuf* to her children Muhammad Sa`d, Muhammad Sanbu, Muhammad al-Bukhari, Khadijatu and A`ishatu. These were the immediate close relatives of the poet, may Allah be merciful to all of them who helped formulate his character upon the path of *taṣawwuf*. As for his eldest maternal uncle, Muhammad Sa`d, the oldest son of the *Shehu* he was the first teacher of *Mallam* Mustafa, the father of the poet. His miraculous erudition and profound character was so close in resemblance to that of his father, the *Shehu*, that one day when he became ill, Muhammad Sa`d was asked to substitute for him in teaching *Qur`anic* exegesis. He imitated the *Shehu*, in his gestures, wordings, demeanor, and instruction so precisely that the people were amazed and as a result he was struck with the evil eye; and died soon after, many years before the birth of the poet. As for the second maternal uncle of the poet, Muhammad al-Bukhari, he was one of his key teachers about whom he recounted: “I will say that Muhammad al-Bukhari was a jurist who possessed an abundance of sciences as well as literary comprehension. He was eloquent in speech who had mastered the science of rhetoric. He possessed a comprehensive intellect and a generous character. He was a lover of knowledge and its people, and possessed swift comprehension, strident in areas of controversy and disagreements. And like his two brothers, he was known for being long in silence, and dignified. He was avaricious for what was good and beneficial and was extremely modest. In addition to this he was among those whose supplications were answered whose entreaties to Allah were sought after by the people of spiritual unveiling and the spiritually elite.” His mother Khadijatu, the eldest daughter of the *Shehu* was among the women who had attained spiritual perfection through the training of her mother and father. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him said about her when she died: “She was permanently established in fulfilling every right and traveled the path which led to the ultimate spiritual Goal.” As for his third maternal uncle, Muhammad Sanbu, he was by far the most influential person in the spiritual life of the poet who took him by the hand and placed him firmly in the presence of his Lord. About him the poet said: “He was my *shaykh* and spiritual master, the right acting scholar, the upright sage and knower of Allah. He had an immense station in sainthood (*wilaayat*), a well established footing in direct experiential knowledge of Allah, and a genuine spiritual state in the realm of inner veraciousness (*siddeeqiyya*). He was the spiritual pole of the circle of reliance upon Allah (*qutb `l-mutawwakileen*). He possessed authentic spiritual unveiling and profound spiritual states, where he himself mentioned in some of his works that he was given the miracle of walking upon the surface of water, the ability to fly in the air and that he had witnessed the fabled land of Sesame and had entered its realm. The knowers of Allah say that this fabled land can only be entered by one who has attained the station of forty (*maqam `l-arba`een*), a spiritual station which is well known with the People of Allah. Once he said about himself that his capacity to enter this mystical land flowed from the spiritual station of redemption (*maqam `l-ghawthiyya*), although he later discounted these words during his states of spiritual sobriety. This is an immense spiritual station, which is essential to recognize for this *shaykh*, because these instances were well known and witnessed outwardly upon him by every possessor of gnosis who knew him.” It was at the hands of these immediate relatives that the poet was guided on the path of *taṣawwuf* and was able to achieve the perfection of character; which as he said: “...that is for the spiritual wayfarer of the elite...” The expression ‘*saalik*’ (wayfarer/traveler) takes its root from the verb ‘*salaka*’ (to pursue, follow or comport oneself with a particular behavior). Thus, the

expression ‘*saalik*’ is connected to an inward journey or spiritual path which one follows. From this concept emerges the expression ‘*suluuk*’ (behavior). Al-Qaashani said in his Istalaahaat’s-Suufiyya: “The spiritual wayfarer (*saalik*) is the one who journeys to Allah, who is intermediate between the spiritual disciple (*mureed*) and the one who has completed his journey (*muntahaa*) as long as he is still on his journey.” *Shaykh* Abd’l-Karim al-Jilli said in his al-Isfaar `An Risaalat’l-Anwaar: “The *suluuk* (spiritual journey) is the transition and transformation with knowledge from spiritual station to spiritual station, from Divine Name to Divine Name, from Self Disclosure (*tajalli*) to Self Disclosure, and from one state of the soul to another state of the soul. The one who goes through this transition or transformation is the *saalik* (the spiritual wayfarer).” *Shaykh* ‘l-Akbar said in his Turjumaan’l-Ashwaaq: “The spiritual wayfarer (*saalik*) is the one who walks upon the path of spiritual stations with his state and not his knowledge, for knowledge is his actual sight on his spiritual journey.” Fatima as-Shadhiliyya al-Yashra’iyya, may Allah ennoble her secret, said in her Yushr Rihlat Ila ‘l-Haqq: “The *suluuk* (journey/behavior) of the poor *suufi* is his advancing on the path by shortening the distance of his soul (*qata`a masaafa ‘n-nafs*) in spiritual stations and states. That is to say, it is the journey of the gradual ascension (*ma`arij madaarij*) of the progress of the spirit, whether conducted alone in the *zawiyya* of his spiritual guide, or by his physically traveling through the earth.” *Imam* Ibn Qudaama al-Maqdasi said in his Mukhtasar Minhaaj’l-Qaasideen: “The one who truly travels (*saalik*) the path of the Hereafter is never free of six spiritual states: [1] either he is an intent worshipper (*‘aabid*); [2] a scholar (*‘aalim*); [3] a student of knowledge (*muta`allim*); [4] a protected friend (*waali*) of Allah; [5] a skilled professional (*muhtarif*); or [6] one completely drowned (*mustagriq*) in the love of Allah `azza wa jalla completely occupied (*mashghuul*) with Him over all else.” These six states are the paths of the elite (*khaasa*), about which the poet said is: “...the best which can be bestowed.” This means that the science of *tasawwuf* for the transformation of character is the best thing which can be bestowed upon a person, as the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Apart of the right that the child has on its parent is that he gives him a good name and teaches him excellent courtesy.” If this is true for the corporeal parent it is more so for the parent of meaning, because the latter has a greater right to be obeyed and adhered to than the former. The *Shehu* said in his Asaaneed’l-Faqeer: “...whoever has missed relationship to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace from the perspective of birth and near relations, then it is necessary for him to seek after the people of the high chains of authority (*asaaneed al-`aliyya*). He should take it from them even with license because parenthood in the *deen* is a greater rank than parenthood of birth. Likewise the pardon which comes from the parenthood in the *deen* is greater in importance than that which comes from the parenthood of birth.” The spiritual and moral inheritance from the parent of birth is more valuable than inheriting from them gold and silver. Similarly, the inward and ethical inheritance from the parent of meaning is more valuable than inheriting from them the knowledge of linguistics, jurisprudence, doctrine, or many chains of authority. The greatest father of meaning, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said as it was transmitted by al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayra: “Indeed I was sent in order to perfect noble character.” He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said as it as related by Ahmad on the authority of Ibn Umar: “Shall I not inform you of the most beloved of you to me, and the nearest of you to me in the assembly on the Day of Judgment? It will be the best of you in character.” He, may

SANKORE'

Allah bless him and grant him peace said as it has been related by al-Haakim on the authority of Anas ibn Malik: "The most perfect believer in faith is the best of them in character." He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said as it was transmitted by at-Tabarani on the authority of Abu Hurayra: "Indeed this character is from Allah ta`ala. For when Allah desires good for him, He grants him excellent character, and the one for whom He desires evil, He grants him evil character." These and many other similar prophetic traditions establish that the best thing that can be bestowed upon a person from Allah, by his parents, by his teacher or by means of spiritual struggle and discipline is excellent and noble character. For the person dedicated and committed to the spiritual journey, excellent character is his means to his Goal. In the end he must behave with the behavior of Allah ta`ala (*takhalluq bi akhlaaq Allah*) and eradicate his low human character (*yafna' khulq bashariyya*) under the Names and Attributes of Allah ta`ala. Allah is Beneficent, Merciful and Patient and the spiritual wayfarer must be compassionate, merciful and patient towards others. Allah ta`ala says: "*And charge one another to patience, and charge one another to compassion. They are the companions of the right hand.*" The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said as it was related by at-Tirmidhi, and Abu Dawud on the authority of Abdallah ibn Umar who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "The compassionate ones, the All Compassionate *tabarraka wa ta`ala* will show compassion towards them. So therefore be compassionate to those on earth and those in the heavens will be compassionate to You." Allah ta`ala is Forgiving and Pardoning and the spiritual wayfarer must be forgiving and pardoning towards creatures. Allah ta`ala says: "*Adhere to pardoning and enjoin kindness and turn away from the ignorant.*" The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said as it has been related by Ibn Abi'd-Dunya on the authority of Muhammad ibn `Umayr al-`Abdi: "Humility only increases the servant in elevation. So be humble and Allah will elevate you. Pardoning only increases the servant in honor. So pardon others and Allah will honor you. Giving charity only increases wealth in abundance. So give charity and Allah `azza wa jalla will be merciful to you." These and many other *Qur'anic* verses and prophetic traditions urge the spiritual wayfarer to annihilate his human character by behaving with the qualities of the Names and Attributes of Allah ta`ala until Allah ta`ala lifts the veil between him and Him and he comes to know Allah directly and intimately. And Allah is a Witness for what I say.

ذَكَرُ مَا أُوتِيَتْهُ مِنْ عُلُومِ الْأَوَائِلِ بِالنَّقْلِ وَبِغَيْرِهِ

Mentioning What I Received From the Elemental Sciences by Means of Textual Transmission and Other Than That²¹

²¹ After the poet, may Allah be merciful to him explains the sciences he received in the realm of the *shari`a* as well as character transformation, he then cites the sciences which scholars refer to as the ‘elemental sciences’ (*`uluum awwaliyya*). They are called ‘elemental’ or ‘primary’ sciences because these were the sciences which existed before the appearance of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. It is said that some of these sciences were originally taught to Adam, upon him be peace. Some say that these sciences were taught to Prophet *Idris* (Enoch), upon him be peace. Some say that these sciences were taught to Prophet Sulayman ibn Dawud, upon him be peace. While some say that these sciences were taught to *al-Maseeh* Isa ibn Maryum, upon them be peace. Some say that these sciences include the philosophical sciences and natural sciences bequeathed to the Muslims from the ancient Egyptian, Hellenistic, Persian, Sino and Hindu civilizations. I say, the elemental sciences (*`uluum awwaa`il*) embrace all of the above since they include the positive natural, philosophical, medicinal, mathematical, astronomical and other obscure sciences (*`uluum ghaamid*) which existed before the descent of the *Qur`an*, and were used to manipulate or bring about harmony in creation. The early Muslim community naturally avoided these elemental sciences based on the warning in the words of Allah ta`ala: *“And when a messenger comes to them from Allah, confirming what they possess, a party of them who received the Scripture fling the Scripture of Allah behind their backs, as if they did not know. They then follow that which devils falsely attribute to Sulayman. However, Sulayman did not disbelieve, but it was the devils who disbelieved, teaching magic to mankind and that which was revealed to the two Angels in Babel, Harut and Marut. These two Angels did not teach anyone without first saying: ‘We are only a temptation, therefore do not disbelieve.’ From them people learned what would cause division between a man and his wife. However, they only cause harm by the permission of Allah. They also learned what brings harm and brings no advantage. Indeed they are unaware that whoever traffics in it will have no portion in the Hereafter, and indeed evil is the price for those who sell their souls.”* There were also the admonitions from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace in many prophetic traditions in which he criticized the use of astrology, theoretical mathematics or any rational science which did not lead to knowledge of Allah or assist in the worship of Allah. Al-Qanuuji tells us in his *Abjaad`l-`Uluum* that this was the same during the time of the Companions and throughout the Umayyad period in which the elemental sciences were mostly shunned. However, the second ruler of the Abbasid Caliphate, Abu Ja`far al-Mansuur, who was deeply learned in jurisprudence, began an entrenched study of philosophy and astronomy and showed great respect for the intellectuals of these sciences. It was later under the rule of Abdallah al-Ma`muun ibn ar-Rashid who officially established institutions to translate into Arabic the works of Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Ptolemy, Euclid and others of Hellenistic civilization. In addition to this the mathematical and astronomical works from Sino and Hindu civilization utilized by the Persians were encouraged to be translated and studied. It is well known that the ideas of ancient Egyptian civilization which survived the burning of the libraries in Alexandria and Karnak were also actively sought after and studied. In the town of al-Karkh in Iraq, Muslim intellectuals studied the elemental sciences from the Jews and Christians

there. One of the first works to be published into Arabic on a compendium of the elemental sciences was a work entitled al-Maahir Fee `Ullum al-Awaa'il wa'l-Awaakhir by *Imam* Ali ibn Abu Ali ibn Muhammad al-Amidi (551-631 A.H./1157-1233 C.E.) There has long been major dispute among the Muslim scholars regarding the permissibility of learning these sciences, because segments are considered to be occult sciences (*`ilm khafiy*) and other segments are considered as pure magic (*sihir sareeh*). It is for this reason the poet, may Allah be merciful to him indicated that he learned these sciences after first fortifying himself with the sciences of the *shari`a* as well as the perfection of character. This granted him the spiritual and moral yardstick to categorize these ambiguous sciences within the *shari`a* criteria of obligatory (*wajib*), prohibited (*haram*), highly recommended (*mustahaab*), reprehensible (*makruuh*) and allowable (*mubaah*). Because some of these rational sciences are the basis of modern technology and scientific theory, it is difficult to distinguish between it and pure magic. As the atheist Arthur C. Clark keenly cited in his 'third law': "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." Thus, any rational science used to manipulate nature for benefit or harm would naturally be considered by laymen as a form of magic. There is an ancient saying: "Know magic, avoid magic" (*illamu 's-sihr fa ajtanabuuhu*); which indicates the necessity of a segment among the right acting scholars to learn and comprehend the sources of the elemental sciences and how these are utilized in order to improve, benefit, bring balance, defend, ward off and bring about cure. The poet himself said in his al-Uhuud wa'l-Mawaathiq: "I have taken an oath and covenant not to invite anyone among the people to what I have obtained from the sciences of letters, geomancy and astronomy, even though I took these sciences from sound sources and repudiated the fallacies in them. I have never instructed anyone in these in order not to lead them astray. On the contrary, I have invited people to sound knowledge from the *Qur'an*, the *Sunna*, jurisprudence and spiritual purification (*tasawwuf*). I have taken an oath and covenant not to utilize anything from the sciences of natural magic, spells, incantations, charms, and the subjugation of *jinn* for either advantage or protection. On the contrary, I have abandoned these all together, even though I acquired and mastered the essentials of these sciences. I have taken an oath and covenant in line with the above vow, not to implement anything from the science of letters of the Divine Names, in a way which could cause harm to Muslims. However, when these can bring benefit to me, I will utilize it in justifiable circumstances for procuring benefit and protection. I have taken an oath and covenant not to search into the unseen by means of divination, soothsaying, astrology, or any of the baseless occult sciences. Yet, independent of these sciences, I have procured knowledge of the unseen by means of the true dream (*ru'ya saadiq*). For nothing has occurred in these times except that I have seen it effortlessly in my dream before it actually occurred." So, clearly *Shaykh* Dan Tafa was thoroughly acquainted with the positive and negative uses of the elemental sciences. Because of the depth of his knowledge of the *shari`a*, and the perfection of his character, Dan Tafa exhibited a fearless curiosity, intellectual initiative and courageous inquiry into the limits of what is possible. What is ironic in this age is how conservative Muslim clerics decry even examining the books of the elemental sciences, while they have allowed themselves, their societies and youth to be manipulated socially by the pervasive computer online networking; whose impact upon the present social upheavals in the Middle East in comparison with those of the past can not be anything other than 'magical'. Never in the history of mankind have societies been overthrown with the speed and seamlessness with which internet social

networking has permitted western civilization to over throw adversarial societies in the Middle East, Far East and Africa. I have witnessed modernist Muslim clerics on both sides of the *salafist/sufi* divide describing the horrible events of the so-called 'Arab spring', as 'a miracle'; eventhough the events starting with Tunisia and ending with the horrors of Libya and now the slaughter taking place in Syria; were planned, orchestrated and geometrically calculated by social engineers of the US Pentagon's Core of Engineers under the African Command stationed temporarily in Germany. When any outcome can be predetermined and engineered to astound and mystify an observer, one can only describe such a process as 'magical'. Today, the pure manipulative magic of social engineering has become the 'miracle' of the modern Muslim cleric; while the mastery of the elemental sciences (*'ulum 'l-awaa'il*) is anathematized and marginalized as outside the bounds of Islam. It is important to note that *Shaykh* Dan Tafa's approach to the elemental sciences was the same approach which modern scientists take when seeking to minutely understand creation and manipulate it for good or to ward off harm. Allah willing, as the poet, may Allah be merciful to him enumerates these diverse sciences, I will stipulate their origin, the first to elucidate them, their advantages, disadvantages, their judgment in the *shari`a*, the diverse opinions about them, the major books composed regarding them and the individuals among the *Fudiawa* responsible for disseminating them to the poet, may Allah be merciful to him.



Left to right: *Shaykh* Abd'r-Raaziq ibn *Shaykh* Uthman ibn *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qaadir Dan Tafa and the Sarkin Muslimi and *Sultan* of Maiurno Muhammad Bello Mai Wurno ibn *Sultan* Muhammad Attahiru I ibn *Sultan* Ahmadu Zarruku ibn *Sultan* Abu Bakr Atiku ibn *Amir'l-Mu'mineen* Shehu Uthmn ibn Fuduye'.

لَقَدْ أَفَدْنَا مِنْ عُلُومِ الْأَوَّلِ مِنْ نُبُذِ كَثِيرَةٍ أَوْ جَمَلٍ

We garnered benefit from the elemental sciences
From many small books or from condensed texts

بِالنَّقْلِ أَوْ بِمَا بِأَيْدِنَا وَقَعَ مِنْ كُتُبٍ لَهُمْ وَمِنْ تَصَانِيفٍ جُمِعَ

By means of textual transmission or by what fell in my hands
From books on these and what had been collected from texts

وَكَثْرَةِ الْمُطَالَعَاتِ فِيهَا بِالْفَهْمِ أَوْ بِالنَّقْلِ عَنْ ذَوِيهَا

And from extensive perusal of these texts
With comprehension or transmission from its masters²²

²² The poet, may Allah be merciful to him began by saying: “**We garnered benefit from the elemental sciences**”. Here he uses the first person plural pronoun to indicate himself and the *Fudiawa* ethnicity in particular, but it can also apply to the scholars of the central *Bilad's-Sudan* in general. This is significant because it indicates that the study of the elemental sciences in the *Bilad's-Sudan* was a pervasive customary practice. The great African intellectual, Cheikh Anta Diop informs us in his Pre-colonial Black Africa that among the reasons that Islamic metaphysics prevailed over traditional African beliefs was because both civilizations embraced a metaphysical belief in the concept of two parallel worlds. That is to say, both civilizations held the belief that in the world around us there is a world which can be seen and there is an unseen parallel metaphysical world which cannot be seen or sensed but which impacts us continuously. Diop emphasized that the African sages (*awliyya*) of Islam possessed a far more technically advanced means of accessing and manipulating the world of the unseen, than did the shamans among the traditional African religions. In other words the African Muslim sages developed what would today be called ‘a killer software’ regarding access to and manipulation of the metaphysical world. He said: “It goes without saying that this conception of a dual world is to be found, in various forms, in the beliefs of Africans to such a point that they feel completely comfortable in Islam. Some of them do not even feel they have changed their metaphysical horizon. That is what led Dan Fodio to criticize severely all those who, though calling themselves Muslims, continue such practices as libations, offerings, divination, the Kabbala, etc., and even writes verses from the Koran in the blood of sacrificial animals. Dan Fodio’s text, although rather recent, (nineteenth century) reflects a tendency already imperative in the days of the Askias (fifteenth-seventeenth centuries). African religions, more or less forgotten, were in the process of atrophying and being emptied of their spiritual content, their former deep metaphysics. The jumble of empty forms they had left behind could not compete with Islam on the moral and rational level. And it was on that latter level of rationality that the victory of Islam was most striking.” This is clear and can be corroborated by anthropological evidence. It was for this reason that many African pagan spiritualist, oral historians, traditional medicine practitioners, and astronomers converted to Islam bringing with them tens of thousands of years of cumulative knowledge of the elemental sciences. We know the case in Mali around 1050 C.E. during a major drought that engulfed the kingdom. The ruler at the time, Baramendana Keita summoned all of his Mande`, Soninke`, Peul, Sosso, Bambara, and Dogon oral historians, shamans and astronomers, and demanded that they utilize the sciences

granted them to cause it to rain, to no avail. Then a learned Muslim merchant residing in his kingdom performed the '*salaat'l-istisqaa*' (the prayer of rain) and within minutes of completing the prayer, the skies darkened and it rained for months, according to al-Bakri's account. This was indicative of the advanced metaphysical sciences which Islam introduced into Africa. When these were combined with the indigenous elemental sciences of Africa, a profound synthesis occurred particularly among the shaman caste, astronomers, and oral historians who accepted Islam among the Soninke', Mande', Dogon, Habe', Zaberma, Bambara, Wolof, Kanuri and Peul ethnicities. When we add this store of knowledge with the elemental sciences bequeathed inter-generationally among those African ethnicities, particularly in Tinbuktu in the Sankore' quarter; who trace their origin back to the *Banu Isra'il* and the *Banu Ishma'il* a picture emerges of an overwhelming metaphysical and philosophical epistemology which gave birth to the *Fudiawa* store of knowledge. However, I will add, that there was a far more transcendent reason that African priests and initiates willfully abandoned their traditions for the Islamic African traditions, and it had to do with the profound crystalline gnosis of the Absolute Being and gnosis of the emergence of existence from the ocean of non-existence; which Islam clarified and systematized in a unified system which brought back together and unlocked the mysteries of the scattered initiative traditions of Africa once unified on the banks of the Nile. Allah willing, I will return to examining this phenomenon when discussing the sciences of the Divine Realities (*'uluuum 'l-haqaa'iq*). The poet, may Allah be merciful to said that they learned these elemental sciences: "**...from many small books or from condensed texts.**" The most important condensed or abridged works on the elemental sciences which reached the *Bilad's-Sudan* and which I have seen in many of the private archives were those such as the Kitaab'l-Jifr al-Jaami' wa'n-Nuur 'l-Laami' falsely attributed to Ali ibn Abi Talib; the Madaakhil 'Ilm'l-Jifr attributed to *Imam* Abu Ishma'il Ja'far 's-Saadiq ibn Muhammad al-Baaqir; the an-Nufhat'l-Maskiyya Fee Sharh al-Arba'een al-Idrisiyya of *Shaykh* Shihaab'd-Deen 'Attiya as-Shahrawardi; the al-Kashif Li 'Amaal'l-Jifr of *Imam* Ja'far ibn Mansuur al-Yemeni; the as-Sirr'l-Madhruuf Fee 'Ilm Bast'l-Huruuf of *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Khalwati; the Qays'l-Anwaar wa Mujaami'l-Asraar of *Shaykh* Abdallah al-Bustami; the Bahr'l-Wuquuf Fee 'Ilm'l-Huruuf of *Shaykh* Shihaab'd-Deen Abu'l-Abbas Ahmad ibn Ali al-Buni as well as his famous Shams'l-Ma'arif'l-Kubra; the al-Ishaaraat wa't-Tanbeehaat of *Imam* Abu Ali ibn Sinna; the al-Firaasa of *Imam* Fakhr'd-Deen ar-Raazi; the Bustaan'l-Fawaa'id wa'l-Manaafi' of *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Kaabiri; the al-Lawaami' wa'l-Asraar Fee Manaafi'l-Qur'an wa'l-Akhbaar of *Shaykh* Ibn Salaama ibn Isa al-Maghribi; the at-Tadhkira'l-Muheet of *Imam* as-Suwaydi; the al-Buruuj wa'l-Manaazil of *Shaykh* Hassan ibn Ahmad al-Hashimi and many others. In addition to these there were the condensed and abridged works of the elemental sciences produced by the *Fudiawa* themselves which I will highlight throughout the progression of the poem, Allah willing. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, then explains the five ways in which the elemental sciences and knowledge in general are acquired. The first way is: "**By means of textual transmission...**" I have explained the meaning of the expression '*an-naql*' (direct textual transmission) in footnote # 15. What he means by that in this context is that he received direct transmission of the above cited texts as well as others which I will mention, Allah willing by either reciting them himself to his teachers, listening to someone else recite them to his teacher, or listening to the reading of the text directly from the teacher. Then the teacher would elaborate on the obscure or problematic

meanings of the texts. The second way is: “...or by what fell in my hands from books concerning these ...” This means that he came upon some of the texts on the elemental sciences himself and studied them on his own. This is significant because it indicates that although it is obligatory for the common person (*awaam*) and the student of knowledge intermediate (*muta`alam mutawasiṭ*) between the common person and the scholar (*`aalim*) to take knowledge from a teacher; once a person has been given the keys of knowledge (*mifaatih`l-`ilm*) it is then permissible for him to peruse and study texts on his own. This, however, is conditioned by his constant reviewing what he learns from these texts with his teachers and questioning them regarding their obscure and problematic passages. It should not be misunderstood that he obtained his knowledge from books alone, but that once the keys of knowledge were granted him by his teachers, then there was no harm in him studying texts that fell into his hand. The third way is: “...and from what had been collected from the texts...” This means that many of his own teachers composed their own abridgements of the various elemental sciences such as medicine, astronomy, physiognomy, cosmology, the science of letters and others; either in Arabic prose or verse; or in Hausa or Fulfulde`. These works circulated among the *Fudiawa* and were further abridged, versified, translated and commented upon. I will discuss some of these scholars as well as their works, Allah willing. The fourth way is: “...and from extensive perusal of these texts with comprehension...” I have already discussed the transcendent meaning of the expression ‘*muṭaali`aat*’ (perusal) in footnote # 16. However, in this context, the poet infers repetition (*takraar*) and reiteration (*tardeed*). He corroborated this by using the expression ‘*kathra*’ (extensive). This is an indication that real comprehension of any text or issue can only occur through repetitive reading or recitation. The expression ‘*kathra*’ (many/extensive) implies multiplication and its numerical amount is always more than ten. My teachers in the *Bilad`-s-Sudan* always ordered me to read a passage I desired to learn by heart at least 41 times before closing or averting my eyes and attempting to recite it from memory. This is, of course after having transcribed the passage with my own hand. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him qualified, the repetitive reading of texts with the expression ‘*bi`l-fahmi*’ (with comprehension). Understanding (*fahm*) is the infinitive noun taken from the verb ‘*fahima*’ (to understand) and it means to apprehend the meaning of a thing. Al-Amidi said: “It is the excellence of intelligence in respect to its ability to swiftly apprehend subjects of inquiry that present themselves to it.” Thus, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him infers that his perusal of the texts of the elemental sciences were repetitive but not tedious because it was accompanied with comprehension; either with an understanding transmitted from his teachers, an understanding extracted from his own critical thinking or through metaphysical intuition. The fifth way is: “...or through transmission from those who mastered them...” Again the poet, may Allah be merciful to him uses the expression ‘*naql*’ (direct textual transmission). However in this context he means his teachers would transmit to him directly from memory and orally what they had mastered of the elemental sciences. The expression ‘*dhawee*’ (those who mastered) comes from the noun ‘*dhuu*’ meaning the possessor, owner, or master of a thing. Linguistically it is a prefixed noun which is followed by the thing owned, possessed or mastered. Allah ta`ala says: “...and Pharoah the owner of massive pillars (*dhu`l-awtaad*).” He says: “...in order that the one who possesses wealth (*dhu si`at*) can expend from his abundance.” He says: “Indeed the assault of your Lord is severe. He is the One who originates and rejuvenates. He is the Forgiving the Loving, the Master of the Glorious

Like medicine, physiognomy, arithmetic
And logic which guides to what is correct²³

Throne (dhu'l-'arsh'l-majeed).” Thus, the one who masters a thing is the one who knows it intrinsically, is conversant in it, and can expound on it from all of its comprehensible aspects. The masters of the elemental sciences are those who can elucidate these sciences accurately and soundly without the help of transmitted text. This is what the poet, may Allah be merciful to him indicated.

²³ A summation of the elemental sciences is incalculable; however the poet, may Allah be merciful to him listed twelve primary sciences which embrace the other elemental sciences by extension. He starts by mentioning the most important of these sciences: “**Like medicine...**” The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, *Imam* Muhammad Murtaḍa in his *Taaaj'l-'Aruus* gave the etymology of the expression ‘*tibb*’ (medicine) to be from the verb ‘*tabba*’ which means to treat someone medically or therapeutically and can apply to both the body (*badan*) and the soul (*nafs*). In its original meaning it is a synonym of the verb ‘*rafaqa*’ (to be gentle). Thus, the science of medicine (*ilm't-tibb*) is the gentle treatment or conduct which induces a cure in the body and soul. *Imam* al-Qanuuji said: “The science of medicine is the science that researches into the physiognomy of humans from the perspective of health and sickness, in order to preserve health and remove sickness. Galen said: ‘Medicine is the preservation of health and the removal of maladies.’ Its objective (*mawduu`a*) is the human body with regard to health and sickness.’ Its advantage is not hidden and what suffices in designating its nobility and honor is what *Imam* as-Shafi` said: ‘Knowledge are two: knowledge of physical medicine and knowledge of religious jurisprudence.’ It has been related by Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah ennoble his face who once said: ‘The sciences are five: religious jurisprudence; physical medicine; building engineering; the grammar of the tongue; and astronomy for the purpose of determining time.’ This was mentioned in the *Medinat'l-'Uluum*.” In the *Qanuun't-Tibb* Ibn Sinna he said: “The science of medicine is the science by which the diverse physiognomic states of humans can be known from the perspective of wellbeing and the science of determining what diminishes health, in order to preserve and maintain health and guard it from that which degrades it.” According to Islamic jurists the science of medicine was first revealed to Prophet *Idris* (Enoch), upon him be peace from whom the science was then passed into India and China. It was in China that works on medicine were first composed in textual form and its primary purpose was to establish harmony (和血 - *he` xie*) and balance (平衡 - *ping heng*) between the humors, temperaments, the physiognomy and the psychic. One of the earliest proponents of the medical sciences in China was the legendary Huang Lao who composed three well known texts on the subject, all with the initial title of the *Huangdi Neijing* (黄帝内经 - *Canon of the Yellow Emperor*) – namely: *Suwen* (the Basic Questions); *Ling Shu* (the Divine Pivot) and *Taisu* (- the Grand Basis) composed between 2698-2589 B.C.E. These seminal texts combined an understanding of Chinese cosmology as well as medicinal methodologies, with a complete integration of cosmology, philosophy and medicine, similar to the earliest works on medicine by the Greeks. It was from these three seminal texts that most subsequent works on medicine in China were produced such as the *Difficult Classic* composed by Bian Que in 500 B.C.E., the *Pulse Classic* by Wang Shu He in 270 C.E., the *General Treatise* of Chao Yuan Fang in 610 C.E. and the *Treatise On the Three Categories* by Chen Wu Ze in 1263 C.E. In Africa the

first to compose texts on medicine were the ancient Egyptians in the person of Imhotep ('he who comes in peace' - Muslim), the architect, physician and chief scribe of Pharaoh Zoser of the 3rd Dynasty in 2778 BCE. In Islamic traditions he was known as Luqman al-Hakim (the Wise or the 'Doctor') ibn Baa'uura ibn Naahura ibn Taarih as Muhammad ibn Is'haq gave his lineage. It is said that his name was Luqman ibn 'Anqaa ibn Siruun. Luqman or Imhotep was a Nubian from Ailat as as-Suhayli cited. The late Dr. Abdallah at-Tayyib of Sudan said that Luqman was the Nubian scribe, master builder and physician of ancient Egypt, who designed and built the first pyramid in Saqqara in Upper Egypt, and was known in Greece as Asclepius, and was subsequently worshipped there and in Rome as 'the god of medicine' for over a thousand years. Cheikh Anta Diop explains that the medicinal sciences of ancient Egypt lay at the foundation of what we know today as traditional African medicine. The first among the Europeans to compose works on medicine were Hippocrates (460-376 B.C.E.) who acknowledged that his understanding of the science came from the priest of ancient Egypt. It is from him that the famous 'Hippocratic Oath' taken by doctors today derived. He was followed by Galen some 665 years later. It was from these two that Hellenist medicine spread among the Muslims at the hands of Christian Arabs such as Hunayn Ibn Ishaq, who composed the al-Ashr Maqalat fi 'l-Ayn. Because the science of medicine is concerned with the health of the body in order to perform proper acts of worship, there is an aspect of this science which is apart of the revealed sciences. Thus, Isa ibn Maryum and our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace transmitted practical medicine known as 'Tibb'n-Nabi' (prophetic medicine). This was later combined with the elemental medical practices of the earlier civilizations and there emerged a unique rationalist approach to medicine which embraced the ethics of Islam. Among the leading Muslim scholars in the science of medicine were: Muhammad Ibn Zakariyya al-Razi (Rhazes) who composed the al-Judari wa 'l-Hasba (Smallpox and Measles); Ibn Rushd, (Averoes) who composed his al-Kulliyat fi 'l-Tibb; Ibn Sina (Avicenna) the author of the famous al-Qanuun fee 'l-Tibb (the Canon of Medicine); Ali ibn al-'Abass the author of Kaamil 's-Sanaa'at; Thabit ibn Qurra the author of the ad-Dakheera; Dawud al-Antaakhi the author of the Tadhkira; as-Suyuti the author of Rahma fi't-Tibb wa'l-Hikma and others. Among the leading scholars of the *Fudiawa* who composed text on the science of medicine were *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye', *Shaykh* Muhammad Bello Tukur ibn Muhammad (in his Kitaab 'r-Rahma Fee 't-Tibb, falsely attributed to *Sultan* Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* Uthman), *Shaykh* Umar ibn Muhammad al-Bukhari, and *Sultan* Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu*. *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye' said in his Masaalih'l-Insaan: "Knowledge is two kinds, the religious sciences and the sciences related to physiognomy. Each of them when one's intention is sincere is among the greatest of forms of worship. Thus one must make the intention to imitate the *Sunna* by studying medicine and removing hardships from the Muslims. By doing so, he shares in the afflictions which affect them. As a medical practitioner he must make the intention to cover the private parts of the Muslims by being disclosed only to that which is necessary from their nakedness. He should also intend to be compassionate to them, and if they give him some remuneration for his work, he should take it with the intention of using it to assist him in his work. If they do not give him remuneration, then he should consider that his actions in healing are acts of worship for the sake of Allah." *Shaykh* Muhammad Tukur said in his Ma'uunat 'l-Ikhwaan the purpose of composing texts on medicine: "...is in order to be included among those about whom, he may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: 'Whoever causes delight to a

believer, Allah will bring delight to him'. As well as the prophetic tradition: 'Whoever brings joy to a believer, Allah will bring joy to him on the Day of Standing'. As well as the prophetic tradition: 'Verily the most beloved of actions to Allah azza wa jalla is causing happiness and well being to enter the heart of a Muslim'. By developing the means for a believer to regain or maintain psychological, psychic and physical well being is the ultimate means of bringing joy and happiness to him, since psychological, psychic and physical balance are essential for acknowledging the existence of Allah, distinguishing Him from His creation and worshipping Him. Thus, the study of the science of medicine is beneficial for the practitioner as well as the patient, in this life and the Next. The key teacher of the poet, may Allah be merciful to him in the science of medicine was his father-in-law *Sultan* Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu*; about whom he said in his *Turjumaan Ba`d Ulama*: "As for Muhammad Bello...I studied with him the al-Jawhar al-Maknuun, some of the poets, some of the teachings of the People of *tasawwuf*, some of the books on the fundamental principles of medicine and other than these." Muhammad Bello composed more than eleven texts on the science of medicine. According to the present leader of the leather workers guild of Sokoto, *Shaykh* Mahmud Ma`mun ibn Yusef ibn Maasiran ibn *Shaykh* Ahmad Bakai' ibn *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir ibn Mustafa, some of the books of medicine which his great grandfather, *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir studied with *Amir'l-Mu'mineen* Muhammad Bello, were his own texts such as the 'Ujaalat 'r-Raakib and the al-Mawaarid an-Nabawwiya Fi al-Masaa'il 't-Tibbiya, but also the Kitab as-Su'aal Fi Manaafi' al-Hayawaan wa Khawaasihi, the at-Tadhkira'l-Muheet of *Imam* as-Suwaydi, and the al-Lawaami' wa'l-Asraar Fi Manaafi' 'l-Qur'an wa'l-Akhbaar of *Shaykh* Isa ibn Salaama ibn Isa al-Maghribi and others. Muhammad Bello said in his 'Ujaalat'r-Raakib: "The science of medicine is majestic in its scope as well as universal in its advantages and concern, mainly because it is responsible for the health of the physical bodies. With the health of the physical bodies the prayer, the fasting, and all other pillars of Islam are perfected. The Book and the *Sunna* have repeatedly discussed the science of medicine. The luminaries among the *Imams* have devoted their attention to the study of it. However, the issue of the study of medicine in these lands of ours has become completely abandoned and rendered unpopular to the extent that now total ignorance of the science has overcome most of its people. Many people who have a natural aptitude for this science have instead become preoccupied with the art of the disposal of letters (*tasreef'l-huruuf*), magical squares (*al-awfaaq*) and talismans to the point of even falling into unadulterated magic and the utilization of the occult sciences. As a result, their affair has led them into pure disbelief without doubt. Along with that the preoccupation with these occult arts in most cases brings about no advantage, although one may falsely think that he is gaining some benefit. It is for this reason that preoccupation with the occult arts is a social behavior that does not develop good character. Therefore, it is obligatory, instead for the people to expend their concern in the science of the medicine of the physical bodies in order that they may bring some advantage by that to themselves and their fellow Muslims. Ibn' l-Hajj said in his al-Madhkhal: 'It is necessary for students and for those who are suitable in knowledge and comprehension to be preoccupied with this science in these times due to the fact that few people among the Muslims are concerned with it. This neglect has moved the importance of the science of medicine to the level of an individual obligation. Consequently, when a person becomes immersed in the study of medicine it brings benefit to himself, his family, those he is acquainted with and the general population of the Muslims. Further, the advantage becomes multiplied for the

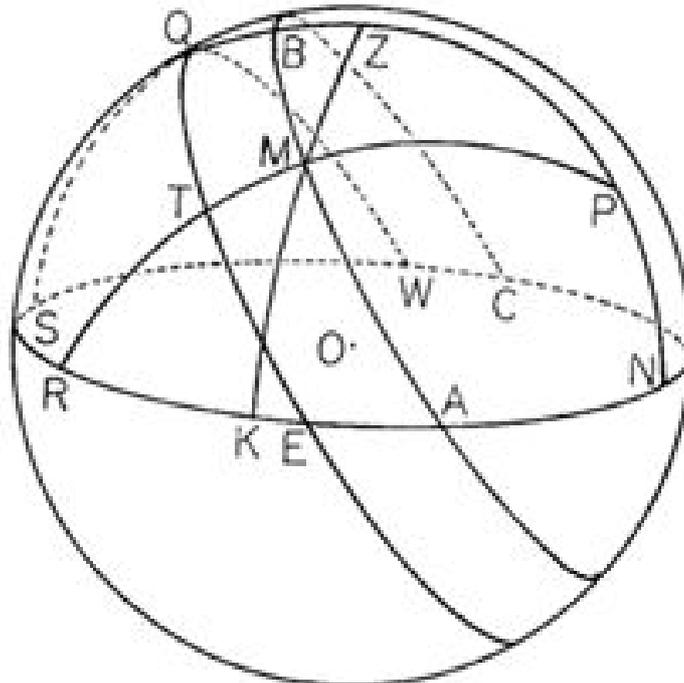
remainder of the people of his region. However, you find in these times those who have the capacity for comprehension of this science in terms of their aptitude and astuteness, yet they neglect being preoccupied with it, although they have the ability to acquire it.' He also said before that: 'The common rule today is that people have abandoned this science all together and have resorted to utilizing the medical practices of the people of the Book and others from among the disbelievers while they are certain in most cases that the medicinal practices of the disbelievers, which they encounter are devoid of real reasonable basis, due to its toxicity. The disbelieving "doctor" diagnoses symptoms which are not accurate due to the fact that they possess no real knowledge of the subject, which constitutes major harm against Muslims, from which we ask Allah ta'ala for protection'." The second of the elemental sciences which *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful him mastered was the science of "...**physiognomy**...". The expression '*hay'a*' (outward appearance or form) is a synonym of '*sura*' (form), '*haal*' (state) and '*shakl*' (shape). Thus, it came to have a dual meaning among the people of verification (*muhaqqiqun*): [1] the physical configuration of the form of animals and humans; and [2] the order, the number, divisions, size, distance and motions of the heavenly bodies. The later aspect of '*ilm'l-hay'a*' is a branch of astronomy known as cosmology (*kawniyyaat*). The first aspect is associated with the study of medicine; while the second aspect is the designation of the shape of the heavenly orbits (*aflaak*), specifying their positions, enumerating the number of the planetary bodies, the stars, and their movements. This is further connected to the study of the cosmic realities such as the universal orbit, Footstool, the Throne, the Guarded Tablet and the Primordial Pen. Thus, the study of the science of '*hay'a*' involves the study of physiognomy of man as microcosm and the form of the larger macrocosmic order. In the Medinat'l-Uluum the author describes the science of '*hay'a*': "...as the science of the understanding of the states of the higher and lower celestial bodies, their forms, positions in space, their hierarchies and their distances from one another." Among the more well known earlier text on this science are the al-Madkhal Ila 'ilm'l-Hay'a by *Imam* Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Munajjim, the Misrat'l-Quluub Fee Dafi'l-Kuruub by 'Alaa'd-Deen Ali ibn Muhammad Qawshuuji, the Muntahaa 'l-Idraak Fee Jaraaseem'l-Aflaak by *Imam* Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Hussayni al-Kharuukhi. The leading scholar among the *Fudiawa* responsible for composing texts on the science of '*hay'a*', was *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye`. We have two texts from him which cover the science in an abridged manner: an Arabic work called al-Kayyat's-Saniyya Fee 'l-Hay'at as-Siniyya and a Hausa poem called Faati Buurji Ghaghida (Elucidating All the Constellations and Their Mansions). The first text is a theoretical work written to delineate the Islamic cosmology extracted from the Book of Allah and the *Sunna*. The second text is on the science of '*hay'a*' and '*ilm'n-nujuum*' (astronomy) and was composed in order to utilize these as an applied science in the manner of an 'almanac'. It was particularly useful to agronomist and civil servants of the time. One of the key students of *Shaykh* Abdullahi in this science was *Shaykh* Mustafa at-Turuudi, who then passed the fundamentals of this science to his son, the poet, *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir, may Allah be merciful to all of them. Related to the science of '*hay'a*' is the third of the elemental sciences the poet mastered which is "...**arithmetic**...". The expression '*hisaab*' (calculation/computation/arithmetic) is an infinitive noun from the verb '*hasaba*' (to number, count, compute or calculate); like when one says: '*rafa`a l-'aamilu hisaabahu ila al-amir*' (The civil servant presented his calculation to the governor). In the *Qur'an* the expression '*hisaab*' ('reckoning) is apart of the

fundamental principles of theology which is obligatory for every responsible Muslim to believe in. Allah ta'ala says on the tongue of Ibrahim, upon him be peace: “*Our Lord forgive me, my parents and the believers on the Day the Reckoning is established.*” This refers to the Day of Resurrection when all the men and *jinn* will be revived from the dead, gathered into one place and reckoned for every atoms weight of good or evil they performed or failed to perform. It is for this reason that Allah names Himself ‘*al-Haseeb*’ (the Enumerator or the One Who Reckons). As for the science of ‘*ilm’l-hisaab*’ (arithmetic), *Imam* al-Qanuuji said: “...it is concerned with determining unknown numerical quantities from known quantities, as well as the fundamental mathematical operations and extraction of root numbers.” Although the science of mathematics was well known and utilized by the earlier civilizations, Muslims developed algebraic and geometric calculation to new heights required for determining the division of inheritance, calculating the obligatory *zakat* on wealth, dividing the wealth of the public treasury (*bayt’l-maal*); and pinpointing the exact direction of Mecca. Among the most important works composed on the science of arithmetic were: the Nihaayat’t-Tullaab Fee ‘l-Hisaab of Badr’d-Deen ibn al-Khateeb al-Irbali; the Nuzhat ‘l-Albaab Fee ‘l-Hisaab of Abd’l-‘Aziz ibn Abd’l-Waahid al-Maghribi; the al-Lami` fee ‘l-Hisaab of Abu’l-Abass Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ali al-Haa’iy ‘l-Maqdasi; the al-Lubaab Fee ‘l-Hisaab by Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Kinani as-Sanjari; the Kifaayat’l-Hisaab Fee ‘l-Hisaab of *Shaykh* al-Labuudi; and others. Among the *Fudiawa*, the study of the science of arithmetic was a necessary requirement for the mastery of those elemental, linguistic and *shari`a* sciences which involve calculation, such as the science of inheritance (*faraa`id*), prosody (*uruud*), building engineering (*handisa ‘l-banaa`*), and the science of letters (*jifr*). The science of ‘*hisaab*’ was essential in business and commerce which were the warp and woof of long distance trade that lay at the foundation of the spread of Islam throughout the *Bilad’s-Sudan*. *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` made the science of simple and complex arithmetic a fundamental requirement in his courses as *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` said in his Ida`n-Nusuukh: “I took from him the science of arithmetic (*al-hisaab*), that which is complex and that which is simple.” Another scholar among the *Fudiawa* well versed in the teaching of the mathematical sciences was *Shaykh* Muhammad Mudi Mamari ibn Uthman ibn Alfa Zazi. According to *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn *al-Qadi* al-Hajj, in addition to mastering mathematics, *Shaykh* Mudi Mamari was well versed in the rational sciences (*ma`quul*), and the theoretical sciences (*uluum nadhariyya*) such as logic (*mantiq*), theology (*kalaam*) as well as the jurisprudence of the divisions of inheritance (*faraa`id*); all which are depended upon the science of arithmetic. *Shehu* Uthman, *Shaykh* Abdullahi and *Shaykh* Mudi Mamari were the key teachers of the mathematical and rational sciences to *Shaykh* Mustafa ibn Muhammad at-Turuudi, who in turn taught them to his son, the poet, may Allah be merciful to all of them. The fourth of the elemental sciences which *Shaykh* Dan Tafa mastered was the mother of the rational sciences (*ummahaat’l-ilm ‘l-ma`quul*) called ‘*mantiq*’ (logic) as he said: “**...and logic which guides to what is correct...**” The poet used the phrase ‘*nutq*’ (perception /articulation) which has an inner meaning referring to the mental conceptualization of the meanings of universals, and an outward meaning referring to the verbal articulation of these comprehensions. In this sense ‘*nutq*’ (perception /articulation) is what distinguishes human beings from animals, *jinn*, and Angels because it is the qualitative strength of conceptualization and the ability to articulate it, which resides in the human spirit. That is to say, ‘*nutq*’ (perception /articulation) is

that quality in the human being which enables him to perceive the realities of things and then to delineate them. It is for this reason humans are called rational or speaking creatures (*hayawaan naatiq*); and is why the expression ‘*nutq*’ is a synonym for speech (*kalaam*). Allah ta’ala says: “*And with Us is a Book which articulates (yantiq) the Truth.*” He ta’ala says about the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: “*He does not speak (yantiq) out of whim. It is indeed nothing but revealed revelation.*” Although the expression ‘*nutq*’ (perception /articulation) refers to the unique quality in humans to comprehend and articulate meaning, in a limited sense it also refers to any form of vocal articulation which emerges from animals and other sentient beings. Allah ta’ala says: “*And We taught him the language of the birds (mantiq’-t-tayr).*” Technically the science of ‘*nutq*’ (perception /articulation) is a reference to the science of logic (*’ilm’l-mantiq*) which *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Ali at-Tahaanawi in the introduction to his Kashaaf Istilaah’l-Funuun wa’l-’Uluum delineated as the science of balance (*’ilm’l-meezaan*) and one of the applied sciences (*’ilm’ amali*) whose objective is to evaluate proofs and evidence. In his al-Ishaaraat wa’t-Tanbeehaat the *Imam* of the physicians Ibn Sina said: “Logic (*mantiq*) is the science by which the encapsulated ideations (*umuur haasila*) which occur in the mind of humans are transferred into their consequential forms and subsequently articulates the conditions of these forms.” Al-Qanuuji defined it in his Abjad’l-’Uluum as: “...the science which protects the mind from errors in seeking to grasp what is unknown from known ideations. Its advantage is the ability to distinguish what is correct from what is erroneous by the observer as he examines existing things and their causalities and to arrive at the verification of truth in existence by the full limit of his reflection.” It is thus an essential element of the rational sciences and the means by which the people of intuitive knowledge can articulate the spiritual openings which they have been granted. *Imam* al-Farabri referred to it as the ‘*ray’sa’l-’uluum*’ (the mistress of the sciences) on account of the ease which it affords other sciences to be mastered. Ibn Sina referred to it as the ‘*khaadim’l-’uluum*’ (servant of the sciences), due to the fact that the study of logic is not an end in itself, but its study is a means to comprehending other sciences. Hence, the science of logic is both at the assistance and employ of all the other sciences. *Imam* al-Ghazali said: “Whoever does not know the science of ‘*mantiq*’ (logic), ultimately has no reliability in comprehending the remaining sciences.” Arguably the strongest defense for the study of the science of logic was put forward by *Shaykh* Abu Bakr ibn Rushd who maintained that the science of logic (*’ilm’l-mantiq*) and the science of philosophy were one and the same. In his Fasl’l-Maqaal Ibn Rushd advanced a pertinent question: “Is close investigation into philosophy and the sciences of logic lawful by the *shari’a*; or is it precarious; or is it among the matters which are commanded to be studied, either from the perspective of recommendation (*nadb*) or from the perspective of incumbent obligation (*wujuub*)?” He answered: “If the actions of philosophy is nothing more than examination of existing things, and considering it from the perspective of the evidence that it gives for a Creator; I mean by that, from the perspective that these things were created; then all of existence by knowing the nature of its creation is evidence for the Creator. Thus, whenever the knowledge of creation of existence is perfected, then knowledge of its Creator will also be perfected. The *shari’a* recommends servants to closely consider existence and encourages that. This clarifies that the cognomen of what provides evidence for this is either obligatory by the *shari’a* or it is made highly recommended by it. As for the invitation of the *shari’a* to closely consider existing things by reason and to seek after its knowledge by means of

the intellect; then that was clarified in many verses of the Book of Allah *tabaarak wa ta'ala*; like His words: 'Examine closely O possessors of reasoned insight'; and His words: 'Will they not closely examine the kingdoms of the heavens and the earth and what Allah created from things?' This is actual textual evidence encouraging the close examination of all of existence. Realize that among those whom Allah ta'ala singled out for the mastery of this science was Ibrahim, upon him be peace. Allah ta'ala says: 'And likewise We showed Ibrahim the kingdoms of the heavens and the earth'. Allah ta'ala says: 'Will you not closely examine the camel and how it was created, and the heavens how it was raised?' Allah ta'ala says: 'Reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth'; and other verses like this which are innumerable." Thus, those scholars who consider it an obligation to know the rational channels for the evidence of knowing Allah, say that the science of logic is an individual obligation (*fard 'ayn*). They base their view on the axiom: 'That by which an obligation cannot be completed except by means of it, makes it also obligatory'; since the rational channels for evidence of knowing Allah cannot be conceived or articulated except by means of logic. Although this is the preponderant view, yet some of the scholars, on the other hand consider the study of the science of logic and philosophy to be forbidden since it was first formulated, in their view, by Aristotle and was utilized by the Mu'atazili to try and deconstruct the *'aqeeda* of the Muslims. This objection to the science of logic is advanced because it is conceivable that this discipline can be utilized to negate the in-time nature of existence and to deny the existence of a Creator or Diety. As I mentioned previously, the science of logic (*mantiq*) is inseparable from the science of rhetorical eloquence (*bayaan*) since the conceptualization of universals and the ability to articulate them in such a manner that their authentic significance is conveyed requires eloquence. It is here that the sages, but not necessarily the jurists, censure delving too deeply in them. Our master, *Shaykh* Ahmad ibn 'Ajiba al-Maghribi, may Allah be pleased with him said: "The correction of the syntax of the tongue without the correction of the syntax of the heart is nothing but corruption and error." The *Imam* of the grammarians, Sibawayhi said: "A tongue so eloquent in the syntax of his speech; if only he could be safe from the sorrow and regrets of its elucidations." Thus, the censure of delving too deeply in the study of logic and eloquence is not because of the harm in the sciences themselves, but due to the danger of a corrupt heart being armed with logic and eloquence. How, many of the venial scholars today, utilize the sciences of '*mantiq*' and '*bayaan*' to deny and distort the *'aqeeda* of the Muslims, to deny and distort the *shari'a* of the Muslims and to mobilize the Muslims masses to accept being under *dhimmi* status to dominant western civilization? They seek to deceive Allah and the believers by means of their eloquence and logical concepts, but they end up only deceiving themselves, while they are unawares. *Shaykh* Ali ibn Maymuun al-Hassani al-Idrisi said in his *Nahw'l-Qalb*: "The most repulsive of all repugnant acts is that a person studies the syntax of the tongue and masters it, but does not know the syntax of the heart and masters it, since it is the locus for the Gaze of the Lord." It is from this perspective that the sciences of logic (*mantiq*) and eloquence (*bayaan*) are censured by a majority of the sages and a few of the jurists. The majority of the jurists, however, consider the study of the science of logic to be a collective obligation (*fard kifaaya*), since there must be a cadre of scholars who comprehend these sciences, if only to defend the doctrines of Islam, let alone to advance it in the hearts of non Muslims. Because it is inconceivable that every human has the intellectual stamina to master this science, it is then a collective obligation for those who have the intellectual capacity to master it. This is the accepted view.

Among the leading works on the science of logic utilized by Muslim scholars were: the al-Ishaaraat wa't-Tanbeehaat Fee'l-Mantiq wa'l-Hikma and the as-Shifa' Fee'l-Mantiq of the *Imam* of the physicians Abu Ali al-Hassan ibn Abdallah famous as Ibn Sina; the Bayaan 'l-Haqq fee 'l-Mantiq wa'l-Hikma of Siraj'd-Deen Mahmud ibn Abu Bakr al-Urumi; the at-Taqreeb fee'l-Mantiq of Abu Muhammad Ali ibn Ahmad known as Ibn Hazim ad-Dhaahiri; the at-Talweehaat Fee'l-Mantiq wa'l-Hikma of Shihaab'd-Deen Yahya ibn Habash as-Sahrawardi; the al-Mashriq Fee Istilaah'l-Mantiq of *Qadi* Ahmad ibn Abd'r-Rahman al-Lakhmi; the Tahdheeb 'n-Nutaq wa'l-Kalaam of Sa'd'd-Deen Mas'ud ibn Umar at-Taftaazaani; the Muqaddima Fee'l-Mantiq of Badr'd-Deen Muhammad ibn Muhammad, known as Ibn Malik an-Nahwi; the al-Jaami' 'l-Kabeer Fee'l-Mantiq wa't-Tabee'iy wa'l-Ilahi of Abd'l-Lateef ibn Yusef al-Baghdadi; the al-Jumal Fee Mukhtasar Nihaayat 'l-Amal Fee'l-Mantiq of Afdal'd-Deen Muhammad ibn Naamuur ibn Abd'l-Malik al-Khawnuji; the Sawn'l-Mantiq wa'l-Kalaam 'An Fann'l-Mantiq wa'l-Kalaam of Abd'r-Rahman as-Suyuuti and many more. Among the leading scholars of the *Fudiawa* who taught the science of logic were: the maternal uncle of the *Shehu*, Muhammad al-Farabri ibn Muhammad ibn Hamal ibn Ahmad ibn Hamm ibn 'Aal about whom *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` said in verse: "Then came our companion, meaning al-Farabri, a veritable reference book * for the science of logic, exalted above every fixed star and planet." In addition to the *Shehu* and *Shaykh* Abdullahi, there were *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Bukhari ibn *Shehu*, *Shaykh* Mudi Mamari, *Shaykh* Mustafa ibn Muhammad at-Turuudi, and Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* all who instructed the poet, may Allah be merciful to him in the science of logic. As I mentioned previously, the Kitaab at-Tahreer of Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* was considered the most excellent work composed on the subject of logic (*mantiq*) due to its conciseness and simplicity. It was this text which the poet, studied with its author, as well as with his father and maternal uncle, Muhammad al-Bukhari.



The wisdom of the stars and physics, which

Is the assistant to medicine by the prevailing judgment.²⁴

²⁴ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, then cites the fifth of the elemental sciences he mastered, which is: “**The wisdom of the stars...**” When we rule out the reproach that some scholars make against the study of logic, it is here with the science of the study of the stars that we come to those elemental sciences that are considered most blameworthy by a majority of scholars. The expression ‘*hikma*’ has many meanings with the verifiers (*muhaqiqun*). Among them is the accurate mastery of a thing (*itqaan*’s-*shay*’), or it means the absolute knowledge (*ilm mutlaq*) of an issue in all its aspects. Muhammad ibn Turmart al-Andalusi said in his Kanz’l-Uluum: “Wisdom (*hikma*) is placing a thing in its proper place.” However, in the context of the poem the expression ‘*hikma*’ is synonymous with the phrase ‘*hakam*’ (judgment), and means arriving at a decision of a particular event in time based upon the influence and dynamics of a causative factor, and can be considered a kind of analogous deduction (*qiyaas*). It is for this reason that the scholars make a distinction between ‘*ilm*’n-*nujuum*’ (the science of the stars - astronomy) and ‘*ahkaam*’n-*nujuum*’ (the judgment or decrees of the stars - astrology). Imam al-Qanuuji said that the first, astronomy, is known by means of calculation (*hisaab*) and thus is a branch of the mathematical sciences (*ilm*’r-*riyaadi*), while the second, astrology, is known by the alleged influence that the zodiac of stars has upon nature, and thus it is a branch of the natural sciences (*ilm*’t-*tabee*’iy). Because the later science entails predicting the future, and the manipulation of creation, some scholars include it among the magical sciences. It is for this reason that the sciences of choosing (*ikhtaariyaat*), geomancy (*raml*), drawing lots (*qur`at*), omens (*tayra*) and other occult sciences branch from or are an integral part if the science astrology. Shaykh Muhammad at-Tahaanawi delineated the science of the stars in his Kashaaf Istilaah’l-Funuun wa’l-Uluum as: “...the science by which evidence can be known regarding the events of celestial entities.” The expression ‘*nujuum*’ is plural for ‘*najm*’ (star) which takes its root from the verb ‘*najama*’ (to ensue) and is the synonym of the expressions ‘*tala`a*’ (to rise) and ‘*dhahara*’ (to manifest). Allah ta`ala says: “*And the star (najm) and the tree they do give glorification.*” The scholars of linguistics say that the plural expression ‘*nujuum*’ is inclusive of all the constellations and stars, thus the science of the wisdom of the stars (*hikmat*’n-*nujuum*) is the science by which the conditions of the sun, the moon and other stellar bodies can be known. Mujahid and Qatada asserted that the observation of the stars and determining the calendar by the movements of the celestial bodies in the heavens can be traced back to Adam and was apart of the sciences he was taught when Allah ta`ala says: “*And He taught Adam all the names.*” Imam al-Qurtubi asserted that this science is attributed to Prophet Idris (Enoch). Evidence exist that the ancient Chaldeans were among the first civilizations to develop standardized calendars and were the first to locate and name the stars. From them it diffused to the Egyptians (via Abraham) and the Chinese. According to renowned perennialist and egyptologist, Schwaller de Lubicz, the Egyptians used three calendars: a lunar calendar of alternative 29 and 30 day months; a civil calendar of 360 days plus five additional days; and a 365 and 1/4th day calendar based upon the movement of the ‘Dog Star’ Sirius, a star by which Allah swears in the Infallible *Qur’an*. The later calendar being the same calendar utilized by the Dogon and Bambara ethnicities for thousands of years in the western *Bilad’s-Sudan*. Allah ta`ala

establishes that observation of the stars was a common practice among the ancients by His words regarding Prophet Ibrahim: “*He then took a glance at the stars.*” *Imam al-Bayḍawī* said in his exegesis that this verse means that he examined the positions (*mawaaqiʿ*) of the stars, their conjunctions and interactions (*itisaalaat*); or it means he examined the science of the stars; or that he looked into the books regarding the stars and found no prohibition in doing so. *Imam at-Tabarī* said that this verse indicates that members of the family of Ibrahim were astrologers and had advanced knowledge of the movement of the celestial bodies. In the at-Tafsir’l-Kabir it said: “If it is asserted that examining the science of the stars (*ilm’-n-nujuum*) is not lawful, then how was it possible for Ibrahim, upon him be peace to have even approached it? We say: we do not accept that the examining of the science of the stars and drawing inferences from these meanings is forbidden. This is because whoever believes that Allah ta’ala is the One who designates each of the celestial bodies with functional energy and distinctive qualities and that there emerges from each a specific influence as a result of this; then from that perspective this knowledge cannot be considered false.” Josephus tells us in his Antiquity of the Jews: “He (Abraham) communicated to them (the Egyptians) arithmetic, and delivered to them the science of astronomy; for, before Abram came into Egypt, they were unacquainted with those parts of learning; for that science came from the Chaldeans into Egypt, and from thence to the Greeks also.” Without looking too critically into the accuracy of this account, what it does indicate is that the science of astronomy was considered a lawful science by pre-Islamic religious communities and was considered in some part to be apart of the prophetic sciences. *Imam al-Qurtubī* relates in his al-Jaami’ Li Ahkaam’l-Qur’an: “Ibn Abass said: ‘The science of the stars was apart of prophethood, but when Allah ta’ala sequestered the sun for Joshua ibn Nuun, this science became distorted. Thus, the examination of the stars by Ibrahim was apart of prophetic knowledge’. Juwaybir narrated on the authority of ad-Duhaak who said: ‘The science of the stars as a prophetic science persisted until the time of Jesus, upon him be peace, until it is reported that some people entered upon him in a place in which he was concealed as an infant. Maryum then said to them: ‘From where did you learn of his whereabouts?’ They said: ‘By means of the stars’. Thus, Jesus as an infant supplicated to his Lord saying: ‘O Allah do not grant them comprehension of its science.’ Thus, no one thereafter had knowledge of the prophetic aspect of the science of the stars.” It was then that the science thereafter was based upon supposition, calculation, and hypothesis rather than the science of divine realities (*haqaa’iq*). It also devolved into pure magic with its roots firmly planted in the occult sciences. It is for this reason that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Whoever believes in the stars has become disbeliever.” This admonition is a criticism of the occult and magical aspects of the science, and not the practical science of astronomy because it is also reported that he, upon him be blessings and peace said: “Learn from the stars, that which can enable you to be guided on the land and sea; then stop there.” *Imam as-Shafi’* said: “When the astronomer believes that the effective influence behind the stars is Allah ta’ala, but he allows that it is the pattern of Allah sub’haanahu wa ta’ala to cause His decrees to issue upon the circumstantial events by the movement of the celestial bodies and their designated positions, then I find no harm in that.” It states in the al-Faraa’id as-Siraajiyya of *Imam Siraj’-d-Deen Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Hanafi*: “There is no harm in the study of the stars to the extent that one is able to know the times of prayer and the direction of the *qibla*.” *Imam Haaji Khalifa* said in his Kashif ‘d-Dhunuun: “The science of the stars is divided into four strata: the first is knowledge of the

calculation of the calendar, knowledge of the astrolabe, and how it is constructed; the second is knowledge of introduction to the science of the stars, knowledge of the physics of the stars, constellations and their interactions with one another; the third is knowledge of the calculation of the dynamics of the stars, the dynamics of the ephemeris and their influence upon the calendar; and the fourth is knowledge of astronomical cosmology, and engineering guidelines based upon the dynamics of the stars. Whoever is able to grasp these four strata is a complete reliable astronomer.” This does not in any way preclude the spiritual wayfarer attaining a complete knowledge of the stars and constellations by means of spiritual unveiling. Indeed the heavenly bodies are apart of the creation of Allah ta`ala and knowledge of the objective, the ultimate purpose and the glorification that each aspect of creation gives towards Allah is apart of the prophetic sciences. Subsequently, knowledge of the reality of the stars (*haqaa'iq 'n-nujuum*), as Allah ta`ala intended by their creation can be known. In fact, many of the perfected sages (*awliyya kumaal*) such as the *Awtaad*, the *Abdaal*, the *Nujaba*, the *Nuqaaba*, and the *Rajabiyuun* possess extraordinary divine knowledge of the celestial bodies and how to employ this knowledge for the benefit of mankind, as we will discuss, Allah willing in the latter sections of this poem. This was corroborated by many of the people of *tasawwuf*, such as Abu'l-Husayn as-Sufi in his Kitaab Suwar'l-Kawaakib, Muhammad ibn Turmart al-Andalusi in his Kanz'l-'Uluum wa'd-Durari'l-Mandhuum and the gnostic *Shaykh* Abu'l-Abass Ahmad ibn Mustafa al-Alawi in his al-Manhi'l-Quduusiyya Sharh al-Murshid al-Mu`een Bi Tareeq as-Sufiyya in which he said that he composed a text delineating the structure of the entire heavenly constellations based upon spiritual unveiling. I myself came across a text in the Hartford Seminary, translated from Turkish into English by an American priest in 1837 C.E. of a work by a Sufi master called Revelations On the Sidereal Universe, where the author reveals the entire structure of existence from the universe of the Throne through the seven heavens and seven earths based upon spiritual unveiling. The Christian priest asserted that not only was the structure of the universe as envisioned by this Muslim sage accurate based upon the prevailing knowledge of the time of the cosmos, but that he actually presented ideas about the structure of the heavens which was far ahead of the compendium of knowledge possessed by astronomers of that period. Because the determination and estimation of the sun and moon are required in order to determine the direction of the *qibla* for prayer and the pilgrimage to Mecca, the study of the '*ilm 'n-nujuum*' is considered to be among the collective obligations, and as a result the astronomical and astrological sciences associated with the celestial bodies were studied extensively by Muslim scholars. Ibn Tumart said in his Kanz'l-'Uluum: “Realize, and may Allah ta`ala guide you, that '*ilm 'n-nujuum*' is a sound science from the most noble of the sciences of nature because knowing it is knowledge of the exoteric *shari`a*. This is because Allah transcribed it with the Hand of His omnipotence, and placed in it what He willed from His knowledge and wisdom. The only reason that this science is disliked is due to those who believe that affairs of existence with all of their dynamics, power, strength and decrees are attributed only to themselves. This is pure disbelief without doubt. As for those who believe that Allah is the One who creates all the affairs of existence, fashions, manages, subjugates them, and causes them to flow in accordance with what He wills from His volition; and that all these cosmic affairs with their created dynamics have good and harmful influence, is indistinguishable from the belief that the actions of the soul such as obedience and disobedience have their subsequent influence. This is because Allah `azza wa jalla is the Creator of everything by means

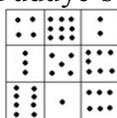
of His omnipotence. *He will not be questioned regarding what He does, but they will be questioned.* It is thus necessary that what is in preexistence from His knowledge must come into being and there is no end to His affair. He has no partner in the management of His kingdom and nothing decided can be averted except what has been annulled or establish. This is the knowledge of the people of verification in this path. Whoever believes other than that has made partners with Him in the affair... It is incumbent for the intelligent person not to ever neglect the estimation of the sun and moon, knowledge of their interactions in their zodiacal constellations and mansions, knowledge of the four seasons, knowledge of the times of the religious rites, as well as knowledge of the hours of the night and day. All of this is what is associated with the noble *shari`a* and are required by necessity for humans to know. Rather, the necessities of life itself impresses upon him to know this. Allah ta`ala says: *‘He it is who made the sun as an illumination and the moon as a light, and has decreed for them stations, so that you can know the computation of the years and calculation. Allah does not create that except by means of the Truth. He details the signs for a people who know.’* Allah ta`ala says: *‘And We have made the night and the day as signs. Then We make the sign of night dark, and We make the sign of the day as a means of giving sight, so that you may seek after the bounty of your Lord, and that you may know the computation of the years, and calculation. For everything We have detailed with a clear exposition.’* This is what is incumbent to know from the science of the stars (*‘ilm`n-nujuum*), so learn it and achieve understanding, if Allah ta`ala wills it.” Among the leading texts composed by Muslims on the *‘ilm`n-nujuum* were: the al-Baari` Fee Ahkaam`n-Nujuum of Ali ibn Abu`r-Rihaal as-Shaybaani; the at-Tabsira Fee `Ilm`n-Nujuum of Umar ibn al-Madhfar Yusef; the al-Madhkhal Fee `Ilm`n-Nujuum of Abu`l-Abass Ahmad ibn Muhammad as-Sarkhisi; the Masaa`il `l-Qasraani of Abu Yusef Ya`qub ibn Ali al-Qasraani; the Kitaab Tasteeh as-Suwar wa Tabteeh `l-Kuwar of Abu`r-Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni; the Ajaa`ib`l-Makhluuqaat of Zakariyya ibn Muhammad al-Qazwini and many others. Among the texts which were widely used by the *Fudiawa* was the famous poem called Qaseedat Fee`l-Buruuj wa`l-Manaazil of *Shaykh* Husayn ibn Ahmad ibn Ali al-Hashimi al-Baghdadi; the al-Jawhara Fee Dhamm `Ilm`n-Nujuum of *Shaykh* Hamadaan ibn Ahmad as well as the above mentioned Hausa poem of *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` called Faati Buurji Ghaghida (Elucidating All the Constellations and Their Mansions). Among the works which severely censored the unrestricted usage of the science of astronomy and especially astrology was the Tanbeeh Ahl`l-Fuhuum `Ala Wujuub Ijtinaab Ahl as-Sha`adhaba wa`n-Nujuum of Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu*. This predisposition towards the study of the negative aspects of this science is what induced *Shaykh* Dan Tafa to say in his Kashif`l-Ghitta: “Realize that this key to accessing the unseen is utilized by the people of the observation of the celestial orbits (*‘arsaad`l-falakiyya*). This methodology is not the concern of the People of Allah who rely completely upon Him, due to its inherent remoteness from the place of ascent of gnosis of Allah. However, what we mean by it being one of the keys to accessing the unseen is what its people acquire by means of it. And it is that in this realm of knowledge Allah has made the celestial orbits from among the links to earthly events, the occurrence of insignificant phenomena and momentous events as a result of the various conditions that the dynamics of the celestial orbits have upon them, as well as the impact these have upon nature and the advantage that can be extracted from the rays of its study. Although, these issues which are connected to this science are well established since Allah ta`ala is the One who made them so; yet the ignorant when

they become attached to it will be diverted by its data from the station of Divine Unity and the true way of life (*deen*). It is then that the *shari`a* demands the rejection of it and forbids them looking into the stars; since it is feared that they, due to their ignorance, will become preoccupied with it and become engulfed in the dubious philosophies associated with it, and fall headlong into its deviant beliefs by perusing the ideas of its philosophers. For some go as far to placing the science of the constellation in the place of an intermediary and barrier to the Absolute Being. While some of them assert that the constellations have tangible and independent affect in and of itself. All of this is error, disbelief and a clear divergence from the realm of Divine Unity. The proof of the establishment of this science is what has been transmitted regarding its prohibition, and this is abundant in the *Sunnan* and the historical sources.” The poet, may Allah be merciful restricted the study of this science to the scholars who were firm in the Book, the *Sunna* and the principles of the *shari`a* and clearly prohibited the ignorant from delving into the sciences, especially as a means of accessing the unseen or the unknown. He corroborated this view by taking an oath and covenant to avoid using astrology and other occult sciences to access the unseen world (*`alam`l-ghayb*); while maintaining that there is a lawful means of knowing the unseen confirmed by the *shari`a*. He said in his *al-Uhuud wa`l-Mawaathiq*: “I have taken an oath and covenant not to search into the unseen by means of divination, soothsaying, astrology, or any of the baseless occult sciences. Yet, independent of these sciences, I have procured knowledge of the unseen by means of the true dream (*ru`ya saadiq*). For nothing has occurred in these times except that I have seen it effortlessly in my dream before it actually occurred.” The sixth of the elemental sciences that *Shaykh* Dan Tafa mastered was the science connected to the study of medicine, as he said: “**...and physics...**” The expression ‘*tabaa`i`iy*’ (natural constituents) is plural for ‘*tabee`u*’, which signifies innate temperament (*mizaaj*). It is a synonym of ‘*khaleeqa*’ (that which is naturally appropriate), ‘*jibilla*’ (the composition), and ‘*sajeeya*’ (the natural constitution). Ibn Sina designated the ‘*tabaa`i`iy*’ (natural constituents) as the combined constituents which make up the harmony of the material world. The basic elements of material existence are four: fire (*naar*), air (*hawaa*), water (*maa`*) and earth (*turaab*). These four elements are the components of the ‘*tabaa`i`iy*’ (natural constituents) which make up the whole of material existence. The balance and harmony of these elements in creatures is what enables health and physical well being. Allah ta`ala says: “*And the heavens He elevated and established the Balance; so that you do not exceed the balance, but establish the scale with equity and do not fall short of the Balance.*” The poet, thus, asserted that the preservation of the harmony and balance among the ‘*tabaa`i`iy*’ (natural constituents) is that “**...which is the assistant to medicine by the prevailing judgment.**” That is to say that maintaining the equilibrium between the four natural elements: water (*maa`*), earth (*turaab*), fire (*naar*) and air (*hawaa*); preserving the balance between the four natural temperaments (*tabee`at arba`a*): hot (*haraara*), cold (*baruuda*), dry (*yabuusa*) and wet (*ratuuba*); and to sustaining the harmony between the four humors (*akhlaat arba`a*): the yellow bile (*saфра`*), the red bile (*damm*) or blood, the white bile (*balgham*) which comprises the mucous and phlegmatic fluids, and the black bile (*sawdaa`*); are the fundamental principles underlying the science of medicine. By preserving the soundness and balance of these four elements, four temperaments and four humors, psychic and physiognomic well being is protected in the human being. Adversely, with the corruption and imbalance of these, it leads to physiognomic and psychic illness. In traditional Chinese medicine

And the science of paranormal squares and of letters from the perspective
Of the intrinsic effects and numerical values that are well known²⁵

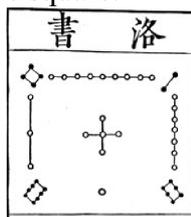
this concept of harmony (和血 - *he`xie*) and balance (平衡 - *ping heng*) between man and nature and between the physiognomy and the spirit is of primary importance in health and well being. For this reason the knowledge of the nature of things (*tabee`a*) is an essential element in the study of medicine. The leading studies by Muslims on the science of natures (*`ilm` t-tabee`a*) were normally included in the books on medicine, cosmology, and philosophy; such as the al-Ikleel Fee Ansaab Humayr Wa Ayaam Muluukihaa of Abu Muhammad al-Hassan ibn Ahmad ibn Ya`qub al-Yemeni; the ar-Rahma Fee` t-Tibb wa`l-Hikma of Mahdi ibn Ali ibn Ibrahim as-Sabiri al-Yemeni; and the Kanz`l-`Uluum wa` d-Durr`l-Mandhuum Fee Haqaa`iq` Ilm as-Shari`a wa Daqaa`iq` Ilm` t-Tabee`a of spiritual master Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Turmart al-Andalusi. The leading proponents of this science among the *Fudiawa* were the great grandfather of the poet, *Shaykh* Fuduye` Muhammad ibn Uthman, *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Fulaati al-Katsinawi, *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Farabri ibn Muhammad, *Shaykh* Muhammad Yero ibn Fuduye` Muhammad and others. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him learned the science of constituent natures from his father-in-law *Sultan* Muhammad Bello with whom he studied the science of medicine.

²⁵ Closely associated with *`ilm` n-nujuum`* (astronomy) and *`ilm` t-tibb`* (medicine) are the seventh and eighth of the elemental sciences called *`ilm` l-awfaaq`* and *`ilm` l-huruuf`*, which when combined is called *`ilm` s-seemiyya`* (the science of differentiation). The poet indicated that these two elemental sciences are indispensable to one another by making them both annexed nouns (*mudaaf ilayhi*) to the expression *`ilm`*, which makes them two aspects of a single discipline; by his words: **“...and the science of paranormal squares and of letters...”** The expression *awfaaq`* is plural for *wafq`* (harmonization) and has its root from the verb *wuafaqa`* which means to be assisted, to have good fortune or to be favored by Allah. It is thus, associated with attaining success in one’s endeavors and diverting failure and misfortune. The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, the learned *sharif Imam* Muhammad Murtaḍa az-Zabidi said in his Taaaj`l-`Aruus: “From it comes the expression *wafq`* with the leaders of the science of letters; and refers to being in accord, harmony and correspondence where all of its elements are equilateral. Its plural is *awfaaq`*.” Technically *awfaaq`* is a synonym of *jadaawil`* (tables, registers or plans) and *khawaatim* (seals). Paranormal squares (*awfaaq`*) are mostly quadrangular diagrams, but are sometimes drawn in other geometrical shapes which possess an equal number of horizontal and vertical squares, either three, four, five or more in which are arranged mystical letters, numbers, *Qur`anic* words, segments of *Qur`anic* verses, Names of Allah, the names of Prophets or Angels. These elements are arranged in such a manner that the harmony, summation and computation of the horizontal, vertical and diagonal fields are the same, or are in harmony; thus, the name *wafq`* (harmonization/synchronization); as demonstrated in the following *wafq`* taken from *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`s Kitaab` l-Ism` l-`Aadhem:



The elements of each field are arranged in such a manner that when added horizontally, vertically or diagonally the sum is always 15, which is 3 times its central field (5). The masters of this science believe that there is a secret harmony and correlation between the components of a 'wafq' (paranormal square) that when these elements are arranged synchronically at an appropriate time; will result in obtaining good fortune or warding off misfortune. *Imam al-Qanuuji* said in his Abjad'l-Uluum: "It says in the Medinat'l-Uluum: 'The science of the calculation of paranormal squares (*wafq*), the science of bringing about expeditious abundance (*dafaq*) and the science of quadrangular tabulation (*jadwaal maraba`a*) have squared fields in which are placed numerical figures or with letters in place of numbers; with the condition that the horizontal, vertical and diagonal fields are equilateral in number, where no number in that tabulation is repeated. It is believed that the harmony and balance of the numbers in the paranormal square have distinct superabundant sway flowing from the spiritual qualities of those numbers and letters; resulting in remarkable influence and astonishing effect. Its efficacy is conditioned by it being done during harmonious and commensurate times and at laudable hours'. This science is apart of the branches of the science of calculation with respect to its conformity to arithmetic. It is also apart of the branches of the sciences of the distinctive properties with respect to its effect on creation." The science of 'awfaaq' depends upon a complete harmony between the spiritual state of the practitioner, the time, the letters, numbers or elements of the paranormal square and the desired effect or influence. This entails an understanding of the genesis and hierarchy of existence (*nasab 'l-mawjuudaat*) as the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, said in his Nasab'l-Mawjuudaat: "Realize, brother that every created thing in existence has four genealogies: one with respect to its essence (*dhaat*); one with respect to its attributes (*sifaat*); one with respect to its life-force (*naamuus*); and one with respect to its nature (*tabee`iyya*). The Divine realities (*haqaa`iq ilaahiya*) are the reinforcement of its essence. The subtle spirits (*lataa`if ruuhaaniyya*) are the reinforcement of its attributes. The astronomical ascensions (*tawaali` falakiyya*) are the reinforcement of its life force. The natural elements (*ashyaa` tabee`iyya*) are the reinforcement of its nature. The human being is the most perfect of existing created things, since he has the most complete share of these four grades of genealogies. He is a gathering of life, knowledge, will and action. His real life is reinforced by Divine Life. His real knowledge is reinforced by Divine Knowledge. His real will is reinforced by Divine Will. His real actions are reinforced by Divine Power." It is for this reason that human beings have the ability to bring into harmony and correlation the different hierarchies of being and designate a grid which networks these into a chronogram which acts as a key (*miftaah*) or link between the Divine Realities and nature. Quoting from *Shaykh al-Qunawi*, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said in his al-Bahth `An `t-Tafaadul Bayna Jinsiyya 'l-Malak wa'l-Bashar: "The Perfect Human is familiar with the Divine Essence, the Divine Names, the Divine Attributes, and Divine Actions. He is familiar with all the hierarchies of the worlds and the beings that reside in them; with the conditions of the worlds and what is associated with them; and he is familiar with every location and loci from all locations and with the demands of each world, both generally and in detail. These are the details of the grades of humanity, for he is the summation of all created things." Allah ta`ala says repeatedly in His Infallible *Qur'an*: "He has subjugated to you the ship by which you ply the oceans by His command, and He has subjugated to you the rivers. He has subjugated to you the sun and moon constant in their courses; and He has subjugated to you the night and the day. He provides you with whatever you ask

of Him; for if you were to enumerate the bounties of Allah, you could not reckon them. Indeed humanity is a transgressor and an ingrate.” This verse clearly indicates the ability of humanity to manipulate creation for good or evil. The science of ‘*awfaaq*’ and the science of letters are apart of humanities ability to manipulate creation and bring it into harmony or discord for good or evil. It is for this reason there is considerable dispute among the scholars as to how this science originated, by whom and whether it is considered permissible (*mubaah*) or forbidden (*haraam*). Imam al-Qanuuji said that the study and utilization of this science was forbidden due to the fact that it was not transmitted from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, can be used for pure magic and can attribute power and effective influence to other than Allah ta`ala; leading to polytheism. However, many scholars consider the science of ‘*awfaaq*’ as one of the natural sciences such as astronomy, medicine, and the like that enable humanity to manipulate, control and influence his environment. Shaykh Muhammad ibn Muhammad known as Ibn Turmart said in his Kanz`l-`Uluum: “Realize that the Divine Attributes of Allah ta`ala are a signification of the Divine Essence and the Divine Actions are a signification of the omnipotent power of the Prime Cause. These Names and Actions are linked to the essences of all phenomenal created things with respect to their genesis, attributes and dynamics. The knowledge of these harmonious correspondences is known in the paranormal squares of those who are successful at mastering them.” Imam Zakariyya ibn Muhammad al-Qazwini said in his Athaar`l-Bilaad wa Akhbaar`l-`Ibaad that it was at the hands of the renown Greek mathematician Archimedes that the paranormal square was first invented. However, this is disputed by many of the verifiers (*muhqiqquun*) who attribute the science to Adam and Prophet Idris, respectively. The first recorded evidence of the paranormal square after Prophet Idris, was in China some 2500 years ago in the ‘Luo River Inscription’ called ‘*luò shū*’ (洛書). In the Yi Da Zhuan (The Great Treatise) which is the earliest commentary upon the Yi Qing composed in 2200 B.C.E., the ‘*luò shū*’ was first revealed to *Dà-Yǔ* and was a concise representation of the universe in a microcosm where heaven and earth were brought into harmonious balance by the central field represented by the number 5, which symbolized the perfect man or sage. In it the author explains: “Heaven creates Divine things; and the holy sage takes them as models. Heaven and earth change and transform; and the holy sage imitates them. In the heavens hang images that reveal good fortune and misfortune; and the holy sage reproduces these. The Yellow River brought forth a diagram and the Luo River brought forth an inscription; and the holy men took these as models.” This diagram became known as the *jiǔ gōng tú* (九宮圖- nine halls diagram) and was the foundation for the five element phases (*wu xing* -五行) and eight trigrams (*ba gua* -八卦) which were the basis of geomancy, Chinese medicine, cosmogony, the art of war; and Chinese internal martial arts. According to Ts`ai Yuang Ting, the odd numbers in the *luò shū* represented *Yang* and the even numbers represented *Yin* as depicted in this early rendition of the square:



This symbol was later replaced with the ‘*Yin-Yang*’ symbol which represented heaven/earth and all the paired opposites in existence. When combined, these symbols

were a depiction of the perfect man as a summation of all things in heaven and earth. It is clear that the science of paranormal squares was in wide usage in ancient China, Egypt as well as the ancient *Banu Isra`il* as indicated by the following diagram using the Hebrew letters, since the language lacked a numeric system:

ו	ט	כ
ג	ה	ז
ח	א	ו

This square was a symbolic representation of the secret name of the Absolute Being – YHWH and symbolized the internal relationship between man and the Creator. It was used as a means of gaining power over nature, manipulating creation and performing paranormal acts in the world. In all the earlier pre Islamic civilizations, the paranormal square was originally a device used to communicate with the cosmos, and a tool to gain control over creation. It then devolved and eventually degenerated into being a tool for geomancy, divination and magic. Thus, a portion of this science was considered permissible by the scholars and a portion was considered forbidden. As for ‘ilm *‘l-huruuf* (the science of letters), it is the science of the special qualities of each of the 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet, as well as their diverse qualities when combined with one another. It is therefore, inseparable from the science of paranormal squares. According to the masters of this discipline the letters of the Arabic alphabet are divided into luminous letters and dark letters. They are further divided based upon the four elements of fire, water, air and earth; and in accordance with the four temperaments of hot/dry, cold/wet, hot/wet, and cold/dry; as the following chart indicates:

water	air	earth	fire
4 ط	3 ح	2 هـ	1 ا
8 خ	7 ز	6 و	5 هـ
30 ل	20 ك	10 ي	9 ط
70 ع	60 ص	50 ن	40 ف
200 ر	100 ق	90 ض	80 ذ
600 غ	500 ث	400 ت	300 س
1000 ش	900 ع	800 ظ	700 ظ

└───┬───┘		└───┬───┘
w		d
└───┬───┘		└───┬───┘
c		h

The ordering of the letters as listed in the above diagram follows the system utilized by the Muslims of northwestern Africa, Andalusia and the *Bilad’s-Sudan*. The original order in which the Arabic letters were written, and the system of *al-jafri* utilized by the Muslims of the east were as follows: *alif* -1; *ba*- 2; *jim* -3; *daal* - 4; *ha* - 5; *waw* - 6; *za* 7; *ha* - 8 ; *taw* - 9; *ya* - 10; *kaaf* - 20; *laam* - 30; *mim* - 40; *nun* - 50; *sin* - 60; *‘ayn* - 70; *fa* - 80; *sad* - 90; *qaf*- 100; *ra* - 200; *shin* - 300; *ta* - 400; *tha* 500; *kha* 600; *dhaal* 700; *dad* - 800; *dhaw* - 900; and *ghayn* – 1000; with the negation *lam-alif* (‘no’) being a symbol for the *sypher* – 0. In his *al-Fuutuuhaa’tl-Makiyya*, *Shaykh Muhy’d-Deen Ibn Arabi* referred to these two distinctive schools as the ‘*ahl’l-asraar*’ (the people of secrets) in reference to the system devised in the west, and the ‘*ahl’l-*

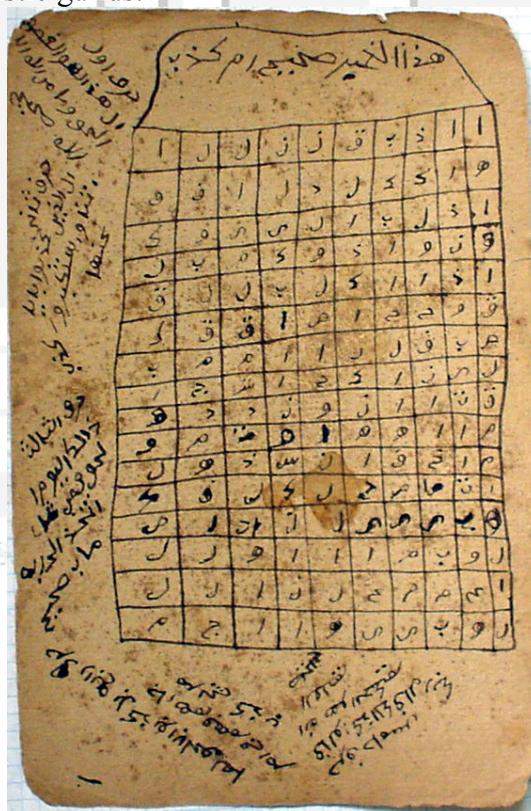
anwaar' (the people of illumination) in reference to the system devised in the east. This original arrangement of the Arabic letters had a meaning when gathered together in phrases. In ancient times the Arabs used to say: "***abjad hawwaza huttiya kalamanna sa'afasa qarashat thakhadha dadhaghalaa***". It was from the first four letters in this statement that the Arabic word for alphabet - "*abjad*" - was born. The first six words of this statement expressed deep cosmological and ontological significance to the Arabs. The author of the *al-Muhkam*, *Shaykh* Ibn Sida said: "It was related on the authority of Abu 'Amr Uthman ibn Sa'id ad-Daani on the authority of Ibn Abaas who said: 'Everything has an interpretation (*tafsir*). Whoever knows it, knows it. Whoever is ignorant of it is ignorant of it.' He then interpreted the statement: '*abjad*' as meaning: 'Adam refused (*aba*) obedience and became impassioned (*wajada*) with the eating of the tree'. And '*hawwaza*' meant: 'He slipped (*zalla*) and fell (*hawaa*) from the heavens to the earth.' And '*huttiya*' meant: 'His errors degraded (*hatat*) him.' And '*kalamana*' meant: 'He ate (*akala*) from the tree and he was then favored (*manna*) with the blessings of repentance.' And '*sa'afasa*', meant: 'He rebelled and he was taken out of blessings into hardships.' And '*qarashat*', meant: 'He acknowledged (*aqarra*) his sins and was saved from punishment.'" From this, we note that the Arabic language has, at its most fundamental level, a connection with man's primal beginnings. Hence, a cosmology is built in the arrangement of its letters, which not only facilitate communication, but also delineate man's origin, stations and states, grades and cycles both generally and in detail. It is therefore not surprising that, the sciences of *'ilm 'l-huruuf* and *'ilm 'l-jafr* emerged. Because the *Qur'an* is the Uncreated Speech of Allah ta'ala, and is a summation of all the 28 Arabic letters, the science of letters is said to be a branch of the *Qur'anic* sciences. Inclusive in '*'ilm 'l-huruuf*' are the sciences of the special spiritual, psychic and medicinal qualities of the letters, the effective utilization of the verses of the *Qur'an* and Divine Names in attaining fortune and diverting misfortune, as well as disclosure of the Immense Name of Allah. Precisely because the 28 letters are divided into four groups based upon the four natural elements of fire (*naar*), air (*hawaa*), water (*maa'*), and earth (*turaab*); and the four natural temperaments (*tabee'at arba'a*): hot (*haraara*), dry (*yabuusa*) wet (*ratuuba*); and cold (*baruuda*); the sciences of '*awfaaq*' and '*huruuf*' naturally accompany the sciences of physical and metaphysical medicine. One of the key fundamental axioms of applied Islamic medicine in physiognomic or physic ailments is the principle:

"إِنَّ دَوَاءَ كُلِّ عِلَّةٍ بِضِدِّهَا"

"The cure for every ailment is in its opposite." Thus, it follows that every physical or metaphysical/psychic ailment whose source is from an imbalance in the natural elements and temperaments can be cured by *Qur'anic* words, verses, chapters, Names of Allah, names of the Prophets or Angels which are opposite the natural element and temperament of that sickness. As we mentioned previously that there are luminous letters and dark letters in the Arabic alphabet. The dark letters are seven – the letters: '*jeem*' (ج), '*zaa*' (ز), '*fa*' (ف), '*thaa*' (ث), '*khaa*' (خ), '*dhaw*' (ظ), and '*sheen*' (ش). 'Dark' in this context does not mean malevolent or evil as *Imam* as-Suyuti explained. None of these seven 'dark' letters can be found in the opening chapter of the *Qur'an* called *al-Faatiha* and it is for this reason that this chapter is universally considered a cure for all physical and metaphysical imbalances and illnesses. It has been related by al-Bayhaqi on the authority of Abd'l-Malik ibn Umar in a tradition that is *mursal* that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "The *Faatiha* of the Book is a remedy for every sickness." It has been related by al-Bayhaqi and al-

Khurasani on the authority of Abu Sa'id'l-Khudri, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "The *Faatiha* of the Book is a remedy against toxics and poisons." The curative faculty of the *Qur'an* thus begins at the level of the 28 Arabic letters. *Sultan Muhammad Bello* informs us in his *Ujaalat 'r-Raakib*: "Realize that Allah did not reveal anything from the heavens whose medicinal remedy is more encompassing in advantage and more effective in removing ailments than the *Qur'an*, for it is the cure to every sickness and the polisher of the rust of the hearts. As for it being the cure for spiritual sicknesses, this is apparent. As for it being the cure for physical sicknesses, for attaining *baraka* through recitation of the *Qur'an* brings much advantage to sicknesses. Even the majority of the philosophers and the masters of talismans have expressed the idea that recitation of unknown chanted invocations and incantations does leave powerful influence in obtaining advantage and warding of the causes of corruption. However, since the recitation of the Mighty *Qur'an* comprises mentioning the majesty of Allah ta'ala, His immensity, extolling the Arch Angels, and debasing the recalcitrant and the devils, it in turn is the most important cause in the obtaining of religious and worldly advantage. This is taken from what has been narrated from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace when he said: 'Whoever is not healed with the *Qur'an*, then Allah will not cure him'." It is based upon the principal idea of the efficacy of the curing abilities of the *Qur'an* that the sciences of '*awfaaq*' and '*huruuf*' were developed to such advanced levels in the diverse physical and metaphysical sciences in Islam. The premier master of the sciences of '*awfaaq*' and '*huruuf*', *Shaykh* Shihaab'd-Deen Ahmad ibn Ali al-Buni, may Allah be merciful to him said: "By means of this science one can attain all desires and can be connected by it to every need. The one who adheres to this science will see the manifestation of results, experience lucid unveiling and have disclosure of the secrets of the unseen. As for the advantage of this science in worldly matters, it provides acceptance, respect, honor, *baraka* in one's wealth, it is resorting to the Word of Allah, a following of the command of Allah...It constitutes an immense secret among the sciences which cannot be denied either by the *shari'a* or reason." The advantages of these sciences were indicated by the words of the poet, may Allah be merciful to him when he said: **"...from the perspective of their intrinsic effects and numerical values that are well known."** This is a reference to the correspondence between the letters, their numerical values and the natural elements and temperaments, as well as the effect that these have on nature and existence when they are arranged appropriately in their paranormal squares or when recited properly at suitable times. Among the most important early works in Islam on the sciences of '*awfaaq*' and '*huruuf*' are: the *Bahr'l-Wuquuf Fee 'Ilm 'l-Awfaaq wa'l-Huruuf* and the *Shams'l-Ma'aarif 'l-Kubra* of *Shaykh* Shihaab'd-Deen Ahmad ibn Ali al-Buni; the *Shams'l-Aafaq Fee 'Ilm 'l-Huruuf wa'l-Awfaaq* and the *Darrat'l-Aafaq Fee 'Ilm'l-Huruuf wa'l-Awfaaq* of Abd'r-Rahman ibn Muhammad al-Bustami; the *al-Adwaar fee 'Ilm'l-Huruuf wa'l-Asraar* of Yusuf ibn Abd.r-Rahman al-Maghribi; the *al-Kashif'l-Kulli wa'l-'Ilm al-Aani* of *Muhy'd-Deen* Ibn Arabi al-Hatimi; and the *Kanz'l-Asraar wa Dakhaa'ir 'l-Abraar* of Abu Abdallah Ya'eesh ibn Ibrahim al-Umawi. As I mentioned earlier, the house of Aal in general and the house of Fuduye' in particular among the *Turudbe* Fulbe were renown for their acquaintance with the esoteric and mystical secrets of the *Qur'an*. Among the leading proponents of these sciences among the *Fudiawa* were: *Shaykh* Muhammad Bindu, and the father of the *Shehu*, Fuduye' Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn *Saalih*, with whom the *Shehu* studied the *Qur'anic* and mathematical sciences which '*ilm'l-awfaaq*' and '*ilm'l-huruuf*' are both branches. Among them

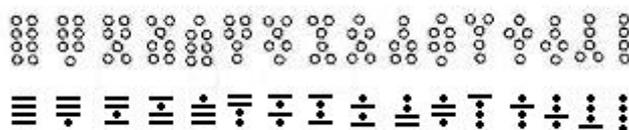
was the disciple of the above mentioned teachers, *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Fulaati al-Katsinawi who studied with them the sciences of mathematics, mystical letters and paranormal squares. He then journeyed to the east and eventually became the chief executor of the estate of the famous geographer al-Hasan al-Jabarti in Cairo. Among his works on the sciences of ‘*awfaaq*’ and ‘*huruuf*’ were his: ad-Duur’l-Mandhuum wa’l-Khulaasat ‘s-Sirr’l-Maktuum fee ‘Ilm ‘t-Talaasim wa’n-Nujuum; the Buhjat ‘l-Afaaq wa ‘Idaah ‘l-Lubs wa’l-Ighlaaq Fee ‘Ilm’l-Huruuf wa’l-Awfaaq; the ad-Durar wa’l-Yawaaqeat Fee ‘Ilm ‘l-Huruuf wa’l-Asma’; and the as-Sirr ‘l-Maktuum Fee Makhaatabat’n-Nujuum. Among them was the paternal uncle of the *Shehu*, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn Abdullahi ibn Muhammad ibn Sa’d ibn Muhammad Ladan with whom the *Shehu* studied the Mukhtasar and its commentary by al-Karashi, but also mastered under his tutelage the mystical and esoteric sciences of ‘*awfaaq*’ and ‘*huruuf*’. In his Kitaab ‘l-Isma’ al-Aadhem, the *Shehu* said that he had received the secrets of the Immense Name of Allah that he described as: “...a treasure from among the treasures of the King of the devout servants, which was given to me as license by my paternal uncle and teacher, the *Imam* Muhammad Sanbu, on Tuesday, the 15th of the month of *Ramadan*, the year 1191 A.H. (circa 1777 C.E.)” The *Shehu* transmitted the sciences of ‘*awfaaq*’ and ‘*huruuf*’ to his wife *Iyya Gharka* `Aisha bint Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Hamm ibn `Aal , their daughter *Khadijatu bint Shehu* Uthman, her husband, the chief scribe *Mustafa ibn Muhammad at-Turuudi*, the father of the poet; as well to her half-brother, *Sultan Muhammad Bello ibn Shehu* Uthman, the father-n-law of the poet. It was from these scholars that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him received these sciences and learned to apply them in medicine, building construction, city planning, military strategy and in the artistic guilds.



An *awqaaf* of determination from the archives of *Shaykh* Bello ibn Abd’r-Raaziq ibn Uthman ibn *Shaykh* Abd’l-Qaadir Dantafa in the Blue Nile town of Maiurno, Sennar, Sudan. I was told it was composed by the paternal uncle of *Shaykh* Bello. His name was *Shaykh* Abd’r-Rahman al-Ya’baana ibn Uthman ibn *Shaykh* Abd’l-Qaadir

The science of geomancy, onomatomancy and circular divinatory tables
And demarcation, the articulation of which is difficult²⁶

²⁶ The ninth of the elemental sciences which the poet, may Allah be merciful to him mastered was as he said: “**The science of geomancy...**” The expression ‘*raml*’ (sand) is technically a well known type of soil, whose plural form is ‘*rimaal*’. The science is called ‘sand’ because it was first originated by making inscriptions in the sand. Although the science was later employed by the use of paper and writing utensils, the original name ‘sand’ stuck. Haaji Khalifa said in his Kashif’ d-Dhunuun ‘An Usaami’ l-Kutub wa’ l-Funuun: “The science of geomancy (*‘ilm’ r-raml*) is a science by which inferred conclusions are known about an issue at the time a question is raised about it, by examining the shapes in the sand. These shapes amount to twelve in accordance with the number of constellations.” It is for this reason that some of the scholars consider the science to be a branch of astronomy. While other scholars consider it to be a branch of the natural sciences (*tabee’iy*) since it is closely associated with the influence or effects which the constellations have upon nature. The science of geomancy is a synonym and is sometimes interchanged with the expressions ‘*khatt*’ (inscribing), or more precisely ‘*khatt bi raml*’ (inscribing in the sand) or ‘*‘ilm’ l-khatt*’ (the science of inscribing). It has been related by Ahmad, al-Bukhari, Muslim and at-Tirmidhi on the authority of Mu’awiyya ibn al-Hakam who once asked the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace about *khatt* and he said: “There was a Prophet from among the prophets who used to practice *khatt*. Whoever succeeds in doing it according to his methodology will come to know what that Prophet knew.” There is disagreement regarding which Prophet, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was referring to. Some say that it was Adam, others say that it was Sulayman, while others say it was Daniel. The majority, however, hold the view that it was Prophet Idris (Enoch), who first crystallized this science into a discipline for determination, forecasting and in a sense a kind of paranormal proto geometric progression. Because of the random nature of the science due to the fortuitous quality of sand its inferences can never be precise (*taqeeniyya*) but only approximate (*taqreebiyya*). That is, unless the knowledge of the practitioner (*rammaal*) conforms with the science as it was practiced by the above mentioned Prophets, upon them be peace. In this regard the practitioner must have a predisposition for matters of the unseen (*isti`daad li`l-ghayb*), be well versed in the science of stars and constellations (*‘ilm’ n-nujuum wa’ l-buruuj*) and master the other elemental sciences which are indispensable to it. Quoting from the al-Muntakhib, *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Ali at-Tahaanawi in his Kashaaf Istilaah’ l-Funuun wa’ l-Uluum said: “It is the science which was revealed to Prophet Daniel upon him be peace, by way of the instruction of Jibril using a number of dots.” An example of the sixteen tetra grams using dots utilized in geomancy were depicted by Abu Abdallah Muhammad az-Zanaati in his Risaalat Fee Usuul ‘Ilm’ r-Raml in the following manner:



The paired rows of dots or straight lines represent even/outward and the single rows of dots represent odd/inward. Sometimes these patterns were formed by automatic writing, manual inscription, or by the casting of pebbles in the sand and examining the inscriptions made. With respect to the on going consternation which conservative Muslim scholars have with the science of geomancy, yet evidence demonstrates that this science which is based upon the utilization of binary numbers has long been in use in a pragmatic sense with the eight trigram and sixty four hexagrams in the Chinese classic texts called the Yi Qing where *yang* is 1 and *yin* is 0. In 1937 an MIT graduate student, Claude Shannon implemented binary mathematics which he applied to electronic relays and switches which was the foundation of digital circuit design and is presently the basis for the electronic age which is used today by the most strident conservative Muslim critics of the science of geomancy. Since the binary numbers 0 and 1 are Arabic numerals, one can assert that Arabic is at the foundation of the electronic and digital age we are in today. If we apply modern binary numeric estimation to the above sixteen tetra grams utilized in the science of geomancy it gives us a digital grid of:

1111.1110.1101.1011.0111.1100.1010.1001.0101.0011.0110.1000.0100.0010.0001.0000

What this demonstrates is that the elemental sciences (*'ilm awaa'il*), while partly considered apart of occult magic in ancient times, is presently being utilized at the basis of modern digital technology. This underscores the atheist Arthur C. Clarks' theory: 'Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.' What this infers about the present dominant culture is that it is as fetishist, mythological and magical as was ancient civilization, if not more so. The fact that religious clerics of all faiths are fervent in condemning the elemental sciences as magic, heresy and apostasy, while they themselves endorse and employ the utilization of the occult and magical sciences of modern technology in instantaneous communication, creating wealth from digital blips, forecasting futures in investment banking and fomenting social unrest by means of online social networks; highlights the irony and hypocrisy of the clerical class. I firmly believe that the elemental sciences even those anathematized can be utilized for more practical and pragmatic purposes such as advanced and applied mathematics, theoretical and applied physics, information systems and electronic technology, mechanical and civil engineering, psychology and medicine, global trade and commerce as well as diplomacy and military strategy. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him counted '*'ilm'r-raml'* among the symbolic keys (*mifaatih mithaali*) of knowing what is hidden because it is subordinate and less ineffectual in comprehension due to the fact that it occurs through the deduction of elements which are extraneous to human nature. In his Kashif'l-Ghitta wa'r-Rayb Fee Dhikr Anwaa` Mafaatih'l-Ghayb the poet said: "Among this genus is the discipline of '*'ilm'r-raml'* because it is formulated as a structural likeness of the circumstances of the constellations of the celestial orbits, with regard to their influence upon nobility, depreciation, misfortune, consequence, enmity, and the remainder of terrestrial conditions. This is further conditioned by the natural correspondence (*manaasibaat tabee`iyya*) between the natural elements of fire, air, water and earth...All comprehensions of hidden matters from this direction are considered symbolic because sometimes comprehension is often correct, and sometimes it is erroneous.

Thus, it cannot be considered as a precise and certain science. Rather, it is mostly based on opinion derived through supposition, and requires that it be corroborated with demonstrable proofs and complementary sciences.” Among the most prominent works produced by Muslims on the science of geomancy were: the ad-Dahab al-Ibreez ‘l-Muhammar Fee Iqtifaa’ ‘Ilm’r-Raml wa ‘l-Athar of Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Ahmad al-Mahalli ‘r-Rammaal; the ar-Risaalat Fee Usuul ‘Ilm ‘r-Raml of Abu Abdallah Muhammad az-Zanaati; the Sihaam’r-Rabt Fee’l-Mukhammas’l-Khaali ‘l-Wast of Sahnun ibn Uthman ibn Sa’id al-Wansharisi; the Madaarij’n-Naml Fee ‘Ilm’r-Raml of Ali ibn Naasir; the al-Haashiyaa’l-Ikhtisaariyya’r-Ramliyya’l-Falakiyya of Ali ibn Hasan’l-Jazaa’iri; the Nufahaat’l-Asraar Fee ‘Ilm’r-Raml of Muhammad Baaqir al-Hairi and a well known text by an anonymous author called Shaamil’l-Usuul wa Kaamil’l-Husuul Fee ‘Ilm’r-Raml. The latter text clearly follows the school of thought of az-Zanaati and is one of the most detailed studies of the science of geomancy providing ample graphs and illustrated fields on the practical usage of the science. The *Fudiawa* scholars combined the science of geomancy with the science of letters, paranormal squares, astronomy, and arithmetic and composed many mystical texts regarding comprehending the future of the Sokoto Caliphate, predicting the present ‘Hour of the Christians’ and calculating the appearance of ‘the Coming Man’, *Imam* al-Mahdi and the descent of Isa ibn Maryum, who together would thoroughly eradicate injustice, inequity, tyranny, greed, consumerism and materialism from the earth. Two of my spiritual guides, *Shaykh* Muhammad Brima’l-Yarubi and *Shaykh* Umar ibn Ahmad Zaruq said that at the time of the appearance of the Mahdi, that all the sciences, including the elemental sciences will be extracted from the *Qur’an*. The extractions of these sciences and other as yet unknown sciences from the *Qur’an* by the Mahdi will be revealed as if the *Qur’an* is being revealed afresh. It is for this reason that it has been reported in a prophetic tradition that: ‘the *Qur’an* and the *Mahdi* are siblings’. Among the texts which demonstrate the mastery of this type of comprehension among the *Fudiawa* were: the al-Qawl al-Mukhatsar Fee Amr’l-Imam’l-Mahdi and the Miftaah’l-Basaa’ir of *Sultan* Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu*; where the author combined these elemental sciences in a form of paranormal geometric progression to unlock future possibilities. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him learned this from his father-in-law *Sultan* Muhammad Bello, and combined this with the science of dream visions. It was from this that he composed his apocalyptic work entitled: Muddat’d-Dawla’l-Uthmaniyya in which he, by following the manner of Prophet Daniel, narrates a dream vision regarding the trials and tribulations which would befall the Sokoto Caliphate until the appearance of *Imam al-Mahdi*. This naturally brings us to the tenth and eleventh of the elemental sciences which the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said that he had mastered – the sciences of: **“...onomatancy and circular divinatory tables...”** The poet makes the expression ‘*ajfaar*’ genitive since it is conjuncted to the genitive nouns preceding it: paranormal squares (*awfaaq*), letters (*huruuf*), and geomancy (*raml*). These are made genitive because they are annexed nouns (*mudaaf ilayhi*) to the expression ‘*ilm*’ (science). The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, uses the singular ‘*ilm*’ rather than the plural ‘*uluum*’ when discussing these sciences, because in reality all of these paranormal elemental sciences are indispensable to one another and cannot be comprehended completely without a working knowledge of all of them. It is for this reason they are interrelated and are considered apart of one class of knowledge. By employing the plural ‘*ajfaar*’ of the expression ‘*jafr*’, rather than the singular, the poet indicates that the science is made up of diverse elements. He also coupled the allied

science of circular divinatory tables (*ziyaarij*) to the science of '*jafir*'; as an indication that these two are inseparable. The reality is that the science of *ziyaarij* is a subdivision or component within the science of '*jafir*', and thus I will discuss it within the context of its parent science. By utilizing the plural expression '*ajfaar*' and annexing to it the plural expression of its subdivision, '*ziyaarij*', the poet inferred by this that the science of '*jafir*' (onomatopoeia) is divided into many components as I will demonstrate, Allah willing. Linguistically, the expression '*jafir*' comes from the verb '*jafara*' (to become wide or expansive) and thus can be translated to refer to comprehensive knowledge of things, since the term '*jafir*' is usually coupled with its companion phrase '*jaami`a*' (all-inclusive and universal). Some of the sages associate these two phrases with the decree (*qadr*) and destiny (*qadaa`*) as if they are synonyms. And others infer that these two expressions are catchwords for the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul. *Shaykh* al-Qunawi indicates that they are referents to the science of the Primordial Pen and the Guarded Tablet respectively. *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Ali at-Tahaanawi said in his Kashaaf Istilaah'l-Funuun: "The science of '*jafir*' is a science which researches into the letters with respect to their independent formation based upon corroborated evidence. It is also called '*ilm`l-huruuf*' (the science of letters) and '*ilm`t-takseer*' (the science of contravention). Its advantage is that it discloses what is comprehensible from the Muhammadan articulation which cannot occur except with knowledge of the science of the Arabic language. In this manner spiritual advantage can be attained from some of the divine messages. What can be known from this science are the future events in the world until its end. Sayyid Sindi said in his commentary upon the al-Mawaaqif in the second objective regarding the categories of knowledge: 'The expressions '*jafir*' and '*jaami`a*' are referents to two books of Ali, may Allah ennoble his face, in which he discussed, utilizing the science of letters, all the events which will occur until the end of the world. The well known *Imams* from his children were well acquainted with these sciences and passed judgment by means of them'." Thus, one aspect of the science of '*jafir*' deals with millenarian, eschatological and apocalyptic events which will lead to the end of the world. Another meaning of the expression '*jafir*' is 'a small ox', but as a science it refers to the skin of the animal upon which Ali ibn Abi Talib inscribed this enigmatic inscription. Haaji Khalifa said in his Kashif`d-Dhunuun: "The science of '*jafir*' and '*jaami`*' are two expressions referring to the comprehensive knowledge of the destiny and decree, which is inclusive of everything that was, and will be, in total and in part.' The expression '*jafir*' specifically is an expression referring to the Tablet of Destiny (*lawh`l-qadaa`*) which is another name for the Universal Intellect (*`aql kulli*). The expression '*jaami`a*' is an expression referring to the Tablet of the Decree (*lawh`l-qadr*) which is another name for the Universal Soul. Cadres among the sages claim that *Imam* Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah ennoble his face, composed the twenty eight letters by way of immense expansion on the skin of a small ox (*jafir*). From this inscription, using a specific method with particular conditions, he was able to extract special expressions which guide to what is written on the Tablet of the Destiny and Decree. This science was a specific inheritance of the People of the House, those who were affiliated with them and those who inherited it from them from among the perfected spiritual guides and notable *awliyya*. With utmost diligence they used to conceal this science from all others. It is said that no one will unlock the realities of that script except the Awaited al-Mahdi who will appear in the end of time." This last expression is significant because it is the exact claim which the poet, may Allah be merciful to him insinuates in the title of the conclusion of his poem where he said:

“Mentioning the Other Sciences of the Sciences of Secrets That I Have Received From the Sciences of the Greatest Unveiling Which No One Except Us Have Experienced and Which None Will Disclose Except the *Muhammadan* Seal, the *Mahdi*, upon him be peace” Thus, the identity construct of the *Fudiawa* placed them squarely within the genealogical inheritance of the People of the House, those closely affiliated with Ali ibn Abi Talib through the Golden Chain of the People of *Tasawwuf* and the perfected spiritual guides and *awliyya* who inherit their esoteric knowledge as a result of the mastery of their souls. Allah willing, I will return to a discussion of the significance of this identity construct in my conclusion. From the above citation, it is clear that the highest aspects of ‘*ilm*’l-*jafr*’ is a complex technique which employs many features of the elemental sciences, but transcends these disciplines and is integrated in the sciences of the Divine realities (*ilm*’l-*haqaa’iq*) where it is referred to as ‘*jadwaal*’ (precise tabulation). There are other aspects of ‘*ilm*’l-*jafr*’ which revolve around numerology (*tarkeeb* ‘*adadi*) specifically. There are some aspects of this science which utilize non Arabic expressions and are associated solely to astrology. There are some aspects of this area of the science which are applicable only to paranormal squares (*awfaaq*) and the science of letters. There is also discrepancy in this science due to the arrangement of the letters and their numerical values. When examining the books on ‘*ilm*’l-*jafr*’ one has to be cognizant of the divergence between the arrangement and order of the Arabic letters by practitioners of the eastern lands of Islam and the west, as I mentioned previously. Among the prominent early works composed on the science of ‘*jafr*’ (onomatopoeia) were: the ad-Durr’l-Munadhim Fee ‘s-Sirr ‘l-‘Aadhim of Abd’r-Rahman ibn Muhammad al-Bustami; the ad-Durr’l-Munadhim Fee ‘s-Sirr ‘l-‘Aadhim of Muhammad Ibn Talha al-‘Adawi ‘r-Raaji; the Qays’l-Anwaar wa Mujaami’l-Asraar of *Shaykh* Abdallah al-Bustami; the Miftaah’l-Jafr’l-Jaami’ of Muhy’d-Deen Muhammad ibn Arabi al-Hatimi; the Bahr’l-Wuquuf Fee ‘Ilm’l-Huruuf and the Shams’l-Ma`arif’l-Kubra of *Shaykh* Shihaab’d-Deen Abu’l-Abbas Ahmad ibn Ali al-Buni; the al-Kashf Li’ ‘Amaal’l-Jafr of Ja’far Mansur’l-Yemeni; and the al-Futuuhaat fee’l-Jafr of Shukrullah Muhammad ibn Ibrahim as-Sharawaani. These texts were widely read and studied in the *Bilad*’s-*Sudan* and genres of independent works were produced by many of the *Fudiawa* scholars themselves. Among them were: the above well known cited works of Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Fulaati al-Katsinawi such as his: ad-Duur’l-Mandhuum wa’l-Khulaasat ‘s-Sirr’l-Maktuum fee ‘Ilm’t-Talaasim wa’n-Nujuum; the Buhjat ‘l-Aafaq wa ‘Idaah ‘l-Lubs wa’l-Ighlaaq Fee ‘Ilm’l-Huruuf wa’l-Awfaaq; the ad-Durar wa’l-Yawaqaat Fee ‘Ilm’l-Huruuf wa’l-Asma’; and the as-Sirr ‘l-Maktuum Fee Makhaatabat’n-Nujuum; Manhal Maa ‘Adhb Li ‘Ilm’l-Asraar Sifaat’r-Rabb. These works were amalgamations of all the elemental sciences such as ‘*ilm*’l-*jafr*’, the sciences of ‘*awfaaq*’, and ‘*huruuf*’. The foremost mastery of the science of ‘*jafr*’ (onomatopoeia) among the *Fudiawa* was taken up by the ‘two Bellos’: *Shaykh* Muhammad Bello ibn Muhammad, who was known as Muhammad Tukur; and *Sultan* Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu*. Muhammad Tukur composed many works on the elemental sciences some of which were composed at the request of Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu*. Most of his works were an amalgamation of all the elemental sciences, with some emphasis on the sciences of ‘*jafr*’ and ‘*awfaaq*’ and their medicinal applications. Among the works of Muhammad Tukur which have survived in Arabic are his: Ma`aawanat’l-Ikhwaan; the Qira’l-Ahibba; and the Tanbeeh’l-Khusamaa. On the other hand, a vast proportion of this science as promulgated by Muhammad Tukur was transmitted orally in Hausa and Fulfulde’ to his many students in Zamfara in the

town of Talata Mafara where these traditions are still taught and practiced today. In one of his Arabic works Muhammad Tukur asserted that he learned some aspects of the elemental sciences from Islamic sources and some from traditional African sources. This is significant because it indicates that the *Fudiawa* saw nothing anathematic in some of the pre-Islamic African traditions. Or it indicates that these traditions were purified of their pagan elements in much the same way that the early Muslim communities filtered the elemental sciences of Greek, India, and Persia. This reveals that the *Fudiawa* were forward-thinking in their reform movement in contrast to the intolerance which emerged in that same period from the *Najd* at the hands of the *al-Ikhwaan* followers of Muhammad Abd'l-Wahaab. Yet, there is clear evidence that among the *Fudiawa* there was strong criticism and censure of the elemental sciences. We have the poetic work of Muhammad al-Wali ibn Sulayman ibn Muhammad al-Wali al-Fulaati which openly condemned astrologers and the purveyors of paranormal squares. While at the same time he himself composed his own work employing the science of '*jafr*' and the special qualities of the Names of Allah called Manhal Maa `Adhib Li `Ilm Asraar Sifaat`r-Rabb. We have the legal decision promulgated by the *Shehu* in his Siraaj`l-Ikhwaan where he said: "Among the duties which are obligatory upon the *Amir `l-Mu`mineen* and his deputies in his country is to alter the reprehensible deeds of those who falsely claim that he has the ability to write that which can secure advantage - like: multiplying one's daily sustenance; winning someone's love; or that which can avert evil - like: vanquishing one's enemy during war; preventing iron from piercing; or preventing arrows from striking and the like from what magicians falsely claim by their action." This is an unequivocal condemnation of the general utilization of the elemental sciences and from it one could presuppose that the leader of the reform movement initiated by the *Fudiawa* was opposed to the study and employment of any aspect of these sciences. However, in the same text after quoting the conservative *fatwa* of Muhammad ibn Abd'l-Karim al-Maghili, the *Shehu* qualifies and fine tunes his criticism by his words: "I say, what we have mentioned here does not in anyway necessitate the prohibition of utilizing (*tahreem `l-isti`maal*) those things which are in conformity to the divine law (*shari`a*). On the contrary, it is allowed to utilize everything which is in conformity to the *shari`a* regardless if it is for securing advantage or protecting from dangers, or whether it be something which is to be drunk or worn. The only thing which is forbidden are those things which are clear magic (*as-sihriyaat*) as was explained like those talismans, incantations and the like which are not in conformity with the *shari`a*." We also have the concise criticism of the study and employment of astrology by Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* in his Tanbeeh Ahl`l-Fuhuum as well as the quotation in his Infaq`l-Maysuur of Umar ibn Muhammad at-Turuudi's including the Shams`l-Ma`arif`l-Kubra of al-Buni among the apocrypha books to be avoided. While at the same time Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* composed his own independent work on the science of '*jafr*' called Kitaab`l-Kaafi Fee `Ilm`l-Jafr wa`l-Khawaafi in which he makes reference to the secrets designated to the affair of the *Shehu* and his mystical relationship with *Imam* al-Mahdi. This work became one of the most important texts on '*ilm`l-jafr*' transmitted among the latter generations of the *Fudiawa*. He arranged the text into an introduction and seven small chapters in which he laid out the fundamentals of the science and provided illustrations of quadrangular tabulation (*jadwaal maraba`a*) illustrating the different schools of thought in this discipline and the diverse secrets which this science conceals. In its introduction he said: "Indeed the science of '*jafr*' (onomatopoeic) is a magnificent science which

possesses exalted secrets. However, the core of its mysteries have been scaled back and made impenetrable, and the quintessence of its pearls have been intentionally veiled and barred, so that the devils among mankind and the malevolent among the *jinn* cannot be disclosed to it. I say in poetic verse:

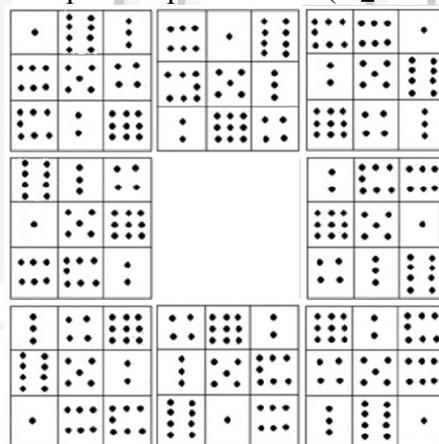
The secrets which revolve around the letters
 Comes with transcendent meanings from the Subtle One
 It assists in the unveiling of the essences
 By manifesting what is concealed in the environment
 Every realm of existence possesses transcendent meanings
 The least of them being what is calculated from interactions
 Informing of the past epochs and ages to come
 From those of perfected intellects or the banal
 Whoever plunges into its seas with comprehension
 Will circulate in this world freely without any barrier
 He will manifest into a full moon and appear as the sun
 And will be far beyond being abated or eclipsed
 Whoever knows the meaning of my words
 He is a nobleman (*shareef*) from among the noble
 I thus, bestow on him the honored full moon of the science
 Which Allah has placed within the secrets of the letters.”

In the first chapter Muhammad Bello explains that there are four schools of thought (*madhaahib*) in the science of ‘*jafr*’, and that the greatest of them and the most lucid of them at arriving at comprehension is the one established by *Imam* Ali ibn Abi Talib. He then asserted that it was this particular school of thought that he relied upon. He then gives the following example of the quadrangular tabulation (*jadwaal maraba`a*) of the letter *alif* (الألف) which he says can be applied to each of the twenty-eight letters as *Imam* Ali arranged them:

ا ا ا ا	ا ا ا ا	ا ا ا ا	ا ا ا ا
ا ا ا ا	ا ا ا ا	ا ا ا ا	ا ا ا ا
ا ا ا ا	ا ا ا ا	ا ا ا ا	ا ا ا ا
ا ا ا ا	ا ا ا ا	ا ا ا ا	ا ا ا ا

In the above quadrangular tabulation (*jadwaal maraba`a*), which Muhammad Bello designates as ‘an inscription’, as in all the remaining 28 tabulations there are sixteen ‘houses’, with each field containing four letters, bringing the total number of letters to 64. Thus, there is an immediate association with the ancient Chinese Yi Qing with its sixty-four hexagrams. However, unlike the Yi Qing which is limited to the sixty-four random probabilities, the science of ‘*jafr*’ allows for an infinite range of possibilities in the mapping, reading and decoding of existence. Muhammad Bello said: “Each letter is ‘an inscription’. Thus, the total numbers of inscriptions for the letters in ‘*jafr*’ are 28. And for each of the twenty-eight letters there is ‘a tabulation’ (*jadwaal*). Thus, the total numbers of tabulations (*jadaawul*) are 784. In each *jadwaal* there are 28 equal parts (*shatr*). Thus, the total numbers of equal parts (*shutuur*) are 11,952. The total numbers of houses are 595,050. This brings the total number of letters to 1,300,224.” Because the numbers of the probabilities in ‘*ilm`l-jafr*’ are so great, it is considerably more precise and exact at arriving at deduction than those of the Yi Qing

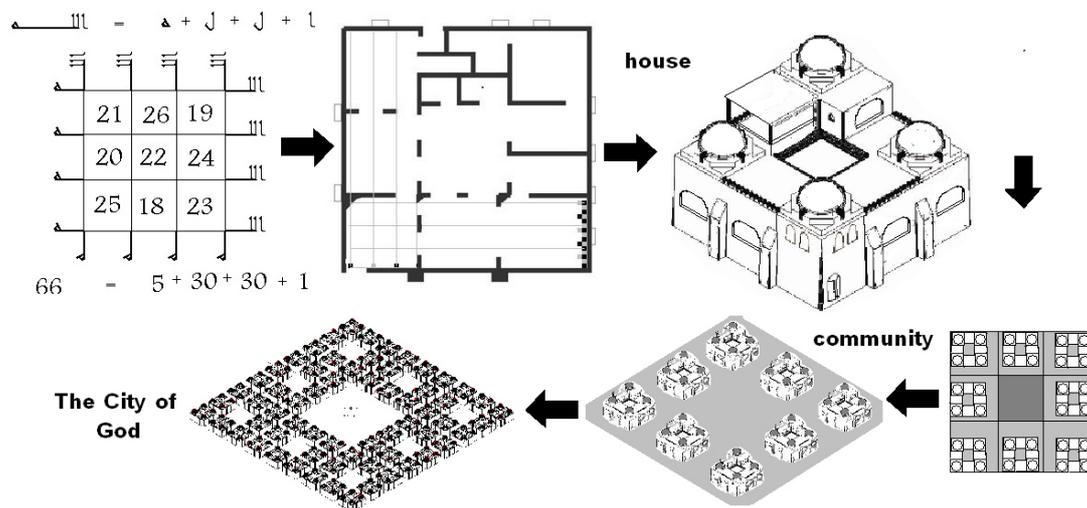
and the divinatory methods of the animists of sub Saharan Africa. This partly explains why Cheikh Anta Diop asserted that the science of *'jafr'* as employed by African Muslims prevailed over the elemental sciences utilized in traditional African societies. The science of *'jafr'* was sufficiently advanced as a technique because it contained unlimited probabilities, was inundated with spiritual substance and deep metaphysics, and more importantly it was rational and fresh, being connected to the *Qur'an*. It is no wonder that all the traditional African societies contiguous to the growing African Islamic civilizations, such as the Akan, the Dogon, the Bori, those of the Yoruba, Dahomey, Nupe, and the *zar* divinatory rites of the Nilotic Sudan employed, borrowed or adopted in whole or in part, the elemental methodologies of the African Muslims. The particular school of thought of the science of *'jafr'* advanced by Muhammad Bello was originally established by *Imam* Ali, and was the same methodology adhered to by *Imam* Muhammad ibn Turmart al-Andalusi, and in the beginning of the 20th century by two of the greatest of the masters of this science the gnostic freedom fighters, *Shaykh* Muhammad Ma''l-Aynayn, and *Amir* Abd'l-Qadir al-Jazaa'iri, may Allah be pleased with all of them. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, informed us in his Turjuma Ba'd Ulama' az-Zamaan that it was from his uncle and his father-n-law, Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* that he learned this science. Because this aspect of the science of *'jafr'* had its origin in the *shari'a* with the People of the House, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said about it and the other elemental sciences: "I have taken an oath and covenant not to invite anyone among the people to what I have obtained from the sciences of letters, geomancy and astronomy, even though I took these sciences from sound sources and repudiated the fallacies in them. I have never instructed anyone in these in order not to lead them astray. On the contrary, I have invited people to sound knowledge from the *Qur'an*, the *Sunna*, jurisprudence and spiritual purification (*tasawwuf*)."



My own study of the functional usage to which the *hatumere* of the Majestic Name of Allah transcribed by the *Shehu* in his Kitaan'l-Ism'l-Aadhim can be applied, It is a *ziyaarij* creating a 'sacred space' for living, learning, social interactions and worship.

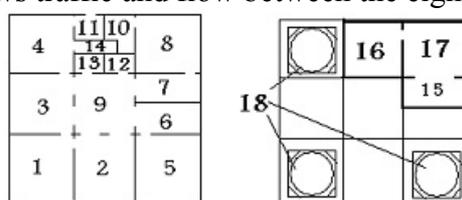
In Sokoto, one of the practical usage to which the sciences of *'awfaaq'*, and *'ziyaarij'* were put was in the built environment of *masjid* construction, fortress building and city planning. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him asserted in his Nubdhat Ibn Mustafa that it was his father-n-law, *Sultan* Muhammad Bello who gave him advice on the rules and metaphysical principles of construction and the built environment. Bello also commissioned and subsidized the master builders guilds of the eastern region of the Caliphate, such as the one led by *Mubana Ghani* Malam Muhammad Mika'il and his many apprentices in creating and organizing a unique style of vernacular architecture utilizing the elemental sciences of *'awfaaq'* and *'ziyaarij'*,

similar in nature to the ancient Chinese system of ‘geomancy’ (*feng shui* 風水) in optimizing the total physical and metaphysical environment. With the help of Allah ta`ala, I was able to employ the elemental sciences in conceiving the plans for a home, community and city based upon the ‘*awfaaq*’ and ‘*ziyaarij*’ of the Majestic Name – ALLAH. A frequently utilized synonym for both ‘*awfaaq*’ and ‘*ziyaarij*’ is the expression ‘*hijaab*’ (veil/barrier/amulet). When the ‘*hijaab*’ is placed inside of a case and worn it is called ‘*bayt`l-hijaab*’ (the house of protection). By first creating a ‘*hijaab*’ of the Majestic Name, it enshrines a sacred space that contains tremendous secrets and advantages, both in the spirit world (*ruuhaniya*) and the sensory world (*hissiya*). It is a *hijab* that protects from spiritual and physical harm. When it is applied to a structure it will protect against heat, cold, rain and wind as well as cover/veil the privacy of one’s family; but more importantly it generates a sacred realm (*daa`ira ruuhaniyya*) which acts as a talisman encompassing the home, the community and the city in a way that is connected to the immensity of the Majestic Name - ALLAH.



As the above illustration indicates the Majestic Name Allah can be written 8 times to create a quadrangular tabulation (*jadwaal maraba`a*). The nine spaces within the ‘*awfaaq*’ (known in sino-geomancy as the nine halls diagram (*jiũ gōng tú* - 九宮圖)) can then be rendered into eight spaces (*ba gua* - 八卦) surrounding an open atrium or garden at the center from which the five element phases (*wu xing* - 五行) of: light, wind, vegetation, temperature and moisture can enter the home. This engenders a spatial environment in the home which is inward looking, where each element functions as the definitive Islamic dwelling space - the ‘*ribaat*’ (military garrison). The Taoist monk Xu Xuanping defined this interplay between the 8 halls and the center five elements by his words: “Hands hold eight trigrams, feet walk five elements.” (*shǒu è bāguà, jiǎo tà wǔxíng*- 手扼八卦 * 腳踏五行). Although this axiom expressed the essence of what became known as the three ‘internal Chinese martial arts’ of *tai qi*, *ba gua* and *xing yi*; the statement can be applied to the spatial function and dynamics of the built environment as well. The expression ‘hands’ (*shǒu* - 手) imply ‘function’ which can be applied to the eight spaces or rooms, each with its own function, such as: entrance/guest room (*zauré*), living room, library/*masalla*, dining room, kitchen, lavatory, master sleeping quarters and minor sleeping quarters.

The expression ‘feet’ (*jiǎo* - 腳) imply ‘interaction’ which is the central open space/atrium which allows traffic and flow between the eight spatial environments.



1st and 2nd floor plan

As this ideal protective environment naturally and organically develops into a community, the same quadrangular tabulation (*jadwaal maraba`a*) would apply to engender a community of eight homes surrounding a central open space for the five social dynamics such as a shared: market, school, administration center, garden and place of worship, which are inwardly oriented, and resemble the ‘*ribaaf*’ (military garrison). By optimizing the total physical and metaphysical environment using the elemental sciences it stimulates wind and water (*feng shui* - 風水), necessary for growth which naturally and organically expands from a small community of 8 (*ba gua* - 八卦) into a small town of 64 homes surrounding a central area where the five social dynamics can unite and integrate the whole city/town/village. Thus, the city becomes arranged as a talismanic fortress, similar to the 64 hexagrams of the Yi Qing. It is conceivable that a fusion of the science of letters (*ilm`l-huruuf*), the science of arithmetic (*ilm`l-hisaab*), the science of the Divine Names (*ilm`l-asma`*), the science of onomatopoeia (*ilm`l-jafir*), the science of paranormal squares and circular divinatory tables (*ilm`l-awfaaq wa`z-ziyaarij*) can all be synthesized to create ‘a City of God’ (*Medinat`l-Allah*), where the concept, spatial rendering and application is consciously oriented to evoke the Majestic Name of ALLAH. Thus, any aspect of the elemental sciences can be decoded and then transmuted to apply to practical sciences such as the artistic guilds, the crafts, building constructing and city planning. Throughout my travels in the *Bilad`s-Sudan* from Mali to the Sudan, I noticed the homogeneity and unity of cultural and aesthetic forms in what Labelle Pruisin rightly identified as ‘the *hatumere*’. We are indebted to her, and other modern thinkers such as Hassan Fathy, Samer Akkach, Akel I. Kahera, Nader Ardalan, Abu Bakr Sirajuddin (Martin Lings), Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Yasser Tabba, and others for interpreting the correlation between Islamic mystical ideas, metaphysics, symbolism, cosmology and their influence upon the built environment, spacial ordering, attire, and the decorative arts. The elemental sciences of ‘*huruuf*’, ‘*awfaaq*’, ‘*ziyaarij*’, ‘*seemiyya*’ and ‘*hay`a*’ were amalgamated in African Islamic civilization and gave birth to the artistic guilds whose center of inspiration was the *Qur`an*. Building on the elemental sciences of pre-Islamic African secret societies, there emerged in the *Bilad`s-Sudan*, the *alfa* guild responsible for the transmission of the scribal arts, tailoring, cloth manufacturing and embroidery. There was the *arma* guild responsible for the transmission of the crafts of paper making, tanning and leatherwork. There was the *modibe`* guild responsible for the transmission of city planning, architecture, *masjid* construction and the important craft of grave digging (*malu*). The *modibe`* also supervised the *gabibi* guilds of masons (*soro banna*), carpentry and iron smelting (*diamouasi*). All of these guilds were connected to *madrasas* (schools of learning) where the fundamental sciences of Islam were transmitted along with the mystical and symbolic sciences expressed in the built environment, attire and daily utensils. I am convinced that this potential will become more apparent in the future as we witness a

SANKORE'

decline in occidental civilization and a reorientation of African Islamic civilization towards the east again. Organically connected to the sciences of 'awfaaq', and 'ziyaarij' which the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, said he had mastered is the twelfth of the elemental sciences which he called the: **"...sciences of distinct demarcation..."** The expression 'asmaat' is plural for 'seemiyya'. It takes its root from the verb 'samaa' (to exalt) and is a synonym of 'aalaa' (to lift up) and 'irtafa'a' (to elevate). The poet utilized the plural form in order to indicate that this science is divided into many sectors. In a sense it includes all the previous mentioned elemental sciences and thus, can be considered as a phrase of emphasis (*tawkeed*) designed to corroborate, reiterate and strengthen what was asserted previously. Muhammad ibn Turmart al-Andalusi said in his Kanz'l-Uluum: "Realize, and may Allah ta'ala guide you, that the science of distinct demarcation (*seemiyaa*) is among the most significant and noble of the natural sciences. The expression '*seemiyaa*' is either a synthesis of a singular name, two, three or four and the like which is a conjunction of the letters, and in which Allah places the secret of His Greatest Immense Name." He goes on to assert that this science can only be successful as a result of the precise correspondence and harmony between the heart of the practitioner, his spirit, psychic and physiognomy, as well as the natural elements, the appropriate time and correlation with the heavenly orbits and their alignment with the Divine Acts, Names and Attributes appropriate to what is desired. It is thus, a complex admixture of disciplines which the poet, may Allah be merciful to him described as: **"...the articulation of which is difficult."** This difficulty (*sa'uuba*) is intentional because it bars those in whose heart is a disease from utilizing the science for malevolent purposes. Because this science is connected to the Immense Hidden Name of Allah, Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* in his al-Isim'l-Aadhem prohibited people from articulating this science explicitly. It is for this reason that the poet, may Allah be merciful took an oath and covenant not to reveal to anyone what he had learned from the elemental sciences, or to utilize them to procure worldly aims. Subsequently the masters of these esoteric and occult sciences discuss them using an intentionally complicated lexicon to delineate their boundaries without actually revealing their secrets. Thus, when incomprehension remains after reading their explanations of these sciences, it is premeditated.

وَعِیْرَهَا مِنْ حُكْمٍ عَدِیْدِهِ

قَدِیْمَةٍ فِی الْوَضْعِ أَوْ جَدِیْدَةٍ

And other than these whose judgments are numerous

And whose original formulation is ancient or recent²⁷



The central mosque of Maiurno, Sudan, the land of *hijra* of the *Jama`at* of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`

²⁷ After listing the twelve major elemental sciences which he had mastered, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him explains that there were additional elemental and natural sciences which he had mastered by his words: “**And other than these whose judgments are numerous and whose original formulation is ancient or recent.**” What he meant by the expression ‘...whose judgments are numerous...’ is that the jurists differ regarding the legal judgment of the elemental sciences. Some of them assert that the majority of the elemental sciences with the exception of medicine, practical astronomy and arithmetic are absolutely forbidden because they infer that natural phenomenon is outside of the control of Allah ta`ala and are apart of occult magic which is forbidden. Some of the jurists assert that the learning and utilization of the elemental sciences are absolutely lawful especially when the practitioner acknowledges that the original cause of all phenomenon in creation is Allah ta`ala and nothing happens in creation except with His will and power. Some of the jurists assert that the elemental sciences are permissible to learn and practice only by those who are deserving of it spiritually, ethically and intellectually and should be hermetically sealed from those not deserving. This was the particular school of thought of the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, as well as his key teachers, such as his father-in-law, *Sultan* Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* and others from the *Fudiawa*. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him classified the elemental sciences as those sciences: “...whose original formulations are ancient or recent.” This is an indication of the innovative character of the natural sciences. Because the elemental sciences involve the manipulation of creation, invention, manufacturing and the development of technique, it has subsequently developed alongside the progress of mankind. These sciences began with Prophet Idris, upon him be peace, the first to systematize the alphabet and language, to practice medicine, to codify the meaning of the movement of the heavens, and to fabricate sewn attire; and have evolved into what we have

today in the magic of the global technological society. If the ancient elemental sciences can be considered as forbidden occult magic, then the same judgment can apply to the sciences which lay at the foundation of today's high speed instantaneous electronic communication and technology. One of the reasons that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him considered many of the elemental sciences as classified and closed to all except those who had spiritual, ethical and intellectual 'clearance' is because of the natural correspondence they have with the Art of War. When the sciences of '*awfaaq*', '*haya*', '*ilm 'n-nujuum*', '*ziyaarij*', '*ilm 'l-huruuf*' and others are combined they act as a calibration instrument, similar to a spiritual global positioning system (GPS) which allows the practitioner to precisely locate an enemy target and to align him within a designated correspondence of elemental, seasonal, and celestial trilateration, resulting in devastating consequences in the essence, attributes, humanity and nature of the enemy. It is for this reason that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Fear the supplication of the oppressed, because between him and Allah there is no barrier." In another narration, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace added that the effectiveness of the supplication of the oppressed is sound even when he is a disbeliever. What this means is that there is synchronization between the Life, Knowledge, Will and Power of Allah and the death, ignorance, coercion and impotence of the oppressed. If the oppressed believer has a sufficiently advanced understanding of the elemental sciences, has mastered the state of turning over the management of affairs (what Chinese sages call 'no-action' [wú wéi-無為]), then these sciences can come to bear on the effectiveness of his supplications. We will re-examine this idea when discussing the sciences of secrets (*'uluum 'l-asraar*). Essentially, as *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Turmart al-Andalusi said in his Kanz'l-Uluum that the elemental sciences are divided into theory (*'ilm*) and practice (*'amal*) and can be accessed sometimes through invocation (*dhikr*) of specific Divine Names of Allah, and sometimes through the strategic use of chronograms (*rasam*) combined with acute observation (*rasd*) of the correspondence and harmony between the 28 letters, the four elements, the four temperaments, the celestial orbits, and the specific terrestrial anomalies of the soul and psychic of the individual, town or region targeted. This brings new meaning to the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: "The supplication is the weapon of the believer." It also clarifies in a more scientific manner the meaning of the adage often utilized by al-Hajj Malik El Shabazz (Malcolm X) of the 'house negro' and the 'field negro'. While the 'house negro' would pray for the slave master when he was sick and even prayed for him when the master spitefully abused him; the 'field negro' would pray that the slave master became sick, and when the slaves master's house or property caught afire, he would pray that a wind would come along. Well, the knowledge and mastery of the elemental sciences by a sufficiently super empowered group of oppressed Muslims is not only a supplication for a wind, it is a scientific means of evoking, guiding and targeting such winds. Here, I have disclosed a subtle secret in the Art of War, which is a key for the times in which we live and should suffice for those whom Allah has illuminated their inner sight. Having said that, it is important to note that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, did not utilize the elemental sciences as a means of having gnosis of Allah. He, like the majority of the founding fathers of the Sokoto Caliphate were critical of relying heavily on these sciences to understand creation. In his Kashif'l-Ghitta, the poet explains the utility to be gained from the elemental sciences, but also warns that in order for these sciences to be precise every hierarchy

of realms of existence must be in alignment, including the inward and outward states of the one accessing these sciences. If this is not the case, then mistakes, illusions and errors will result, in spite of the temporary utilities gained from them. It is this capacity which induced the poet, may Allah be merciful to him to say in his al-Uhuud wa'l-Mawaathiq: "I have taken a covenant and oath not to compete with anyone regarding a right which they have a greater claim to than myself. Rather, I will stick to the rights which are mine, until others in fact compete with me regarding my own rights. Then I will contend with them regarding that with the Truth, for the Truth regarding the Truth, and this is regardless if the Truth which is my right is of a religious or worldly nature. This is because the prerequisites for reclaiming one's due rights are well known with the masters of *tasreef*." The master of our masters, the learned *sharif* Muhammad Murtaḍa az-Zabidi said in his Taaaj'l-'Aruus: "The expression '*tasreef*' means the turning of the winds from one condition to another, or from one direction to another. It implies the ability to induce the winds and clouds to vary and change directions." Thus, the science of '*tasreef*' entails a deep acquaintance with the science of letters and the symbiotic relationship these have with the four elements, the four temperaments, the cosmos, the movements of the heavens, and the impact these have upon the alteration of the weather, the winds, and temperature which generate tornadoes, hurricanes, flash fires, floods, and other natural disasters. Allah ta'ala says regarding Sulayman: "*And We have subjected to him the winds which flow at his command wherever he wishes; as well as demons of every kind of builder and other diverse subservient elements linked together by shackles.*" It is clear that Allah ta'ala blessed the King/Prophet Sulayman, upon him be peace with an abundant portion of the elemental sciences. The fact that many of the approved and malevolent aspects of the elemental sciences are either authentically or falsely attributed to Prophet Sulayman, indicates the central role that he played in the transmission of these sciences. This mastery of the diverse elemental sciences for Sulayman and all the remaining Prophets, and *awliyya* comes from the '*taskeer*' (subjugation) granted by Allah ta'ala, and not from 'magical manipulation'. This is the essential difference between the power of '*taskeer*' (subjugation) of the perfected sage and the manipulative magic of the '*kaahin*' (shaman). To the common man both appear to have some control over creational realities by manipulating or breaking the normative laws of creation. Yet, they are essentially different. The power of '*taskeer*' (subjugation) is the power of disposal (*tasreef*) given to the Perfect Man (*insaan kaamil*) as vicegerent over creation and is defined as '*mu'ajizaat*' for the Prophets and Messengers, and '*karamaat*' for the righteous sages (*awliyya*). It is diametrically opposed to the magical manipulation (*sihr*) over creation utilized by worldly rulers like Nimrod or Pharaoh. It is noteworthy here to mention the concept of disposal (*tasreef*) as it is understood in the town of Maiurno on the west bank of the Blue Nile in Sennar, Sudan. This town is the home of the people of the *hijra* foretold by *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye', whom he described as those who would be his true remnant, would possess tremendous *baraka* and would have immense spiritual stations with Allah. The sages of the town are reknown for their innate abilities at *tasreef*; something I witnessed with my own eyes on many occasions. In his remarkable study of the oral traditions and eschatology of the people of Maiurno, Maiurno of the Blue Nile: A Study of an Oral Biography Dr. Ahmad Nasr related several miracles that occurred at the hands of the *Sarkin Muslimi* Muhammad Bello Maiurno against the British. In one miracle, an informant went to the British and falsely accused the sages of Maiurno of formenting *jihad* against them. Subsequently, the British outfitted a

steamer and headed towards Maiurno with the intention of sacking the town. According to oral reports, the *Amir'l-Mu'mineen* merely pointed at the steamer and it sank drowning everyone except the one non-European on the boat, the Sudanese helmsman. This was corroborated by the British themselves in the Sudan Intelligence Report, No. 241, Aug. 1914. Another example of *tasreef* by *Sultan* Maiurno against the British is when they desired to construct a government school in the town against the will of the people; *Sarkin Muslimi* again made supplication and pointed at the new construction and it burst into flames and was reduced to ashes. On one occasion a British administrator rudely interrupted the private prayers of the *Sultan*, who rose and beat the British officer with his sandals. The next day this officer mysteriously died. I myself experienced, (as I cited previously) the *tasreef* of my *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Amin ibn Adam Kari`angha, the *Imam* of the chief mosque of Maiurno. Today, the sages of Maiurno, are well known for their abilities of disposal and their supplications are both feared and sought after throughout the Sudan. This has led many outsiders (and some renegades) to falsely accuse the people of Maiurno of practicing magic (*sihr*). There is a clear distinction between 'magic' and the power of disposal (*tasreef*) given to a Muslim sage. Outwardly, both are processes of manipulating normative creational laws. The latter is *karamaat* (miraculous actions) performed by Allah on behalf of His protected friends. According to Islamic eschatology four individuals will appear in the End of Time who will exercise extraordinary powers over creation: *Imam* al-Mahdi, upon him be peace, the *Masih* ad-Dajjal, may Allah curse him, the *al-Jasaasa* (the spy or emissary of Dajjal), and our master Isa ibn Maryum, upon him be peace. The *al-jasaasa* will inform the Dajjal about everything he needs to know about the secret desires and actions of the people, groups and nations he seeks to control. This is not dissimilar to the INDECT (Intelligence Information System Supporting Observation, Searching and Detection for Security of Citizens in Urban Environments) used by the US State Department and EU Governments to comb the world's emails, text messages, tweets, blogs, chat sites, news reports and online social networks in order to construct automatic profiles on individuals, organizations and their relationships; as well as the NSA's 'Social Networking Monitoring Center'. In effect the *al-jasaasa* will be a conduit of total information or data regarding any individual and his networks that will enable the Dajjal to foretell the psychic and psychological profiles of individuals using algorithms and geometric progression, which only the elemental sciences can provide. The Dajjal, will have the manipulative ability to provide provision and cause rain to fall for those who believe in and follow him while withholding the provision and rain from those who are opposed to him. He will also have the magical ability to clone those who have died and make people believe that he can revive the dead as Allah ta'ala revives the dead. The manipulative abilities of the Dajjal and the *al-Jasaasa* will be a result of pure magic based upon a sufficiently advanced use of the elemental and natural sciences along with the assistance from malevolent demons. The Dajjal and his *jasaasa* will be the finalization (*khitam*) and culmination (*awaakhir*) of all demonic and man-made sorcery. In fact, the poet, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said in his Hillu 'r-Rumuuz wa Kashif 'l-Kunuuz that the Dajjal is the spiritual axis of the instigation of the lower soul (*qutb 'athaar 'n-nafsaniyya*). He said: "As for the *Masih* Dajjal, he is the grid of the vanity of the lower soul (*jadwal 'z-zahw 'n-nafsaniyya*) and a paradigm of the element of demonic arrogance (*jadwal 't-takabbar 's-shaytaniyya 'l-unsariy*). In fact, he will have a greater right to this demonic station than *Iblees*, due to the aptness of his genesis which necessitates the

manifestation of arousal from him. However, the characteristic in him by which he will incite the lower souls will be a false impotent disguised fabrication (*mukharraqa mamuha mulabisa `aatila baatila*). This will be his station through which he will adjudicate and control the spiritual axis of the lower souls. When the arousal of the lower souls takes control over the earth and the Dajjal appears, this will be evidence of the completion of the sovereignty of magical falsehood.” As for the *Mahdi* and *Isa ibn Maryum*, they are the Seals of the Muhammadan and universal *awliyya* respectively and will be a summation of all the gnosis and miraculous abilities of the past Messengers, Prophets and *awliyya*. In this regard they will possess the complete gnosis of Allah in His Divine Essence, Divine Names, Divine Attributes, and Divine Actions which were possessed by those before them. In addition they will be able to marshal (*tasarruf*) creational laws in a manner unlike the sages before them, since as the seals of sainthood they will be familiar with all the hierarchies of the worlds and the beings that reside in them; and with the conditions of the worlds and what is associated with them. With the appearance of both the *Mahdi* and *Isa ibn Maryum*, upon them be peace, the heavens and the earth will be summoned to give forth all of its wealth, riches and secrets, to the extent that know one will desire it; and mankind will only aspire for Knowledge of Allah. Allah willing, I will discuss this at length in the forthcoming sections. The *Mahdi* and *Isa ibn Maryum*, will be living talismans to which the celestial and terrestrial realities will be made subservient armies as an all inclusive miracle (*karamaat `ameem*). It will be the miraculous subjugation of the *awliyya* of Allah which will overcome the manipulative magic of the *awliyya* of Iblees. In the prophetic tradition regarding the Dajjal withholding food, drink and the rain from those who oppose him, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace informed his Companions that the believers will sustain themselves at that time by means of the remembrance of Allah ta`ala. In other words the science of the invocation of the Names of Allah and the recitation of the *Qur'an* in the heart, the mind and the tongue will be developed under the tutelage of the *Mahdi* into a highly sophisticated metaphysical science able to undo the magic of Dajjal. To the common people, the End of Time will be a ‘magical age’ in which normative creational laws will be broken routinely, through the advanced usage of occult magic by sorcerers on one hand; and the miraculous subjugation of creation by sages on the other. It will be a time when imperceptible spirits, malevolent demons and righteous *jinn* or *ifreet* will manifest and fight on the side of good and evil; a time in which the demarcations between the rational and the mystical and the natural and spiritual worlds will collapse. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him alluded to this amalgamation of natural/rational but essentially spiritual/mystical understanding of existence in his *al-Uhuud wa'l-Mawaathiq* where he said: “I have taken an oath and covenant to closely reflect upon the established precepts and researched theories regarding the majority of existing things and upon what emerges from the influences which some parts of existence have upon others. I have not disregarded the benefits and blessings which are in these precepts. Further, I have refrained from being like the mentally shallow who say that created existence has no effective influence, whatsoever. In holding this position, I remain completely acquainted with the fundamental Divine realities from which all things have emerged. I have taken an oath and covenant to believe firmly with my heart and envision with my mind that all the dynamic emanating forces in the universe with all of its reverberations in nature and diverse consequences are all in reality the effects and dynamism from the reality of the Prime Doer, which is the Essence of the One, glory be to Him.” It was this forward looking, proactive and

ذِكْرُ مَا أُوتِيْتُهُ مِنْ عُلُومِ الْحَقَائِقِ

Mentioning What I Received From the Sciences of Spiritual Realities²⁸

intuitive approach to existence which enabled the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, to master the elemental sciences with ease and disengage them from their mythical and occult accretions. His acquisition and deployment of the elemental sciences was based upon an abiding belief that nothing brings benefit, induces harm, and nothing procures or withholds except Allah ta'ala; and that the entire cosmos from the Throne of Allah to the spread carpet of the earth has been placed at the free disposal of the spiritually realized individual who knows the Absolute Being (*al-Haqq*) and His truths (*haqaa'iq*) which bind the whole of existence. This naturally brings us to the subject of the remainder of the poem, which is the issue of the sciences of Divine Realities (*'uluum 'l-haqaa'iq*).

²⁸ After discussing the rational elemental and natural sciences, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, then commences to discuss the focal point of the poem, which are the unmediated sciences, or those sciences which emerge from the disciplining of the soul and its spiritual transformation. He called these unmediated sciences the '*'uluum 'l-haqaa'iq*' (the sciences of the Divine or spiritual Realities). The expression '*haqaa'iq*' is the plural of '*haqeeqa*' (reality) and takes its root from the word '*haqq*' which means 'the real', 'the truth' and 'that which is suitable to the requirements of wisdom'. It is essentially the antonym of '*baatil*' (falsehood, unreal or untruth). The name '*al-Haqq*' (the Real, the Absolute Being, or the Necessary Existent) is one of the Names of Allah ta'ala and establishes that He is the One who really exists in an absolute manner and that all other existing things besides Him exist as a result of His absolute existence. The reality of a thing (*haqeeqat 's-shay'*) is its 'it-ness' (*huwiyya*), its 'what-ness' (*maahiyya*) and its gist (*dhaatiyya*) as it is, free of any acuity from creational realities. Thus, the expression '*haqeeqa*' (reality) means the essence of a thing and its definitive essential actuality as it is with the Absolute Being (*al-Haqq*). Because this cognition is related to the Absolute Being, it is unmediated and intuitive; and is thus called the Divine Realities (*haqaa'iq*). Allah ta'ala says: "*He is the One who created the heavens and the earth with the haqq.*" He says: "*Allah did not create these except by means of the haqq; for He details His signs for a people who know.*" He says: "*We have not created the heavens, the earth and all that is between them except by means of the haqq.*" He says: "*Allah created the heavens and earth with the haqq. Indeed in that is a sign for the believers.*" The scholars of *Qur'anic* exegesis differ regarding the interpolation of the expression '*haqq*' in the above cited verses. Some say that it means 'with justice and equity'. Some say that it means 'with His Word'. Some say that it means 'with His power'. Some say that it means 'with the absolute command of *KUN – Be!*'. Some say that the genitive particle '*ba*' (with) actually means 'for' as used in the genitive particle '*laam*'. Thus, the meaning is 'they were created for the sake of the Real'. In his monumental *tafsir* called *Ruuh'l-Ma'ani*, Imam Mahmud al-Alusi al-Baghdadi said: "Many of those firmly established in knowledge verify that the realities of things (*haqaa'iq 'l-ashyaai*) are its essential nature (*maahiyya*) which were permanently affixed in pre-eternity. The essential nature of things in their eternal fixity were unformulated (*ghayr maj'uula*), but what existed were its archetypical forms, which never alter, change and originally cannot be described with destruction as indicated by His words: '*Everything perishes except its face*', where the pronoun 'its' in the verse refers back to 'everything'. Thus the

interpolation of ‘face’ (*wajh*), in this context, means ‘reality’ (*haqeeqa*), since the knowledge of Allah ta’ala of the realities of things is forever present with Him like a mirror of its in-time form (*suurihaa’l-haaditha*). Essentially, these forms along with their non existence in themselves stand as eternal witnesses to Allah ta’ala intellectually and outwardly. Thus, the knowledge of these pre-existent archetypical forms with all of their enunciated meanings forever delineates their distinction from the knowledge of the Divine Essence and indicates that He is their Originator.” In this sense the *haqq* is the reality (*haqeeqa*) of existence as it was/is in the knowledge of Allah before it came/comes into existence. This knowledge that Allah has of other than Himself is eternal without beginning or ending, or it would infer that the Knowledge of Allah has a beginning, comes into being and is preceded by ignorance. This is impossible with regard to Allah because Knowledge is one of the attributes of His Essence which is eternally pre-existent with no beginning or end. Thus, His knowledge of the realities of things also has no beginning or ending, since He is One in His Essence, Names, Attributes and Actions. *Shaykh* Abd’l-Karim al-Jilli said in his *al-Isfaar ‘An Risaalat’l-Anwaar*: “Indeed, because Allah ta’ala knows all things when they were in absolute non existence, you realize that other than Him can never know things as the Absolute Being knows them. This is because other than Allah can only know things from the knowledge of Allah after they have undoubtedly come into existence. Other than Allah can only take its knowledge from that which has come into existence; while the Absolute Being’s knowledge of things exists when those things were in absolute non existence and after they came into existence.” Thus, the knowledge of all existing things as they really are in their archetypical forms before their materialization is the lowest level of the sciences of the realities (*‘uluum’l-haqaa’iq*). Above this is the science of how creational phenomena emerge from the Acts of Allah ta’ala. Above this is the science of how the Acts of Allah ta’ala are a Self-Disclosure (*tajalli*) of the Divine Names and Attributes. Finally, the sciences of the realities culminate with the science of how the Divine Names and Attributes are a Self Disclosure (*tajalli*) of the Immense Essence of Allah. These are the hierarchies of the sciences of the realities (*‘uluum’l-haqaa’iq*) and constitute what the sages call unmediated knowledge, the knowledge of tasting, spiritual unveiling, gnosis and spiritual openings. This unmediated knowledge can only come about through some form of spiritual transformation. It is for this reason that the *Shehu* referred to ‘*ilm’l-haqeeqa*’ (the science of the spiritual realities) as that which is connected to the hearts of humanity because it is through the subtle medium of the heart that this science is perceived. It cannot be realized through reason or sense perception, although it can be transmitted through the medium of reason and sense perception. *Imam* Abu’l-Hassan Ali al-Hujwiri said in his *Kashif’l-Mahjuub*: “The science of divine realities has three principles: the first is knowledge of the Essence of Allah, ‘azza wa jalla and His Oneness, and negating resemblance to His Incomparable Essence, jalla jalaaluhu; the second is knowledge of the Attributes of Allah and their judgments; and the third is knowledge of the Actions of Allah, and their judgments.” The poet, may Allah be merciful to him informs us in his *Ma’arifat’l-Haqq*: “...there is no way for the servant to attain this level of knowledge except after the spiritual pulverization (*as-sahqi*) and the spiritual obliteration (*al-mahwi*) of all the created essences. For the servant first becomes annihilated from himself (*fayanfaa awalan ‘an nafsihi*) by the Self-Manifestation of his Lord (*bi dhuhuur Rabbihi*). Then secondly he becomes annihilated from his Lord (*yanfaa thaaniyan ‘an Rabbihi*) by the Self-Manifestation of the secrets of His lordship (*bi dhuhuur sirri rubbuubiyatihi*). Then thirdly he

وَاعْلَمَ بَأْتًا قَدْ نَقَلْنَا كُتُبًا فِي نَهْجِهَا عَلَى ثِقَاتٍ أَدْبًا

Realize that we have transmitted texts

Regarding its method from those reliable in spiritual courtesies²⁹

becomes annihilated from the relations and correlations of His Divine Attributes (*yanfaa thalithan `an muta`aliqaati Sifaathi*) by means of the abundant realization of His Essence (*bi dhuhuur bi mutahaqqiqaaati Dhaatihi*). At this point the servant experiences spiritual obliteration (*al-mahqi*), annihilation (*al-fana`*) and cutting off (*al-inqittaa`*). For when he experiences spiritual obliteration (*al-mahqi*), then this is the source of Real Establishment (*`ayn ithbaat haqeeqi*). And when he experiences spiritual annihilation (*al-fanaa`*), then this is the source of Eternal Continuity (*`ayn baqa` daymuumi*). And when he experiences spiritual cutting off (*al-inqittaa`*), then this is the source of Sacred Arrival (*`ayn ittissaal qudsiyyi*).” What the poet reveals here in these words is that the ‘*maahiyya*’ (essential reality) of Allah ta`ala can only be known by Him and that what happens when His servant is disclosed to this ‘knowing’ by Him, is a dislocation of the center where it is Allah knowing Himself through other than Himself. This is a secret jealously guarded by the People of Allah, which few even dare to discuss without utilizing a guarded and coded language. This section of the poem will deal with these various unmediated sciences which the poet, may Allah be merciful to him had mastered.

²⁹ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him begins by giving his derivation and sources in the sciences of realities by his words: “**Realize that we have transmitted texts * regarding its method from those reliable in spiritual courtesies**”. He utilizes the first person plural to indicate: [1] that this unmediated knowledge cannot come about without the assistance of an intergenerational chain of spiritual guides (*murshid*); and [2] that he was apart of an intergenerational epistemology or system of spiritual transmission which was specific to a bounded ethnicity, making this transmission apart of their historical consciousness and identity construct. When the poet says ‘we’, he is referring to the sages of the *Fudiawa* in general; and he is making reference to his father, his mother, his maternal and paternal uncles and aunts, his paternal and maternal grandparents in particular. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him also used the plural expression ‘books’ (*kutub*), in order to indicate that each of the generations preceding him transmitted the key works on the sciences of the realities, such as the many works of al-Ghazali, *Muyh`d-Deen* Ibn `Arabi, Ibn `Aṭa`illah, Abd`l-Karim`l-Jilli, Abu`l-Hassan as-Shadhili and others, which were transmitted among them textually and in derivative form through versification, prose and abridgement in Arabic and in none Arabic (*ajami*). The expression ‘*thiqaat*’ is plural for ‘*thiqa*’ (reliable) and comes from the verbs ‘*wathiqa*’ (to trust) and ‘*wathuqa*’ (to become firm); like when you say: “*wathiqa Zaydun bi Muhammadin*” (Zayd trusted in Muhammad). The expression ‘*thiqa*’ (trustworthy/reliable) has a precise technical meaning with the people of prophetic traditions and means that a man or woman is reliable and trustworthy regarding their chain of authority (*sanad*), memorization (*dabt*), and transmission (*naql*) of the prophetic traditions. With the people of the spiritual path the expression has a more transcendent meaning and infers, not only to reliability in knowledge and piety, but it also implies that a person is a realized sage (*waliy*) who has taken the spiritual path at the hands of a reliable teaching spiritual guide (*shaykh murabbi*) based upon the covenant (*meethaaq*) of the Path. The *Shehu* said in his *Usuul`l-Wilaayat*: “The conditions of the teaching *shaykh* are five, as Ahmad Zarruq delineated them. The first is sound knowledge that is derived from the

Book of Allah and the *Sunna*. The second is sound perceptivity based upon experience. The third is an exalted appearance. The fourth is pleasing spiritual states conforming to the Book and the *Sunna* and in accordance with the *shaykhs* of the Path. The fifth is penetrating discernment by which he is guided from the outward appearances of things into their inner realities.” When the poet mentioned that he received the keys of the sciences of the realities from ‘those reliable in spiritual courtesies’, he was making reference to those members of the *Fudiawa* who had met all the above conditions for being a teaching *Shaykh*. The expression ‘*adab*’ (courtesies) also has a distinctive meaning with the people of gnosis, and refers to the spiritual courtesies of taking the covenant (*meethaaq*) with Allah at the hands of a *Shaykh*. The *Shehu* also said in his Usul’l-Wilaayat quoting *Imam* al-Ghazali on the first means by which a spiritual disciple can know the defects of the soul and remove them as barriers between him and gnosis of Allah: “The first is sitting in front of a *shaykh* who is acutely aware of the defects of the soul and who is informed about the secret affairs of death. He seeks the judgment of the *shaykh* in the governing of his soul and he follows his designated instructions concerning the struggle against it. This is the affair of the seeker with his *shaykh* and the disciple with his instructor; for the *shaykh* or instructor knows the defects of the soul and he is aware of the road to its cure.” The spiritual courtesies which are an integral part of the spiritual covenant between the *Shaykh* and his disciple was further corroborated by the *Shehu* in his as-Salaasil’d-Dhahabiyya where he said: “I say and success is with Allah, Abd 'l-Wahaab 's-Sha`rani says in his Madaarij 's-Saalikeen: ‘Realize, O disciple, may Allah give you and us success in seeking after His pleasure, whoever does not know his fathers and grandfathers in the Path (*tareeq*), then he is blind and perhaps he will trace his ancestry to other than his true father. He will then be included among those about whom the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: ‘Allah curses the one who traces his ancestry to other than his true father.’ For this reason all of the righteous ancestors (*as-salaf 's-saalihi*) have proceeded in teaching the disciples about the courtesies of their fathers and instructing them about their lineage. All of them are agreed upon the fact that the one who has no sound relationship with the People, then he is illegitimate and has no connection with the Path. Further, it is not permissible for him to disseminate anything or sit in order to guide the disciples, except after he has taken the courtesies of the Path (*'adab't-tareeq*) from a perfected *Shaykh* about whose eminence there is unanimous agreement. The *Shaykh* then informs him about the Path and then gives unambiguous permission for guidance, instructions and then dresses him in the cloth in accordance with the prerequisites laid down by the ancestors, may Allah be pleased with them’.” It is in this light that the poet asserted that he transmitted the sciences of the realities from reliable spiritual guides who were well versed in the courtesies of spiritual arrival. Among them were: his maternal grandmother the wife of the *Shehu*, the sage *Iyya Gharka A`ishatu* Ghabindu bint Muhammad Sa`d ibn Abdullahi, his mother, Khadijatu bint *Shehu*, his father, Mustafa ibn Muhammad Turuudi, his uncle and father-n-law *Sultan* Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu*, *Shaykh* Muhammad Yero ibn Gharu, but specifically from his maternal uncle Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu*. Each of these individuals were perfected sages (*awliyya kumaal*) who had completed the spiritual journey at the hands of the *Shehu* and had permission (*idhn*) to guide spiritual disciples on the journey to gnosis of Allah ta`ala. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, utilized the expression ‘*nahju*’ (method) to indicate that mediated and unmediated gnosis of Allah has a systemic methodology (*manhaj*) by which the spiritual aspirant can attain his Goal. *Imam* Abu

Nasr as-Siraj 't-Tusi said in his Tuus'l-Lami: "The attainment of the science of the Divine realities and their spiritual descent are accomplished by: the knowledge of religious behavior; personal struggle; sincerity in obedience; directing one's self to Allah `azza wa jalla from every perspective; cutting one's self off from all except Him at all times; healthy objective and volition; cleansing the inner secret from destructive qualities; sufficing in the Creator of the heavens alone; the death of the rebellious souls; truthfulness in the descent of spiritual states and stations; excellent courtesy through one's thoughts in the presence of Allah in secret and open; showing satisfaction through self analysis when being overcome by privations; turning away from this world's life and avoiding what is in it, desiring by that elevation in spiritual ranks and arrival at miraculous nobility." None of these achievements can occur without the assistance of the teaching *Shaykh*, or by an 'Immense Reality' which takes the place of the teaching *Shaykh*, such as abundant and persistent sending blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Munlaa said in his commentary upon the as-Salaat 's-Sughraa of *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir 'l-Jaylani: "There is no doubt that the spiritual disciple in dire need of a *Shaykh* of instruction, mindful of the need to refine his soul and to cure it from all relationships besides Allah *tabaaruk wa ta`ala*; if he were to perform abundant blessings upon our Prophet and master, Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, it would, in effect, suffice for him in all the spiritual concerns which he requires." It is for this reason that sending blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace became the distinctive quality of the sages of the *Fudiawa*. *Waziri* Uthman Gidadu ibn Muhammad Layma tells us in his Rawdat'l-Janaan that this immense affair of the *Shehu* revolved around the constant sending of blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. His reliance upon this methodology in arriving at the door of Allah was so passionate that he took a covenant to adhere to sending blessings upon the Prophet for a full year without talking to anyone except by sign language. At the ending of the year, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace appeared to him in the waking state (*yaqthatan*) and said: "O Uthman! I am your *Imam*! You will never go astray!" The *wazir* goes on to explain that the *Shehu* was given three responsibilities: [1] inviting the people to Allah; [2] the government commission of *khilaafa*; and [3] military struggle. He was given spiritual and temporal authority over all the lands of the *Fulbe`*, the Blacks and the Tuareg. In his Kitab'l-Wird, the *Shehu* said that in addition he was given the Sword of Truth and was named by all the Prophets, Messengers, Companions and *awliyya*, 'the *Imam* of the *Awliyya*'. Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* informs us in his Infaq'l-Maysuur the spiritual consequences of the *Shehu*'s persistence in sending blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was that the *Shehu* 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 Lord of Truth gave him to drink the sweetness of inviting people to Him and crowned him with the crown of direction and guidance to Him. Our spiritual guide, *Waziri* Junayd ibn Muhammad al-Bukhari, may Allah be merciful to him, informs us in one of his poems regarding the miracles of the *Shehu*, that he mastered the mystical teachings of al-Ghazali, al-Muhasibi, al-Jilli, as-Shadhili, Ibn Arabi and al-Qunawi. The *Shehu*, in turn transmitted these teachings to forty-seven men and women who became teachings *Shaykhs*, in their own right. Among them

Our understanding was inundated by the help of the Absolute Being
In these realities based upon verification and spiritual progress³⁰

were his wife, *Iyya Gharka A`isha Ghabindu*, their children *Khadijatu, Sultan Muhammad Bello, Muhammad al-Bukhari and Muhammad Sanbu*, his scribe and the father of the poet, *Malam Mustafa ibn Muhammad, Shaykh Abdullahi Mujanna, Shaykh Muhammad Mudi Mamari ibn Uthman Layma and Shaykh Muhammad Yero ibn Gharu*. The most important of these teachers were his maternal uncle *Muhammad Sanbu ibn Shehu*. It was from these reliable sources that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him mastered the ‘*uluum`l-haqaa`iq`*’ (the sciences of spiritual realities).

³⁰ The previously mentioned unique spiritual path systematized by the *Shehu* and bequeathed as an inheritance to his many disciples, was inherited and transmitted in the same manner that a magnet magnetizes other metals or as uranium radiates every element around it. It was for this reason that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: **“Our understanding was inundated by the help of the Absolute Being * in the sciences of realities...”** Because the sending of blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace takes the place of the teaching *Shaykh*, it preempted there emerging around the *Shehu* and those sages elevated to spiritual authority at his hand, the kind of sycophancy and false adulation which has become the hallmark of ‘*sufis`*’ today. At the same time the constant sending of blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace assured that those who followed his spiritual path would always enjoy high standing with the People of Allah, wherever they settled. This is because the sending of blessings upon the Prophet, is a light which is recognized by the People of Allah and attracts their hearts in spite of themselves. It is for this reason the poet, may Allah be merciful said that the spiritual inundations in the sciences of the realities occurred for the *Fudiawa* sages: **“...based upon verification and spiritual progress.”** The expression ‘*tahqeeq`*’ (verification) is the infinitive noun of the verb ‘*haqqaq`*’ (to verify or prove to be spot on). Its etymology with the ancient Arabs was the ability to weave cloth firmly and resiliently where no breaks, tears or holes would emerge. In academic jargon ‘*tahqeeq`*’ means to examine, investigate, and reference the soundness of a text. In jurisprudence ‘*tahqeeq`*’ means to corroborate and substantiate a legal issue or decision by citing the legal evidence from the *Qur`an*, the *Sunna*, the *Ijma`* or reason. In the language of the People of Allah ‘*tahqeeq`*’ means to corroborate the veracity of spiritual unveilings, visions, openings and gnosis by the scale of the Book and the *Sunna*. Thus, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him indicates that the torrent of spiritual realities granted the *Fudiawa* were verifiable, substantiated, and systemically quantifiable in accordance with the principles of this Ancient Way. The gnosis of the *Fudiawa* was not imprecise, but was crystalline pedantic mysticism, since the Absolute Being became the hearing by which these sages heard, the sight by which they saw, the hands by which they grasped, and the feet by which they walked. Their movements and stillness were by means of the Absolute Being, regarding the Absolute Being, for the sake of the Absolute Being. As for the expression ‘*tarqiy`*’ (spiritual progress) it is an infinitive noun derived from the verb ‘*irtiqaa`*’ (to advance or to ascend). It implies the gradual and steady progress upward like the slow scaling of a mountain. In his *at-Ta`areefaat Shaykh al-Akbar* defined ‘*tarqiy`*’ (spiritual progress) as: “...the gradual ascending advance in spiritual states, spiritual stations and gnosis.” Here, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him indicates that he and his ancestors among the *Fudiawa* attained

spiritual unveilings and openings naturally and organically based upon the gradual rise through all the spiritual states and stations in conformity with the courtesies of the People of the Path. Technically, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him delineated that there were eight gates through which knowledge and gnosis of the Absolute Being can be attained. He classified these eight modes of cognition in his Ma`arifaat'l-Haqq based upon a Fulfulde` poem of the *Shehu*. In it he said: "Since direct knowledge of the Lord of Truth (*ma`arifat'l-haqqi*) is the *raison d'être* of knowledge (*ajalu'l-ma`arif*) and its most important factor (*wa ahimmuhaa*), it becomes incumbent upon everyone to extend his resolution in acquiring it (*surf'l-himma ila iqtinaa'ihaa*) and extending his endeavors to attaining it (*wa's-sa`aya fee tahsseelihaa*), with whatever abilities that are possible. Indeed the Absolute Being by means of His shear bounty has favored us with the causative factors of guidance (*bi'l-asbaabi'l-hidaayat*) that has enabled us to attain this, as a favor and mercy from Himself, and to Him is the praise in that. These causative factors are many. Their fundamentals are achieved through eight paths; [1] natural disposition (*al-fitra*); [2] information attained by reported transmission (*al-khabr*); [3] reflection (*an-nadhar*); [4] through the experience of majesty (*al-jalaal*); [5] through the experience of beauty (*al-jamaal*); [6] the *Qur'an*; [7] the prophetic traditions (*al-hadeeth*); and [8] experienced spiritual states (*al-ahwaal ad-dhawqiyya*). I came across a Fulfulde` poem written by our *shaykh*, *Shehu* Uthman Dan Fuduye` in which he gathered in it these eight paths. We thank Allah ta`ala for what Allah has favored us with by means of him from these sciences and for what we have learned of it from him. He said that he attained direct knowledge of Allah from all of these eight paths. Consequently, the purpose of this writing is to stipulate these paths (*tafseelihaa*) and to explain by way of particularization the methodology of attaining this direct knowledge (*wa bayaan kayfiyat hussuul'l-ma`arifa bihaa*), for anyone who has the ability to experience it." The ease by which the *Fudiawa* classified, and simplified these complex modes of cognition, which even advanced gnostics such as *Muhy'd-Deen* Ibn `Arabi found difficult to explain without resorting to a hermetically sealed lexicon, is evidence that they unraveled the enigmatic sciences and made them accessible to an *Umma* which, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace described as an 'unlettered community' (*ummat ummiyuun*). To make it easier for the reader, I have here made a quadrangular tabulation (*jadwaal maraba`a*) which clearly depicts these eight gates which lead to knowledge of Allah ta`ala:

Qur'an	dhawq al-yaqeen	nadhr
jamaal	ma`arifaat al-haqq	jalaal
khabr	fitra	Sunna

All of the eight modes of cognition are paths to the '*uluum'l-haqaa'iq*' or direct knowledge of the Absolute Being and His infinite Self Disclosures in all the matrices of existence. Although, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him delineated the eight gates to direct unmediated knowledge of Allah ta`ala in his Ma`arifaat'l-Haqq; in this

poem he unlocks each of the eight gates and allows a glimpse at the quiddity (*maahiyya*) of this knowledge behind each of the eight modes of cognition.

³¹ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him and sanctify his secret cites sixteen of the sciences of the spiritual realities (*'uluuum l-haqaa'iq*) which are the foundations from which all the other spiritual realities emerge. He begins by mentioning the wellspring of the spiritual realities (*'ayn l-haqaa'iq*) which is: “**The science of divinity**” (*'ilm l-'uluuhiyya*). The noun *'ilm* (science) is in the accusative case (*mansuub*) because it is the object wherewith (*maf'uul ma'ahu*) of the verb *'afaad* (inundate). In other words the science of divinity and all the subsequent sciences conjoined to it are among the sciences with which the poet, and his ancestors were inundated. When examining the etymology of the annexed expression *'uluuhiyya* (divinity) and its technical meaning with the sages of Islam, we immediately run into a linguistic dilemma. The science of divinity has a completely different meaning in occidental culture than it does in oriental culture, even though the west inherited its fundamental principles of ‘deity’ from the east. In the west divinity can apply to anything which is worshipped, be it a force of nature, an inanimate being, a sentient being, combination there of, or a Supreme Unitary Being. In Islamic theology the expression *'ilah* (إله) from which the expression *al-'uluuhiyya* derive refers specifically to the Singular Unitary Deity alone and is closely associated with the Supreme Name of the Absolute Being – Allah (الله) used in other Semitic languages such as the Hebrew *'elohim* (אֱלֹהִים), and the Aramaic *'elahi* (אֱלֹהֵי). In Arabic the expression *'ilah* takes its key etymological root from the verb *'alaha* (to bewilder) and thus the expressions *'ilah* and *'uluuhiyya* denotes the Absolute Being in His transcendence and whose reality or knowableness bewilders the mind. On a Friday, the 21st of *Dhu'l-Qa'ida*, 1236 A.H. (circa 17th August 1821 C.E.) at the age of 18, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him composed his phenomenal poem on the technical terminologies of the *sufis* called al-Mandhumat li'l-Istalihaat as-Suufiyya, in which he boldly sets out to define the technical language and expressions used by the People of spiritual unveiling. In it he said: “I composed it for two reasons: oft times much of the meanings of their terms have remained hidden from most people who have never grasped the concepts of the origins of their technical expressions; secondly it was never the objective of the *Sufis* to bar people from examining the core meaning of the science of *tasawwuf*. Thus, our objective in composing this poem is to incite those who have a genuine desire to understand this and to encourage them to acquire spiritual advantages, emanation (*saadira*) and spiritual unveilings (*waarida*)...” It is to this work that we must now turn to understand many of the concepts presented in this segment of the poem. Regarding the expression *'uluuhiyya* (divinity), he, may Allah be merciful to him said: “The comprehensiveness (*shaamil*) of all the created opposites (*addaad*) and created loci (*mahaal*) * evoke the Divinity (*'uluuhiyya*) the Sole Possessor of Majesty.” That is to say that the transcendent, unknowable and thoroughly perplexing reality of Allah is His divinity (*'uluuhiyya*) and this aspect of Allah can only be known through what is known. It is for this reason that this knowledge begins with the negative statement: ‘There is no deity (*ilah*) except The Deity (*Allah*)’. This means that the reality of the Absolute Being as the Divinity can only be known by what He is not. The poet, explained the meaning of this poetic couplet when he said: “I mean

here that the Divinity (*'uluuhiyya*) is the comprehensive stratum (*maratiba shaamila*), which embraces the Absolute Existence (in non-manifestation) and the three strata of existence: namely: [1] created things (*khalqi*); [2] inconceivable non-existences (*'idam mustaheel*); and [3] the uncreated conceivable things (*jaa'iz*). Allah possesses a Name that embraces all of these strata, and He has circumspection (*hayta*) and comprehensiveness (*shumuul*) over the Self-manifestation and suzerainty of every Divine Attribute and Name based on the meaning when I said: "The comprehensiveness of all the created opposites and created loci", to the end of the poetic couplet." Another interpolation of the expression '*ilah*' is 'that which is adored or worshiped' and this reality cannot be comprehended except by the infinitely variegated forms in existence which point to His divinity (*'uluuhiyya*), for the object for which Allah is '*ilah*' (deity) is the only means by which He can be known to be the Deity. It is these permanent individual archetypes as they exist in the Knowledge of Allah, which when they are given actuality or existence by Allah, or are left in their non-actualized potential state of non existence, act eternally as the realities that evoke or point to Allah as 'divinity'. Imam Abd'l-Kareem 'l-Jilli indicated in his al-Insaanl-Kaamil that 'divinity' (*'uluuhiyya*) is nothing but the Absolute Being whose outward form is creation, and it is nothing but creation whose inward meanings is the Absolute Being. He said explicitly: "Divinity (*'uluuhiyya*) requires the annihilation of the universe in the essence of its eternal continuity (in the Knowledge of Allah); and the eternal continuity of the universe in the essence of its annihilation (in pre-existence)." In other words, what we see, perceive and conceive of existence with all of its variegated forms and manifestations or lack there of, is proof that Allah exists and that He is the deity (*'ilah*) of the whole existence, as Imam Abd'l-Waahid ibn 'Ashir said in his Murshid'l-Mu'een: "His existence has a decisive proof: the necessity of every created thing having a Creator." Again, Imam Abd'l-Kareem 'l-Jilli said in his Maraatib'l-Wujuud that the matrix of '*'uluuhiyya*' (divinity) is an expression referring to the manifestation of disbursement where all the realities in existence are given their due and each are distinguishable (*tamyeez*) from all others. It is the matrix of the emergence of the multiplicity of existence (*nasha't'l-kathra'l-wujuudiyya*) and the presences of divine particularization, the gathering of gatherings, the Self-Disclosure of the names, attributes, the most perfected presence of existence, and the degree of all degrees. He designated the matrix of '*'uluuhiyya*' as the degree of all degrees since all the degrees of existence are particularized and manifested in this presence where each reality is given its distinctive name, quality, concern, expression, and relationship. It is for this reason that the science of divinity (*'ilm'l-'uluuhiyya*) is the first of the sciences of the spiritual realities (*'uluum'l-haqaa'iq*) because it is the first of the realities that lay at the foundation of what is perceived and conceived in the sensible world. Thus, through what is known becomes an indication and points to what is unknown. Allah ta'ala says: "I did not create jinn and men except to worship"; that is to say, to first know Allah and worship Him as the sole deity (*ilaah waahid*). This acknowledgement that there is a Necessarily Existent Deity who requires worship can only be known by what He is not, and that is everything in existence besides Himself, epitomized in the testimony of: **Laa ilaha illa Allah**. However, this is only the beginning of the journey. The master of our spiritual masters, Shaykh Abu'l-Abass Ahmad ibn Mustafa said: "Evidence is merely a veil for that which it signifies. It is because you require evidence, you then, become an evidence for that evidence you require. Subsequently, it becomes necessary for you, O brother, to require Allah, seek after His succor and be in great need in your seeking after Him.

For Allah answers the one in great need when he calls on Him. For the true lover seeks after his Beloved and is never content to stop with anything besides Him. For how can a created thing be in need of a created thing like itself?” Thus, the science of divinity (*‘ilm’l-‘uluuhiyya*) is the knowledge of all the realities of existence and how these realities are preserved as eternal archetypes pointing to His divinity. After comprehending the science of divinity, the spiritual aspirant is required to have the veils of the attributes, names and essences of existence to be lifted until he comprehends what these conceal of the Divine Essence of Allah, His Divine Names and Attributes. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him indicated this by his words: **“...and the science of the essences * the science of qualities, and enterprises...”**

He utilized the expression *‘dhawaat’*, the plural of *‘dhaat’* (essence or quintessence), which is a synonym of *‘ayaan’* (individualized substance) and refers to the permanent archetypes (*‘ayaan thaabita*) of creation before their manifestations in the sensible world. Technically, the expression *‘dhaat’* (essence) has two meanings: [1] the Divine Essence whose existence is absolute; and [2] the essence of created beings whose existence is ancillary to its prior non existence. The Divine Essence is One, Immutable and Unchanging, while the essence of all things beside Him is contingent, changing, and variegated. It is the latter meaning which the poet implies when using the plural form *‘dhawaat’* (essences). The expression *‘wasf’* (quality or description) takes its root from the verb *‘wasafa’* (to describe). *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Ali at-Tahaanawi informs us in his Kashaaf Istilaah’l-Funuun wa’l-Uluum that the expression *‘wasf’* in the technical terminology of the jurists is what is a consequence to a thing without it being disconnected from it where this *‘wasf’* when it occurs in that thing it increases it in beauty or unattractiveness. Thus, in created things its *‘wasf’* (quality) is not necessarily apart of its quintessence, but is an increment and an appendage to it, and comes about subsequent to its essence (*dhaat*). This is indicated by the usage of the conjunctive particle *‘waw’* which in this context means order (*tarteeb*) and sequence (*taraaduf*); that is to say that the science of the qualities of things is subsequent to the science of the quintessence of things. The expression *‘shu’un’* is plural from *‘sha’n’* (concern, business or enterprise). Again the usage of the plural indicates that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him is still referring to created realities, because Allah ta’ala is One in His Essence, Attributes and Actions. It is for this reason Allah ta’ala uses the singular when describing the multiplicity of His Actions: *“Every day He is in a new business (sha’n).”* He did not use the plural *‘shu’un’* to describe His Actions, although they are variegated and are equal to the number of the multiplicities of created phenomena. Thus *Shaykh* Ahmad an-Naqshabandi described the *‘shu’un’* (enterprises) as actions (*af’aal*) which apply to the diversity of activities of existence from the perspective of their being the Self-Disclosure (*tajalli*) of the Acts of Allah ta’ala. Allah ta’ala says: *“Allah created you and what you do.”* The poet, may Allah be merciful to him further elaborated on the reality of the *‘shu’un’* in his al-Kashif’l-Bayaan where he said: *“Realize that the Essence of Allah ta’ala manifest in the matrix of Unicity by means of the Divine enterprises (shu’un ilaahiyat) as when He says: “Every day He is in a new enterprise.”* The poet, may Allah be merciful to him further clarified this in his Bayaan’t-Ta’abudaat where he quotes his maternal uncle Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* saying: *“Enterprises (shu’un) are recurrent with Allah like the spiritual states of the servant are recurrent to them. These enterprises are what He azza wa jalla emerge from His Will. When He expands the foundations of these enterprises, then the essences of the universe manifest in the matrices of the Primordial Cloud (‘amaa’),*

The science of the Self Manifestation of the Divine Names
And Attributes which is the matrix of the scholars and the learned³²

which is the primordial ‘White Pearl’ (*durrat bayda*), another name for the Original Primeval Waters from which Allah created the entire universe. The branches of the enterprises of Allah have two affinities (*nisbataan*): [1] a Divine affinity (*nisbat ilaahiyya*) which are the decreed judgments (*qada’ mahkam*) that will never change, all of which are established on the Guarded Tablet (*lawh mahfuudh*); and [2] a creational affinity (*nisbat kawniyya*) which are those judgments that have been decreed for creation and the irrevocable decree which perhaps can be changed by something or can be transformed without being actually changed. This change or alteration occurs by the tongue of the universe and its requests. Their fundamentals are established on the Guarded Tablet without their details because their proper places are the Tablets of Effacement and Establishment (*alwaaḥ ‘l-mahwi wa’l-ithbaat*). Perhaps they will occur and perhaps they will occur in a mode which does not resemble the desire of creation.” Here, Muhammad Sanbu ibn Shehu clarified how Allah ta’ala brings existence out of none existence using the term ‘*shu’un*’ (enterprise) which is another word for the Actions of Allah. All of the created essences, their qualities and phenomenal activities are the ‘*shu’un*’ (enterprises) of the Essence of Allah ta’ala and emanate from His Actions.

³² After the poet, may Allah be merciful to him delineates the relationship between the unfolding of creation and the transcendence (*tanzeeh*) of the Essence of Allah ta’ala, he then mentions how existence unfolds from the Immutable Divine Essence through the immanence (*tashbeeh*) of His Divine Names and Attributes by his words: “**The science of the Self Manifestation of the Divine Names * and Attributes...**” He began the hemistich with the conjunctive particle ‘*waw*’ (and) to indicate that this couplet is connected to the previous one and is the object wherewith (*maf’uul ma’ahu*) of the verb ‘to inundate’, but also to reveal the gradation (*tadreej*) and succession (*ta’aqib*) of the sciences of the Self Manifestation of Allah’s Names and Attributes from the previously mentioned science of the Divine Essence. The expression ‘*tajalli*’ (self disclosure or manifestation) is arguably the most important word in the technical lexicon of the People of Spiritual Unveiling. It takes its root from the verb ‘*jalaa*’ (to be revealed) like when you say: “*tajallati ‘s-shamsu*” (The sun became exposed to view). It means to disclose something which was hidden behind a veil. This implies that the thing which was disclosed was always there, but was veiled by something else and became disclosed simply by the removal or lifting of that which veiled it. Allah ta’ala utilizes the term in several places in the *Qur’an* where He says: “*wa’n-nahaari idha tajallaa*” (By the day when it becomes manifest); and His words: “*falammaa tajallaa Rabbuhu li’l-jabali*” (And when his Lord became manifested to the mountain...). We also have several prophetic traditions where the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace utilized the term to indicate Allah’s Self Disclosure to creation. It has been related by Ahmad, an-Nisai’, Ibn Jareer and others on the authority of Qabeesa al-Hilali, an-Nu`man ibn Bashir and others that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “...when Allah manifests (*tajalla*) Himself to a thing from His creation, it fears Him...” The fear (*khushuu`*) being referred to here is not the fear of the common believer which comes from the remembrance of the sins which have passed; the fear which comes from the remembrance of the severity of the punishment of Allah; the fear which comes from

the remembrance of the weakness of the soul; or the fear which comes from the remembrance of the omnipotence of Allah ta`ala. The fear being referenced here is the kind which results from acknowledging the immensity of Allah ta`ala and emerges with knowledge of Him. It is for this reason Allah ta`ala says: *“Indeed the most fearful of Allah from His servants are the knowers.”* This means the knowers of Allah (*`ulama billahi*) and His enterprises, whose fear of Him increases with their knowledge, gnosis and awe of Him, because true fear of Allah can only occur after gnosis of Him. Gnosis of Allah ta`ala occurs through the process referred to as Self Disclosure (*tajalliyaat*) where Allah lifts the veils between those who yearn to know Him demonstrated by their absolute servitude to Him (*`ubudiyya lahu*); as Allah ta`ala says: *“Fear Allah and Allah will teach you”*. That is to say, that the Self Disclosure (*tajalliyaat*) of the Acts of Allah, the Names and Attributes of Allah and finally the Immutable Essence of Allah can only occur for those who fear Him most. This realm of knowledge and gnosis is the exclusive matrix of the knowers of Allah among His *awliyya*. The *Shehu* said in his *Fat’h’l-Basaa’ir* that the aspect of the Self Disclosure of the Acts, Names and Immutable Essence of Allah is the second of the two divisions of the science of *tasawwuf* which: *“...is not only among the collective obligations (*furuud ’l-kifaaya*), but part of this science is specifically established for the *awliyya* - without dispute.”* It was during the five years in which the *Shehu* and his community resided in Sifawa from *Ramadan* of 1224 A.H. to the 5th of *Jumad’l-Akhir* 1229 A.H. (circa January 1810 C.E. to January 1815.C.E.); that he transmitted to a select group of his disciples the comprehension of the Self Disclosures of Allah through His Acts, Names and Essence. During this period the poet, may Allah be merciful to him was between the ages of six and eleven and his father, *Malam* Mustafa was the chief scribe of the *Shehu*, responsible for transcribing all of his lectures, and writings. This five year period in Sifawa, has been universally acknowledged by the scholars to be the most intellectually explosive and spiritually fruitful period in the entire life of the *Shehu* and his *jama`at*. We are indebted to the gnostic *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Muhammad’l-Kunaawi in his *Kitaab’d-Dawaa’ir* in which he transmits in an abridge manner the entire range of this level of spiritual unveiling. He said quoting the *Shehu*: *“The orbits of the knowledge of the *haqaa’iq* are: Allah ta`ala’s saying: ‘Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The likeness of His Light is like a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a brilliant star, lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east nor the west, whose oil would almost glow forth though no fire has touched it. Light upon Light! Allah guides to His Light whom He wills.’ And Allah ta`ala’s saying: ‘We have not created the heavens and the earth and what is between them except with the *haqq*.’ And Allah ta`ala’s saying: ‘Everything in the heavens and the earth is from Him.’ And Allah ta`ala’s saying: ‘We will show them Our signs in the horizons and in their *nafs* until it is clear to them that He is the *Haqq*.’ And Allah ta`ala’s saying: ‘Where ever you turn there is the *wajh* of Allah.’ And Allah ta`ala’s saying: ‘When I had formed him, I blew into Him from My *ruuh*.’ And Allah ta`ala’s saying: ‘Verily those who take the oath of allegiance with you, they have taken an oath of allegiance with Allah.’ And Allah ta`ala’s saying: ‘He is the First, the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden.’ And Allah ta`ala’s saying: ‘You did not throw when you threw, but it was Allah who threw.’ And Allah ta`ala’s saying: ‘*Alif, Lam, Mim*. This is the Book.’ And Allah ta`ala’s saying: ‘*Ha Mim, `Ayn, Sin, Qaf*.’ There are also prophetic traditions which delineate the proofs of the science spiritual realities (*ilm’l-haqaa’iq*). The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said when he was asked: ‘Where was Allah before*

He created creation?'; 'He was in the Cloud.' The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: 'His Veil is Light. If it were lifted, the glory of His Face could not be traversed because the vision of created beings could not apprehend Him.' The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: 'Verily Allah has seventy something veils of Light and darkness. If they were lifted, the glory of His Face could not be traversed because the vision of created beings cannot reach Him.' The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: 'Verily Allah created Adam based upon his appearance.' The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: 'Each and every one of you is a vicegerent (*khulafa*) in his essence.' Realize also that the Absolute Being (*al-Haqq*) ta'ala is the source of the entire cosmos with respect to the reality of things (*bi' l-`itibaa' al-haqeeqa*) and everything other than Him is an outward appearance (*as-shakl*) with respect to Him. For everything in existence is either an outward phenomenal expression (*madhaahir*) of His Perfection (*kamaalihi*), Majesty (*jalaalihi*) or Beauty (*jamaalihi*). For all our essences (*dhawaatunaa*) are an outward phenomenal expression of His exalted Essence (*madhhara li Dhaatihi*); and our existence (*wujuudunaa*) is an outward phenomenal expression of His exalted Existence (*madhharat li Wujuudihi*). Our life (*hayaatunaa*) is an outward phenomenal expression of His exalted Life (*madhhar li Hayaatihi*). Our knowledge (*`ilmunaa*) is an outward phenomenal expression of His exalted Knowledge (*madhhar li `Ilmihi*). Our will (*iraadatunaa*) is an outward phenomenal expression of His exalted Will (*madhhar li Iraadatihi*). Our power (*qudratunaa*) is an outward phenomenal expression of His exalted Power (*madhhar li Qudratihi*). Our speech (*kalaamunaa*) is an outward phenomenal expression of His exalted Speech (*madhhar li kalaamihi*). Our hearing (*sami`unaa*) is an outward phenomenal expression of His exalted Hearing (*madhhar li Sami`hi*). Our sight (*basarunaa*) is an outward phenomenal expression of His exalted Sight (*madhhar li Basarihi*). Our outer appearance (*surrunaa*) is an outward phenomenal expression of His Attributes of Beauty (*madhhar li Sifaat`l-Jamaal*) and some Attributes of Majesty (*ba`adi Sifaat `l-Jalaal*). Human beings are an outward phenomenal expression of the Divine Names of Essence, the Divine Names of Majesty and Beauty (*madhhar li`l-Asma ad-Dhaatiya wa `l-Jalaaliya wa`l-Jamaaliya*). The Arch Angels (*al-mala`ika `l-`iliyeen*) are an outward phenomenal expression of the Names of the Beauty of the Divine Essence (*madhhar Jamaal ad-Dhaat*). Devils (*shayaateen*) are an outward phenomenal expression of the Names of the Majesty of the Divine Essence (*madhhar Jalaal ad-Dhaat*). Invisible creatures (*jinn*) are an outward phenomenal expression of the Names of Beauty and Majesty (*madhhar al-Jalaal wa`l-Jamaal*). Angels are an outward phenomenal expression of the Names of Majesty (*madhhar al-Jalaal*). Human spirits (*al-arwaah*) are an outward phenomenal expression of the Names of Beauty (*madhhar al-Jamaal*). Human souls (*an-nufuus*) are an outward phenomenal expression of the Names of Majesty (*madhhar al-Jalaal*). The Primordial Pen (*al-Qalam*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Incomprehensible (*al-Badee`*). The Guarded Tablet (*al-Lawh al-Mahfuudh*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Ressurector (*al-Baa`ith*). The Universal Nature (*at-tabee`iya`l-kulli*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Inwardly Hidden (*al-Baatin*). The Fundamental Substance (*al-jawhara`l-bahba`i*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Last (*al-Akhir*). The Universal Body (*al-jasam`l-kulli*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Outwardly Manifest (*ad-Dhaahir*). The Universal Perceptual Form (*as-shakl `l-kulli*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Wise (*al-*

Hakeem). The Throne (*al-'Arsh*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the All Encompassing (*al-Muheet*). The Footstool (*al-Kursi*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Thankful (*as-Shakuur*). The Universal Orbital Atlas (*al-falak al-atlas*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Independently Rich (*al-Ghaniy*). The Planetary Orbit (*falak 'l-kawkab*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Overpowering (*al-Muqtadir*). The orbit of Saturn (*falak zahal*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the All Knowing (*al-'Aleem*). The orbit of Jupiter (*falak al-mashtari*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Lord (*ar-Rabb*). The orbit of Mars (*falak al-mareekh*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Perfect (*al-Kaamil*) and His Divine Name, the Conqueror (*al-Qaahir*). The orbit of the Sun (*falak as-shams*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Light (*an-Nuur*). The orbit of Venus (*falak az-Zahra*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Fashioner (*al-Musawwir*). The orbit of Mercury (*falak 'Ataarid*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Enumerator (*al-Muhsi*). The orbit of the Moon (*falak al-qamar*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Unyielding (*al-Mateen*). The fiery orbit (*falak an-naar*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Constrictor (*al-Qaabid*). The airy orbit (*falak al-hawa*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Living (*al-Hayy*). The watery orbit (*falak 'l-maa*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Giver of Life (*al-Muhyi*). The earthly orbit (*falak at-turaab*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Giver of Death (*al-Mumeet*). Treasure mines (*ma`adin*) are a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Esteemed (*al-'Azeez*). Vegetation is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Provider (*ar-Razaaq*). Animals are a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Humiliator (*al-Mudhillu*). The Corporeal Kingdom (*al-Mulk*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Tremendously Strong (*al-Qawwi*). Invisible creatures (*al-jinn*) are a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Subtle (*al-Lateef*). Human beings (*al-Ins*) are a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Gatherer (*al-Jaam`i*). The spiritual ranks (*ad-darajaat*) are a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Exalter (*ar-Raafi`u*). The Paradise (*al-Janna*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name the Affectionate (*al-Hanaan*) and His Divine Name the Benefactor (*al-Manaan*), both being the secret of the Self Disclosure of His Divine Name, the Subtle (*al-Lateef*). The Hell-Fires (*an-naar*) are a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Conqueror (*al-Qaahir*), which is a secret from the Self Disclosure of His Divine Name, the Forgiving (*al-Ghaafir*). The worldly life (*ad-dunya*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of a combination of His Divine Names, the Universally Compassionate (*ar-Rahman*) and the Lord (*ar-Rabb*). The intellect (*al-'aql*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the All Knowing (*al-'Aleem*). Spiritual enthusiasm (*al-himma*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Names, the Immediate (*as-Saree`u*), the Near (*al-Qareeb*), and the Answerer (*al-Mujeeb*). Illusions (*al-waham*) are a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Conqueror (*al-Qaahir*). The heart (*al-qalb*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of an amalgamation of all His Divine Names and Attributes (*jumlat al-Asma wa's-Sifaat*). The conceptual vision (*al-khayaal*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of the perfections of the Manifestations of the Worshipped (*kamala dhuhuur al-Ma`buud*). Thoughts are a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Names, the Ressurecter (*al-Baa`ith*), the Witness (*as-Shaheed*), the Originator (*al-Mubdi`u*), the Restorer (*al-Mu`eed*), the Guide (*al-Haadi*), and the Discerning (*ar-Rasheed*). The Sun is a Self Disclosure

(*majalla*) of His Divine Name, Allah. The moon is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Universally Compassionate (*ar-Rahmaan*). Mars is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Desired (*al-Mureed*). Venus is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the All Knowing (*al-`Aleem*). Jupiter is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Lord (*ar-Rabb*). Mercury is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the All Powerful (*al-Qadeer*). Saturn is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Singular (*al-Waahid*). Heat (*al-haraara*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Desired (*al-Mureed*). Cold (*al-baruuda*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the All Knowing (*al-`Aleem*). Wet (*ar-ratuuba*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Living (*al-Hayy*). Dry (*al-yabuusa*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the All Powerful (*al-Qadeer*). The creational foundational root (*al-usuul*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, Allah. The branches (*al-furuu`*) are a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Universal Compassionate (*ar-Rahmaan*). Fruits (*at-thamaraat*) are a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Lord (*ar-Rabb*). Illumination (*al-anwaar*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Beautiful Names (*al-Jamaal*). Darkness (*ad-dhulumaat*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Majestic Names, (*al-Jalaal*). Obedience (*at-taa`at*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Beautiful Names (*al-Jamaal*). Disobedience (*al-ma`aasi*) is a Self Disclosure (*majalla*) of His Divine Majestic Names, (*al-Jalaal*).” It is clear from the foregoing that the knowledge of the Self Disclosure of the Acts, Names and Immutable Essence of Allah ta`ala is the goal of spiritual disciples (*murideen*), the spiritual wayfarers (*saalikeen*) and “...**which is ...**” as the poet, may Allah be merciful to him described: “...**the matrix of the scholars and the learned.**” The expression ‘*qaalib*’ (matrix) means a mould or pattern by which its likeness is fashioned. This means that the science of the Self Disclosure of Acts, Names and Essence of Allah is the goal of the endeavors of true scholars/warriors and learned sages. This explains why the founding father, soldier and statesman, *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye`, retired from government and civil work to the quiet lecture hall of his home college. His teaching hall held more than eight hundred student chairs, many of whom were men and women of spiritual arrival (*ahl`l-wusuul*), government officials, leading members of the judiciary and other people of learning. Among them was *Shaykh* Mustafa ibn Muhammad at-Turuudi, the father of the poet. Some years after being commissioned by *Shaykh* Abdullahi with *idhn* and *ijaazaat*, *Malam* Mustafa went on to establish what some argue was the first national university/college of the Sokoto Caliphate in Sallame` actually acknowledged and accredited in writing by *Sultan* Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* Uthman. This is reflected in these times in the Republic of Sudan in the person of our spiritual father, the late gnostic sage *Shaykh`t-Tariqah* Dr. Hassan ibn Muhammad Qaribullah as-Samaani who for many years was the Dean of the renown Omdurman Islamic University. Each of these acclaimed scholars and academicians had as their ultimate goal the understanding and comprehension of the Self Disclosure of the Acts, Names and Essence of the Absolute Being.

And power, knowledge, will, life

The Mother of the Book, its quintessence with its sublimity³³

³³ After mentioning the science of the origin of existence and its unfolding or emanating from the Self Disclosure of the Acts, Names and Essence of Allah ta'ala, the poet then cites the next level of immanence which lay at the foundation of being: **“And power, knowledge, will, life...”** The expressions ‘*qudra*’, ‘*ilm*’, ‘*iraada*’ and ‘*hayya*’ are all in the genitive case (*majruur*) because they are annexed nouns (*mudaaf ilayhi*) of an omitted noun (*ism mahdhuuf*), namely ‘science’ or ‘sciences’ (*ilm aw uluum*). Thus, the phrase can be translated: “And the sciences of power, knowledge will, life...” Or they are in the genitive case because they are conjunctions (*ma`tuuf*) of the sciences mentioned in the previous hemistich. These four attributes (*sifaat*) are both transcendent (*tanzeeh*) and immanent (*tashbeeh*) in that they are the attributes of Essence which distinguishes Allah from all things beside Himself; and they are attributes which creational realities share in a restricted sense. It is in this realm that the Creator and His creation meet, in that we know that He has power and is powerful, has knowledge and is knowledgeable, has volition and is willing, and has life and is living by means of His creation which He empowers, knows, enacts His will and gives life. This is the secret of His words: “*It is You that we worship and it is You that we seek for aid*”; as the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace explained that this verse is where the Lord and the servant meet. What is understood by ‘meeting’ in this sense, is that it is at the level of power, knowledge, will and life, that the divinity (*uluhiyya*) and lordship (*rububbiyya*) of the Absolute Being are known and the being, existence, and coming forth of creation are given being. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him rendered the three attributes of knowledge, will and life as adjectives (*na`at*) of power. This is an indication that they are all one and are indistinguishable from one another. *Shaykh* Abd’l-Kareem al-Jilli said in his *al-Insaan’l-Kaamil*: “Power (*qudra*) is the strength inherent in the Divine Essence which only Allah possesses. Its concern is the manifestation of all known things into the world of creational essences based upon the known decree. For it is a locus of Self Disclosure from which manifestation occurs, or it is the place of the appearance of what is known by Him of the creational essences and how they emerge from non existence. This is because His knowledge of them exists in His wisdom; in priority to their existence. Thus, power (*qudra*) is the strength of coming into being for existing things from non existence. It is an Essential Attribute of Being by which lordship is manifested and is the quintessential force of the power which exists in us. Thus, when this power is attributed to us it is called in-time power (*qudra haaditha*), and when it is attributed to Allah ta’ala it is called Eternally Pre-Existent Power (*qudra qadeema*). Power when it is attributed to us is completely powerless to devise or originate. However, when it is attributed to Allah ta’ala, this Power is the essence of the impotent power of creation, by which Allah originates things and brings them forth from the concealment of non existence into the witnessing of existence. So understand this, for it is a majestic secret which is not fitting to disclose except to those who are from the People of Allah ta’ala.” He also said in the same work regarding Will (*iraada*): “Will (*iraada*) is an Attribute by which the Knowledge of the Absolute Being is disclosed and manifested in accordance with the decrees of the Essence. This decree or judgment is in effect Will, and is what the Absolute Being designates to what is known of creational existence based upon the decrees of

Knowledge. This description is called Divine Will. The will or volition of created things which is in us, is a quintessence of the Will of the Absolute Being glory be to Him and may He be exalted. However, the will or volition which is attributed to us is essentially in-time and its in-time-ness is an inherent part of our attribute. Thus, when we say that will is a created entity, we mean by that our will and volition. Other than that the Will attributed to Allah ta'ala is the essential Eternally Pre-Existent Will which is His, meaning it is that by which He brings things forth into existence based upon what is intended by Him. This volition is sometimes attributed to us, but this attribution refers to created volition. Thus, when the attribution of will attributed to us is raised and attributed to the Absolute Being, which is its reality, then it refers to His effective influence upon created things. So understand! Just as our existence as it is attributed to us is created, this existence when attributed to Allah is Eternally Pre-Existent. This attribution is necessary by which one attains spiritual unveiling, and spiritual tasting; or the Self existent knowledge which is the station of the Essence, for Will is nothing but that, so understand." *Shaykh* al'-Jilli said in the same work regarding Knowledge: "Knowledge (*'ilm*) is an essential Eternal Attribute of the Essence of Allah; for His knowledge of Himself, glory be to Him and may He be exalted and His knowledge of His creation are One and undivided and devoid of multiplicities. However, He knows Himself by what is His and He knows His creation by what is theirs. It is not permissible to say that what is known by Him is knowledge which He attains from Himself, in order that it cannot be asserted from this, that He gains benefit from a thing." This means that all things known be they existing things, things which are left in pure non existent; or those things which exist potentially are all in the Knowledge of Allah which is intrinsic with His Essence. Thus, His Knowledge of Himself is His knowledge of His creation, its past, present and future and this knowledge is One and Eternal with the eternity of His Essence. It is our knowledge which is governed by attributes of time and space, since our knowledge of a thing is naturally proceeded by ignorance and the reality of our knowledge of a thing is based upon our capacity or lack there of to encompass it in its totality. Like our power and will, our knowledge is in-time (*hadath*) and bounded by the attributes of in-time creation, such as time, mass and place. As for Life (*hayyat*), *Shaykh* al-Jilli said in his Maraatib'l-Wujuud that it is the leader of the aforementioned attributes of the Essence which lay at the foundation of the unfolding of the realms of existence (*'ijaad maraatib'l-mawjudaat*). He said: "Apart of the realms of existence are the Essential Names and Attributes of the Essence, which are in reality four. It is impossible for creation to designate the perfection of the Essence of Allah except by means of these four Attributes. They are: [1] Life (*hayyat*) because every essence which does not have life is deficient and falls short of the limits of the Perfection of the Essence. It is for this reason that some of the Knowers of Allah hold the view that the Most Immense Name of Allah is His Name '*al-Hayy*' (the Ever Living). Then comes [2] Knowledge (*'ilm*) because every living thing which has no knowledge, then its life is merely contingent and not real. Knowledge, thus, is apart of the prerequisites of the Life of the Essence of Allah, since the perfection of His Life is realized by His Knowledge. It is for this reason that Allah ta'ala uses the expression 'life' as a nickname for knowledge when He says: "*Is the one who was dead...*"; which means ignorant; "*...and We gave life to him*"; meaning and We taught him. In the hierarchy of existence life proceeds knowledge because the existence of the world cannot be given form without their being life in it. Thus, the Attribute of Life comes before all of the Essential Attributes of the Divine Essence and is called the *Imam* among the

realized ones. As for the expression ‘Imams’, plural, they mean by that all of the four Attributes of the Divine Essence. This is because they are the leaders of the remaining Divine Attributes, since when they are gathered they are included under the charge of these four Attributes. Then comes [3] Will (*iraada*) because every living thing which has no will or volition cannot conceive to bring anything else into existence. The Absolute Being, glory be to Him and may He be exalted is the One who brought all things into existence, for He is Desiring (*Mureed*) and by means of Will, He designates, specifies and determines all things and He gives preponderance to the aspects of existence over the aspects of non existence in all contingent possibilities. Then comes [4] Power (*qudra*) because everything which desires something and is incapable of doing it is impotent. The Absolute Being is far exalted above being incapable, for He is the Absolute Omnipotent One. These four Attributes (namely: power, knowledge, will and life) are the source of all the Divine Names. They are the second Self-Disclosure of the Divine Essence and the keys to the unseen, by which our relationship with the Perfection of the Divine Essence is completed; for whatever possesses intrinsic life, knowledge, will, and power is perfect in Its existence and has the ability to bring other things into existence.” What al-Jilli, may Allah be merciful to him discloses to us is a profound secret regarding the strata of existence as it emerges from non existence into existence. This coming into existence cannot occur except through a relationship of Self determination. Allah, the Absolute Being was a Hidden Treasure of Life, Knowledge, Will and Power because He was and there was nothing with Him in existence. He, thus desired to be known as He was in pre-eternity, so He invested creation with contingent life, knowledge, will and power, in order that creation can know itself and know its Lord and worship Him. Allah ta’ala says: “*I did not create jinn and men except to worship*”; that is to say, Allah did not create creation and invest it with contingent life, knowledge, will and power except that creation can know and worship the Absolute Living, Knowledgeable, Desiring and Omnipotent One. Knowledge of the creational realities inexorably leads to the knowledge of the Creator. It is for this reason that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him cited these Names in ascending order, rather than descending order; to indicate the temporal order of creation is the foundation for comprehending the higher strata of being and the Absolute Being Himself. In his *Nasab’l-Mawjudaat* the poet, may Allah be merciful to him explained the ontological relationship between the Life, Knowledge, Will and Power of Allah and the life, knowledge, will and power with which He infuses creation and gives it contingent existence. In it he advised the reader to examine a talisman of existence which he composed and described as being apart of the secrets of concealed wisdom. He divides existence into four hierarchal realms (*dawaa’ir*): Divine (*ilaahiyya*); spirit (*ruuhaaniyya*); celestial (*falakiyya*); and natural (*tabee’iyya*). Each realm emanates from and is influenced by the realm above it in the hierarchy. Thus, the natural realm emanates from and is influenced by the celestial realm above it. The celestial realm emanates from and is influenced by the spiritual realm above it. The spiritual realm and all the realms below it emanate from and are influenced by the Divine realm. He said: “Realize, that the world of spirits is a replica of the Divine Presence. The celestial stations are a replica of the spiritual presence. The gradations of nature are a replica of celestial realms. It is based upon this hierarchy that all divine wisdom is arranged. Thus, each matrix of these four matrices resembles the one above it and is governed by the decrees of its powers.” It is based upon this hierarchy of existence and being that the knowers of Allah understand how to utilize the elemental sciences in a precise procedural manner which never goes

amiss. Knowledge of the hierarchy of existence is crucial in the aforementioned science of the '*jadwaal*' (tabulations) utilized in the Art of War. Following is a diagram of the talisman that the poet utilized in his text to illustrate the hierarchy of being:

Divine Life which is the reality of Existence	Divine Knowledge which is the manifestation of Unicity	Divine Will which is the necessity of Divinity	Divine Power which is the manifestation of the Essence
Spiritual life which is the immutable light	Spiritual knowledge which is perceived light	Spiritual will which is the necessity of the created essence	Spiritual power which is the perfection of the created essence
Celestial life which is astronomical strength	Celestial knowledge which is complex thought	Celestial will which is original desire	Celestial power which is dynamic movement
Natural life which is humidity whose outward appearance is the orbit of air	Natural knowledge which is cold whose outward manifestation is the orbit of water	Natural will which is hot whose outward manifestation is the orbit of the influences of fire	Natural power which is the meaning of aridity whose outward manifestation is the orbit of earth

The poet, may Allah be merciful to him explains the secrets of the above talisman by his words: "Realize that the highest stratum from these realms of existence is the Light of Pure Divinity which manifest in general upon the Throne, and in detail upon the Footstool. The second stratum of existence is the Angelic spiritual light which is the place of the manifestation of the seventh heaven with respect to its inward, but not with respect to its outward. The third stratum is the natural influences. It is from this stratum of existence that physical structure begins and meanings are accentuated in the inner nature of physical structures, and their intrinsic density emerges. It is the place of the manifestation of the celestial centers and their planetary bodies. The fourth stratum of existence is dark nature or matter from which is formulated the four elements, and whose essential qualities the Absolute Being glory be to Him modified by His will over the planetary orbits governing them. As a result of this they became divided into four realms. The first is the fiery realm due to the intensity of its subtle nature, from which emerged hot entities in existence. Then from that spread the airy stratum due to the intensity of its aridity, from which emerged the airy entities in existence. From this there originated the watery stratum which fell upon the earth, from which the cold entities came into being from existence. Then the earthly stratum was established due to the intensity of its density and weight, from which originated the arid entities from existence. And just as the seven heavenly orbits each have its own spirit that manages it which are the Angels, likewise, these four elements each has its own subtle spirit that manages it which are the *jinn*. However, realize, that the human species has four states: [1] a discerning state; [2] a rational state; [3] a receptive state; and [4] a controlling state. It is not hidden to a person well supported with intelligence how these diverse states return back to their primary four elements and how these emerge from each of the hierarchal realms above it which necessitates its existence." In his *Qawaneen'l-Wujuud* (the Fundamental Principles of Existence), the poet, may Allah be merciful to him explained this hierarchy of existence from the

perspective of number where he said: “The realities of evaluation of existence and mastery over it are constructed upon four foundations. If you wish to unconditionally ascertain a complete picture of an affair in existence; then it must be done from the perspectives of [1] Divinity, [2] the spirits, [3] the beams of the clear celestial orbits and [4] from its natural strata. In this way its true picture can be formulated or one can gain advantage over it from any particular sphere in existence. By means of this its existence, rational, soul and corporeal form can be known, by which its true place in existence can be completed. Its existential boundaries can be distinguished after it has been categorized; then it will not be impossible to have complete mastery over it. Realize, then that it is by means of the mastering of its natural elements that one can establish the composition of the raised celestial orbits above it.” Here the poet, may Allah be merciful to him reiterates the fact that existence in all its strata can be known, but this comprehension must start from the perspective of Divinity and include all of the lower hierarchies of existence. In this regard the creation or existence can be described as a ‘book’, as *Shaykh* al-Qunawi designated in his *Mirat’l-`Aarifeen*: “The universe is divided into two worlds: the world of command and the world of creation. Each of them is a book from the Books of Allah ta`ala.” It is this concept of creation or existence as a ‘book’ which then induces the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, to cite one of the most widely utilized terms in the exoteric and esoteric lexicon of Islam; where he said: “...**the Mother of the Book, its quintessence with its sublimity**”

The expression ‘*umm’l-kitaab*’ is made genitive (*majruur*) in the poem because it is a grammatical substitute of what it comprises (*badal’l-ishtimaal*) of the previously mentioned Attributes of Power, Knowledge, Will and Life. In other words the expression ‘the Mother of the Book’ is another way of expressing these transcendent and contingent qualities. The origin of the expression ‘*umm’l-kitaab*’ comes from three places in the *Qur’an*. Allah ta`ala says in *Surat Aali`Imraan*: “*Alif Lam Meem. Allah there is no deity except Him, the Living the Self Subsisting who has revealed to you the Book with Truth, testifying to what is in your hands, and He has revealed the Torah and the Injeel from before, as a Guidance for people; and He has revealed the Furqaan. Indeed those who disbelieve in the signs of Allah, for them is a severe punishment, and Allah is Mighty Able to avenge. Indeed, with Allah nothing in the earth or in the heavens is hidden from Him. He is the One who formulates you in the wombs as He wills. There is no deity except Him, the Mighty the Wise. He is the One who revealed to you the Book, in which are decisive signs, these are **the Mother of the Book.***” In *Surat`r-Ra`d* Allah ta`ala says: “*We indeed sent Messengers before you and made for them wives and descendents. It is not permissible for a Messenger to come with a sign except with the permission of Allah, and for everything there is a book. Allah erases what He wills and He establishes what He wills and with Him is **the Mother of the Book.***” Finally, in *Surat az-Zukhruf*, Allah ta`ala says: “*Ha Meem and by the Detailed Book, indeed We have made It into an Arabic Qur’an so that you may reflect; and It is in **the Mother of the Book** which is with Us, the Exalted the Wise.*” The scholars of *Qur’anic* exegesis explain that the expression ‘*umm’l-kitaab*’ has many meanings. The Arabs call every comprehensive thing which acts as a reference to a thing it’s ‘*umm*’ (mother). It is foremost a reference to the first chapter of the *Qur’an*, *al-Faatiha*. It is also a reference to the Primordial Pen (*al-qalam*). It is also a reference to the decisive and clear legal verses of the *Qur’an*. In the language of some of the gnostics, it is a reference to the First Intellect (*`aql ulaa*). The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, uses the expression ‘*umm’l-kitaab*’ in the same manner which *Shaykh* Abd’l-Kareem al-Jilli, *Shaykh* Muiy’d-Deen Ibn `Arabi and *Shaykh* al-

Qunawi utilized it in their mystical philosophy; as being an indication of the source (*asl*) and foundation (*umdat*) to which existence returns. Thus, the '*umm'l-kitaab*' (Mother of the Book) refers to comprehensive knowledge itself which comprises everything which has been recorded in the Angelic books and other heavenly books which cannot occur except in accordance with what Allah ta'ala had previously established. Thus, Allah's prior knowledge of existence is called its '*umm*' or foundation (*asl*). *Imam* al-Alusi said in his *Ruuh'l-Ma'ani*: "It is as if Allah ta'ala says that He effaces whatever He wills to efface and establishes what He wills to establish from what has been transcribed in the Books. Thus, establishment (*thaabit*) with Him means the eternal knowledge about which none of the possibilities can exist except in accordance with it. The explanation of the expression '*umm'l-kitaab*' being Knowledge of Allah ta'ala is from what was related by Abd'r-Razaaq and Ibn Jareer on the authority of Ka'b, may Allah ta'ala be pleased with." Again referring to al-Qunawi in his *Mirat'l-'Aarifeen* he said: "The totality (*mujmal*) with respect to the summation of what is made detailed in the book is called '*Umm'l-Kitaab*' (the Mother of the Book), while the perspective of the detailing of what is summarized in the diverse realms of the book, it is called with respect to these details: '*Kitaab Mubeen*' (the Detailed Book). Each existing thing in this 'book' is a letter from one perspective, a word from one perspective, a *sura* (chapter) from one perspective, an isolated entity from one perspective, and a compound entity from another perspective." In his *al-Insaan'l-Kaamil* al-Jilli said that the expression '*umm'l-kitaab*' is: "...an expression which refers to the intrinsic what-ness of the Essence indicated by some of its aspects through the quintessence of the realities which cannot be designated by a name, description, attribute, existence, non-existence, reality or creation. For, the Book in this circumstance refers to absolute existence which has no non-existence in it; and thus its quintessential essence is called the 'Mother of the Book' because existence is subsumed in it in the same manner that letters are subsumed in ink. Ink, in and of itself, is never designated with a name from the names of the letters which the ink encapsulates. Likewise with the quintessential essence, it cannot be designated with either the name 'existence' or the name 'non-existence' because it is incomprehensible and judgment regarding that which is incomprehensible is impossible. One cannot say that it is either absolute being or creation or anything else..." Because the comprehension of this expression is so complex, we are obligated to turn to the poet himself, to determine what he meant by the expression. We know from his own writings that he sought to simplify and clarify the obscure and controversial ideas advanced by al-Jilli, Ibn 'Arabi and al-Qunawi. When the poet was merely 18 years old he said in his *al-Mandhumat li'l-Istalihaat as-Suufiyya* designating the concept of '*umm'l-kitaab*':

"The term 'Mother' refers to the quintessence of realities

An expression used in the teachings of each of the foremost
And the Absoluteness of existence, It is called 'a Book'

Let there be no doubt or misgivings in you regarding that."

In his commentary upon the above couplets, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him quotes al-Jilli precisely saying: "The expression 'Mother' (*umm*), is an idiomatic expression of the quintessence of the realities (*maahiyya 'l-haqaa'iq*). It is the intrinsic quality of the Divine Essence for which no name, attribute, adjective, existence, non-existence, creation or reality can apply. As for my words: 'And the Absoluteness of existence (*mutlaq'l-wujuud*), it is called 'a Book', it is an idiomatic expression of the Absolute Existence which has no non-existence in it. The

And the science of the spirits and the unseen spiritual kingdoms
And the Spirit of all spirits in the kingdom of power³⁴

quintessence of the Intrinsic Quality is the ‘Mother of the Book, while Absolute Existence is the Book because existence is subsumed in It just as letters are embodied within ink.”

³⁴ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, then cites other sciences of the spiritual realities which he had mastered, by his words: “**And the science of the spirits...**” The expression ‘*arwaah*’ is plural for *ruuh* and refers to the vital substances of beings that exist without perishing corporeal bodies or in the case of human beings whose vital substances subsist after the death of the corporeal bodies. Allah ta’ala says: “*And they ask you about the spirit. Say: the spirit is from the command of my Lord and you have only been given a little knowledge regarding it.*” It is a reference to several beings and realms: [1] they are spiritual creatures created like human beings with human faces, but with bodies like Angels and who reside in the seventh heaven as Ibn Abass and az-Zujaj cited. [2] The Angels who are noble intelligible beings of a subtle spiritual substance. They were created from light, and do not disobey Allah in what He commands, rather they do exactly what they are ordered to do. They are able to transform their shapes into diverse excellent forms. They are not intrinsically described as male or female and they do not intermarry, eat, drink, or sleep. The Angels are divided into a multitude of diverse types. [3] The realm of the *jinn* who are also intelligible spirits composed of vapor and flame, who like humans are capable of obedience and disobedience, belief and disbelief; and can shape shift and take the forms of various animals or humans. It is said that they are divided into sixteen categories [4] Finally, there are the human spirits, which are the most noble of the spiritual world and is that aspect of humanity which makes them the vicegerent (*khalifa*) of Allah ta’ala to the rest of creation. According to *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye’, the human spirit is created pure, mature, perfect and completely knowledgeable of Allah ta’ala. Human beings comprise of three subtle spirits. The first two make up what is known as the spirit (*ruuh*) unconditionally; and the third is the only aspect in humanity which can be transformed positively or negatively and with its transformation it affects the inward and outward of humanity. They are: [1] the intellect (*’aql*); [2] the spirit (*ruuh*); and [3] the soul (*nafs*). In addition to the four above mentioned orders of spirits the poet, may Allah be merciful to him cited in his *Nasab’l-Mawjuudaat* four more categories of spirits which support existence: [1] the spirits of life (*arwaah’l-hayaatiyya*); [2] the spirits of knowledge (*arwaah’l-’ilmiyya*); [3] the spirits of volition (*arwaah’l-iraadiyya*); and [4] the spirits of dynamic action (*arwaah’l-fi’liyya*); which encompass all existing things. He said that the entire world of spirits is a replica of the Divine Presence, while the celestial orbits are a replica of the world of spirits. The world of spirits is one aspect of the world of the unseen (*’alam’l-ghayb*) called ‘*malakuut*’. It is for this reason the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, joined the expression ‘*malakuut*’ as a conjunction to ‘the science of spirits’; when he said: “**...and the unseen spiritual kingdoms...**” The expression ‘*malakuut*’ takes its etymology from the verb ‘*malaka*’ (to own or control exclusively) and refers in a general sense to the whole of existence. Allah ta’ala says: “*Therefore, glory be to Him in whose Hand is the dominion (malakuut) of everything and to Him you will return.*” In this verse the expression ‘*malakuut*’ is a superlative form of the expression ‘*mulk*’ and means all-inclusive and complete dominion over everything.

For, He is the Sole King over all the dominions and Omnipotent over everything. However, Allah ta`ala also uses the expression ‘malakuut’ to refer to a particular aspect of creation when He says: “Do they not examine the unseen kingdoms (*malakuut*) of the heavens and the earth, and what Allah has created of things”; and again He says: “Likewise We showed Ibrahim the unseen kingdoms (*malakuut*) of the heavens and the earth so that he can be among those who are certain.” Here Allah ta`ala uses the expression ‘malakuut’ to refer to the world of command and the unseen (*‘aalam’l-amr wa’l-ghayb*), for everything in the heavens and the earth has an unseen aspect which indicates the Oneness of Allah. *Imam al-Alusi* said in his *Ruuḥ’l-Ma`ani*: “The meaning of ‘malakuut’ in the technical language of the *sufis*, may Allah ta`ala sanctify their secrets, is an expression referring to the world of the unseen specific to the spirits and souls, and they utilize the expression ‘mulk’ to refer to the witnessed natural world of the sensory, such as the Throne, the Footstool, and other than these from every compounded corporeal entity.” Thus, both couplets by the poet indicate the possibility of comprehending the unseen spiritual kingdoms and that this comprehension comes from Allah ta`ala. In the case of Ibrahim, the Friend of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, Allah ta`ala informs us that He gave him an unveiling by showing him the spiritual power with which He manages the affairs of the highest and lowest worlds, and showed him the spiritual realities behind all existence so that he could be among the People of Certitude who discern that there is no effective influence in creation except Allah ta`ala; and that every single atom of creation emanates from the Actions, Names and Attributes of Allah ta`ala. In his *Kashif’l-Ghitta*, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, explains the nature of this kind of spiritual unveiling (*kashif*) which Allah ta`ala grants to His Messengers and *awliyya* by his words: “As for spiritual unveiling (*kashif*) it is the greatest key and the most exalted spiritual ascension. It is divided into the highest spiritual unveilings and lower spiritual unveilings. As for the highest spiritual unveilings, by means of it the servants are disclosed to the secrets of the Divine Names, the secrets of the Divine Attributes, the secrets of the Divine Essence, the spiritual realities underpinning the cosmos, the diverse categories of the Self-Disclosure of universal compassion, the evidences of Lordship, the realities of Divinity, and the details of His incomprehensibility. As for the lower spiritual unveilings, by means of it the servants are disclosed to the immense unseen spiritual kingdoms (*malakuut*), the most dazzling kingdom of power (*jabaruut*), the subtle forms of the spirits (*laṭaa’if suwar’l-arwaah*), and the realities of the grades of corporeal forms (*maraatib’l-ashbaah*). In addition, the servants are disclosed to the hallmarks of the Hereafter, the stations of the Isthmus (*barzarkh*), they are able to hear the glorification of inanimate beings, the spiritual praise of the Angels, and are able to see the passage of the living and the final stopping place of the deceased. They are also unveiled by Allah ta`ala to what has passed and what will come. For this kind of spiritual unveiling is the congruence of the Prophets and the place of witnessing of the *awliyya*. In this spiritual unveiling the spirits of the people who have been purified are expanded into the unseen, and the categories of the Men of the Unseen become diverse. It is the drinking place of the first and the last of the sages, and the gathering place of the inward and outward realities, which are shared by the Prophets and the *awliyya* alike: ‘...where each people know their drinking place’.” The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, indicates the highest category of spiritual realities by his words: “...the science of the Spirit of all spirits in the kingdom of power.” The expression ‘jabaruut’ is a superlative phrase taking from the noun ‘jabr’ (power/might) and according to *Sadr’d-Deen ad-*

Daylami it refers to the realm of existence above the world of the unseen spiritual kingdoms (*malakuut*). The expression '*jabaruut*' is not from the *Qur'anic* lexicon, but was transmitted in many sound prophetic traditions especially in a well known supplication related by ad-Daylami on the authority of Ibn Umar, Mu`adh and Anas, at-Tabarani on the authority al-Bara', an-Nisai' on the authority of `A'waf ibn Malik, al-Hashimi on the authority of Ali ibn Abi Talib, and Abd'r-Razaaq on the authority of A`isha, that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said in a long prophetic tradition in different variants: "*Subhaana Dhi'l-'Izzati wa'l-Jabaruut*" (Glory be to the Possessor of Might and Power). Thus, the expression '*jabaruut*' refers to the kingdom of power and might by which Allah ta`ala brings things from the spiritual unseen kingdoms (*malakuut*) into the witnessed seen kingdom (*mulk*); and from the witnessed seen kingdom into the spiritual unseen kingdoms. Some of the Knowers of Allah ta`ala, say that these three worlds: the *malakuut*, the *mulk* and the *jabaruut* are indicated in the science of grammar with the three divisions of speech: [1] the noun (*ism*); [2] the verb (*fi'l*) and [3] the particle (*harf*). The noun is a word which indicates meaning in itself but is not connected to time. This represents the world of the spiritual unseen kingdom (*malakuut*) which is the world of meaning and spiritual realities and is outside of time. The verb is a word which indicates meaning in itself and is determined by past (*maadi*), present (*mudaari*) and the imperative/command (*amr*). This represents the world of the seen kingdom (*mulk*) from the Throne of Allah ta`ala to the spread carpet of the earth and all things therein, which have a beginning, an allotted time, an end, or is under the active command of Allah ta`ala. The particle is a word which does not indicate meaning in itself and is not connected to time, but indicates meaning in the nouns and verbs and designates the time of the verbs. This represents the world of power (*jabaruut*) by which Allah ta`ala establishes the spiritual realities of the unseen kingdoms and seen kingdom, and designates the allotted time and dynamics of the seen kingdom. Just as speech revolves around and depends upon the seventy-two particles specific for the noun, specific for the verb or those which share between nouns and verbs, similarly, the worlds of the seen and unseen (*'alam'l-mulk wa'l-malakuut*) revolve around and depend upon the world of power (*'alam'l-jabaruut*). It is for this reason that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him qualified the kingdom of power with the expression: "the Spirit of all spirits in the kingdom of power." This is a direct reference to the first spirit, the first intellect, the first light and the truth from which and by which Allah ta`ala brings non existence into existence – the Muhammadan Reality (*haqeeqat'l-muhammadiyah*), upon him be the best blessings and most perfect peace and is epitomized in the seventy something traits of faith, about which he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said as related by Ibn Hiban: "Faith is seventy or seventy-two gates. Its most exalted is **Laa ilaha illa Allah**, and its lowest is removing something harmful from the road. Modesty is one of the traits of faith." Allah ta`ala brought into existence the seen corporeal world (*mulk*) and the unseen worlds (*malakuut*) by means of these seventy-two particles (*huruuf*) or Muhammadan realities (*haqaa'iq Muhammadiyah*). Allah ta`ala brought the two worlds into existence in order to manifest these seventy-two traits of faith. The grades and stations of humanity and spirits in these two kingdoms are determined by the seventy-traits of faith, and when humanity and spirits are incapable of manifesting these traits, then that will be the end of the allotted time of the seen kingdom and the point of manifestation of the decrees of the unseen kingdoms. It is for this reason that the majority of prophetic traditions number the signs of the End of Time as seventy-

مِمَّا اسْتَعِدْنَا بِهِ بِفَهْمٍ فَائِقٍ

وَعِیْرَهَا مِنْ نُبْذِ الْحَقَائِقِ

And other than these among a portion of the divine realities

From which we were prepared by heightened understanding.³⁵

two, which are the diametrical opposites of the seventy-two traits of faith. When these seventy-two signs of the End of Time are prevalent it signifies the transmutation of corporeal existence into the world of the unseen. Subsequently, just as the seventy-two particles of speech determine the nature, quality, and reality of speech, similarly the seventy-two traits of faith which constitute the Muhammadan Reality, or the Spirit of all spirits in the kingdom of power (*jabaruut*), determine the origin, manifestation, stations, states, grades and cycles both generally and in detail of the seen kingdom (*mulk*) and the unseen kingdoms (*malakuut*). The Spirit of spirits is the seed of the tree of existence, which has two branches the seen and the unseen. It is also the fruit of that tree, or the objective in the creation of existence. In the *as-Shifa* of *Qadi`Iyad* he transmitted a prophetic tradition where Allah informs Adam that it was in order to manifest this Muhammadan Reality that He created existence in all its matrices.

³⁵ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him ends this section of his poem by indicating that there were additional sciences of the spiritual realities which he had mastered and learned, by his words: “**And other than these among a portion of the divine realities * from which we were prepared by means of heightened understanding.**” Again the poet utilizes the plural personal pronoun ‘we’ to indicate himself, but also his immediate relatives from the *Fudiawa* who were responsible for transmitting the mystical sciences to him, such as his father, *Shaykh* Mustafa ibn Muhammad at-Turuudi, his mother *Jaji* Khadijatu bint *Shehu* Uthman, his uncle and father-in-law *Sultan* Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* Uthman, his maternal uncle Muhammad al-Bukhari ibn *Shehu* Uthman, *Shaykh* Muhammad Mudi Mamari ibn Uthman Layma; but more importantly his maternal uncle and spiritual guide *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* Uthman. What the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, meant by ‘heightened understanding’ (*fahm faa`iq*) is that he was trained by his teachers until Allah ta`ala gave him spiritual unveilings and openings which transcended the knowledge of the people of his time. The expression ‘*faa`iq*’ in Arabic is an adjective (*na`at*) which means ‘transcendent’ or ‘supernormal’ and is a synonym of ‘*baariz*’ (pre-eminent). This statement by the poet, is in no way a contradiction of what he said in the beginning of the poem, but a confirmation:

My objective with the poem is Showing Gratitude to the Benefactor

Glory be to Him For the Divine Overflowing He Gives Those Favored

Regarding what we were singled out for with respect to sciences

For fulfilling rights include gratitude to Him as an obligation

Not for fame or in order to boast due to them

But rather desiring by means of them to have increase in them

So, I praise Allah, the One who guided me

To show gratitude to Him for the love He has shown me.

Apart of gratitude and praise is mentioning the favors which Allah ta`ala has given, as Allah ta`ala says: “*And regarding the favors of your Lord, proclaim them.*” His pre-eminence in the sciences of the spiritual realities is not only evidenced by this poem, but by what he said in his *al-Kashif wa'l-Bayaan* in which he unraveled the problematic issues of the *al-Insaan'l-Kaamil* of *Shaykh* Abd'l-Kareem al-Jilli. In this text, the poet, extracted thirteen key controversial issues which Muslim scholars have debated over for centuries and about which many of the mystics of Islam were divided.

The poet, may Allah be merciful to him untied the knots which baffled earlier generations and removed the barriers which barred understanding of this profound mystical text by al-Jilli. In the introduction he explained that the only way that the sciences of the spiritual realities can be understood and mastered is through spiritual unveiling. He asserted that he had attained the spiritual station required to unravel and clarify the controversies of the text. He then goes on to make a scathing attack against those scholars, students and novices who had some acquisition of the outward sciences, but had little or no comprehension of the spiritual realities. He declared that his comprehension of the sciences of the spiritual realities was pre-eminent surpassing the majority of the mystics of his generation. In the al-Kashif he said: "I initially received this book through direct transmission from my spiritual master the righteous ascetic and gnostic sage of Allah ta'ala, my maternal uncle, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu, who received it through direct transmission from his father, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye, may Allah be merciful to both of them. Then after that, Allah ta'ala benefited me with additional majestic advantages in most of the issues of the book. I then applied myself to its continual study repeatedly until I faithfully acquired the essence of the text, systematized it and drew out of it innumerable extractions. Among these advantages which I extracted from the text was my poem on the technical terminologies of the text in accordance with its chapters in about thirty poetic verses. I then made a reliable commentary upon the fundamental ideas of that poem. Also among these advantages which I extracted from the text is a poetic composition I composed after studying the book in which I included a small preface, however, many years have passed since I lost this particular poetic work. Among these as well, was a concise composition which I composed in about three pages in which I gathered and imparted innumerable spiritual benefits. And there were others, as well. As a result, Allah opened to me in this book what had not been opened to others. Rather, I don't know of anyone in this time who has struck upon what I have struck upon from the study of this text, besides my above mentioned master. And if anyone casts any arrows of aspersion at it, or takes an excerpt from it which induces him to argumentation, then realize that his understanding is not like my understanding nor has he come to know what I have come to know. And the limitation of his thinking doesn't allow him to comprehend the real import of the ideas I have attained, nor does his use of the rational scales or transmitted principles, which are not licensed by the science of Divine realities, or expressed using its minute and detailed expressions, permit him to reach where I have reached. As a result any analogy on his part is cut off and his ability to place my words on the scale of equity has been marred. He thus retreats frustrated and returns from being among the foremost to being among the least and finally ends up denying the Truth after first having witnessed it, and losing it after having first discovered it. And that is if, in the first place, he had some suitability to comprehending it or some capacity for understanding the well springs of the Divine realities. But those who really do are one or two in these times. As for the great majority and larger part of those who are associated with knowledge and its acquisition, the treasure of their imaginations have become marred due to their obvious base human needs, and the establishment of the cunning deceits of the soul due to the love of leadership, rank, and the mutual rivalry for a fixed place in the hearts of people. As a result, there has emerged between most of them hatred, rancor, envy, arrogance, and duplicity due to their identical rivaling purposes for a single object. Thus, by means of that Allah turns their hearts away from truly comprehending the real results of ideations, let alone understanding the Divine

ذَكَرُ مَا أُتَيْتُهُ مِنْ عُلُومِ الْأَوْلِيَاءِ وَهِيَ عُلُومُ الْأَسْرَارِ لَكِنَ عَلَى طَرِيقَةِ الصَّوْفِيَّةِ
Mentioning What I Received in the Sciences of the *Awliyya* Which
Are the Sciences of Secrets According to the Path of the *Sufis*³⁶

realities and secrets hidden in them. Allah has blinded their vision, the veil of arrogance has covered their secrets, their hearts have been made conceited against true humility, and they have substituted impartiality with discord and hostility. Their hearts hardly ever receive spiritual good from knowledgeable advantages due to their lack of impartiality. Nor do they believe that distinction can be had by others in order not to be led to accept contrary views. For this reason Allah has made their era bankrupt and the *baraka* of their time has been taken away. We ask Allah for safety and well-being.” I know of no more eloquent affirmation and defense of the sciences of the spiritual realities nor a more derisive condemnation of those who deny them than what is in these words of the poet, may Allah be merciful to him.

³⁶ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him designated the sciences of this section of the poem to be the sciences of the *awliyya* (the protected friends of Allah), which he then qualifies as being the sciences of secrets (*‘ulum’l-asraar*), however in accordance with the path of the *Sufis*. If *tasawwuf* is understood by the poet as a spiritual discipline (*riyaada*) as well as a method of comprehension (*idraak*), then the concepts of ‘according to the path of *sufis*’ and the concept ‘outside the path of the *sufis*’ (which will be referenced in the next section) demands our reflection. Most western academicians and some modernist Muslim intellectuals and clerics would count all of the mediated and unmediated sciences mentioned in the poem with the exception of the first two sections to be inclusive of the sciences of the *Sufis*. However, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, seems to be making a distinction between the mediated and unmediated sciences which result from spiritual purification (*tasawwuf*), and the sciences resulting from the path of the *Sufis*. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, clearly makes a distinction between ‘*tasawwuf*’ as a conduit for gnosis of Allah, and the gnosis which results from the discipline of the path of the ‘*Sufis*’. Indeed, gnosis (*ma`arifa*) is what the Absolute Being emanates to every atom of existence; from the Throne of Allah to the subatomic particles, since all things indicate His Oneness. The Angels, the disembodied spirits, the celestial orbits, sentient beings, animals, vegetables and all inanimate beings glorify Allah with its unique praises of Him. Allah ta`ala says: “*The seven heavens, the earth and what is in them glorify Him, and there is nothing except that it glorifies His praises, but you cannot comprehend their glorification.*” Glorification, praises and worship are preconditioned by knowledge, for one cannot worship what one does not know. Thus, gnosis of Allah ta`ala is what everything in creation except the rebellious among men and *jinn* share in. It is this knowledge of Allah ta`ala which induces fear, awe, glorification and praise and makes everything in existence, with the exception of the rebellious among men and *jinn*, to be among the *awliyya* of Allah ta`ala. Here the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, indicates that the path of the *Sufis* is just one portion through which gnosis of Allah ta`ala and *wilaaya* (friendship) can be attained. This is significant because the *Imam* of the People of *Tasawwuf*, Abu'l-Qasim al-Junayd al-Baghdadi once said: “*Tasawwuf* used to be a reality without a name. Now it is a name without a reality.” What this means is that the majority of people who claim to be apart of the formal organized path of the *Sufis* do not necessarily have gnosis of Allah; and that the majority of the *Awliyya* of Allah ta`ala who have gnosis of Him are not necessarily apart of the formal organized paths of the *Sufis*. Those who assert

otherwise imply that the Companions of the Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace were devoid of gnosis of Allah, since the formal organized paths of *tasawwuf* emerged centuries after them. This suggestion is absurd because the Companions of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and the succeeding two generations after them are forever the fixed stars and leaders of the *Awliyya* which guide the People of Allah ta`ala to their Goal. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "My Companions are like the stars, whichever one you follow you will be guided." What the poet, may Allah be merciful to him indicates by classifying this section of his poem as such, is to assert that the formal organized path of the *Sufis* does not have a cartel, as some of them claim, on mediated and unmediated knowledge of Allah ta`ala. Rather, only a small portion of gnosis of Allah can be attained within the organized brotherhoods of the *Sufis*. That is, if and when these paths meet the prerequisites laid down by the *awliyya*, are devoid of heretical innovations, conform to the Book and the *Sunna* and are not co-opted by the state, (as we see in these times) to control and contain potential and tangible volatile Muslim populations and national minorities. When the Path of the *Sufis* is sound, then, and only then, are the formal *Sufi* brotherhoods able to act as a conduit for the transmutation of the soul and the lifting of the veils between the servants and their Lord. Today, the majority of the *Sufi* brotherhoods have atrophied into useless social networks whose only distinction from their '*salafi*' nemesis is their dancing, kissing of hands, blind worship of their '*shaykhs*', and hagiography. Once the Rand Corporation gave its stamp of approval to '*sufi*' Islam and designated it as a means of 'democratizing' Muslim populations and rendering them 'moderate'; the formal organized '*sufi*' brotherhoods (at least those in the western hemisphere) lost all claims to gnosis of Allah. The co-opting of 'sufism' has become so popular with western governments that we now witness their antagonists, Saudi Wahhabi clerics, with the backing of western intelligence agencies organizing '*deen* intensives' around '*sufic*' themes such 'Saalik Retreats', etc., where obese 'scholars' who obviously have no control over their stomachs let alone the secret machinations of the heart give lectures on how to be 'good consumer citizens' in western market economies. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him seemed to have envisaged this dilemma by designating that Gnosis of Allah, which is the goal of the path of *tasawwuf* is not exclusive to it; and can in some circumstances, such as the present crisis of 'sufism', migrate outside of the formal organized '*sufi*' brotherhoods, to its genuine birthplace – the Living *Sunna*. As a reminder of the kind of *tasawwuf* which the poet indicates to be a conduit for genuine gnosis of Allah; the *Shehu* said in his *Usuul't-Tareeqa* quoting *Shaykh Ahmad Zarruq*: "These are the foundations of the spiritual path. Whoever neglects any of them, Allah will inhibit him from spiritual arrival. They are five things: fear of Allah secretly and openly; following the *Sunna* by word and deed; shunning people coming or going; contentment with Allah in little and much; and resignation to Allah during prosperity and adversity." It is when these five foundations are established that the formal *Sufi* brotherhoods become conduits for the transmutation of the soul and the means for spiritual unveiling into the sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of secrets (*asraar*). There are three key terms which the poet introduces in this section of the poem, which we must examine in order to determine the distinction being made here. The first concept is the '*awliyya*', which the poet explicitly introduces for the first time in the poem. The term '*awliyya*' is plural for '*waliy*' (protected friend) and comes from the verb '*waliya*' to be near or close to; to follow; or manage. Allah ta`ala says: "*Allah is the protecting friend (waliy) of those who believe.*" It has been related

by at-Tabarani on the authority of Ibn `Amr that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “The servant will never discover the purity of faith until he loves and hates for the sake of Allah. For, when he loves for Allah and hates for Allah, then protected friendship (*wilaaya*) from Allah will be certified for him.” In the famous *hadeeh qudsi* narrated from at-Tabarani on the authority of Abu Amama the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Indeed Allah ta`ala says: ‘Whoever insults My *waliy* has actually fought Me with enmity. O son of Adam you will never realize what is with Me until you perform what I have obligated upon you. My servant then continues to draw near to Me with superogatory acts until I love him. Then I become his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his tongue with which he speaks, his heart with which he reasons. When he supplicates Me, I will answer him. When he asks Me, I will give him. When he seeks My help, I will help him. The most beloved thing with which My servant can worship Me is his sincerity to Me’.” *Imam* al-Qushayri said in his ar-Risaalat: “The concept ‘*waliy*’ has two meanings. The first takes the conjugated form of ‘*fa`eel*’ and has the meaning of being a direct object (*maf`uul*). He is the one whom the Absolute Being manages his affairs as Allah says: ‘*And He is the one who protects the righteous*’; since the Absolute Being does not abandon him to the devices of his own soul for a single moment. The second also takes the conjugated form of ‘*fa`eel*’ but with the meaning of being the active agent (*faa`il*). He is the one who establishes the worship of the Absolute Being glory be to Him and exalted be He and proceeds in accordance with His countenance forever without the occurrence of incarnation. Each one of these two descriptions are necessary for a person to be considered a *waliy*, just as it is necessary for him to establish the rights of Allah ta`ala by way of deep research, fulfillment and persistence in preserving the Absolute Being in times of ease and hardship. Among the prerequisites of the *waliy* is that he be protected from being persistent in disobedience, just as the prerequisite of the Prophet is infallibility. Among the prerequisites of the *waliy* is that he conceal his spiritual state, while the prerequisite for the Prophet is to manifest his spiritual state.” Thus, the ‘*uluum`l-awliyya*’ are the sciences which Allah ta`ala grants them specifically above all others, and which emanate to their hearts as a result of their friendship with Him, adhering to His commands, avoiding His prohibitions and following the *Sunna* of His Prophet, secretly and openly. The second concept which the poet, may Allah be merciful to him introduces for the first time is the ‘*uluum`l-asraar*’ (the sciences of secrets) which he says is a synonym for the ‘*uluum`l-awliyya*’. *Shaykh* Muhy`d-Deen Ibn `Arabi says in his al-Futuuhaat`l-Makiyya: “The sciences of secrets comprise the knowledge which innately transcends the bounds of the intellect. It is knowledge which the Holy Spirit emits into the heart which is designated for the Prophet and the *waliy*.” The third concept which the poet, may Allah be merciful to him introduces for the first time is the expression ‘*sufiyya*’ (*Sufis*). As I mentioned previously, the poet designated this section of the poem to mention the sciences of secrets which he had mastered by way of the path of the *Sufis*, in order to indicate that the sciences of spiritual realities, the sciences of the *awliyya* and the sciences of secrets transcend the path of the *Sufis*. This however, is not a deprecation of the path of the genuine *Sufis*, but a veneration of the sciences of secrets in relationship to their formal path. Rather, the fact that the sciences of secrets transcend the path of the *Sufis* ennobles them because they become ennobled by the nobility of the goal of their path. *Shaykh* Abd`l-Qadir al-Jaylani, may Allah be pleased with him explains the distinction between the ‘wannabe’ *sufi* and the genuine *Sufi* in his al-Ghunyat Li Taalibi Tareeq`l-Haqq where

he says: “The *mutasawwuf* is the one who affects being *sufi* until by means of his effort he eventually attains being a genuine *sufi*. For, when a person impersonates and dresses according to the path of the People and adheres to it, he is called *mutasawwufan*, in the same way that one who says of a person dressed in a long shirt (*qamees*) that he is *taqammisan*; or of a person who dresses in a loose outer garment with a slit in the front (*durra`a*) that he is *tadarru`an*. Thus, they are both called *taqammisan* and *tadarru`an*. Likewise, it is said of one who enters into austerity (*zuhd*) that he is *mutazahhidan* (one emulating the austere). However, when his austerity is complete and mature, and things become disliked to him, he becomes annihilated to them and abandons them altogether; it is then that he is called *zaahid* (an ascetic). As a result of this, when material things are brought to him he neither desires them nor dislikes them. Rather, he obeys the command of Allah regarding them and waits for the action of Allah in them. It is said about such a person, that he is *mutasawwuf* and *sufi* when he is described with this meaning. The etymology of the expression *sufi* is based upon the conjugated measure of ‘*fuu`il*’ taken from the expression ‘*muṣaafaat*’ (one who is refined), that is to say, a servant whom the Absolute Being refines. It is for this reason that the genuine *sufi* is the one who has been refined (*ṣaafiyyan*) from the destructive qualities of the soul, free of its blameworthiness, traveling the praiseworthy way, adhering to the spiritual realities without his heart settling with any aspect of creation.” It is based upon this explanation that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him differentiates between the gnosis of Allah attained within the genuine *Sufi* Path, and the gnosis of Allah attained outside their Path. He indicates by this that when the person truly becomes *sufi* in his essence; then Allah ta`ala emits sciences and secrets in his heart which are appropriate to his state and station with Allah ta`ala. Therefore, what the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, implies is that the Path of the *Sufis* is only one aspect of the paths to gnosis of Allah, and that gnosis of Allah ta`ala in its entirety is not the monopoly of the path of the *Sufis*. Gnosis of Allah in its entirety transcends their path and is the specific entitlement of the People of Allah ta`ala among the Prophets and *Awliyya*. What this indicates is that the path of the *Sufis* has its limit (*hadd*), its concern (*mawduu`*), its objective (*ghaayat*), and its advantages (*faa`idat*) which are specific to it; but which are also delimited by the limitations of the age, its people and the ossification the formal path itself goes through. This is what induced the *Imam* of the *Sufis*, al-Junayd al-Baghdadi to say: “*Sufism* was a reality without a name. Now it has become a name without a reality.” This means that the formal path of the *Sufis* is capable of atrophying, coagulating, drying up and becoming over weight with ritualism, and losing the sweet, succulent and transformative spiritual reality which it seeks to harness. However, the reality (*haqeeqa*) itself always remains extant waiting to be discovered because it transcends the formal path of the *Sufis*. It is a mistake to assume that the *Sufis* control the market of Knowledge of Allah because the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “There will always remain a cadre from my *Umma* plain upon the Truth until the establishment of the Hour.” That is to say, that the Truth which Knowledge of Allah embodies and its People will always remain, even with the ossification and dissipation of the formal path of the *Sufis*. Here ends folio 2.

أَفَاضَهَا لَنَا بِفَهْمٍ كَامِلٍ

وَإِعْلَمَ بِأَنَّ فَاطِرَ الْقَوَالِ

Realize that the Originator of articulations

Inundated us with perfect comprehension in these sciences³⁷

³⁷ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him begins this section of the poem by first evoking an important Name of Allah by his words: **“Realize that the Originator of articulations”**. The Divine Name ‘*al-Faatir*’ (Originator) is from the verb ‘*fatara*’ (to cause to exist). Allah ta’ala mentions this Devine Name six times in the Infallible *Qur’an*. Among them is His saying: “Say: do you take other than Allah as a protector, the Originator (**Faatir**) of the heavens and the earth?” The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, *Imam* Muhammad Murtada said in *Taa’jil-’Aruus*: “Ibn Abass, once said: ‘I did not know what the *Faatir* of the heavens and the earth meant until two Bedouin Arabs came to me disputing over a well and one of them said: ‘I am the one who originated it (*fatartuhaa*)’.” Thus, the Divine Name ‘*al-Faatir*’ refers to the One who originated and created the primary mold of all created things. The expression ‘*qawwaal*’ (articulation) is plural for ‘*qawlat*’ (saying/axiom/articulation) and refers to that quality which distinguishes human beings from all other creatures and which constitutes the original nature (*fitra*) of humanity. Articulation is innate and intrinsic in humanity, while it is contingent or extrinsic in other created beings. It is this quality as ‘*naatiq*’ (rational or articulate) human which qualifies this species to be the Vicegerent of Allah (*khalifat Allah*) to the rest of creation. Vicegerency implies knowledge of the One being represented. It is for this reason the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said that Allah ta’ala: **“...inundated us with perfect comprehension in these sciences”**. Again the poet utilizes the concept of overflowing (*fayd*) in order to indicate that this kind of comprehension comes directly from Allah ta’ala. As I mentioned earlier, there are two terms which the People of Allah, may Allah sanctify their secrets and benefit us by them, utilize to depict the Self Disclosure of Allah ta’ala to His creatures: [1] ‘*fayda*’ (inundation/overflowing); and [2] ‘*tajalli*’ (manifestation/disclosure). This kind of comprehension of Allah and His creation can only occur to the servant through what the poet referred to in his *Kashif’l-Ghitta* as spiritual unveiling (*kashif*), the greatest key (*miftaah akbar*) and the highest ascension (*mi’raaj arfa’a*); which he refers to later in the poem as ‘knowledge of tasting’ (*ilm’d-dhawq*). He divided this form of comprehension into a higher and a lower mode of comprehension as we cited earlier. He said regarding these two modes of spiritual unveiling quoting from *Qadi* Abu Bakr ibn al-’Arabi al-Maliki: “The *Sufis* hold the view that when the cleansing of the soul has been achieved, as well as the purification of the heart, the severing of attachments, and the cutting off of the key components of the causative factors of this world’s life, such as rank, wealth, intermixing with their species; and when one turns to Allah ta’ala completely and continuously, that he will have unveiled to him the worlds of the unseen; he will see the Angels; hear their articulation; and be disclosed to the spirits of the Prophets and listen to their speech.” When the poet, may Allah be merciful to him used the first person plural pronoun ‘we’, he refers to himself, his mother, his father, his maternal uncle and personal guide, Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu*, his uncle and father-in-law, Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu*, and the many other gnostics and mystics of the *Fudiawa* ethnicity, who had completed the spiritual path of the *Sufis* in accordance with the courtesies and prerequisites of the *Qaadiriyya*, *Shadhiliyya*, *Khalwatiyya* and *Mahmudiyya* Paths.

وَدُونَهَا الدَّلَائِلَ العَقْلِيَّةَ

وَهِيَ عُلُومٌ لَا تَرَى نَقْلَةً

They are sciences for which there are no written texts

Nor can they be articulated utilizing rational proofs

وَشَرَحُهَا عَلَى الصَّرِيحِ يُحْرِمَ

يَمْنَحُهَا القُدُوسُ مَنْ يُعَلِّمَ

The Holy One bestows upon the one who learns it

Although elucidating it openly has been made prohibited³⁸

³⁸ The sciences of the *awliyya* which are the spiritual unveilings resulting from the transformation of the soul utilizing the disciplines developed within the path of the *Sufis* are sciences which are not disclosed openly to the common people. It is for this reason that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: “**They are sciences for which there are no written texts * nor can they be articulated utilizing rational proofs.**” These sciences are designated as the sciences of the secrets (*‘uluuum’l-asraar’*), because they involve the transformation of the most inaccessible part of man: his soul, his heart and spirit. Once this transformation is achieved then the secret component of humanity then is disclosed to the secrets of the Divine Names, the Divine Attributes, the Divine Essence, the realities sustaining the cosmos, the diverse categories of the Self-Disclosure of universal compassion, the evidences of Lordship, the realities of Divinity, and the details of His incomprehensibility, the secrets of the immense unseen spiritual kingdoms, the secrets of the most dazzling kingdom of power, the subtle forms of the spirits, the realities of the grades of corporeal forms, the secrets of the hallmarks of the Hereafter, the secrets of the grades of Isthmus, the secrets of the glorification of inanimate beings, the praise of the Angels, the secrets of the passages of the living, the secrets of the destinies of the deceased; and the secrets of past and future. These sciences fall outside the realm of the comprehension of reason, because they exist in a realm beyond time and space. The use of speculation or reason cannot be utilized to crack open these sciences because human reason is made up of the same bounded matter which form the building blocks of creation. It is like a glass’s inability to comprehend the nature of the glass maker by analyzing its ‘glass-ness’. I make a distinction here between the deductions and rationalization of scientific reason and the intelligence of the First Intellect that illumines an ‘Awakened’ individual. The guarded nature of these sciences is what induced the poet, may Allah be merciful to him to say in his *al-Uhuud wa’l-Mawaathiq*: “I have taken an oath and covenant to keep secret what is with me from the sciences of the spiritual realities and secrets (*‘uluuum’l-haqaa’iq wa’l-asraar*) and to conceal my works regarding these. This is because these sciences are an exalted class of sciences for the spiritually elite and are only designated for those who are spiritually prepared from among the People of Allah.” Now, the keeping secret (*atwiyya*) and concealment (*kitma*) of these sciences does not mean not revealing them at all, for this would imply an act of injustice on the part of the One who revealed them to the heart of His *awliyya*. The concealment and keeping secret means composing the texts with a protected and closed technical language which locks out the uninitiated, such that when the common man or the spiritually degraded read the ideas of these sciences, they are unaware of its import and meaning. As Allah ta’ala says regarding those in whose heart is a disease and are spiritually veiled: “*In order that those in whose hearts is a disease and the disbelievers will say: ‘What does Allah mean by this semblance?’ Likewise, does Allah lead astray whom He wills and guides whom He will.*” Corroborating the view that there is an aspect of knowledge which should not

be openly transmitted is what was related by Ibn Maja on the authority of Anas ibn Malik that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Placing knowledge with other than its rightful people is like adorning pigs with precious diamonds, pearls and gold." In another narration, he upon him be peace said: "...it is doing injustice to knowledge." The grandfather of the poet, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` alluded to this concealment of the sciences of secrets as well in his as-Salaasil 'd-Dhahabiyya where he said: "The Path of the People (*tareeq 'l-qawm*) is built upon concealment and that it is not permissible to mention their teachings in the presence of those who are not among their discipline nor in the presence of those who do not believe in them." This in no way contradicts the well known prophetic tradition where the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Whoever is asked about some knowledge and he conceals it, Allah will bridle him with a bridle of fire on the Day of Judgment." The knowledge referred to in this prophetic tradition excludes all but those sciences which are obligatory upon every responsible person to know and act upon, as As-Sayyid said: "This prophetic tradition refers to the knowledge that is necessary to learn, like teaching the disbelievers the reality of Islam, the methodology of the prayer; as well as giving legal decisions in what is lawful and prohibited. Thus, in these affairs it is incumbent to give an answer, but not in those sciences considered superogatory or in those sciences not essentially necessary." The *Shehu* clarified in his Fat'h'l-Basaa'ir that the sciences of spiritual realities and secrets were among the collective obligations which were not incumbent upon everyone to know, but were specified for the *awliyya* and closed to those outside their circle. This obstruction is intrinsic within the sciences themselves, in that they are only disclosed to those who have successfully transformed their souls or the obstruction is contrived by the masters of these sciences in order to divert it from the eyes of those undeserving. This is what was inferred by the words of the poet, may Allah be merciful to him: "**The Holy One bestows it upon the one who learns it * although elucidating it openly has been made prohibited.**" In his Kashif'l-Ghitta, the poet said: "For when you are disclosed to these secrets and have been exposed to the illuminations of these lights, then you should safeguard them underneath the concealment of a specific language, preserve them beneath the cloak of linguistic clues and not express them openly. This is because expressing these secrets openly is a form of treachery (*khiyaana*). Whoever does that then the lifting of the veils and the protection of trust will be forbidden him. He will then return back to the rank of the common people after initially having reached the high assemblies of the spiritually noble. This is due to the fact that openly revealing these secrets will not increase the listeners in anything except more erroneousness, and it will not benefit the one who utters them except in spiritual confinement and debarment." The upshot is that his status with the People of Allah, becomes equal if not worse than a common man who stands in a busy public square and exposes his private parts to all passers by. Such a person will be derided, stoned, driven from the square, perhaps jailed, beaten, and fined and his honor and that of his family will be forever scorned. Similarly, those who after having attained gnosis of Allah seek to disclose these secrets unfiltered to the common people will suffer a far worse fate with Allah and His elect. My teacher *Shaykh* Umar ibn Ahmad Zaruq once related to me a story of one of the spiritual disciples of Sennar, Sudan during the Funj period who had been entered into spiritual retreat (*khalwa*) by his spiritual guide, during which Allah ta'ala lifted the veils of his heart and this disciple became intimately acquainted with Allah ta'ala, His unseen kingdoms and innumerable spiritual unveilings. When the disciple completed his

وَالْوَحْيِ مَا جَرَتْ بِهِ الْعِبَارَةُ

وَأَيْمًا نَذْكُرُ بِالْإِشَارَةِ

Thus we will mention them by means of allusion

And revelation by what will convey the correct expression³⁹

spiritual retreat, the first person he came to he began to relate everything that was revealed to him; and as the narration flowed from his tongue, Allah extracted these sciences and unveilings from his heart. So when he finished narrating his account, his heart was as barren of spiritual unveiling and gnosis of Allah as the day he began the path. This disciple then lamented the loss of the direct knowledge that Allah had acquainted him with and went to his *shaykh*, in repentance, imploring his teacher to allow him to return into spiritual retreat in order to attain gnosis of his Lord. The *shaykh* relented on the condition that the disciple would thereafter conceal everything Allah ta`ala discloses to him of His secrets, from all except His elect. The disciple gave a solemn oath to conceal these secrets. The *shaykh* reentered the disciple into retreat and Allah ta`ala disclosed to his heart everything that He disclosed to him in the previous retreat and more. When the disciple completed his retreat he never mentioned anything of the gnosis he received, nor did he distinguish himself outwardly from the affairs of the common people. In this way his gnosis of Allah ta`ala increased, and was made firm for him.

³⁹ It is due to the fear of debarment and the dread of spiritual alienation as a result of openly revealing the sciences of secrets that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: **“Thus we will mention them by means of allusion * and revelation by what will convey the correct expression.”** This is because every letter, word, sentence, verse, chapter, entity be it terrestrial or celestial has its spiritual ascription, a lordly ascription, an ascription from the perspective of spiritual realities, a form with respect to spiritual realities, a designated meaning with regard to symbolic significance and an evidence with regard to its verbal expression. Thus, the Knower of Allah can utilize a phrase to indicate any aspect of the spiritual realities he chooses, which will be enough to transmit the desired meaning to those whose hearts Allah ta`ala has illuminated while at the same time baring the hearts of those whom Allah ta`ala has veiled. The expression ‘*ishaara*’ (hint/allusion) is an interesting concept utilized by all segments of the scholars in Islam; be they scholars of the sources, linguists, jurists, exegesis, theologians or mystics. *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Ali at-Tahaanawi informs us in his Kashaaf Istilaah’l-Funuun wa’l-Uluum: “The expression ‘*ishaara*’ (indication/allusion) is divided into two divisions: [1] intelligible indications (*ishaara`aqliyya*) and [2] sensory indications (*ishaara`hissiyya*).” The scholars of sources (*usuuliyuun*) hold that an ‘*ishaara*’ (indication) is a concept of expression which denotes a meaning outside of the context of the given words used. The linguists interpolate ‘*ishaara*’ (indication) is an expression which has few words, but which contain abundant meanings. So here the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said that he will utilize expressions which have known intelligible or sensory meanings to designate meanings not apparent in the outward expressions. His use of the expression ‘revelation’ (*wahyi*) means that he will utilize known expressions from the Book and the *Sunna*, both which are revelations (*wahyi*) to express meanings not apparent in their outward expressions. Just as the *awliyya* can extract profound meanings from mundane things, likewise the *awliyya* can also utilize mundane or known expressions to indicate higher meanings. The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, *Sidi* Abu’l-Abass Ahmad ibn Mustafa al-Alawi said: “These are People who can extract momentous matters out of trifle matters, so how is it not possible for them to extract momentous matters out of

momentous matters? Rather, this is because they do not stop with the outward of expressions, but look deeply into the meanings which indicate what is desired. They are not hampered by colloquialism or properly inflected speech, but rather they take meanings from wherever they can find it. They look into the indications of the spirits and are indifferent to the expressions of the tongue. You see them with Allah in every state and affair, since: *'Every day He is in a new affair'*." It is this mode of comprehension which allows the *awliyya* to see what the common people cannot see in the sensory and intelligible worlds. To them the entire existence is a letter, a word, a verse, chapter and a book pointing to the Oneness of Allah ta'ala. In this regard, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him utilized familiar terms which are often read and recited from the revelations of the Book and the *Sunna* to indicate the sciences of secrets bequeathed to the *awliyya*. Everything in existence has its inward and outward reality, thus, the names which Allah ta'ala gives to a thing denotes its exoteric and esoteric realities. The secret of things are set in their names. It is for this reason that Allah ta'ala distinguished His human vicegerents by teaching them the 'names of all things as He says: *"And He taught Adam all the names"*; and he upon him be peace said: "I was taught all the Names just as Adam was taught all the Names." It is from the light of these 'names' taught to the Prophets and Messengers that all the *awliyya* receive the spiritual unveilings and gnosis preordained for them. The greatest Self Disclosure which Allah ta'ala gives to His Prophets and *awliyya* are those given through the medium of His revelation. *Imam* Ja'far as-Saadiq ibn Muhammad al-Baaqir said: "Allah definitely discloses Himself to His servants through His speech, however you cannot comprehend it." The poet, may Allah be merciful to him said in his *Ma'arifaat'l-Haqq*: "The direct knowledge attained through the *Qur'an* is the same as that attained through the *Sunna*. There is no distinction between them since their source is One, which is divine revelation (*al-wahyi*). All the previously mentioned paths of attaining knowledge of Allah have its source in the intellect (*al-'aql*). Thus, whenever reasons coincide with the *Qur'an* and the *Sunna* we take hold of them all together. Whenever they contradict these two then we put forward the *shari'a* and discard our reason since Allah and His Messenger know best. It is for this reason that the school of thought of the early ancestors (*madh'hab as-salaf*) was to retain the allegorical verses and statements (*al-mutashaabihaat*) on their original meaning without interpolating them (*'idama ta'weeluhaa*) in accordance with what agrees with the inferences of reason (*al-'aql an-nadhari*). Realize that direct knowledge attained from the *shari'a* is the most valuable form of direct knowledge (*anfas'l-ma'aarif*) and is superior to knowledge attained through reason (*al-ma'arifa al-'aqliya*) because it is the source from which Allah ta'ala informs us regarding Himself. It brings benefit in three areas. The first is that it establishes the existence of the Creator (*as-Saani*) and His Divine Attributes in the same manner that intellectual knowledge does. The second benefit is the additional attributes that impede the intellect from outwardly grasping their meanings although it has come down to us in revelation (*qad jaa bihaa 'l-wahyi*). Our legal right in this issue is that we affirm it, believe in it and entrust its authenticity (*mufawwuda haqeeqatihaa*) to the One who said it (*qaa'ilihaa*). This refers to those verses and prophetic sayings in which references are made to the Hand of Allah, the two Hands, the Hands (plural), the Face of Allah, Allah's contentment, anger, intimate conversation, laughter, smiling and descending to the lower heavens and the like. It is obligatory upon us to have firm belief in these and affirm them because the revelation has come to us stating this even when reason finds it inconceivable. So understand! The third benefit is the

From them: the sciences of divine attraction and ecstatic inattention

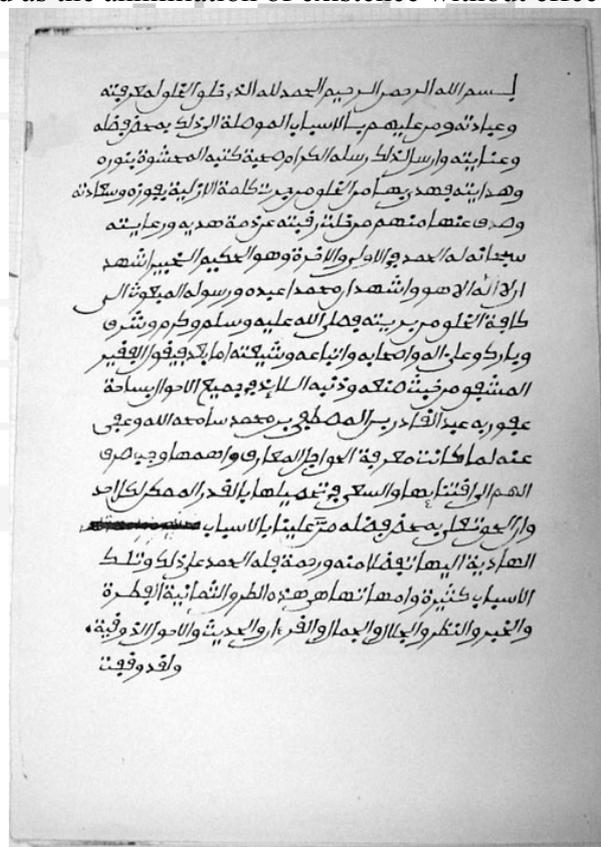
Likewise, the annihilation of universal existence without effects⁴⁰

methodology of worship (*kayfiyat`ibaada*) of Allah, the clarification of the Path by which the servant can attain His pleasure, and the terrors of the human After Life. This variety of knowledge is obligatory to believe in its outward meaning based upon what has come from the *shari`a*. It is not permissible to interpret it with any form of intellectual interpretation (*at-ta`weel`l-`aqliyya*). This is because it leads to denying the Lord of Truth in what His most truthful Messenger informed us about Him. Thus, whoever inclines toward interpretation in this category, especially with regard to Paradise, and the Fire, we declare him disbeliever by consensus (*kafarnaahu ijmaa`an*). If he inclines towards interpretation in the remainder of the matters of the After-Life like the questioning, the Scale, the Reckoning, the Pond, the Intercession, the Bridge and the like, we declare him a heretical innovator (*bada`anaahu*). This is the summation of the benefits from direct knowledge attained from the *Qur`an* and the *Sunna*. Whoever believes in it (*a`taqiduhaa*) based upon how it has come down to us has achieved Eternal Success (*faaza fawzu`l-abadiy*) and attained Everlasting Joy (*sa`ada sa`aadat`l-abadiy*).” This unveiling of the symbolic and mysterious meanings of the *Qur`an* and *Sunna* was also elaborated on by *Shaykh* Ibn `Arabi, *Shaykh* al-Jilli, *Shaykh* Qunawi, and others. In this section the poet, may Allah be merciful to him will cite nineteen of these many sciences.

⁴⁰ The poet, Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to him begins by citing the first of these nineteen sciences which Allah grants to those who are ‘awakened’ (*yaqthaan*), by his words: “**From them**” meaning that among the sciences of the *awliyya* or sciences of secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis* are: “**...the sciences of divine attraction and ecstatic inattention...**” The expression ‘*jadhb*’ (divine magnetic attraction) with the letter *jeem* inflected with *fat`ha* and the letter *dhaal* inflected with *sukuun*, comes from the verb ‘*jadhaba*’ (to pull, attract or magnetize). It is a well known term among the technical terms of the *Sufis* and refers to Allah ta`ala’s magnetically pulling a servant into His presence. It is a fortuitous spiritual state which every *waliy* must initially experience during his spiritual journey (*suluuk*). The state of ‘*jadhb*’ can be repetitive and can occur for an instant, a day, a week, months, years and in certain individuals it can last his or her entire life time; from whence the state ‘*majdhuub*’ (mad in Allah) originates. *Shaykh* Al-Qaashani said in his *Istalaahaat`S-Suufiyya*: “The state of ‘*jadhb*’ is the drawing near of the servant in conformity with the prior divine assistance prepared for him and which provides him with everything he requires in rolling up the spiritual stations in the journey to the Absolute Being, without any burden, endeavor, effort or maneuvering on his part.” This state emerges completely from Allah ta`ala and indicates Allah’s desire for His servant to attain Him, and not the servant’s desire to reach Him. The great *qutb* *Shaykh* Mukhtar al-Kunti said that ‘*jadhb*’ (divine attraction) was one of the three means by which a person can attain sainthood (*wilaaya*). The other two being the result of inheritance (*tawaaruth*) and spiritual struggle (*mujaahida*). *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` explains the nature of ‘*jadhb*’ in his *Kitaab`l-Wird* where he said: “When I reached the age of forty-one, five months and a few days, Allah attracted me (*jadhabanee*) 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.” Similarly, the poet tells us in his Bayaan at-Ta`abudaat that his key spiritual guide, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* joined together the states of ‘*jadhb*’ and spiritual sobriety throughout his life and this was one of the key reasons that he preferred solitude over the company of people. Thus, ‘*jadhb*’ (divine attraction) is an unprovoked and unexpected gravitational energy by which Allah ta`ala pulls the one on the spiritual journey (*saalik*) into the divine presences preordained for him. The divine presences are the sources for those sciences distinct to them, thus the poet, may Allah be merciful to him refers to these sciences as the sciences of divine attraction. Subsumed within the states of ‘*jadhb*’ (divine attraction) is the state the poet, may Allah be merciful to him referred to as ‘*ihmaal*’ (ecstatic inattention). Although the expression ‘*ihmaal*’ is conjuncted to ‘*jadhb*’ (divine attraction), it is actually a specification (*tamyeez*) clarifying what is uncertain or unclear about the state of ‘*jadhb*’ (divine attraction). This is because some of the People of Allah describe ‘*jadhb*’ (divine attraction) as one of the initial stages of ‘*fana*’ (spiritual annihilation) where the locus or center of the servant is dislocated and the gates of spiritual unveiling are opened which then induces him to set out on the spiritual journey with high spiritual resolve (*himma*) and yearning (‘*ishq*). They call this person a ‘*majdhuub saalik*’ (an attracted spiritual wayfarer). Others describe ‘*jadhb*’ (divine attraction) as the final stages of ‘*fana*’ (spiritual annihilation) where the person makes every effort in adhering to the courtesies of the spiritual journey (*suluuk*) until he attains a ‘*jadhb*’ (divine attraction) which causes the spiritual stations to be ‘rolled up’ (*tayy*) for him. This rolling up of the stations where the spiritual wayfarer passes from A to Z of the spiritual stations without actually being aware of traveling through the remaining ‘alphabets’, is what the People of Allah call ‘ecstatic inattention’ (*ihmaal*). They call this person a ‘*saalik majdhuub*’, and his reality is that he actually passes through all the ‘alphabets’ or stations of the spiritual journey without being aware that he has, until he has completed his ‘*suluuk*’. It is during these different manifestations of ‘*jadhb*’ that Allah ta`ala may manifest miracles on the limbs of the person, while he is unawares, such as crossing great distances of the earth in a moment, flying in the air, walking upon water or having one’s provision provided without any effort on his part from a direction that he is unawares. My teacher, *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Amin, said about this that the first manifestation of miracles occur inadvertently when the heart and mind of the servant are completely preoccupied with worship and remembrance of Allah and inattentive of all else. This vacuum creates the negative energy for the states of ‘*jadhb*’ to occur involuntarily and unanticipated for the servant as a result of his annihilation into the Living *Sunna*. The annihilation (*fanaa*) into the outward and inward realities of the *Sunna* is an automated spiritual zone which is the prerequisite for the great spiritual annihilation, indicated by the words of the poet, may Allah be merciful to him when he said: **“...likewise, the annihilation of universal existence without effects.”** The expression ‘*kawn*’ refers to everything in existence besides Allah ta`ala. The annihilation of existence, means the dislocation of the center of cognition of existence where what is cognizing through existence at that point is the Necessary Existent. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him described this profound spiritual station in his Ma`arifaat'l-Haqq where he said: “...there is no way for the servant to attain this level of knowledge except after the pulverization (*as-sahqi*) and obliteration (*al-mahwi*) of all the essences. For the servant first becomes annihilated from himself (*fayanfaa awalan `an nafsihi*) by the Self-Manifestation of his Lord (*bi dhuhuur Rabbihi*). Then secondly he becomes annihilated from his Lord (*yanfaa thaaniyan `an*

Rabbihi) by the Self-Manifestation of the secrets of His lordship (*bi dhuhuur sirri rubbuubiyatihi*). Then thirdly he becomes annihilated from the relationships and correlations of His Divine Attributes (*yanfaa thalithan `an muta`aliqaati Sifaathi*) by means of the abundant realization of His Essence (*bi dhuhuur bi mutahaqqiqaaati Dhaatihi*). At this point the servant realizes spiritual obliteration (*al-mahqi*), annihilation (*al-fana`*) and cutting off (*al-inqittaa`*). For when he realizes spiritual obliteration (*al-mahqi*), then this is the source of Real Establishment (*`ayn ithbaat haqeeqi*). And when he realizes spiritual annihilation (*al-fanaa`*), then this is the source of Eternal Continuity (*`ayn baqa` daymuumi*). And when he realizes spiritual cutting off (*al-inqittaa`*), then this is the source of Sacred Arrival (*`ayn ittissaal qudsiyyi*).” These states of divine attraction (*jadhb*), ecstatic inattentiveness (*ihmaal*) and the annihilation of existence (*talaashi`l-kawn*) are all prerequisites to the lifting of the Veils understood in the words of Allah ta`ala on the tongue of His Prophet: “*I was a Hidden Treasure, and I wanted to be known, so I created creation.*” The sciences which emanate from this station are the primordial cognitions of Allah ta`ala of Himself through other than Himself void of the false illusion of unification between Him and ‘other than Him’. This entails the dislocation of the center of cognition of otherness, described as the annihilation of existence without effects.



Folio 2 of the manuscript *Ma`arifaat`l-Haqq* of the poet, Dan Tafa photographed from the archives of the Center of Islamic Studies at the University of Usman Danfodio, Sokoto, Nigeria

Likewise from these sciences is the science of the Hand
And the science of the Veil of Eternal Glory⁴¹

⁴¹ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him then delves into one of the most controversial subjects in the doctrines of belief of Islam and which have instigated debate between the different schools of theology, the traditionists and mystics since the earliest period after the time of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace; namely the concept of *'tashbeeh'* (immanence/semblance) and *'tanzeeh'* (transcendence/incomparability). He said: “**Likewise from these sciences is ...**”, that is to say, included among the nineteen sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis* which the poet said he and the *Fudiawa* had mastered is the third which he designates as: “**the science of the Hand...**” The poet, may Allah be merciful to him utilized the expression *'yad'* (Hand) in the singular form categorically without qualifying it or annexing it to another noun. The expression *'yad'* from the earliest times has had a literal and figurative meaning in Arabic lexicology. Literally, it is apart of the paired limbs of a corporeal body and includes the fingers and the palms and sometimes the fingers to the elbows. Its plural form is both *'ayd'* and *'ayaad'* as *Imam Muhammad Murtaḍa* cited in his *Taaaj'l-'Aruus* and refers to the entire arm from the elbow to the finger tips. The meaning of the expression *'yad'* figuratively is a reference to various metaphorical expressions, such as blessings (*ni`ama*), generosity (*ihsaan*), domination (*sayṭara*), strength (*quwwa*) and ability (*qudra*). We have many examples in pre-Islamic poetry, the *Qur'an* and the prophetic traditions of the usage of *'yad'* in its singular form, dual form and its plural form to refer purely to metaphorical significance. Allah ta`ala says: “...the possessors of hands (*al-'aydiy*) and insight”; where the plural of hand refers to strength (*quwwa*). Allah ta`ala says: “The Hand of Allah is above their hands”; where the meaning of ‘the Hand of Allah’ has three connotations: [1] the Hand of Allah in fulfilling the covenant is above their hands; [2] the Hand of Allah in recompensing is over their hands; and [3] the Hand of Allah in providing the bounty of guidance is over their hands in obedience. Allah ta`ala says: “Have they not seen how We have created for them with Our Hands (*'aydeenaa*) the cattle...”; where the plural form is used to indicate Omnipotent ability, power and strength. Allah ta`ala says to *Iblees* when he refused to prostrate to Adam: “What prevented you from prostrating to what I created with My Two Hands (*bi yadayya*)? Have you become arrogant, or are you among the exalted Angels?”; where the dual form of the expression is used to indicate diverse metaphorical meanings as we will cite. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said: “Obligatory upon you is holding to the *jama`at*, for indeed the Hand of Allah is over the *jama`at*”; where the singular expression is used as a metaphor for protection, defense and sheltering. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “The Hand of Allah is wide open for the one who committed sins at night to repent in the day, and for the one who committed sins in the day to repent in the night; and this will be so until the sun rises from the west”; where the expression ‘hand’ is a metaphor for the vastness of His forgiveness and pardon. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “The Hand of Allah is with the judge when he gives judgment and with the one who swears an oath when he takes an oath”; where the expression is used as a metaphor for assistance, support and aid. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “The Black Stone is the Right

Hand of Allah. For whoever touches his hand to the Stone, has in affect taken the oath of allegiance with Allah not to disobey Him”; where the expression is used as a metaphor to indicate dominion, authority and sovereignty. Ibn al-Athir said: “This is analogous and imaginative language whose origin is taken from a ruler who when a man shakes his hand he also kisses the outside of it. Thus, metaphorically, the Black Stone stands in the place of the right hand to a ruler which is first greeted and then kissed. Thus, anything which is cited in the *Qur’an* or the prophetic traditions with a reference to bodily parts such as a Hand, two Hands and other than these in reference to Allah `azza wa jalla, is assigned a metaphorical and allegorical meaning, since Allah is free of resemblance to creation (*tashbeeh*) and substantiation (*tajseem*).” There are many examples like this in the religious sources which give evidence that the expression ‘*yad*’ (Hand) is a symbolic expression used to indicate a much higher transcendent meaning than its apparent meaning implies. It is important here to turn to the meaning of ‘*yad*’ (Hand) as it is utilized by the People of Allah in general and its connotation as a science as indicated by the poet. First, in his al-Mandhuumat li’l-Istalihaat as-Suufiyya the poet himself, utilized the expression ‘*yad*’ (hand) in a metaphorical sense when giving a brief biography of his father, *Shaykh* Mustafa ibn Muhammad at-Turuudi, where he said about him: “He possessed an authoritative grasp (*yad tuul*) of the science of prophetic traditions.” This meant that his father had complete mastery over all the aspects of the science of prophetic tradition. Thus, the expression ‘the science of the Hand’ (*ilm’l-yad*) is a designation which conceals a profound immanent comprehension of Allah since humanity was created by the Two Hands of Allah. This means that there is an immediate and unmediated relationship between the Hand of Allah and Allah’s vicegerent due to the interpersonal nature of humanity to their creative process. *Shaykh* al-Qaashani said in his Istalaahaat as-Suufiyya: “The Two Hands refers to paired opposites of the Names of Allah, such as those Names which are active (*faa`ila*) and those which are receptive (*qaabila*). It is for this reason that Iblees was reproached by Allah ta`ala by His question: ‘*What prevented you from prostrating to what I created with My Two Hands (bi yadayya)? Have you become arrogant?*’ Since the presence of these two opposite Divine Names gathers together the two presences of necessary existence and possible existence; one of the sages said: ‘The expression the Hands of Allah refer to the two Divine Presences’ of necessity and possibility.’ However, the reality is that the Divine paired opposites are far more comprehensive than that, since the quality of activity (*faa`ila*) is by itself paired, such as the qualities of Beauty (*jameel*) and Majesty (*jaleel*); Kind (*lateef*) and Forceful (*qahaar*) or the One who causes harm (*daar*) and the One who causes advantage (*naafi`*). This is the same with the quality of receptivity (*qaabila*), such as the qualities of Amiable (*anees*) and Formidable (*haa`ib*); the One Hoped in (*raaji*) and the One Feared (*khaa`if*) or the Esteemed (*muntafi`*) and the Offended (*mutadarrar*).” For, the Perfect Human (*insaan kaamil*) was honored above all created beings due to his intimacy and closeness to the Divine creative process. An honor only shared with the Primordial Pen, the Throne and the Paradise of Aden, all which Allah ta`ala created with His Two Hands. Thus, that which was created by the Two Hands of Allah gathers together all the universal paired opposites and share an intimacy and proximity to the Absolute Being not known by the remainder of created beings. Allah created everything else in creation by saying to it: ‘Be’ and it became and established a cognitive distance between Him and them delineated by the veils of existence and none existence. In reality the genesis of the Perfect Human preceded the creation of the Primordial Pen, the Throne and the Paradise of Aden, for he was the

causative factor and goal of the creation of all of existence, just as the seed preceded the tree, which eventually reproduces the seed. Allah ta`ala says on the tongue of the Perfect Man: “*I was a Hidden Treasure and I wanted to be Known, so I created creation.*” It is as if He, the exalted said: I was a Hidden Treasure to all besides Myself, because everything besides Me was behind the veil of pure none existence. I desired to be Known by other than Me and worshipped, so I created from My light a light to whom I unveiled Myself and acquainted him with all the Names of Majesty and Beauty, the Names of transcendence and immanence, established him in the terrain of servitude and made him the Seal of the Prophets, when Adam was between the spirit and earth. Then from this light I created all the paired opposites of creation until I perfected creation by bringing forth this primordial light in the form of Muhammad ibn Abdullahi, the master of the Messengers, the Seal of the Prophets, and mercy to all the worlds. This reality embodies a science and it is this science that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him refers to, and Allah knows best. Then the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, cites the fourth of the nineteen sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis* which the poet said he and the *Fudiawa* had mastered and designated as: “**...and the science of the Veil of Eternal Glory.**” After delineating the science of the Hand, which is the first ontological reality known by creation after being brought out of pure none existence (*`idam mahd*), the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, then discusses the prior realm in ascending order, that of the ‘Veil’ (*hijaab*). Although the poet did not place a conjunctive particle (*harf `atf*) between the science of the Hand and the science of the Veil of Eternal Glory, it is grammatically implied. However, it is also conceivable that this omission was intentional which would make the expression ‘*ilm`l-`izza`l-mu`ayid*’ a grammatical substitute (*badal*) of the expression ‘*ilm`l-yad*’, since both expressions are in the genitive case (*majruur*). What this means is that the science of the Veil of Eternal Glory is in fact an identification (*tamyeez*) and clarification (*bayaan*) of the essential nature (*maahiyya*) of the science of the Hand. That is to say, that the science of the Hand is the first of the Veils which separate none existence from the existence of the Absolute Being. Or the science of the Veil of Eternal Glory is the subsequent reality in the ascending order which precedes the reality of the science of the Hand. Linguistically, the concept of ‘*hijaab*’ (veil) is any obstacle (*haa`il*) or obstruction (*`aa`iq*) which comes between an entity and its desired objective, or between the seeker and his goal. Allah ta`ala says: “*...and between them is a Veil, and on the heights are men who know everything by their marks.*” It has been related in a prophetic tradition about which there are some conjecture by at-Tabarani on the authority of Ibn Umar that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Below Allah `azza wa jalla are seventy thousand veils of light and darkness.” In the language of the People of Allah, the concept of veil (*hijaab*) has many meanings. Our master, *Shaykh Abd`l-Qaadir al-Jaylani* said in his *Fath`r-Rabbaniyya*: “This world is a veil between the Hereafter. The Hereafter is a veil between the Lord of this world and the Hereafter. Every created thing is a veil between the Creator, azza wa jalla. For, where you stop, then that stopping place is a veil for you. Therefore you should never settle with creation, with this world, or with anything else besides the Absolute Being azza wa jalla until you come to the Door of the Absolute Being azza wa jalla on the two feet of your innermost secret, and the soundness of your austerity from anything besides Him, completely bare of all things, totally perplexed by Him, seeking redemption in Him, seeking assistance from Him, and gazing upon His eternal pre-existence and knowledge.” This state of perplexity

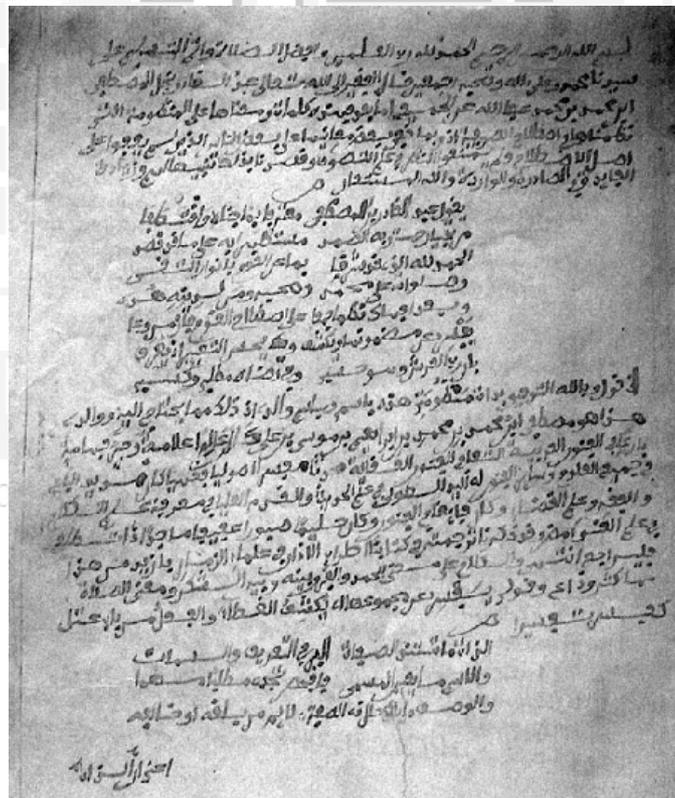
and confusion is what the People of Allah refer to as the reality of existence in its pre-existent state. It is for this reason, the poet described this realm of knowledge as the science of the Veil of Eternal Glory (*`ilm`l-`izza`l-mu`ayyid*). *Shaykh`l-Akbar* mentioned in his at-Ta`areefaat that the Veil of Eternal Glory (*`ilm`l-`izza`l-mu`ayyid*) is an expression referring to the realm of blindness (*`amaa*) and perplexity (*hayra*) often referred to in the prophetic traditions as the Primordial Cloud (*al-`amaa`*) or it is referred to as the state of undifferentiated non-existence. It has been related by Ya`la ibn `Ataa` on the authority of Wakee` on the authority of his paternal uncle Abu Razeen who said: "I once said: O Messenger of Allah, where was our Lord before He created creation? He said: 'He was in the Primordial Cloud, above which there was no atmosphere and below which there was no atmosphere. He then created His Throne upon the Primordial Waters'." In a narration of Ahmad ibn Manee` on the authority of Yazid ibn Harun, that he upon him be peace said: "He was in the Primordial Cloud, that is to say, there was nothing with Him." This clearly indicates that the Primordial Cloud (*al-`amaa`*) is a description of the undifferentiated state of everything besides Allah ta`ala before He brought them into being. It is not a description of a realm, place or time in which Allah ta`ala resided or existed. This is impossible (*mustaheel*) because this would imply that Allah is in need of locus (*mahal*) and time (*zaman*), which are two created entities and Allah was before place or time; and He is now as He was. This is further corroborated by a prophetic tradition related by al-Bukhari on the authority of `Imran ibn Hissein who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Allah was and there was nothing other than Him, and His Throne was on the Primordial Waters." In the above traditions his statement: "...and His Throne was on the Primordial Waters"; is a conjunctive clause (*jumla ma`tuuf*) where the letter 'waw' (and) means order (*tarteeb*) and sequence (*taraaduf*). Thus, it means that Allah ta`ala created the Primordial Waters, and then created the Throne upon it, and then He created the decrees of everything in existence. The state of existence before Allah ta`ala brought it into being was a state of blindness (*`amaa*) and perplexity (*hayra*) described as the Primordial Cloud, the primordial 'White Pearl' (*durrat bayda*), or the Original Primeval Waters from which Allah created the entire universe. *Shaykh Abd`l-Karim al-Jilli* said about this in his Maraatib `l-Wujuud: "It is for this reason that some of the Knowers of Allah name this level of existence 'non-existence' (*idam*) which predates existence; meaning by that the non-existence of the connections of affinities of existence by the absolute disposal of the Divine Essence which is far exalted above affinities, connections and the like. It was not meant by his words that Allah was in non-existence...On the contrary, his words meant that this undifferentiated state is the sheer reality of existence, which is the darkness of the lights in that state. It is unknown (*majhuula*) from every perspective. There is no way from any direction that this level of pre-existence can be known. It is for this reason that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace named it the '*amaa`* (Primordial Cloud); when he was asked: 'Where was Allah?'; or in another narration: 'Where was our Lord before He created creation?'; and the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: 'He was in the Primordial Cloud. There was no atmosphere above it and no atmosphere below it'; meaning that beyond this realm of existence there was no affinity or attribute of existence." The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, informs us about the depths of al-Jilli's ideas in his al-Mandhuumat li`l-Istalihaat as-Suufiyya. He says that the Self Disclosure of the Absolute Being when existence was in this undifferentiated state of none existence called the Primordial Cloud, was the matrix of Unicity (*ahadiyya*),

which he said: "...gathers together all of encompassed realities without making them manifest, because It is the treasurer of the Divine Essence by the decree of Self Disclosure. While in this strata, the Divine Names and Attributes have no effectual appearance in the Unicity, because It is the first of the Divine descents of the Divine Essence emanating from the obscure anonymity of the Primordial Cloud into the strata of Self-manifestation, so understand and beware of mistakes!" After a little, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said in poetic verse:

"The reality of all realities is the Primordial Cloud

Based upon the technical language of those who possess eminence."

He said in commentary on this couplet: "What I mean is that the Primordial Cloud is an idiomatic expression of the Reality of all realities, which is neither described by the aspects of the Absolute reality nor described by any aspect of creational realities. It is the Presence of the Essence because It is not associated to any of the strata, whether Absolute or creational. The difference between It and the aspect of Unicity is that in the realm of Unicity there is actual disposal of the Absolute Essence by virtue of the Self Disclosure, as we mentioned previously, while in the realm of the Primordial Cloud there is actual disposal of the Absolute Essence by virtue of Self-Occultation. So understand and avoid errors!" Thus, the science which emanates from Allah ta'ala in this realm can only be described as blindness (*'amaa*) and perplexity (*hayra*) because it is knowledge of Allah before the manifestation of existence from the darkness and indistinctness of undifferentiated non-existence. Allah willing, I real return to this theme when discussing the primordial 'White Pearl' (*durrat bayda*) and the Original Primeval Waters.



Xeroxed copy of folio 1 of al-Mustalahat as-Suufiyya of the poet, Dan Tafa, courtesy of John Hunwick

And from its environs is the science of the Foot

The Tablet, the Primordial 'Nuun' and the science of the Pen⁴²

⁴² As we progress through this poem, it becomes increasingly clear that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, is gradually acquainting us with a precise hierarchy of existence and a candid disclosure of the coded language of the People of Allah regarding Allah's Self Manifestation (*tajalli*). In the following couplet, the poet, may Allah be mercy to him cites the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth of the nineteen sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis* which the author said he and the *Fudiawa* had mastered. Following the theme of the previous hemistich by citing concepts which denote Allah's immanence (*tashbeeh*), the poet, may Allah be merciful said: **"And from its environs is the science of the Foot..."** Due to the subtlety of this science the poet may Allah be merciful to him plays with words that both reveal meaning and conceal it at the same time. He starts by utilizing a noun '*hafiy*' (environs), whose verbal root '*hafiya*' (to walk barefooted) is connected to feet (*aqdaam*), which is the subject of this hemistich. One usually walks barefooted while in the home, or when walking on sacred or hallowed ground. Allah ta'ala says to our master Musa, upon him be peace: "O Musa, indeed I am your Lord, therefore remove your two sandals, for you are in the sanctified valley of *Tuwa*." Thus, the removing of one's shoes, and walking barefoot (*hafiya*) is an indication of respect, closeness, intimacy to the place, and it is a form of receptivity for intimate discourse or being receptive for commands. Thus, the meaning of the hemistich is that from the honored vicinity of the sciences of the *awliyya* or the fifth of the sciences of secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis* which can only be realized through proper courtesy, reverence and awe; is the science of the Foot (*al-Qadam*). The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, utilizes the singular rather than the dual or plural expressions, although in the lexicon of the *shari'a* the singular and dual are used in reference to Allah ta'ala. Linguistically the foot (*qadam*) in created beings is the part of the physiognomy which includes the ankle downwards to the sole, whose synonym in Arabic is '*rijl*', as Ibn as-Sikkeet cited. However, the transcendence of *tawheed* demands that we disassociate any literal reference of body parts to the Absolute Being. Allah ta'ala says: "There is nothing like Him"; which means that there is nothing in creation which resembles Allah's Essence, Names, Attributes or Actions. The textual evidence of the concept of the 'Foot' of Allah is taken from a long prophetic tradition related by Muslim, at-Tirmidhi and others on the authority of Abu Hurayra where the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said regarding Allah: "The *ar-Rahman* will place His Foot (*qadamahu*) in it (the Hell), and part of it will be folded up into itself." In the narration of Muslim he said: "Allah will place His Foot (*rijlahu*) in it (the Hell)..." The scholars of the *Sunna* differ regarding this referent to the 'Foot of Allah' due to the controversy it raises regarding His transcendence, immutability and incomparableness. Some of the earlier scholars forbade giving any interpolation of the Foot of Allah or any referent to Allah's Face, His Hand, His Two Hands, His plural Hands, His Eye, His Two Eyes or His plural Eyes, while at the same time they avoided giving comparison of Him to His creation. Other scholars required that His transcendence and incomparability demand interpolating any reference to the immanent attributes of Allah as being other than the apparent expression. This difference among the scholars is arguably the most controversial dispute among

Muslim thinkers and theologians to this day. *Imam* al-Asqalaani said in his Fath'l-Baari: "There are differences regarding what is meant by the 'foot'. The path of the early community in this and other similar issues is well known. It was to accept it as it came, and not to delve into interpolating it. Rather, we believe in the impossibility of anything which adduces the illusion of deficiency to Allah. However, many of the people of knowledge specified an interpolation of this. They held the view that it means a form of humiliation (*idhlaal*) of the Hell Fires. Thus, when it is conceived that the Hell Fires reaches a state of arbitrariness and desires increase in inmates, Allah will humiliate it, by placing it underneath the Foot. However, what is meant here is not a real figurative foot, because the Arabs oft times utilize an expression of bodily limbs in order to express a similitude. Thus, a figurative limb is never intended. Like their saying: '*raghama anfahu*' 'in spite of his nose' (meaning against his will) or '*saqata fee yadihi*', 'he fell in his hands' (meaning he loss favor with him). It is said that what is meant by 'foot' is a heightened precedence. That is to say, that Allah will place in the Hell prior to others some of the people of Divine punishment. Al-Isma'ili said: 'The 'foot' as a noun is taken from the verb '*qadama*' (to precede) in the same way that paper which is stamped (*khabaṭa*) is called '*khabaṭ*'. Thus, the meaning of the expression 'foot' means what they will have sent forward ahead of themselves in terms of deeds. It is also said what is meant by 'foot' is that the deeds which the creatures will come with will take precedence, where the pronoun 'his' refers to a known created being. Or it refers to an actual created being named 'the foot'. Or the expression 'foot' means 'the last' (*al-akhir*) because the foot is the last of the limbs. Thus, the meaning here is that Allah will place in the Fire the last of its inmate, thus, the pronoun 'his/its' is a reference to the increase that the Hell Fires will requests. Ibn Hiban said in his Saheeh after narrating this prophetic tradition: 'This is from the transmissions about which there is unrestrained use of associated metaphor, used to describe what will happen on the Day of Judgment. Thus, both communities and locations in which disobediences and sins were committed will be placed in the Fire, to such an extent that the mass of Hell will continue to expand, until the Lord establishes a known place or an actual location, which will take the form of a 'foot' as a metaphor. This is because Arabs usually utilize the expression 'foot' unrestrictedly to mean a location. Allah ta'ala says: '*Indeed for them is sincere footing with their Lord*', where what is meant is a location of sincerity with Allah.' Ad-Dawudi said: 'What is meant by 'foot' is a reference to the one who is called 'the sincere footing', which is a direct reference to Muhammad. This is an indication of his intercession, otherwise known as the station of *Mahmud*, from which he will extract from the Fire those in whose hearts is something of faith.' However, this is an apparent infringement of the wording of the prophetic tradition, because it states in it that His Foot will be placed in the Hell after it asks: 'Is there anymore?'...It is clear that the narrative states that the Hell will be folded up on itself due to the Foot being placed in it, and not because anything will be extracted from it." *Imam* al-Asqalaani went on to explain many other possible and obscure interpolations of the meaning of 'foot' in this prophetic tradition, which indicates the diverse opinions regarding this. The Maliki scholar al-Qaari said: "The school of thought of the early community revolved around the acceptance of the meaning 'Foot', and leaving its interpolations to Allah, while giving recognition to His immutability and transcendence. The masters of interpolation from the latter scholars held the view that what is meant by the 'foot' is the foot of one of His creation, where the pronoun 'his' in 'his foot' refers to that known creature of His. Or it refers to a people whom Allah will make them precede

their people to the Fire.” The more conservative view held by the Malikis, the Hanafis and the Hanbalis, mainly expressed in the commentary upon the as-Sunna where the author said: “The expressions ‘footing’ and ‘foot’ cited in these prophetic traditions are among the Attributes of Allah which are free of how-ness (*takayyif*) and resemblance (*tashbeeh*). This is the same for anything which is related in this regard in the Book or the *Sunna*, like the ‘Hand’, the ‘Finger’, the ‘Eye’, the going, the coming, and the descent of Allah. For, belief in these is an obligation, and the prohibition of delving into interpolation of them is incumbent.” On the other hand, *Imam* an-Nawawwi said in his commentary upon the Saheeh of Muslim: “The majority of the scholars of scholastic theology hold the view that these referents to Allah must be interpolated based upon what is fitting them. It is due to this that there are extensive differences regarding the interpolation of this prophetic tradition. It is said that the ‘foot’ here means precedents (*mutaqaddam*) and is a common convention in language. Thus, the prophetic tradition means that Allah ta’ala will place in it an advanced group from the people deserving Divine punishment.” *Al-Qadi* ‘Iyad said: “It is necessary to deflect it from its apparent linguistic meaning in order to establish the decisive intellectual evidence of the impossibility of literal bodily limbs being possessed by Allah ta’ala.” It is here that we must step away from the traditionists and the speculative scholars and examine the meaning of the Foot of Allah as He unveils it to His friends among the spiritually elite. Because the expression ‘foot’ is an immanent attribute which expresses intimacy and proximity between the Absolute Being and His creatures, it is vital that its meaning be examined from the perspective of the People of intimate discourse and disclosure with Allah ta’ala. One of the first of the mystics to openly discuss the transcendent (*tanzeeh*) and immanent (*tashbeeh*) meanings of the science of the Foot was *Muhy’-d-Deen* Ibn Arabi, may Allah be merciful to him. He said in his at-Ta’areefaat: “The expression ‘the Foot’ is a reference to what is firmly established in pre-eternity for the servant of Allah from the science of the Absolute Being.” Thus, the literal expression ‘*qadam*’ is related to its broader meaning of ‘pre-existence’ (*qidam*) and delineates the point at which the Absolute Being and the servant meet. It is the encounter between the Pre-Eternally Existent and in-time creation; between the Necessary Existent and pure none existence; between transcendence and immanence. *Shaykh* Al-Qaashani said in his Istalihaat as-Suufiyya: “The expression ‘the Foot’ is the antecedent favors which the Absolute Being decrees for the servant in pre-eternity, and which He designates for him in priority for his perfection and in order to complete the spiritual preparedness for the ultimate aptitude with respect to the servant. This is based upon his words, upon him be peace: ‘The Hell Fires will continue to say: ‘Are there anymore?’, until the Mighty One places His Foot in it, and then the Hell Fires will say: ‘It is enough! It is enough!’.” Al-Qaashaani connects the science of the ‘Foot’ to the apparent expression used in the above cited prophetic tradition where both the outward expression is accepted figuratively and the inward Self Disclosure of Allah which it and everything in existence conceals is also delineated. He went on to say: “The expression ‘the Foot’ is a catchphrase because the foot is the concluding entity from the outward appearance of a thing. Thus, the ‘Foot’ is the final Self Disclosure with which the Absolute Being draws near to the servant. It is from His Name with which when encountered and realized, the servant attains spiritual perfection and completion.” Thus, the concept of ‘the Foot’ with the People of Allah is one of the final Self Disclosures of the Absolute Being to His creatures in priority as a preparation for the spiritual unveilings decreed for them. As I cited earlier the poet,

may Allah be merciful to him at a relatively young age was able to elucidate this with ease in his al-Mandhuumat li'l-Istalihaat as-Suufiyya where he said:

“In perpetuity is His quintessence, and the Foot

Is the necessity of His Essence, and He is the Best Knower.”

About the meaning of this hemistich, the poet said: “As for ‘Foot it is an idiomatic expression of essential being-ness. For the essential being-ness is that which manifests preexistence (*qidam*) to the Absolute Being, not the preexistence whose existence is necessary by His Essence, because He was not preceded by non-existence. That which is not preceded by non-existence, it is necessary that He be preexistent based upon judgment.” Thus, the preexistence referenced here is an indication of the universal archetypes as they exist in their state of non-existence in the Knowledge of the Absolute Being. This Self Disclosure manifests as the Foot. Although, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him did not discuss it in this poem, closely associated with the science of the Foot, is the science of the Two Feet of Allah. *Shaykh* Abd'l-Karim al-Jilli said in his al-Insaan'l-Kaamil: “The Two Feet is an expression regarding two opposing essential judgments. Both are a totality of the Essence. Rather they are the spring well of the Essence.” The poet, may Allah be merciful to him said about this in his al-Mandhuumat li'l-Istalihaat as-Suufiyya:

“Absolute-ness and created-ness are His Two Feet

While mercy and blessings are His Two Sandals”

He said in explanation of these two verses: “I mean here that ‘the Two Feet’ is an idiomatic expression of the decrees of the two contrasting opposite paired essences, like the absolute essences and the creational essences. The ‘Two Sandals’ is an idiomatic expression of the dynamics of the two contrasting opposite paired attributes, like mercy and wrath.” It is clear that these concepts of Foot, the Two Feet and the Two Sandals manifest at the level of the *‘khayal’* (conceptualized vision), which will be discussed in the next hemistich. We have a well known prophetic tradition related by at-Tabarani and others on the authorities of Umm ‘t-Tufayl, Ibn Abass, Mu`adh ibn `Afra` and others that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “I saw my Lord in my sleep...” In each of these narrations the Messenger of Allah uses sensory conceptions to describe how Allah looked. In the narration of Umm‘t-Tufayl, she narrated that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said to her: “I saw my Lord in my sleep in the form of a youth, with long hair, dressed in green and He was wearing two sandals...” What the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace saw was real and true, and the Self Disclosure of Allah was comprehended by his *‘khayal’* (conceptualized vision), may Allah bless him and grant him peace in ‘the form’ (*suura*) of ‘youth’ (*shaab*), with ‘long hair’ (*waafira*), ‘green attire’ and with ‘two sandals’ (*na`laan*), where each of these attributes describe His transcendence and immanence at the same time and indicate a deeper meaning at the level of the *‘haqaa’iq’* (spiritual realities) than the perceptible form (*suura*) it took in the *‘khayal’* (conceptualized vision). This is similar to what happened to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace during the Night Journey and the Ascension when he was brought to Jerusalem and Jibreel came to him with three containers; one of wine, one of honey and another of milk and was asked to choose from them. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace chose the container of milk and drank from it. Jibreel responded: “You chose the original nature (*fitra*).” In another narration Jibreel said: “It is the original nature (*fitra*) which you and your *Umma* are upon.” In the realm of the *‘khayal’* the container was milk, while in the realm of the realities

(*haqaa'iq*) the form of the milk was actually the original nature (*fitra*). Thus, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, defines the Two Feet in his *Qawaaneen'l-Wujuud* as a manifestation of the duality and the paired opposites where he said:

“Its manifestation is in the world of the two universes

In that the foundations of our creation are through two gates

The central focus of the Footstool (*Kursi*) is for the number two

Realize this and you will be guided to the meaning of the Two Feet.”

Here the poet, may Allah be merciful to him informs us that everything in existence is paired, and behind these creational paired opposites are two gates which are the basis of our creation. Behind the paired cosmic gates which form our creation are the locus of the influential authority of the commands and prohibitions which demarcate the world of the Footstool. Upon the Footstool manifests the totality of the Attributes of Divine Actions and the appearance of Divine Power indicated in the '*khayaal*' (conceptualized vision) as the Two Feet of Allah, and Allah knows best. It has been related in a prophetic tradition that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "...and He placed His Two Feet upon the Footstool"; indicating the manifestation of the world of command and prohibition from the Names of Beauty and Majesty, which manifest in the '*khayaal*' (conceptualized vision) as the *Kursi*. Allah ta'ala says: "*Glory be to Him who created paired opposites of everything; from what the earth produces; from yourselves and from what you do not know.*" After discussing the fifth science of the divine realities connected to the transcendence and immanence of Allah ta'ala, the poet, then discusses the three interconnected cosmic realities (*haqaa'iq kawniyya*). He said, may Allah be merciful to him: "**The Tablet, the Primordial '*Nuun* and the science of the Pen.**" In truth these three realities are three aspects of one reality, or you can say they are an unfolding of one reality. In the poetic verse the expressions '*al-lawh*' and '*an-nuun*' linguistically are both in the genitive case (*majruur*) because they are nouns conjuncted (*ma'atuuf*) to the annexed noun (*mudaaf ilayhi*) '*al-qadam*', mentioned in the previous verse. The sixth of the sciences of realities or secrets which the *awliyya* attain through the Path of the *sufis* is the science of the Tablet (*al-lawh*). This a direct reference to the Guarded Tablet (*lawh mahfuudh*) mentioned in the *Qur'an*. Allah ta'ala says: "*Rather, it is a Glorious Qur'an in a Guarded Tablet.*" The etymological root of the expression 'tablet' (*lawh*) is from the word 'to make a signal' (*lawaha*) which means to record signals for the purpose of conveying meaning. It is called 'guarded' or 'preserved' because it is guarded and protected with Allah ta'ala from the reach of the devils, or it is preserved from being altered, or it preserves and protects the decrees of all known things. Ontologically, it manifest as the Mother of the Book (*umm'l-kitaab*) which is on the forehead of the Arch Angel Israfeel from which was transcribed the *Qur'an* and the other Heavenly Books. In it is recorded all the varieties of creatures, their natures and an explanation of all their affairs. There is no disagreement that the *Qur'an* was revealed completely from the Guarded Tablet on the Night of Power. It has been related by Ibn Abi Hatim on the authority of Ibn Abass, may Allah be pleased with him who said: "Allah created the Guarded Tablet with a measurement which covers the span of one hundred years. He then said to the Primordial Pen before He created creation: 'Write!' It said: 'What shall I write?' He said: 'My knowledge regarding My creation until the establishment of the Hour,' Then the Pen began to record what exists in the Knowledge of Allah until the Day of Judgment." Thus, the Guarded Tablet (*lawh mahfuudh*) is among the cosmic realities and is a massive entity which exists above the seventh heaven in which is recorded everything that was and will be

until the Day of Judgment. *Muhy'd-Deen* Ibn Arabi said in his Futuuhaat'l-Makiyya: "The Pen and the Tablet are the first entities in the world of registering and recording. Their realities flow throughout the whole of existence, the high, the low, the meaning, and the sensory. By means of the Pen and the Guarded Tablet, Allah preserves the knowledge about the world. It is for this reason that the pen and the tablet are universally considered as symbols for both the production of knowledge and its preservation. It has been transmitted in the narratives that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: 'Tie up knowledge by means of writing'." This is an indication that the production and preservation of knowledge can only occur through transcription. In the language of the People of spiritual unveiling the Guarded Tablet is the universal rational soul (*nafs naatiqa kulliyya*) whose outward manifestation is the Footstool (*Kursi*) and whose inward reality is the Detailed Book (*Kitaab Mubeen*). *Muhy'd-Deen* Ibn Arabi said in his 'Aqlatu 'l-Mustawfiz: "This Tablet is the place for the encounter of the Primordial Intellect. Thus, it has the same general position to the Intellect that Hawa had to Adam." Just as Adam's encounter with Hawa in the conjugal sense produced human offspring, likewise, the encounter of the Primordial Pen with the Guarded Tablet produces all that is known. Similarly, the intellect writes upon the soul and inspires it in the same manner that Adam cast his sperm into the womb of Hawa and impregnated her. The reality is that the sperm, Adam and Hawa are three aspects of the same reality – humanity. Correspondingly, the *Nuun*, the Primordial Pen and the Guarded Tablet are three aspects of the same cosmic reality (*haqaa'iq kawniyya*). The etymological root of expression '*Nuun*' is from the actual twenty-fifth Arabic alphabet of the same name 'ن'. Its numeral value in the science of letters is 50 and it is one of the letters of augmentation (*zaa'ida*) used to indicate plurality and duality in nouns and verbs; and intensification in verbs. Allah ta'ala says: "*Nuun. By the Primordial Pen and what they record.*" In Islamic cosmology the *Nuun* from one respect is the Primeval Waters from which Allah created everything living. From another respect it is the Primordial Ink from which the Pen transcribed all that was and will be until the Day of Judgment. At the celestial level the *Nuun* is a cosmological synonym for the 'whale' (*huut*) upon which the seven earths are spread. In reality, each of these aspects describe a single reality whose cognomen transforms in accordance with the realm of existence it represents. It has been related in the Khulasaat'l-Kumaal on the authority of *Imam* Ali ibn Abi Talib who said: "The first thing which Allah created was the Primordial Pen. Then He created the *Nuun*, which is the Primeval Ink. He then created the Tablet. It (the Pen) then transcribed this world's life and all that will be in it until it is annihilated. It transcribed the created entities that were created, the deeds of those things which act, whether righteous or evil, what will be for them of provision whether lawful or forbidden, and whether it will be a humid entity or arid entity. Then He placed that Book in the responsibilities of the Angels, and then made Angels responsible for the maintenance of creation." In a chain of transmission considered by some traditionists the soundest of all transmissions from *Imam* Malik ibn Anas on the authority of Rabi'a ibn Abu Abd'r-Rahman on the authority of Naafi' on the authority of Ibn Umar who said: "When Allah ta'ala revealed: '*Recite in the name of your Lord who created...*' the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said to Mu'adh: 'Write it down O Mu'adh.' Mu'adh then took the tablet, the pen and *nuun*, which is another name for ink. Then Mu'adh began to write it down until he reached the verse: '*Rather, do not obey him, but prostrate and draw near*', then the tablet prostrated, the pen prostrated and the *nuun* fell in prostration, while each was

saying: 'O Allah raise him in renown. O Allah, lighten for him his burden. O Allah, forgive him his sins'. Then Mu'adh said: 'I then fell down in prostration. I then went and informed the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and he too fell in prostration'. In another narration by Ibn Abi Shayba on the authority of Abdallah ibn Abass who said: "The first thing that Allah created from entities was the Primordial Pen. Then He created the *Nuun*, and then compressed the earth upon the back of the *Nuun*." The expression '*nuun*' in the latter transmission refers to the Primeval Whale. This is corroborated by a prophetic tradition related in the al-Mu'ajim 'l-Kubra on the authority of Abdallah ibn Abass that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "The first of what Allah ta'ala created was the Primordial Pen and the Primeval Whale (*huut*)." It was said: "What did it write?" He said: "Everything that will be until the Day of Judgment." He then recited the verse: "*Nuun and by the Pen...*"; for the *Nuun* is the Primeval Whale and the Pen is the Primordial Pen." It is for this reason that Allah ta'ala names Prophet Yunus, upon him be peace '*Dhu'n-Nuun*' (the companion of the whale) when He says: "*And Dhu'n-Nuun when he left angrily. He assumed that We had no power over him, but he cried out in the darkness, saying: There is no deity except You! Glory be to You! Indeed I am among the unjust! Then We answered him and saved him from difficulty. Likewise do We save the believers.*" All this indicates that these three realities the Tablet, the *Nuun* and the Primordial Pen are three aspects of the same reality. In his at-Ta'areefat Muhy'd-Deen Ibn Arabi described the *Nuun* as universal knowledge in summation (*ilm 'l-ijmaal*) potentially all-inclusive, but undifferentiated, much like knowledge which remains dormant in the ink, until the pen extracts it and transcribes it in detail. The pen cannot transcribe what is potentially hidden in the ink unless it is first moved by its prime mover, which is the intellect. It is for this reason that Abd'l-Karim al-Jilli said in his al-Isfaar 'An Risaalat'l-Anwaar: "The First Intellect (*'aql*) in its essence, with respect to the summation of the sciences, is called the *Nuun*; and with respect to it manifesting the comprehensive details of the sciences in the Tablet, it is called the *Pen*." Because these three cosmic realities (*haqaa'iq kawniyya*) are considered to be three aspects of a single reality; there are no discrepancies between the different *Qur'anic* verses and prophetic traditions which speak of the first thing which Allah ta'ala created; such as the words of Allah ta'ala: "*And We created from Water everything living*"; which in this respect is the Primordial Waters, the *Nuun* (Ink) or the Primordial Cloud (*'amaa*); all typified by a formless watery primordial substance, which the author will later indicate by 'the Black Swamp' from which emerged the first light, the first form or the primordial existence. Reflective of this perspective is his saying, upon him be blessings and peace: "The first thing which Allah created was the light (*nuur*) of your Prophet, O Jaabir. Then He created from it every excellent thing, and after that He created every thing"; which in this respect is the Muhammadan Reality (*haqeeqa Muhammadiyya*). There are his words, upon him be blessings and peace: "Verily the first thing that Allah azza wa jalla created was the Primordial Pen"; and his words, upon him be blessings and peace: "The first thing that Allah created was the Primordial Intellect." All of these diverse names are diverse cognomens referring to a single reality whose aspects change as it unfolds from pure non existence into existence. *Imam* Wang Tai-yu said in his Ch'ing-chen Ta-hsueh: "The names are different, but the principle is one at root. Its reality was originally concealed in non-existence in the Knowledge of the Powerful Being. It accepted the mandate (*ming* 命) and became manifest (*xiän* 顯). It is the root origin of the ten thousand things and thereby embodies the ten thousand principles. It is the

Non-Ultimate (wú jí 無極). There are three levels which corroborate this reality: [1] the Originally Honored (yuán xun 元勳), the Representative (dài lǐ 代理), and the Scribe (tài shǐ-太史).” Here *Imam* Wang Tai-yu gives us another aspect of the three pre-temporal aspects of this first light called the Muhammadan Reality (*haqaa’iq Muhammadiyya*) which are: [1] the Primeval Waters (*maa’ asl*); [2] the First Intellect (*’aql awwal*); and [3] the Primordial Pen (*qalam*); all embodied within the Primordial Cloud (*al-’amaa’*), which Chinese sages designate as the Non-Ultimate (wú jí 無極). The poet, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to him said in his al-Mandhuumat li’l-Istalihaat as-Suufiyya:

“And the first of the individual determinations is the Primordial Pen

Based on the technical terminology of those who have comprehension
And the Tablet with the People of Allah is Absolute Light

If It is imprinted upon It, then it becomes creational light”

As mentioned previously, ‘light’ in the language of the People of Allah is another cognomen for existence. It is therefore not surprising that modern theoretical physicists have determined that there is a relationship between energy and mass. As a thing increases its speed to the speed of light, so does its mass increase. Thus, the Tablet is an indication of existence in totality, while the individual determination imprinted upon the Tablet by the Pen becomes creational existence. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him explained the meaning of the above poetic verses when he said: “As for the ‘Primordial Pen’, I mean by It an idiomatic expression of the first of the individual determinations of creational manifestation based upon the technical terminology of the *Sufis*. As for the ‘Tablet’ it is an absolute light which is the locus of the manifestation in the location of creation in which is an imprint of all existing things.” What the poet indicates is that the first of the matrices of existence to emanate from pure non-existence was the *Nuur* of Muhammad, also known as the Cloud (*’amaa’*), the White Pearl (*durrat bayda’*), and the Primeval Water (*maa’ asl*) from which all creational realities emanated. Then the first of the creational realities to emanate from this first light was the Primordial Pen, which is the First Intellect (*’aql awwal*), the closest of the creational realities (*haqaa’iq khalqiyya*) to the realities of the Absolute Being (*haqaa’iq haqqiyya*). This was followed by the Guarded Tablet, which is the Universal Soul (*nafs kulliyya*) which contains the details of the decrees and judgments of all created entities until the Day of Judgment. Then there emanated universal matter (*jawhar kulliy*) from which emerged the universal corporeal substance (*jasam kulliy*). Then the original mold (*shakl*) of existence emerged and then the first creational form (*surat khalqiyya*) emerged, which was the Throne of Allah ta’ala. It is the ‘*khayaal*’ (conceptualized vision) which comprehends these worlds, distinguishes them from one another, and differentiates all created realities from their Creator, the Absolute Being (*al-Haqq*). It is for this reason the poet, may Allah be merciful to him now turns to discussing the science of the objective ‘*khayaal*’ (conceptualized vision) and the visionary forms that existence takes in the ‘*khayaal*’ (conceptualized vision), which some interpret as the imagination, but which does not fully express the full breadth of its meaning, as we will see.

The science of ‘conceptualized visions’ and the science of the ‘Shadow’
The science of the ‘Gown’, the ascendant teacher⁴³

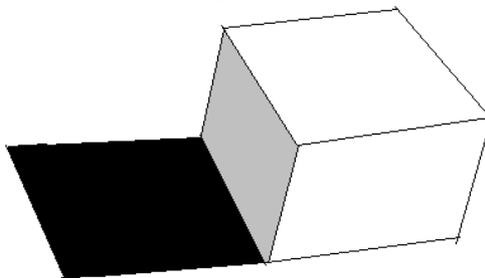
⁴³ In this hemistich the poet, may Allah be mercy to him introduces us to the world of the symbolic and conceptualized vision which are the ninth, tenth, and eleventh of the nineteen sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis*. He begins with the ninth of these sciences which is actually the means by which the others are comprehended and understood. He says: “**The science of ‘khuyulaat’ (conceptualized visions)...**” Perhaps the most widely misunderstood concept in the technical language of the *Sufis* is the concept of ‘*khayaal*’ (‘imagination’/conceptualized vision). The poet uses the plural form of the expression ‘*khuyulaat*’, taking from the measure ‘*fa`uulaa*’, and the ‘etymological root of the verb ‘*khaala*’ (to consider). When it is used in a positive significance it is a synonym of ‘*dhanna*’ (to assume or surmise); while when used in negative implications it is a synonym of ‘*wahama*’ (to have an illusion). However in the sense in which the author uses it, it is analogous to the verb ‘*sawwara*’ (to formulate or conceptualize); like when one says: ‘*sawwarahu fa tasawwara lahu*’ (He formulated it, and it then became conceived in the mind to him.) Thus, here it is stronger than mere assumption, imagination or fancy. The use of the plural form is an indication that there are multiple conceptual visions in the view of Muslim gnostics, as we will discuss. Although the expression ‘*khayaal*’ (conceptualized vision) cannot be found in the *Qur’anic* lexicon, there are several prophetic traditions which reference this idiom. The most important one is a prophetic tradition related by al-Haythami and Abu Ya’ala, but which was considered weak by al-Bukhari, Muslim and others where the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace is reported to have supplicated: “My conceptual vision (*khayaal*) and my body (*sawaad*) prostrate to You. My heart (*fu’aad*) truly believes in You. And here are my two hands with what they have earned against my soul. O Immense One, the Hope of everyone who committed enormities, forgive me of immense sins.” Here the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant contrasts the ‘*khayaal*’ (conceptualized vision) to that of the body/mass (*sawaad*) and indicates that his ‘*khayaal*’ represents the intelligible aspect of his being, his reason and ideation as opposed to his physical and sensory perceptions. The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, Imam Muhammad Murtaḍa in his *Taaj’l-’Aruus* equated the transitive form of the verb ‘*takhayyala*’ (to have a strong premonition) to a form of ‘*firaasa*’ (intuitive awareness) of a thing whose imagined form actually mirrors its essential nature. It is the ‘form’ (*suura*) that the world of ideation, intelligible concepts, the world of the unseen, and spiritual realities take in the conceptual vision. Thus, he defined the noun form ‘*khayaal*’ to signify an image of a person, a body, a corporeal form or figure which one sees from a distance, which can be either accurate, a conjecture or pure illusion based upon the clarity of the observer. In his *Kashif ‘l-Lughaat wa’l-Istalaahaat* *Shaykh* Abd’r-Rahim ibn Ahmad said that the ‘*khayaal*’ is the world of symbol (*mithaal*), which is the intermediate world (*barzakh*) between the world of spirits and the world of corporeal forms. Because of the simultaneous transcendent (*tanzeeh*) and immanent (*tashbeeh*) nature of this subject, we must turn to the People of spiritual unveiling for a disclosure of the meaning of this form of comprehension. *Shaykh* Abd’l-Karim al-Jilli in his *al-Insaan ‘l-Kaamil* defined the ‘*khayaal*’ as the foundational source of the entire world since it is the realm where the Absolute Being manifest the perfection of His Attributes and

Actions. He said: "Have you not seen how the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace made this sensory world as a form of sleep (*manaam*) and how he made actual sleep into a '*khayaan*' (conceptualized vision); when he said: 'Mankind is sleeping when they die they wake up.' This means that the realities which they were upon in this world will manifest to them. Hence they will realize that they were actually asleep." In his al-Isfaar 'An Risaalat'l-Anwaar al-Jilli divided the '*khayaan*' into three: [1] the absolute '*khayaan*' related to the Absolute Being's formulation of the forms of the universal archetypes in the world of the Cloud before the creation of existence; [2] the contiguous '*khayaan*' and [3] the bounded '*khayaan*'; where the contiguous and bounded '*khayaan*' are related to the conceptual visions of the servants in the world of spirits, intelligible worlds and the Hereafter. In his Futuuhāt 'l-Makiyya, *Shaykh al-Akbar* Ibn Arabi describes the '*khayaan*' as being both a science and a world, both which are immense pillars from the pillars of gnosis of Allah ta'ala. With regard to the '*khayaan*' as a science, he designates it as a means of comprehending the world of the isthmus (*barzakh*) and the world of corporeal bodies (*ajsaad*) and how the disembodied spirits manifest in them. He also distinguishes the '*khayaan*' as the means by which the Self Disclosure of Allah on the Day of Judgment will be comprehended and experienced. Thus, it is through the '*khayaan*' that the world of meanings, intelligibles and spirits are given form. In his al-Mandhuumat li'l-Istalihaat as-Suufiyya the poet, Dan Tafa, may Allah ta'ala be merciful to him described the '*khayaan*' as a locus of comprehension in human beings in which the Absolute Being formulates an intelligible construct for His Divine Names and imprints these meanings upon the human soul. These ideations and conceptions of the '*khayaan*' cannot be grasped by sensory perception. Thus, the '*khayaan*' is a metaphysical perception which functions in the world of spirits in the same manner as the reason functions in the intelligible worlds and the sense perceptions of sight, hearing, and taste function in the sensory world. In his Muqaddimat Fee 'Ilm al-Maraa'iy wa't-Ta'beer he gives a working definition of the '*khayaan*' as: "...an expression referring to a locus of manifestation in which appears intelligible forms as if they were duplicate copies from the sensory world." In this sense the '*khayaan*' (conceptualized vision) is like an isthmus (*barzakh*) which decodes, deciphers and translates meanings between the sensory, intelligible and spiritual worlds. In his Kashif 'l-Ghitta wa'r-Rayb Fee Dhikr Anwaa' Mafaatih 'l-Ghayb the poet, may Allah be merciful to him dedicates the entire fourth chapter to a study of the use of the '*khayaan*' as one of the keys for comprehending the world of the unseen which he connects to the visions seen in sleep. He asserts that it is through the '*khayaan*' that prophetic revelation (*wahyi 'n-nubuwwa*) and the miraculous visions of the sages (*ilham 'l-awliyya*) are received and comprehended. He said: "This key of unlocking the world of the unseen is for the masters of sleep visions (*ru'yaa*) and the masters of seeking proper guidance (*istikhaara*) and it is among the most subtle of the keys for unlocking the unseen. Part of it is endowed as a natural gift (*mawhuub*) for some, while part of it can be acquired (*maksuub*) by others." In his al-Kashif wa'l-Bayaan Lima Ashkala Min Kitaab'l-Insaan, the poet, describes how the '*khayaan*' (conceptualized vision) is a treasure of comprehension which can become corrupted or blocked. This occurs when human aspirations, the love for rank, leadership and the desire for renown in the hearts of people causes the heart to be filled with competition, hatred, disdain, envy, pride, and mutual plotting until Allah completely diverts the heart from reflecting on the higher intelligible notions, let alone the metaphysical concepts of the spiritual realities. Thus, the '*khayaan*' is an inward sense perception

which allows the reason to formulate what is perceived in the worlds of the unseen, whether it be from the visions of sleep, or the unveilings of the heart into the spiritual realities. In his Muqadimat Fee 'Ilm al-Maraa'iy the poet, may Allah ta'ala be merciful to him gave us a detailed picture of the '*khayaal*' as it is related to sleep visions: He said: "Realize that sleep is an expression referring to the return of the sense perceptions towards the sensory world, where there enters into the interior of the heart the vapors of this interaction, which then ascends to the brain. There then arises in the anterior of the brain natural incidents in a depository realm of manifestation called the '*khayaal*' (conceptualized vision). Thus, the figures of sentient and non sentient beings take form in this realm of manifestation. It is then that one can see all of the sensory things which one's thoughts and reflections have seized upon. From this it can be known that the '*khayaal*' (conceptualized vision) is a connecting matrix between the intelligible world and that of the sensory. Apart of its wisdom is that in it all intelligible meanings take a corporeal form as 'a double'. This judgment is invariable and persistent regarding the whole of existence, and applies to all necessary, possible and impossible existing things. All of these descend into the '*khayaal*' and take a symbolic form, which at the same time is not established in reality. If this symbolic form is from those things which the sensory perceptions seize upon, or it is from the imagined occurrences of the soul; then it is merely a confused dream which has no judgment in the world of conceptualization. As for what a person knows in his soul and has sought guidance concerning, then he will see it in his sleep. This type of vision is not from confused dreams. Rather, it is from the tokens of transmission, so understand." Here the poet, may Allah be merciful to him explains that the '*khayaal*' is the most important element in understanding and comprehending the meanings which overflow from our dream visions. He will discuss this at length in the last section of this poem. There, Allah willing, I will return to the important function of the contiguous and bounded '*khayaal*' related to humans. It must not be misunderstood from the above that the world of the '*khayaal*' is only a realm accessible only through dreams. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him informs us in his Salwat 'l-Ikhwaan Fee Dhikr Ba'd'l-Khawaas Min Ahl Hadha 'z-Zamaan when discussing some of the virtues of his key teacher and spiritual guide, *Shaykh Muhammad Sanbu ibn Shehu Uthman ibn Fuduye`*: "He used to give spiritual instructions by means of his spiritual resolution and states. However his spiritual training was designated only for the elite among the servants among sentient spiritual entities and some of the virtuous among the *jinn*. In this regard he had a secret assembly in which they used to assemble, in which he maintained a chair of professorship in the lower levels of the world of the '*khayaal*', in which he would reveal whatever he wished to the above mentioned companions of his." This indicates that the '*khayaal*' is not only an inward human sense perception, but it is also a metaphysical realm identical to a '*barzakh*' (ithmus). This was further corroborated by the poet, in the same text when discussing some of the miracles of his teacher, Muhammad Sanbu, where he said: "Indeed Allah gave this spiritual master the miracles of flying in the air, walking upon water, and he possessed an exalted state in crossing the earth with great speed. He also witnessed with his eyes the earth of the White Sesame, which is the remnant of the earth from which Adam, upon him be peace was created. This land is located on the edge of the world of the '*khayaal*'." Again the poet expands the concept of '*khayaal*' (conceptualized vision), not to mean just a subjective or objective vision of the world of spirits and the world of the unseen; but he describes it here also as an actual world or realm of being uniquely connected

to humanity which exist parallel to the world in which we live. In the al-Munaaajaat of the *Shehu* he supplicates Allah ta`ala by means of those he called 'Ahl 's-Samsama', indicating that this world which exists on the edge of the world of the 'khayaal' is real enough to be evoked in supplication. *Shaykh al-Akbar* informs us in the al-Futuhaat 'l-Makiyya that when Adam, upon him be peace was created, there was some remnant from the leaven of his earth. Allah ta`ala then created from this remnant the date, the pomegranate, and the grape. What was left from that earth after the creation of the date, the pomegranate and the grape, was a remnant equal to the size of a sesame seed (*as-samsama*) in mass. Then Allah expanded this sesame seed to the extent of a vast immense earth, whose size was larger than the Throne, the Footstool, the heavens, the earths, what is underneath the earth, the Paradise, and the Hell Fires. In this massive earth called *as-Samsama* Allah created servants and spiritual beings called the People of *as-Samsama*, who glorify Allah ta`ala night and day without stop. In this vast earth is an assembly where the Gnostic Knowers of Allah, constantly visit, circulate and gather. Allah ta`ala has also created many worlds whose outward form resembles our world. When a Knower of Allah is disclosed to these worlds, he is able to witness an image of himself among them; as Ibn al-Abass and others witnessed. It is to this world which the teacher of the poet, referred to as being on the edge of the world of the 'khayaal'. The tenth of the sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis*, is as the poet, may Allah be merciful to him described in his words: **"...and the science of the 'Shadow'."** The expression 'shadow' (*dhill*) takes its root from the verb '*dhallalu*' (to shade something), and is a synonym of the word '*fay*'. The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, the learned *sharif* Muhammad Murtaḍa az-Zabidi said in his Taaaj'l-'Aruus: "Every location on which the sun shines and then removes is called '*dhillun*' and '*fay'un*'. Or '*dhillu*' is considered the shade of the early morning, while '*fay*' is the shade of the evening. Thus, the '*dhillu*' is the shade before the appearance of the sun, and the '*fay*' is the shade which 'returns' (*fa'a*) after the setting of the sun. One normally says: 'the '*dhillu*' of Paradise'; and never says: 'the '*fay*' of Paradise because the early morning shade of the sun of Paradise is not subsequent to the sun. In that case it would be a '*fay*', but the shade of Paradise is forever an early morning shade (*dhillu*). It is for this reason that Allah `azza wa jalla says: '*Its nourishment is eternal and its shade (dhilluhaa)*'; which means that its early morning shade is also eternal." Here a metaphorical meaning emerges from the verb form '*yadhillu*' of 'an emerging forth by day' or 'a becoming by day' and is a synonym of the verb '*saara*' (becoming) since the shade which signifies the rising of the sun is an indication of coming forth into existence or the process of becoming. The Arabs say: "*dhillu wajhuhu munawwaran*"; (...his face became illuminated...). The expression thus, is utilized to indicate the beginning stages of transformation or change, like when you say: '*dhillu 's-shitaa*' (the early morning shade of winter), which means the first stages indicating the coming of winter. The shade of the early morning (*dhillu*) also signifies pleasantry, beauty, ease and relaxation in contrast to the shade of the evening (*fay*) because the earth in the early morning during the rising of the sun is cool as a result of the coolness of night, while the shade of the earth as the sun sets gives off heat from the heat collected during the day.. It is for this reason that people normally refer to something which is taken as a refuge from difficulties as a '*fay*'; as one normally takes refuge in the evening shade from the heat of the earth. This meaning gives a deeper understanding of the prophetic tradition: "Do not denounce the *Sultan*, for he is the shade (*fay*) of Allah in His earth." This means that the *Sultan* is the place of refuge for creatures on earth against temporal and spiritual

difficulties. The expression '*dhillu*' also has the meaning of honor (*'izza*) and impregnable immunity (*man`a*) as when Allah ta`ala says: "*Indeed those who are fearfully aware will be in shades*"; meaning by that, they will be in a state of honor and inaccessible immunity. This explains the meaning of another similar prophetic tradition related by al-Bayhaqi on the authority of Anas: "The *Sultan* is the shade (*dhillu*) of Allah in the earth. Whoever double crosses him has gone astray, and whoever is sincere towards him has been guided." Metaphorically and symbolically, the shade is a reference to anything which shades or protects during the severity of afflictions, hardships and difficulties which is a referent to the role of the temporal and spiritual ruler. A nephew of the poet, *Shaykh* Muhammad Bello ibn Sa`id ibn Muhammad Bello referred to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace in his famous Madeeh Khayr al-Anaam as: "The one whose face is handsome, and whose eyes are tinged with kohl; and an umbrageous shade (*dhillu 'd-dhaleel*) for all creatures." In physics the shade or shadow is evidence for the existence of three things: [1] light [2] its source; and [3] a corporeal entity upon which the light shines. All of the three phenomena result in the emergence of a shade or shadow. Previously we demonstrated how 'light' (*nuur*) is a metaphor for existence or being. Thus, shade (*dhillu*) is the manifestation of the traces of existence. It indicates the source of existence and demarcates the qualities of the existing thing itself. It is here that we must turn to the People of spiritual unveiling to gain insight into the complex concepts hidden in the expression – 'the Shade'. *Shaykh* al-Qaashani said in his Istalaahaat as-Suufiyya: "The Shade is the outward ancillary existence which emerges with the individualization of the possible essences. These individualized possible essences are in pure none existence and are demarcated and become manifest by His Name '*an-Nuur*' (the Light). This Light is the external existence attributed to these individualized essences. Subsequently, this manifest Light conceals the darkness of the non existence of the individualized essences by their forms. This outward ancillary existence then become a shade due to the appearance of the shadow which emerges as a result of the Light and the none existence of their essences at the same time. Allah ta`ala says: '*Do you not see how your Lord extends the shadow*'; which means that He enlarges ancillary existence to reach all of its creational possibilities. Thus, darkness vis-à-vis this Light is none existence, since every darkness is an expression of the absence of light." Subsequently, the extension of the shadow indicates its existence and none existence at the same time, and this phenomena cannot appear without the existence of light and the entity which light demarcates.



Shaykh al-Qaashani goes further to distinguish between the 'shadow' of the world and the primary shade/shadow (*dhillu awwalu*) which he delineates as a synonym of the First Intellect (*'aql awwal*) since it is the first of the individualized essences to appear by means of the Light of Allah ta`ala and the first of the forms of multiplicity which are the '*shu'un*' (enterprises) of the Oneness of Essence. This is a reference to the Perfect Human (*insaan kaamil*), Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him

peace, also referred to as the Shadow or Shade of Allah (*dhillu Allah*) in His earth. This indicates that there is a correlation between the Acts of Allah, His enterprises (*shu'un*) and the Perfect Human. This correlation is denoted by the words of Allah ta'ala: "You did not fight them, but it was Allah who fought them. You did not throw when you threw, but it was Allah who threw." It is further elaborated on in the *hadith qudsi* where Allah ta'ala says on the tongue of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: "...when I love him, I become His eye with which he sees, his ear by which he hears, his hand by which he grasps, his foot by which he walks, his soul with which he reflects, and his tongue with which he speaks..." In another narration He said: "...until I love him, then I Myself become his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his tongue with which he articulates, and his heart with which he reflects...". In these Divine statements the Absolute Being indicates that the actions of the Perfect Human is a shadow of the Acts and enterprises of Allah ta'ala. Although the address of the above cited verse and prophetic traditions deal specifically with the in-time actions of fighting, throwing, hearing, seeing, reflecting, grasping, walking, and speaking of the perfected Adamic creature; yet this does not preclude that the key address is to pre-Adamic man. That is to say, the Perfect Human whose creation preceded the in-time creation of Adam indicated by Muhammad's words, may Allah bless him and grant: "I was a prophet when Adam was between the spirit and clay." The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, the *Sultan* of the scholars, *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn al-Habib said in his *Kanz'l-Haqaa'iq* that our master Muhammad is the first of the lights to overflow from the Immense seas of the Essence (*awwalu 'l-anwaar faa'idat min buhuur 'adhimaat 'd-Dhaat*); the one realized in the worlds of the hidden and manifest by means of the meanings of the Divine Names and Attributes (*al-mutahaqqiqi fee 'aalami 'l-butuuni w'd-dhuhuuri bi ma'ani 'l-Asmaai' wa's-Sifaat*). He was the first to give praise and abundant worship by means of all the varieties of worship and drawing near (*awwalu haamidin wa muta'abidin bi 'anwaai' 'l-ibaadaat wa'l-qurubaat*). The 'first-ness (*awwaliyya*) of Muhammad, the Perfect Human, is distinct from the Immutable Firstness of the Absolute Being. The eternal 'firstness' of the Absolute Being was not preceded by non-existence, while the 'firstness' of the Perfect Human was preceded by non-existence. Allah ta'ala says: "Has there not come upon the human a time in which he was a thing unremembered?" Just as the 'shadow' in its emergence, extension, and contraction indicates the existence of the source of light; similarly the firstness of the Perfect Human is a shadow of the Eternal Firstness of the Absolute Being. The great Chinese Muslim sage, *Imam* Wang Tai-yu described this Muhammadan Reality as the 'root of the ten thousand things, which he called 'the Numerical One' (shǔ yī -数一). This primary summit of existence is what accepted the Divine mandate and was the first shadow to become manifest from which emerged the shadow of the world. This shadow reflection was further corroborated by al-Qunawi in his *Mirat'l-Aarifeen* where he makes a parallel (*mudaahaat*) between the comprehensive Self Knowledge of Allah, the Mother of the Book, the Primordial Pen, the Universal Intellect and the Throne with that of the comprehensive knowledge of the Perfect Human; and a parallel between the detailed Self Knowledge of Allah, the Detailed Book, the Guarded Tablet, the Universal Soul and the Footstool with that of the detailed knowledge of the Perfect Human. Al-Qunawi indicates by this that the Perfect Human is the shadow of Allah, His vicegerent (*khalifa*) and representative (*naa'ib*) to the rest of creation. The great *Samaniyya Tareeqa* of the nilotic Sudan have a famous *qaseeda*

which they sing which embodies the mysteries hidden in the concept of existence being the emergence of a series of ‘shadows’ (*dhilaal*) when they say:

أَنْتَ كُنْ بِاللَّهِ قَائِمًا * لَنْ تَكُونَ بَلَّ أَنْتَ هُوَ
أَنْتَ ظِلُّ الْغَيْبِ مِنْ * أَسْمَائِهِ وَالشَّمْسُ هُوَ

“You, be, by Allah, existent!

You are not in actuality, but rather you are he

You are a shadow of the Unseen from

His Divine Names, and the Sun is He”

This is a play on words where the ‘you-ness’ being addressed and the ‘he-ness’ being spoken of are not the same in the two hemistiches. The meaning of the first verse: ‘You, be, by Allah, existent’ refers to an imperative or command from Allah to ‘you’ (the world) to accept the mandate of existence and come into being my means of the command of Allah – Be! In reality, the ‘you-ness’ (the world) are nothing but the command: Be! However, the existence of the world is a synthetic simulation and is not real. On the contrary, ‘you’ (the world) are actually ‘he’, a shadow of the Perfect Human (*insaana kaamil*), the Utmost Sage (zhi shèng-至聖). The use of the third person pronoun ‘*huwa*’ is not only a grammatical indicator of absence (*ghayb*), but is also an indication of ‘becoming’ (*sayruura*); or something existent in *potentia* yet to be realized, like a concealed seed, yet to become a tree, yet to become a fruit.. In the second verse, the ‘you’ being addressed is the essence of the world which is the reality of the Perfect Human, Muhammad, which is also in turn a shadow of the Unseen of the Divine Names of Allah. The Sun or Light which manifest these series of unfolding shadows of existence is a metaphor for the Essence of the Absolute Being, and Allah ta`ala knows best. The eleventh of the nineteen sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis*, is as the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said “...the science of the ‘Gown’, the ascendant teacher.” The expression ‘Gown’ (*ridaa*) is taken from a verb ‘*radiya*’ which has opposite meanings: [1] ‘falling’ and [2] ‘perishing’. The origin of the expression ‘*ridaa*’ (gown) is a garment thrown over the shoulder and falls over the rest of the body; thus, the connection with the verb ‘*radiya*’ (falling). The ‘gown’ is also a non-essential symbolic garment worn as complementary attire. It thus, indicates in a broader sense anything which is used to add beauty to a thing, such as a spouse, a child and a home, as Ibn al-`Arabi cited. The ‘*ridaa*’ (gown) with regard to complimentary clothing is the kind of attire worn by those who possess authority from among the `Arabs which they wear upon the upper part of the body and is considered honorable attire. It was related by at-Tirmidhi in his *as-Shimaa`il* on the authority of Abdallah ibn Sarjis who said: “I once came to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace while he was among some people from his Companions. I then moved behind him, and he knew what it was that I wanted, so he removed his gown (*ridaa*) from his back. I then saw the place of the seal which was between his shoulder blades.” His removing his gown from his back is evidence that it is a garment which is worn over the upper part of the body and is opposite the lower garment (*izaar*). It is the normal custom to wear the ‘*ridaa*’ (gown) with a long shirt and long under garment. The evidence that he, upon him be peace wore the ‘*ridaa*’ (gown) is in what was related by *Qadi`Iyad* in his *as-Shifa* as we cited previously: “Abu`-t-Tufayl said: ‘I saw the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace when I was a boy. A woman approached him until she became close. He then stood and spread out his gown for her and she sat upon it. I then said: ‘Who is that?’ They

said: 'She is his mother who used to suckle him'." He placed his gown for her to sit upon as a way of honoring her and showing her respect. It has been mentioned in a prophetic tradition on the authority of al-Waaqidi: "The gown of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was six cubits by three cubits and one hand span." Again *Qadi`Iyad* said in his *as-Shifa* on the authority of Ali ibn Abi Talib who said that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said: "Patience is my gown"; which means to say that the expression '*ridaa*' (gown) indicates honor and nobility. Thus, he, upon him be peace found his honor and nobility in being patient; just as the leaders of the `Arabs find their honor and nobility in their gowns. *Imam* al-Baghawi said in his commentary upon the *as-Sunna* that he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace named his gown '*al-fath*' (the opening), which is a direct reference to a transcendent metaphorical meaning. This was corroborated by what Allah ta`ala said on the tongue of His Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace in a *hadeeth qudsi* related by Ahmad, Abu Dawud, and Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayra, and by Ibn Maja on the authority of Abdallah ibn Abass, both who said that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Allah ta`ala says: 'Pride is My gown (*ridaa*) and might is My lower garment (*izaar*). Whoever contends with Me for anyone of them, I will fling him into the Fire'." Here, Allah ta`ala likens His pride and might to an upper and lower garment metaphorically and symbolically because pride is among His attributes of majesty (*sifaat`l-jalaal*) and might is among His attributes of beauty (*sifaat`l-jamaal*). Thus, Allah ta`ala describes Himself with these two attributes in the same manner that men adorn their upper bodies with the *ridaa*' and their lower bodies with the *izaar*. In this prophetic tradition is a severe threat against arrogance and self aggrandizement and it is explicit in establishing the prohibition of these two traits. Thus, what is understood from the expression '*ridaa*' (gown), here, is a metaphor used figuratively to indicate His immensity, as al-Qurtubi mentioned. It is said regarding a person who seeks to avoid all forms of arrogance: "He has cast away the gown (*ridaa*) of arrogance from his shoulders." Here, the concept *ridaa*' (upper gown) is associated in a metaphorical sense with arrogance. It is clear that the expression 'gown' has had a metaphorical and symbolic meaning among the Arabs from the pre-Islamic period. As the above *hadeeth qudsi* explicitly specify that the Absolute Being utilized the rich symbolic meanings concealed in the expression 'gown' to refer to the Attribute of pride (*kibriya*) which is exclusive to Him and should not be contested for by created beings. It thus follows that the *Sufis* would take this symbolic indication and expand its milieu to express a higher interaction between humanity and the Absolute Being. *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Ali at-Tahaanawi in his *Kashaaf Istilaah`l-Funuun wa`l-Uluum* quoting from *Shaykh al-Akbar* Ibn `Arabi said: "In the technical terminology of the *Sufis* the expression 'gown' (*ridaa*) is an indication of the manifestation of the Attributes of the Absolute Being upon the servant." This is an indication of being given a robe of honor, as a sign of vicegerency (*khilaafa*) and representation (*niyaaba*). In this brief definition at-Tahaanawi informs us that the 'gown' (*ridaa*) is both an unveiling (*inkishaaf*) or manifestation (*idhhaar*) as well as a form of honoring (*takreem*) and ennobling (*tashreef*), much like the conveying of a robe (*khil`at*) of honor as a symbol of spiritual achievement. This conferring of honor comes from the Absolute Being with self effacement, the recognition of ones inability, impoverishment and one's essential non-existence with respect to the Absolute Being. This is the investment with which the Adamic creature is adorned. However, the expression 'gown' (*ridaa*) especially when we examine it from the perspective of the

above cited *hadeeth qudsi* is also an indication of a kind of metaphysical dishonoring and spiritual destruction by which *Iblees* was cursed, resulting from his arrogance (*kibriyya*) and conceit (*'ujb*). *Shaykh* al-Qaashani said in his *Istalaahaat as-Suufiyya*: "The expression '*radii*' (to fall), with the letter '*raa*' inflected with '*fatha*' is the manifestation of the Attributes of the Absolute Being falsely (*bi'l-baa'itil*), as when Allah ta'ala says: '*I will turn away from My signs those who are arrogant in the earth without right.*' This is the spiritual station of *Iblees* and explains the nature of his being flung from the mountain of honor (*taradiya min jabal'l-izaa*) which he claimed. Thus, the expression '*radii*' as well as '*ridaa*' (gown) convey a form of spiritual destruction. Allah ta'ala said: '*Pride is My gown (ridaa)*' and might is My lower garment (*izaar*). Whoever contends with Me for anyone of them, I will exterminate him." As for the context in which the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, utilized and understood the concept of the 'Gown', it is connected to the Perfect Man and the Muhammadan Reality (*haqeeqa Muhammadiyya*). In the *Futuuhaat 'l-Makiyya*, Ibn 'Arabi raises the question: "What is the 'Gown'? The answer: It is a reference to the perfected servant created on a form which gathers together all the realities of creational possibilities and Divine realities. He is the most perfect locus of Divine manifestations and there is no creature more perfected than him. It is about him that Abu Haamid said: 'There is nothing among the creational possibilities more unique in excellence than this perfected world of knowledge in whom exist all the Divine realities. For, he is the servant about whom it is necessary to be named 'vicegerent' (*khalifa*) and the 'representative' (*naa'ib*). He possesses perfect influence over all the creational possibilities, has complete mastery over volition, and he is the most perfect locus of Divine manifestations.'" This spiritual reality described as 'the Gown' was called by the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, 'the ascendant teacher' (*mu'allam mutilla*). This reality is called a 'teacher' because the knowledge which emerges in this realm can only come about through instructions and a submission to a teacher. It implies humility, the acceptance of one's ignorance and the recognition of the need for a teacher. The robe of honor and vicegerency conveyed to Adam was given to him by the Absolute Being after his 'fall' from grace and recognition of the station of the Perfect Human – Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. *Qadi 'Iyad* gives us a picture of this primordial instruction given to Adam in his *as-Shifa* where he said: "Abu Muhammad Mekki, Abu'l-Layth as-Samraqandi and others narrated that when Adam committed his slip he said: 'O Allah by the truth of Muhammad forgive me of my mistakes.' In another narration he said: '...and accept my repentance.' Then Allah said: '*From where did you know of Muhammad?*' He said: 'I saw in every place of Paradise written: 'There is no deity except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.' In another narration: '...Muhammad is My servant and messenger'; so I knew that he was the noblest of Your creation to You.' Then Allah relented towards him and forgave him as a result of his words. This is one of the interpolations of Allah's words: '*...and Adam received words from his Lord, and He relented towards him, indeed He is the Relenting the Merciful.*' In another narration he said: 'Adam then said: 'When You created me I lifted my head up to Your Throne and there was written upon It: 'There is no deity except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.' I knew then that there was no one who was more immense in status with You than he whose name had been placed in conjunction with Your name.' Then Allah revealed to him: '*By My might and majesty! He is the last of the Prophets from your descendents. If it were not for him, I would not have created you.*'" Our master *Shaykh* Muhy'd-Deen Abd'l-Qadir al-Jaylaani, may Allah be

SANKORE'



pleased with him, described this aspect of the Muhammadan Reality as the light which illuminates every Messenger, the secret which guides every Prophet, and the essence which instructs every perfected sage. This is the meaning, and Allah ta'ala knows best, of the reality of 'the Gown' as the ascendant teacher, since it is a symbolic referent to Muhammad as the perfected servant created on a form which gathers together all the realities of creational possibilities and Divine realities. He is, like the symbolism which a robe of honor (*ridaa 'l-'izza*) indicates, the most perfect locus of Divine manifestations and there is no creature more honorable and perfected than him. For this reason the Chinese Muslim sages refer to this aspect of the Muhammadan Reality as the Originally Honored (*yuán xun 元勳*), and "is the great fountainhead of nature and the mandate. It is like an ocean – receiving all the rivers, it never overflows, and pouring into all the rivers, it never becomes exhausted. It is neither this nor that, it keeps the great harmony, and it is called: 'the seed of all beings'. It is what the Taoists mean when they say: 'the Gate of All Subtlety', and 'the Nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth'." When referring to the Muhammadan Reality as the ascendant teacher (*mu'allim mutilla*), the Chinese Muslim sages refer to it as the Scribe (*tài shǐ 太史*); which they describe as the original taproot of *yin* and *yang*, which issued from the formless prior to all beings; and gave meaning and names to all created things. It was related by ad-Daylami on the authority of Abu Raafi' that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "My *Umma* was made into a likeness for me in the realm of water and earth; and I was taught all the Names just as Adam was taught all the Names." In this regard, the Perfect Human, Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace is the highest ascendant teacher.

The science of the residuals and the science of ‘the Griffon’
And the ‘White Pearl and the science of the ‘Pages’.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ In this hemistich, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, sets down the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth of the nineteen sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis* which he and his *Fudiawa* forebears had mastered. The entire hemistich is a predicate phrase (*jumla khabariyya*) of the previous verse: “...from its environs...”, and means that among the sphere of those sciences of the *awliyya* or secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis* is the twelfth of them called: “**The science of the residuals.**” The expression ‘*zawaa'id*’ (residuals) is plural for ‘*za'ida*’ and takes its root from the verb ‘*zaada*’ (to increase). Linguistically, the expression when annexed with the word ‘letters’ (*huruuf*) in the phrase ‘*huruuf*’-*zawaa'id*’ (the letters of augmentation); refers to the ten Arabic letters added to radical letters comprised in the phrase: ‘*sa'altumuneehaa*’ (سَأَلْتُمُونِيهَا – ‘I asked them about it’). These ten letters are added as prefixes and suffixes to both nouns and verbs which subsequently augment (*zaada*) the meaning of nouns and transform the time and meaning connected to verbs. It is based upon this linguistic meaning that the *Sufis* construct a higher meaning for the concept of ‘the residuals’ (*zawaa'id*) to be the ten aspects of the augmentation of the illuminations of the heart. *Shaykh 'l-Akbar* Muhy'd-Deen Ibn 'Arabi said in his *al-Futuuh*at ‘*l-Makiyya*’ that ‘the residuals’ (*zawaa'id*) in the language of the *Sufis* from the People of Allah ta'ala are the increases (*ziyaadaat*) of the belief in the Unseen (*ghayb*) as well as the intensification of spiritual certainty (*yaqeen*). It is apart of the fundamental doctrine of belief that faith (*imaan*) decreases and increases. Allah ta'ala says: “*In order to increase their belief with belief.*” He says: “*And He increases those who believe in belief.*” He says: “*As for those who believe, it only increased them in belief.*” As for the *Sunna*, it has been related in the *Saheeh* of al-Bukhari on the authority of Anas ibn Malik, that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: “He will be taken out of Hell-Fires who says: ‘**Laa ilaha illa Allah**’, and he has in his heart the equivalent of the weight of a grain of barley in good (*khayr*). He will be taken out of Hell-Fires who says: ‘**Laa ilaha illa Allah**’, and he has in his heart the equivalent of the weight of a grain of wheat in good (*khayr*). He will be taken out of Hell-Fires who says: ‘**Laa ilaha illa Allah**’, and he has in his heart the equivalent of the weight of a grain of an atom in good (*khayr*).” Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him once asked the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: “Belief, does it increase and decrease?” He said: “Yes. It increases until it enters its companion into Paradise, and it decreases until it enters its companion into the Hell Fires.” As for the consensus, *Shaykh* Ibrahim ibn al-Laqaani al-Maliki said in his *Jawharat*’t-Tawheed: “It is the preponderate view regarding the increase of belief * based upon the increase of obedience of a person.” It means that a large majority of the scholars hold the preponderant opinion that belief is increased by reason of the increase in his obedience, and the decrease of belief is by reason of the decrease of his obedience. The scholars have divided the issue of decrease of belief and its decrease into three divisions: the first are creatures whose belief increases and decreases, which include the belief of human beings and *jinn*. The second creatures are those whose belief does not increase nor decrease. This is the belief of the Angels, because their belief is innate with their original nature and is not incongruent. Allah ta'ala says about them: “*They do not disobey Allah in what He commands them and they do*

exactly what they are commanded.” And since it has been established that the decrease of belief is due to the decrease in obedience, then the belief of Angels do not decrease because they never commit disobedience. Some of the scholars say that everything which does not accept decrease must of a necessity not accept increase. However, some of the scholars differ regarding this, like *Shaykh* Abd’l-Barr al-Ujhuuri who said that the belief of Angels increases but does not decrease. Thus, he includes them among the third division, and it is those creatures whose belief increases but does not decrease, which is the belief of the Prophets upon them be blessings and peace. Allah ta`ala says to our master Ibrahim, upon him be peace: “*Do you not believe? And he said: ‘Of course, but it is in order to bring tranquility to my heart.’*” The meaning of the question of Allah ta`ala is: Is not your belief sufficient? And the meaning of the answer of Ibrahim upon him be peace is: Indeed, however in order to increase the belief of my heart with more belief. Subsequently, this is the evidence that the belief of the Prophets, increases but doesn’t decrease. I would include in this group the perfected *Awliyya* whose belief have become guarded by Allah ta`ala from decrease, but whose belief and certainty increases with the unfolding of spiritual unveilings, since they are the ones who follow the path of the Prophets in belief (*imaan*) and spiritual excellence (*ihsaan*). There are ten aspects through which the People of Allah attain increase in the illuminations of the heart and certainty, and they are represented exoterically in the Arabic language by the ten letters of augmentation (*huruuf* ‘z-zawaa’id). *Shaykh* Abu Nasr Abdallah as-Siraaj at-Tuusi said in his *al-Lam`u Fee at-Tasawwuf*: “The ‘residuals’ (*zawaa’id*) are the increases in faith of the Unseen and spiritual certainty, where with each augmentation of faith and spiritual certainty, there occurs increase in veracity (*sidq*) and sincerity (*ikhlaas*) in spiritual states (*ahwaal*), stations (*maqamaat*), spiritual descent (*iraadaat*) and behavior (*mu`aamilaat*).” The poet, may Allah be merciful to him then discusses the thirteenth of the sciences of the *awliyya* or secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis*, which he called: “...and the science of ‘the Griffon’...” The expression ‘*anqaa*’ (the Griffon/phoenix) takes its root from the verb ‘*aniqua*’ (to become long in the neck) and refers to a bird whose neck is extremely long with a whitish coloring around its neck. This legendary bird is found in the sources of most ancient cultures from Japan, China, Hindu, Greco-Roman, Persian, ancient Egyptian and pre-Islamic Arabia. Majid’ d-Deen al-Fayruz Abaadi said in his *al-Qamus ‘l-Muheet* that the legendary ‘*anqaa*’ also called ‘*anqaa’ mughrib*’ is a species of bird which name is known but the body is unknown (*majhuul*). Ibn’l-Mandhuur ‘l-Ifriqiya said in his *Lisaan’l-‘Arab* that the expression ‘*anqaa*’ is a phrase which indicates something which is meaningless. The phrase is usually associated with calamities (*daahiya*). In this regard some of the scholars of *Qur’anic* exegesis interpolate the expression to refer to the birds utilized by Allah ta`ala to destroy the Abyssinian army which invaded Mecca in the year that Prophet Muhammad was born, about which Allah ta`ala says: “*And send against them swarms of flying creatures (tayran abaabeel).*” These birds were the ‘*anqaa’ mughriba*’ (the extraordinary griffon) which were said to have flown in from the western horizon. It has been related by al-Mas`udi in his *Maruj’ d-Dhahab* on the authority of Abdallah ibn Abass that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said that the ‘*anqaa*’ (the Griffon) was a fabulous bird which Allah ta`ala created in the first ages whose genesis was mostly in the lands of the *Hijaz*. This species plagued the people by snatching away other birds as well as infants. The people complained of this to the Prophet of that time whose name was Khalid ibn Sinaan, from the Banu Abass who

supplicated against it and its progeny was cut off and made nearly extinct. In another prophetic tradition the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said that Allah ta'ala once informed the Prophet Ayyub, that He uses the ‘`anqaa’ (the Griffon) to destroy those who contend with Him. *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Ali at-Tahaanawi in his Kashaaf Istilaah'l-Funuun wa'l-Uluum referred to the ‘`anqaa’ (the Griffon) as a species of bird which is unknown and is called in the language of the Persians: ‘simurgh’. In the language of the *Sufis* it is a metonymy in rhetoric used to reference ‘original matter’ (*hayuuli*) because like the ‘`anqaa’ (the Griffon), which is rarely seen, original matter is also not seen. We previously cited the words of *Shaykh* Ahmad an-Naqshabandi where he equated the ‘the Griffon’ (‘`anqaa’) with the atomic particle (*habaa’*) or the ‘original matter’ (*hayuuli*) with which Allah opened the form of the cosmos. This original matter is called ‘the Griffon’ because the ‘griffon’ is a legendary mythical bird which represents an abstract representation of the fundamental substance which binds the whole of creation, much like the basic building blocks which some modern theoretical physicist call ‘quarks’, ‘flavors’, ‘the God particle’ and other sub-atomic particles. In the language of the *Sufis*, ‘the Griffon’ (‘`anqaa’) took on a more abstract and transcendent meaning. *Shaykh* Abd'l-Karim al-Jilli was the first to elaborate on this concept in his al-Insan'l-Kaamil where he said that what is understood by the concept of the extraordinary Griffon (‘`anqaa’ *mughrib*) in the terminology of the *Sufis* is a thing which is unusual to reason and reflection, whose specific appearance can find no likeness due to its immensity. He said: “The extraordinary Griffon (‘`anqaa’ *mughrib*) with regard to creation is antithetical to what the name ‘Allah’ is with regard to the Absolute Being. Just as what is called ‘`anqaa’ in itself is a reference to pure non-existence, likewise what is named ‘Allah’ in Itself is pure existence. Thus, the term ‘`anqaa’ is analogous to the name of ‘Allah’ with regard to the fact that one cannot comprehend what is named except by means of the name. In this regard it is a referent to creational existence. Likewise with the Absolute Being, *sub'haanahu wa ta'ala*, there is no way to know Him except by means of His names and attributes. This is because all of the Divine Names and Attributes fall under this Name – Allah. It is not possible to attain comprehension of Him except through the medium of His Divine Names and Attributes.” What al-Jilli suggest here is that ‘the Griffon’ (‘`anqaa’) is a referent to creational existence at its most fundamental level of the atomic particle (*habaa’*) which is pure non-existence but also the realm where matter or creational existence comes into being. This level of existence cannot be known except through the medium of existence. It is for this reason that modern theoretical physicists today bombard atomic particles with themselves in order to get a picture of what lies beneath the electrons and protons. They have unanimously agreed that the ‘matter’ which emerges when atomic particles are smashed are six types of quarks and anti-quarks (anti-matter). These terms are used by theoretical physicists to describe the fundamental particles of matter as they emerge from pure non-existence into existence. The *Sufis* refer to this realm of existence as ‘the Griffon’ (‘`anqaa’) whose name is known but whose actual matter or corporeality cannot be precisely identified or located. This perspective was further intimated by al-Qaashani in his Istalaahaat's-Suufiyya where he said: “The Griffon’ (‘`anqaa’) is a metaphorical referent to original matter (*hayuuli*) because it cannot be precisely seen, similar to. the ‘`anqaa’. This original matter cannot be located except as an abstract form (*suura*).” He went on to describe this original matter as the fundamental or greatest element (‘*unsure`aadhem*). Thus, original matter is the first manifestation of creation from pure non-existence,

whose reality is known but whose precise location or mass cannot be established. *Shaykh* Abd'l-Kareem 'l-Jilli said in his Maraatib'l-Wujuud that among the realms of existence is the original matter (*hayuuli*) which is the presence of corporeal formulization (*tashkeel*) and formation (*tasweer*). These creational forms emerge from original matter in the same way that the waves emerge on the surface of the oceans. Just as the forms of the waves of the oceans cannot not be precisely located or determined, likewise the form of existence that we see, in the views of the realized ones are nebulous and without reality. It is for this reason that our master Jesus the son of Mary made no distinction between fine gold and a common rock, because in reality there is no real distinction between them. They both come from a common fundamental element whose reality is non-existence. The poet, Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to him made a reference to the indefinable manner in which corporeal existence emerges from non-existence in his Bayaan't-Ta'abudaat. In it he puts a question to his maternal uncle Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* about the difference between spiritual states (*haal*) and spiritual stations (*maqam*) with regard to the Divine Presence (*hadrat ilaahiya*). His maternal uncle, who was also his chief spiritual guide answered: "The judgments of the different realms, such as the realms of Divinity (*'uluhiya*), Universal Compassion (*rahmaaniyya*), Everlastingness (*samaaniya*), Might (*'izza*) and Eternal Self Subsistence (*qayuumiya*) are unfolding stations (*maqam*) with respect to Him. The enterprises (*shu'un*) which are recurrent with Allah are like the spiritual states (*ahwaal*) of the servant are recurrent to them. These enterprises are what He azza wa jalla emerge from His Will. When He expands the foundations of these enterprises, then the essences of the universe manifest in the matrices of the Primordial Cloud (*'amaa'*), which is the primordial 'White Pearl' (*durrat bayda*), another name for the Original Primeval Waters from which Allah created the entire universe. The branches of the enterprises of Allah have two affinities (*nisbataan*): [1] a Divine affinity (*nisbat ilaahiyya*) which are the decreed judgments (*qada' mahkam*) that will never change, all of which are established on the Guarded Tablet (*lawh mahfuudh*); and [2] a creational affinity (*nisbat kawniyya*) which are those judgments that have been decreed for creation and the irrevocable decree which perhaps can be changed by something or can be transformed without being actually changed. This change or alteration occurs by the tongue of the universe and its requests. Their fundamentals are established on the Guarded Tablet without their details because their proper places are the Tablets of Effacement and Establishment (*alwaa'h 'l-mahwi wa'l-ithbaat*). Perhaps they will occur and perhaps they will occur in a mode which does not resemble the desire of creation." Thus, the emergence of creational realities appears as the nebulous waves of the oceans. They exist and they do not exist at the same time. It is clear that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him saw an affinity between the indefinable 'Griffon' (*'anqaa'*) of original matter (*hayuuli*) and the fourteenth of the nineteen sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis* which he called: **"...and the 'White Pearl..."** It is for this reason that he did not single out this mode of knowledge with the title '*ilm*' (science). He made it a noun in conjunction (*ma'tuuf*) to the science of the Griffon, in order to indicate that they are apart of a singular science, or mode of cognition. We mentioned previously that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him designated the 'White Pearl' (*durrat bayda*) as a synonym of the Primordial Cloud (*'amaa'*), and the Original Primeval Waters (*maa' 'asl*). Each of these conceptions are names or aspects of the 'First Intellect' (*'aql awwal*), which is another name of the spirit of Muhammad, or the Muhammadan Reality (*haqeeqa 'l-*

Muhammadiyah); which scholars, traditionists, jurists and mystics concur are the names of the 'first effect' (*ma`luul awwal*). `Shaykh Afif`d-Deen Sulayman ibn Ali at-Tilimsani said in his commentary upon the al-Muwaaqif Fee at-Tasawwuf: "This 'first effect' (*ma`luul awwal*) with respect to it being no more than an abstract (*mujarrad*) which comprehends (*ya`aralu*) its own essence (*dhaat*) and origin (*mabda`a*), it is called 'an intellect' (*`aql*). With respect to this first effect being an intermediate (*waasita*) in the emergence of the remainder of existence (*suduur saa`ir`l-mawjuudaat*) in the inscription of the sciences (*nuquush`l-`uluum*), it is called 'a pen' (*qalam*). With respect to its intermediacy (*tawssuta*) in the abundant emanation of the lights of prophethood (*ifaadat anwaar`n-nubuwwa*), then it is 'a light' (*nuur*) of the master of the Prophets, upon him and them be peace." As we navigate the variegated technical terms in this section of the poem, it becomes apparent that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him is talking about one reality which has a multitude of effects, functions and manifestations, and it is the Muhammadan Reality. The poet designates this reality as the 'White Pearl' (*durrat bayda*). This concept takes its etymology from the verb 'darra' (to flow abundantly) and is associated with the flowing of milk from the breast of sentient beings and creatures. From this construct the Arabs call a large pearl - 'durra', due to its size and milky white color. It is a synonym of 'lu`lu', and is the most highly prized stone among Arabs due to the fact that it is produced organically from an animal, the oyster and not from a mineral. Some of the earlier scholars designated the name of the pearl to be 'lu`lu', but distinguished between large pearls and small pearls with the names 'durra' and 'marjaan', respectively. In ancient times the origin of the formation of pearls was obscured in mythology and legend. However, the usage to which the People of Allah made of the symbolism of this stone, reflects its true origin, which is from the permeation of microscopic sea worms or parasites into the mouth of the oyster, which eventually over time grows and congeals into a pearl. This is significant because the Muhammadan Reality, for which the 'White Pearl' (*durrat bayda*) is representative, is a gathering of all the universal archetypes and essences at the level of undifferentiated non-existence, which when it manifest becomes the first of existing things. This was corroborated by the prophetic tradition related by *Imam Abd`r-Rahman as-Suyuti* in his al-Laali`u`l-Masnuu`a: "The first thing which Allah created was the White Pearl." Thus, the 'White Pearl' (*durrat bayda*), the Primordial Pen (*qalam awwal*), the First Intellect (*`aql awwal*), the Primeval Waters (*maa` awwal*) and the Cloud (*`amaa`*) are all references to the unfolding and permeation of the first light which Allah ta`ala created – the Light of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. *Shaykh`l-Akbar Muhy`d-Deen Ibn`Arabi* composed an entire text dedicated to this ontological aspect of the Muhammadan Reality, that he called ad-Durrat`l-Bayda ('the White Pearl'). In this concise text Ibn Arabi explained this original light, reality or created substance in which Allah ta`ala disclosed the knowledge of His Essence which then caused all known things to overflow from and come into existence. This primary created existence is called by many names: [1] the intellect (*`aql*); [2] the pen (*qalam*); [3] the universal spirit (*ruuh kulliy*); [4] the truth with which the Absolute Being creates (*haqq makhluuq bihi*); [5] the impartial justice (*`adl*); [6] the "white pearl" (*durrat bayda*); and [7] the light of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. *Shaykh`l-Akbar Ibn`Arabi* explained in his own work also entitled al-Insaan`l-Kaamil that this primary created reality was the reason for the creation of existence. He said: "Realize that the entire universe would not have been brought into existence, if it were not for the existence of the Perfect Human; for by means of his

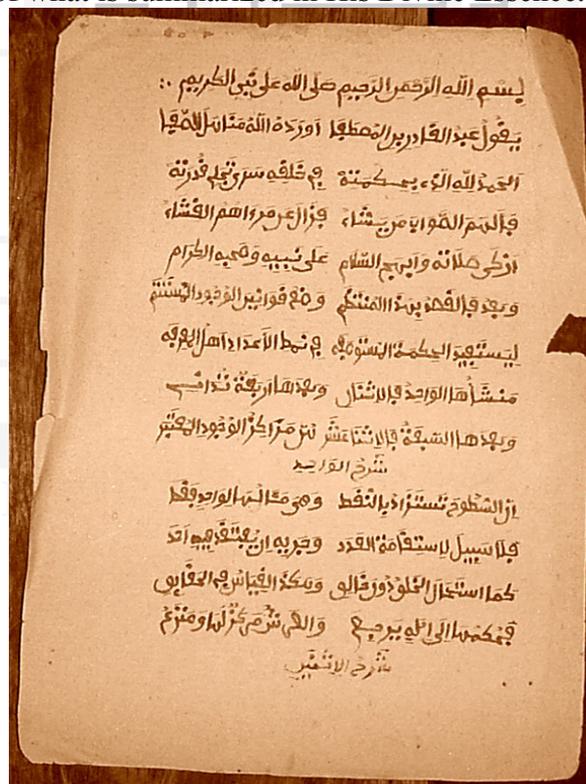
existence the original objective for this in-time created world was fulfilled by Allah.” He went on to describe the Muhammadan Reality as the spirit of the universe (*ruuh* ‘l-*‘aalam*) to which the entire universe is subjugated (*musakhkhir*), even the debased human animal nature and passions. This reality when it is treasured in the seas of the Essence of Allah ta’ala is called ‘White Pearl’ (*durrat bayda*). Abu’s-Shaykh transmitted to us a prophetic tradition on the authority of Ibn Abass that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Allah ta’ala created the Guarded Tablet from white pearl (*durrat bayda*) and then made its pages of ruby. Its pen was light and its transcription was the light of Allah, which was inscribed each day three hundred and sixty notes declaring that He creates, provides provision, causes death, brings to life, honors, humiliates and does whatever He wills.” This prophetic tradition establishes that the origin of the Guarded Tablet is from the ‘white pearl’, which means that the ‘white pearl’ existed in priority to it, making it synonymous with the Primordial Pen, the First Intellect, the Universal Spirit, and the Mother of the Book; one of the many aspects of the Muhammadan Reality. *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye’ made a reference to this reality in his *al-Munaaajaat* when he said: “...by the sanctity of the White Pearl (*bi hurmat ‘d-durrat ‘l-bayda*) and its secrets (*wa asraarihaa*).” It is to the sciences and secrets of this Muhammadan Reality which the poet, may Allah be merciful to him makes reference. Dan Tafa then cites the fifteenth of the nineteen sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis*. He brings this science into conjunction with the previous cited science by utilizing the conjunctive particle ‘waw’: “...and...” meaning order (*tarteeb*) and sequence (*taraaduf*) “...the science of the ‘Pages’...”. This means that this science follows in successive order to the science of the ‘White Pearl’. The reason for this will be made clear once this science is defined. The etymology of the expression ‘waraqa’ (the pages) is from the leaves of the tree and thorns (*waraq* ‘s-*shajara wa’s-shawk*). The singular form is ‘waraqa’ (leaflet/leaf). Allah ta’ala says: “...and a leaf (**waraq**) does not fall except that He knows it.” The expression is also utilized to describe the leaflets of books (*awraq ‘l-kutub*). It is this later meaning which the poet makes reference to as it will be made clear. Abu Hanifa defined the expression ‘waraqa’ (foliage) as anything which spreads out extensively and has at its center a rib or vein from which its edges expand. The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, the learned *sharif* Muhammad Murtada az-Zabidi in his *Taaaj ‘l-Uruus* defined the expression ‘waraqaa’ to refer to well known green shrubs used to feed livestock. Because the expression is a reference to green leaves and foliage, it is also utilized by the Arabs to refer to a person young in years, like when we say in English: ‘He is still a little green’. This means that one is considered ‘waraqa’ (green) in relationship to another thing; as if to imply that it is subsequent to it or an offspring of that thing. It is in this context that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him placed the science of the ‘Pages’ in successive order to the science of the ‘White Pearl’. It was for this reason that *Imam* al-Qaashani in his *Istalaahaat’s-Suufiyya* coined another name for this science as the ‘*iqaab*’ (heels), which is another name for recompense (*jaza’a*) or the consequence of a thing (*‘aqaba ‘s-shay*). He said: “With the *Sufis* they refer to the rational soul (*nafs naatiqa*) as ‘the Pages’ (*waraqaa*).” He defined ‘the Pages’ (*waraqaa*) as the Universal Soul (*nafs kulliy*), which is the heart of the cosmos, also known as the Guarded Tablet (*lawh mahfuudh*) and the Detailed Book (*kitaab mubeen*). In this regard ‘the Pages’ are subsequent (*ya’aqab*) to ‘the White Pearl’, in the same way that the Guarded Tablet is subsequent to the Primordial Pen, the Detailed Book is subsequent to the Mother of the Book and the Universal Soul is

subsequent to the First Intellect. Thus, ‘the Pages’ are, as its name imply, an expansion in detail of what is subsumed in general in the science of the White Pearl. The poet, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa indicated this in his al-Mandhuumat li'l-Istalihaat as-Suufiyya where he cites the meaning of the expression Guarded Tablet in the language of the *Sufis*:

“And the Tablet with the People is Absolute Light

If It is imprinted upon, then it is creational light”

We previously mentioned that ‘light’, with the People of Allah, is inseparable from existence. They are one in the same, as modern theoretical physicists have theorized, that energy (light) and mass are the same. Thus, the Pages, which is another name for the Guarded Tablet or the Universal Soul, is the detailed particularization and differentiation of existence as it unfolds from the undifferentiated comprehensive existence of the White Pearl, (or the Primordial Pen or the First Intellect). Allah willing, we will return to a discussion at length of the hierarchy of this existence and how the lower realms are a reflection, an archetype, and a locus of manifestation and a transcription of the realms above them. In the same text, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him explains what he meant by the above cited hemistich. He said: “As for the ‘Tablet’ it is an absolute light which is the locus of manifestation in creation in which is an imprint (*anba`at*) of all existing things.” Thus, the Pages is a detailing or transcription of what is summarized in the White Pearl; just as the Guarded Tablet is a detailing of transcription of what is summarized in the Primordial Pen; just as the Universal Soul is a detailing and particularization of what is summarized in the First Intellect; just as the Detailed Book is a detailing and differentiation of what is summarized in the Mother of the Book; just as the Knowledge of Allah is a detailing and differentiation of what is summarized in His Divine Essence.



Folio 1 of the Nasab'l-Mawjuudaat of the poet, Dan Tafa, photographed from the archives of *Shaykh* Bello ibn Abd'r-Raazqid ibn Uthman ibn *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qaadir Dan Tafa from the Blue Nile town of Maiurno, Sennar, Sudan.

The 'Throne', the 'Footstool' and the 'Bridal Pavilion'

The 'Black Swamp', the science of the 'Lote Tree'⁴⁵

⁴⁵ After discussing the sciences of the cosmic realities (*haqaa'iq kawniyya*), the poet, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to him then discusses the sensory realities (*haqaa'iq hisiyya*) which are the first manifestation of the orbit of forms (*falak 'l-ashkaal*). In this hemistich, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him lists the last five of the nineteen sciences of the *awliyya* or secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis*. The poet begins by citing the sixteenth of them by his words: "the 'Throne'"; by placing the expression in the genitive case (*majruur*) it makes it a conjunction of the annexed noun (*ma'tuuf 'ala mudaaf ilayhi*) 'the Pages' in the previous poetic verse. The expression 'throne' (*'arsh*) is well known in the lexicon of the linguists, the theologians, jurists, traditionists, and mystics. Its etymology is from the verb '*arasha*' (to build or construct) like when you say: '*arasha 'l-bayta*' ('He constructed a home'). Allah ta'ala says: "And your Lord revealed to the bee to take homes from the mountains and trees and from what they construct (*ya'ashuruun*)" He also says: "And We annihilated all that Pharaoh and his people had manufactured and what they had constructed (*ya'arishuun*)." As for its usage with regard to human sovereignty, *Imam* Ibn al-Mandhuur said in his *Lisan'l-Arab*: "The '*arsh*' (throne) is the official seat of a sovereign." Its plural forms are: '*araash*', '*uruush*', and '*irasha*'. Allah utilizes the expression '*arsh*' (throne) five times in the *Qur'an* as a symbol of temporal human sovereignty. In each, incidentally, it is used to refer to human kingdoms upon the African continent. Allah ta'ala says about Prophet Yusef when he officiated as a sovereign over ancient Egypt: "When they entered upon Yusef, he drew his parents near and said: 'Enter Egypt, Allah willing, safely' He raised his parents to the throne (*ala 'l-'arshi*), and they then fell down before him in prostration. He said: 'O my father! This is the interpolation of my dream of old. My Lord has made it come true, and He has shown me kindness by taking me out of prison, and bringing me out of the desert after Satan made strife between me and my brothers.'" Allah ta'ala says about the kingdom of *Bilqis* (Makeda) who ruled the lands of Abyssinia and Yemen, known as *Saba*: "Indeed I discovered a woman who ruled them who was given everything, and she possessed an immense throne (*'arsh 'adheem*)" Allah ta'ala says: "He said: O esteemed assembly which of you can bring me her throne (*'arshihaa*) before she comes to me as a Muslim?" Allah ta'ala says: "He said: 'Disguise her throne (*'arshahaa*) and we will see if she is guided or is she among those who are not guided. When she arrived, it was said to her: 'Is this your throne (*'arshika*)?' She said: 'It is as if it is it'." Ibn al-Mandhuur further indicates in the prophetic tradition how the expression '*arsh*' (throne) was used to indicate spiritual authority; in the prophetic tradition regarding the beginning of revelation: "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said (about *Jibril*): 'I then raised my head and saw him sitting upon a throne (*'arsh*) in mid air.' In another narration he said: '...between the heavens and the earth'. This means that *Jibril* was sitting upon a seat (*sareer*).'" As for those analogous verses (*ayaat mutashaabiha*) which outwardly imply the 'establishment' or 'mounting' (*istiwaa*) of the Absolute Being upon the Throne; Allah ta'ala says: "The Rahman is established upon the Throne"; He says: "Indeed your Lord Allah is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then He mounted the Throne"; He says: "He is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then He, the Rahman,

mounted the Throne”; He says: “Allah is the One who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six days and then He mounted the Throne”; He says: “He is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then He mounted the Throne.” Because Allah ta`ala revealed five verses explicitly stating that the Absolute Being or the *Rahman* is established or mounted on the Throne; it is important before moving on to examine the meaning of the expression ‘*istawaa*’ (establishment/mounting) in the opinion of the traditional scholars of *Qur’anic* exegesis (*mufasiruun*). Referring to the interpolation of establishment (*istiwaa*) in the view of the early community, *Imam* Suyuti said in his *ad-Durr ‘l-Manthuur*: “*Ibn* Mardiwayhi and al-Alkaa’iy in his *as-Sunna* related on the authority of Umm Salama, the mother of the believers, may Allah be pleased with her, who said regarding the words of Allah ta`ala: ‘...then He mounted upon the Throne’, ‘The how-ness is not comprehensible. The ‘mounting’ (*istiwaa*) is not unknown. Acknowledgment of it is belief. Denying it is disbelief.’ Al-Alkaa’iy related on the authority of *Ibn ‘Uyayna* said: ‘*Rabi`a* was once asked about the meaning of His words: ‘...He mounted upon the Throne’; ‘How did He mount it?’ He said: ‘Mounting (*istiwaa*) is not unknown. Its how-ness is incomprehensible. The message of this is from Allah. It is obligatory upon the Messenger to deliver the message. It is obligatory upon us to accept it.” *Imam* al-Qurtubi in his *al-Jamu` Li Ahkaam ‘l-Qur’an* went at length to clarify the major disagreements among the exegesis regarding this expression. He said: “Regarding this issue of ‘*istiwaa*’ (establishment/mounting) there have been many ideas and procedural approaches to this with the scholars. The diverse views of the scholars regarding this were clarified in my book called *al-Asnaa Fee Sharh Asmaa Allah al-Husna Wa Sifaatihi ‘l-Alaa*. I mentioned in it about fourteen ideas. The majority of the earlier and latter scholars hold the view that since it is obligatory to free the Creator *sub ‘hannahu* from direction (*jihat*) and partiality (*tahayyiz*), then this necessitates with the general body of the earlier scholars and the leaders among them of the latter scholars, that He *tabaaraka wa ta`ala* be absolutely free (*tanzeehi*) of any direction, and that regarding His right, the adverb ‘above’ (*fawq*), in their view, cannot apply to Him. This is because, in their view, this will necessitate wherever direction is designated that He be in a place or He is partial to a specific direction. This necessity requires that place (*makaan*), partial movement (*hayyiz haraka*), being stationary in a preferential direction (*sukuun li mutahayyiz*), alteration (*taghyeer*) and coming into existence (*huduuth*) are obligatory for Him. This critique is held by the theologians (*mutakallimuun*). However, the earliest ancestors, may Allah be pleased with them did not speak of a negation of direction to Him (*nafyi ‘l-jihat*), nor did they articulate anything about that. On the contrary, they articulated the establishment of Allah ta`ala as He Himself articulated it in His Book, and as His Messengers informed us about Himself. None of the righteous ancestors denied that He is established upon His Throne in reality. They held the view that He designated the Throne specifically for that because it is the most immense of His creation. Subsequently, they declared their ignorance of the methodology of His establishment on the Throne (*kayfiyya al-istiwaa*), and that its reality cannot be known. In that regard *Malik*, may Allah be merciful to him said: ‘Being established (*istiwaa*) is known (linguistically), but its how-ness remains unknown (*majhuul*). Inquiring into that is a heretical innovation.’ Umm Salama, may Allah be pleased with her said something similar. Thus, this extent is sufficient. However, for those who desire to increase beyond that, they then must stop with the books of the scholars. The meaning of ‘*istiwaa*’ (establishment/mounting) in the language of the Arabs is elevation (*‘uluu*) and

stability (*istiqraar*). Al-Jawhari said: ‘One can become ‘*istiwaa*’ (established) from being bent (*i`iwijaaj*). One can ‘*istiwaa*’ (be mounted) upon the back of his riding beast, that is to say ‘being stable’ (*astaqara*). One can ‘*istiwaa*’ (mount) to the heavens, that is to say ‘intend’ (*qasad*). The expression ‘*istiwaa*’ (established) also means ‘to take possession of’ (*astawalaa*) and ‘to become manifest’ (*dhahara*). In a poetic verse:

Bishr became established (*istiwaa*’) over Iraq

Without a sword or the shedding of blood

Similarly, a man can become established (*istiwaa*’) when his youth comes to an end. A thing can become established (*istiwaa*’) when it becomes balanced (*i`itidaal*). Abu Umar ibn Abd’l-Barr transmitted on the authority of Abu `Ubayda regarding the words of Allah ta`ala: ‘*The Rahman is established upon the Throne*’, this means that He is exalted (*`alaa*) and elevated (*irtafa`a*) over the Throne.’ I say: ‘The exaltedness of Allah and His elevation is an expression which speaks of the exaltedness of His glory, Attributes and sovereignty (*`ulwi majdihi wa sifaatihi wa malakuutihi*). This means that there is nothing elevated over Him, with regard to His majesty, nor is there anything elevated which shares with Him in His elevation. On the contrary, He is the Absolute Exalted One, *sub`hanahu*.” These divergent views regarding the interpolation of the ‘mounting/establishment’ (*istiwaa*’) of Allah upon the Throne were well known among the scholars of the *Bilad’s-Sudan* and were articulated in detail in the books of *`aqeeda* as well as *Qur’anic* exegesis composed by them. The poet, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to him, no doubt delved deep into these views and transmitted them to his students and descendents. We have a sample of this intergenerational transmission from one of his grandchildren in Maiurno, *Shaykh* Abd’r-Rahman Ya`bana ibn Uthman ibn Abd’l-Qadir ibn Mustafa who said in his poem *Bada`l-`Amaal* on the science of *tawheed*:

“And He my Lord is not matter or a material mass

And nor is He the totality or a part which comprises the whole

The Lord of the Throne is above the Throne, however

Without description of positioning and interconnection.”

The acceptance of the belief that Allah ta`ala is exalted above the Throne, but with a description, devoid of anthropomorphic attributes of positioning (*tamakan*), interconnection (*itisaal*) or resemblance (*tashbeeh*); is evidence that the *Fudiawa* embraced the traditional view of immanence (*tashbeeh*) of Allah ta`ala upheld by the earlier community, while at the same time upholding the most forward looking and intellectually crucial understanding of Allah’s transcendence (*tanzeeh*). It is here that we must turn to the premier authority on the science of *Qur’anic* exegesis among the *Fudiawa*, from whom most of the generation of *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, received their knowledge; *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye`, may Allah be merciful to him. He said in his *Diya`t-Ta`weel Fee Ma`ana`t-Tanzeel* regarding the words of Allah ta`ala: “*The Rahman is established upon the Throne*”; “This verse is a figurative expression (*kinaaya*) of the permeation of His power to dispose of (*nifaadh`t-tasarruf*) and implement the management of existence (*ijra`a tadbeer`l-kaa`inaat*) in accordance with the exact decrees of His judgments.” In the same text he said regarding the words of Allah ta`ala: “*Indeed your Lord Allah is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then He mounted the Throne*”; “The meaning of the throne linguistically is the official chair of a sovereign (*sareer`l-malik*). Thus, ‘mounting’ (*istiwaa*’) is an expression which is appropriate to Him from a perspective that He alone signifies and is free of any meaning of alighting (*istiqraar*) and

positioning (*tamakan*). Or it is a metaphor for the implementation of His rule (*tamtheel* 'li *ajraa* ' *ahkaamuhu*) over the whole of creation after He created it, in the same manner that a sovereign sits upon the official seat of his sovereignty after his authority is established and looks into the affairs of all those under his rule. In the Ghaayat'l-Amaani it says: 'The idea that the Throne is a corporeal entity which encompasses the remainder of corporeal bodies is an idea which has no evidence for it from the *shari`a*. It has been established that the Throne of the *Rahman* is above the heavens, and is an immense body of light'." Again he said regarding the words of Allah ta`ala: "He is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then He mounted the Throne"; "...in order to manage the whole of existence (*li tadbeer* 'l-*kaa'inaat*). This expression is a metaphor (*tamtheel*), whose analogy we discussed previously." It is clear here that the *Fudiawa* held to the view of the 'establishment/mounting' (*istiwaa*) of Allah ta`ala on the Throne to be as He Himself meant it in a manner which is appropriate to His majesty and is free of any interpolation of likeness (*tashbeeh*), how-ness (*takyeef*), positioning (*tamakan*), interconnection (*itisaal*), dependence (*irtikaaz*), and alighting (*istiqraar*). Ibn al-Mandhuur also said in reference to the Throne of Allah, that its reality has no limits or boundaries. This means that it cannot be defined using the limited definitions which apply to a throne of human or Angelic sovereignty. The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, the learned *sharif* Muhammad Murtada az-Zabidi in his Taaaj 'l-Uruus said: "The Throne of Allah ta`ala has no limit. It has been related on the authority of Ibn Abbas that he said: 'The Footstool is the place of the Two Feet, and as for the Throne it is not possible to estimate it. It says in the al-Mufradaat of ar-Raaghib: 'The Throne of Allah is that which no one among humanity knows its true reality except by its name. It is not (a corporeal entity) as some of the common people falsely imagine. If it were like that then it would of a necessity be supportive of Him, exalted be He, and not supported by Him. Allah ta`ala says: 'Indeed Allah grasps the heavens and the earth that they may not deviate, and if they were to deviate, there is not one that could grasp them after Him'." Here, ar-Raaghib indicates that the Throne of Allah is in need of Allah ta`ala and He is not in need of it, because He is now as He was in eternity before the creation of the Throne, the Footstool, the Guarded Tablet, the Primordial Pen, the Universal Soul, the First Intellect or the Primeval Waters, the Cloud, or any reality bounded by time or place. This is because Allah exists now as He has existed in pre-eternity before time and place. He created time and space in order to manifest the comprehensive and particularized differentiation of His creation. Any other interpolation of the utilization of the Throne of Allah by Allah, is a delimitation of His transcendence and applies attributes of limitation, embodiment, materialization, incarnation and anthropomorphism to Him, which is inconceivable. Because the Throne of Allah is the first of the sensory realities to become manifest, it is not surprising that its reality would be and still remains the source of innumerable disputes and debates among Muslim theologians. Allah ta`ala says: "And He is the Lord of the Tremendous Throne." It has been related on the authority of Ibn Abass, may Allah be pleased with them that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "No one can truly measure the extent of the Throne except the One who created it. For the heavens in comparison to the Throne is like a small cupola in a vast desert." It has been related on the authority of Humaad that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "When the Throne was created, it was created with one thousand tongues. Allah then created in the earth one thousand communities, each glorifying Allah with one of the tongues

from the tongues of the Throne.” It has been related on the authority of Mujaahid that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Indeed between the Throne and the Angels are seventy veils, veils of light and veils of darkness, veils of darkness and veils of light, veils of darkness and veils of light until the total number reach seventy.” Allah ta`ala says: “*And you see the Angels gathered around the Throne glorifying with the praises of their Lord.*” Allah ta`ala says: “*And the supports of the Throne of your Lord, then will be eight.*” This means the Supporters of the Throne are eight Angels or will be eight on the Day of Standing. Their names are: Dadwayaa`eel, Dadfayaa`eel, Satfayaa`eel, `Atmayaa`eel, Kamkayaa`eel, Samkayaa`eel, Sasmayaa`eel and Zanjayaa`eel, as *Shaykh* Ahmadu Bamba, may Allah be merciful to him said in his Mawaahib`l-Qudus. In it he, may Allah be pleased with said: “Whoever memorizes their names will not die except after knowing his place in Paradise.” Thus, the Throne of Allah is considered the first and the most immense of the sensory realities (*haqaa`iq hisiyya*) to exist after the cosmic realities (*haqaa`iq kawniyya*) and the Divine realities (*haqaa`iq ilaahiyya*). Because every sensory thing, has its outward exoteric certainty and its inward esoteric reality (*haqeeqa*) or meaning; it is regarding the transcendent meaning of the Throne that the scholars, jurists, theologians and mystics differ. This is understandable because it is as it is designated in the texts (*nusus*), but it also transcends it as the textual evidence states explicitly. Again the learned *sharif* Muhammad Murtada az-Zabidi said in his Taaaj`l-Uruus: “Some people say that it (the Throne) is a referent for the highest orbit (*falak a`alaa*), while the Footstool is a referent for the orbit of the stars and planets (*falak `l-kawaakib*). They take for evidence for this what was related from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace that the dimension of the sevens heavens and the seven earths juxtaposed to the dimension of the Footstool are only like a small ring thrown into a vast wilderness of the earth. And the dimension of the Footstool in relationship to that of the Throne is the same.” As for the *Sufis*, they give many diverse interpolations of the transcendent meaning of the Throne without denying its exoteric legal meaning. In his Uqlat `l-Mustawfiz, *Shaykh `l-Akbar* Ibn Arabi enumerated the thrones (*`urush*) as five: [1] the throne of life (*`arsh`l-hayaat*), which he described as the throne of determination (*`arsh`l-huwiyya*); [2] the throne of universal compassion (*`arsh `r-rahmaniyya*); [3] the immense throne (*`arsh `adheem*); [4] the generous throne (*`arsh kareem*); and [5] the majestic throne (*`arsh majeed*). For each of these thrones he cited a *Qur`anic* verse to establish their differentiation. *Shaykh* Abd`l-Kareem al-Jilli in three of his major works: the al-Insaan `l-Kaamil; the al-Isfaar `An Risaalat`l-Anwaar; and the Maraatib `l-Wujuud designated the Throne as a metaphor for several aspects of the Muhammadan Reality: the universal body (*jasm kulliy*) and the heart of the Perfect Human. It is clear that the expression ‘Throne’ has vast and unlimited interpolations with the *Sufis*. In some of his texts, the poet, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, clarified some of the problematic statements regarding the Throne made by earlier sages such as Ibn `Arabi and al-Jilli; and in some he actually expanded the transcendent horizons which the vast concept of the Throne entail. In doing this, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, merely reiterates and corroborates the boundless measurement of the Throne and its transcendence as it was defined by lexicologist such as Ibn al-Mandhuur and az-Zabidi. For example, in his al-Kashif wa`l-Bayaan the poet, may Allah be merciful to him sought to clarify some of the problematic statements made by *Shaykh* al-Jilli in his al-Insaan `l-Kaamil regarding the place of the Throne in the hierarchy of existence. In it he said: “Among the problematic viewpoints of this book is what he said in

chapter forty five on mentioning the Throne: ‘It is not known that there is an existing entity above the Throne besides the *Rahman*. However, it has been expressed that the Universal Soul which is another cognomen for the Guarded Tablet, and that the Guarded Tablet is above the Throne’. This view is contrary to the consensus. What is problematic in this opinion is that the consensus upholds that the Throne is above the Guarded Tablet, and that there exist nothing above the Throne ontologically except the *Rahman*. This opinion constitutes a well known dispute among the *Sufis*, who openly claim that the First Intellect, which is the Primordial Pen, is the closest of created realities to the reality of the Absolute Being. Then after the Pen comes the Universal Soul (*nafs kulliy*); which is the Guarded Tablet; after which comes the Universal Nature (*tabe`iyya kulliyya*); then the Universal Matter (*jawhar kulliy*); then the Universal Body (*jasm kulliy*); then the Universal Structure (*shakl kulliy*); and then the Throne. This is based upon what we mentioned previously. This view of the hierarchy of existence is well known in the works of al-Hatimi and others. What is apparent from what we have mentioned is that the Guarded Tablet precedes the Throne in the hierarchy of existence; except if the author intended by the Throne, other than the tangible Throne; such as the Throne of meaning which is an expression denoting the locus of the Self Manifestation of the Divine Essence and the locus of Divine Majesty. In that case, there is no dilemma with his words. All of these ideas indicate above-ness (*fawqiyya*) in terms of the realms of hierarchy and not the above-ness of sensory forms (*fawqiyya suuriyya*). For in that regard, the Throne is the most elevated existing sensory form without dispute. I have not transmitted these ideas in order to dispute with the author, but simply in order to clarify what is well known among the *Sufis* and the sages. Thus, the way of rectifying between these seemingly conflicting ideas is what we mentioned regarding the two conceptions of above-ness (*fawqiyyatayn*).” Here, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, makes a distinction between the sensory Throne and the Throne as transcendent meaning. The earliest reference that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, made of the transcendent meaning of the Throne was in his Mandhuumat Istilaah as-Suufiyya, when at the age of 18 he said:

“The Attributes of Divine Actions is the Footstool

While Its locus of manifestation is called His Holy Throne”

We will return to his transcendent comprehension of the Footstool (*kursi*) when discussing it. As for his commentary upon his words: ‘...while its locus of manifestation is called His Holy Throne’, he said: “As for the ‘Throne’, based upon realized verification, it is the locus of the appearance of Magnificence, the station of Glory, the exclusive locus of the Divine Essence, the Axis of the Divine Presence and Its Station. However, It is a Station which is boundless of the six directions.” Here, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, indicates that the Throne of Allah ta`ala exists, but as a locus for the manifestation of the glory of Divine Presence and the seat of universal compassion from which corporeal existence emerges. His description of the Throne as being ‘boundless of the six directions’; means that it is the point from which the six directions, form, place and time emerge in the sensory. It is the first form (*suurat awwal*) which *Imam* Wang Tai-yu referred to as the Numerical One’ (shǔ yī -数一); or the root of the ten thousand things. This reality was identified as the Muhammadan Reality (*haqaa`iq Muhammadiyya*) which was the first light to emerge from pure non existence, and from which all the created essences were created. Thus, it was first in a numerical sense and not in firstness of the beginning-less beginning of the Absolute Being. In his Qawanuun`l-Wujuud the poet, may Allah be merciful to

him utilized number as a means of delineating the principles of the emergence of existence. Regarding the number one he said:

“Indeed the areas are increased by the existence of the point

It is thus, a metaphor for the areas represented by the number one only
There is no way in this realm for multiplicity to be established

Thus, when multiplicity is searched for in it, it is commensurate as one
Just as creational realities are impossible without a Creator

Likewise quantification is impossible without the spiritual realities

Thus, the judgment of the realities returns back to the Deity

And the Throne is the nucleus of its judgments and its objective.”

Here, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him makes a correspondence between the number one, the point (*nuqat*) and the Throne of Allah as the locus where the judgments of Divine realities emerge and the heart of the emergence of the multiplicity of forms of the universe. It is for this reason that *Shaykh Abd'l-Kareem al-Jilli* referred to the Throne as a symbolic referent to the universal spirit (*ruuh kulliy*) which encompasses all creational possibilities; or as the heart of the Perfect Human (*qalb 'l-insaan 'l-kaamil*) which encompasses all of the divine realities, or as an encompassing tangible entity which surrounds the world of tangible forms or the entire universe. This is a direct reference to the heart of our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace because he is the locus of the manifestation of all the Names of beauty and majesty. It is for this reason that his *shari'a* is the most perfected and complete of all the divine laws, their summation, and the broadest of them in encompassing, since it gathers together all immanent, transcendent explicit and implicit meanings. *Imam as-Suyuti* related in his *Ziyaadat 'l-Jaami 's-Sagheer* on the authority of Ahmad on the authority of Wahb ibn Munabbah: “Indeed Allah opened the heavens for Prophet Hezakah until he was able to gaze upon the Throne. Then Hezakah said: ‘Glory be to You, how immense You are O Lord!’ Then Allah said: ‘Verily the heavens and the earth combined cannot encompass Me, but I am encompassed by the heart of the believer which is soft and at peace.’” In another narration related by at-Tabarani on the authority of Abdullah ibn 'Inaba that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Indeed Allah ta'ala has a container among the people of the earth. The container of your Lord is the hearts of His righteous servants; and the most beloved of them to Him, are those that are the softest and kindest.” *Imam al-Minawi* said in his *Fayd'l-Qadeer*: “Indeed the heart when it is soft and kind it becomes a polished mirror, which when the lights of the unseen kingdoms dawn upon it illuminates the breast and fills it with its radiation. Then the heart sees the source of advantages in the inward affairs of Allah in His creation. He thus becomes reinforced by means of the salient light of Allah ta'ala. When this light becomes clear the heart becomes perfected in its beauty and sublimity by what it achieves from its purity. It thus, becomes a locus from which Allah gazes upon His creatures. Whenever Allah gazes into his heart it increases the servant in joy, love and honor. He then encompasses him with mercy, gives him relief from the congestion of people, and fills his heart with the illuminations of divine sciences.” This is the inner significance of the Throne as the heart of the Perfect Human in the ideas of the *Sufis*. As for the sensory form of the Throne and its place in the hierarchy of the existence, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said in his *Nasab'l-Mawjuudaat*: “Realize that the highest hierarchy from this realm is the Light of Pure Divinity (*nuur ilaahi 'l-azkiy*), which manifest in summation (*bi jumla*) upon the Throne, and which manifest in detail (*bi tafseel*) upon the Footstool. The second

hierarchy is the light of Angelic spirits (*nuur ruuḥaaniy malikiy*), whose locus of manifestation is the seven heavens with respect to their inward, not with respect to their outward. The third hierarchy is the light of elevated nature (*tabee`iy`ulwiyyi*). It is at this realm that sensory form begins and the level of meanings is submerged in their sensory forms. In this realm emerges authentic density (*kithaafa ḥaqeeqiyya*). The place of its manifestation (*madḥharuhu*) is the orbital centers (*maraakiz falakiyya*) and their planetary stars (*kawaakib*). The fourth hierarchy is dark nature (*dhulmat tabee`iyya*) from which the four elements (*`anaasur`arba`a* – fire/air/water/earth) are composed. Originally, this dark nature was amalgamated and was matured (*ritqan ta`tiqihaa*) overtime by the will of the Absolute Being, who then formulated it into orbits which were then divided into four distinct orbits. That is to say, that the highest orbit was the orbit of fire (*tabaq naari*) due to the intensity of its subtlety (*shiddat lataa`if haa*). From this orbit emerged (*infa`alat*) hot entities (*ḥaraarat kawniyya*) in existence. From these entities expanded (*anbasat*) the orbit of air (*tabaq hawaa`iy*); due to the intensity of its aridity (*shiddat yabuusatihi*). From this orbit the airy entities (*haawiyya kawniyya*) were brought into existence. Then the orbit of water (*tabaq maa`iya*) was originated, from which wet entities (*ratuuba kawniyya*) were brought into existence. Then, the earthly orbit (*tabaq`ardiyya*) was established due to the intensity of its density and mass (*shiddat kithaafatihi wa thaqalihi*). Upon this earthly orbit fell the water, and from this cold entities (*baruuda kawniyya*) were brought into existence. Just as the seven heavenly orbits have spirits which manage it, which are the Angels; likewise, the orbits of these four elements have spirits which manage them, and they are the *jinn*. Realize that human beings possess four states (*`arba`a aḥwaaal*) which distinguish them from other creatures: [1] a cognizant reflective state (*ḥaal naadhira*); [2] a rational articulate state (*ḥaal naatiqa*); [3] a reciprocal receptive state (*ḥaal qaabila*); and [4] a controlling sovereign state (*ḥaal maalika*). It is not hidden to anyone who possesses substantiated reason, how these four states are traced back to their respective four elements (*`anaasir*); then to their respective orbital centers (*maraakiz*); then to their respective subtle natures (*lataa`if*); and finally to their respective divine realities (*ḥaqaa`iq*).” Thus, humanity is a gathering of all the higher and lower realities and the inward heart of humanity is the only conduit in nature which can comprehend the reality of the Absolute Being and His creation in its fullness. It is for this reason some of the *Sufis* refer to the heart of the Perfect Human as the Throne of Allah. In his *Kashif`l-Ghitta*, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him elaborated on this inner reality of the heart of the Perfect Human by his words: “We say about the expression ‘the Throne’, that it is the all encompassing orbit (*falak muheet*) which surrounds all the orbits of meaning (*ma`anawiyya*) and sensory forms (*suuriyya*). The expansion of this orbit is the place of the manifestation of universal compassion (*makaana raḥmaaniyya*). The self identification (*nafs huwiyya*) of this orbit is the absoluteness of existence (*mutlaq`l-wujuud*), whether from the perspective of its quintessence or judgment. This orbit has an outward reality and an inward reality. As for its inward reality it is the world of holy sanctity (*`alam`l-quduus*) which is the world of the Names of the Absolute Being and His Attributes. As for its outward reality it is the world of humanity (*`alam`l-ins*), which is the locus of immanence (*tashbeeh*), embodiment (*tajseem*) and formulation (*tasweer*).” After discussing the realities of the sensory Throne and its transcendent meanings, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him discusses the seventeenth of the nineteen sciences of the *awliyya* or secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis*, which he calls: “...the **‘Footstool’**.” The etymological root of the Footstool is from *‘takarras’* (to

consolidate), which is the foundation (*'asl*) of something, the root of a thing, or that by which something is strengthened (*sulliba*). The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, the learned *sharif* Muhammad Murtada az-Zabidi in his *Taaaj 'l-Uruus* said that the expression '*takarrasa*' means to place something (*tawaadi*) or to amass something (*taraakam*) on top of something else, like when you say: '*takarrasa 'ussu 'l-banaa*' ('He consolidated the foundation of the building.') Some of the linguists say that the expression '*kursi*' is attributed to the origin or basis of a kingdom (*kirs 'l-mulk*), which means its foundation (*'asl*). Allah ta`ala says: "*His Footstool is as wide as the heavens and the earth.*" *Imam* at-Tabarani relates on the authority of Ibn Abass who said about the meaning of this verse: "What He means is that His Footstool is more immense (*'aadhim*) than the seven heavens and seven earths." This immensity is a direct reference to the tangible magnitude of the Footstool as a corporeal entity, but also to the immensity of the reality which it represents. Thus, the Footstool, like the Throne, has an outward tangible corporeal reality well known and accepted by all Muslims, and it has a transcendent reality which it represents as a symbol. With reference to its tangible exoteric reality, it has been related on the authority of Wabb that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Between the Angels of the Footstool and the Angels of the Throne are seventy veils of darkness, then seventy veils of ice, and then seventy veils of light. The thickness of each veil is equal to the distance of five hundred years." Both Ibn al-Mundhir and Ibn Abi Hatim related on the authority of Ibn Abass who said: "If the seven heavens and seven earths were spread out and then connected end to end, they would not be wider than it, (meaning the Footstool) except that they would be like a bracelet thrown in a vast wilderness." Clearly, these above prophetic traditions establish the corporeal existence of the Footstool and delineate its size in comparison to the rest of existence. As for its transcendent reality, it has been related by Abdu ibn Humayd, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim and al-Bayhaqi on the authority of Ibn Abass who said regarding the words of Allah ta`ala: "*His Footstool is as wide as the heavens and the earth*"; 'His Footstool is His Knowledge (*'ilmuhu*)." In other narrations the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace describes the Footstool as the place upon which Allah ta`ala places His Foot or Two Feet. We previously discussed at length the meaning of the 'Foot' and the 'Two Feet' of Allah ta`ala, and how *tawheed* demands that we disassociate Allah ta`ala from possessing attributes of in-time creation. Thus, any reference to immanent attributes (*sifaat tashbeeh*) of Allah ta`ala in the *Qur'an* or sound prophetic traditions must be extricated from its outward linguistic meaning and His transcendence (*tanzeeh*) must take preference. Regarding, this it has been related by al-Khateeb in his *at-Tarikh* on the authority of Ibn Abass who said: "The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was asked about the words of Allah ta`ala: '*His Footstool is as wide as the heavens and the earth*'; and he said: 'His Footstool is the place of His Foot, and the extent of the Throne is incapable of being measured'." In another narration by Abd ibn Humayd, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim and others on the authority of Ibn Abass that he said: "The Footstool is the place of the Two Feet; and no one has the capacity to truly measure the extent of the Throne." In his *ad-Durr 'l-Manthuur* *Imam* as-Suyuti cites that these prophetic traditions and others like them which describe the Footstool as being the place or locus for the Foot or Two Feet of the Absolute Being indicates that the Footstool exists but its existence represents a more transcendent hidden reality. He said: "These are related by way of metaphor (*isti'aara*), because Allah is above resemblance to creation. This is made clear by what Ibn Jareer related on the authority

of ad-Duhaak regarding the same verse: ‘The Footstool which is located below the Throne is like that upon which sovereigns place their feet’.” Again the *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, the learned *sharif* Muhammad Murtaḍa az-Zabidi in his Taaaj ‘l-Uruus said: “Ibn Abass, may Allah be pleased with both of them said regarding the exegesis of His words *‘izza wa jalla*: ‘*His Footstool is as wide as the heavens and the earth*’; ‘The Footstool is His Knowledge’. Thus, this word is considered a figurative expression (*majaaz*). It has been transmitted by az-Zamakhshariy that what is meant by His Footstool is His dominion (*mulk*). Some people said that His Footstool represents His Omnipotence (*qudra*) with which He grasps the heavens and the earth. They said that this meaning is like your saying: *‘ij`al li hadha ‘l-haa`it kursiyaan*’ (‘Make for this wall a buttress’); which means to construct for it something by which the wall is supported (*ya`amuduhu*) and by which it is held up (*yumsakuhu*). This interpolation is similar to the words of Ibn Abass, may Allah ta`ala be pleased with both of them, because His Knowledge which is wider than the heavens and the earth does not go beyond the meaning of it grasping or encompassing the heavens and the earth.” It is for this reason the Arabic linguists utilize the expression ‘*kiraasa*’, which is taken from the same root of ‘*kursi*’; to refer to the people of erudition and learning. And the expression ‘*kurraasa*’ (a condensed text) means a small book made of ten pages, but which has condensed or converged within it (*takarrasat feehaa*) a vast amount of knowledge. Let us now, turn to the people of spiritual unveiling to examine the meaning of the Footstool of Allah ta`ala, in the technical terminology of the *Sufis*. We cited earlier that *Shaykh al-Akbar* Ibn `Arabi said in his at-Ta`areefaat that the Footstool being the locus of the Two Feet of Allah ta`ala means the place of the commands and prohibitions (*mawdu` ‘l-amr wa`n-nahyi*), symbolized by them being under the ‘Two Feet’ of the Absolute Being. In his Cheng-Chiao Chen-Ch`uan, *Imam* Wang Tai-yu refers to this realm as ‘the Heavenly Mandate’ (tiān mìng -天命); or that realm in which the destinies, fates and life spans of all created entities are allotted and apportioned. The *Sufis* refer to the world of command and prohibition (*`aalam ‘l-amr wa`n-nahyi*) as simply the world of the command (*`aalam ‘l-amr*), since both commands and prohibitions fall linguistically under verbal imperatives (*fi`l ‘l-amr*). It is for this reason that the concept of ‘the Foot’ and ‘the Two Feet’ of the Absolute Being are interchangeable in the text of the prophetic traditions as well as in the technical language of the *Sufis*. In another sense the Footstool is the place of the manifestation of the Divine Acts of the Absolute Being, because everything in existence, with the exception of Adam, the Primordial Pen, the Throne and the Paradise of Aden, which Allah ta`ala created with His ‘Two Hands’; came into existence from the world of command – ‘Be’ (*kun*). Allah ta`ala says: “*He is the Originator of the heavens and he earth, and when He decrees a command, He merely says to it: ‘Be!’ and it is.*” In other words, the Divine Actions of Allah ta`ala are manifested in His commands, and His commands are one, but have two aspects: [1] commands, and [2] prohibitions. Allah ta`ala says: “*Glory be to Him who created paired opposites of everything; from what the earth produces; from yourselves and from what you do not know.*” Everything in existence is paired and is a place of the Self Manifestation of the commands and prohibitions of the Absolute Being; which in turn are the Self Disclosure of the Beautiful (*jamaal*) and Majestic (*jalaal*) Acts of Allah, which in turn are One with His Beautiful and Majestic Names and Attributes, which in turn are eternal with the Eternity of His Divine Essence. Allah ta`ala says: “*To Allah belong the heavens and the earth and to Allah returns the commands of affairs.*” *Shaykh* Abd`l-Kareem al-Jilli said in his al-Insaan ‘l-Kaamil: “The Footstool

is an expression referring to the manifestation (*tajalliy*) of all the Divine Attributes of Actions (*sifaat fi`iliyya*), which is the realm of the appearance of Divine decrees (*madhhar`l-iqtidaar`l-ilaahiy*) and the locus of the influence of the commands and prohibitions (*mahal nufuudh`l-amr wa`n-nahyi*). Subsequently, the first endeavor (*tawajjah*) of the subtleties of the Absolute Being (*raqaa`iq haqiyya*) in the profusion of creational realities (*fee ibraaz haqaa`iq khalqiyya*) is in the form of the Footstool.” This concept was reiterated by the poet, Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to him in his Mandhuumat Istilaah as-Suufiyya where he said: “As for the ‘Footstool’ it is an idiomatic expression of the locus of manifestation of the totality of the Attributes of Divine Actions. It is a locus of the influential authority of the commands and prohibitions, as well as the locus of the appearance of Divine Power.” With regard to the Perfect Human (*insaan kaamil*), the Footstool is an expression referring to the Universal Soul and its detailed knowledge. It is in the ‘soul’ (*nafs*) that the commands and prohibitions take root. When these two take root in the soul, they transmute into two energies of repulsion and attractions, which in turn germinate the four elements (fire/air/water/earth) which in turn generate the eight paired energies (opening/closing; expanding/contracting; penetrating/receding; and rising-falling/round-smooth), and as a result the multitude of phenomenal sensory existence unfolds dynamically like in a fission, where the one becomes two and the two paired opposites interact and generate four then eight and so forth in an instantaneous chain reaction. All of these phenomenal sensory dynamics emerge from the Actions of Allah symbolized by His Footstool. In discussing the realities of the sensory Footstool and its transcendent meanings, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him discloses the secret of the paired opposites and the drive to become one again. In the language of the people of Allah, this is symbolized in creation by the private and secretive act of copulation. It is for this reason that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him now discusses the eighteenth of the nineteen sciences of the *awliyya* or secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis*, by his words: “...and the **Bridal Pavilion...**” This expression, ‘*al-minssa*’, is taken from the verb ‘*nassa*’, which means to elevate a thing (*raf`u`s-shay`*). It has a technical meaning with the scholars of prophetic tradition, when one says: ‘*nassa`l-hadeetha*’ (‘He expressed the prophetic tradition.’); and means everything which can be properly expressed and comprehended of meaning from the Book and the *Sunna*, regardless if these expressions and comprehensions are apparent, textual, derived genuinely from its commentary, extracted metaphorically from its general meaning, or derived from some specific expression in the text. Ibn al-Mandhuur said in his Lisan`l-Arab that: “Amr ibn Dinar once said: ‘I have never seen a man more expressive of the prophetic traditions (*anssa li`l-hadeeth*) than az-Zuhri.’ This means that he was the most ascendant (*arfa`*) in the verification of the prophetic traditions and the one who was most cognizant of tracing them back through their chains of authority (*asnad*).” Thus, ‘*nassa*’ (express) applies to anything which becomes manifest or apparent (*adhhar*). The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, the learned *sharif* Muhammad Murtada az-Zabidi said in his Taaaj`l-Uruus that the origin of ‘*nassa*’ as a noun refers to the furthest limit of a thing (*aqṣaa as-shay`*), its utmost threshold (*ghaayatuhu*) or its final goal (*muntahaahu*). The expression ‘bridal pavilion’ (*minsat*) used by the poet, Dan Tafa, is an elevated canopy upon which a new bride sits raised above other women in order for her to be seen by them. It is also used in a metaphorical sense to refer to becoming well known or achieving fame, like when you say: ‘*wudi`a fulaanun`ala`l-minsat*’ (‘So-and-so was placed upon the bridal pavilion’); in order to indicate that this person achieved renown and fame. It is clear from the above that ‘the

Bridal Pavilion' is related to becoming manifest, apparent, a coming out, so to speak, of something that was previously concealed. It also implies a coming together of two things, a marriage, a meeting or festive gathering in order to make something known. In his *Istalaahaat as-Suufiyya* *Shaykh* al-Qaashani utilized the plural form 'mins_{aa}t' to indicate that there were multiple usages for the expression Bridal Pavilions. He said: "The expressions the loci of total manifestations (*majaaliy kulliyya*), the realms of ascension (*mu_{ta}ali`u*) and the Bridal Pavilions (*mins_{aa}t*) are all expressions referring to the places of the appearance of the keys of the unseen (*mad_{ha}ahir mifaateeh`l-ghuyyub*) which open the locked and sealed gates that lie between the outward of existence and its inward. They are five levels of manifestation..." For our purposes, I will only cite, the last of the five loci of manifestation, since this was the meaning addressed by the poet, Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to him. He used the singular form 'mins_at' in order to specify that he was referring to the last of the five manifestations, which is the realm after the world of command, where existence is given form. Al-Qaashani described it as: "...the locus of the manifestation of the world of the corporeal kingdom (*majalla`aalam`l-mulk*) by means of the disclosing of form (*bi`l-kashf as-suuriy*), the manifestation of the astonishing mysteries of the world of similitude (*`ajaa`ib`aalam`l-mithaal*); and the manifestation of the cosmic management of the lower worlds (*mudabbaraat kawniyya fee`aalam sufliy*)." Thus, the science of Bridal Pavilion in the language of the *Sufis* is a reference to what emerges from the creational realities below the world of the command (*`aalam`l-amr*), the Footstool. It is the unlocking of the keys of the unseen which was hidden and treasured between the letters 'kaaf' and 'nuun' in the command of Allah – 'Be!' (*kun*); where the corporeal kingdom was given form in accordance with the bi-polar mandate which manifested from the Footstool. It is in this realm that corporeal existence burst forth and became manifest by taking on form. Naturally, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him follows this with the ensuing realm which follows the symbolic world of the Bridal Pavilion by discussing the last of the nineteen sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of secrets attained through the path of the *Sufis*. He said: "...the 'Black Swamp..." The expression 'wa as-sabkhati' is a conjunctive phrase (*ma`tuuf*) made genitive (*majruur*) by being conjuncted to the genitive phrase in the preceding hemistich. The sign of its genitive is the apparent 'kasra' at its end. The expression 'as-sawda'i' is an adjective (*na`at*) of 'as-sabkhati', made genitive by virtue of being an adjective (*majruur bi man`uutihi*) of a genitive noun, since the adjective of a genitive noun is also genitive (*man`uut`l-majruur majruuran*). The sign of its genitive is the apparent 'kasra' at its end. It is interesting to note here, that in two of the manuscripts of this poem in my possession as well as the edited Arabic of this poem published in a paper by one of the learned descendents of the poet in Sokoto, shows some discrepancy regarding the wording of this section of the poem. The primary manuscript I used for this work was the manuscript digitized from the home of my teacher, *Shaykh* Muhammad Bello ibn Abd'r-Raaziq ibn *Shaykh* Uthman ibn Abd'l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa, in Maiurno, Sennar in the Republic of Sudan. In this manuscript the poet utilizes the Arabic expression 'as-subkha as-sawdaa' (the Black Swamp or marsh). The second manuscript, which I digitized from a village on the southern outskirts of the Salame', called Awera in Northern Nigeria. It was from the home of *Malam* Abd'l-Qaadir ibn Muhammad Sanbu ibn Maasiran ibn *Malam* Abdullahi Bayero ibn Abd'l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa. In this manuscript the poet utilizes the Arabic expression 'as-sabhat as-sawdaa' (the Black Rosary or beads). This was the same expression utilized in a paper by *Malam* Muhammad al-Amin ibn

Muhammad at-Tahir Salame' ibn Malam Muhammad al-Amin ibn Maasiran ibn Muhammad Mu'allahyede ibn *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa; called '*Masaahimat as-Shaykh Abd'l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa Fee Thiqaafat'l-'Arabiyya*'; presented at 'the Conference of the Scholars of the Sokoto Government', held in Sokoto, Nigeria, July 23-25, 2004, to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the Sokoto Uthmaniyya Caliphate. In this concise biography of the poet, the author included an edited and marginally annotated version of the poem. Normally, for eschatological reasons, when I have two conflicting texts from two manuscripts taken from the descendents of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye' in northern Nigeria and the Republic of Sudan, I give precedence to the text from the Sudan, unless there is some compelling circumstantial or more corroborating evidence to do otherwise. In this case, the paper presented by Malam Muhammad al-Amin gave me the pretext to disregard the expression 'the Black Swamp' utilized in the Maiurno manuscript, and to consider it a scribal error. However, when I examined the writings of the scholars of spiritual unveiling who systematized these sciences, such as *Shaykh* Ibn 'Arabi, *Shaykh* al-Qunawi, *Shaykh* Abd'l-Kareem al-Jilli, *Imam Shaykh* al-Qaashani and others I discovered that both expressions: 'the Black Swamp' and 'the Black Rosary' are interchangeable and has the same meaning in the lexicon of the *Sufis*. This is remarkable because it indicates that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, utilized both expressions when narrating the poem, but over time, the transposable usage of the two terms was perhaps forgotten; or one was given precedence in transcription over the other and its synonym was preserved and transmitted orally. I cannot say for a surety that this was the case. In the absence of corroboration from the scholars, I can only make an assumption. Because both expressions are analogous, I retained the expression '*subkha sawdaa*' (the Black Swamp) in the Arabic text, but will elaborate on its synonym '*sabha sawdaa*' (the Black Rosary) in this commentary, demonstrating how both terms are interchangeable in *Sufic* mystical lexicon. Thus, the adjective '*sawdaa*' (black) which describes both expressions, is plural for '*aswad*' (black/dark), and in both cases indicates something whose origin is unknown or unseen, similar to how modern physicists utilize the adjective 'black' and 'dark' to describe black holes or original dark matter. As for the expression '*sabha sawdaa*' (the Black Rosary), it takes its etymology from the verb '*sabaha*' (to swim, to laud, or to glorify). These diverse meanings of the verb are joined in the words of Allah ta'ala when He says: "*wa kullun fee falakin yasbahuun*" ('Everything is in an orbit swimming [or glorifying]'). This is appropriate since in this pre-temporal realm, glorification (*tasbeeh*) is the sole dynamic which unifies existence. Allah ta'ala says: "*Indeed those with your Lord are not arrogant from worshipping Him; they glory Him and to Him they prostrate.*" He says: "*There is nothing except that it glorifies Him with its praises, however, you cannot comprehend its mode of glorification.*" As for the meaning of '*sabha sawdaa*' (the Black Rosary) in the language of the scholars of spiritual unveiling, *Imam* Ali ibn Muhammad as-Shareef al-Jurjaani said in his *Kitaab 't-Ta'reefaat*: "The 'rosary' (*sabha*) is a reference to the atomic particles (*habaa*') whose essential nature is dark (*dhaatuhu dhulma*); in which Allah created creation, and then showered upon it something from His light. Whomever that light affected became guided and whoever erred regarding it went astray." Thus, 'the Black Rosary' is a synonym for the original primeval atomic particles in which Allah ta'ala opened the corporeal bodies of the cosmos. *Shaykh 'l-Akbar* Ibn 'Arabi said in his *at-Tadbeeraat'l-Ilaahiyya* that this dark world of undifferentiated atomic particles (*habaa*') is a realm that is distinguished from the realm of pure light, which he

delineates as the First Intellect (*`aql awwal*), and that between the world of darkness and light lie the Universal Soul (*nafs kulliyya*) like a perimeter of both darkness and light (*sudfa*). *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Ali at-Tahaanawi in his *Kashaaf Istilaah'l-Funuun wa'l-Uluum* as well as *Shaykh* al-Qaashani in his *Istalaahaat's-Suufiyya* said: "In the technical language of the *Sufis* it, (the *sabha*) is a reference to the subatomic particles (*habaa'*) which are also called 'original matter' (*hayuuli*) because its existence was indistinct (*ghayr waadiha*) and undifferentiated (*laa mawjuuda*) in its essence but not its form." As for the expression 'subkha' (swamp or marsh), it takes its root from the verb 'sabakha' (to sleep, be at rest, or take one's leisure); like when you say: 'sabakhtu 'n-nawma' ('I slept long.'). The meaning of 'subkha' (swamp or marsh) is an area overspread with water to the extent that it is unusable and uninhabitable by humans. This expression is appropriate because a marsh, swamp or bog is the best description which can be given to describe undifferentiated pre-temporal existence which is in, what Izutsu called, 'an extreme degree of rarefaction'. This narrative of pre-temporal existence as formless watery primordial substance is not unique to Islam. It is a concept which pervades ancient cultures all over the globe. In ancient Chinese culture the subtle Way (*dào* -道) or the Non-Ultimate (*wú jí* 無) is depicted as the black nameless void from which the ten thousand things emerged. It is significant that black is the color which represent water in Chinese cosmology. Similarly, in ancient Egypt (*Kemit*), the black watery abyss of *Nun* is the realm from which differentiated existence emerged. This belief was transmitted from Egyptian cosmology to the majority of Black African ethnicities as they scattered from the Nile valley into Sub Saharan African. For example, the Yoruba, believe that in the beginning corporeal existence was nothing but a marshy wet wasteland before heavens and earth were created from this dark watery void. The Dogon, the Bambara, as well as the pagan Fulfulde` believe that the universe was originally made from symbolic enigmatic water signs. Among the Tongo and Zulu of southern Africa as well as the Bantu of east and central Africa, they believe that the universe originally emerged from murky marsh reeds. In Islamic cosmology, the cognomen 'Nuun', not unlike the ancient Egyptian 'Nun', is used to indicate the Primeval Waters symbolized as Black Ink (comprehensive knowledge). Allah ta'ala says: "*Nuun. By the Primordial Pen and what they record.*" The *Nuun* is the dark formless primordial substance from which Allah created everything living, and as undifferentiated pre-temporal existence it represents the potential knowledge of existence concealed in the black Primordial Ink. As for the expression 'subkha sawdaa' (the Black Swamp) it was with *Imam* Ahmad an-Naqshabandi in his *Jaami' 'l-Usuul Fee Awliyya wa Anwaa`ihim wa Kalimaat 's-Suufiyya* that we see it utilized as a synonym of 'sabha sawdaa' (the Black Rosary); where he said: "The Swamp (*subkha*) is a reference to the atomic particles (*habaa'*) also called 'original matter' (*hayuuli*) because its existence was indistinct (*ghayr waadiha*) and undifferentiated (*laa mawjuuda*) in its essence but not its form." It is clear that the author used the same definition for the 'subkha sawdaa' (the Black Swamp) which others gave for the 'sabha sawdaa' (the Black Rosary). Both expressions are thus referents to the original undifferentiated subatomic particles (*habaa'*) or 'original matter' (*hayuuli*) symbolized by the 'anqaa' (the Griffon) which like the legendary mythical bird it represents, it cannot be quantified or measured except as an abstract representation or form which binds the whole of creation, like the basic particles that modern theoretical physicist now called Hick's boson, or 'the God particles'. These mysterious particles are known to exist but they cannot yet be precisely located by physicists. *Imam* al-Jurjaani said

about this original matter that it is undifferentiated form which has no essential nature (*laa `ayna lahu*). It is called the ‘*`anqaa*’ (the Griffon) which is a symbolic designation for ‘original matter’ (*hayuuli*), as we discussed previously. This original subatomic matter or dust particles can ‘hear’ (*sama`a*), that is to say, it is receptive to the Divine command, but does not have differentiated existence (*laa wujuud lahu fee `aynihi*). *Shaykh* Abd’l-Kareem al-Jilli in his Maraatib’l-Wujuud tells us that it was *Amir’l-Mu`mineen* Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him who was the first to designate this undifferentiated world of forms as the ‘*habaa*’ (atomic particles). We are repeatedly brought back to a primordial pre-temporal reality described as undifferentiated dust particles, a formless watery primordial substance, a watery void, a swamp, or a cloud with which the Absolute Being brought corporeal existence into being. In his al-Fuutuhaat ‘l-Makiyya, Ibn `Arabi said that these particles are a dark substance (*jawhar mudhlim*) which filled the empty void with its essence, then the Absolute Being made a Self Disclosure of His Name – *an-Nuur* (the Light) upon this dark substance causing its darkness, by which he means its non-existence (*`idam*), to dissipate; and this original substance became described with the attributes of existence and took the form of pre-Adamic human being. It is for this reason that the People of Allah call this realm of original existence the Macrocosmic Human (*insaan kabeer*) and they designate what was extracted from it as the microcosmic human (*insaan sagheer*), in which Allah placed all of the realities of the macrocosmic worlds. This is what is meant by the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, related by Ahmad, al-Bukhari, Muslim and at-Tabarani on the authority of Abu Hurayra, Abd ibn Humayd on the authority of Abu Sa`id al-Khudri, ad-Daraqutni and al-Khateeb on the authority of Ibn Umar: “Allah created Adam on his mode/form (*suura*).” The scholars disagree regarding the third person possessive pronoun – ‘his’ in this prophetic tradition. Some hold the view that this pronoun is attributed to the Absolute Being, however with a meaning appropriate to His exalted transcendence without designating how-ness; where the Adamic creature is the *Khalif* of Allah ta`ala and is inwardly the locus of the Self Disclosure of all the Divine Names. However, the majority of the People of Allah say that this pronoun refers to pre-Adamic man, the macrocosmic human, or the Muhammadan Reality which was the first light to emerge from the seas of the Essence and is the gathering of all the Divine Names. Thus, Adam, the microcosmic man was created on the form or mode of this primordial macrocosmic man. Subsequently, what was condensed in undifferentiated form, like a seed (*habaa*) in the Muhammadan Light, became particularized and differentiated in the Adamic man, who then carried the DNA of this pre-temporal original man until Allah manifested him as the Seal of the Prophets and Messengers, the crown of creation and the reason for the creation of existence. The poet, Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to him further elaborates on the designation of this world of undifferentiated original dark matter, particles or formless as: “...the science of the ‘Lote Tree.’” The phrase ‘*ilmi `s-sudrati*’ linguistically is a governing noun (*mudaaf*) with its governed noun (*mudaaf ilayhi*) of a genitive construction. The governing noun ‘*ilm*’ is made genitive by virtue of being a substitute of the embodying thing for the thing embodied (*badal `l-ishtimaal*) of the genitive noun ‘*as-sabkhati*’, since a noun substituted for a genitive noun (*ism majruur*) follows the noun it substitutes in its inflection (*tabi`uhu fee `iraabihi*), making it also genitive. The sign of its genitive is the apparent ‘*kasra*’ at its end. The governed noun ‘*as-sudrati*’ is made genitive (*majruur*) by virtue of being a governed noun in a genitive construction (*mudaaf ilayhi*). Thus, the entire

phrase means: ‘Among the sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of secrets is the science of the ‘Black Swamp’, that is to say, the science of the ‘Lote Tree’. The expression ‘*sudrat*’ (lote tree) takes its root from the verb ‘*sadira*’ (to become dazzled, confounded or perplexed) and is a synonym of the verb ‘*tahayyara*’ (to become confused); like when you say: ‘*sudira baṣaruhu bi ‘s-shamsi*’ (His sight was dazzled by the sun). In a famous pre-Islamic poem by Umayyah ibn Abi ‘s-Ṣalt the expression ‘*sadir*’ is used as a proper name for the sea. This is significant because it connects the origin of the expression with the primordial waters for which it is a substitute phrase. The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, the learned *sharif* Muhammad Murtaḍa az-Zabidi in his *Taaaj ‘l-Uruus* noted that the word is expressed with the letter ‘*seen*’ inflected with both ‘*kasra*’ and ‘*damma*’; and is a species of lote tree which exist throughout North Africa and the Middle East. Its leaves, fruit and bark has long been used for food, medicine, utensils and furniture and in many ancient cultures it is considered a sacred plant. In fact, in pre-Islamic times the Arabs took a lote tree as a deity to be worshipped, as *Sultan* Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* Uthman related in the introduction of his *Kitaab ‘l-Dhikra* where he said: “It has been related by Ibn Is’haq on the authority of Abu Waaqidi al-Laythi who said: ‘We went out with the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace to the battle of Hunayn. The disbelievers of the Quraysh and others besides them from among the Arabs possessed a massive green lote tree which they called ‘the decorated tree’ (*dhat ‘l-anwaaat*). They used to come to the tree every year, fastening their weapons to it and offering devotion to it by performing animal sacrifices. As we were traveling, we too saw this massive green tree. Then one of us called from the road: O Messenger of Allah, produce for us a decorated tree as they have a decorated tree. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said to them: ‘Allah is the greatest. I swear by the One in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, you have uttered the same words that the people of Musa said to him. ‘*Make for us a deity as they have deities. He said: You are indeed an ignorant people*’. This custom is among the customs that you will certainly commit imitating those who came before you, until if one of them had entered the hole of a lizard, you will certainly enter it. And, if one of them were to openly have sex with his woman in the street, you will certainly do the same’.” This tree is also sited several times in the *Qur’an*, in reference to the ultimate boundary between the spiritual ascension and the Absolute Being. Allah ta’ala says: “*For, he was two bows length in distance or closer. Then He revealed to His servant what He revealed to him. The heart did not deny what it saw. Will you then dispute with him concerning what he sees? And he saw him, yet another time; by the Lote Tree of the utmost boundary, near it which is the Garden of the Abode. When that which enshrouded the Lote Tree enshrouded it, the sight did not turn aside nor did it go astray. He indeed saw one of the greatest signs of his Lord.*” *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye’ tells us in his *Diya’t-Ta’weel* that the ‘*sidrat ‘l-muntahaa*’ in this verse is a jujube tree (*shajara nabq*) which is located to the right of the Throne that no one among the Angels or anything besides them have ever passed beyond and no one knows what lies beyond it. It is related by al-Bukhari that this tree is located beyond the seventh heaven, is multicolored, it has leaves the size of elephant ears, and fruit the size of large clay pottery. It was at this point that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace reached standing alone and gazed with his heart upon the Face of Allah described as the ‘Greatest Signs’. *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Ali at-Tahaanawi in his *Kashaaf Istilaah ‘l-Funuun wa’l-‘Uluum* said that the ‘*sidrat ‘l-muntahaa*’ is the same tree cited in chapter *ar-Ra’d* called ‘*Tuubaa*’ where Allah

ta'ala says: "Those who believe and make their hearts tranquil with the remembrance of Allah. Indeed with the remembrance of Allah do hearts become tranquil. Those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them will be Tuubaa and an excellent ending." In the Mu'aarij'n-Nabuwwa Fee Madaarij 'l-Futuwwa of *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Faraahi the author related that on the night of the Ascension, when the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant was brought to the Lote Tree of the furthest limit, Jibril hesitated and separated himself from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. The Prophet, then asked: 'What is the reason that you stopped? Is this the proper time for a genuine friend to abandon his companion? Jibril responded: 'If I were to take another step further I would burst into flames.' In another narration Jibril said: 'I leave the beloved with the Beloved'; and then pushed the Prophet, until he reached a place where no created being had ever reached. From beneath the Lote Tree emerged four rivers: two hidden rivers and two apparent rivers. As for the hidden rivers they flow within Paradise. As for the apparent rivers, they are the Nile and the Euphrates rivers. In the language of the People of Allah there is a distinction between the transcendent and symbolic meaning of the '*sidrat 'l-muntahaa*' (the lote tree of the furthest limit) and simply the '*sidrat*'. *Shaykh* Al-Qaashani said in his Istalaahaat's-Suufiyya describing the '*sidrat 'l-muntahaa*' as the great isthmus (*barzakhiiyya kubra*) at which the creational totality along with its dynamics and sciences end. It is the termination of the matrices of the Names after which there is no spiritual rank above it. *Shaykh* Abd'l-Kareem al-Jilli said in his al-Insaan 'l-Kaamil the '*sidrat 'l-muntahaa*' is the final station at which created beings reach in their journey to Allah ta'ala, and what lies after it is the station specific for the Absolute Being alone. There created beings have no place and it is impossible to pass beyond the '*sidrat 'l-muntahaa*'. This is because creation at that level becomes pulverized (*mashuuq*), obliterated (*mamhuuq*), effaced (*madmuus*), eradicated (*matmuus*) and stripped of everything except pure non-existence (*muhallaq bi 'l-idam 'l-mahad*) without any attribute of existence after the Lote Tree. This interpolation is remarkable for our purposes because this description is similar to what the poet, Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to him described in his Ma'rifaat'l-Haqq as the final stage of the four stages of the path which he called the source of certainty (*ayn'l-yaqeen*), the very truth of certainty (*haqq'l-yaqeen*), or the very reality of certainty (*haqeeqat'l-yaqeen*). He said: "The fourth station is the station of Self-Manifestation of the Divine Essence (*tajalli 'dh-Dhaat*). This experiential knowledge is the utmost limit and the most exalted form of Self-Manifestation (*aqsaal-ghaayaat wa 'aalaa't-tijalliyyaat*). And there is no way for the servant to attain this level of knowledge except after the spiritual pulverization (*as-sahqi*) and the spiritual obliteration (*al-mahwi*) of all the essences. For the servant first becomes annihilated from himself (*fayanfaa awalan 'an nafsiihi*) by the Self-Manifestation of his Lord (*bi dhuhuur Rabbihi*). Then secondly he becomes annihilated from his Lord (*yanfaa thaaniyan 'an Rabbihi*) by the Self-Manifestation of the secrets of His lordship (*bi dhuhuur sirri rubbuubiyatihi*). Then thirdly he becomes annihilated from the relationships and correlations of His Divine Attributes (*yanfaa thalithan 'an muta'aliqaati Sifaathi*) by means of the abundant realization of His Essence (*bi dhuhuur bi mutahaqqiqaaati Dhaatihi*). At this point the servant experiences spiritual obliteration (*al-mahqi*), annihilation (*al-fana'*) and cutting off (*al-inqittaa'*). For when he experiences spiritual obliteration (*al-mahqi*), then this is the source of Real Establishment (*'ayn ithbaat haqeeqi*). And when he experiences spiritual annihilation (*al-fanaa'*), then this is the source of Eternal Continuity (*'ayn baqa' daymuumi*). And

SANKORE'

when he experiences spiritual cutting off (*al-inqittaa*), then this is the source of Sacred Arrival (*`ayn ittissaal qudsiyyi*).” What is most remarkable about this final spiritual realm is that no created being other than Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace has ever reached it, and those who have experienced it, or do experience it, do so inheriting from his vast station by stopping (*tawqeef*) with his *Sunna* in a state of absolute servitude. *Shaykh 'l-Akbar* Ibn `Arabi described this station as: “...the knowledge of the Divine Essence from the perspective of absolute servitude.” This is because Muhammad, is the perfect slave of Allah, created from the beginning before all things in the state of absolute servitude and worship of the Absolute Being. This is ultimately what the People of the Path describe as annihilation (*fana'*), where the spiritual wayfarer is annihilated into the self form of the Perfect Human (*insaan kaamil*), upon him be peace and he inherits from this ontological ancestor the knowledge of the Essence of the Absolute Being which was predetermined for him in the realm of pure non-existence when Allah ta`ala said to the spirits: ‘*Am I not your Lord?*’ This realm is also called ‘the standing’ (*makaana*) in the language of the *Sufis* and indicates the termination of the spiritual journey or the last point before the wayfarer reaches spiritual annihilation symbolized by the Lote Tree of the furthest limit. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him said in his al-Mandhuumat li'l-Istalihaat as-Suufiyya:

“The standing is the stopping point in which spiritual resolution discontinues

Meaning the stopping in the Presence of Those of the Lote Tree.”

In his commentary on these stanzas, the poet, said: “As for the ‘Lote Tree’ it is the final station that the servant reaches on his spiritual journey to Allah the exalted. As for what comes after It, there only exist the exclusive station of the Absolute Being solely. For after that there is no where for a created thing to proceed.” This mode of comprehension of the Absolute Being designated by the Lote Tree of the Furthest Limit is the final stage of the spiritual path of the *Sufis* and constitutes the ultimate goal of their journey where Allah ta`ala: “...revealed to His servant what He revealed to him. The heart did not deny what it saw;... by the Lote Tree of the utmost boundary,...the sight did not turn aside nor did it go astray. He indeed saw one of the greatest signs of his Lord.” Only the Muhammadan Reality can experience this mode of comprehension of the Essence of the Absolute Being, and all other created beings receive its portion of this comprehension through him, because: “*Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*” to all creatures and “*a mercy to all the worlds.*”

And other than these which are comprehended by experience

And is understood by the one mad in Allah and the sober traveler⁴⁶

⁴⁶ The poet, Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to him finishes this section of the poem with two hemistiches describing the means by which the sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of the secrets (*'uluum 'l-asraar*) utilizing the disciplines developed within the path of the *Sufis* are attained. Although the poet, cited nineteen of these sciences in this poem he indicates in this hemistich that there are more. He said: “**And other than these...**”. What the poet indicates by ‘other than these’ are those sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of secrets attained through the discipline of the path of the *Sufis* in addition to the nineteen of them cited in this poem. In his al-Mandhuumat li'l-Istalihaat as-Suufiyya after citing the science of the Lote Tree and its ontological meaning in the language of the *Sufis*, the poet listed a final comprehensive terminology which embraces a multitude of unmediated esoteric sciences, which he called ‘the Muhammadan form’ (*suurat 'l-muhammadiyya*). He said:

“And the origin of Divine punishment and blessing
Is the form of that of the Generous Chosen One.”

In his commentary upon these verses he said: “As for the ‘Muhammadan form’ (*suurat muhammadiyya*), upon Its possessor be the best blessings and endless peace, it is an idiomatic expression (*'ibaara*) of the Light from which Allah created Paradise and Hell, and the Origin (*muhtada*) from which He brought into existence (*wajada*) Divine Punishment (*'adhaab*) and Blessings (*na'eem*).” We previously mentioned that the Lote Tree is the final stage of the spiritual ascension of the wayfarers after which lies an unknown realm specific to the Absolute Being alone, which some of the *Sufis* call the realm of pure unicity (*ahadiyya*). This realm can only be comprehended through the Muhammadan form, or what some of the People of Unveiling call the ‘*suurat 'l-haqq*’ (the form of the Absolute Being). This latter term should not be misunderstood to mean an annexed genitive construction (*idaafa*) implying that Allah ta'ala has a corporeal form (*suura*) and is incarnate in Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This is impossible (*mustaheel*). What it means is an annexed genitive construction which means possession (*milk*), like when you say: ‘*ruuh Allah*’ (the spirit of Allah), meaning a spirit belonging to Allah and not Allah Himself. Similarly, the ‘form of the Absolute Being’ means a created form which belongs to the Absolute Being, or which is the closest created being to the realm of the Absolute Being, in which He discloses the secrets of His unicity (*ahadiyya*), due to its nearness as indicated by the Lote Tree. This is what he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace meant when he said as related by Ahmad, al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Abu Qatada: “Whoever saw me has seen the *Haqq*, for indeed Satan cannot be seen in my form.” In another narration on the authority of Abu Hurayra he said: “Whoever saw me in sleep has seen the *Haqq*; for, Satan cannot resemble me.” The poet, may Allah be merciful to him said that these sciences of the *awliyya* or secrets acquired through the path of the *Sufis* are sciences: “**...which are comprehended by experience...**” The expression ‘*dhawq*’ (experience) comes from the verb ‘*dhaaqa*’ (to taste or to experience by tasting). Technically, it is a sense perception localized in the tongue and is transmitted through the saliva, by which something can be determined to be sweet, sour, salty, bitter, acidic or any of the other nine taste sensations. It is thus an immediate sense perception which can only be described through experience; like when one attempts to describe the difference in the

SANKORE

sweetness of honey and sugar. This knowledge cannot be intellectualized or merely talked about. It must be ‘tasted’ (*dhaaqa*) or experienced. From this definition a more subtle meaning of the expression emerges which describes any intuitive appreciation which is felt in the heart, like: love, happiness, sadness, yearning and the like. In the language of the People of Allah, ‘*dhawq*’ (experience) is immediate, direct and unmediated gnosis of Allah and His creation which Allah allows his *awliyya* to comprehend through experience. *Imam* al-Jurjaani said in his Kitaab’-t-Ta’reefaat that the word ‘*dhawq*’ (experience) with regard to knowledge of Allah is an expression indicating the light of direct gnosis (*nuur`irfaani*) which the Absolute Being cast (*yaqdhafahu*) into the hearts of His *awliyya*, by means of His Self Disclosure (*tajalli*) with which they can distinguish between truth and falsehood, without them extracting that gnosis from a book or other than a book. In his al-Fuutuuhaa ‘*l-Makkiyya* Ibn ‘Arabi described ‘*dhawq*’ (experience) as the initial beginning of the Self Disclosure of the Absolute Being to His servants. It is a spiritual state which He unexpectedly places in their hearts. It thus refers to direct knowledge of Allah which is attained through direct experience (*bi’d-dhawq*) and not through intellectualization (*wa laa bi’t-ta’beer*). The knowledge of experiential tasting (*`ilm`d-dhawq*) concurs exclusively with the purification of the heart (*tasfiyyat`l-qalb*), the disciplining of the character (*riyaadiyat`l-akhlaaq*) and spiritual struggle (*al-mujaahida*) in accordance with the courtesies of the people of the Path. The poet, may Allah be merciful described his maternal uncle and spiritual master, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* Uthman as constructing his spiritual path upon direct experiential knowledge, when he said in his Bayaan at-Ta’abudaat: “The summation of his entire spiritual path was built upon knowledge (*`ilm*) and guidance (*huda*). His knowledge was based upon the spiritual courtesies (*adaab*) of the *Sufis*, and his guidance was based upon the illuminations of direct experience (*anwaar dhawqiyya*), which is known innately by the masters of spiritual cores. He ta’ala stops below this level of comprehension those whom he stops before the veil. May Allah ta’ala make us succeed in behaving in accordance with it, being guided by it, and whose spiritual states are forgiven as a result of it.” This intuitive experienced gnosis of Allah ta’ala and His creation is a blessing from Allah, as the poet said: “**...and is understood by the one mad in Allah and the sober traveler.**” We discussed the meaning of the roots of these two terms: ‘*majdhuub*’ and ‘*masalik*’ in footnote #s 20 and 40 and they refer to those who are suddenly spiritually gravitated (*judhiba*) by Allah ta’ala into a presence or state, and those who soberly travel the arduous task of transforming and disciplining of the soul, respectively. In both cases the knowledge and comprehension is unified because the spiritual Goal is the same and is not predetermined by the spiritual state of the one cognizing.

All of these sciences without exception are the spiritual methods
Of the most notable of the outstanding luminaries of transmission⁴⁷

⁴⁷ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him ends this section of the poem with his words: “**All of these sciences without exception are the spiritual methods from the most notable of the outstanding luminaries of transmission.**” Here, the poet, informs us that these unmediated sciences of secrets have been arrived at and transmitted by the most notable of the right acting scholars well established in the sciences of transmission, such as the sciences of linguistics, *Qur’anic* exegesis, prophetic traditions, theology, the roots and branches of jurisprudence, and the remaining sciences passed through transmission. This is a prerequisite for transmission of the sciences of the path of the *Sufis*. The grandfather of the poet, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye’, said in his *Fat’h ‘l-Basaa’ir*; that the science of spiritual purification (*‘ilm ‘t-tasawwuf*) is divided into two division: [1] spiritual purification for the transformation of behavior (*tasawwuf li’t-takhalluq*), which is obligatory upon every individual responsible male and female; and [2] spiritual purification for genuine spiritual certitude (*tasawwuf li’t-tahaqquq*); which the *Shehu* said: “...includes the knowledge (*ma`rifa*) of the spiritual states (*ahwaal*) of the disciples (*murids*), the permanent spiritual stations (*maqamaat*) 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.” Clearly, the transmission of the sciences of the spiritual certitude (*haqaa’iq*) falls squarely upon the shoulders of the right-acting scholars who are firm in their knowledge of the *Qur’an*, the *Sunna* and the interrelated religious sciences. The transmission of these sciences cannot be at the whim of the ignorant, the common people, those intermediate in knowledge or those scholars who have failed to act on their knowledge and are veiled due to the corruption of their souls from gnosis of Allah ta’ala. *Shaykh* Ahmad Zaruq al-Burnusi said: “There is nothing worse than the ignorant *Sufi*”; meaning there is nothing more detestable than those who claim to be on the Path of the *Sufis* and who are content with remaining ignorant of the *shari’a* which is the treasure trove of Divine Knowledge. *Shaykh* Ahmad Zaruq also said regarding the prerequisites of the genuine teaching *shaykh*: “The first is sound knowledge that is derived from the Book of Allah and the *Sunna*. The second is sound perceptivity based upon experience (*dhawq*). The third is an exalted appearance. The fourth is pleasing spiritual states (*ahwaal mardiyya*) conforming to the Book and the *Sunna* and in accordance with the *shaykhs* of the Path. The fifth is penetrating discernment by which he is guided from the outward appearances of things into their inner realities.” The teaching *shaykhs* responsible for transmitting the sciences of the secrets to the *Umma* began after the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, with his Companions. Regarding Abu Bakr, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said as related by Ibn Mardawiyah on the authority of Anas ibn Malik and al-Hakim on the authority of Jaabir ibn Abdallah: “O Abu Bakr! Allah will give you the greatest pleasure.” He said: “What is His pleasure?” He said: “Indeed Allah will make a Self Disclosure to the whole of creation in general, but He will make an exclusive Self Disclosure of Himself to you.” Regarding Umar, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace

said as related by Ahmad, at-Tirmidhi and at-Tabaraani on the authority of Ibn Umar, Abu Hurayra and others: "Indeed Allah ta'ala placed truth upon the tongue of Umar and his heart." Regarding Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Messenger of Allah, said as related by al-Hakim, at-Tabarani on the authority Ibn Abass: "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate. Whoever desires knowledge must come to it through its gate." This establishes that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace transmitted unmediated knowledge of Allah to his close Companions. It also establishes the necessity of a teaching *Shaykh* and disciples that inherit from him. Similarly, during the time of the *Shehu*, he was responsible for the spread of knowledge of Allah to more than forty men and women who were spiritually awakened to gnosis of Allah and His secrets. Among them were his wife *Iyya Gharka A'ishatu Ghabindu bint Shaykh Muhammad Sa'd ibn Abdullahi* (the grandmother of the poet). In his Salwat al-Ikhwan the poet said about this learned maternal grandmother: "She possessed an ample share of the traits of uprightness (*salaah*) and spiritual excellence (*ihsaan*), and a well established precedence in the affair of spiritual realization and gnosis...She was renowned for her constant spiritual states and stations and had attained the highest levels in asceticism, uprightness, piety, and complete spiritual struggle and discipline. She was from among the *'Ibad Allah as-Saaliheen* and the obedient *Khiyaar al-Umma*." What this indicates is that the path of the *Sufis*, as developed among the *Fudiawa*, was not a hermitically sealed 'brotherhood' closed only to men. The wives of the *Shehu* were the key purveyors of the courtesies of the spiritual path, but also had embodied the mystical knowledge which is the ultimate goal of the path. *Iyya Gharka A'ishatu Ghabindu* was the mother of eight children, three of whom died young. Those who survived were: Muhammad Sa'd (the eldest son of the *Shehu*), Muhammad Sanbu, Muhammad al-Bukhari, Khadijatu (the eldest daughter of the *Shehu*) and A'ishatu. I've cited some of the merits of Muhammad Sa'd previously. As for A'ishatu, little is known of her. As for the second son of *Iyya Gharka A'ishatu Ghabindu*, the Gnostic Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu*, I've cited some aspects of his virtues, but will give more details about his life and spiritual path in the following section. The reasons for zooming in on *Shaykh Muhammad Sanbu* is because he was the key spiritual guide of the poet in the sciences of Divine Realities; and like his father, the *Shehu*, he was able to develop a spiritual method which transcended the formal path of the *Sufis*. As for Muhammad al-Bukhari ibn *Shehu*, he was one of the key students of the father of the poet, *Shaykh Mustafa ibn Muhammad at-Turuudi*. *Shaykh Abdullahi ibn Qadi Muhammad al-Hajj ibn Ali ibn Uthman ibn Ahmad*, tells us in his at-Ta'areef: "He (Muhammad al-Bukhari) was one of the eminent of the family of Fuduye' in knowledge, tolerance, bravery, abstinence from the prohibited, endeavoring in noble deeds, his endurance of the burdens of leadership through his affability, kindness, patience with shortcomings, avoiding criticizing and slander, tender treatment of those near and distant, and other praiseworthy habits and righteousness which were well known." As for the eldest daughter of *Iyya Gharka A'ishatu Ghabindu*, Khadijatu bint *Shehu*, the mother of the poet, she was an advanced mystic and a learned jurists in the best tradition of the jurists of her age. Our *Shaykh*, the great Waziri Junaydu ibn Muhammad al-Bukhari said about her in his Irf 'r-Rayhaan: "She was from among the *awliyya*, and the righteous and humble ascetics. She was among the daughters of the *Shehu* who made the *hijra* with him from Degel. She was famous for her virtuous spiritual states, pleasing character, copious learning and magnificent comprehension of the Divine realities (*haqaa'iq*). She possessed a well established foot hold in many diverse

ذَكَرَ مَا أُتِيَتْهُ مِنْ عُلُومِ الْأَسْرَارِ أَيْضًا لَكِنَ عَلَى غَيْرِ طَرِيقَةِ الصُّوفِيَّةِ

Mentioning What I Received From the Science of Secrets As Well, However Outside of the Path of the Sufis⁴⁸

⁴⁸ We mentioned previously that the poet, Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to him, made a distinction between the mystical sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of secrets (*'ulum 'l-asraar*) attained within the path of the *Sufis* and those attained outside of the path of the *Sufis*. In this section the poet discusses nine of the enigmatic esoteric sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of secrets which are attained outside of the formal and organized path of the *Sufis*. These nine sciences are among the applied sciences (*'ulum tatbeeqiy*) within the sciences of secrets because they are used to gather good (*jalab 'l-khayr*) and ward off harm (*dafa 'l-idraar*) whether worldly or spiritual. It is in this area of the science of secrets that rudiments of the elemental sciences (*'ilm 'l-awaa'il*) are used. What this indicates is that the leading scholars among the *Fudiawa* had developed their own unique approach to Gnosis of Allah ta'ala and the applied sciences of secrets. This can be seen in the biographies as well as the original works produced by *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye', *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye', *Sultan* Muhammad Bello, *Shaykh* Muhammad Tukur, *Shaykh* Muhammad Kari'angha, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu, *Shaykha* Khadijatu, *Shaykha* Nana Asmau', and many others. Although, these sages of the *Fudiawa* were clearly affiliated to the *Qadiriyya* spiritual tradition; as the *Shehu* stated in many of his prose and poetic works, that it was by means of the *baraka* of *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir al-Jaylaani that they had achieved the spiritual, intellectual and social objectives that they had gained. Yet, their approach to the *Qadiriyya* order was somewhat different from the formal brotherhoods in the west and east. The *Fudiawa*, like the *Kuntiyya* in the west, the *Idrisiyya* in the north and the *Majdhuubiyya* in the Nilotic Sudan; placed strong emphasis on strict adherence to the *Sunna* in the outward and on individual spiritual development expressed through a substantial personal relationship with the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace in the inward. This spiritual approach allowed a more distinctive and genuine personal spiritual experience to develop among the *Fudiawa* where the number of spiritual methods (*suluuk*) were equal to the number of individuals within the *Fudiawa* who had achieved Spiritual Arrival. This can be seen noticeably in the personal spiritual method of *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* Uthman, from whom the poet received his spiritual training and by whom he attained spiritual openings. Consequently, in this section, I will focus closely on the spiritual method of *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu and some of his teachings, to demonstrate that most of the Gnosis of this sage emerged from outside of the formal '*sufi*' method. In a sense, this uniqueness is connected to the last section of the poem, which deals with the great spiritual unveiling associated with the *Mahdi*. That is to say, that in the unique spiritual path which the *Fudiawa* developed there was a rearward and forward looking approach to Gnosis of Allah and the sciences of secrets; as exemplified in the claim by the *Shehu* and his followers that they took their spiritual inheritance from two lights: that of the Messenger of Allah and that of the Awaited *Mahdi*. This was made patently clear in the famous Fulfulde' poem of the *Shehu* called Yimre' Tanasabuje' (the Song of Comparison). This was further corroborated in the next generation after the *Shehu*, in a mystical poem composed by his son, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu*, which he authored for his nephew and chief disciple, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, may Allah ta'ala be merciful to both of them. For the most accurate picture of *Shaykh*

Muhammad Sanbu spiritual method, we must turn to the Bayaan't-Ta'abudaat composed by the poet on the 24th of *Muharram*, 1256 A.H. (circa 1840), when he was thirty seven years old. This work emerged from a dream vision in which one of the disciples of the poet saw *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu in a dream who recited to him a poetic saying:

أَلَا قُلْ لِعَبْدِ الْقَادِرِ ابْنِ مُصْطَفَى * يُبَيِّنُ عِبَادَتِي لِمَنْ هُوَ عَالِمٌ

“Will you not say to Abd'l-Qadir ibn Mustafa

To clarify my method of worship for those who are Gnostics?”

This poem gives a picture of the first unique element of the method to gnosis by the *Fudiawa*, and it is through placing major emphasis on visions in dreams and visions during the waking state. This was the basis of the social reform movement of the *Shehu* who made no major decisions without consulting the Messenger of Allah, *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir, or the Men of the Unseen (*rijaal 'l-ghayb*) in dreams or the waking state. Similarly, his son, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu constructed his entire approach to Gnosis of Allah through dream visions. The poet, in turn, asserted that dream visions for him had become equal to what we today would call advanced post graduate studies in mysticism. This will be verified as we move through this poem. So here, the poet composed his Bayaan't-Ta'abudaat based upon a request from his deceased teacher given in a dream vision to one of the poet's disciples. This is interesting because it is reflective of how the legal ruling for the call to prayer (*adhaan*) emerged based upon a dream vision from one of the Companions of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. The Messenger of Allah considered this dream from one of his Companions as a part or a continuation of revelation, and had the call to prayer which he saw in his dream instituted as a mandatory element of the religion. Similarly, *Waziri* Gidadu ibn Layma tells us in his Rawd 'l-Janaan how one of the disciples of the *Shehu*, Muhammad Kari`angha who was in a constant state of '*jadhb*' (divine magnetic attraction) would often be sent by the Messenger of Allah, or the Men of the Unseen to deliver messages to the *Shehu*. These commands came to Muhammad Kari`angha sometimes in sleep and sometimes in the waking state. Because this mode of receiving mystical knowledge was firmly established in the *shari`a*, commonly acknowledged and practiced by the *Fudiawa*, it is not surprising that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him made it the mainstay of his spiritual method (*suluuk*). He gave us a single antidote in his Bayaan't-Ta'abudaat quoting from *Shaykh* Abd'l-Wahaab as-Sha`raani where he said: “My spiritual master Ali al-Khawaas once said: ‘These events which occur to humanity in their sleep are forces from the forces of Allah, by which He strengthens the faith of the dreamer in the Unseen, if the person is deserving of that; even though this could be considered a deficiency regarding the right of belief.’ He used to also say: ‘Only a person ignorant would take for granted what he sees in his sleep. Most of what the believer sees in his sleep is a part of the revelation of Allah (*wahyi Allah*) which comes on the tongue of an Angel of dream inspiration (*malak 'l-ilhaam*).’” All this will be born out as we continue through this poem, Allah willing.

We will mention them by means of allusion

Preventing me by it from declaring them openly⁴⁹

⁴⁹ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, begins with three hemistiches which function as a prologue to the entire section. He said: **“We will mention them by means of allusion”** The expression *‘talweeh’* (signification/implication) is an infinitive noun taken from the verb *‘lawwaha’* (to heat with fire, to alter or change the color of a thing); which in turn takes its root from the verb ‘to make a signal’ (*lawaha*). The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, the learned *sharif* Muhammad Murtada az-Zabidi said in his *Taaaj ‘l-Uruus* that the expression *‘talweeh’* (signification) originally meant to make a sign with a sword (*lawaha bi’s-sayf*) in order to indicate one’s intention, as a form of threat. Thus, the expression means to say or do something indirectly or implicitly. It is interesting that the poet chose an expression which implies both secrecy and the threat of the sword for divulgence; where each functioned in **“...preventing me by it from declaring them openly.”** In the annotated version of this poem presented in the paper of *Malam* Muhammad al-Amin Salame the expression *‘fanaghatnee’* (it thus induced me to speak), is used, taken from the verb *‘naghaa’* (to speak). However, in the two manuscripts in my possession the expression *‘mana`atnee’* (it prevented me), is used, taken from the verb *‘mana`a’* (to bar, to prevent or preclude). This is the more plausible interpolation since the ban from expressing these ideas explicitly was due to the fact that this realm of the sciences of *awliyya* or secrets is connected to the enigmatic elemental sciences as well as the science of the hidden Names of Allah. This view was corroborated by the paternal uncle and father-in-law of the poet, *Sultan* Muhammad Bello in his *al-Ism ‘l-‘Aadhem* where he said: “Beware brother of transmitting this science to anyone clinging to the vanities of this world’s life who seeks it from you in order to spruce up his position in this world. This is because he is undeserving of it, for Allah will swiftly take away your way of life (*deen*), even if the entire world supports you. The Absolute Being glory be to Him has sworn that He will seize the faith of anyone who reveals His secrets to those undeserving. Allah ta`ala and His Messenger have said that the one who does so will be imprisoned in Hell and suffer an evil ending.” The concealing of secrets, spiritual states and enigmatic sciences was the hallmark of the spiritual path developed by the poet’s teacher, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu*. In his *Bayaan’t-Ta`abudaat*, the poet said: “Apart of his spiritual path, was the concealing of spiritual states, and the hiding of miracles and the breaking of norms, except to those deserving of this from the spiritually elite among his companions. He would sometimes reveal to them what he wished, and sometimes informed them of what he had learned. I must admit, in this regard, I was among those who benefited from him graciously and drank from the fresh drink he gave us.” Thus, concealment of certain aspects of the sciences of the divine realities except from those deserving was a principle passed down inter-generationally among the *Fudiawa* to the time of the poet. Subsequently, following their custom and out of obedience to our *Amir’l-Mu`mineen* Muhammad Bello, I will simply list the sciences the poet gives, designate their etymology and show their sources within Islam, and mention briefly what my teachers *Shaykh* Abu Bakr Basambu and *Shaykh* Umar ibn Ahmad Zaruku said about these sciences, without delving into them at length. I believe in this regard, ‘a hint is sufficient for the wise’, is an axiom which will be useful in comprehending the sciences which the poet will list here. Following the pattern set by the poet, I will

مَا خَصَّنَا بِهِ الْحَكِيمُ الْفَتَّاحُ

مِنْ حِكْمٍ بُحُورِهَا لَا تَنْزُحُ

What the Wise Opener designated us with
From the wisdom whose oceans never run dry

وَلَيْسَ مِنْ طَرِيقَةِ التَّصَوُّفِ

حُصُولُهَا لَنَا فَخُذْهُ وَاعْرِفْ

Not from the path of spiritual purification
Were they obtained by us, so seize it and realize⁵⁰

signify the key terminologies he placed in the hemistiches which act as gateways to the sciences he hints at. These hidden sciences are revealed directly from Allah ta`ala to the heart of His *awliyya*, as the poet, stated in the following hemistich.

⁵⁰: The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, begins by revealing a secret by which these modes of comprehension emerge in the heart of the Knower, by his words:

“What the Wise Opener designated us with from the wisdom whose oceans never run dry”

What is significant here, and this has been corroborated by many of the elite Muslim sages, that The Divine Name which Allah ta`ala places in a *Qur`anic* verse is actually the source from which that sign, legal judgment, terrestrial reality, celestial reality, cosmic reality or divine reality emerges. The Divine Name associated with that entity is its ‘Lord’ which brings it from pure non-existence into the fullness of existence, and it is to that Divine Name that it will return and continue as a universal archetype. Similarly, when a gnostic cites a Divine Name of Allah in association with a science, or a mode of comprehension, she is indicating that that science or realm of knowledge emerges from the Self Disclosure of that particular Divine Name. My teacher, *Shaykh* Fadlallah Haeri used to reiterate this principle in almost every lecture he gave on *Qur`anic* exegesis (*tafseer*) and interpolation (*ta`weel*). He insisted that the secret of a verse regardless if that verse addressed a clear decisive legal ruling, an antidotal story of one of the Prophets, a principle of belief, an issue of cosmology, a matter of the Hereafter, an ethical or issue of virtue, or an inward spiritual reality; these all flowed from the Divine Name around which that verse are series of verses revolved. Similarly, in this hemistich, the poet cited two Divine Names of Allah: ‘*al-Hakeem*’ and ‘*al-Fataah*’ as an indication that these sciences emerge in the hearts of the righteous from the niche of these two Divine Names. Everything in existence in general comes from Allah ta`ala and to Him are their final return. However, the particularized details of things in existence, whether they be spiritual realities, intelligible realities, or corporeal realities emerge from a particular Divine Name of Allah which is the ‘Lord/Sustainer’ (*rabb*) of that entity, responsible for bringing that thing from pure non-existence into the fullness of its development. *Shaykh* Muhammad Bello ibn Muhammad, who was known as Muhammad Tukur said in his *Qira`l-Ahibba* that both Divine Names cause the opening of all the gates of good (*fataha abwaab l-khayraat*). He said: “Whoever has gnosis that He is *al-Hakeem* does not remonstrate against Him in anything, nor does he have anxiety regarding His wisdom in anything. On the contrary, he sees every Action from Allah as being beautiful with respect to Him, and with respect to creatures. One can draw near to Allah by means of this Divine Name by correlation by surrendering to His wisdom in all things. Rather, he should see all of His actions as being beautiful and good in all affairs. Thus, in the beginning he strips himself of all remonstrations against Him regarding the *shari`a*, and then he customarily surrenders to the breadth of the *shari`a*. He draws near to Allah by means of this Divine Name in terms of character, by being wise in all affairs, where wisdom means knowing the wisdom of the Absolute Being

in all words and deeds. The special quality of this Divine Name is that it wards off afflictions, opens the gates of all good, wards off dangers and opens the doors of wisdom.” It is clear here that the sciences which this Divine Name bequeaths are connected not only to direct experiential knowledge of Allah, but also to the applied sciences within the sciences of secrets which garner good and ward off harm. Regarding the Divine Name ‘*al-Fataah*’, the same author said: “The Opener (*al-fataah*) is the One who demonstrates His bounty by manifesting good and abundance in the aftermath of constrictions and the barring of the spiritual and corporeal doors in worldly matters and matters of the Hereafter. It is said that the Name ‘*al-Fataah*’ is from the noun ‘*al-fath*’ (opening); which is relief from constrictions, like the relief that comes to two disputants regarding the truth as a result of His wisdom. The ‘Opener’ (*al-Fataah*) is the One who removes the constrictions of the soul, by means of His good; who removes the constriction of ignorance by means of His knowledge and the like. Whoever has gnosis that He is the Opener relies upon Him in all affairs, finds tranquility with Him from all worries, and resorts to Him in all things. One draws near to Allah by means of this Divine Name through character by being generous to the servants in what Allah has opened to him from knowledge, actions, wealth, divine realities, spiritual endeavor or spiritual states. The special qualities of this Divine Name is that it is the cause of the easing of affairs, the illumination of the hearts and having the gates of spiritual openings firmly established. Whoever recites the Name ‘*al-Fataah*’ seventy-one times after completing the *fajr* prayer, while placing his hand upon his chest, will have his heart purified, his innermost secret illuminated and his affairs made easy.” These spiritual openings and wisdom do not come from the path of the *Sufis*, but transcends it and is open to the whole of creation from the Throne of Allah, to the subatomic particles which bind everything; and emerge from an ocean of knowledge which never runs dry. In his *Bayaan*’t-*Ta’abudaat*, the poet gives us the foundation upon which his teacher *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu attained this wisdom from Allah ta’ala; by his words: “Realize that this *shaykh* gathered together divine magnetic attraction (*jadhb*) and correct spiritual method (*suluuk*) and it was upon these two principles that he constructed his personal spiritual path. In the beginning of his affair he was the constant companion of spiritual states (*ahwaal*) and sudden divine magnetic attractions (*jadhaabaat*). It was through these states and unanticipated spiritual experiences that he was trained during his time as a young man. However, when he formally entered the spiritual path and followed its techniques, he was able to exert himself over these states and took mastery over the states of divine attraction. As a result he was able to gain divine comprehension, embraced fully the courtesies of the spiritual path and adhered to sound worship. This became his spiritual state for many years. Then after that he was able to master his spiritual states most of the time; however, there were times that his spiritual intoxication (*sakr*) would cause him to withdraw from people. This was his circumstances in the end. The path of his spiritual method (*tareeq suluukihi*) was constructed upon sleeplessness (*sahr*), hunger (*juu*), secret remembrance in the heart (*dhikr qalbi*), attentive watchfulness (*muraariba*), and corroboration of the stations of the spiritual path which are: [1] austerity (*zuhd*); [2] reliance upon Allah (*tawakkul*); [3] leaving matters over to Allah (*tafweed*), [4] surrendering to the decrees of Allah (*tasleem*); [5] patience (*sabr*); [6] contentment (*ridaa*); and [7] love (*muhabba*). Apart of his personal spiritual path was elevating his spiritual resolve above all creatures by gathering his heart upon the reality of being alone with the Immense Exalted One. Apart of his personal spiritual path was achieving the furthest limits in hunger,

indicated by the fact that he would go many consecutive days without eating or drinking. He continued sometimes in this fashion until he would remain forty days without food or drink. This occurred purely from the reinforcement of Allah and His success, by His fortifying the spirit with the illumination of remembrance, the illuminations of the Divine Presence and direct witnessing of the heart. During these periods of privation his bodily strength would not weaken or languor. On the contrary, he would go and come as he always had taking care of his daily expenditures. Then he abandoned this method when he attained spiritual perfection, and did not return to refraining from eating and drinking for days on end. Finally, in the year that he died, he resorted back to this spiritual method of denying himself food and drink. Apart of his spiritual path was that he completely threw away all forms of pretentiousness and arrogance from himself. He used to carry his own products to the market in order to sell them. He would also return home carrying his provisions on his neck. Apart of his personal spiritual path was that he was in complete austerity and complete severance from this worldly life and its causative factors. This was not out of his own desire to be austere from the world, nor out of any disdain for its affairs. On many occasions people would bring him some worldly matter as a form of charity and place them next to him in the assemblies. He would then supplicate for those who brought those goods. When they departed, he would stand and leave all those things where they were, without showing any regard for them. Whoever desired to take those things could take them, even when what was left was abundant and valuable. He used to do this frequently.” This picture of the personal spiritual method of *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu was not unlike that of his father, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, whose affair also began when he was a young man, where he was unexpectedly overcome by states of ‘*jadhb*’. The *Shehu* tells us in his *Tahdheer’l-Ikhwaan*: “All I know is that Allah ta’ala placed me under descending spiritual states (*waaridaat ‘l-ahwaal*) when I was a young boy (*sabyi*) which continued until I reached the age of thirty-one. Then I was pulled into a transitory spiritual magnetic gravitational power (*jadhb*), which emanated from the Light of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and ensued from constant sending blessings upon him, until I found myself in the very presence of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Prior to this spiritual experience, I had a strong desire to encounter the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, so much so, that I often wept out of passionate yearning.” It is clear that the *Shehu* transmitted this personal spiritual method to his son, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu, who then transmitted this personal approach to spiritual unveiling to his disciple, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to all of them. The above quote from the *Shehu* was extracted from a text he composed in order to counter the claims that he was the Awaited *Mahdi*. This is fascinating because like his father, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu also saw himself inwardly as an extraction from the lights of *Mahdiyya*, or as a forerunner to him, as we will demonstrate, Allah willing. Among the miraculous abilities of the *Mahdi* and his forces will be the ability to undergo extreme privations from food and drink, while their physical, mental and spiritual strength will be equivalent to that of forty strong men. These miraculous abilities will emerge in the face of the global sorcery of *Dajjal* and his forces to withhold rain, food and drink from large populations of the world. Thus, the *Mahdi* and his forces will derive Divine power through privation, suffering and hardship, in a fashion diametrically opposed to the *Dajjal* and his forces. Isolation, sleeplessness, silence and hunger will not only be the source of the strength of the righteous in the end of time, but they will constitute

powers in their own right. This divine reinforcement (*ta'yeed*) given to the *Mahdi* and his forces will emerge purely from the remembrance of Allah ta'ala as the prophetic traditions verify and not from any innate ability or strength on their parts. Their only capacity will be the absolute recognition of their impoverishment (*iftiqaar*), weakness (*'id'aaf*), impotence (*'ajz*) and divestment or emptiness (*tajreed*) encapsulated in the comprehensive concept of '*mustad'afuun*' (the weak/oppressed). The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace is reported to have said: "Verily Allah gives victory to this *Umma* by means of the oppressed (*mustad'afeen*) among them, by their supplication, their righteousness and their sincerity." This incapacity, weakness and 'emptiness' is what Chinese Muslim sages define as 'no-action' (wú wéi-無為), which is distinct from the Taoists concept of 'in-action'. *Imam* Wang Tai-yu openly criticized the Taoists and Buddhists concept of 'in-action' because they applied this to the Absolute Being rather than to creation. And where they applied it to creatures, it meant allowing things to take their own course. However, *Imam* Wang Tai-yu associated 'no-action' (wú wéi-無為) with the concept of divestment (*tajreed*) and incapacity (*'ajz*), which in the language of the People of Allah means the effective emergence of a vacuum of negative energy which is then promptly filled with the positive energy of the Actions of the Absolute Being. Theoretically it means choosing what Allah chooses (*ikhtaar ikhtiyaar Allah*), by following His commands and avoiding His prohibitions, until the choice and actions of the servant are no longer his own; until Allah ta'ala becomes the tongue by which the servant speaks, the hand by which he grasps, the sight by which he sees, and the hearing by which he hears. The servant becomes content with what pleases Allah and is angry with what angers Allah. As a result Allah ta'ala becomes content with their contentedness and Angry with those matters with which they become angry. Those who befriend them have befriended Allah and those who make war with them have declared war with Allah. Those who declare war with Allah ta'ala will have to contend with the cosmic winds, the raging oceans, the shaking of the earth and all the resulting ten thousand calamities and their aftermath. Because the sources of these sciences are boundless, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: **"Not from the path of spiritual purification were they obtained by us, so seize it and realize."** Here, again, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, reminds us that gnosis of Allah is an ocean which transcends human ratiocination. He restates that certain aspects of gnosis of Allah, are perennial like air, water and earth, or secretive, private and interpersonal corresponding to the uniqueness of every existing entity. It is from this wisdom *Shaykh* Abd'l-Kareem al-Jili was induced to compose a chapter in his *Maraatib al-Wujuud* called 'Perusing the Books of Divine Reality with the Realized Ones is Superior to the Behavior and Actions of Those Who Travel the Path'. In this chapter *Shaykh* al-Jili denigrates actions and behavior, which are the means and elevates the ends to which righteous actions and excellent behavior lead to – Knowledge of Allah. The goal of the Path is elevated over the Path itself and renders the difficulties and barriers of the Path null and void. Consistent with a well established pattern in his poem, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa uses the first person plural pronoun – 'us', to indicate the specific gnosis of Allah designated for the sages of the *Fudiawa* Fulani. It must be noted, that this people viewed themselves, as corroborated by their own oral and written traditions, as direct hires of Abraham, who would in the End of Time be disconnected and reconnected to that sacred tradition, as proof of the fulfillment of the Divine promise made to Abraham. Although this science is exclusive it is also perennial and open to all, and constitutes an applied science within the science of

أُصُولُهَا فِي بَعْضِ مَا كُتِبْنَا

مِنْهَا الْجَدْوَالُ الَّتِي ذَكَرْنَا

Among them are the Tabulations of what we mentioned
Whose foundation we placed in some of our books⁵¹

secrets and a realm of gnosis of Allah ta`ala, His knowledge, and His actions in creation which cannot only be known outside of the path of the *Sufis*, but is an interminable ocean that He opens in every instant to all of His Angels, Messengers, Prophets, *awliyya*, the divine, celestial, cosmic and terrestrial realities. O Allah make us among the alert retainers and obedient *bawaab* of these august assemblies.

⁵¹ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, mentions the first of the nine enigmatic sciences of the *awliyya* or secrets attained outside of the path of the *Sufis*, by his words: **“Among them are the Tabulations of what we mentioned whose foundation we placed in some of our books.”** At the onset there is some discrepancy regarding the expression used in the first hemistich. In the annotated version of the poem, as well as the manuscript digitized from Nigeria, the expression ‘*jadwaal*’ (tabulation), was utilized. While in the manuscript digitized from Sudan, the expression ‘*juduur*’ (appropriate portions) was used, rendering the translation as: “Among them is the appropriate portion of what we mentioned”. Initially, I only had access to the Sudanese manuscript and in this particular wording the poet begins by being as nebulous as possible. I doubt if anyone can be as elusive as the above statement is in concealing what it is at the same time revealing. After digitizing the manuscript from Arewa in northern Nigeria and coming upon the annotated version of the poem in the paper of *Malam Salame`*, it was clear that in the Sudanese version there was a scribal error. However, it was this rendering of the verse which *Shaykh Umar ibn Ahmad Zaruk* interpolated for me in Maiurno, and even he was slightly mystified at the meaning of this hemistich. He said that what is meant by ‘a portion of what we mentioned’ most likely refers back to some of the sciences within the previous section, which are normally attained through the path of the *Sufis*, but also overflow its boundaries and transcend its circumscribed limits. In other words there are sciences of the *awliyya* or secrets which interconnect the two modes of cognition. *Shaykh Umar ibn Ahmad Zaruk* said that what he meant by his words: ‘whose foundation we placed in some of our books’ is a reference to the sciences he discussed in those books which he himself took an oath not to disclose to others. Later, I came to understand that he was referring to his compositions such as his *Zujraf`Ilm`l-Haqeeqa*, his *Nadhim Shudhuur`d-Dhahab`l-Ibreez*, his *Ruyaa`Manaamiyya*, his *Musaamira`l-Habib wa Musaayira`l-Mujib* and the like, in which he lays out the fundamental principles of the sciences of the Divine Realities, disclose the secrets of how Allah ta`ala takes an unlettered sage (*waliy ummiy*) and teaches him all the sciences, the science of dream visions, the sciences of how to gradually approach the Divine Presence without adverse affects; and other than these which constitute the foundations necessary to comprehend the unmediated sciences. All this of course was predicated on the meaning of the hemistich based upon the wording of the poem in the Sudanese manuscript. The correct wording of the verse, however, is ‘*jadwaal*’ (tabulations), and renders the verse: ‘Among them are the Tabulations of what we mentioned whose foundation we placed in some of our books’. We discussed at length the meaning of this technical term: ‘*jadwaal*’ in footnotes #: 24 and #26 under the section of the elemental sciences (*uluum`l-awaa`il*), and explains what the poet meant by his words: ‘...of what we mentioned.’ He indicates here that this science was previously discussed in the section on the elemental sciences, because its utility is

customarily used in nature, to enhance it, manipulate it and ward off its dangers. Thus, its foundation is apart of the acquired sciences (*ʿuluum iktisaab*) and was not included among the science of secrets attained by the *awliyya*. However, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, reintroduces, the science of *'jadwaal'* (tabulation) among the sciences of secrets attained by the *awliyya*. Its precision as a science is connected to the correctness of the realm of cognition from which it emerges. Since the *'jadwaal'* in this context, is connected to the correct alignment of the Divine Names of Allah; the appropriate command of Allah ta'ala, the transcription of the Primordial Pen, the particularization of the Guarded Tablet, the arrangement of the Angels, the pure spirits, the planetary orbits, the appropriate lunar month, the precise day of the week, the alignment of the four elements, the appropriate *Qur'anic* chapter, series of chapters, verse or series of verses; and the precise arrangements of the Arabic letters all coordinated by a Messenger, a Prophet, a gnostic sage (*waliy 'aarif*) or an oppressed believer (*mu'min madhluum*); it results in the most precise applied science imaginable in garnering spiritual and worldly good and warding off spiritual and worldly harm. In the Art of War, there is no more effective weapon than it in garnering the assistance of Allah ta'ala and His forces in directing hurricanes, tornadoes, whirlwinds, flash storms, flash floods, flash fires, and other natural disasters in demoralizing and eroding the infrastructure of those who do not love the honor of Islam and its people. *Shaykh* al-Buni informs us that it was through the usage of these precise spiritual tabulations that the Prophets *Ilyas* (Elijah), Sulayman (Solomon), and Isa ibn Maryum (Jesus), were able to vanquish enemies. I often recall the narrative in the Bible where Jesus recited the Name of Allah *'Adonai'* and a wind blew several Roman sentries away over the edge of existence. In the encounter between African Islamic civilization and European colonialism, during the 19th and 20th centuries, we witnessed the utilization of the science of *'jadwaal'* by sages such as *Amir* Abd'l-Qaadir'l-Jazaa'iri, *Shaykh* Muhammad Ma'l-'Aynayn, *Amir* l-Mu'mineen Muhammad Bello MaiWurno and many others as a means to contend with the technologically more advanced enemies.



The last facsimile of a poem explaining the *jadwaal* or password to the *Rijaal*'l-Ghayb,

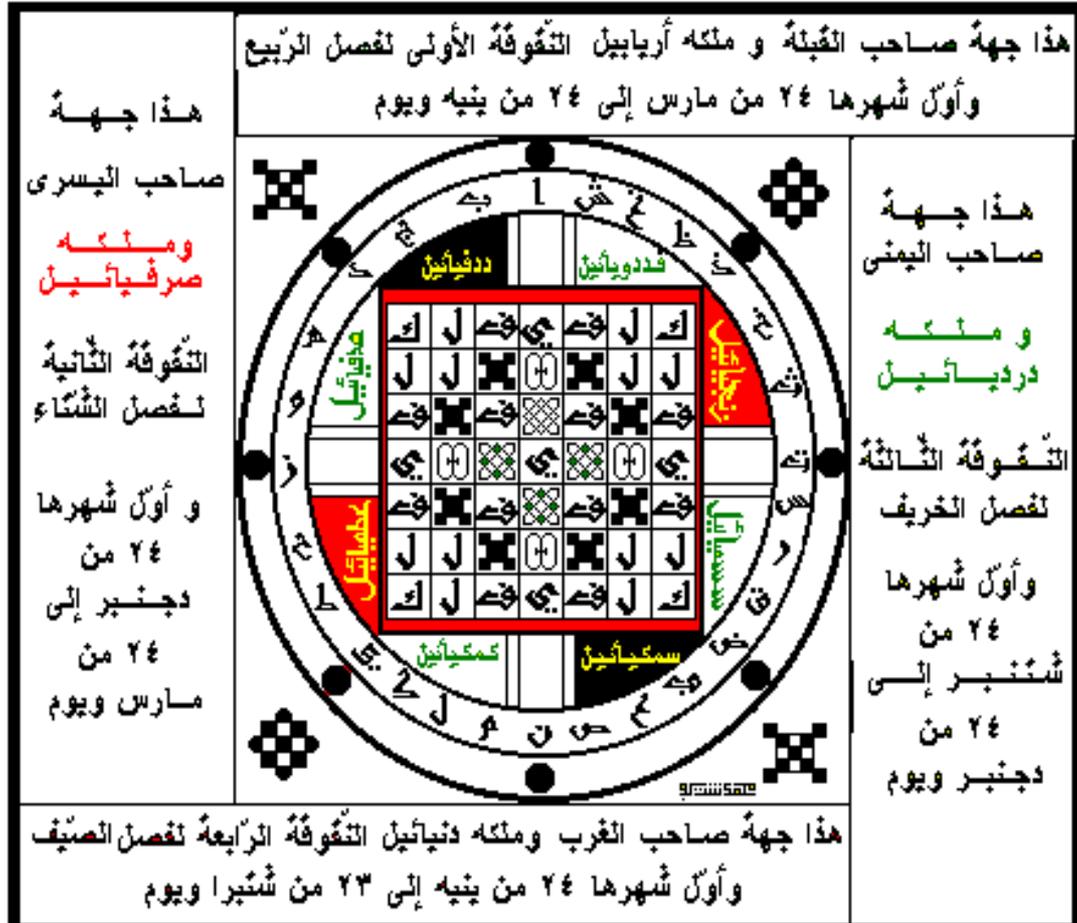
I, myself witnessed on two occasions my chief teacher and guide *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Amin ibn Adam Kari`angha utilize the science of tabulation against two Christian Americans in the Sudan who had clear intention to harm me, and their plots were turned against them with devastating affect. This science is multifaceted and demands that the person be in an acute state of awareness (*muraqqaba*). The *Shehu* bequeathed to us a small portion of this science in his as-Silaasil 'd-Dhahabiyya in the seventh chapter of the text in a '*jadwaal*' (tabulation) he named '*daa'irat 'l-'awniyya*' (the Circle of Assistance); about which he attested was a tabulation unlike any other. I discovered the key to this '*jadwaal*' in the home of the descendents of the poet, Dan Tafa, in Maiurno, written in the form of a coded poem. It was arranged in fifteen stanzas in which the author gave the exact day of the lunar month and the time of the day in which the '*jadwaal*' was most effective. It was by the decree of Allah that in 1991 I lost that key while on a journey in the United States. On a latter trip to Sudan I was able to recover the last page of this poem [See facsimile above]. Based upon the this, it is clear that what the poet, may Allah be merciful to him meant by: "whose foundation we placed in some of our books"; is a reference to his Nasab'l-Mawjuudaat, his Kashif'l-Ghitta wa'r-Rayb Fee Dhikr Anwaa` Mafaatih'l-Ghayb, his Hillu 'r-Rumuuz wa Kashif 'l-Kunuuz, and his Qawaaneen'l-Wujuud. In these texts the poet, may Allah be merciful to him establishes the hierarchy of existence and how existence is arranged from the Immutable Essence of the Absolute Being to the four elements which binds our earthly existence. This precise arrangement of existence is what affords the science of '*jadwaal*' (tabulation) to be extremely accurate, similar to a celestial/global positioning system. It is well known that according to the prophetic traditions that both the *Mahdi* and 'Isa will come with conventional pre-industrial weapons. The *Mahdi* will appear with a sword (*sayf*) and 'Isa ibn Maryum will descend from the heavens carrying a heavenly spear (*harba*). This is confirmed by the prophetic traditions. My spiritual master *Shaykh* Umar ibn Ahmad Zaruq informed me that when the *Mahdi* first appears he and his army will sustain some loses confronting the superior military technology of the disbelievers – particularly, the Europeans (*ahl'r-ruum*). Then as a result of the supplications of the *Mahdi*, coupled with his comprehension of the science of '*jadwaal*', Allah will remove the combusive qualities from petroleum and potassium nitrate and subjugate electrical magnetic fields to him, which will render modern machinery, weapons and electronic equipment useless. It is then that the opposing armies will have to resort to conventional pre-industrial warfare, through the use of the sword, the spear, the bow and arrow, and up close hand to hand combat. Because all of the supporters of the *Mahdi* will be from the struggling oppressed (*mustada'feen*) who are accustomed to working with their hands, they will have a comprehensible advantage over the armies of the disbelievers; that have become overly reliant on technology and softened by the user friendly digitally integrated modern computerized weaponry. In other words, they will become addicted and overreliant on unmanned drone weapons. According to the prophetic traditions, the armies of the *Mahdi* will conquer the greatest of the European metropolis by merely mentioning the Names of Allah. Not unlike Joshua and the toppling of the walls of Jericho.

وَدُونَهَا الْأَسْرَارِ سَاتِرٍ

كَذَا مَفَاتِيحُ صِفَاتِ الظَّاهِرِ

Likewise the keys of the attributes of the outward

Excluding these are the secrets which are concealed⁵²



⁵² In addition to this first science the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: “**Likewise...**”; the second of the nine enigmatic sciences (*‘ulum ghaamida*) of the *awliyya* or secrets attained outside of the path of the *Sufis* are: “...**the keys of the attributes of the outward.**” In the manuscript from the Maiurno, Sudan it stated: “...the keys of the attributes of the purified one (*taahir*)” about which *Shaykh* Umar ibn Ahmad Zaruk said it was a reference to the keys of purity in all of its aspects and dealt specifically with how to utilize the various outward forms of purification as a means of purifying their corresponding elements within the soul, the heart and the innermost secret. He cited two historical occurrences which corroborate this view. We have the case of the People of *Quba* about whom Allah ta’ala says: *Verily Allah loves those who turn in repentance and He loves those who have a care for purity.* “Allah ta’ala says regarding praise of the people of *Quba*: ‘*In it are men who love to purify themselves. Allah loves those who have a care for purity.*’ It is narrated in the tradition of Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him: ‘The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace asked the people of *Quba* regarding the reason for their being the causative factor of the revelation of the verse: ‘*In it are men who love to purify themselves. Allah loves those who have a care for purity.*’ They said: ‘We follow the purification with stone with that of water.’ The second case is in the famous transmission from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace

regarding the priority of the *mu`adhin* Bilal ibn Rabah in Paradise. It was related by ar-Rawiyaani and Ibn `Asakir on the authority of Abu Amama who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "I once entered Paradise, and I heard the sound of rustling footsteps ahead of me. I then asked: 'Who are you?' The person said: 'I am Bilal.' I then said: 'By what means did you precede me into Paradise?' He said: 'I never make a minor impurity (*maa`ahdathu*) except that I immediately perform the ablution. I never perform the ablution except that I consider that Allah has an obligation from me to perform two *raka`ats*.' The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace then said: '(Indeed!) by means of it (you preceded me into Paradise)'." In both examples it indicates the pre-temporal spiritual station of the Companions of Muhammad, as universal archetypes in the realm of disembodied spirits when the Master of humanity said: 'I was a prophet when Adam was between the spirit and clay.' This follows that Bilal, the People of *Quba*, and all the spiritual stations of the 124,000 Companions of the Prophet, were Companions of Muhammad 'when Adam was between spirit and clay'. This opens another gate to understanding the city of al-Medina as the universal archetype of all human social interactions. Thus, the keys to the attributes of the purified ones mean the ability to connect physical cleanliness with the purity of lucid comprehension. The meaning of His words: "*Verily Allah loves those who turn in repentance*", is that Allah loves those who relent from turning their backs on Him and are determined to be obedient to Him. Or it means He loves those who repent from sins and do not return back to them. The meaning of His words: "*...and He loves those who have a care for purity*", that is to say, He loves those who are careful to keep themselves pure from foul things and sins. Or it means He loves those who purify themselves with water from major impurity and minor impurities for the purpose of prayer; and He loves women who purify themselves with water from menstruation, the blood of afterbirth, major impurities and minor impurities. Or it means; as Mujahid said that Allah loves those who keep themselves clean from sodomy during sexual intercourse with women, as he said in his own words: "Whoever comes to his woman to commit sodomy is not among the purified." Thus, Allah ta`ala has placed repentance and purification in a singular station; because repentance is the cleansing of the inward, while purification is the repentance of the outward. It is for this reason that the scholars, may Allah be merciful to them have placed purification as the first legal issue in the outward branch of the religion and they have placed repentance as the first spiritual issue of the inward branch of the religion. These forms of purification have their agents, their preconditions, their obligations, their *sunnan*, their merits, their reprehensibilities and their invalidations. Because these forms of purification are connected to the *shari`a*, then they are by definition among the pre-temporal universal archetypes which existed 'when Adam was between spirit and clay'. The encounter that the Prophet had of Bilal in Paradise, was an encounter with Bilal in the world of spirits as universal archetype among the constellations of those about whom he upon him be blessings and peace said: 'My Companions are like the stars, whichever one you follow you will be guided.' Reason and the *shari`a* demand that we redirect the meaning of this encounter from its outward wording; because we have many sound unbroken and recurrent prophetic traditions stating explicitly that Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace will be the first created being who will enter Paradise; followed by his *Umma*. Thus, any mention of created beings being in Paradise prior to our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace must of a necessity be

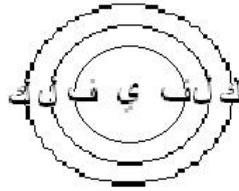
The science of the spiritual tridimensional power
And the place of ascent of the elemental lights⁵³

comprehended from its transcendent meaning. This is what is indicated in the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: “My Companions are like the stars; whichever one you follow, you will be guided.” Thus, the meaning of the ‘keys of the attributes of the purified ones’ is an indication of the individualized methodologies each of the Companions represent as guides to the purification of the soul, the heart, the intellect, the spirit and the innermost secret. *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` said in his *Diya`Uluum`d-Deen*: “The stages of purification are four: the first is purification of the outward from impurities and filth; the second is purification of the limbs from offensive sins; the third is purification of the heart from blameworthy characteristics; and the fourth is purification of the innermost secret from everything besides Allah. For each time you stand to purify your outward, you must remember to also purify your limbs of sins, purify the heart of repulsive traits, and purify the secret of other than Allah in what you are able.” This is how *Shaykh* Umar ibn Ahmad Zaruk interpolated the words as transmitted in the Sudanese manuscript. However, later, it was clear that this phrase was a scribal error. What is interesting is that these scribal errors did not deter the masters of this science from extracting meaning relevant to the text and commensurate with their spiritual stations. In the Arewa manuscript and the annotated poem presented by *Malam* Muhammad al-Amin Salame`, the correct wording is: “the keys of the attributes of the outward” (*mifaatih sifaat`d-dhaahir*). This interpolation is also consistent with the writings of the People of Allah and the teachings of the poet, as it will be demonstrated, Allah willing. For example *Shaykh* Abu Hafis Umar as-Sahrawardi said in his *Awaarif`l-Ma`aarif* that the secret of the attributes of the outward (*sirr sifaat`d-dhaahir*) is obedience to Allah (*taa`at*) indicated by every stillness (*sukuun*) and movement (*haraka*) which is done out of obedience to Allah ta`ala. Anything which acts as a secret of something (*sirr`s-shay`*) is also its key (*miftaah*), since the secret of a thing cannot be known except with its key which unlocks its mysteries. The keys to the attributes of the outward or its secrets are attained through obedience to Allah in all stillness and movements. Its opposite is the keys of the attributes of the inward (*mifaatih sifaat`d-dhaahir*), that as-Sahrawardi described as spiritual ecstasy (*wajd*) which is the secret of the attributes of the inward and designates hidden spiritual states (*ahwaal*) and inward noble characteristics (*akhlaaq*). This is what was meant by the poets words: “**...excluding these are the secrets which are concealed**”; that is to say, the science of the keys to the attributes of the inward (*mifaatih sifaat`l-baatin*), and Allah knows best. Its inwardness indicates that it is personal and private and represents the interpersonal relationship of the Absolute Being with each individualized created essence and entity.

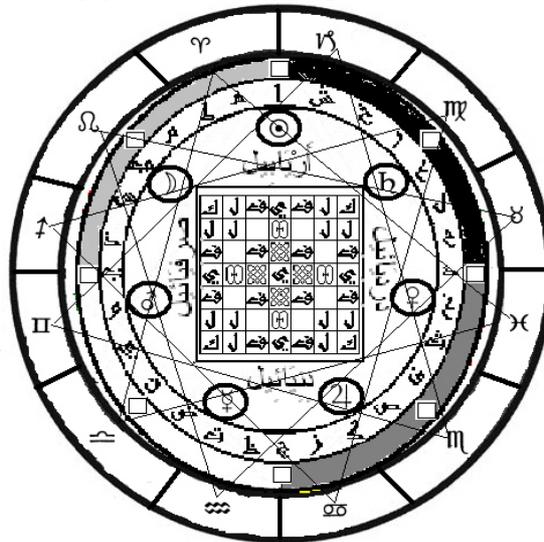
⁵³ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, then cites the third and fourth of the nine enigmatic sciences (*uluum ghaamida*) of the *awliyya* or sciences of secrets attained outside of the path of the *Sufis*. He begins by citing: “**The science of the spiritual tridimensional power.**” The operative expression in the above statement is the word ‘*ruuhaaniy*’ (spiritual being, spiritual like or spirit), which refers in a general sense to both Angels and *jinn*. The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs* the learned *sharif* Muhammad Murtada az-Zabidi said in his *Taaaj`l-Uruus* that the expression ‘*ruuhaaniy*’, with the addition of the letters ‘*alif*’ and ‘*nuun*’ means ‘affinity’ (*nasab*), meaning a being

which has an affinity to non-physical spirit existence. Quoting Sibawayhi he said that Abu `Ubayda narrated that the Arabs utilize the expression ‘*ruuhaaniy*’ to refer to Angels and *jinn*, and have coined a comprehensive noun to embrace all of them in the phrase ‘*ruuhaaniyuun*’ (spirit beings). Ibn Shumayl said that ‘*ruuhaaniyuun*’ are spirit beings that do not have corporeal bodies (*ajsaam*). However, in the manner utilized by the poet, the expression is the first adjective (*na`at*) of the word ‘power’ (*qawiy*), the second adjective being ‘*muthallath*’ (tridimensional). In his al-Insaan ‘l-Kaamil, *Shaykh* Abd’l-Kareem al-Jilli explains that each of the seven heavens is regulated by an Angel who manages that celestial sphere. They are thus called the spirits of the celestial spheres. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him corroborated this view in his Nasab’l-Mawjudaat where he said: “And just as the seven heavenly orbits each have its own spirit that manages it which are the Angels, likewise, the four elements each has its own subtle spirit that manages it which are the *jinn*.” He goes on to explain that humanity is best suited due to their discerning state (*haal naadhira*), rational state (*haal naatiqa*), receptive state (*haal qaabila*) and controlling state (*haal maalika*) to master and direct the ‘*ruuhaaniy*’ beings responsible for the celestial bodies and the four elements below them. Allah ta’ala says: “*He has subjected to you the sun and moon constant in their courses, and He has subjected to you the night and the day.*” He ta’ala says: “*He has subjected to you the night, the day, the sun, the moon and the stars, all subjected to you by His command. Indeed in that is a Sign for a people who reflect.*” He ta’ala says: “*Have you not seen how Allah has subjected to you what is in the heavens and the earth and has loaded upon you His favors outwardly and inwardly.*” Although he referred to both Angels and *jinn* as being among the ‘*ruuhaaniy*’, it is the Angels who manage the celestial bodies and it is the obedient upright *jinn* who manage the four elements, all of which have been subjected to humanity. This sovereignty (*saytara*) and domination (*taskheer*) was best exemplified in the Prophet/King Solomon (*Sulayman*) the son of the Prophet/King David (*Dawuud*), upon them be the best blessings and most perfect peace, about whom Allah ta’ala says: ‘*We made Solomon to comprehend (the sciences), and to each We gave judgment and science, and We subjugated to David, the mountains glorifying Allah, as well as the birds. We were the Doers thereof...*’. The expression ‘*muthaallatha*’ (tridimensional) refers geometrically and cosmologically to the equilateral triangles created from the arrangement of the three zodiacal signs related to one of the four elements. When the twelve zodiacal signs interact with their three companions under the same element, there emerges thirty six triangles which define the full range of interactions between the celestial bodies and the four elements below them. From an esoteric perspective this numbering explains why the 36th chapter of the *Qur’an* is considered the heart of the *Qur’an*, around which it and all that it contains revolve. *Shaykh ‘l-Akbar* explained that the secrets of this chapter is the sole estate, property or domain of the Spiritual Pole (*al-qutb*); and those who possess any share of the secrets of *Yaaseen*, attain these from the dispensation (*sirf*) and treasury (*bayt’l-maal*) of the Spiritual Pole. Apart of the secret of this tridimensional power (*quwwa*) is hidden in the 36th chapter of the *Qur’an* called *Yaaseen*, where Allah ta’ala says: “*Everything is swimming in its orbit*”; designated in the following seven letters:

﴿كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ﴾



Symbolically, these seven letters are representative of the seven celestial bodies, the seven days of the week, the seven *amirs* (governors) among the pure spirits (*jinn*) and the four elements of fire, air, water and earth, subjugated to them. These seven letters are actually four letters, where three of them are paired. Around these three orbits of paired opposites emerge the symbols of time and space, such as the planetary orbits, the twenty eight lunar stations, the days of the week, the hours of the day; as exemplified in the following '*jadwaal*' of the spiritual tridimensional power:

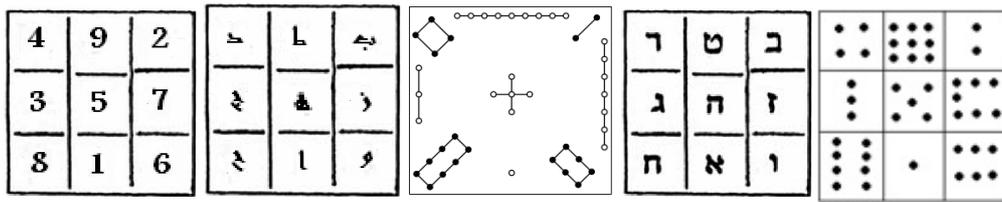


A *ziyaarij* or *jadwaal* of the spiritual tridimensional power

These symbols and the forces which they control have all been subjugated to a special class of humanity among the offspring of Adam. In the Islamic narrative of these super empowered human beings, they are arranged in a spiritual hierarchy or an invisible government to whom Allah has subjected the cosmos. They are considered to be the elite among the *awliyya*, namely the spiritual pole (*qutb*), the two *Imams* (*imamayn*), the four supports (*awtaad*), the seven substitutes (*abdaal*), the twelve spiritual captains (*nuqaba'*) and the eight spiritual noblemen (*nujabaa'*). According to Ibn `Arabi, al-Jilli and in a latter period, Mukhtar al-Kunti; those among these *awliyya* who have mastered the science of the spiritual tridimensional power of the celestial orbits are the *nuqaba'* (the spiritual captains) and the *nujabaa'* (the spiritual noblemen). As for the *nuqabaa'*; they are those who due to their knowledge of the hierarchy of existence, have been granted the sciences of the foregone revealed religious laws (*uluuum 's-sharaai' l-munzila*), are able to extract the evils of the soul (*khibaayaa 'n-nufuus*) and the demons that haunt them (*wa ghawaa'ilihaa*). In addition to this the *nuqaba'* have complete disclosure (*makshuuf*) of *Iblees*, and are aware of matters regarding him about which he himself remain ignorant. For this reason, *Iblees* has no control over them, and it is due to them that he is under the constant stress of stoning (*rajam*). They possess a science by which if one of them were to examine the footprints of anyone, they could determine whether the footprint in the soil is that of a person spiritually blessed (*sa`eed*) or spiritually wretched

(*shaqiy*). Their numbers are twelve like the number of the twelve constellations (*buruuj*). Some are women and some are men, each which is distinctively aware of the specific science for each of the constellations and what secrets (*asraar*) and effective influence (*ta'theeraat*) Allah has placed in the celestial orbits. They are acutely aware of the sciences and power which Allah provides within the heavenly bodies, the planets, and the fixed stars that descend into these twelve constellations. For the fixed stars (*nujuum thaabit*) have dynamic movements and terminations within the twelve constellations which cannot be perceived in the sensory by ordinary people because they do not appear until after thousands of years; something which the people of astronomical observations are barred from witnessing. It is the science of spiritual tridimensional power which enables the '*nuqaba*' to understand the hierarchy of existence. Allah ta'ala says: "And We raised among them twelve spiritual captains (*naqeeb*) and Allah said: 'Indeed I am with you as long as you establish the prayer, give the alms, and believe in My Messengers'." This verse is the secret of their power; or you can say that they are the '*aqtaab*' (spiritual poles) of that *Qur'anic* verse. As for the '*nujaba*' (the spiritual noblemen), they are eight individuals and are established in their spiritual authority (*qaa'imuum*) in order to correct the affairs of mankind (*bi islaah umuur 'n-naas*). This authority keeps them preoccupied with carrying the burdens of creatures (*haml athqal 'l-khalq*) where they are always busy with the needs of others over themselves. Their spiritual station is at the Footstool of Allah ta'ala in which there are no stars or planetary systems but it is the place in which the determined decrees of the celestial orbits are decided. They possess firm foothold (*lahum 'l-qadam 'r-raasikh*) in the science of the orbit of the heavenly bodies (*tayseer 'l-kawaakib*) by means of spiritual unveiling (*kashif*) and spiritual disclosure (*itlaa'*), not from the perspective of the path which is known with the scholars of astronomy or astrology. The Spiritual Noblemen possess the science of the eight celestial orbits (*thamaaniya aflaak*) and everything beneath them which include all the orbits (*kullu falak*) of the planets and stars (*kawkab*). They are the Masters of noble character (*makaaram 'l-akhlaaq*) and gnosis (*'irfaan*). It has been related by at-Tirmidhi and al-Haakim on the authority of Ali ibn Abi Talib that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Indeed every prophet was given seven intimate spiritual noblemen (*nujabaa' rufaqa'*). As for me, I was given fourteen: Ali, al-Hassan, al-Husayn, Ja'far, Hamza, Abu Bakr, Umar, Mus'ab ibn Umayr, Bilal, Salman, 'Amaar, Abdallah ibn Mas'ud, al-Miqdaad and Hudhayfa ibn al-Yamaani." In another narration by Ahmad ibn Hanbal he upon him be blessings and peace said: "There is no prophet except that he was given seven intimate noblemen as ministers (*wuzaraa' nujabaa' rufaqa'*). As for me, I was given fourteen intimate noblemen as ministers. Seven are from the Quraysh: Ali, al-Hassan, al-Husayn, Hamza, Ja'far, Abu Bakr and Umar; while seven are from the *Muhajirun*: Abdallah ibn Mas'ud, Salman, Abu Dharr, Hudhayfa, 'Amaar, Miqdaad and Bilal." This spiritual station has been bequeathed from the generations of the Companions and will remain within the *Umma* of Muhammad until the End of Time. This is apart of the secret of his statement, upon him be blessings and peace: 'The *Khilaafa* is in the Quraysh and it will remain with the Quraysh as long as they establish the religion.' And this affair has been promised to remain manifestly established with them until the sun rises from the west. Thus, anyone who inherits the station of '*nujabaa*' (noblemen), even when they are not ethnically from the Quraysh, they attain this blessing due to being a 'freedman' (*mawla*) in the house of the Quraysh; such as Bilal, Salman, Ammar, and Zayd. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless

him and grant him peace said about Salman al-Farisi: “Oh Salman! You are from us the family of the House. Allah has given you the knowledge of the first and last, the first Book and the Last Book.” Below the realm of the orbital powers naturally follow the realm of the four elements. It is for this reason, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: “**...and the place of ascent of the elemental lights**” As we cited previously, ‘lights’ (*anwaar*) is a synonym for existence (*wujuud*). The elemental lights refer to the existence of the four elements (*arba`a`anaasir*) that are at the foundation of the natural order (*`aalim tabee`y*); which are: fire (*naar*); air (*hawa`*); water (*maa`*) and earth (*ard*). The place of ascent (*murtaqaa*) of the elemental lights refers to the fourth stratum of existence which scholars refer to as ‘dark nature’ (*dhulmat tabee`iyya*). The poet, may Allah be merciful to him informs us in his *Nasab ‘l-Mawjuudat* that Allah glory be to Him is Ever Living (*hayy*), Knowing (*`aalim*), a Willer (*mureed*) and All Powerful (*qaadir*). Subsequently, it is by means of His life (*hayaatihi*), knowledge (*`ilmih*), will (*iraadatihi*) and power (*qudratihi*) that He brings all the matrices of existence into being. That is to say that He gives transitory life, knowledge, will, and power to creation in order for their quintessence (*dhawaat*), attributes (*sifaat*), systems (*naamuus*) and natures (*tabee`iyya*) to emerge. It is the Divine Life, Knowledge, Will and Power which give existence to all the three realms of existence below it: [1] the spiritual realm (*ruuhaaniyya*); [2] the celestial (*falakiyya*); and [3] the natural (*tabee`iyya*). The spiritual realm is a grid for the celestial realm and the celestial realm is a grid for the natural realm. The place of ascent of the elemental lights (*murtaqaa ‘l-`anaasir ‘l-anwaar*) means the comprehension of how the element of fire, its subtle nature and the hot entities which emerge from it are regulated by the original objective of the celestial orbits, which in turn are determined by the necessity of the quintessence of the spiritual realm, which ultimately is a Self Disclosure of the necessity of the Divinity exemplified in the Divine Will. This science includes the comprehension of how the element of air, its airy nature and the humid entities which emerge from them are regulated by the power of the life of the celestial orbits, which in turn is determined by the immutable light of the life of the spiritual realm, which in turn is a Self Disclosure of the reality of the existence of Divine Life. This science includes the comprehension of how the element of water, its wet nature and the cold entities which emerge from them are regulated by the complex conceptions of celestial knowledge, which in turn is determined by the perceived lights of the spiritual realm, which in turn is a Self Disclosure of the unicity of Divine Knowledge. This science includes the comprehension of how the element of earth, its density and weight, and the arid entities which emerge from them are regulated by the dynamic movement of the celestial orbital powers, which in turn is determined by the perfection of the quintessence of the spiritual realm, which in turn is a Self Disclosure of the Essence of Divine Power. Because Allah ta`ala has made humanity the most perfect of species in creation and has given them the most complete share of all the realms of existence and the sciences which govern them; He has made them His vicegerent (*khalifa*). It is humanity in general, but the perfect human in particular, who understand this mapping of existence and how each realm governs the one below it and is a reflection of the one above it.



Due to this, humanity is placed at the center of the paranormal square (*awfaaq*) of existence, represented as the number '5' in quantity, the Arabic letter 'ha' (ه) in the *abjadi* system, the Mandarin grapheme for the number '10', (十) in the 'luò shū' (洛書) inscription, the Hebrew letter (ה) in the secret Name of YHWH, and as a grapheme of a miniature paranormal square (⦿) at the center (*qutb*) of the *awqaaf* in the *hatumere`* system of the *Fudiawa*. Thus, the depiction of perfected humanity being a summation of all things in heaven and earth, the vicegerent (*khalifa*), the Representative (dài lǐ 代理), a custodian, the intermediary between the inward and the outward, the high and the low, heaven and earth, God and existence, and the voice of the Creator and creation simultaneously; is a universal concept conceived and transmitted globally by the larger part of humanity. There must be at all times a human representative who is stationed at the center of existence as an eternal symbol of the internal relationship between humanity and the Creator and the external relationship between humanity and creation. It is for this reason that perfected human beings have a control (*taskheer*) over the natural order which is devoid of manipulative magic, and which accords with the life, knowledge, objective and dynamic intended for the natural order by the Absolute Being. This knowledge can only be comprehended by means of revelation (*wahyi*) with respect to the Prophets and Messengers or by means of spiritual unveiling (*kashif*) with respect to the perfected *Awliyya*. It is for this reason that the poet, may the mercy of Allah be upon him brought the next stanza in a conjunctive relationship with the preceding one. In it he introduces two individuals whom Chinese sages call 'immortals' (xiān-仙) who are forever stationed at the center of the *awqaaf* of existence; one in the heavens, the heavenly prince Jesus, the son of Mary from the House of David; and one on earth, the Captain of the Guard *al-Khadr*, i.e. Abu'l-Abass Ahmad Balyaa ibn Mulkan, the leader of the reconnaissance unit of the armies of Dhu'l-Qarnayn, upon them be blessings and peace. They will be joined together with the appearance of the Seal of the Muhammadan Saints, the blood brother of the *Qur'an*, the *Amir 'l-Mu'mineen*, *Imam* al-Mahdi Muhammad ibn Abdallah, the scion of Fatima from the House of Muhammad, upon them be blessings and peace. Jesus and *al-Khadr* will manifest and act as his two *wazirs*, pray behind him and assist him in the war against *ad-Dajjal* (the anti-Christ) and his legions from the *Shayateen* among men and *jinn*; and establish a period of justice, equity, harmony and balance which will bind the heavens and earth in an era of justice, equity, social and spiritual illumination. The outward manifestation of Jesus and the inward manifestation of *al-Khadr* emerged from 'water'; Jesus from the sanctified waters of the womb of his pure mother, the Champion of Truth, Maryum whose womb was purified and made into a heavenly temple and place of worship containing oceans of secrets in which His Word is glorified and worshipped as long as the heavens abide. The genesis of *Al-Khadr* was brought about by what seemed to be a random or accidental discovery of what the occidental world call 'the Fountain of Youth', considered by many to be the spring which nourishes the earth. It is not surprising that *Al-Khadr* often appears on the

وَبَحْرٍ عَيْسَى الْقُدْسِ الْأَهْوَتِي وَمَاءِ عَيْنِ الْخَضِرِ الْحَيَوْتِي

And the Holy Divine Sea of Jesus

And the Living Water of the Spring of *al-Khadr*⁵⁴

oceans, as *Shaykh al-Akbar* encountered him on many occasions. So, thus the waters of heaven and the waters of earth join to form a bi-polar system, where Jesus and *al-Khadr* are granted the mastery of oceans of gnosis of Allah and pure springs of wisdom. One masters the heavenly seas and the other masters the earthly springs and both are immortal guides on the Path to Gnosis of Allah ta`ala. It is with the Seal of the Muhammad inheritors, *Imam al-Mahdi* that the seas of the heavens and the pure springs of the earth will be brought together, made manifest and replenish both heaven and earth. All of this will be elaborated on in the following hemistich by the poet, Allah willing. Here ends folio 3.

⁵⁴ It is important to note that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, made this stanza as an incomplete phrase (*jumlat ghayr 'l-mufeeda*) annexing its meaning to the preceding phrase with which it is conjoined (*ma`atuf alayhi*). The poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: “**And...**”, where the particle of conjunction (*harf`atf*) opening the stanza means order (*tarteeb*) and sequence (*taraaduf*). This is not surprising because the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, is transcribing through the order and sequence of the sciences a paranormal square (*awfaaq*), where the fifth science of the *awliyya* or science of secrets which can be comprehended outside of the formal *Sufi* brotherhoods comprises a paired reality made of two spiritual immortal guides. One is a heavenly prophet and the other is an illumined earthly immortal, both having their spiritual genesis in the heavenly oceans and the primeval pure earthly springs respectively. Like *yin/yang*, they thus, occupy the central square of the *awqaaf* of existence as paired opposites. In the hierarchy of the government of *awliyya* they are represented as the Two *Imams*. This is by design and conceals a tremendous secret. The poet says: “**...the Holy Divine Sea of Jesus...**”; where the expression ‘*bahr*’ (sea) is made genitive (*majruur*) due to it being a conjunct to the genitive phrases in the previous hemistich: ‘...the spiritual tridimensional power and the place of ascent of the elemental lights’. All of these phrases are made genitive since they are annexed nouns (*mudaaf ilayhi*) to the expression ‘*ilm*’. This grammatical construct suggests that these differentiated sciences are aspects of a singular discipline or science. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, describes this ‘sea’ with two adjectives (*na`taan*); namely ‘*qudus*’ (holy/sacred) and ‘*laahut*’ (that related to divinity) which then attributes this science to the Absolute Being. This indicates that this science is pre-natural and ontological. This holy divine sea is also an annexed noun construct (*mudaaf*) to the expression ‘Jesus’; indicating sway (*tasallut*) or mastery (*itqaan*), and means that this science was among the prophetic sciences given to Jesus the son of Mary by the Absolute Being. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him cites this aspect of the prophetic sciences of Jesus, the son of Mary, because it is the aspect of his prophetic knowledge which can be inherited. Who is Jesus, the son of Mary? He is our master, the Spirit belonging to Allah, His Word, servant and Messenger; `Isa ibn Maryum bint `Imraan ibn Maathaan. In Hebrew, Aramaic and Guz, he is known as Yushu`a. His mother was from the progeny of the Prophet/King Dawud, upon him be peace as Ibn Asaakir cited: She was Maryum bint `Imraan ibn Maathaan ibn al-`Aazar ibn al-Yahud ibn Akhnar ibn Saaduq ibn `Ayazuz ibn al-Yaqayyim ibn Aybuud ibn Zaryaabeel ibn Shaalataal ibn Yuuhaynaa ibn Barshaa ibn Amuun ibn Mayshaa ibn Hizqaa ibn Ahaaz ibn Muthaam ibn `Azariya ibn Yuraam ibn Yushaafath ibn Ayshaa

ibn Ruhba`aam ibn Sulayman ibn Dawud, upon them be peace. She miraculously gave birth to `Isa without the aid of a father, as a sign from Allah of His Omnipotence over creation and Independence to do whatever He wills (*fa`aalun lima yureed*); for when He decides a matter he simply says to it: Be! And it is! Regarding the narrative of Maryum and the nativity of Jesus, upon them be peace, Allah ta`ala says: *“And recall in the Book, Maryum, when she isolated herself from her family in a place in the east and veiled herself from them. How We sent to her one of Our Spirits in the form of a well formed human. She said: ‘Verily I seek refuge with the Beneficent One from you, if indeed you are fearfully aware!’ He said: ‘I am a messenger from your Lord, sent to inform you that He has bestowed upon you a pure and innocent boy. She said: ‘How can I have a boy when no human has touched me and I have never been immoral? He said: ‘It is as your Lord has said: ‘It is a matter easy for Me’, and that We may make him a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us. It is a matter which has been decided!’ She thus became pregnant with him and secluded herself in a remote place. The pangs of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a date palm tree, and she said: ‘If only I could have died before this and been something forgotten!’ Then a voice called out from underneath her: ‘Do not be saddened for your Lord has placed underneath you a rivulet, so shake towards yourself a branch from the palm tree and there will fall on you ripe moist dates. So eat, drink and be consoled. And if you encounter any human, say: ‘I have made a vow this day to the Beneficent One to fast from speaking to any human.’ She then came to her people carrying him, and they all said: ‘O Maryum! You have come with something shameful. O sister of Haarun, your father was not an evil person and your mother was not immoral. However, she merely pointed to the child, and they said: ‘How can we speak to one who is still a child in the cradle?’ The child said: ‘Indeed, I am a servant of Allah whom He has given the Book and He has made me a Prophet. He has made me blessed wherever I am, and has commissioned me to pray and give alms as long as I am alive. He has made me filial towards my mother, and has not made me tyrannical and wretched. Peace upon me the day I was born, the day that I will die and on the Day I will be resurrected alive!’ That was `Isa the son of Maryum, a Word of Truth which they denied. It is not befitting for Allah to take a son. Glory be to Him above that! When He decides a matter He merely says: Be! And it is. Verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord so worship Him alone, that is the straight path.”* For, `Isa ibn Maryum is a pure Prophet, noble, untainted, gracious and assisted with sublime miracles. Allah sent him to the Bani Isra`il with the *Injeel* and the *Torah* but most of them rejected him and sought to kill him. However, Allah raised him up into the second heavens where he has been since; being trained in the courtesies, rulings and wisdom of the Muhammadan *shari`a*. He will descend in the End of Days as an equitable supreme justice (*haakim*), and renewer (*mujaddid*) of the religion of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He will descend and judge between creatures equitably and intuitively. He will recover the lost and scattered descendents of Ibrahim, break the ‘cross’, deny and chastise those who came falsely in his name, slay the pigs, repeal the tax for non Muslims, and kill the accursed *Dajjal*. In his day, the female camel will be left alone, enmity, mutual hatred and envy will depart from the hearts of men, and much wealth will be made available but no one will crave after it. The majority of the communities that call themselves ‘Christians’ will declare their Islam and enter the true faith in large numbers (*awfaajan*). They will be followed by the remnant of the righteous elders and virtuous *rabbis* of the scattered and lost Tribes of Isra`il, who will enter into Islam wholly. But a curse will befall [1] all those who falsely claimed the

birthright of the children of Abraham and embezzled, stole, and murdered in their names, [2] as well as their allies among the pagans among the Christians who falsely came in Jesus's name. In the opinion of the sages of the *Fudiawa*, Jesus, the son of Maryum upon them be blessings and peace is the Seal of the Universal Saints of Allah ta'ala. As for his mother, Maryum bint `Imraan, upon her be peace, she is without exception the best of all the women in the world. Allah ta'ala says about her: *"O Maryum indeed Allah elected you purified you and He chose you above all the women of the world."* How can this not be so when she was chosen in pre-eternity to be the heavenly spouse of Muhammad, the Best of creation? The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, hinted at this by describing the genesis of Jesus and the sciences over which he has complete mastery by his words: *"And the Holy Divine Sea of Jesus";* where this Sea (*bahr*) is given the description of being consecrated and holy. This no doubt is a direct reference to the realm from which Allah ta'ala manifested His Word, in the blessed waters of the womb of Maryum, upon her be eternal peace. She was a 'sideeqa' (champion of truth), what the Hebrews call 'sadduq' and had consecrated her entire being as a sacred 'temple' or purified *masjid* for the worship of the Absolute Being. When she had completed her purification of this 'temple', Allah ta'ala sent her clear signs and miracles indicating His pleasure and contentment with her. It is said that fruits and vegetables of spring and summer would be given to her during the autumn and winter; and that fruits and vegetables of the autumn and winter would be given to her during the spring and summer. Allah ta'ala says: *"When the wife of `Imran said: 'Lord, indeed I freely consecrate over to You what is in my womb, so accept it from me. Indeed You are the all Hearing the all Knowing'. When she delivered it, she said: 'Lord, I have delivered it as a female'; and Allah knows best what she delivered, and the male is not like the female. 'I have named her Maryum; and I seek Your refuge for her and her descendents from the accursed Satan.'* Thus, her Lord accepted this from her with an excellent acceptance and raised her with excellent rearing and made Zakariah her guardian. Whenever Zakariah would enter the niche of the sanctuary, he would find livelihood with her. He said: 'O Maryum, from where did this come to you? She said: 'It is from Allah, indeed Allah provides for whomever He wills without limit'." Maryum, upon her be peace unfailingly continued to worship her Lord with utmost sincerity until Allah ta'ala revealed to her a Revelation like the revelation revealed to the elite of His prophets and messengers. When this Word or Revelation interacted with the purified waters of her womb, it took the form of a blessed child, a living Word of Allah and a purified spirit from Him, who naturally had mastery over the pure water from which he emerged, with which he cures the leper, the lame, gives life to the dead and animate life in inanimate things, by the permission of Allah. According to some of the 'apocrapha' writings, Jesus had the ability to shape shift and take on any righteous pure form, like water which takes on the form and color of the vessel in which it is poured. This water is a heavenly sea which descends from above like the fabled *Tasneem* of Paradise and is the life giving waters of the seal of universal sainthood (*khitam 'l-awliyya 'l-mutlaq*). Allah willing we will return to this topic in the next chapter when discussing the sciences of the Arch Messengers, the Prophets and the *awliyya* who inherit from them. After mentioning the waters of the celestial heavens, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him then cites its paired opposite, the water of the living springs of earth, by his words: **"...and the Living Water of the Spring of al-Khadr."** Because this water springs from the lowest realm and emerges from beneath the earth, it inundates and generates the four elements as well as the elemental spirits which govern them. Just as the above

mentioned science of the spiritual tridimensional power is apart of the science of the Divine Sea of Jesus; likewise the place of ascent of the elemental lights of fire, air, water and earth is under the mastery of the science of the Living Spring of *al-Khadr*. Who is *al-Khadr*? He is our master Abu'l-Abass Ahmad Balyaa ibn Mulkan ibn Faaligh ibn Ghaabir ibn Shaalikh ibn Irfakhshad ibn Saam ibn Nuuh, upon them be peace. He was a captain of the guard and a leader of the reconnaissance unit (*amir 'l-mustakshifeen*) of the armies of the great King and just ruler *Dhu'l-Qarnayn*, upon him be peace. He was sent by the ruler to scout for places of water to replenish the soldiers, riding beasts and livestock of the army. It was during this search that *al-Khadr* came upon 'the spring of life'. He naturally took a drink from this spring, and like his counterpart, Jesus, Allah ta'ala caused him to transform into a human perennial (*mu`ammir*), what Chinese sages call 'a great immortal' (dà xiān-大仙). He slept for centuries and when he awoke, the armies of *Dhul'-Qarnayn* had longed passed into the annals of history, believing that their captain of the guard had died during his search for water. He was transformed physically and was given the ability to shape shift into any pure and righteous form. He has lived since that time to our present, hidden among humanity. My teacher *Shaykh* Uthman Kajim as-Sudani informed me that he met him on several occasions and on each occasion his human apparition was different. Like, Jesus, he some times appears as a youth, sometimes as a poor elderly wayfarer, and sometimes as a sophisticated cosmopolitan traveler; guiding some, testing others, serving others, promoting some, demoting others, initiating some, instructing some and deposing others. One of his distinguishing marks is that he does not have a skeletal bone in the thumb of his right hand. He is the Captain of the Guard of the Armies of the People of Allah, the most advanced reconnaissance leader that has ever lived, the guide of Musa, the Prophet at the junction of the two Niles and the friend of every wayfarer and traveling stranger; a true spiritual *samurai*. His knowledge of the art of war, strategy, troop maneuvers, weaponry and the mysterious forces of Allah is legendary. *Shaykh* as-Saawi once said: "I heard on the authority of one of the Knowers of Allah who said: 'Whoever knows his name, the name of his father, his honorific name and his nickname will enter Paradise. It is Abu'l-Abass Ahmad Balyaa ibn Mulkaan al-Khadr'." It has been related on the authority of Ibn Abass, may Allah be pleased with them who said: "Al-Khadr and Elias (Elijah) meet with one another every year at Mina, where each one shaves the head of the others for the rites of the pilgrimage. When they are ready to part one another's company they say the following supplication: 'In the name of Allah, it is what Allah wills. Nothing drives towards good except Allah. In the name of Allah, it is what Allah wills. Nothing wards off evil except Allah. In the name of Allah, it is what Allah wills. All that exist of blessings is from Allah. In the name of Allah, it is what Allah wills. There is no power or might besides Allah.' They say this four times. It is said that whoever recites these words when he awakens and when evening comes, he will be safe from drowning, burning, theft, devils, unjust rulers, snakes, and scorpions." Because, Jesus and *al-Khadr* together administer the heavenly and earthly spiritual waters, they also have mastery over the spiritual realms (*ruuhaniyyuun*), high and low, Angelic and *jinn* and both have been given supervision over providing assistance to spiritual and earthly wayfarers and by the permission of Allah can guide those who are spiritually and physically lost, as well as provide drink to those spiritually and physically thirsty. This idea, albeit controversial in certain clerical circles, explains the ease by which the magic of the anti-christ (*ad-Dajjal*) will be extinguished from the earth. The waters of life will rain down from the heavens and

SANKORE'

spring forth from beneath the earth when Jesus and *al-Khadr* openly walk the earth again. In many sound prophetic traditions it narrates that *al-Khadr* will be sacrificed by *ad-Dajjal* in order to disprove him as a charlatan and quack; and to hearten and embolden the spirits of the besieged Muslims armies. *Ad-Dajjal* will cleave *al-Khadr* in half and walk between the two severed halves. Using elemental sorcery, he will bring *al-Khadr* back to life, and then declare, that he causes death and life, therefore, he must be 'god'. At this the revived *al-Khadr* will declare: "What you've falsely done and claimed has only increased me in the certainty that you are a deceiving liar!" Then *ad-Dajjal* will cleave him in half again, but will be unable to bring him back to life a second time. Rather, Allah ta'ala will revive him as a martyr and living witness of His power to resurrect the dead. This act of sacrifice on the part of *al-Khadr* will undo the effective magic of *ad-Dajjal* and bring to an end his own immortality as a *shahid* in the armies of the People of Allah; and then Jesus, the son of Maryum will descend from the celestial heavens in all his glory on the wings of Angels, a miraculous act which will cause mankind to denigrate the magic of the era of *ad-Dajjal*. In the Saheeh of the two *Shaykhs*, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace describes Jesus, extinguishing the magic of *ad-Dajjal* in an instant the way salt melts away in water, when it is thrown in it. It will be a period of rejuvenation in the heavens and earth, a cleansing and purification of the high and low worlds, an era which can only be described as a universal Baptism and a collective *Ghusl* of existence. It will be an 'anti-deluge' where the heavens and earth will rain and spring forth its replenishing waters in the most advantageous manner conceivable. This will occur after the appearance of the Muhammadan Seal, or as a result of his appearance. Because he will be the *Amir*, the just *Sultan* and *Amir'l-Mu'mineen*, he will be the spiritual axis (*qutb*) of the time, with Jesus al-Masih and *al-Khadr* as his two *Imams* and *wazirs*. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, declares that he and the sages of his *Fudiawa* forebears were thoroughly acquainted with the sciences and secrets of these hidden waters of Jesus and *al-Khadr*, upon them be peace. The People of Allah have universally designated water to be the sign of the birth of wisdom and sciences. In this context the poet, may Allah be merciful to him joins the waters of the world of spirits and the waters of the natural elements in the heavenly and earthly immortals of Jesus and al-Khadr respectively.

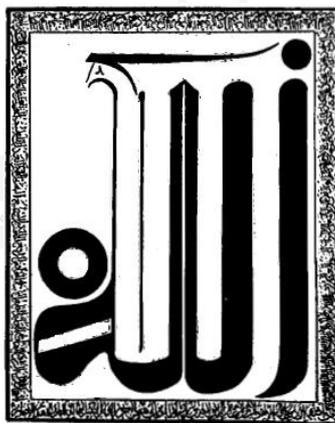
عِلْمُ حُرُوفِ إِسْمِهِ الْمَعْظِمِ وَمِنْهُ عِلْمُ الْحَجَرِ الْمَكْرَمِ

The science of the letters of His Immense Name

And from this is the science of the Venerated Black Stone⁵⁵

⁵⁵ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him then cites the sixth and seventh of the nine enigmatic sciences of the *awliyya* or sciences of secrets attained outside of the path of the *Sufis*, by his words: “**The science of the letters of His Immense Name...**” The first of these, the ‘*huruuf ismihi l-`aadhem*’ (the science of the letters of His Immense Name) is a direct reference to the letters of the Name of Majesty – ALLAH. It is also an indication to the letters of the Hidden Names of Allah concealed (*maktuum*) throughout the *Qur’an* and concealed in the supplications of the messengers, the prophets and the *awliyya*. These hidden names of Allah ta`ala are a singular letter from one respect, a combination of letters from one respect, a combination of words from one respect, a singular *Qur’anic* verse from one respect, a series of *Qur’anic* verses from one respect, a singular *Qur’anic* chapter from one respect, a series of *Qur’anic* chapters from one respect, and the Detailed Book (*kitaab mubeen*) from one respect. It is precisely due to this multiple interaction with the letters of the most Immense Name of ALLAH that there have been many different interpolations among the People of Allah regarding its meaning, and to which of the Names of Allah it refers. The grandfather of the poet, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` said in his *Kitaab Ism l-`Aadhem* regarding the Immense Name of Allah: “...it is the Great Name, which is *Allah*. This is because the Great Name is the name of majesty and is the axis (*qutb*) of the Divine Names to which they all return and around which they all revolve. The name *Allah* is like the distinguishing mark of the remaining Divine Names. This is because if you were to ask for example: ‘Who is the Beneficent (*ar-Rahman*)?’ Then you would naturally answer: ‘Allah’. And, this would be the answer regarding the remainder of the Divine Names related to it. The Beneficent (*ar-Rahman*), the Merciful (*ar-Rahim*) are two Divine Attributes of this noble Name.” As for the legal foundation for reciting the majestic name of ALLAH are the words of Allah ta`ala when He says: “Say: Call upon Allah or call upon the *Rahmaan*, by whichever you call upon, to Him belongs the most beautiful Names.” Again He says: “Say – Allah; and leave them in their amuzement playing around.” It has been related by Ahmad, Muslim and at-Tirmidhi on the authority of Anas ibn Malik that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said: “The Hour will not be established until there is no longer anyone on earth saying: ‘Allah! Allah!’” The scholar warrior and freedom fighter *Shaykh* Sidi Mustafa Ma' al-'Aynayn related in his *Mufeed ar-Rawi* on the authority of Ibn Jarir: “It occurs in tradition that when the worshipper says ‘Allah’, there emerges from within him a shaft of light, which spreads out on the horizons, then rises to the height of the Throne, filling the cosmos completely so that Allah says to it: ‘Stop!’ It then says: ‘By Your glory and majesty! I will not stop until You forgive the one who called on this Name.’ Then He replies: ‘By My glory and My majesty, I vowed to Myself before I created the world - I only set it moving on the tongue of My slave because I have already forgiven him’.” It is clear that the recitation of the singular name – ALLAH, has specific effects upon the heart of the one who recites it, which are distinct from the effects of other Names of Allah. The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, our master Ahmad ibn Mustafa al-'Alawi said: “In a general sense, each person, if he has subtle perception, is aware of the relationship to his soul of the effect of the Name mentioned whether the matter is serious or light. If that is the case we must believe that the Name of Majesty creates an effect on the

self just as any other name creates an effect, and that each has an effect particular to it. The fact will not escape you, my brother that the Name ennobles you through the nobility of naming Him, because of what it holds of His impression in the concealment of its secret and meaning.” Thus, the recitation of the singular name – ALLAH contains immense secrets whose magnificence is commensurate with the majesty of the One named. It is not surprising then, that the people of Allah made this litany into a scientific method for attaining gnosis of Allah, and transmitted it intergenerationally as a distinct method. The *Shehu* claimed that he was 25 years old when he was taught the science of the Immense Name of Allah by his paternal uncle and teacher, the *Imam* Muhammad Sanbu ibn Abdullahi ibn Muhammad ibn Sa’d ibn Muhammad Ladan ibn Idris ibn Maasiran, on Tuesday, the 15th of the month of *Ramadan*, the year 1191 A.H. (circa 1777 C.E.). The *Shehu* included the recitation of the Name of Majesty at the end of his renown *al-Munaajat* where he said: “**ALLAH! ALLAH! ALLAH!** [to the east]. **ALLAH! ALLAH! ALLAH!** [to the west]. **ALLAH! ALLAH! ALLAH!** [to the south]. **ALLAH! ALLAH! ALLAH!** [to the north]. **ALLAH! ALLAH! ALLAH!** [above]. **ALLAH! ALLAH! ALLAH!** [below. Then say:] O Allah! I ask You by the sanctity of Your Inestimable Essence, Your Exalted Attributes and Your Beautiful Names, please do not veil me from Them by the rank of Muhammad, the Prophet of Mercy, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. There is no power or might besides Allah the Exalted the Mighty.” The method of recitation of the Majestic Name was cultivated as a form of spiritual exercise (*riyaada*) in what Chinese sages would call a ‘*qi gong*’ (氣功 – system of deep breathing), but whose sole purpose was spiritual opening. This essential breathing method which accompanied the recitation of the letters was required along with an elongation of the articulation of the Name while envisioning the letters of the Majestic Name. This was then completed with a movement of the right hand pointing towards the indicated direction from the six directions: east, west, south, north, above and below. These directions could also be substituted with the direction of *qibla*, opposite the *qibla*, one’s right, one’s left, above and below. This scientific method of reciting the Majestic Name was the same methodology transmitted among the *Shadhiliyya* circles, particularly those of the *zawiyyas* of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya; as well as the *Khalwatiyya* circles of Niger and the Nilotic Sudan.



This method of evoking the Majestic Name recited by the *Shehu* in his *al-Munaajat* was later refined, developed and streamlined, (especially in the area of breathing) by our master *Shaykh* Ahmad ibn Mustafa al-Alawi in his renown scientific work called *al-Qawl ‘l-Mu’tamad fee Mashruu’iyya ‘d-Dhikr bi’l-Ism ‘l-Mufrad*. The *Shehu* in

turn transmitted this method to his disciples, among them being his wife, the niece of the above mentioned teacher: *Iyya Gharka* A`ishatu Ghabindu bint *Shaykh* Muhammad Sa`d ibn Abdullahi ibn Muhammad ibn Sa`d as well as their son, Muhammad Sanbu. It was from this maternal uncle, Muhammad Sanbu, that the poet, Dan Tafa, learned the mysteries of this particular aspect of the Immense Name of Allah ta`ala. Allah willing, we will return to discussing the meaning of the concealed or hidden Immense Names of Allah, in the next chapter. Connected to the science of the letters of the most Immense Name of Allah is the seventh of the nine enigmatic sciences of the *awliyya* or science of secrets attained outside of the path of the *Sufis*; which the poet called the: "...the science of the venerated Black Stone (*hajr`l-aswad`l-mukarram*)". The poet, may Allah be merciful to him indicated the connection between these two sciences by his words: **"...and from this..."**; meaning that this science is apart of and is inclusive within the science of the secrets of the letters of the most Immense Name of Allah ta`ala. He continued: **"...is the science of the Venerated Black Stone."** The reason that the poet listed this science in conjunction to the former is because it is well known among the People of Allah, that the veracity of the science of letters connected to the Immense Name of Allah is given particularly to those sages who have had the honor of making an acceptable pilgrimage to the House of Allah in Mecca at least three times. The fulfillment of pilgrimage, the final pillar of Islam, is one of the prerequisites for knowing and accessing the science of the letters of the most Immense Name. What is meant here by 'the venerated black stone' is the stone at the corner of the Sacred House in Mecca, may Allah guard it. It is called '*mukarram*' (venerated) because it is venerated in and of itself, placed in the most venerated corner, of the most venerated House, in the most venerated City on the most venerated locale on earth and on the most venerated and ideal planet in the universe. In some cases, it is uniquely referred to as simply 'the stone' (*al-hajr*) as a way of showing esteem for it. In the prophetic tradition: "The Black Stone is the right hand of Allah on His earth." Ibn al-Athir said: "Here in this prophetic tradition it consists of the speech of analogy and metaphor. Its origin is taken from the earthly king who when he shakes the hand of a person, that person responds by kissing his hand. It is as if to Allah, the Black Stone stands in the place of the right hand to an earthly king which is greeted and kissed. Consequently, realize that anything which comes in the *Qur`an* or prophetic traditions in connection to hand, two hands and other than these from the names of bodily parts in reference to Allah azza wa jalla, then it must be understood by way of metaphor and allegory, because Allah is completely free of having resemblance to creation or having substantiated corporeal form." Thus, the science of the venerated Black Stone is connected to the immense oath of allegiance to Allah ta`ala and is an indication of the realization of the first covenant made in the world of spirits when the children of Adam were asked: "*Am I not your Lord?*" It is at the venerated Black Stone where this primordial covenant is renewed and the investment of vicegerency (*khilaafa*) is granted to those deserving of it. It represents the greatest purification as *Shaykh* Lisan`d-Deen said in his *Rawdat`t-Ta`reef*: "The spiritual purification resulting from the pilgrimage is by the servant withdrawing or leaving (*khuruuj*) his own lower soul and arriving at the station of spiritual divestment (*maqaam`t-tajreed*), where he divests himself of the whims and passions of the soul, and dies to the world of his customs and habits. In summation, it is a purification of the secret from everything besides Allah ta`ala, and a turning and directing his spiritual endeavors towards the Absolute Being." It is with this divestment and recognition of one's poverty, impotence and inability, indicated

by the symbolic kissing of the Right Hand of the Absolute Being, the King of kings, that the servant is invested with acceptance, station and sciences, as Allah ta`ala says: “*And We taught Adam all the Names.*” Thus, the science of the Venerated Stone can only be a reference to the sciences inherited from the primordial human, our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. The pilgrim makes seven circumambulations around the House and each time he passes the Venerated Stone, he/she, salutes it, kisses it and or touches it with the right hand, just as one would do when greeting a ruler. This oath of allegiance performed seven times is a symbol of the oaths of allegiance given to our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to subjugate the soul and transform it for the sake of Allah. Like the seven *tawwaf*; the soul is transformed in seven stages: [1] from the soul which commands to evil (*nafs`l-amara bi`s-suu*); to [2] the self critical soul (*nafs`l-lawwama*); to [3] the tranquil soul (*nafs`l-mutma`inna*); to [4] the inspired soul (*nafs`l-mulhimma*); to [5] the contented soul (*nafs`r-raadiyya*); to [6] the soul with which the Absolute Being is contented (*nafs`l-maradiyya*); until its transformation is completed with [7] the perfected soul (*nafs`l-kaamila*). It is at this last stage that the Original Oath (*ba`ayat`l-aqliyya*) is completed when Allah ta`ala said to all the spirits: “*Am I not your Lord?*” The transformation (*tagyeer*) is the ontological response – ‘*balaa*’ (indeed!) to the Absolute Being. These sciences can only come from annihilation into the self-form of the Living *Sunna* of the Perfect Human, our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. It is for this reason that during the reconstruction of the Ka`aba when the leading clans of the *Quraysh* disputed over which of them would have the honor of placing the Black Stone in its place; it was our master Muhammad, who advised them to place the stone upon a cloth and each of the clan leaders were instructed to take hold of an edge of the cloth and raise it. Then Muhammad took the Venerated Stone and placed it in its place. Because the Black Stone is symbolically the Right Hand of the Absolute Being, only His vicegerent could fittingly place it. Because the venerated Black Stone is from the remnant of the creation of Adam, in the language of the People of Allah, it represents the most subtle and ultimate primordial human quality that recognizes its Lord and knows its servitude to its Lord in the subtle world of spirits before Allah ta`ala invested humanity with the attributes of existence. Allah willing, we will return to this theme when discussing the great leadership (*imaamat`udhama*), indicated by the sciences of the Great Unveiling (*kashif akbar*).



The science of the *nawaamees* and the heart of the letter *`ayn*
 The science of the *hawaameem* without fabrication⁵⁶

⁵⁶ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, then discusses the eighth and ninth of the nine enigmatic sciences of the *awliyya* or sciences of secrets attained outside of the path of the *Sufis*. In reference to the first of these sciences, the poet said: “**The science of the *nawaamees*...**”; that is to say that the eighth of the enigmatic sciences attained outside of the path of the *Sufis* is the science of the ‘*nawaamees*’ (realms of Angelic communication and interaction). The expression ‘*nawaamees*’ is plural for ‘*naamuus*’. The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, the learned *sharif* Muhammad Murtada az-Zabidi said in his *Taaaj* ‘*l-Uruus*’ that ‘*naamuus*’ takes its root from the verb ‘*namasa*’ (to conceal a secret), like when you say: ‘*namasa* ‘*alayhi* ‘*l-amra*’ (He concealed the affair from him.) Thus, the expression ‘*naamuus*’ means a secret, a mystery and knowledge revealed from the Unseen in the form of revelation. In political science a ‘*naamuus*’ is a governmental official whom the ruler takes into his confidence and acquaints him with his private affairs and secrets. Thus, a ‘*naamuus*’ is an antonym of ‘*jaasuus*’ (a spy) who becomes privy to the secrets and private affairs which could harm the ruler or nation. *Imam* Ibn’l-Mandhuur said in his *Lisaan*’*l-Arab* that the expression ‘*naamuus*’ is an astute sentient being who is a receptacle of knowledge (*wi`aa`l-`ilm*), such as an Angel or subtle spiritual being. In the early days of Islam, the Jews and Christians utilized this expression to refer to the Arch Angel – Jibril, the bearer of Divine revelation to the prophets. It has been related by al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of A`isha: “When Khadija, may the pleasure of Allah be with her, described the beginning of the affair of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace to her cousin, Waraqa ibn Nufayl, who was a Christian well versed in the Scriptures; he said: ‘If what you have said is the truth, then what has come to him is the same *naamuus* which came to Musa, upon him be peace’. “ In another narration by Ahmad on the authority of `Amr ibn `l-`Aas he said: “...indeed what has come to him is the greatest *naamuus*...”; where the expression is a reference to the Arch Angel – Jibril upon him be peace. This idea was also corroborated by at-Tabari in his *Tarikh* where Jibril, upon him be peace is referred to as the ‘greatest *namuus*’. The poet, Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to him, used the same expression in reference to the spiritual confidante who instructed him to compose his *al-Uhuud wa`l-Mawaatheeq* where he said: “These are oaths and covenants which I took the resolve of fulfilling as a necessary affair and incumbent judgment, from the hand of the greatest confidante (*naamuus akbar*) and most honorable teacher (*ustaadh afkhar*), whom it is sufficient to mention his distinguishing mark without openly citing his name. I have thus composed it in writing in order to keep them present in my mind, as well as to proclaim them, not in order to boast. Whoever desires, from those successful, can follow me in adhering to them based upon their abilities in knowledge, actions, spiritual states, or spiritual stations, whether unmediated or by means of some causative factor. This is because these oaths and covenants are apart of Muhammadan character and Angelic virtues (*shamaa`il naamussiyya*).” Here, the poet, Dan Tafa, utilizes the expression ‘*naamuus*’ to refer to both the Arch Angel Jibril, who he referred to as the ‘*naamuus akbar*’ as well as the Angels of inspiration (*malaa`ika* ‘*l-ilham*). From another perspective the expression ‘*naamuus*’ also refers to the faculty in spiritually superempowered humans to communicate and interact with the Angelic and spiritual worlds. Thus, it is a reference to Angels, spiritual

beings, the highest human spiritual faculty and finally, to the realms (*dawaa'ir*) where these interactions occur. This faculty and realm of comprehension can only emerge in humans either as a divine gift (*mawhib*) or through spiritual discipline (*riyaada*); which is outwardly manifested by the adherence to the Divine commands and prohibitions (*al-awaamir wa'n-nawaahi*), as established by the Islamic the codex/law (*naamuus*). We have it from the famous 4th century *hijra* treatise called Risaa'il 'l-Ikhwaan: "The *naamuus* cannot be perfected in an individual except by means of the commands and prohibitions. The commands and prohibitions cannot permeate the individual except through cognition of the Divine promise and threat (*al-wa'd wa'l-wa'eed*). The cognition of the Divine promise and threat cannot be established in the individual except with an awakened sense of desire and dread (*targheeb wa tarheeb*). An awakened sense of desire and dread cannot be effective without having fear and hope in Allah (*khawf wa raja'*). Fear and hope cannot emerge or be realized in an individual except through adherence to the commands and prohibitions. Thus, whoever fears nothing and hopes for nothing, can never yearn for or dread the Divine. The one who does not have Divine yearning or dread can never be moved by the Divine promise and threat, and thus cannot be influenced by the commands and prohibitions. The one who is not commanded by the established principles of the law (*nawaamees*); and is not checked by their prohibitions, will have no portion from the Divine communications (*naamuus ilahiy*)." Thus, the '*nawaamees*' represent the highest spiritual faculty and realms by which humans communicate with the Absolute Being, His Angels and other spiritual beings. This faculty in humans can only be awakened through persistent adherence to the code of law (*naamuus*). This is significant because it confirms the continuity of human Angelic communication even after the ceasing of messengership and prophethood. It is the consensus of the *Umma*, that the Arch Angel Jibril (the *naamuus akbar*), upon him be peace has ceased to descend with revelation (*wahyi*) in the form of a *shari'a* or *qaanuun* with the physical death of our master Muhammad, upon him be peace. Yet it is agreed that Jibril and his forces (*junuud*) still descend in order to make war on behalf of the Muslim *Umma* as well as to inspire the hearts and secrets (*ilham 'l-quluub wa'l-asraar*) of the intimate friends of Allah ta'ala. We have a report narrated by *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye' in his Ihya's-Sunna: "It is related that Ahmad ibn Hanbal said: 'One day I was with a gathering who were removing all their clothes and entering into the water. Then I employed the prophetic tradition: 'Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him not enter into the bath except with a wrapper.' As a result, I did not remove my clothes. Then I heard a voice that night saying: 'O Ahmad! Rejoice for verily Allah has forgiven you because of your making use of the *Sunna* and He has made you an *Imam* to be followed.' I then said: 'Who are you?' He said: 'Jibril'." Thus, the expression '*nawaamees*' in its plural form refer to those Angelic forces of Jibril, upon him be peace, responsible for preserving the revelation of the *Qur'an*, its secrets, descending upon the assemblies of recitation of the *Qur'an* with mercy, tranquility, forgiveness and gnosis. It has been related by Ahmad and Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayra and Abu Sa'id 'l-Khudri that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "In the assemblies of remembrance there descend upon them tranquility, and the Angels encompass them, covering them with mercy, and mentions them with Allah at His Throne." It has been narrated by al-Hakim in his al-Mustadrak on the authority of Jaabir ibn Abdallah, that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said regarding the revelation of chapter *al-An'aam*: "Indeed this *Qur'anic* chapter was conducted by Angels whose numbers

filled the horizon.” It has been related by ad-Daylami on the authority of Anas ibn Malik, that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “When the chapter *al-Kahf* was revealed there descended a group of seventy-thousand Angels.” In another narration of ad-Daylami on the authority of Ibn Abass the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “I found a chapter in the Book of Allah that contains thirty verses. Whoever recites it when he goes to sleep, he will have recorded for him thirty good deeds, he will have wiped away thirty evil deeds, he will be raised up thirty ranks, and Allah will dispatch to him an Angel from the Angels who will spread out its wings over him and protect him from every harm, until he awakens. It is the advocate which will dispute in the grave on behalf of the one who recites it. It the chapter: ‘*Blessed be to Him in whose Hand is the kingdom*’.” It has been related by Ibn Hibban, at-Tabrani, al-Hakim and al-Bayhaqi on the authority of Asayyid ibn Hudayr who said: “O Messenger of Allah! Tonight I was reciting the chapter *al-Baqara*, when I heard a noise behind me. I assumed that my horse had broken away and fled.” The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Go and continue reciting Abu Ateek!” He said: “I left to return to reciting, and I found a light like a star which had filled between the heavens and the earth, and I was unable to continue reciting.” Then the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Those were Angels that descended due to your recitation of the chapter *al-Baqara*! If you only had continued reciting it, you would have seen amazing wonders!” Finally, we have an important narration from *Imam* as-Suyuti in his *Tanweer al-Halik* quoting from *Qadi* Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi in his *Qanuun at-Ta’weel*: “The *Sufis* hold the view that when a person achieves the purification of the soul through the cleansing of the heart, severing the ties of relationships, casting off the enticements of the causative factors of this worldly life such as rank, wealth, intermixing with the human species; and then turns to Allah ta’ala with his entire being through being a constant companion to knowledge and persistent good deeds; then hearts will become unveiled to him, and he will see the Angels, listen to their words, be disclosed to the spirits of the Prophets, and listen to their speech.” All of these narrations indicate that there are Angelic and spiritual forces (*nawaamees*) which are made responsible for the *Qur’an* in general and for specific chapters and verses in particular. These Angelic forces are responsible for descending with the mercy, forgiveness, wisdom and secrets concealed in those *Qur’anic* verses or chapters. This is especially true regarding the mysterious disconnected letters which begin 29 of the chapters of the *Qur’an*. It is for this reason the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, connected to this science the ninth of the enigmatic sciences which comprise of three interrelated sciences. These sciences revolve around the disconnected mystical letters (*huruuf muqaata’at*); which the poet will cite in the next couplet. Because some of the scholars designate these letters as names of Angels, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him annexed them to the ‘*nawaamees*’ (Angelic forces). The poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: “**...and the heart of the letter `ayn...**”; that is to say, that the ninth of the enigmatic sciences attained outside of the path of the *Sufis* is the science of the heart of the letter `ayn. There is some discrepancy about the wording of this particular stanza, because in the text transmitted by *Malam* Muhammad al-Amin Salame’, the expression ‘*qutb`l-`ayn*’ (the axis of the letter `ayn) is given; however, in the manuscripts from *Arewa* and *Maiurno*, the phrase ‘*qalb`l-`ayn*’ (the heart of the letter `ayn) is utilized instead. In the context of the sciences of the *Qur’anic* mystical letters being discussed here, it is clear that the expression ‘*qutb`l-`ayn*’ is a scribal error. Although in a sense

they both convey the same meaning; where ‘*qutb*’ and ‘*qalb*’ are synonyms. Both expressions convey the meaning of the essence of a thing, or the center around which the reality of a thing revolves. In the *Qur’an*, the expression ‘*‘ayn*’ is mentioned seventeen times. The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, the learned *sharif* Muhammad Murtaḍa az-Zabidi in his *Taaaj ‘l-Uruus* cited thirty five different meanings of the expression ‘*‘ayn*’ (source) among them being: a fountain spring; a direction; gold; the designation of an individual; the people of a household; the nobility; the flowing of water; the well spring of water; the essential meaning of a word; a spy; the eye of a needle; the sun; currency; the beams of the sun; the direction of the *qibla* for the people of Iraq; the name of a land; a cognomen specifying gold coins; unending rainy days; well being; an individual; a form; the actual eye used for sight; the name of a village in Egypt; a designation for a blood brother sharing the same mother and father; the roots of a thing; the source of a tree; a bird; the harmful evil eye; the name given to a well known text on linguistics; and others. For our purposes the meaning of the expression ‘*‘ayn*’ as enumerated by *Shaykh* az-Zabidi are: one of the letters among the mystical letters (*harf min ‘l-mu‘jam*); the name designated for the numerical value 70 in the science of letters (*‘ilm ‘l-abjad*); discernment (*an-nadhr*); spiritual unveiling (*al-mukaashif*); and humanity (*al-insaan*). The letter ‘*‘ayn*’ (ع) is one of the 28 Arabic alphabets whose phonological articulation (*makhraj*) is from the center of the throat. Its numerical value in the science of *abjad* is 70, its element is water and its natural temperament is cold/wet (*baarid/ratib*). It is the axis of the seven water letters, which are: *daal* (د), *ha* (ح), *laam* (ل), ‘*ayn*’ (ع), *ra* (ر), *kha* (خ), and *sheen* (ش). There are three Angels who function under the command of the letter ‘*‘ayn*’ (ع) inwardly and outwardly. They are: *Saraa‘el*; ‘*Arayaa‘el*; and *Walasaa‘el*. The Gnostic *Shaykh* al-Buni said that the letter ‘*‘ayn*’ (ع) is the springwell and source (*manba‘u*) of knowledge and wisdom and that there are seven Divine Names which are connected to it. They are: *al-‘Aleem* (the All Knowing); *al-‘Azeez* (the Mighty); *al-‘Alaam* (the Knower); *al-‘Aliy* (the Exalted); *al-‘Adheem* (the Immense); *al-‘Afiw* (the Pardoner); and *al-‘Adl* (the Equitable). Whoever persists in reciting these seven Divine Names, there will emerge from his heart and tongue the fountainheads of wisdom. He will be able to articulate remarkable elucidations of sciences, judgments and wisdom. He also said that by means of the letter ‘*‘ayn*’ (ع) the water springs of creation are supported and replenished. In the context of the poem, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, refers specifically to the heart and reality of the fountainhead of existence, which is our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. *Shaykh* Muhy‘d-Deen Abd‘l-Qaadir al-Jaylani, may Allah ennoble his secret, referred to this reality in his *as-Salaat‘l-Kubra* as the essence of the essences of creation (*‘ayn ‘a‘ayaan ‘l-khalq*); the source of Divine Assistance (*‘ayn ‘l-inaaya*) to creation; the life giving spring of the two worlds (*‘ayn hayaat ‘d-daarayn*). Thus, the three main aspects of the Muhammadan Reality are its aspects as essence, source and fountainhead of creation. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him said about this in his *at-Tafaadil Bayn Jins ‘l-Malak wa‘l-Ins* that the world of spirits (*‘aalim ruuhaaniyyu*) comprises four divisions. The first and highest of these divisions is the divine human realities (*haqaa‘iq isaaniyya*) and the spiritual meanings (*ma‘aniy ruuhaaniyya*) which reinforce these realities, such as the primordial intellect (*‘aql ‘ulaa*) and the universal soul (*nafs kulliy*); and what these embrace from intelligibles such as knowledge (*‘ilm*), comprehension (*fahim*), reflection (*fikr*) and their like. This is the essence of humanity and its ultimate reality which elevates humanity over the whole of existence. The

heart of this human reality is the Light of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, which the poet referred to as the heart of the letter `ayn. This supreme creational reality has seven aspects which the poet calls the ‘*hawaameem*’ (الحواميم). We know this because the poet did not annex this phrase to the previous stanza with a particle of conjunction (*harf `atf*), but rather he made it a grammatical substitute (*badl*) where the expression ‘*qalb ‘l-`ayn*’ is substituted with what it comprises (*badl ‘l-‘ishtimaal*), by his words: “...the science of the *hawaameem*...”. The expression ‘*hawaameem*’ is plural for the two mystical letters: ‘*haa meem*’ [حم] which open the seven consecutive *Qur’anic* chapters beginning with the chapter called *al-Ghaafir* (the Forgiver); then chapter *al-Fussilat* (the Meticulous); then chapter *as-Shura* (the Consultation); then chapter *az-Zukhruf* (the Ornaments); then *ad-Dukhaan* (the Smoke); then *al-Jaathiyya* (the Kneeling); and culminating with *al-Ahqaf* (the Sand Dunes). They are also called ‘*aalu haameem*’ (the family of *haameem*) as well as, the ‘*dhawaat haameem*’ (the quintessences of the *haameem*). Abdallahi ibn Mas`ud referred to these seven *Qur’anic* chapters as the embroidering (*deebaaj*) of the *Qur’an*. The seven ‘*hawaameem*’ chapters are then followed with the chapter named ‘*Muhammad*’, which is then sealed with the chapter named ‘*al-Fath*’ (the Opening/Victory). These seven consecutive chapters joined together by means of the mystical letters followed by Muhammad and the Opening/Victory, are actually formulae, which the elite of the people of the sword have developed and utilized as a science of strategy in single combat, battle maneuvers, military campaigns and internal and external diplomacy.

ح الزخرف	الفتح	ح فطنت
ح الشورى	ح الدخان	ح الأحقاف
ح محمد	ح الغافر	ح الجاثية

Hatumere’ of the *HaawaaMeem*

These letters are called ‘*hawaameem*’, and they contain superabundant external advantages when recited before military operations essential to establish social balance. They are also highly effective as internal reinforcements, when commencing the major internal wars of the self and spirit against the demons of disbelief, heresies, disobedience and excess. The early scholars differ regarding the meaning and significance of the *Haa Mim*. `Akrama once said that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “*Haa Mim* is a Divine Name from the Divine Names of Allah ta`ala and It is from among the keys to the treasures of our Lord.” Ibn Abass said: “*Haa Mim* is one of the Greatest Divine Names of Allah.” Qatada said: “It is a name of the names of the *Qur’an*.” Mujaahid said: “It is the opening of the chapters of the *Qur’an*.” Ata’ al-Khurasani said: “The letter *haa* is the key to His Divine Names:

Hameed (the Praised), *Hanaan* (the Affectionate), *Haleem* (the Forbearing) and *Hakeem* (the Wise). The letter *mim* is the key to His Divine Names: *Malik* (the Sole King), *Majeed* (the Majestic), *Manaan* (the Benefactor), *Mutakkabir* (the Exceedingly Great) and *Mussawwir* (the Fashioner).” The above interpolations are proven by what was related by Anas that a Bedouin once came and asked the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: “What is *Haa Mim*? We have never known this in our language?” The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace then said: “The letters are the keys to Divine Names and the opening of the *Qur’anic* chapters.” Ad-Duhaak and al-Kisai’ said: “The meaning of the letters is that He fulfills what will be.” It has been related by Nafi’ on the authority of Ibn Abass who said: “The letter *haa* is His forbearance. The letter *mim* is His majesty. The letter *ayn* is His knowledge. The letter *sin* is His sublimity. The letter *qaaf* is His omnipotence. Allah swears by means of these.” *Imam* al-Qurtubi said in his *al-Jaami’ Li Ahkaam’l-Qur’an*: “It has been related on the authority of Artaah ibn al-Mundhir that a man once said to Ibn Abass, who was with Hudhayfa al-Yamani: “Inform me about the exegesis on His exalted words *Haa Mim`Ayn Sin Qaaf*.” Ibn Abass then turned away from him, until the man came to him three times repeatedly asking the same question, and each time he turned away from him. Then Hudhayfa ibn al-Yamaani said to him: “Come, I will transmit the prophecy concerning it to you, because I can see that you will not leave it alone. It was revealed regarding a man from the people of his house, named Abdal Illah or Abdallah. He will settle on a river from the rivers of the east. There two cities will be built for him which the river will dissect. When Allah desires to remove the kingdom from them and discontinue their government, He will send down a fire upon one of the cities during the night and the next morning the people will awake to darkness and smoke. The entire town will be burnt as if it never existed. The city on the other side of the river will awaken astounded over its twin city. How did it suddenly change?! Then the light of day will not be completed before a gathering of armies of every relentless tyrannical government will descend upon them. Then Allah will destroy the remaining city by means of them as well as the gathered armies all together. That is the meaning of His words: ‘*Haa Mim`Ayn Sin Qaaf*’; that is to say a decisive decision from the Decisions of Allah will occur and tribulation and the Decision will cause darkness. *Haa Mim* the letter *ayn* means that ‘Divine Justice (*adl*) from Him’, the letter *sin* means ‘will occur’ (*sayakuun*); the letter *qaaf* means ‘to befall those two cities’.” It is clear that the city referred to by Hudhayfa was the city of Baghdad and the destruction of the city at the hands of its citizens and US/NATO forces. In a prophet tradition it has been related that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: “When you are camped out and you retire to sleep; you should recite *haameem*; and the enemies will not be given victory over you.” Thus, the *haameem* is a powerful formulaic oath which comprises one of the Great Hidden Names of Allah, and thus means: ‘O Allah, by the secret of *haameem*, they will not be made victorious’ In his *Hizb`l-Itmam*, *Shaykh* Muhy’d-Deen Abd’l-Qaadir al-Jaylaani utilizes these same formula seven times as a means of thwarting the objectives, schemes and plans of enemies. He said: “*Haa Mim Haa Mim Haa Mim Haa Mim Haa Mim Haa Mim Haa Mim* they will not be given victory!” This repetition of the *Haa Mim* seven times is a formula which was practiced by many of the sages of Islam in warding off the dangers and harms of human, *jinn*, creatures and nature. It is as if the *Shaykh* is saying: “O Allah I ask You by the truth of *Haa Mim* of *Surat Ghaafir*, by the truth of *Haa Mim* of *Surat Fussilat*; by the truth of *Haa Mim* of *Surat as-Shuraa*; by the truth of *Haa Mim* of *Surat az-*

SANKORE

Zukhruf; by the truth of Haa Mim of *Surat ad-Dukhaan*: by the truth of Haa Mim of *Surat al-Jaadhiya*; and by the truth of Haa Mim of *Surat al-Ahqaq*.” That is to say: “I ask You by the truth of each of these seven *Qur’anic* chapters and by the secrets concealed within them from Your Greatest Names.” This same formula was later utilized by the gnostic sage, *Shaykh* Abu’l-Hassan as-Shadhili in his famous *Hizb ‘l-Bahr* where he recited: “Haa Mim `Ayn Seen Qaaf. ‘The two seas meet and there remains between them an isthmus which they do not pass.’ ‘Haa Mim, Haa Mim’. ‘The affair has become immense. The victory has come, for against Us they will have no helper’. Haa Mim a revelation of the Book from Allah, the Mighty the Knowing, the Forgiver of sins, the Acceptor of repentance, the Severe in punishment, the Possessor of immense patience; there is no deity except Him and to Him is the final destiny.” One of my teachers, *Shaykh* Muhammad Bello ibn Abdullahi of Maiurno informed me that the seven ‘*hawaameem*’ chapters are to be recited in one sitting along with chapters ‘*Muhammad*’ and ‘*al-Fath*’ in order to protect a village, a city or a *jama`at* from the attacks of enemies. He transmitted this to me with a chain of authority going back through his ancestor, *Sultan* Muhammad Bello, where the foundation of this applied utilization is taken from the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace who said: “The *hawaameem* are the bounties (*rayaaheen*) of the *Qur’an*. Whoever recites them, has in effect praised Allah, and thanked Him abundantly, due to the preservative powers granted when reciting them. Indeed the servant when he sets about to reciting the *hawaameem* there emerges from his mouth a fragrance more pleasant than sealed musk and amber. Allah `izza wa jalla shows His compassion to the one who recites and reads them, and in addition He extends His compassion to his neighbors, friends, those he knows, as well as his intimate and close relationships. On the Day of Standing the very Throne, Footstool, and the Arch Angels will seek forgiveness for him.” The poet, may Allah be merciful to him closes the verse by stipulating that he learned the secrets of the ‘*hawaameem*’ chapters “...without fabrication.” This is an indication that the poet recognized the objection which the spiritually bereft and intellectually shallow have made against the existence of this mode of comprehension of the mystical letters of the *Qur’an*. This is especially true with regard to the modernist intellectuals and ‘doctors’ of these times who have composed numerous text denying the existence of an esoteric understanding of these enigmatic sciences. Their denial is simply a reflection of their incapacity to understand these sciences and a proof that Allah bars from gnosis of Him and His creation whomever He wills. As *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` once said in verse:

The sweetness of water does not change because the camel refuses to drink.”

The science of the letters which open the *Qur'anic* chapters
Upon the matrices of the ranges of recorded existence⁵⁷

⁵⁷ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him then designated the ninth of the nine enigmatic sciences of the *awliyya* or sciences of secrets attained outside of the path of the *Sufis*, is as he said: “**The science of the letters which open the *Qur'anic* chapters.**” The grammatical structure of this verse, like the preceding verse regarding the science of the ‘*hawaameem*’, is nominative (*raf`u*). Thus, the poet did not annex this phrase to the previous stanza with a particle of conjunction (*harf`atf*), but rather he made it a grammatical substitute (*badl*) to the expression ‘*qalb`l-`ayn*’ where it is a substitute for what it comprises (*badl`l-`ishtimaal*). In this case it comprises the sciences of the ‘*hawaameem*’ and the subject of this verse: the letters which open the *Qur'anic* chapters (*huruuf`l-fawaatih` as-suwar*). Subsequently, this science is also included among the ninth of the enigmatic sciences of the *awliyya* or sciences of secrets attained outside of the path of the *Sufis*. The scholars of the *Sunna* differ regarding the cognomen of these letters. Some refer to them as the ‘*huruuf`fawaatih`s-suwar*’ (the letters which open the *Qur'anic* chapters), while some refer to them as the ‘*huruuf`awaa`il`s-suwar*’ (the letters which begin the *Qur'anic* chapters). A general cognomen which came to be used to refer to these 14 enigmatic letters is ‘the mystical disconnected letters’ (*huruuf`l-mu`ajim`l-muqatta`t*). The reason for the diverse interpolations regarding these mystical letters is that we have few narrations from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace about them. It has been related by at-Tirmidhi and ad-Darimi in a good but ambiguous prophetic tradition on the authority of Abdallah ibn Mas`ud that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Whoever recites a single letter from the Book of Allah will attain one good deed. This good deed is equivalent to ten like it. And I do not say that *Alif Laam Meem* comprises a single letter, but that *Alif* is a letter, *Laam* is a letter and *Meem* is a letter.” In this prophetic tradition the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace does not provide us with the meanings of these mystical letters, but simply includes them among the other letters of the *Qur'an*. *Imam* al-Khazin said in his *tafsir*: “Realize that the total numbers of letters revealed which begin the *Qur'anic* chapters are fourteen which head twenty-nine chapters. They are: *alif* (ا); *laam* (ل); *meem* (م); *sad* (ص); *raa* (ر); *kaaf* (ك); *haa* (ه); *yaa* (ي); `ayn (ع); *taa* (ط); *seen* (س); *haa* (ح); *qaaf* (ق) and *nuun* (ن). They are half of the letters of the Arabic alphabet.” In his *al-Burhaan Fee `Uluum`l-Qur'an* *Imam* Badr`d-Deen Muhammad ibn Abdallah az-Zarkashi described the technical definition of the *huruuf`muqatta`at* as letters from among the Arabic alphabets by which Allah opens some of the chapters of the *Qur'an*; some which comprise of a singular letter; some more. Each of these letters should be articulated separately. These mystical letters are arranged into fourteen groups and form the head of twenty-nine *Qur'anic* chapters arranged in the following order: *Alif Laam Meem* (الم) which open the chapters [1] *al-Baqara*, [2] *Aali`Imraan*, [3] *al-`Ankabuut*, [4] *ar-Ruum*, [5] *Luqmaan*, and [6] *Sajda*; *Alif Laam Meem Saad* (المص) which open the chapter [7] *al-`Araaf*; *Alif Laam Raa* (الر) which open the chapters [8] *Yunus*, [9] *Huud*, [10] *Yusef*, [11] *Ibrahim*, and [12] *al-Hajr*; *Alif Laam Meem Raa* (الممر) which opens the chapter [13] *ar-Ra`d*; *Kaaf Haa Yaa`Ayn Saad* (كهيعص) which open the chapter [14] *Maryum*; [15] *Taa Haa* (طه)

which opens the chapter of the same name; *Taa Seen Meem* (طسم) which open the chapters [16] *as-Shu`ara* and [17] *al-Qassas*; *Taa Seen* (طس) which opens the chapter [18] *an-Naml*; [19] *Yaa Seen* (يس) which opens the chapter of the same name; [20] *Saad* (ص) which opens the chapter of the same name; *Haa Meem* (حم) which open the chapters [21] *al-Ghaafir*, [22] *al-Fussilat*, [23] *az-Zukhruf*, [24] *ad-Dukhaan*, [25] *al-Jaathiyya* and [26] *al-Ahqaf*; annexed within this group is *`Ayn Seen Qaaf* (عسق) which opens [27] *as-Shura*; [28] *Qaaf* (ق) which opens the chapter of the same name; and *Nuun* (ن) which opens the chapter [29] *al-Qalam*. Imam al-Qurtubi said in his *al-Jaami` Li Ahkaam'l-Qur'an*: "The people of *Qur'anic* interpolation (*ahl't-ta'weel*) differ regarding the letters which are at the beginning of the *Qur'anic* chapters. `Aamir, as-Sha`bi, Sufyan at-Thawri and a large contingent from the scholars of prophetic traditions said that these letters are the secrets of Allah within the *Qur'an* and that within each of the heavenly Books of Allah, He has secrets. They comprise the allegorical verses (*mutashaabih*) which Allah designates as apart of His exclusive knowledge. Allah ta`ala says: "He is the One who revealed to you the Book, from it are verses which are decisive, these are the Mother of the Book; and others are allegorical (**mutashaabihaat**)." Imam al-Qurtubi said in his *al-Jaami` Li Ahkaam'l-Qur'an*: "It is said that the decisive verses (*muhkamaat*) are those verses whose objective is known apparently. As for the allegorical verses (*mutashaabihaat*), they are what Allah conceals within His knowledge, such as the establishment of the Final Hour, the appearance of the Anti-christ (*ad-Dajjal*) and the meanings of the disconnected letters (*huruuf muqati`at*) at the beginning of the *Qur'anic* chapters." It is thus, not obligatory for anyone to speak about their meanings. However, we are obligated to believe in them and to recite them in the *Qur'an* as they came. This view was transmitted on the authority of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq and Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with both of them. Abu al-Layth as-Samraaqandi cited on the authority of Umar, Uthman and Ibn Mas`ud that they said: 'The disconnected letters are among the concealed matters (*maktuum*) which should not be interpreted.' Abu Haatim said: 'I have not seen the disconnected letters in the *Qur'an* except in the beginning of the chapters, and we do not know what Allah jalla wa `azza desires by them.'...Abu Bakr al-Anbari narrated a prophetic tradition saying: 'al-Hassan ibn al-Hibaab related to us that Abu Bakr ibn Abi Talib related to us that Abu al-Mandhur al-Waasiti related to us on the authority of Malik ibn Maghuul on the authority of Sa`id ibn Masruuq on the authority of ar-Rabi` ibn Khuthaym who said: 'Allah ta`ala has revealed this *Qur'an* and has concealed in it what knowledge that He wills. He has disclosed to you what He wills. As for that which He has concealed in it for Himself, you can not obtain it. Therefore do not inquire about it. As for that which He has disclosed to you from it, it is among those matters about which you can investigate and inform others about. However, you cannot know about the entire *Qur'an*, and nor can you implement everything that you understand from it.' Abu Bakr ibn Abi Talib said: 'This is clear that the meanings of certain letters from the *Qur'an* have been concealed from the whole of creation, as a trial and a test. For whoever truly believes in it will be rewarded and attain bliss; while whoever disbelieves and doubts, will be recompensed for his sins and made remote from Allah'." However, in the *al-Itqaan*, Imam as-Suyuti held the view that the difference between the decisive verses and allegorical were that the former are those verses about which there is a singular perspective in its interpolation; while the allegorical

verses are those which contain multiple or ennumerous interpolations. *Imam* al-Qurtubi said: “A large contingent of the notable scholars said that it is obligatory to speak about the meaning of these letters, to investigate into the advantages which lie beneath them, as well as benefit from the significances which can be extracted from them. It is in this regard that there have occurred countless diverse opinions regarding the objectives of these mystical letters. It has been related from Ibn Abass and Ali ibn Abi Talib: ‘The disconnected letters in the *Qur’an* are among the Immense Names of Allah, except that we do not know how these are formulated from them.’ Qatrab, al-Fara’ and others said: ‘They are indications of the letters of the alphabet by which Allah informs those Arabs who denied the *Qur’an* that it has been composed from the letters upon which their language was constructed, so that their incapacity to compose its like would stand as the most eloquent proof against them; since the *Qur’an* is not foreign to their language.’” Some of the scholars of the *Sunna* said: “These letters are proofs which indicate Divine Names which are extracted from them while other Divine Names are omitted. Thus, we have the words of Ibn Abass who said regarding *Alif Laam Meem*: ‘The *alif* is from Allah. The *laam* is from Jibril. The *meem* is from Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.’ It is said that the *alif* is the key to His name Allah, *laam* is the key to His name *Latif* and *meem* is the key to His name *Majid*. Abu ad-Duhay related on the authority of Ibn Abass regarding His words: ‘*Alif Laam Meem*’; it means: ‘I Allah am the All Knowing’; regarding His words: ‘*Alif Laam Raa*’; it means: ‘I Allah am the All Seeing’; and regarding His words: ‘*Alif Laam Meem Saad*’; it means: ‘I Allah am the Superior’. Thus the *alif* leads to the meaning of ‘I’; *laam* indicates the meaning of the name ‘Allah’; and *meem* indicates the meaning ‘...am the All Knowing’.” Zayd ibn Aslam said that these disconnected letters are the names of the *Qur’anic* chapters. Ibn Abass said that these letters are Names of Allah and oaths by which Allah swears. It is for this reason that Ali ibn Abi Talib used to invoke them during hardships in his supplications, saying: “O *kaaf haa yaa `ayn saad!* O *ha meem `ayn seen qaaf* forgive me!” It is clear that Ali considered these disconnected letters (*huruuf muqati`at*) as referents to the Absolute Being and as functions which activates the Angelic worlds and all the worlds below it. It has been related by al-Bayhaqi in his *al-Asma’ wa Sifaat* on the authority of Ibn Abass who said regarding the words of Allah: ‘*Kaaf Ha Yaa `Ayn Saad*’; ‘*Ta Ha*’; ‘*Ta Seen Meem*’; ‘*Yaa Seen*’; ‘*Saad*’; ‘*Ha Meem `Ayn Seen Qaaf*’; ‘*Qaaf*’ and their like: “These are oaths which Allah ta`ala swears by and they are among the Names of Allah *izza wa jalla*.” *Imam* Badr’d-Deen Muhammad ibn Abdallah az-Zarkashi corroborated this in his *al-Burhaan Fee `Uluum`l-Qur’an* where he said: “Indeed Allah makes oaths by means of these letters in order to show that this Book recited by Muhammad is a Divinely revealed scripture which has no doubt in it. This proves the majestic extent of these letters.” *Imam* at-Tirmidhi said: “Allah ta`ala has placed all that is in these *Qur’anic* chapters from legal judgments and stories inside of the mystical letters which are cited at the beginning of the chapters. However, no one knows this except a prophet or protected friend (*waliy*).” In a concise but comprehensive work by *Shaykh* Abdullah al-Bustami called *Qays al-Anwaar wa Mujaami` al-Asraar*, he referred to the disconnected letters (*huruuf muqati`at*) as ‘the illuminated letters’ (*huruuf anwaar*); and the other fourteen letters are ‘dark letters’ (*huruuf dhulumaat*). They are distinguished in this manner not to indicate a value judgment (good vs. evil), but to delineate the two divisions of the stellar orbits (*kawaakib*). The 14 disconnected letters (*huruuf muqati`at*) are designated as illuminated because they function over the highest stellar orbits (*kawaakib*

`uluwwiyya); while the remaining fourteen dark letters are so described because they function over the lowest stellar orbits (*kawaakib sufliyya*). Thus, each of the twenty-eight letters have their significance and function within the mystical conception of the 28 lunar phases (*manaazil*) and the dynamics of the universe. Al-Bustami said: "Realize that all of the twenty-eight letters comprise of the secrets of Allah ta`ala. Allah ta`ala transmitted from these the disconnected letters (*huruuf muqati`at*) at the beginning of the *Qur`anic* chapters, which are fourteen letters; and made them like the spirit (*ruuh*) and He made the remaining fourteen letters like the body (*jasm*). Without replicating these fourteen disconnected letters, they were arranged by the wise in a versified sentence which states:

"مَنْ قَطَعَكَ صِلُهُ سَجِيرًا"

'Whoever cuts you off, connect with him intriguingly'." It basically means that whenever a person disconnects himself from you, connect with him secretly by doing good deeds in his name or by supplicating for him secretly during the predawn hours. Thus, these two divisions of the 28 letters were also divided into spiritual (*ruuhaaniyya*) and corporeal (*jasmaaniyya*); where the 14 illuminated disconnected letters functioned over the spirit and the 14 dark connecting letters functioned over the corporal. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, held the opinion that these disconnected mystical letters were not only hidden Names of Allah, but they also represented functional equations for the names of Angels which correspond to the power and function of those Divine Names they represent; and conversely represent the spiritual entities, celestial bodies and terrestrial elements which fall under the sway of those Divine Names. It is for this reason he ended the stanza with the following words: "...upon the matrices of the ranges of recorded existence". We cited earlier how the poet described the hierarchy of existence where the natural order comprising the elementals (fire/air/water/earth) fall under the active sway of the celestial spheres; which in turn falls under the active sway of the Angelic realm; which in turn manifest and are under the active sway of the Divine Names and Attributes. Thus, the disconnected letters are keys designating the functions and power of each of the realms as well as the Divine Names and Attributes which govern these realms. Or they are actual functions like '+', '×', etc, that, not only designate the Absolute Being but are executables or commands which activate the Angelic hierarchies and matrices of existence. It is for this reason the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, annexed these letters to the '*nawaamees*' (realms of Angelic communication and interaction). This view was corroborated by *Shaykh* Muhy'd-Deen Ibn Arabi who said in his *al-Futuuh* 'I-Makiyya: "No one knows the realities of the disconnected letters at the beginnings of the *Qur`anic* chapters except the people of spiritual unveiling (*ahl'l-kashif*) and existence. For these letters are Angels and their names are the names of those letters." He also said: "I have gathered with them in fact and there is not one of the Angels from among them except that they benefitted me with some science which I did not previously have. In summation they are the spiritual teachers among the Angels. When one reciting the *Qur`an* articulates any of these letters it is as if he is evoking and summoning them, to which they then respond; such as the recited letters: '*Alif Laam Meem*', and the three Angels say: 'What do you say?' Then the reciter recites what comes after these mystical letters, and they respond: 'You have spoken the truth', if it is good. They then say: 'That is a true believer, who articulates the truth and transmits the truth.' They then seek forgiveness for him. This is what occurs with the saying of '*Alif Laam Meem Saad*' and their sisters, which are fourteen Angels in total; the last of them being '*Nuun*' and

SANKORE

'*al-Qalam*' (the Primordial Pen). They manifest in the places of the descent of the *Qur'an* in different aspects. For, the place of descent can be the manifestation of a singular Angel, such as '*Nuun*' and '*Saad*'; while the place of descent can be the manifestation of two Angels, such as '*Ta Seen*', '*Ya Seen*', and '*Ha Meem*' and the like. Thus, their forms accompanied with their repetitions makes seventy nine Angels, in which each Angel holds in its hand a branch of faith (*shu`b`l-imaan*). Faith is divided into seventy and something (*bad`un*) branches, where the expression 'something' (*bid`un*) means a number between one and nine. Thus, the highest amount of the meaning of '*bid`un*' utilized here is nine. Whoever closely studies these letters from the perspective here which I have opened up to him will see amazing secrets; and the corporeal effects of the Angelic spirits of these letters will become subservient to him as well as the branch of faith which is in the hand of that particular Angel will reinforce him, and preserve him in that aspect of faith." What is significant here, is that the poet considered that the disconnected mystical letters which open some of the *Qur'anic* chapters are a distinct science associated with the secrets of the hierarchy of the matrices of existence which Allah grants to His *awliyya*. The understanding which the *Fudiawa* had of the symbolic function of the disconnected letters (*huruuf muqati`at*) is not surprising when you examine their writings. Many of the sages of the *Fudiawa* utilized isolated and disconnected letters to symbolize cognomens, numbers and cryptograms for eschatological events. For example, the great paternal uncle of the poet, *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` utilized isolated letters to designate the chronological line of the ancestry of the *Turudbe` Fulbe* in his Asl`l-Falaatiyeen, where he said: "The names of these ancestors of ours can be gathered in your saying:

غَصَّه فُجَّ سَبِّ مَام

The ع represents Uthman. The ص represents Saalih. The ه represent Haruun. The غ represent Ghurtu. The ج represent Jubba. The س represent Sanbu. The ب represent Buba Baba. The م represent Maas iraan. The ا represent Ayyub. The final م represent Musa Jakuli." The expression is a common Fulfulde phrase, but Abdullahi used it as cryptograms to designate ethnic lineage and historical consciousness. Thus, the sages of the *Fudiawa* were well aware of the symbolic and transcendental functions of the letters. According to the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, each of the 14 the disconnected letters (*huruuf muqati`at*) was a book, a science and an universe distinct to itself that subsumed in itself innumerable sciences.

وَعَبَّرَ هَذَا مِنْ عُلُومٍ غَامِضَةٍ يَقْصِرُ عَنْهَا الْأَقْوِيَاءُ الْعَارِضَةُ

And other than these from the sciences which are concealed
Where the strongest intellects fall short and turn away⁵⁸

⁵⁸ The poet, may Allah be merciful to him ends this section in which he discussed nine of the enigmatic esoteric sciences of the *awliyya* or the sciences of secrets which are attained outside of the formal and organized path of the *Sufis*. Although he listed nine of these sciences, he completes this section by indicating that there are more. The poet says: **“And other than these from the sciences which are concealed.”** This is an indication that his intention is to keep these sciences hidden and closed except to those who deserve it from among the People of Allah - the people of spiritual unveiling. All of these sciences are among the applied sciences (*‘ulum tatbeeqiy*) of the *Qur’an* within the sciences of secrets because they are used to gather good (*jalab ‘l-khayr*) and ward off harm (*dafa ‘l-idraar*) whether worldly or spiritual. They are not theoretical sciences, but sciences which are applicable and can be used in the control and manipulation of creation. It is for this reason that the poet, Dan Tafa said in his *al-Uhud wa’l-Mawaathiq*: “I have taken upon myself an oath and covenant to consider and reflect upon the conventional laws and principles in all of existence, and to examine what emerges from these laws and principles and how the different hierarchies of existence influence one another. In doing this I would not disregard the advantages and *baraka* which lies in these grades, but more importantly, that I would not be like those who are mentally shallow who claim that the hierarchies of existence absolutely do not have influence upon each other; while recognizing the Divine Reality from which all these phenomena emerge.” It is in this area of the science of secrets that rudiments of the elemental sciences (*‘ilm ‘l-awaa’il*) are used. What this indicates is that the leading scholars among the *Fudiawa* had developed their own unique approach to Gnosis of Allah ta’ala through the *Qur’an* and the applied sciences of secrets. Not every human has the capacity to understand these sciences, let alone employ them as an applied science. Thus, it is incumbent for the masters of these sciences to conceal them from all except those who are spiritually prepared and those who have an inherent aptitude for it. In the above cited text, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: “I have taken an oath and covenant to obscure what is with me from the sciences of the spiritual realities and secrets (*‘ulum ‘l-haqaa’iq wa’l-asraar*) and to conceal my works regarding these. This is because these sciences are an exalted class of science specified for the spiritually elite and are only designated for those who are spiritually prepared from among the People of Allah.” These enigmatic sciences of the *Qur’an* which Allah ta’ala grants to His closest friends and servants constitute an ocean which has no shore. This *Qur’anic* ocean can only be traversed by those about whom *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` said in poetic verse: “The *Qur’an* is a super abundant ocean

And the Knowers are the ships which ply it.”

The scholars of the outward, intellectuals and the savants of information, regardless of how dexterous and adroit their minds, are forever barred from understanding the least of these sciences. The poet described this level of comprehension as Divinely classified: **“...where even the strongest of intellects are restricted from it and turns away”** The one who remains ignorant of a thing eventually becomes its enemy. The poet indicates that many people involved in the acquisition and transmission of the sciences of Islam have erred in this regard. Their lower passions and love for rank has barred them from achieving the goal which the sciences lead to – which is gnosis of

SANKORE'

Allah ta'ala. In his al-Kashif wa'l-Bayaan he said: "As for the great majority and larger part of those associated with knowledge and its acquisition, the treasure of their imaginations have become marred due to their obvious base human needs, and the establishment of the cunning deceits of the soul due to the love of leadership, rank, and the mutual rivalry for a fixed place in the hearts of people. As a result, there has emerged between most of them hatred, rancor, envy, arrogance, and duplicity due to their identical rivaling purposes for a single object. Thus, by means of that Allah turns their hearts away from truly comprehending the real results of ideations, let alone understanding the Divine realities and secrets hidden in them. Allah has blinded their vision, the veil of arrogance has covered their secrets, their hearts have been made conceited against true humility, and they have substituted impartiality with discord and hostility. Their hearts hardly ever receive spiritual good from knowledgeable advantages due to their lack of impartiality. Nor do they believe that distinction can be had by others in order not to be led to accept contrary views. For this reason Allah has made their era bankrupt and the *baraka* of their time has been taken away. We ask Allah for safety and well-being." The venial scholars (*'ulumaa's-suu*) have allowed the pleasures of this life to dominate the higher spiritual pleasures (*al-lithat'rruuhaaniyya*) as proof against them of their being bereft of the thing they claim. The so-called '*salafist*' deny this mode of comprehension because they have been barred from it. The ignorant '*sufi*', is barred from it due to the veil of charlatanism and false claims. In the end, both the ignorant '*sufi*' and the so-called '*salafist*' are equal in being forever veiled from the mystical sciences which result from the struggle against the lower passions. *Shaykh* as-Shaybaani commented that it was due to spiritual veiling that the majority of the people associated with knowledge and its acquisition turn away and deny the existence of esoteric knowledge (*ma'rifa*), the realities of the unseen kingdoms (*haqaa'iq'l-malakuut*) and the secrets of divinity (*asraar 'l-laahuut*) itself. What this section of the poem clearly indicates is the vast potential which the concealed sciences within the *Qur'an* will have on the future of mankind and existence. Just as the greater parts of the treasures of the earth remain hidden from mankind, similarly, the greater parts of the secrets of the *Qur'an* remain hidden. It has been transmitted in the sound prophetic traditions that both material and spiritual hidden treasures will be uncovered in the End of Time. These will naturally emerge with the appearance of the Coming Man, *Imam* al-Mahdi and the heavenly descent of Jesus, the son of Mary, upon both of them be blessings and peace. It is to this subject that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him now directs our attention in the final section of this poem.

ذَكَرُ عُلُومِ آخِرِ مِنْ عُلُومِ الْأَسْرَارِ أَوْتِيَتْهَا وَهِيَ مِنْ عُلُومِ الْكَشْفِ الْأَكْبَرِ وَلَا مَطْمَعٌ
لِأَحَدٍ فِيهَا غَيْرُنَا وَلَا يَفْكُهَا إِلَّا الْخَتْمُ الْمُحَمَّدِي وَهُوَ الْمَهْدِي عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

Mentioning the Other Sciences From the Sciences of Secrets That I Have Received From the Sciences of the Greatest Unveiling Which No One Except Us Have Craved for and Which None Will Disclose Except the Muhammadan Seal, Who is the Mahdi, upon him be peace⁵⁹

⁵⁹ The author, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to him seals his poem appropriately with this final section of ten verses in which he cites eight additional sciences (*`uluuum 'aakhir*) from the sciences of secrets (*`uluuum 'l-asraar*) that he and the *awliyya* among the *Fudiawa* were given. He referred to these eight sciences as 'the greatest unveiling' (*al-kashf 'l-akbar*). This is the first time the poet openly mentions the concept of 'spiritual unveiling' (*al-kashif*), although this mode of comprehension is implied throughout the poem. This, I believe, is intentional and conceals a profound secret, which we will discuss, Allah willing. He also openly reveals for the first time in the poem the concept of an exclusivity of knowledge which was granted solely to him and the sages of his ethnicity as he said: "...which no one except us have craved for ..." He used the word *'matma`u'* (something craved after vehemently) to indicate that these secret sciences have not been sought after or coveted by the sages of the past simply because they were unknown and concealed. This exclusivity of gnosis within the *Fudiawa* ethnicity was a claim maintained from the time their earliest ancestors fled Futa Toro and settled in the regions of Konni in the central *bilad 's-sudan*. It is pertinent here to restate the claim made by my teacher, the late Dr. *Waziri* Junayd ibn Muhammad al-Bukhari which underscores this identity construct. He said in his *Dabt'l-Multaqatat*: "The house of Aal was the most numerous of the children of (our common ancestor) Musa Jokolli. It was a house famous for piety, spiritual excellence, knowledge, the memorization of *Qur'an*, the learning of various sciences and acquaintance with its mysteries. This was a mystical secret which was passed among them from generation to generation until it became outwardly manifest with *Shaykh* Muhammad who was known as *Fuduye`*, may Allah be pleased with him." This claim of exclusive gnosis was repeated often by the children of *Fuduye`* Muhammad, including *Shehu* Uthman, *Shaykh* Abdullahi, *Sultan* Muhammad Bello, but particularly by *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* Uthman; the key spiritual guide of the poet. Finally, the poet, tells us that these sciences will only be revealed to mankind in their fullness through the Seal of the Muhammadan sages, *Imam* al-Mahdi. This assertion was another crucial marker of the unique identity construct of the *Fudiawa* who claimed that they were heralders and forerunners of *Imam* al-Mahdi. This was especially true with *Shehu* Uthman and his son, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu who asserted that their spiritual illumination emanated from the light of *Imam* al-Mahdi. We will revisit this discussion when examining the stanzas of the poem. Let us now, return to the discussion of spiritual unveiling (*'ilm 'l-kashif*). This expression has its etymology from the verb *'kashafa'* (to disclose), like when you say: *'kashafa`anhu'* (He uncovered it.); or: *'kashafahu'* (He unveiled it.). In the technical language of the sages the term spiritual unveiling (*kashif*) has three ranges. The first is that there is unveiled to them the corporeal forms of the Prophets. Second is that there is unveiled

to them the spirits of the Prophets. The third is that there is unveiled to them the vast Muhammadan spirit, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. It is then that He places the illumination of the Essential Divine Unity in their hearts. Abu Muhammad al-Hariri once said: "Whoever does not behave with fearful awareness (*taqwa*) and wakeful alert attentiveness (*muraqqaba*) in what is between himself and Allah, will never arrive at spiritual unveiling (*kashif*) and direct witnessing (*mushaahida*)." The well known traditionist, *Imam* an-Nawwawi, said: "The unveiling of the eyes is through vision, while the unveiling of the hearts is through actual arrival." This is an indication that a wide range of Muslim scholars and clerics placed comprehension through spiritual unveiling as the highest mode of discernment for humans. The best source to indicate what the poet himself thought of this final form of comprehension is what we cited previously from his *Kashif'l-Ghitta* in which he discloses the nature of spiritual unveiling (*kashif*): "Realize, O brother that 'spiritual unveiling' (*al-kashf*) is an expression indicating the stimulating of light in the heart of the servant; where the mirror of his spirit emerges and he witnesses in it the unseen kingdoms of the heavens and the earth. No one denies that this is an affair which occurs frequently and unbrokenly on the authority of the *awliyya*." He adds after little: "...spiritual unveiling (*kashif*) it is the greatest key and the most exalted spiritual ascension. It is divided into the highest spiritual unveilings and lower spiritual unveilings. As for the highest spiritual unveilings, by means of it the servants are disclosed to the secrets of the Divine Names, the secrets of the Divine Attributes, the secrets of the Divine Essence, the spiritual realities underpinning the cosmos, the diverse categories of the Self-Disclosure of universal compassion, the evidences of Lordship, the realities of Divinity, and the details of His incomprehensibility. As for the lower spiritual unveilings, by means of it the servants are disclosed to the immense unseen spiritual kingdoms (*malakuut*), the most dazzling kingdom of power (*jabaruut*), the subtle forms of the spirits (*lataa'if suwar'l-arwaah*), and the realities of the grades of corporeal forms (*maraatib'l-ashbaah*). In addition, the servants are disclosed to the hallmarks of the Hereafter, the stations of the Isthmus (*barzarkh*), they are able to hear the glorification of inanimate beings, the spiritual praise of the Angels, and are able to see the passage of the living and the final stopping place of the deceased. They are also unveiled by Allah ta'ala to what has passed and what will come. For this kind of spiritual unveiling is the congruence of the Prophets and the place of witnessing of the *awliyya*. In this spiritual unveiling the spirits of the people who have been purified are expanded into the unseen, and the categories of the Men of the Unseen become diversely discerned. It is the drinking place of the first and the last of the sages, and the gathering place of the inward and outward realities, which are shared by the Prophets and the *awliyya* alike: '...where each people know their drinking place'." Among the key sages who drank from this spiritual station and who had profound influence on the poet was his maternal uncle, friend and guide *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* Uthman, may Allah be merciful to him and benefit us by his *baraka*. *Sultan* Muhammad Bello ibn *Shehu* Uthman depicted his half brother *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu in the following manner: "(He is)...the sage *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu, who has gathered together in himself the *shari`a* (Divine Law) and the *haqeeqa* (spiritual realities). He is a noted *Sufi* who most times has an aversion for being in the company of people. Sometimes he is in a state where he is seized spiritually and in other times he is spiritually awakened." According to the majority of the oral traditions and transcribed narratives about this reclusive son of *Shehu* Uthman, he had mastered what Chinese sages refer to as 'no-action' (*wú wéi-*

無為), and what Muslim sages call divestment (*tajreed*) and incapacity (*`ajz*). It is a state of ‘weakness’ (*da`af*) which conceals its opposite. The *Shehu* would often go to his son, Muhammad Sanbu, requesting his supplication and prayers before every military campaign. It has been reported in a sound tradition “Verily Allah gives victory to this *Umma* by means of the oppressed (*mustad`afeen*) among them, by their supplication, their righteousness and their sincerity.” And there is his words upon him be blessings and peace: “Fear the supplication of the oppressed, because between him and Allah there is no barrier.” Some of the family of Dan Tafa in both Sallame` in Nigeria, and Maiurno in Sudan, assert that all of the military successes of the scholar/warriors of the Sokoto Caliphate during the early days resulted from the supplications and prayers of *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu requested of him from his father. In one oral transmission I heard in Arewa concerning him is that he was always sought after by rulers, governors and officials, but he never sought after them. On the contrary he avoided them, and was known to frown and remain serious whenever he encountered them. There was no one among the children of the *Shehu* who shunned all forms of authority, more than the reclusive Muhammad Sanbu. He exercised no responsibility over any human except those he naturally held over his family. Even this responsibility was held in his hands with kindness, compassion as if it was the property of another, or a trust soon to be returned to its true owner. The importance that he held in the eyes of the *Shehu* and all those around him were confirmed by the fact that his grave is the only prominent structure besides *Nana Asma`u* which is annexed to the *Hubbare`* (burial chamber) of the *Shehu*.



The grave of *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* Uthman Dan Fuduye`. On the otherside of the wall at the back is the grave of *Nana Asma`u* bint *Shehu*. On the rightside of both graves on the otherside of the wall is the *Hubbare* of *Shehu*.

The poet, may Allah be merciful to him composed many works describing this close uncle and teacher, such as his Bayaan 't-Ta'abudaat and his Turjumaan Ba'd 'Ulama Zamaanihi. In the latter work the poet said: "He was our *shaykh* and spiritual master, the right acting scholar, the upright sage and knower of Allah. He had an immense station in sainthood (*wilaayat*), a well established footing in direct experiential knowledge of Allah (*ma'arifa*), and a genuine spiritual state in the realm of inner veraciousness (*siddeeqiyya*). He was the spiritual pole of the circle of reliance upon Allah (*qutb daa'ira't-tawakkul*). He possessed authentic spiritual unveiling (*kashif*) and profound spiritual states, where he himself mentioned in some of his works that he was given the miracle of walking upon the surface of water, the ability to fly in the air...This was an immense spiritual station, which is essential to recognize for this *shaykh*, because these instances were well known and witnessed outwardly upon him by every possessor of gnosis who knew him." *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu discloses the means that he arrived at this profound spiritual station in a famous poem composed for his nephew, the poet as a kind of spiritual manual. In it *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu lays out the distinct methodology of the *Fudiawa* in general, but his own spiritual method (*suluuk*) in particular. He said:

"O one who desires brotherhood, love and good advice
 Listen to my words, for I have attained victory over all lower aspirations
 I took a covenant with my Lord to follow Muhammad
 In every affair with pure sincerity out of genuine love for him
 For I have been guided by his light in performing
 Commands, avoiding prohibitions and dubious deeds
 As well as austerity in this lower world, because it
 Is pure deception, and preoccupation from the Hereafter
 And openhanded, abundant tolerance along with contentment
 Being cheerful for the sake of the Lord, and excellent companionship
 Humility, nobility and courageousness
 And visiting the sick as if these were second nature
 Love for the destitute and love for orphans
 Behaving excellently towards property without showing irritation
 Purifying of the inner secrets, and constant remembrance
 It was love for the master (Muhammad) which withdrew me from mishaps
 As a result, I reached the Divine Presence by means of his light
 Until I walked in the shade of intimate friendship and love
 I have been guided by his light in all my supplications
 To Allah, following in that the Path of the elite.
 And joining together the spiritual reality and the law
 And concealing Divine Secrets from the common people
 By avoiding everyone who conflicted with the bright *Sunna*
 And every follower of the path of heretical innovation
 And by avoiding suedo scholars and government rulers
 And the false austere, who acts treacherously by having love of leadership."

In these verses, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu delineates the fundamental methodology of the *Fudiawa* sages in attaining spiritual unveiling. He reiterates that the light of Muhammad, his *Sunna*, character traits and behavior are central to the highest spiritual unveilings. In this poem *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu advises his nephew how to attain unmediated knowledge of Allah ta'ala, which revolves around the '*nuur 'l-muhammadiyya*' (the Light of Muhammad), may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Although he outlined the fundamental characteristics of the transformation of character, which is the foundation of the path of the *Sufis*; yet he did not designate a particular spiritual 'sufi' brotherhood. This is fascinating because as we mentioned earlier, this indicates that the spiritual path inherited by *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu,

from his father and teacher *Shehu* Uthman was bounded by the prerequisites of the path but transcended the formal mechanisms of the *Sufi* brotherhoods. In the beginning of the poem he said that he first took an oath with Allah ta'ala to follow Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Throughout the poem he repeatedly cites that it was by being guided by the light of Muhammad, by which he means his outward *Sunna*, his inward character and deep yearning and love for him; that he was able to achieve the greatest spiritual unveilings. In a sense, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu tells us that the REAL *Shaykh* is the Messenger of Allah, and the REAL spiritual path is the Living *Sunna*. This is identical to the statement made by the *Shehu* in a Fulfulde` poem which he composed when he was still a teenager: "It is the *Sunna* that I truly love. It is the orbit of my preoccupation. It is the theme of all my preaching and it has become my spiritual litany." This indicates that *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu was the one who inherited the spiritual path as articulated and systematized by the *Shehu*. Unlike any of his full and half siblings, such as Muhammad al-Bukhari, Abu Bakr Atiku, and Muhammad Bello; Sanbu completely shunned all governmental positions at a time when his family had conquered the entire central *Bilad's-Sudan*. He eschewed teaching large assemblies, and would normally conceal himself from people except during times of the prayers or when taking care of the daily needs of his family. This apparent weakness (*da`af*) incapacity (*`ajz*) and austerity (*zuhd*) were the source of his enlightenment. It was this vacuum of negative energy which was directly filled with the positive energy of the Actions of the Absolute Being, which the poet called 'the greatest unveiling' (*al-kashif'l-akbar*). In the following verses, the poet designates this level of comprehension of the *awliyya* as the sciences of the prophets and messengers in their function as *awliyya*. Thus, it constitutes the sciences of the 124,000 prophets and messengers and the stations of the 124,000 *awliyya* who inherit from them in every age, openly and secretly. This immense spiritual unveiling has rarely been gathered together in a single personage after our master Muhammad, upon him be the best blessings and most perfect peace. Some of the fixed stars of the *awliyya* have held this mantle secretly, but few have ever manifested it. Allah ta'ala then granted it to *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` as a sign and herald of the Coming Age and the Coming Man. The entire world has born witness to the outward development and progress which the Sokoto Caliphate caused to flourish in the central *bilad 's-sudan*. Centers of learning, manufacturing and artisan guilds thrived and the most sufficient continent wide judiciary came into its maturity. A unique form of vernacular building style which traced its origin to the ancient cities of Djenne Djeno thrived in Kano and other nearby metropolises. The master builders who maintained this style of architecture traced their pre-islamic knowledge of architecture and draftsmanship intergenerationally back to ancient Egypt and Meroe and the Nubian Sennar. *Sultan* Muhammad Bello composed texts on the organization, unionization and deployment of the professional guilds throughout the empire as a right of all citizens. The artisan and manufacturers were given direct sanction by the government and were funded and subsidized as a matter of right. In the same manner that the People's Republic of China today back, support, own and/or are integrated with international Chinese business communities; the Sokoto polity saw that it had a vested interest for everyone in reviving and generating the professional and trading guilds. *Nana* Asma'u, the daughter of the *Shehu* led the most successful women's benevolent and philanthropic movement, ever!; the *YanTaru* which morphed into a mobil college without walls for women. It originated as a *zawiyya* for the sisters to transmit knowledge among

themselves which addressed the spiritual, moral and social needs unique to them as women. This women's foundation, the *Yan Taru* went on to oversee the archiving of rare national libraries and preserving them for posterity. The Sokoto government had entered into international agreements and covenants with the same nations which had treaties with the early thirteen colonies of North America. At the same time the driver which manifested this continental organization was a vehement yearning for the greatest spiritual unveiling. A control over the inward treasures of knowledge and mastery over the principles which govern society is a rare accomplishment and to be able to implement it with justice and fairness is even more daunting. The *Shehu* claimed that what he was given was simply a mantle of the Mahdi. The full manifestation of this immense unveiling is the prerogative of *Imam* al-Mahdi, as the poet acknowledged. Ibn `Arabi pointed out in his Shajarat'l-Kawn that spiritual unveilings and disclosures of the mysteries of Being is eternal, and have been continuous in creation until it reached its perfection with the sending of our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Existence itself was completed and perfected with the finality of Seal of the Prophets. Allah ta`ala says: "This day have I perfected for you your way of life and completed My favor upon you." This address is to all of existence and infers that the universe reached its completion and perfection with finalization of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. With the passing of our master to the Next Life and the passing of those blessed ancestors who followed in the footsteps of his *Sunna*, the world and the universe has been going into a deep sleep. This means that spiritual unveilings have been weakening and slowly withdrawing from the consciousness of humanity since the passing of our beloved Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. However, apart of the mercy of Allah to creation is that in each century the way of Muhammad is renewed and revived by individuals and groups who reawaken the universe through the revival of the Living *Sunna*. Abu Ja`far an-Nahas said in his an-Naasikh wa'l-Mansuukh: "Sufyan ibn `Uyayna informed me that there will appear in every century after the death of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace a man from among the scholars by whom Allah will strengthen the religion." Ahmad ibn Hanbal said: "It has been narrated on the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: "A scholar from the Quraysh will fill the earth with knowledge." Again Ahmad ibn Hanbal said: "It has been narrated upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: 'Verily Allah will favor the people of His religion at the head of every century with a man from the people of my house who will correct the affairs of their religion for them.'" And another narration by Ibn Asaakir by way of Abdallah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal who said: "I heard my father say: 'It has been narrated on the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace that he said: 'Verily Allah will send at the head of every century a man from the people of my house who will teach my community the religion.'" This revival (*tajdeed*) is a form of awakening (*eeqaadh*) of the universe and the death of the *Sunna* is a form of universal slumber. This moral ethical and spiritual slumber will be the clearest proof against humanity that they cannot be 'gods'. The heavens and the earth will complain against mankind's inhumanity as if all human descency in them had been knocked out and put to sleep. This sleep will persist in the End of Time until darkness, injustice, oppression reigns. During this confusing period charalatlans will be the only one's claiming spiritual unveilings; and their claims will be as fraudulent as the age. Those who proclaim the *Sunna* will be bereft of it. Those who declare esoteric knowledge and spiritual stations will be as empty and fraudulent as a desert mirage.

The actual door of spiritual openings will be closed and locked to all but a few. This unfortunate night of darkness is essential for the universe as a prelude to the bright day of the 'greatest spiritual unveiling' which will dispell all darkness. It is only after the spread of immense darkness that great illumination emerges. Some of the scholars of Maiurno described this age as a trying one for the *awliyya* because they will be unable to maintain the balance of good over evil. They will be overwhelmed at a time of wanton oppression, injustice, and corruption. It is from this state of incapacity (*'ajz*), impoverishment (*iftiqaar*), weakness (*'id'aaf*), absence (*ghayba*), and non-existence (*'adam*) on the part of the *awliyya* that Allah ta'ala will manifest two immense lights or two *mujaddid* at the same time. The appearance of *al-Mahdi* and the heavenly descent of Jesus, the Messiah will be heralded by two major signs during the month of *Ramadan*, as ad-Daaraqutni transmitted in his Sunnan on the authority of Muhammad al-Baqir ibn Ali, on the authority of his father Ali Zayn'l-Abideen, on the authority of his father Husayn ibn Ali, on the authority of his father Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with all of them, who said: "Our *al-Mahdi* will have two signs which has not appeared from the time Allah created the heavens and the earth. They are that the moon will be eclipsed the first night of *Ramadan* and the sun will be eclipsed during the middle night of *Ramadan*. This has not occurred from the time Allah created the heavens and the earth." The eclipse of the sun and moon are signs of the manifestation of the effulgence lights of *Imam* al-Mahdi and Jesus the son of Mary. Our master and teacher *Shaykh* Abd'r-Rahim al-Burai of Kordofan once disclosed to us that when *Imam* al-Mahdi appears, he will extract all the elemental sciences from the diverse verses of the *Qur'an*. It will be as though the *Qur'an* will be revealed again fresh, and humanity will share a totally new vision of Being and existence." This was corroborated by the architect and city planner *Shaykh* Muhammad Brimah al-Yarubi who went further to say that a more benevolent environmental friendly technology and manufacturing methods will emerge. However, what the poet is referring to here is the more transcendent knowledge connected to the Absolute Being which will be transmitted by *Imam* al-Mahdi. The poet asserts that he and his many relatives among the *Fudiawa* received direct experiential gnosis through the effulgent light of the *Imam*, just as the earlier prophets and Messengers had received their light from the niche of the Seal of the Prophets, our master Muhammad, before he was physically born. *Shehu* Uthman stated explicitly that he saw the society which he and his disciples developed as a forerunner to the appearance of *Imam* al-Mahdi. In his Naseehat Ahl 'z-Zamaan he said: "It is mentioned in the Sunan of Ibn Maja in the section concerning following the *Sunna* of the righteous rightly guided *khalifs*, on the authority of al-'Irbaad ibn Saariya, may Allah be pleased with him that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: '*Obligatory upon you is fearful awareness of Allah, hearing and obeying. Even if there is appointed over you an Abyssinian slave. You will see after me severe dissension so therefore obligatory upon you is my Sunna and the Sunna of the righteous rightly guided khalifs after me.*' They are twelve and Muhammad *al-Mahdi* will be the last of them. He is the one meant whenever the term *al-Mahdi* is used unconditionally. A prophetic tradition is mentioned in the Tareekh 'l-Khulafa of Abd 'r-Rahman as-Suyuti: '*This umma will not be destroyed until there appears twelve khalifs. Each of them will behave with true guidance and the religion of truth.*' Abd 'r-Rahman as-Suyuti said after relating this tradition in the forementioned book: 'There has appeared from among these twelve the four *khalifs*, then al-Hassan, Mu'awiyya, Abdallah ibn 'z-Zubayr and Umar ibn Abd'l-'Azeez.

These were eight. Then included with them is al-Muhtadi Billahi from among the Abassiyya because he acted among them like Umar ibn Abd'l-'Azeez acted among the Banu Umayya. Then there was at-Thaahir Billahi because of what Allah gave him from justice. There only remain two awaited *khalifs*. One of them is *al-Mahdi*.⁷ I say: I hope that I will be the first of these two and that the Promised *al-Mahdi* will be the last.” When the *Shehu* began to see the first fruits of victory he sent his son, Muhammad Bello to the people of the eastern lands of the Caliphate with an official dispatch announcing that this *jihad* will not cease until it reaches *Imam* al-Mahdi. My key spiritual master and father of meaning, *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Amin ibn Adam, may Allah be merciful to him once said that the meaning of this assertion is that the *jihad* began with the pen and instruction and it was completed by the sword. Now we have returned back to the *jihad* of the pen and instruction and it is *Imam* al-Mahdi who will complete the *jihad* by the sword. He will be assisted by the heavenly descent of Jesus the son of Mary, brandishing a heavenly spear. This belief means that the identity construct of the Sokoto Caliphate in general and that of the ideologues and scholarly sages of the *Fudiawa* in particular was built upon a connection with the End of Time narrative. They constitute a messianic community along the same lines and trajectories of the *Nasaarean* jewish communities residing in the deserts surrounding the Dead Sea. In fact, the *Turudbe`* Fulbe trace their ancestry through the nomadic Christian communities of Africa; via the jewish communities cloistered around Mount Sinai; and finally, to the pre-judaic communities around Ibrahim. This historical consciousness infused the *Fudiawa* with an *`asabiyya* (group spirit/*esprit decor*) which outwardly was not unlike the latent ideas which repeatedly emerged at the same time across the Atlantic in the US regarding its meta-historical narrative of itself as ‘the shining city on a hill’, ‘a beacon to all nations’, and the American ‘exceptionalism’ epitomized by John O’Sullivan in his own words:

“For this blessed mission to the nations of the world, which are shut out from the life-giving light of truth, has America been chosen; and her high example shall smite unto death the tyranny of kings, hierarchs, and oligarchs, and carry the glad tidings of peace and good will where myriads now endure an existence scarcely more enviable than that of beasts of the field.”

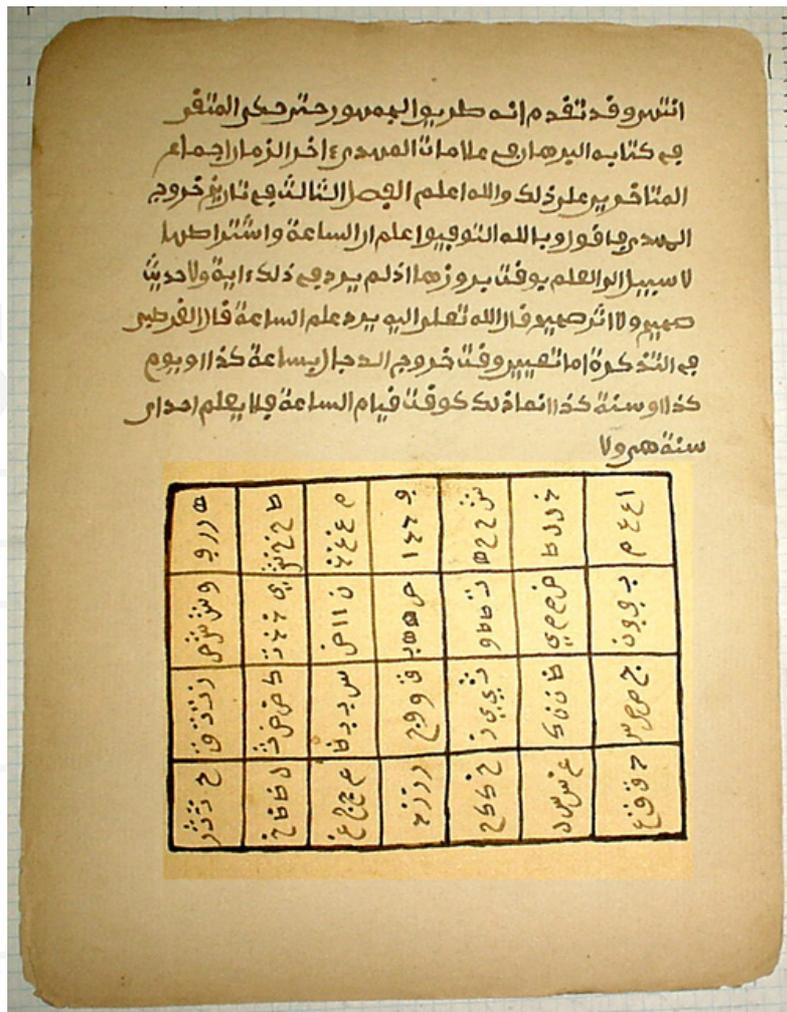
This identity construct of ‘a manifest destiny’ has had positive effect upon the speed of the nation’s development, but it also concealed within the dank folds of this narrative a contempt for non-whites and for anyone who failed to assimilate the values of the American empire. This has led the USA to arrogate to itself the right to suspend its own constitutional standards when the constitutional law worked against Anglo-American interest. This social malady and dysfunction has been the driver behind unwarranted military incursions and the violating of the sovereign right of other nations. Despite the negative effects of such an identity construct, this vision still remains the most important driver in the process of American imperial expansion and development in the 21st century. Ibn Khaldun called it a nation’s ‘*asabiyya*’ (group solidarity), – and Nietzsche called it their ‘will to power’. Similarly, a coherent identity construct was the key driver of the development of the Sokoto Caliphate which fueled its development and sustained it even in the face of European colonialism. This identity construct which was infused with millenarian beliefs connecting it with the revival of the religion in the person of the Seal of the Muhammadan sages, *Imam* al-Mahdi and the End of Time; was/is a sustaining force which has broadened the historical narrative even into the western diaspora. While

SANKORE'

few empires envision their decay and collapse, the Sokoto Caliphate actually foresaw and incorporated its decline and collapse as an integral part of its historical narrative. One of the most intriguing works produced emphasizing this was the Kitaab 'ad-Dhikra by *Sultan* Muhammad Bello, in which he shows the parallels between the rise and decline of the *Bani Isra'il*, to that of the early community of Muhammad and the Sokoto Caliphate. In this text, he prescribed remedial directions to bring the empire back to its original vigor. *Sultan* Bello demarcated the decline of the Sokoto Caliphate as a necessary sign for the emergence of *Imam* al-Mahdi. Thus, the *Fudiawa* sages saw themselves as forerunners and heralds of the *Imam* and attributed the spiritual illuminations they received to emanate from his niche. While in a state of spiritual intoxication, the key spiritual guide of the poet, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* Uthman said this in verse:

“For, I saw with the light of my secret that I was
Completely realized with Muhammad in my outward form
And I saw with the light of my secret that I was
Inwardly, the *Mahdi*, and Allah is the One who made this evidence clear
This is the reality, and in that I can care less about those
Who object without sound knowledge of the path of the Companions.”

What *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu indicates is that, like his father, the *Shehu*, he was annihilated outwardly in following the *Sunna* of the Messenger of Allah and adherence to his noble character and that he was annihilated inwardly in the spiritual unveilings of *Imam* al-Mahdi. Muhammad Sanbu indicated that this spiritual realization is the same which was experienced by the Companions of Muhammad, and it was for this reason that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace referred to the Rightly Guided Caliphs as '*mahdiyyun*'. This meant that these rulers were vicegerents of the Messenger of Allah, but also heralds of *al-Mahdi*.



Excerpt from the manuscript *al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fee Amr al-Imam al-Mahdi al-Muntadhir* by Sultan Muhammad Bello, photographed from the archives of the *Waziri Junayd History Bureau*, Sokoto, Nigeria

Thus, the ‘*mahdiyya*’ is both an inward spiritual station attainable by anyone; as well as an outward rank designated for a specific individual. *Shaykh* Umar ibn Ahmad Zaruq once told me that it is when the sages reach this station that some of them in their state of spiritual intoxication err and believe this light of the *mahdiyya* to emanate directly from them. This was the case with sages such as *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Turmart al-Andalusi, *Sayyid* Muhammad Ahmad ibn Abdullah as-Sudani and others who received illumination from the niche of *mahdiyya* and in their intoxication erred and believed that this emanation originated with them. *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Amin ibn Adam told me that from the time *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` was appointed the *Imam* of the *Awliyya* and given the Sword of Truth that it marked the point at which the *awliyya* of this *Umma* began to receive their illuminations solely from the niche of the *mahdiyya*, and that anyone who claimed station with Allah ta’ala received it by way of the light of *Imam* al-Mahdi, even if they did not know this. The *Shehu* was aware of this and stated this explicitly in his *Yimre` Tanasabuje`* (the Song of Comparison) where he said:

“*Milaa taakiy mi Mahdi kidichu yaadu * Yudum tuffuujj ma`kuni burtuyaami*

I am not the awaited *Mahdi*;

It is his mantle with which I have been clothed.

*Meeyanjiru yaayi mi Mahdi ghu`u zamaani * Meechi Allah meemubu di dukkaraami*

I do not deny that I am a *mahdi* for this time;

I thank Allah that I have been granted this privilege.

*Zamaanu fukaa yu`addira naaghu Mahdi * Shahaada hi ghaybu duwaydum tiseem nuyaami*
Every epoch has a *mahdi* allotted to it;

openly or secretly, so I have been taught.

*Miduudi jiwuudi Mahdi ki dittuyaadu * Yudum wadittaam dimim nanddinaami*

I am certain that there will be an awaited *Mahdi*; that is why

I have been made to know him whom I have been made to resemble.”

Here the *Shehu* makes a distinction between the Awaited Mahdi and what he referred to as ‘a *mahdi*’; which he designated in other writings as a ‘*mujaddid*’ (reformer). There could only be one Awaited Mahdi foretold by the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace; but at the head of every century there would emerge ‘*mujaddid*’ who in their function as revivers and reformers would be ‘*mahdi*’ for their age. This was the distinction made by the *Fudiawa* and it protected them from falsely claiming *mahdiyya* as many mistakenly did, as the *Shehu* clarified in his Tahdheer’l-Ikhwaan Min ‘Ad’aa’ al-Mahdiyya al-Ma’uuda. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him also supported this view as he demonstrated in his Kitaab Masaa’il ’l-Khilaaf where he described the *Shehu* as being the key herald of the *Mahdi*: “[The *Shehu*] had attained in that the status of *mujtahid* and was accurate in his *ijtihad*. Thus, his preeminence, the supremacy of his rank and emergence of his station above all the scholars of his time became apparent. The sign of *mahdiyya* also became clear for him due to this because it has been narrated concerning the description of the *Mahdi* that he will oppose the scholars in the majority of their decisions.” This view by the poet was further substantiated by his son, Muhammad Mua’allahyede who said in his Nabdhah Yaseera: “As for the origin of the affair of the *Shehu*, it began with calling and inviting the people (*da’awa*), then with instruction and education (*ta’leem*) and finally with *jihad* which was conditioned by the *khilaafa* (sovereignty) and representative government (*imaara niyaaba*). As for the secret of his affair it flowed from a subtle spiritual gravitational force (*lateefa jaadhiba*) which emanated from the cloak of al-Mahdi and was reinforced and strengthened by the presence of spiritual assistance (*a’waan ruuhaaniyuun*) such as the Angels. The fact that this *jihad* is interconnected with the affair of *Imam* al-Mahdi, upon him be peace was a declaration openly transmitted from the *Shehu*, may Allah ta’ala be pleased with him.” Just as the *Fudiawa* developed an identity construct which connected them to the outward political achievements foretold of *Imam* al-Mahdi, more importantly, they saw their spiritual illuminations as a presage to the universal enlightenment which *Imam* al-Mahdi will initiate. It is significant that this messianic narrative was transmitted by Fulfulde songs from the *Shehu*, and was reiterated in prose and verse foretelling of the eventual decline, corruption and decay of the Sokoto Caliphate, the coming of the European Christians (*zaman ‘n-nasaara ahl’r-ruum*), the exodus to the Nilotic Sudan and the eventual meeting with the *Mahdi* and being given a flag of victory over the whole of the African continent. This oral eschatological narrative is believed and transmitted among Fulbe families throughout Darfur, Kordofan, the Gezira region of Sudan, Gedirif, Tokor and many villages in western Ethiopia and Eritrea. It is important to understand this creed because it helps explain the proactive political action of avoiding political discourse exemplified by the Sultanates of Maiurno, Sokoto and Niger. It comprises a quiet confidence in the appearance of the *Mahdi*, and earnest actions from the heart and the limbs in preparation for it. It is this Path which infuses light into the practices of the *Sunna* and brings the *Sunna* to Life. The spiritual unveilings which emerge from realization of MUHAMMAD is called by its devotees ‘the Greatest Spiritual Unveiling’; which is the Creed, the School of thought,

The science of the Stout of Heart and the Universal Perimeter
Which Manifest the moment of the hours of the totality.⁶⁰

and spiritual Path of the *Mahdi*. The poet discloses eight fundamental sciences of secrets which delineate this Greatest of Spiritual Unveilings.

⁶⁰ In this verse, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him cites the first two of the eight sciences which comprise the greatest spiritual unveiling (*al-kashf 'l-akbar*). He said: **“The science of the Stout of Heart...”** The expression ‘*uluu 'l-'azmi*’ (those stout of heart) is mentioned once in the *Qur'an* where Allah ta'ala connects it to the noble quality of patient perseverance (*sabr*). In the context of the *Fudiawa*, patience was one of the highest human attributes which emanates from the Self Disclosure of the Divine Name ‘*Sabuur*’ – the Eternally Patient. In his *Qira'l-Ahibba*, one of the learned colleagues of the father of the poet, the sage Muhammad Tukur ibn Muhammad disclosed an axiom regarding the gnosis of the Divine Name the Eternally Patient (*as-Sabuur*). He said: “The Eternally Patient (*as-Sabuur*) is the One whose exaltedness does not allow Him to hurry against those who intend Him harm, although their harm never reaches Him. This means that it is the right of the exalted Absolute Being to postpone the punishment against the disobedient until a stretch of time hidden in His knowledge. Then He seizes them, or due to His bounty He relents towards them. It has been related that there is no one who is more patient against evils than Allah. It is for this reason that He names Himself ‘*as-Sabuur*’ (the Eternally Patient). Whoever realizes with lucid gnosis that He is ‘*as-Sabuur*’ (the Eternally Patient), then [1] he loves Him due to His shere compassion towards his servants; and [2] that in all circumstances he never feels secure from His plots; in that he should never be negligent of Him and disregard Him.” Examination will show that most of the prominent scholars of the *Fudiawa* composed works at length on the qualities of patience in rulers and sages. In many of their works they asserted that patient perseverance was the first of the qualities required to destroy degenerative characters of the soul and corrupting elements of society. The expression ‘those stout of heart’ (*uluu 'l-'azmi*) is first introduced to us in the *Qur'an* where Allah says to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: “*Then be patient even as the stout of heart among the Messengers were patient and seek not to hasten the punishment upon them, for it is like they are in a Day when they will see what they were promised; as if they sojourned for only an hour of a day. This is a clear communiqué. Is any destroyed except corrupted people?*” This verse is a command to Muhammad, upon him be peace to be patient in the face of trials and tribulations as the elite among the Messengers before him were patient. Allah ta'ala assures His servant that He will certainly punish the wicked and that he should not try and hasten their punishment by either taking matters in his own hands or by calling for their destruction before the time is right. This does not mean that the Messenger was ordered not to supplicate against the enemies of Allah. On the contrary he was ordered not to hasten this punishment. This implies that ‘those stout at heart’ (*uluu 'l-'azmi*) are those who are patient because they know the times and what must be done during those times. This spiritual station is not without major and immense trials and tribulations but the rewards in the End are both physically and metaphysically astonishing. It is important to note that each of the *Fudiawa* sages suffered immense trials, tribulations and loss at some point in their lives. The *Shehu* had to endure immense trials at the beginning of his mission, and then suffered his greatest trial and tribulation at the Battle of

Tsunthuwa on Tuesday the 13th of *Jumad at-Thani* 1220 *hijra* (circa 18th September 1805 C.E.) where his guide and teacher, the Supreme Justice, the learned jurist, the *qutb*, the *Imam* and *Khateeb*, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shaykh* Abd'r-Rahman Ghabindu died a martyr. This teacher at the time was the most important intellectual and jurist who laid the foundation of the supreme justice of the Sokoto Caliphate. In fact, at the time when the *jama`at* had gathered in Gudu after the mass exodus and *hijra* from the diverse and vast regions of Hausaland, there were two individuals the young community had to choose from for the important office of *Amir'l-Mu'mineen* or *Sarkin Muslimi*. The majority of the scholars and sages chose the *Shehu*, but the *Shehu* himself chose his teacher, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu. After the *Shehu* was chosen, he in turn appointed *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu as the Supreme Justice whose duty was to guide and check the executive government and establish justice and the rule of law. Thus, this teacher was the backbone of the *Shehu's* government and advanced education; thus his loss was felt deeply. He along with thousands of scholars, jurists, sages and *Qur'an* readers attained their Goal on that fateful day; such as the flag bearer, the learned Muhammad Sa`daara ibn Baba al-Hassan ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hassan ibn Hamm ibn Aal, Dittu ibn Alighu ibn Ghaga bint Hamm Yero ibn Bilku` ibn Muhammad Ghurtu, the Magistrate Abu Bakr Laadan Raami ibn Abdullahi ibn Muhammad al-Amin ibn Uthman ibn Hamm ibn Aal, Muhammad Ghurdam, Muhammad Jamm and Abu Bakr Binghu and thousands more scholars, jurist and *Qur'an* readers. This was a tremendous loss to the *jama`at* and it was a life changing blow to the *Shehu*. The loss of these thousands of learned sages would be felt later in the years after the death of the *Shehu*. In 1805, the poet, Dan Tafa, was merely a year old and could not have personally known the trauma of that period except through the sickness and fever which affected the old and young at that time. However, the poet did experience firsthand the most immense calamity to strike the *Fudiawa* and it was the death of his grandfather, the *Shehu* in 1817. The poet was thirteen years old and was the avid student of his father, the scribe of the *Shehu*, *Shaykh* Mustafa ibn Muhammad at-Turuudi. His mother, the oldest daughter and yet the youngest of the *Shehu's* disciples who had attained spiritual mastery (*mashayyakhah*) was also devastated and required her son's comforting and help. The tribulation and hardships of the demise of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` were felt hardest by *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` who had to endure the loss of his brother, close friend, spiritual master and leader. No one was more shattered over the death of the *Shehu* than *Shaykh* Abdullahi. This loss was accompanied with the pain of having the gates of Sokoto closed to him when he journeyed to give his final greetings to his deceased brother, leader and guide. It was unanimous that *Shaykh* Abdullahi was the closest sibling of the *Shehu*, his closest friend, companion, most prolific disciple, the leading chief adviser, the supreme general of his military and his most successful regional governor. He, more than any other, accompanied the *Shehu* from the very beginning of his mission. To have the gates of Sokoto closed against him was a severe trial for him. In his *Tarteeb As'haab Shaykh Abdullahi*, *Malam* Sa`d ibn Abd'r-Rahman describes the distress which *Shaykh* Abdullahi had to endure by being barred from the region of the Sokoto capital and having its gates locked against him. He said: "When *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` died, *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye`, may Allah engulf both of them in his mercy, delayed the journey for about eight months in a place called Bodinga awaiting for the permission (*idhn*) from the spiritual presence of *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir al-Jaylani, may Allah be pleased with him, in order to relocate to wherever he ordered him. Then it became clear to him that he should

relocate back to Gwandu and reside there. He resettled in Gwandu for some twelve years and several months until he eventually died.” This eight month sabbatical was the most trying period for *Shaykh* Abdullahi because he was being delegitimized and prevented from political participation in a government that he played a major part in constructing. He was being denied a voice in the choice of the next Caliph. But more poignant than these outward political setbacks, was that *Shaykh* Abdullahi was being prevented from making the funeral prayers over his elder brother. History is replete with similar occasions which led ultimately to further revolt and social strife. Yet *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` endured these patiently and went into spiritual retreat in Bodinga. It was in this state that *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` received his greatest spiritual openings from the presence of *Shaykh* Abd’l-Qaadir al-Jaylani, and inherited the knowledge of patient perseverance and gratitude from the four stations of those stout of heart among the prophets and Messengers. It was then that he was given the title of Mai Bodinga, or simply ‘Bodinga’, named after the town in which he received his greatest spiritual openings. It is to him we now turn in order to analyze the meaning of the aforementioned *Qur’anic* verse regarding the ‘*uluu’l-`azmi*’ (those stout at heart) from among the Messengers; as well as the station of *qutb ‘s-sabr* (the axis of patience). In his *Diya’t-Ta’wil Fee Ma`ana at-Tanzil* *Shaykh* Abdullahi gives us an astounding exegesis clearly delineating the identity of ‘those stout at heart’ but he also expanded his discussion into the nature of the spiritual station of patient perseverance (*sabr*) which will be interesting for our purposes here. He said: “*Then be patient*’ with the harms caused by your people ‘*even as the stout of heart were patient*’, those who possessed permanent stability (*thibaat*) and earnest perseverance (*jidd*) in the face of adversities (*shadaa’id*) ‘*among the Messengers*’ who came before you; therefore you too should be among the stout at heart. Some linguists consider that the genitive particle ‘*min*’ is used to indicate clarification and explanation (*bayaan*) since all of the messengers are stout of heart. Others say that the genitive particle ‘*min*’ is used for the purpose of individualization. Thus, what is desired here by them are the masters of a canon or a divine law (*as haabu ‘s-sharaa’i’ee*) because they endeavored to establish it after it had been originally formulated. They were also perseverant in enduring the difficulties of the task and in enduring the enmity of despots. Specifically they were Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus the son Mary upon them be peace. Or it is a reference to all those who are patiently perseverant in the face of trials and afflictions (*balaa’*). Noah himself was physically assaulted by his people until he was beat nearly unconscious. Abraham was thrown into the fiery furnace and was then tested to sacrifice his first born son. Moses had to endure the tyranny of Pharaoh. While Jesus the son of Mary never placed an earthen brick upon an earthen brick, (to indicate that he never owned anything of this world). It has been related on the authority of A`isha that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace fasted continuously for three days without breaking his fast. He then said: “O A`isha, it is not possible that this worldly life is for Muhammad or the family of Muhammad. For Allah was not content with the stout of heart except due to their patience, and He has made me responsible with what He made them responsible. For He says: ‘*Then be patient even as the stout of heart among the Messengers were patient*’.” He continues: “...and seek not to hasten the punishment upon them”, that is to say, do not hasten against your own people by calling for the descent of divine punishment upon them. The promised punishment will definitely befall them without doubt, “...for it is like they are in a Day when they will see what they were promised”, from the Divine Punishment of the Hereafter due to its immense magnitude; “...as if

they sojourned”, that is to say, they assumed that they lived and resided in this world’s life; “...for only an hour of a day”, due to the horror and fright of the Divine Punishment. It says in the al-Jawaahir: ‘O brother if you really realize that this world’s life is nothing but a confused dream, you must then be immediately resolved to be preoccupied in gathering the provision for the final destiny by protecting your five senses (*hifdh* ‘*l-hawaas*), being mindful of the breadths (*muraa`aat* ‘*l-anfaas*), and being attentively watchful of your Lord and Master (*muraaqabat mawlaak*). Therefore take Him as a Companion and leave the people behind.’ Al-Ghazali once said: ‘Your true Companion is the One who never parts from you during your settlement, your traveling, your sleeping or wakefulness; rather all during your life and in death, He is your Sustainer, Lord, Master and Creator. Whenever you remember Him, He will then be your close associate (*jalees*) since He says: ‘*I am the close associate of the one who remembers Me.*’ For if you knew Him as He should be known, you would of a certain take Him as a Companion and abandon people behind you. If you are unable to do that at all times, then you must at least free up some time during the night and day which is free only for your Lord. Then enjoy the pleasure of intimate conversation with Him (*tanalladhadhu bi munaajatih*) while behaving with the courtesies of true companionship. For this, my brother is attained by actually traveling the path (*atraaq* ‘*t-turuuq*), gathering resolution (*jam`u* ‘*l-himma*), continuous silence (*dawaam* ‘*s-samt*), the quiet repose of the limbs (*sukuun* ‘*l-jawaarih*), taking the initiative in fulfilling commands (*mubaadarat* ‘*l-amr*), avoiding prohibitions (*ajtinaab* ‘*n-nahyi*), decrease in remonstrating against things decreed (*qillat* ‘*l-itiraad`ala* ‘*l-qadr*), persistent Divine remembrance (*dawaam* ‘*d-dhikr*), adherence to reflection (*malaazimat* ‘*l-fikr*), giving preference to the Real (‘*eethaar* ‘*l-Haqq*), being cynical of creatures (*al-ya`su mina`l-khalq*) and complete reliance upon Allah (*at-tawakkul`ala Allah*).’ “*This is a clear communiqué*”; meaning, about that which they were forewarn. Or it means this *Qur`anic* chapter is sufficient in providing lessons and exhortation. Or it means that this is Divine Tidings (*tableegh*) from the Messenger. “*Is any destroyed...*” that is to say, no one is destroyed during the befalling of punishment, “...except corrupted people?” those renegade to obedience after the delivery of this Clear Message (*balaagh*).” Thus, those stout at heart (*uluu`l-`azmi*) are those whose patience is annihilated in the Patience of the All Patient (*Sabuur*). Patient perseverance is therefore the foundation of all the praiseworthy traits. This was reiterated in another work by *Shaykh* Abdullahi called Nayl al-Maraam Min Shaym al-Karaam in which he summarizes the ethical teachings of the famous work Naseehat`l-Mansuf al-Mubsir al-Muta`attif by *Shaykh* Mukhtar al-Kunti al-Kabir of Timbuktu. *Shaykh* Abdullahi composed this text on a Sunday morning, the 2nd of *Muharram* in the year 1242 A.H. He was 63 years old and had retired from active participation in government. In this text Abdullahi said: “Realize brothers that the achievement of all praiseworthy traits depend upon acting contrary to ones whims, avoiding empty amusements and warding off the enticements of the lower passions. The pivot of all of this revolves around patient perseverance (*sabr*). It is for this reason that I will began by discussing it. Allah ta`ala says: ‘*Indeed it is for those who are fearfully aware of Allah and patiently persevere, for Allah will not forfeit the reward of those who are spiritually excellent.*’ He says: ‘*It is for those who patiently persevere and who forgive, for that is from the most stalwart of affairs.*’ He says: ‘*It is due to the fact that you patiently persevered, for He is good to those who are patient.*’ The *Qur`anic* verses which corroborate the importance of patience are innumerable. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: ‘Patient

perseverance is the distinguishing mark of the virtuous.' He said: 'Being patient during shocking difficulties is foremost.' He said: 'Patient perseverance is the cause of illumination and ignorance is the cause of injustice and enticements.' He said: 'There is no potion more beloved to Allah than two: the potion of rage induced by humans and the potion of afflictions, both which a person patiently endures.' By means of patient perseverance those of noble character (*kareem*) are distinguished from those of despicable character (*la'eem*). Evil and harm cannot be extinguished by more evil; rather it can only be extinguished by means of patient perseverance (*sabr*) and spiritual excellence (*ihsaan*). Allah ta'ala says: *'Ward off that which is evil with what is better; for between you and the one with which there is some enmity, it will be as if he were an intimate protecting friend. For, no one can achieve this, except those who patiently persevere and no one can achieve patience except those who possess an immense inner portion.'* Patient perseverance is the best assistant and leads to the most praiseworthy outcome; while impatience (*jaza'*) which is rashness (*taysh*), is the worst assistant and leads to the most regretful outcome. The highest level of patience is not to relate your afflictions to anyone and not to inwardly praise yourself and hold yourself superior to those who do evil to you. This is based upon the prophetic tradition: 'True patience is not broadcasting ones sorrow and afflictions. Whoever experiences hardships should conceal his afflictions from others. Being patient against the lower passions is evidence of intelligence.' He said: 'Conceal your sorrows, Ibn Sayfi; for the patient live wholesome and at ease; while the rash live exhausted, frightened and poor. The one who is truly patient never allows his anger to get the better of his judgment. Whoever seeks to remedy a situation by means of his wrath will forever be governed by his wrath.' Ali, may Allah be pleased with him said: 'That I gain control over wrathful behavior is more beloved to me than gaining mastery over the art of war. Whoever does not control his wrath will eventually come to regret his wrath and his enemies will be many. No matter what level of physical strength a person may attain, no one can ever remedy matters by means of his wrathful behavior.' Allah has praised those who patiently endure those things which anger them by His words: *'Those who control their wrath and are pardoning towards people, for indeed Allah loves the spiritually excellent.'* Once Mu'awiyya, may Allah be pleased with him said: 'I am ashamed when someone commits an offense against me and I am not able to endure it patiently; and that I consider that poverty does not impede my nobility.' Again, he, may Allah be pleased with him said: 'Patient perseverance during the descent of calamities is better than seeking to extinguish it with more difficulties.' Al-Muhlab once said: 'Indeed, you are capable of triumphing over victory itself; but you can never conquer patience.' Ali once said to al-Ashghath ibn Qays: 'When you patiently persevere then decreed providence flows over you, and you become a rivulet of dynamic flowing energy. But when you are rash, the decreed fates inundate you and you become disparaged and denigrated.' Shayb ibn Shayba once said to al-Mahdi al-Abass: 'The matter which has the greatest right to be patient regarding is that matter which can only find relief through the corruption of your honor and way of life.' Ibn al-Mundhir once said: 'Patience and intelligence are siblings, just as nervous apprehension and ignorance are siblings. The perpetual occurrence of upright deeds and pleasing spiritual states can only be achieved through patience. Patience is the offspring of intelligence and protects it from being corrupted by the lower whims. Rashness, on the other hand is the offspring of ignorance because it leads to the corruption of nature and the spreading of evil social customs. Allah will assist the one who is patient and cause his honor and way of life to be perpetual.' The

Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said to a man: 'The Divine assistance of Allah that He grants you is better than you trying to assist yourself'. Again, one of the closest and most spiritually advanced disciples of the *Shehu*, the sage Muhammad Tukur, who was often celebrated by *Shaykh* Abdullahi, disclosed the requirements of the human who reaches the axis of patient perseverance (*qutb 's-sabr*): "The science by which a person can draw near to Him by means of this Name through correlation is by [1] ceasing and desisting from everything He dislikes; doing so in order to preserve sanctity; [2] adhering to the *Sunna* in order to make good and perfect one's service to Allah. This is followed because violations are matters which the Absolute Being, *subh \bar{a} anhu* is not pleased with." This idea of surrendering to the flow of existence and being patient in the face of adversity by maintaining and cultivating human virtue is not novel to Islam. The concept of enduring hardships in order to make life better for others, (be they plant, animal, elemental, environmental, parents, siblings, offspring, near relatives, neighbors or needy strangers) is apart of the core teachings of most sacred traditions. It is embodied in the concept of sacrifice, which the Jews and Christians celebrate. It is embodied in the Sino and Hindi celebration of filial and families ties. The endearment that the heavens, the earth, its waters and all its inhabitants have to the traditional Aboriginal Nations reflects this sacred duty to the rest of creation. It is the core value of the Way of the warrior and the sacrifice he is trained to give for the benefit of the people, to protect the weak, and maintain the rule of law, order and justice under the authorization of a duly appointed governor (*al-amir*). This sacrifice finds its source in the mastery of patient perseverance and can only be realized by those stout of heart. The masters of this spiritual station are four messenger prophets: Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. What distinguishes these prophetic sages from the rest is that they were instructed to deliver a sacred canon or law to humanity, see to it that it be implemented and to codify it in order for it to survive. This responsibility demanded that their patience be as humanly enduring as the exalted Patience of the One who sent them as messengers. At the level of secrets these four manifestations of patient perseverance imply that patient perseverance is divided into four divisions. It is for this reason that *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye' disclosed this secret regarding patience in his *Tareeq al-Janna* where he said: "As for patience (*sabr*) it is the cure and although its drink is disliked, yet it is blessed. It attracts every benefit and wards-off all harm. All intelligent people know that the soul hates taking a real cure. So, realize that patience is four kinds: [1] patience during obedience; [2] patience against disobedience; [3] patience against the excesses of this world; and [4] patience in the face of trials and afflictions." Each of the four '*uluu 'l-'azmi*' (those stout of heart) were a self disclosure of one of these four aspects of patient perseverance. It is for this reason Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus are eternal archetypes of the higher and lower worlds. This can also be said about the four arch-Angels: Jibril, Mika'il, Israfil and Ezra'il; or the four Companions: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali; or the four People of the Household: Ali, Fatima, Hassan and Husayn. *Imam* Abd'l-Wahaab as-Sha'raani include among these the four *mujtahid* Imams: *Imam* Malik ibn Anas, *Imam* Abu Hanifa Nu'maan, *Imam* Muhammad ibn Idris as-Shafi', and *Imam* Ahmad ibn Hanbal. The *Fudiawa* sages include among these the four fixed stars of the *awliyya*: *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qaadir al-Jaylani, *Shaykh* Ibrahim ad-Dasuqi, *Shaykh* Ahmad ar-Rufai, and *Shaykh* Ahmad al-Baydawi. Each of the four archtypes represents one of the four aspects of patience. These four characteristics of patient perseverance are joined in the Seal of the prophets and messengers, our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him

and grant him peace. It is or this reason Allah explicitly commanded Muhammad to also follow these four archtypes in mastering patient perseverance by His words: “Then be patient even as the stout of heart among the Messengers were patient.” This command indicates a 5th element or a realm (*daa’ira*) wherewith the four archtypes can interact, which is both the root of the four archtypes but is also the fruit which emerge from this four branched tree of existence. The 5th element, Muhammad, is thus the axis (*qutb*) of the four inward archtypes, the axis (*qutb*) of the four outward vicegerents, the axis (*qutb*) of the four arch Angels, the axis (*qutb*) of the four purified people of the household, the axis of the four schools of independent judgment, and the axis of the four spiritual supports. Below is an illustration of this idea of the four stout of heart and their relationship with their axis:

Jesus	Ali	Abraham	Mika’il	Fatima	Jibril	Jaylani	Malik	Baydawi
Umar	Muhammad	Abu Bakr	Hassan	Muhammad	Husayn	as-Shafi`	Muhammad	Ibn Hanbal
Moses	Uthman	Noah	Ezra’il	Ali	Israfil	Dusuqi	Abu Hanifa	Rufai`

What is important is that in the center of these squares (*da’ira*) Muhammad is the 5th element out of which the eight other squares evolve, revolve around, intereact with and to which they return. It is not surprising that the *Fudiawa* made Muhammad the central figure in all things human, humane and spiritual. The *Shehu* said in his Fulfulde poem, *Yimre` Tanasabuje`* (the Song of Comparison):

‘*Muhammadu muydu turraaji deembi’ay*

Meechay Allah duuduun’iri taqaami’

Muhammad endured the inhumanities of men

I thank Allah, to such treatment have I too been subjected.

‘*Uhu`a shidiraayi ghu`atu hiduu ghiyaadum*

Meechay Allah duuduura duu tunaami’

He faced no one in personal enmity;

I thank Allah, on this principle have I too taken my stand.’

The patient perseverance that the *Shehu* had to endure was the first fruits which eventually resulted in the establishment of the *khilaafate*. It is from the negative energy created by the emptiness of helplessness, impotence, and incapacity that makes a vacuum affect for the Living *Sunna*. What the *Fudiawa* seem to be revealing is that the qualities of patience during obedience; patience against disobedience; patience against the excesses of this world; and patience in the face of trials and afflictions are the places of refuge during earthly and social upheavals. The sage Muhammad Tukur said in his *Qira’l-Ahibba*: “Among the specific qualities of the Name ‘*as-Sabuur*’ is that it wards off affliction (*dafa` l-bilaaya*); for whoever recites it one hundred times before the rising of the sun will not be afflicted with misfortune.” This concept is important for virtuous humans caught up in the final collapse of a degenerate but once dominant culture. In the face of adversities, patience is the servants’ humanity and is the spirit which sets them apart from the rest of creatures. The state of patient perseverance is the Ark of Noah, it is the coolness which engulfed Abraham in the midst of the fiery furnace, it is the staff and Ark of the Covenant of Moses, and it is the ocean of miracles of Jesus the son of Mary. The person fortunate to master the method of *sabr* (patient perseverance) is the one who inherits the legacy, heritage, traditions, sciences and secrets of the messengers who

were stout of heart (*'ulaa'l-'azmi*). In his Tareeq'l-Janna, the *Shehu* described the fortitude necessary for mastering patient perseverance: "Realize O brothers that the only way to establish such struggle (*muhaahadaat*) is through the strength of knowledge (*quwwat'l-'ilm*) and the light of certainty (*nuur'l-yaqeen*). You have learned, my brothers, of the guarantee which Allah gives in sustaining your physical constitution without cause. Likewise, you have learned about the strength of the ascetics (*zuhhaad*) during their travels and their walking night and day. Among them are those who do not eat for ten days, some do not eat for a complete month and some do not eat for two months at a time. Each one acts in accordance with his own spiritual strength." This intergenerational message of endurance under afflictions and adherence to the Way or covenant; was heard loud and clear by the leading mystic of their seventh generation, the sage *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* Uthman. This reclusive sage had long ago turned his back upon the world; and askewed every vestige of leadership, rank wealth and fame at a time when all of his relatives and their colleagues subdued the entire fourteen city-states of Hausaland. When the *Shehu* died and most of his former colleagues and family members were visibly distraught over his loss and were facing revolt to their rule; this reclusive son of the *Shehu*, Muhammad Sanbu went into a state of spiritual occultation (*ghayba*) in which he experienced crystalline unveilings. A modern psychiatrist might describe Sanbu with some form of mental disorder resulting from the trauma from the demise of his father. However, the passing of the *Shehu* happened simultaneously as the great spiritual unveilings of Sanbu, which he claimed were interconnected. It was during this heartrending period which affected many, that its opposite in spiritual awareness, opening, and expansion affected the eldest and most promising of the surviving sons of the *Shehu*. Years later, the poet himself was to recount the immense spiritual state that Sanbu experienced at the death of his father, the *Shehu*. In his Salwat 'l-Ikhwaan, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: "He Sanbu became the leader of his age in this affair in knowledge, actions, spiritual states, spiritual stations and implementation. He became the axis of the circle of sainthood and the most immense gate opened to the masters of Divine assistance. He came to possess an extensive hand in penetrating expenditure of the secrets of Allah. He possessed a far-reaching capacity for perfect comprehension. When he was young he was educated and trained by the hand of lordly assistance, until there dawned upon him spiritual illumination at the onset of his maturity. He took the light of the Absolute Being as a guide to His presence until the fruits of sainthood humbled themselves to him with utter submission. With all this, the spiritual state of this master was hidden in concealment and in the absence of social prominence due to the powerful influences that the Divine realities had upon him." The poet goes on to describe how the patient perseverance of Sanbu enabled him to endure severe privations of food, drink, and human comforts. Because the patience of those stout of heart is connected to the Eternal Patience of the Absolute Being the concepts of time, timelessness, before-timeness and beyond time are understood and mastered. No one can claim to be patient until he is able to behave with the patience of the Patient One. The patience of Allah is eternal without beginning or end. The patience of the Absolute Being is enduring and outside of time. It thus knows the present moment from which time and space first emerged. It is for this reason that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, connected this science with the second of the eight sciences of the greatest spiritual unveiling. The poet said: **"...and the Universal Perimeter which manifest the moment of the hours of the totality."** The poet made the expression '*dawr*' (perimeter/rotation) nominative

(*marfiuu*) because it is a conjunction (*ma`atuuuf*) of the expression ‘ilm’ (‘the science of...’) in the beginning of the verse. Thus, this science is a distinct and separate discipline from the science of the ‘*uluu ‘l-`azmi*’ (those stout of heart). Allah ta`ala says: “Thus, when fear comes, you see them looking at you with their eyes turning about (**taduuru**) like one who faints due to death”; where He uses the expression ‘*taduuru*’ (rolling/turning about) to describe the eyes which cannot remain steady and roll about due to the severity of their fear. The expression ‘*dawr*’ (rotation/cycle) also has a unique meaning among medical practitioners, astronomers, physicists as well as philosophers. In his Qamuus Mustalahaat al-Falsifat al-Islamiyya Prof. Muhammad Saeed Sheikh delineated the meaning of the expression ‘*dawr*’ (circular/rotation) as it is utilized in the science of philosophy and logic as: “An expression used in logic to denote the circularity in an argument or proof which occurs when a proposition is put forward followed by a number of propositions successively and at the end the last proposition is posited as the proof of the original proposition. It is, thus, a kind of *petition principia*. In a simpler form it may be merely the rotation of two propositions, one used as a proof of the other.” The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, the learned *sharif* Muhammad Murtaḍa az-Zabidi in his Taaaj ‘l-Uruus said regarding the meaning of the expression ‘*dawr*’ (orbit/rotation): “The expressions: ‘*daar’s-shay*’ (‘he circled a thing’); ‘*yaduuru*’ (to circulate); and ‘*dawr*’ (perimeter/boundary/circumference) is from the root ‘*daara*’ (to rotate/orbit or revolve).” It is thus connected to time (*dahr*) as it was used in a long prophetic tradition related by Ahmad and others on the authority of the uncle of Abu Hurra ar-Raqaashi that the Messenger of Allah said during the Farewell Pilgrimage: “Indeed time revolves in a circle (*astidaara*) like its form, the Day that Allah created the heavens and the earth. Is not the number of the months with Allah twelve, recorded in the Book of Allah the Day He created the heavens and the earth? Among these twelve, four are sacred. That is upright religion. Therefore, do not act unjustly to your souls during them.” In this prophetic tradition the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace used the expression ‘*astadaara*’ (to revolve) to mean when something circumambulates (*taaf*) a thing; or when it returns (*`aada*) back to the place from where it began. This is considered a ‘*dawr*’ (a cycle/revolution) of time. In the context of the poem, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, seems to indicate that this science is a comprehension of the original chronometer, or the first moment from which the hours of all existence emerge, revolve, turn and come back to. This moment (*waqt*) is the creation or emanation of the first light from the immense seas of the Essence of Allah ta`ala. This is a reference to the Light of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace whose creation marked the instant time was set in motion (*istidaarat az-zamaan*). Because existence is ranged in a hierarchy, time is relative based upon the ‘*da’ira*’ (rank) of that existence. Thus, there is a moment (*waqt*) regarding the creation of the First Intellect (*`aql awwal*), the Primordial Pen (*qalam*), the Tremendous Throne (*`arsh `adheem*), and the Universal Orbit (*falak atlaas*); whose dynamics constitutes the primary engine of all the derivative orbital rotations; such as the orbit of stars and planets, the orbit of particles, the orbit of nature and their like. Thus everything has its own time, and all these times are governed by the original moment (*waqt awwal*) which manifested with the creation of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Because these ‘clocks’ are synchronized and calibrated with the First Light, the poet called it the: “Universal Perimeter (*dawr kulli*) which manifest the moment of the hours of totality.”

مَعَانِي الإِسْمِ الأَعْظَمِ المَكْتُونِ فِي الرُّوحِ أَوْ فِي سِرِّهِ المَخْزُونِ

The meanings of the Most Immense Concealed Name Hidden in the Spirit or treasured in its secret⁶¹

⁶¹ What should be clear to the reader by now, is that all of these sciences and mystical secrets are signs and logi pointing to the *raison d'être* for being and existence itself. Allah ta`ala says: “*I did not create men or jinn except to worship*”; and since one cannot worship without the pre-existence of knowledge; then the knowledge of the Absolute Being is the reason for the creation of men and *jinn*. This is corroborated by words of Allah ta`ala on the tongue of His Messenger when He says: “I was a Hidden Treasure that was unknown. I desired (*ahbabtu*) to be Known, so I created creation.” The first of this creation is the perfect man, Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace who was perfect in his servitude/worship (*‘ubudiyya*) and gnosis (*ma`arifa*) of the Absolute Being; was the seal of the Prophets, was the master of the Messengers, sent as ‘*a mercy to all the worlds*’, was the Beloved (*Habeeb*) of Allah and was taught all the Names when Adam was still between water and clay. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, encapsulates all the above ideas in his words: “**The meanings of the most immense concealed Name...**” This science is the third of the eight sciences which comprise the greatest spiritual unveiling (*al-kashf ‘l-akbar*). The poet made this verse into a nominal sentence (*jumla ismiyya*) without a particle of conjunction connecting it to the previous verse. Thus, this verse stands as a substitute of the part for the whole (*badl ‘l-ba`d min ‘l-kulli*); where the expression ‘*ma`anaa*’ (the meanings) is made nominative (*marfuu*) being a substitute for the nominative noun ‘*dawr*’ in the previous verse. It is also a governing noun (*mudaaf*) whose annexed noun (*mudaaf ilayhi*) is the genitive noun ‘*ism*’ (the Name). This is then followed with two adjectives which are also genitive (*majruur*): ‘*aadhem*’ (the most immense) and ‘*maknuun*’ (concealed); rendering the sentence as: ‘The meaning of the most immense concealed Name’. This is a reference to the most immense and concealed Name of the Absolute Being. However, the governing noun, ‘*ma`anaa*’ (the meanings) comprises another immense secret which discloses the unique spiritual Path of the *Fudiawa*. Allah willing, I will return back to this discussion. For now let us review what Islamic sources say about ‘the most immense concealed Name’ of Allah. The paternal uncle and father-in-law of the poet, *Sultan* Muhammad Bello reiterated in his own *Kitaab Ism‘l-‘Aadhem* that there was disagreement regarding the diverse interpolations of the Immense Name of Allah and what precisely is meant by it. He said: “Indeed the most Immense Name of Allah is that Name which when it is supplicated by, answers are given, and when a request is made by means of it, it is granted. It is the master (*muhaymin*) of all the Names and the one-hundredth Name which completes (*mukammil*) the Ninety-Nine Divine Names transmitted in the prophetic tradition related by Abu Hurayra. It is the superintendant and supervising Name and the Name which is closer to the quintessence of things than their own differentiated essences. Regarding the affair of this Immense Name there has been related many prophetic traditions, sound, good and other than that, which gather together the diverse meanings which delineate the incalculable affair of the Immense Name of Allah. At the onset there is unanimous agreement among the Sunni scholars regarding the existence of immense concealed Names of Allah. However, there is disagreement among the *Umma* concerning designating precisely what the Immense Name is. The people of prophetic traditions (*ihl‘l-hadeeth*) hold the view that it refers to a number of diverse Divine Names which have been transmitted in the apparent

meaning of the narrated traditions and extracted from diverse narratives. The realized ones (*muhaqqiquun*), the *Imams* of jurisprudence, the majority of the *awliyya* and many of the scholars of the science of letters hold the view that the Immense Name is the name of majesty – ALLAH, and some of them maintain that this view constitutes the consensus of opinion. Then they say what prevents many from being answered when calling upon it is the absence of the perfection of its prerequisites, whose summation is in consuming what is lawful (*akl'l-halaal*). The savior of men and *jinn*, our master and chief *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir al-Jaylani, may Allah be pleased with him said: 'Allah is the most Immense Name of Allah, however, what allows you to be answered by means of it is not having anything in your heart other than Allah.' *Shaykh* Muhy'd-Deen ibn Arabi held the view that the most Immense Name of Allah is actually all of the Divine Names combined, and that what is required is that you be sincere and that you ask Allah by any of His Divine Names you wish in order to fulfill your needs. This view was corroborated by Abu Yazid al-Bustami when a man once asked him: 'Teach me the most Immense Name of Allah?' He said: 'Show me the least of the Names and you will know the most Immense of His Names.' Some of the notables among the *awliyya* held the view that it is not possible to articulate the most Immense Name of Allah openly (*sareehan*); while some of the scholars of the science of letters as well as some of the notables of the Gnostics held the view that the most Immense Name of Allah is a non-Arabic name which acts as the superintendant of all the Divine Names, inwardly and outwardly. The transmitted narratives differ regarding designating precisely which of the Names of Allah is His most Immense Name, but they mention the secrets which designates its meaning. Then they say that its meaning with respect to its outward is the majestic name - ALLAH, and it's meaning with respect to its inward, is His name – HUWA, so understand. I myself remained for seven years searching into it and held fast to my father, the *Shehu*, hoping to attain it. As a result I gained much advantage and countless benefits from him regarding the reality of innumerable Divine Names. He also instructed me in their diverse meanings." *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye' held the view that the most Immense Name of Allah was concealed within the letters of the supplication: '...by Your most Immense Great Name which when You are supplicated by it, You answer and when You are asked by means of it, You give...' It has been related by Ibn Maja on the authority of A'isha who said: "I once heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace say: 'O Allah, I ask You by Your apparent, excellent and most blessed Name to You, which when You are supplicated by means of it You answer; when You are asked by means of it You give; when You are requested to be merciful by it You show mercy; and when You are sought for relief by it, You give relief'. He then said: 'O A'isha, did you learn that Allah has guided me to the Name by which when He is supplicated with it He answers?' She said: 'O Messenger of Allah, by my father and mother, teach me!' He said: 'It is necessary for you, O A'isha that I instruct you so that you can ask for anything by means of it from this world's life.' She said: 'I then stood and made ablution and prayed two *rak'ats*; then recited: O Allah, I supplicate You by the name Allah. I supplicate You by the name *Rahman*. I supplicate You by the names *Barr* and *Rahim*. I supplicate You by all of Your Beautiful Names, those that I know and those I do not know, that You forgive me and be merciful to me'. She said: 'Then the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace laughed and said: 'It is the Name with which you supplicated with'." It has been related by Abu Dawud on the authority of Asma bint Yazid that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "The most Immense Name of

SANKORE'

Allah is in these two *Qur'anic* verses: 'Your God is One God, there is no deity except Him the Beneficent the Merciful' and the opening verses of *Aal 'Imraan*: 'Alif Laam Meem, Allah there is no deity except Him, the Ever Living the Self Subsistent'."



It has been related by at-Tirmidhi on the authority of Abdallah ibn Burayda al-Aslami on the authority of his father who said: "The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once heard a man supplicating saying: 'O Allah, I ask You, by the fact that I bear witness that You are Allah, there is no deity except You, the One the Eternal, who does not give birth nor was He begotten, and there is nothing like Him.' He, then said: 'By the One in whose Hand is my soul, he has asked Allah by means of His most Immense Name which when He is supplicated by it He answers and when He is asked by means of it He gives'." It has also been related by Abu Dawud on the authority of al-Bara' ibn 'Aazib who said: "I once said to Ali: 'O *Amir'l-Mu'mineen* I ask you by Allah and His messenger, that you single me out with the most immense thing which the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace specified for you, and which Jibril specified for him, and with which the Beneficent sent him with.' Ali laughed and then said: 'O Bara', if you desire to supplicate Allah 'izza wa jalla by means of His most Immense Name, then recite from the beginning of the chapter *al-Hadeed* of the first six verses until His words: '...*He is all knowing of what is in the breast*'. It is His words:



‘What is in the heavens and in the earth glorifies Allah, and He is the Mighty the Wise. To Him belong the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He gives life and brings death, and He has power over all things. He is the First, the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden, and He is all Knowing of all things. He is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then He was firm over the Throne. He knows what goes into the earth and what is extracted from it, and what descends from the heavens and what ascends into it. He is with you wherever you are, and Allah is all Seeing of what you do. To Him belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and to Allah do all affairs return. He causes the night to transform into day and the day to transform into night, and He is all Knowing of what is in the breast’; and the last four verses from the chapter *al-Hashr*: ‘If We had revealed this Qur’an to the mountains, you would have seen them fearfully splitting out of fear of Allah. These similitudes We throw for mankind so that they may reflect. He is Allah, whom there is no deity except Him, the Knower of the unseen and the seen, and He is the Beneficent the Merciful. He is Allah, whom there is no deity except Him, the Sole Sovereign the Holy, the Peace, the Protector, the Guardian, the Mighty, the Overwhelming, the Vainglorious, glory be to Allah over what they associate with Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Originator, the Fashioner, and to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names. What is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Him, and He is the Mighty the Wise.’ Then raise your hands and supplicate: ‘O One who is like that, I ask You by the truth of these Divine Names, that You send blessings upon Muhammad, and upon the family of Muhammad, and that you do so-and-so with me...’; and ask for whatever you desire; for by the One whom there is no deity besides Him, He will definitely accept to fulfill your needs; Allah willing.” It has been related by Ibn Maja on the authority of Abu Amama that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “The most Immense Name of Allah, which when it is supplicated by it He answers, are hidden in three chapters of the *Qur’an*: in *al-Baqara*, *Aali `Imraan* and *TaHa*.” It has been related by at-Tabarani on the authority of Ibn Abass, that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “The most Immense Name of

Allah, which when it is supplicated by it He answers is concealed in the verse from *'Aali 'Imraan*: *'Say O Allah, the King of kings, You give the kingdom to whomever You please and remove the kingdom from whomever You please. You honor whomever You please and humiliate whomever You please. In Your Hand is all good and You have power over all things'.*" It has been related by Ibn Jareer on the authority of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqaas that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "The most Immense Name of Allah, which when He is supplicated by it He answers, and when He is asked by it He gives, is the supplication of prophet Yunus ibn Mata." It is the words of Allah ta'ala: *"There is no deity except You, glory be to You, indeed I have been among the unjust."* Shaykh Muhammad Tukur ibn Muhammad at-Turuudi said in his *Qiraa'l-Ahibaa* that the most Immense Names of Allah were the names *'al-Hayy'* (the Ever Living), *'al-Qayyum'* (the Self Subsistent), *'al-Ghani'* (the Independently Rich), *'as-Saree'* (the Swift) and many others, for those deserving of them. All of these diverse views on the designation of the most Immense Name of Allah ta'ala were transmitted by the *Fudiawa* through many generations and were perfected by the poet, may Allah be merciful to him at the hands of his teacher Shaykh Muhammad Sanbu ibn Shehu Uthman ibn Fuduye'. The poet said in his *Salwat'l-Ikhwaan*: "He, Shaykh Muhammad Sanbu, possessed genuine spiritual unveiling (*mukaashifaat saadiqa*), from which he caused to flow many varieties of gnostic unveilings upon me. One day he informed me about the true circumstances of these times, and the secret interpolation of all of its affairs based upon spiritual indication. He taught me about the letters of existence (*huruuf'l-kawn*), their meanings, and secrets. I once asked him about the most Immense Name of Allah, and he recited to me the twenty-sixth verse from chapter *ar-Ra'd*. As a result I was completely enveloped with a joy which was indescribable due to the immense affair which manifested to me resulting from that, and all praises are due to Allah." This is what has been transmitted by sound prophetic traditions, the *Sunni* scholars and the *Fudiawa* sages regarding the general meaning of the most immense concealed Name of Allah. Let us now return to discussing the most probable interpolation of the poet's words: "The meanings of the most immense concealed Name"; which will reveal the unique approach to gnosis of Allah that the *Fudiawa* had perfected. In this couplet the poet cites three creational realities connected to the the most immense concealed Name of Allah: [1] 'meanings' (*ma`anaa*); [2] the Spirit (*ruuh*) and [3] the secret (*sirr*). Each of these expressions are references to an aspect of the Muhammadan reality. The operative word in this verse is the expression *'ma`anaa'* (meanings/significance/concepts). This word is taken from the verb *'anaa'* (to mean or to signify); like when you say: *'anaa bi'l-qawli kadha'* (He meant or intended by the saying, such a thing.) Thus, the synonyms for the expression *'ma`anaa'* are: *'mafhuum'* (the notion which is understood/connotation); *'dalaala'* (import or significance); *'tasawwur'* (the conception or idea) and *haqeeqa* (the reality). Thus the poet is not addressing the most immense concealed Name of the Absolute Being Itself, but he is addressing the notions, concepts and objectives of this Name as it was and is concealed in the Perfect Human. Shehu Uthman ibn Fuduye' hinted at this concept when he was in Sifawa and instructed his disciples regarding the Self Disclosure of the Names and Attributes of Allah. He said: "Human beings are an outward phenomenal expression of the Divine Names of Essence, the Divine Names of Majesty and Beauty (*madhhar li'l-Asma ad-Dhaatiya wa 'l-Jalaaliya wa 'l-Jamaaliya*)." Here the Shehu designates the Perfect Human as a gathering of the meanings of all the Names. This idea was corroborated by the previously mentioned prophetic tradition related by ad-

Daylami on the authority of Abu Raafi' where the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "My *Umma* was made into a likeness for me in the realm of water and earth; and I was taught all the Names just as Adam was taught all the Names." Thus, the *Shehu* depicts the Perfect Man as a gathering of the meanings of all the Names, manifest or hidden. He then supported this assertion with the following statement: "Humanity (*al-ins*) is a Self Manifestation (*majalla*) of His Divine Name, the Gatherer (*al-Jaam`i*)." This means that humanity is a gathering of all the higher and lower worlds. When the *Shehu* speaks of humanity and human beings here, he is talking of the human archetype, which is Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace – the Perfect Human (*insaana kaamil*). Thus, the most immense concealed Name of Allah is that Name which can only be accessed through all the meanings and objectives of the spirit, intellect, character, behavior and actions of the Perfect Human. It is for this reason, the *Fudiawa* placed primary importance on adherence to the Living *Sunna* of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him indicated here that behind every Muhammadan character trait, and hidden in every action of the *Sunna* is the most immense concealed name of Allah. This is what the poet meant with the following words: "...hidden in the Spirit or treasured in its secret." This means that the most immense concealed Name of Allah is not disguised in a specific Divine Name per say. Nor is it secreted within a *Qur`anic* verse, or series of verses, nor yet in a *Qur`anic* chapter. It is not a Syrian, Aramaic, Amharic or Hebrew name of Allah, or any other obscure cognomen revealed in one of the archaic revealed languages of the past. It is secreted in the Spirit which was the objective and cause for the creative Act. Therefore, what or who is this 'spirit'? Allah ta`ala says: "And they ask you about the *ruuh*; say: the Spirit is from the command of my Lord; and you have only been given a little knowledge regarding it." Allah ta`ala says: "On the Day when the *ruuh* and the Angels stand in ranks, no one will speak except the one whom the *Rahmaan* has given permission." Allah ta`ala says: "When I had formed him, I blew into Him from My *ruuh*." The scholars of the *Sunna* differ regarding what or who this spirit is. Some say that this spirit is *Jibril*. Some say that it is a specific Angel distinct from any other Angel. The People of Allah transmit that this Spirit is a reference to our master Muhammad's reality (*haqeeqa*), light (*nuur*), ontological form (*suura*) and spirit (*ruuh*) as it was when Adam was still between water and clay. *Shaykh* Abd'l-Kareem al-Jilli said in the fifty-first chapter of his *al-Insaan 'l-Kaamil*: "Realize that this Spirit has many names based upon the number of its manifestations. It is called the exalted Pen (*qalam`alaa*), the Spirit of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, the Primordial Intellect (*`aql awwal*), and the divine spirit (*ruuh ilaahi*)." In his *Salaat 'l-Kubra* *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir al-Jaylani referred to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace as 'the spirit of the corporeal form of the two existences' (*ruuh jasad'l-kawnayn*); 'the spirit of the spirits of Allah's worship' (*ruuh arwaah`ibaadatillahi*); and as 'the immense secret of Allah' (*sirr Allah al`Aadhem*). This last cognomen gives an indication of the meaning the poet utilized in the verse: "...the most immense concealed Name." This in no way should be interpolated to mean that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace embodied the Absolute Being. On the contrary, it means that everything that Allah ta`ala desired to be known about Himself which was the reason for creating creation; was concealed in the quintessence of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. The poet indicated that this treasured and concealed Name is hidden and concealed within a created being which he entitled '*ar-ruuh*' (the spirit). He then

further qualified this created entity in which the most immense concealed Name of Allah is hidden by describing It as being treasured (*makhzuun*) in the secret (*sirr*) of this created being. It is for this reason that Allah ta'ala said to Adam, as it was transmitted by *Qadi`Iyad* in his as-Shifa: "If it were not for him (Muhammad), I would not have created you." That is to say, that the *ruuh* of our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was created before the *ruuh* of Adam or any of the celestial spiritual beings. This means that the sole reason for creating the entire creation including Adam, was in order to manifest His most Beloved creation, Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace; who knew Allah as He intended when He said: "*I was a Hidden Treasure, and I wanted to be known, so I created creation.*" That is to say, that He created a spirit (*ruuh*), a light (*nuur*), an intellect (*`aql*) and a rational soul (*nafs naatiq*) and concealed in his secret His most treasured immense Name. *Shaykh* *Muyh'd-Deen ibn Arabi* said in his al-Insaan al-Kaamil: "Indeed we say regarding Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace by way of identification, that he is the Spirit (*ruuh*) which functions as the rational soul (*nafs naatiqa*) in the cosmos." So the concept of Muhammad being identified as Spirit was not novel to the poet. It was a doctrine transmitted by many of the People of Allah ta'ala throughout the ages. In his al-Mandhuumat li'l-Istalihaat as-Suufiyya the poet, may Allah be merciful to him described this Spirit as 'the Muhammadan form' (*suurat'l-muhammadiyya*): "...which is a reference to the original Light from which Allah created the Garden and Hell Fires and the original matrix by which divine punishment and blessing were measured." This concept of the Messenger of Allah concealing or treasuring in his quintessence the most immense concealed Name of Allah – from where did it originate? We are provided a clue to this question in the words of A'isha who said about the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: "His character was that of the *Qur'an*"; which means he embodied the quintessence of the *Qur'an*. *Shaykh* *Abd'l-Qaadir al-Jaylani*, may Allah be merciful to him when he said in his Fat'hu'r-Rabbaani: "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." Thus, the most immense concealed Name of Allah ta'ala hidden in the secret of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is not a name that can be articulated, recited or verbally evoked like any other Name of Allah. It is a Name that can only be accessed through interaction with him. This is a profound secret which lay at the core doctrine of the *Fudiawa* sages. In order to access this Hidden Name of Allah, the aspirant must annihilate his self form in that of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, by reviving his *Sunna*, taking on his noble character and by sending much blessings and peace upon him. The grandfather of the poet, the *Shehu* said about this in his famous ad-Daaliyya:

"The fires of passion moves freely between our breast,
I am snatched away towards him with love and longing.
We have been sealed with his honor between the two worlds,

We are completely dissolved from devotion to Prophet Muhammad.
His swords have cut the necks of the idolaters
Who can traverse the perfections of Muhammad?"

What the *Shehu* describes here is the passion, devotion, longing and yearning which is necessary in order to annihilate oneself into the Living *Sunna*. It is not simply a blind following (*taqleed*) devoid of sentiment. It entails recognition that the quintessence of Muhammad can be accessed through every minute action and behavior of the Prophet. Thus, adherence to the Living *Sunna* becomes the ultimate spiritual path whose fruit is acquaintance with the most inaccessible aspects of the Absolute Being. It is this intention which distinguishes the People of Allah in their love for the Living *Sunna*, from the so-called '*salafist*' who claim adherence to the *Sunna*, while being bereft of the spiritual illuminations which result from it. Again the *Shehu* said in a *Fulbe* song describing this spiritual path of annihilation into the *haqeeqa* of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace:

"Whenever I go out, in whatever direction I turn my eyes
It is as if I see him and hear him speak."

This means that the *Shehu* reached a level in adherence to the Living *Sunna*, where it was as if he was in the very presence of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Thus, the outward revival of the *Sunna* of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace in all its aspects opens the door to the inner encounter with the light (*nuur*) and spiritual reality (*haqeeqa*) of the Perfect Man. In order to maintain this direct experiential knowledge of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace the *Shehu* prescribed the prayer upon the Prophet as the key component of the inward journey. Once the aspirant is purified by the outward and inward *Sunna* of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and he persists in the sending of blessings and peace upon him; it is then that Allah discloses to him His most immense Name concealed in the secret of the *ruuh* of His beloved Messenger. Thus, the reality of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace exemplifies the meanings of the most immense Name of the Absolute Being. This is why the knower of Allah *Shaykh* al-Qunawi said in his introduction to the *Mirat'l-'Aarifeen*: "And blessings be upon the most immense Name (*ism 'aadhem*), the most knowledgeable respondent, and the most attentive reinforcement, Muhammad, by whom the Book was opened and sealed, by whom Truth was distinguished from falsehood and by whom the light was distinguished from darkness..." In this salutation on the Prophet, al-Qunawi designates the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace as the most immense Name of Allah, because it is embodied in adherence to the Muhammadan *Sunna*. This idea has its root from the early community of Islam as *Qadi 'Iyad* narrated in his *as-Shifa* on the authority of Salaama al-Kindi that Ali ibn Abi Talib once instructed them on a method of sending blessings upon the Prophet where he said: "...for he is Your trustworthy trusty ('*aminuka al-ma'muun*) and the treasury of Your treasured knowledge (*khaazin 'ilmuka al-makhzuun*)." This treasured knowledge of Allah ta'ala is His immense unique Name concealed in all the meanings behind the character, behavior and actions of the Living *Sunna*. So, understand. Here, with praises to Allah, I have disclosed an immense secret which was the core element of the spiritual Path developed by the *Fudiawa* sages.

ثُمَّ فَكَّكْتُ مِنْ طَلَسِيمِ الْكِتَابِ مَا لَمْ يَفُكْ الْأَوْلِيَاءُ فِي الْخِطَابِ

Then I deciphered the talismans of the Book

That none of the *Awliyya* had decoded through communication⁶²

⁶² The poet, may Allah Be merciful to him, cites the fourth of the eight sciences which comprise the greatest spiritual unveiling (*al-kashf 'l-akbar*) by his words: “**Then I deciphered the talismans of the Book...**” By utilizing the attached first person singular pronoun here, the poet reminds us in this hemistich that these sciences constitute his own personal subjective spiritual achievement, and are not merely an inventory of theoretical esoteric sciences. It is interesting to note that the poet only uses this idiosyncratic voice seven times throughout the poem, this time being the sixth. He opened the verse with the expression ‘*thumma*’ (then) or ‘*thamma*’ (there), based upon which manuscript is given partiality. In the Maiurno manuscript it is transcribed as ‘*thumma*’ (then), while in the Arewa manuscript it is transcribed as ‘*thamma*’ (there). Initially, I assumed that the Arewa manuscript was simply a scribal error. However, when I read this section of the poem with *Shaykh* Muhammad Bello ibn Abdullahi he noted that either of the two words was applicable in conveying the meaning which the poet was trying to convey; and that the inflection of the letter *tha*’ with either *damma* or *fat’ha* were correct with regard to the essential meaning of the poet. *Shaykh* Umar ibn Ahmad Zaruuq, however, read the expression ‘*thumma*’, with the letter *tha*’ inflected with *damma*, giving only a chronological meaning to the couplet. The expression ‘*thamma*’ (‘there’) is a noun of indication or an adverbial noun which denotes a place or location that is remote from the speaker. It is a synonym of ‘*hunaaka*’ (over there). Allah ta’ala says: “*And We brought the others near there (wa ‘azlufunaa thamma al-‘akhireen).*” If we take this usage to be correct it would render the verse: “There I deciphered the talisman of the Book...” This is interesting because, it would connect this hemistich with the previous verse, where the realm being referenced here is to the Spirit (*ruuh*) or secret (*sirr*) of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in which the talisman of the Book is deciphered. That is to say, it is a knowledge in which an extra knowledge is disclosed. The initial knowledge is the meanings of the most immense concealed Name of Allah, hidden in the secret of the spirit of the Perfect Human; which can only be known through the annihilation of the self into the outward and inward aspects of the Living *Sunna*. The extra knowledge which results from this is unraveling the talisman of the Book. Allah willing, I will return to this interpolation. The expression ‘*thumma*’ (then) is a particle of conjunction (*harf’l-`atf*) and denotes sequential order (*tarteeb*) and chronological delay (*taraakhi*); like when Allah says: “*You were dead, so He gave you life; then (thumma) He causes you to die; then (thumma) He brings you back to life; then (thumma) to Him you will return.*” In each case the expression ‘*thumma*’ denotes one thing coming after another in a sequential order. If we take this meaning to be valid, it would render the verse: “Then I deciphered the talisman of the Book...”; where the poet indicates that this particular science is realized subsequent to comprehending the most immense concealed Name of Allah hidden in the secret (*sirr*) of the Spirit (*ruuh*) of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This level of comprehension can only be realized by exchanging low character for the noble character traits of the Perfect Human; exchanging irrational selfish customs for the Living *Sunna* of the Perfect Human; sending frequent and persistent blessings and salutation upon the Perfect Human; and by having intense craving and genuine yearning to be in his presence, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Based on

this, I have transcribed the latter interpolation, but will include the former in analyzing the full meaning of the verse. The poet used an annexed first person singular pronoun in the expression *'fakaktu'* (I deciphered), in order to establish that these sciences of unveiling were ontological, existential and real; and were not merely (like my commentary here), a theoretical cataloging of sciences received from others. The verb *'fakka'* (decipher) means to disentangle (*fassala*); to untie (*halla*); or, in a certain sense, to raise (*rafa`a*). Allah ta`ala says: *"But he has not attempted the spiritual Ascent. Ah, what will convey to you what the spiritual Ascent is. It is the freeing of the enslaved (fakku raqaba)"*; where the expression *'fakka'* (unraveling/untying) means *'tahreer'* (setting free/manumitting). In his *Infaq`l-Maysuur* Sultan Muhammad Bello used the term *'fakka'* (unravel) to describe the spiritual achievements of the *Shehu* as a result of his persistent sending of blessings upon the Prophet, when he said: *"He became acquainted with the Guarded Tablet and untied its remarkable mysteries (wa fakka ramzahu al-malhuudh)." In the context of this poem it also means to decipher or decode an encryption (fakka 'r-rumuuz). The 'encryption' here being what the poet called 'the talismans of the Book' (talaasim 'l-kitaab). The expression 'talaasim' is plural for 'tilassim' (a mystery/talisman) and according to the learned sharif Shaykh Muhammad Murtada az-Zabidi in his Taaj`l-Uruus it takes its root from the verb 'tallassima' (to lower the eyes to the ground and become silent). This is a facial demeanor or a body language which indicates that the person knows something, but does not want to talk about it; or it is a sign of silent consent, acceptance or acquiescence. The noun 'tilassim' (a mystery/talisman) is thus, any symbol, character, hieroglyph, word, gesture or entity which when unraveled discloses the secret which the talisman conceals. A talisman can be used to keep a secret, preserve a treasure, or to protect something from harm, or to evoke forces and secret knowledge. In the context of this poem, the poet designated the talismans to be seals guarding what he called 'the Book' (al-kitaab). Now, in order to understand which 'book' is being referred to here, we have to re-examine the previous verse. This is crucial because the expression 'book' can be a reference to any multiplicity of interpolations. For example 'the Book' is normally used to refer to the *Qur'an*. The jurists use the term 'book' to refer to large chapters within a larger book. Muslim cosmologist use the term 'the Book' to refer to the Guarded Tablet (*al-lawh 'l-mahfuudh*) which is the ontological record of created existence in its entirety. Al-Qunawi said in his *Mirat`l-Aarifeen*: *"The world consists of two worlds: the world of the command ('aalam`l-amr) and the world of creation ('aalam`l-khalq); and each of them is a book from the Book of Allah ta`ala."* The 'book' also is a reference to contingent existence, when Allah ta`ala says: *"Read your own book, for this Day your own soul will suffice against you as a reckoning."* In his *al-Mandhuumat li`l-Istalihaat as-Suufiyya* the poet, himself gives us an interpolation of 'the Book' as it is used by the People of *tasawwuf*, which is starkly different from its meaning in this work. He said:*

"And the Absoluteness of existence, It is called 'a Book'

Let there be no doubt or misgivings in you regarding that."

The poet later explains the meaning of this couplet by his words: *"As for my words: 'And the Absoluteness of existence, it is called 'a Book'; it is an idiomatic expression of the Absolute Existence devoid of non-existence...because temporal existence is subsumed in It just as letters are embodied within ink."* However, in the context of this particular verse the term 'the Book' has an entirely different meaning; and is connected to the concept of *'nuur'* (the light), *'ruuh'* (the spirit), *'sirr'* (the secret) or

'haqeeqa' (the reality) of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace; where each of these technical terms are indistinguishable and refer to the same reality – the Perfect Human (*insaan kaamil*) as a 'Book'. The Perfect Human is the talisman which both seals and opens the Book simultaneously. It is an isthmus (*barzarkh*) which stands between the Divine realities of the Absolute Being and the creational realities of existence. Like a reflective mirror the Perfect Human is the created archetype (*namuudhij*) that transmits the commands of the Absolute Being to creation, and is the voice of creation to the Absolute Being. Thus, when Allah ta'ala says: "*Muhammad is the messenger of Allah*"; this means that he is His messenger to all things besides Himself, and gives Muhammad priority of existence and his Book as the Mother of Books. *Shaykh* al-Qunawi sheds some light on this function of the Perfect Human in his *Mirat'l-Aarifeen* where he said: "The Perfect Human's (*insaan kaamil*) knowledge of his soul is a mirror reflection of human perfection. The reality of his soul is made apparent in his knowledge and made distinct and differentiated by means of it. Likewise, the Absolute Being's knowledge of His Essence is a mirror reflection of His Essence. His Divine Essence manifest in His knowledge and is differentiated by means of It. Thus, between the Essence of the Absolute Being and the essence of the Perfect Human there are correspondences (*mudaahaat*) with respect to generality and summation (*min jihat'l-kulliyya wa'l-ijmaal*) and the existence of things in them. Likewise, between the knowledge of the Absolute Being and the knowledge of the Perfect Human there are correspondences with respect to the manifestation of the details that are subsumed in the Perfect Human. Thus, the Perfect Human acts as a perfect mirror reflection of the Divine Essence by reason of these correspondences." This line of reasoning brings us back to whether the opening phrase of this couplet was: "There I deciphered the talisman of the Book..."; where it means the realization of a level of comprehension and awareness in which an additional higher level of comprehension and awareness is disclosed and unfolded like a 'Book'. Probably the most ambitious work of the poet in which he laid out these ideas in their clearest language was his *Hillu'r-Rumuuz wa Kashf 'l-Kunuuz* (Unraveling the Symbols and Revealing the Treasures). This impressive name alone indicates that he composed the work to answer the many questions which were bound to emerge as a result of the forward-thinking metaphysical and complex cosmological ideas advanced in his *Shukr 'l-Waahib*. When studying the *Hillu'r-Rumuuz*, I realized that it answered most of the puzzling questions which this last section of *Shukr 'l-Waahib* raised. In this extremely concise four page document the poet clarifies who and what are the talisman and the Book. He said: "Indeed the original talismanic axis (*tilassim qutb awwal*), is an idiom which we use to refer to the '*nuur Muhammadiyya*' (the light of Muhammad). It is the original manifestation which first emanated from the Will of the Absolute Being. It was the fundamental principle of the original nature (*al-mawd ila 'l-fitra*), the prerequisite agent of the Divine realities (*al-haqaa'iq muqtadiyyaatuhaa*), and the first design (*satuur awwal*) of the four prototypes from which emanated the letters ('*antasha'at al-huruuf*) and joined the unknown and the known (*ta'alif 'l-mankuur wa'l-ma'aruuf*). The first of the four prototypes overflowed from the ocean of the Essence of Lordship (*faada `an bahr'd-dhaat 'r-rabbiyya*). The second prototype overflowed from immutable spirit (*faada `an ruuh quddusiyya*). The third overflowed from divine reason (*faada `an `aql laahuuti*). Finally, the fourth overflowed from the living spirit (*faada `an ruuh hayaatiyya*). These four prototypes constitute the fundamental principles of existence (*ummahaat'l-umuur*). It is from them that all the recorded books were inscribed (*antaqasha*). The inscribed books (*al-*

kutub 'l-muntaqasha) which emerged from each of these prototypes are countless. Among them are books written by the right hand (*tuktibu bi'l-yameen*), and those written by the left hand (*tuktibu bi's-shimaal*). From each of these books and from each of these inscriptions emerged more branches of knowledge. From each branch emerged more branches of knowledge continuously without end. The full potential of these sciences will only manifest in their totality in the Hereafter. Thus, when the divine advent was apportioned (*wa lamaa tajzat 'l-wufiud 'l-laahuutiyya*) by the formation of the point of humanity (*bi tasweer 'n-nuqta 'n-naasuutiyya*) after the orbits had been set in motion (*ba'damaa daarat 'l-adwaar*), and the turning of the realities of night and day had been established (*wa taqaallib `ala al-haqaa'iq al-layl wa'n-nahaar*); Allah deposited in this point of humanity (*'awda`a Allahu fee tilka an-nuqta*) the emanating divine realities (*al-haqaa'iq 'l-muntasha'at*) emerging from the abiding inscription (*'an 'r-ruquum 'l-muntaqasha*) in the books which branched off (*fee 'l-kutub 'l-mutafara'at*) from the previously mentioned four prototypes. Thus, the orbit of existence was set in motion (*fa daarat `alayhaa ad-dawrat 'l-wujuudiyya*) because of it, and the Eternal Desire was completed by means of it (*wa tammat bihaa al-iraadaat al-azaliyya*); and ultimately by it the Divine Realities were realized (*fa tahaqqaaqat bihaa 'l-haqaa'iq*). Then the minute details (*ad-daqa'iq*) reinforced this human reality from the two presences (*min 'l-hadratayn*), and it was given the Lordly robe of honor (*fa 'atahaa 'l-khul'at 'r-rabbaniyya*) with the merit of vicegerency (*bi 'l-khilaafat al-'istihqaqiyya*). This was then the first that the Absolute Being manifested (*'abraza*) from the cosmos (*al-'alaama*). By means of it He rent opened the garment of the rites which announce the dawn of the Day of Judgment. Thus, the truth became distinguished from falsehood, and the immediate Present Moment was separated from the Void. Therefore, understand these Divine Realities (*fa 'afham hadhihi 'l-haqaa'iq*) and learn from the chronology of these details (*wa ta'allam min 'araxhi hadhihi 'd-daqa'iq*).” These initial remarks to the Hillu'r-Rumuuz wa Kashf 'l-Kunuuz by the poet are simply extraordinary because they sum up the entire story of the emergence of existence from the oceans of the Immense Essence of the Absolute Being; and delineate that the Perfect Human (Muhammad) is the summation of all things. Every minutia of knowledge of Allah and His creation is subsumed in the realities of the Perfect Human. Here, I have simply transmitted what the poet himself said, without adding any commentary, because he intentionally concealed this overwhelming wisdom inside of a specific technical language, like an encryption. The password to this encryption is inward and outward adherence to the Living *Sunna*. Those whom Allah ta'ala have blessed to annihilate themselves into the self form of the Perfect Human, may Allah bless him and grant him peace innately know what these symbolic indications refer to. I intentionally, placed the transliteration here so that those whom Allah ta'ala wills can research into their hidden meanings in the assemblies of the People of Allah. This is clearly a hermitically sealed language which the poet, may Allah be merciful to him mastered and then concentrated in a kind of ‘nano-book’. This ability to take encyclopedic and portmanteaux mystical ideas and condense them into succinct and concise principles is what made the poet, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to him, one of the most unique sages of this latter age. He then asserts that His unraveling the complex language of the People of Allah, his breaking the talisman of the ‘Book’ of the Perfect Human, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and then streamlining this into a concise theory/practice was unparalleled and: **“...that none of the *Awliyya* had decoded through communication.”** Modernist academics may challenge the claim of *Shaykh* Dan Tafa,

by citing the teachings of al-Jilli, al-Jaylaani, al-Shadhili, Ibn Arabi, al-Qunawi, al-Bakri, Wang Tai-yu, ad-Darqawi, as-Sanusi, al-Kunti, Ma' al-'Aynayn and many other sages before and during the time of the poet that had developed an identical comprehension of the Absolute Being and His creation. In this regard, I would be inclined to agree. However, what distinguished the poet, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa from these other masters was that he took these expansive ideas and made them into a streamlined and condensed applied science. The sages of the past spoke in detail regarding the stations of the Perfect Human, but none of them had openly transmitted the methodology of achieving it. The *Awliyya* concealed these sciences in voluminous works such as the al-Fuutuuhaaat 'l-Makiyya; in dense works such as al-Insaan al-Kaamil, Mira't 'l-'Aarifeen, and Khitam 'l-Awliyya; in intoxicating poetry such as the al-Burda as-Shareef and the many beautiful songs of the Darqawa. Some concealed it in meditation, incantations, and martial movements such as the *quan* of the *Jeoman* (Muslims) of China, or the *silat* exercises of Muslim Indonesia. Some of the sages established professional artistic guilds and then concealed these teachings in a symbiosis of gnosis, calligraphy, art, architecture and fashion. *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, on the other hand took all of these symbols, volumes, and edifices and developed a simplified formula: That the Absolute Being created from His Eternal Light a likeness of it as a pattern (*namuudhij*) conveyed (*manquul*) to all the lower worlds (*al-'asfal*). He made him the talisman, opener (*faatih*) and seal (*khaatim*) in the realm of the Consolidated Covenant (*al-'uquud 'l-mawthiq*) when He said: “*And when your Lord took from the back of the children of Adam, their descendents...*” The Absolute Being made him a mirror reflection of the Divine Essence (*mir'at 'd-dhaat*), when He says: “*Therefore, believe in Allah and His messenger.*” He made obedience to him equal to obedience to Himself by His words: “*Obey Allah and the Messenger.*” The Absolute Being made him the locus of the Self Disclosure of the Divine Attributes (*majallaat's-sifaat*) and the waterspout of the Divine Names (*meezaab 'l-asmaa'*) from which pours out it's like in incessant effusions with pity and compassion to all existence by His words: “*We have not sent you except as a mercy to all the worlds*”; and by His words: “*There has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves, who grieves over your discomforts, full of concern for you, compassionate and merciful to those who believe.*” The Absolute Being made him the most immense agency (*al-waseela 'l'aadhem*) from the presence of the essences (*min hadrat 'l-ayaan*) to the Angelic worlds (*amlaak*), the world of spirits (*arwaah*) and all those brought near (*muqarribuun*) by His words: “*Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*”; and by His words: “*And indeed you are upon an immense character form*”; and by His words: “*Indeed Allah and His Angels send blessings upon the Prophet. O you who believe send blessings upon him and abundant peace.*” This final act was in the opinion of the *Fudiawa*, the greatest form of remembrance of Allah, because the Messenger of Allah, may bless him and grant him peace said: “The most grateful of people to Allah are those who are most grateful to the people.” He also said: “Those who are not grateful to people are not grateful to Allah.” Among the best forms of showing gratitude to people is by believing in them, following them and making much supplication for them. This is the basis of filial piety venerated in all the sacred traditions. Trusting in parents, believing in their Way, following and obeying them; along with praying for them is a universally accepted virtue. In many eastern cultures this gratitude to parents embrace gratitude towards heaven and earth and the gratitude towards all those who instruct us, nurture us and help us to physical, emotional, and spiritual maturity. There is no created being who has benefited the entire existence by their

presence, than our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. If it were not for him, the Absolute Being would not have created creation. He is the locus of the descent of the most exalted light (*mahbat* 'n-nuur 'l-'aala), and the measure of the most distinct secret (*mi`yaar 's-sirr 'l-ajlaa*). He is the first breaking of the dawn of the lights of Divine Oneness (*fallaq subh anwaar 'l-wahdaaniyya*); the first appearance of the sun of the secrets of Lordship (*tal`at shams al-asraar 'r-rabbaniyya*); the splendid full moon of the eternal divine realities (*buhjat qamar 'l-haqaa`iq 's-samadaaniyya*); the bridegroom of the presence of universal compassion (*'uruus 'l-hadra 'r-rahmaaniyya*). He is the essential light (*nuur*) and radiance (*sanaa*) of every Messenger; the fundamental secret (*sirr*) and guidance (*huda*) of every Prophet; the quintessence (*jawhar*) and core (*dayl*) of every *wali*; and the impetus (*sawq*) and zeal (*himma*) of every *saalih*. He is Muhammad, the *ruuh* the Unlettered Prophet and Messenger. He was the first of them in spirit and meaning (*al-awwal ruuhaaniyya wa ma`anaa*), and the last of them to be sent and judge as substance and corporeal form (*al-akhir mursilan wa hakaman was jawharan wa jasaman*). It is for this reason the poet, now cites the fifth of the eight sciences which comprise the greatest spiritual unveiling (*al-kashf 'l-akbar*) – the sciences of the Prophets inherited in every age revealed under the sciences of the *awliyya*.



عِلْمُ زِيَادَاتِ عُلُومِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ فِي كُلِّ عَصْرِ مِنْ عُلُومِ الْأَوْلِيَاءِ

The science of the augmentations of the sciences of the Prophets

Transmitted in every epoch from the sciences of the *Awliyya*⁶³

⁶³ The poet, may Allah ta'ala be merciful to him mentions the fifth of the eight sciences which comprise the greatest spiritual unveiling (*al-kashf 'l-akbar*) by his words: **“The science of augmentations of the sciences of the Prophets transmitted in every epoch from the sciences of the *Awliyya*.”** The expression ‘*augmentations*’ (*ziyaadiyyaat*) has a specific connotation in the language of the People of Allah. It takes its origin from the words of Allah on the tongue of our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: *“Do not rush the Qur’an before its revelation has been fulfilled in you; and say: Lord increase me in knowledge.”* It has been related by Abu Dawud, an-Nisaa’i and al-Bayhaqi on the authority of A’isha that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once woke in the night and said: *“There is no deity except You. Glory be to you. O Allah I seek forgiveness of my sins. I ask You for Your mercy. O Allah increase me in knowledge (*Allahumma zidniy `ilman*) and do not cause my heart to deviate after You have guided me. Give me mercy from Your presence, indeed You are the Benevolent.”* In both the *Qur’anic* verse and the prophetic tradition the request for an increase in knowledge means an increase in knowledge of Allah, ta’ala His Attributes, and an increase in the unseen and certainty. Allah ta’ala never commanded the Messenger of Allah, to ask for increase in anything except knowledge. The sciences of the Prophets, upon them be peace, regarding belief, certainty and the matters of the unseen, continuously increase even after the passing of that particular Prophet. Those who inherit these sciences from them are the *awliyya*. Imam Abu Nasr as-Siraaj said in his *al-Lama`* *“The augmentations are the increases in the belief in the unseen and certainty (*ziyaadaat 'l-imaan wa 'l-yaqeen*). Each time there is an increase in belief and certainty, there is also an increase of truthfulness and sincerity in spiritual states, stations, spiritual unveilings and behavior.”* In his *Kashf 'l-Mahjuub*, Shaykh Abu'l-Hassan Ali al-Hujwiri, referred to the augmentations (*zawaa'id*) as the increases of the illuminations of the heart. This was also reflected in the request of our master Ibrahim, upon him be blessings and peace where Allah ta’ala says on his tongue: *“When Ibrahim said: ‘Show me how You give life to the dead. He said: ‘Do you not believe?’ He said: ‘Indeed, however in order to bring tranquility to my heart’.”* Imam at-Tabari said in his *Jaami' l-Bayaan*: *“He asked this question of Allah, so that he can be increased in certainty through actual eye witnessing of knowledge he already possessed through transmission.”* Muslim, Ibn Manjur, Ibn Jareer and others related on the authority of Mujaahid that the meaning of the words of Ibrahim: *“...in order to bring tranquility to my heart”*; i.e. in order to increase more belief to my belief (*izdaad 'imaan 'ila 'imaaniy*). The request from the Prophets, may Allah bless them and grant them peace to gain increase in knowledge of Allah, His attributes, belief and certainty in the unseen, is a request whose response did not end with the death of the Prophets. This is because knowledge of Allah increases with the increase of His actions. Allah ta’ala says: *“Every day He is in a new business.”* Thus, each day knowledge of Allah and the unseen increases with the increase in the ‘business’ (*sha'n*) of Allah ta’ala. These augmentations are the sciences of the Prophets which increases in radiation with time until the end of Time. It is in the Hereafter that all the sciences of the Prophets will remain as archtypes laying the foundation for the creational forms which will continue with His continuity. The perpetuity of the wisdom of all the prophets and messengers

has been preserved in the Book revealed to Muhammad, in the daily *sunnan* practices of Muhammad, and in the ethical behavior of Muhammad. The increase in belief, certainty and the matters of the unseen was manifested with the first prophet Adam and continued with the 124,000 prophets until the appearance of their Seal, our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. It has been related by al-Haakim and others on the authority of Abu Dharr that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “The prophets were 124,000; the messengers were 313, and Adam was a speaking prophet.” The grand uncle of the poet, *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye’, opened his *Ta’leem’l-Anaam* with a prophetic tradition that explains the narrative of the emergence of the spirits of the 124,000 Prophets and the transmission of their spiritual stations to all the *awliyya* throughout the age. He said:

“It has been related on the authority of Jaabir ibn Abdallah, may Allah be pleased with him, who said I asked the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, about the first thing which Allah ta’ala created. He said: ‘The first thing which Allah created was the light (*nuur*) of your Prophet, O Jaabir. Then He created from it every excellent thing, and after that He created every thing. At the time He created my light, He established it in the station of proximity (*maqam 'l-qurb*) for twelve thousand years. Then He made my light into four parts (*arba' aqsaami*). He then created the Throne (*al-'arsh*) from one part, the Foot Stool (*al-kursi*) from one part, the supporters of the Throne (*hamalata 'l-'arsh*) from one part, and the supporters of the Foot Stool (*hamalata 'l-kursi*) from a part. He then established this fourth part of my light (the light of the supporters of the *kursi*) in the station of Love (*maqam 'l-hubb*) for twelve thousand years. He then made the light into four parts. He then created the Primordial Pen (*al-qalam*) from one part, the Guarded Tablet (*al-lawh*) from one part, the Garden (*al-janna*) from one part, and the remaining fourth part of my light He established in the station of Fear (*maqam 'l-khawf*) for twelve thousand years. He then made my light into four components (*arba' ajza'u*). He then created the Angels (*al-mala'ika*) from one component, the Sun (*as-shams*) from one component, the Moon (*al-qamar*) from one component, and the Planetary Stars (*al-kawkab*) from a component. He then established this fourth component of my light (the light of the *kawkab*) in the station of Hope (*maqam 'r-raja'i*) for twelve thousand years. He then made my light into four portions. He then created the Intellect (*al-'aql*) from one portion, Knowledge (*al-'ilm*) from one portion, Infallibility (*al-'isma*) from one portion, and Success (*at-tawfeeq*) from one portion. He then established this fourth portion of my light in the station of Modesty (*maqam 'l-haya'i*) for twelve thousand years. Then Allah *sub'haanahu* gazed upon my light and out of modesty it perspired and there exuded from it 124,000 drops of light. Allah *sub'haanahu* then created from each drop of light the spirit (*ruuh*) of a Prophet or Messenger. The spirit of the Prophets and Messengers then inhaled and exhaled breath (*tanaffasat*) and Allah created from their breath the light of the obedient (*nuur 'l-mu'ti'eena*) from among the believers until the Day of Standing...”

This ‘breath’ is continuous and will continue to increase from the niche of the Prophets into the hearts of His *awliyya* until the end of time. These knowers of Allah are the inheritors of the Prophets spoken of in many prophetic traditions. This function is also referred to as being ‘on the heart of a prophet’; and being ‘under the feet of a prophet’. Abu Dawud related on the authority of al-Bara’ that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “The scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets. The people of the heavens love them and when one of them dies the fish of the sea seek forgiveness for him until the Day of Judgment.” In the narration at-Tirmidhi on the authority of Abu ad-Darda’ that he upon him be blessings and peace said: “The scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets. The Prophets are not

inherited in gold and silver. They are inherited in knowledge. Whoever has taken knowledge has taken an immense portion.” Ibn `Adiy related in his al-Kaamil on the authority of Ali ibn Abi Talib that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said: “The scholars are the lamps of the earth, the vicegerents of the Prophets, my inheritors and the inheritors of the Prophets.” In the above prophetic traditions the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace is not speaking of an inheritance of the legal judgments, precepts and laws of the prophets of old. He is speaking of the hidden wisdom, gnosis, belief, and spiritual unveilings of the Prophets which continue after the physical passing of the Prophets. It is the sagehood (*wilaayat*) of the Prophets which is inherited. It has been related by ad-Daylami on the authority of Abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Indeed among the sciences are those which are like a form concealed. No one knows it except the knowers of Allah. Whenever they articulate this science, no one denies it except the people of heedlessness in Allah.” Just as the 124,000 Prophets, have left their inheritance of gnosis of Allah; it was the 124,000 Companions of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace who inherited these sciences from them through the niche of the Seal of the Prophets. He, upon him be blessings and peace said: “My Companions are like the stars, whichever one you follow, you will be guided.” There were 124,000 men and women, among human and *jinn*, who were alive when our master Muhammad passed from this life. These were the Companions and they were followed by those who inherited from them. Every age has 124,000 *awliyya* either manifested or concealed, who inherit these concealed sciences from the generations before them. This will remain until the Day of Judgment. It has been related by at-Tabaraani on the authority of Abdallah ibn Mas`ud that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “There will always remain forty people from my *Umma* who are upon the heart of Ibrahim. By means of them Allah defends the people of the earth. They are called the ‘*abdaal*’. They do not obtain this station through prayers, giving alms or fasting.” They said: “O Messenger of Allah, how do they obtain this station?” He said: “Through their openhandedness and giving sincere advice to the Muslims.” In another narration from Ibn `Asakir and others on the authority of Abdallah ibn Mas`ud that he upon him be peace said: “Indeed Allah has three hundred people who are upon the heart of Adam. Allah has forty people upon the heart of Musa. Allah has seven people upon the heart of Ibrahim. Allah has five people upon the heat of Jibril. Allah has three people upon the heart of Mika`il. Allah has one person upon the heart of `Israfil...Regarding them, life is given, death is caused, the rains fall, vegetation grows, and afflictions are warded off.” In a narration on the authority of Abdallah ibn Umar, he upon him be peace said: “The select of my *Umma* are five hundred people and the ‘*abdaal*’ are forty. Neither the five hundred nor the forty diminish. Each time one of them dies, Allah substitutes from the five hundred someone for the station of the forty. Thus, never does the number of the five hundred or forty ever diminish.” They said: “O Messenger of Allah, guide us to the behavior of these people.” He said: “They are those who pardon those who do injustice to them; they do good to those who do evil to them and they are generous with what Allah has given them. This is corroborated about them in the Book of Allah, where He says: ‘...*those who control their wrath and pardon people; indeed Allah loves those who are spiritually excellent*’.” The bygone prophets continued to obtain increase in belief and certainty after their deaths, and this increase was augmented with the appearance of Muhammad. The only thing discontinuous with the bygone Prophets and Messengers

is their law (*qanuun*) and religious injunctions (*shari`a*). These are preserved in a Clear Tablet, but their legal applications have been discontinued with the appearance of the Seal of the Prophets, our master Muhammad. However, what remains is the select spirits, the spiritual stations, spiritual states, the esoteric meanings, wisdom, beliefs and certainties of the Prophets. This inheritance is concealed from the common people but is well known to the spiritually elite among the *awliyya*. It is this reason that many of the realized ones said that the sagehood (*wilaayat*) of all the Prophets is continuous while their messengership (*risaala*) is discontinuous. These prophetic stations of sagehood are the inheritance of the *awliyya*. The scholars referred to here are the right-acting scholars – the *awliyya* who inherit the augmented sciences of the Prophets, in every age until the Day of Judgment. *Shaykh* Muhy`d-Deen Ibn Arabi said in his al-Fuutuuh: “Realize that the Absolute Being exalted be He, decreed the appearance of the *awliyya* with the discontinuance of prophethood and messengership with the death of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.” Thus, each epoch has its 124,000 *awliyya* who inherit from the generations before them going back to the 124,000 Companions who were alive when the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace died. These are the *awliyya* meant when the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him peace said: “The scholars are the inheritors of Prophets”; and his words: “The scholars of this *Umma* are like the Prophets of the remaining religious communities”; and: “The scholars of this *Umma* are like the Prophets of the Banu `Isra`il.” Just as there must exist individuals among the *Umma* of Muhammad who inherit from the certainties, beliefs, gnosis and spiritual unveilings of the Prophets of old; likewise among the *Fudiawa* were men and women who inherited these from them. We mentioned previously that the transmission of esoteric knowledge among the *Fudiawa* was an inheritance intergenerationally passed down from the time of their earliest generations in Futa Toro until the time of the poet, may Allah be merciful to him. In his Salwat`l-Ikhwaan, the poet listed at least eight individuals who had attained the station of inheritance of the Prophets among the *Fudiawa*: *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`; his son Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu*; *Shaykh* Abdullahi Mujinna; Muhammad Kari`angha; *Shaykh* Aliy Dinbu ibn Abu Bakr *Mallamu*; *Shaykh* Muhammad Kashfuji ibn al-Bukhari; *as-sayyid* Ibrahim Yan Siriyaku; Umar Gharba; and the wife of the *Shehu*, *Iyya Gharka A`ishatu* Ghabindu bint *Shaykh* Muhammad Sa`d ibn Abdullahi ibn Muhammad ibn Sa`d. In his Turjumat the poet added to this list, his two uncles *Sultan* Muhammad Bello, Muhammad al-Bukhari, as well as *Malam* Mustafa ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Musa, Gidadu ibn Muhammad Ghari, *Shaykh* Mudi Ma`mara, and *Shaykh* Muhammad Yero ibn Gharu. In addition *Waziri* Gidadu ibn Layma listed in his Rawdat`l-Janaan more than forty companions of the *Shehu* which included the above, but also *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` and about ten other women namely: Maymuna bint *Shaykh* Muhammad Haaj ibn Ibrahim ibn Maane`; *Inna-Garka* Hawwa Bikaragha bint *Shaykh* Adam ibn Muhammad Agh; *Shaykha* Khadijatu bint *Shaykh* Abu Bakr ibn Uthman al-Kaakiye`; Khadija bint *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fududye`, the mother of the poet; A`isha, the wife of *Imam Malamu*; Hafsatu, the paternal aunt of *Imam* Muhammad Sanbu; Habibatu, the wife of *Imam* Muhammad Zanghu; Aminatu Bi`adi; Aminatu Lubaalu; and Jude` Kawawara...” These `ulama/awliyya inherited the spiritual stations of the Prophets, and functioned among the *Fudiawa* the same as the Prophets of the Banu `Isra`il functioned among them. It was a time of chrysaline forward looking mysticism and illumination. During these two generations a renewed and streamlined style of transcription, government constitutional theory, architecture, clothe manufacturing,

tayloring industry, leather manufacturing, agronomy, medicine and cosmology emerged which was abruptly arrested and delayed only by the trauma of European imperialism. It was from these two spiritually radioactive generations of the *Fudiawa* that the poet, may Allah be merciful to him inherited the sciences of the Prophets and their spiritual stations (*'uluum 'l-anbiyaa' wa maqaamatahum*). It was in the month of *Rajab* 1260 A.H. (1843) at the age of 41 that the poet first began to articulate the ideas of inheriting directly from the Prophets. That same period his father *Mallam* Mustafa retired to Wurno appointing him heir of the seat of dean of Salame University and governor of the region as far as Awera. The *Fudiawa* held a common belief among them that age 40 was a time of inheritance and election. It was at age 41 that the poet, may Allah be merciful inherited the seat of authority and academic achievement. It was later in the year that he composed his *Maqaamat'l-Anbiya'* (the Spiritual Stations of the Prophets) which he composed for his students in the university. This indicates that the curriculum of metaphysics explored under his tutelage was extremely intricate and advanced. In the introduction of this work the poet explained what induced him to compose it and some of the highly developed research he was conducting. He said:

“It occurred to me in the past to compose a momentous epistle (*maktuub jaleel*) in which I would single out some of the fruits I attained from the spiritual stations of the Prophets, and some of the distinctive qualities of each of their specific religions (*khaṣaa'is adyaanihim*); based upon what I understood at that time. However, in these times, there descended upon me (*warada 'alayya*) other meanings clarifying what I wanted to mention then, but which are more sublime, more comprehensive in advantage and more inclusive in scope now. The sources of these reflections are more extraordinary and remarkable than before, although they spring from a single spiritual source (*mawrudahumma waahidan*). I mean by this that both meditations together are a reflection upon the spiritual stations of the Prophets; with the exception that both remain free of transcription and both interact and interchange with the other in certain issues. Further, everything which I conveyed in both were not taken from transmitted texts; but were taken from lordly dream visions (*ilhaam rabbaanbiy*), and divine delivery (*ilqaa' ilaahiy*), deposited into the spirit of my essence as a comprehension for the students and instructions for the ignorant.”

What is clear is that the poet composed two works dealing with the sciences of the Prophets. In the first one he discussed at length on the spiritual stations of the overall 124,000 prophets and messengers and the sciences of unveiling inherited from them. In his second work he discussed the same issue but restricted his reflection upon the seven most perfect of them: [1] Adam; [2] the second Adam, Noah, [3] Ibrahim, [4] Dawud, [5] Sulayman, [6] Jesus the son of Mary and [7] the seal of the prophets and messengers, our master Muhammad, may Allah bless them and grant them peace. In this latter text, the poet arranged its chapters into seven matrices or realms (*dawaa'ir*). In each realm he discussed the specific spiritual station of that particular prophet, as well as the means (*waseela*) to arrive at that station and to understand the times of that prophet and the influences his station has upon the times to come. The poet designated a specific name for each of the seven matrices designed to act as a kind of physiognomy of time (*firaasat'd-dahr*), or a way to decode the times. Without doubt, all of my teachers asserted that this text was one of the works which he himself declared 'apocrypha' to all except the adept. The inherent connection between the sciences of the Prophets and the increase in the application of these within the sciences of the *awliyya*, engenders movement, rotation, repetition and cyclical time. This

The science of the manifestation of the night and the day
Then I entered into the *Ka`ba* of Secrets⁶⁴

instinctly led the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, to discuss those sciences concerned with the emergence of Day and Night.

⁶⁴ The poet, may Allah ta`ala be merciful to him now mentions the sixth and seventh of the eight sciences which comprise the greatest spiritual unveiling (*al-kashf 'l-akbar*). Starting with the first of these, the poet, connects this science to the previous timeless science of the Prophets and the *awliyya*. He said: “**The science of the manifestation of the night and the day...**”; this means that the science of the coming forth by night and the science of the coming forth by day are branches of the sciences of the Prophets conveyed to the *awliyya*. We previously mentioned the meaning of the expression ‘*tajalli*’ (manifestation/disclosure) in footnote # 32; where Allah ta`ala utilizes the term to indicate ‘a coming forth’: “*wa'n-nahaari idha tajallaa*” (By the day when it becomes manifest). Allah ta`ala says: “*A sign for them is the night from which We extract the day. Then they are plunged in darkness. And the sun follows an exact course to its resting place. That is the decree of the Mighty the Wise. And the moon We have arranged it with mansions until it resorts to being like a shriveled palm leaf. It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; for everything swims in an exact orbit.*” This *Qur`anic* verse establishes that earthly time consists of the hours of the night and day and that both night and day are effects of the rotational orbit of the sun and moon. Thus, time and its temporal manifestations of night and day are a part of in-time creation (*hadath*) and its originator is the Absolute Being. Allah ta`ala says: “*He is the one who created the night and the day, the sun and moon; everything is swimming in an exact orbit.*” The ‘night and day’ being referred to here is the 24 hour day which we experience each night and day. It makes the 7 day week; the 29 day month; the 365 day year. It contains hours, minutes, seconds, nano seconds and moments. These are all time referents which are all relative. The ‘night’ and ‘day’ of one element, creature or being is not the same ‘night’ and ‘day’ of another. Everything swims in its own orbit. Subsequently, the night and day which the poet, may Allah be merciful to him refers to here is ‘day’ and ‘night’ in relationship to the Absolute Being. Allah ta`ala says: “*He manages the command from the heavens to the earth; then it ascends to Him in a Day, where the measurement thereof is a thousand years of your reckoning.*” In the *Qur`an* the message is quite clear regarding the relativity of time and space; and the concept of ‘time/place’ outside or prior to temporal time and space. For example the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said in his *Mustalihaat 's-Suufiyya* of the meaning of ‘Day’ in the language of the People of Allah:

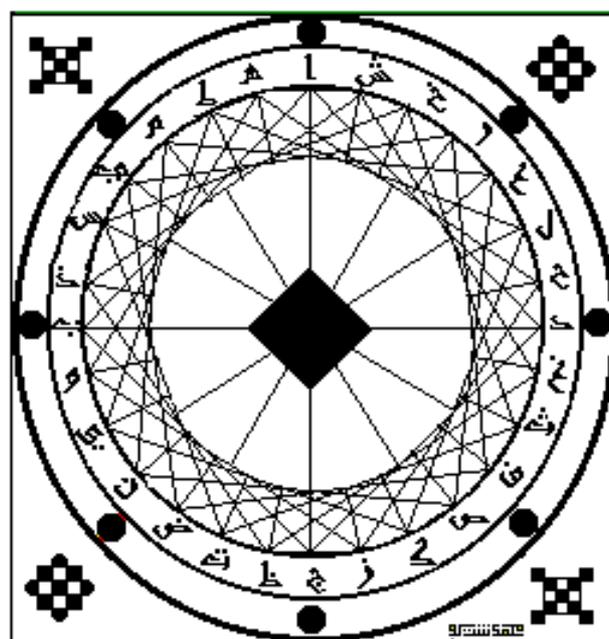
“His Days are those Self-Manifestations
Which are recognized by the trustworthy notables”

Explaining the meaning of this verse the poet said: “And the ‘Days of Allah’ are His Self-Manifestations and Appearances based upon the requirements of His Essence according to the multiplicities of Perfection. And for each of His Self-Manifestations, glory be to Him there is a Divine judgment which is indicated by the term ‘Affair’ (*sha`n*). And this particular judgment in existence is an affective influence suitable to that particular ‘Affair’. For, the differences of existence, I mean, its transformation in each time, for it is simply the affective influence of that particular Divine Affair.” The ‘Days’ of Allah, is a reality, an expression and a symbol of the Present Moment. Allah

ta'ala says: "Everyday He is in an Affair"; meaning that creation and sensate existence is simply the inundation and effulgence of the Affair and Actions of the Absolute Being as He manifest existence through His Names and Attributes from His Inestimable Holy Essence in every moment. These moments have their beginning, middle, end and renewal which all flow from the Present Moment of the Absolute Being, who is now as He was in pre-existence forever in a new affair. Everything is paired with its opposite; its non-existence and its existence; its inward and its outward; its high and its low; its past and its present; its first and its last and all the multiplicities of paired opposites which comprise the Affair of this complex universe. These affairs of paired opposites are the commands of His expanding and contracting actions, which manifest from His Majestic and Beautiful Names and Attributes, which are the manifestations of His Immutable Essence. The human who knows this is the 'son of His moment' (*ibn waqtih*) and experiences the Present Moment which is outside of time and place; and is the scission between non-existence and existence, the source of night and day and all the multiplicities of paired opposites. It is a vision of the world of particles; what some scientists describe as the world of 'dust particles' (*'aalim 'l-hibaa*). This comprehension and understanding is what our master Musa, upon him be peace experienced when he asked to see Allah ta'ala plainly and He responded by making a Self Disclosure upon the mountain, which threw Musa into a faint and everything including Musa saw itself as scattered dust particles. This is why Ibn 'Arabi asserted in his *al-Fuutuhaat*, that it is from Musa ibn 'Imraan, upon him be peace that the *awliyya* inherit this science of the Present Moment and the science of the coming forth by night and day. The 'son of his moment' (*ibn waqtih*) knows the time relative to all entities and has command over the moments that govern them. With him, day transforms to night and night transforms to day and he is aware of the emergence of the ten thousand paired opposites. After comprehension of the emergence of time and its reality, the poet, may Allah ta'ala be merciful to him cites the seventh of the eight sciences which comprise the greatest spiritual unveiling (*al-kashf 'l-akbar*). He said: "...then I entered into the *Ka'ba* of Secrets"; where the particle of conjunction (*harf 'l-'atf*) '*thumma*' (then) denotes sequential order (*tarteeb*) and chronological delay (*taraakhi*). This means that this seventh science is a result of the one before it and cannot be realized except after realization of the science prior to it. The poet again used the annexed first person singular pronoun in the expression '*dakhaltu*' (I entered). He employed this literary device, as I stated earlier, in order to draw attention to the fact that these levels of comprehension and awareness were experienced and not merely classified and identified. In order to understand what the poet, may Allah be merciful to him meant by the 'entering the *Ka'ba* of Secrets', let us first discuss the apparent meaning of the expression '*ka'ba*'. The *Ka'ba* in Mecca, also called the House of Allah (*Bayt Allah*) is attributed to Allah by attachment in the words of Allah ta'ala to His Bosom Friend, Ibrahim, upon him be peace: "And purify My House for those who circumambulate, those who stand, bow and prostrate." According to a sound prophetic tradition related by Muslim on the authority of Abu Dharr the *Ka'ba* is the first House established for mankind as a place of worship. Allah ta'ala says: "Verily the first House established for mankind is the one at Bakka the Blessed, and as guidance to the worlds. In it are clear signs, the station of Ibrahim. Whoever enters it he is protected. And for the sake of Allah, obligatory upon mankind is pilgrimage to the House." The majority of the scholars of *Qur'anic* exegesis say that the meaning of His words: "in it are clear signs"; is inside the sacred precincts surrounding the actual *Ka'ba* are clear sites around which the rites of pilgrimage

revolve; such as the *hijr*, the well of *zanzem*, *Safa* and *Marwa*, the *multazim*, and finally, in the sacred precincts exist the key sign of the third architect, builder and renovator of this House; “*the station of Ibrahim*”, the one who systematized the science of *tawhid* (Divine Unity) and conveyed a Way of life which was in harmony with all of creation. The meaning of His words: “*whoever enters it*”, that is to say, whoever enters the station of Ibrahim; or whoever enters the sacred precincts of Mecca; “*is protected*.” This means that whoever adheres to the Way of Ibrahim; or whoever prays in the site of the station of Ibrahim; or enters the sacred precincts of Mecca is protected spiritually, mentally, physically, lawfully and politically. This means that lawfully, no one can seize a person who has taken refuge within the sacred precinct. However, a minority of scholars of *Quranic* exegesis say that the references in the verse to ‘*it*’ when He says: “*In it are clear signs*”; and His words: “*Whoever enters it*” are referents to the House – the *Ka`ba* itself. That is to say, that inside the *Ka`ba* are clear signs and that whoever enters the *Ka`ba* is protected. *Shaykh al-Akbar* said in his *al-Fuutuhaat*: “Realize that Allah ta`ala has placed a treasure within the confines of the *Ka`ba*. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace desired to extract it and expend it, but it occurred to him that there was another matter the advantage of which he considered. Then after him, Umar wanted to extract this treasure for the people, but he too was prevented, following the example of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This treasure, thus remains there to the present... He, upon him be blessings and peace did not leave the treasure there as a disincentive. He only left it there so that it can be extracted by the one who will establish the command of Allah in the End of Time; ‘*who will fill the earth with equity and justice, as it has been filled with oppression and injustice*’.” Inside the *Ka`ba* is the center point around which all circumambulation, standing, bowing and prostration meet. This happens regularly five times daily in cocentric circles and waves which circle the globe. Thus, the center of the *Ka`ba* is the invisible point or axis around which time, place, movement and recurrence begins and ends. Just as Allah ta`ala has placed treasure within the *Ka`ba* that will be extracted for the benefit of mankind in the End of Time, similarly, Allah ta`ala has placed treasure in the hearts of His *awliyya* that will be extracted for the benefit of mankind in the End of Time. This is what the poet, Dan Tafa meant by: “entering the *Ka`ba* of Secrets”. Everything in time is a part of the wheel of time. The Present Moment is the invisible axis, pivot or moment, around which time spins, orbits, turns and rotates. This means realization of both the center of being and realization of all the limits of being. It is realization of Unique Unicity and diverse multiplicity simultaneously. It is seeing the body from the perspective of the heart, which by nature is its center with the four other organs [the lungs, the liver, the spleen and the kidneys] orbiting it like the orbits of the Two East and the Two West. These four attributes of worship are the four treasures that lay at the center of the *Ka`ba*. The fifth element which acts as the pivot of these four is purification (*tahaara*), whose root is water or its substitute. To experience this level of awareness of existence the heart must be purified in order for the four functions and energies to occur. It is in the heart that true worship begins and for this reason it is called the First House of GOD. Similarly, the physical heart is the central organ of interaction, and transformation, which regulates the circulatory system and delivers vitality and life to the rest of the body. The heart is the first of the organs just as the *Ka`ba* is the first House established for the worship of the Absolute Being. Allah ta`ala says: “*Allah bears witness that there is no deity except Him; and the Angels and those who possess knowledge also bear witness*.” What the poet, may

Allah be merciful to him meant by 'secrets' in his words: "*the Ka`ba of Secrets*"; is the point of Unicity where all the paired opposites collide and are negated and is referred to as the origin of existence like the navel indicates the origin of birth.. In this regard a tradition was related by `Ataa` who said: "It has reached me that the midpoint or navel of the earth is beneath the *Ka`ba*." Just as beneath the center of the *Ka`ba* lay the midpoint or navel of the earth, similarly, above the center of the *Ka`ba* above the seven heavens exists the Throne (*al-`arsh*) beyond which time dissolves and from which time and place emerge. Just as the *Ka`ba* is the locus of circumambulation standing, bowing and prostration of earthly creatures, similarly, the Throne of Allah ta`ala is the locus of the His glorification, exaltation, praise and worship from all beings. Allah ta`ala says: "*There surrounds the Throne those who glorify the praises of their Lord*"; in the same manner that Angels, *jinn*, human and other earthly creatures circle the *Ka`ba* in praise, glorification and exaltation of Allah. It is interesting that the idea of 'house' (*bayt*) in Arabic is associated with the concept of sleep or repose (*mubeet*) and night time; the time of intimate converse (*munaaja*) and a time about which the best of creation said: "...none of you know where his hand spent the night (*baata*)." This implies the visions and dreams of the world of sleep and repose, which the poet, will discuss in the next stnza. Thus, the entrance into the *Ka`ba* of secrets is related to night journeys and night visions, so replete in the lexicon of the *Qur'an* and *Sunna*. This admission and access opens up to the world of the secrets of existence as exemplified in highest symbol of existence – the THRONE of GOD; which brings us now to the eighth and final science of the greatest spiritual unveiling.



وَجَلَبْتُ أَيْضًا فِي عُلُومِ الْعَرْشِ فِي عَالِمِ النَّوْمِ بِغَيْرِ طَيْشٍ

And I also obtained the sciences of the Throne
In the world of sleep without any difficulty

وَكُلُّ ذَا حَقَائِقٍ قُدْسِيَّةٍ وَرُؤْيَا فِي النَّوْمِ لَا حِسِّيَّةٍ

Each of these sciences are from the sanctified realities
And from vision during sleep, not from the sensory⁶⁵

⁶⁵ As for the final of the eight sciences which comprise the greatest spiritual unveiling (*al-kashf 'l-akbar*), the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: “**And I also obtained the sciences of the Throne**”. The poet, may Allah ta`ala be merciful to him opened the stanza with the primary particle of conjunction (*asl huruuf'l-`atf*), the letter ‘waw’ (‘and’) connects the action of ‘obtaining’ (*jallaba*) with the action of ‘entering’ (*dukhuul*) in the previous stanza. He did this in order to indicate similarity, equivalence and correspondence. That is to say, that at the instance the *Ka`ba* of secrets is entered; access to an additional knowledge is gained. This is corroborated by the poet’s utilization of the expression ‘*aydaan*’ (also). This clearly indicates that this particular science is obtained as a result of the previous science or that its comprehension occurs simultaneously. That is to say, that the science of *Ka`ba* of secrets and the sciences of the Throne are concurrent and contemporaneous just as the physical *Ka`ba* is concomitant with the corporeal Throne of Allah above it. Again the poet opens the stanza with an annexed first person singular pronoun in the expression: ‘*jalabtu*’ (I obtained); in order to indicate that this science, like all the foregoing sciences, was experienced by the poet, and was not theoretical. This specifies that these sciences of ultimate secrets are ‘tasted’ (*dhaaqa*) as a part of the knowledge of experience (*ilm'd-dhawq*), can be transmitted and can be partly articulated. The verb ‘*jalaba*’ means ‘to attract’ (*jadhaba*), ‘to procure or obtain’ (*hasala*); like when you say: ‘*jalabtu as-shay' ila nafsiy*’ (*I procured the thing to myself*). The poet, may Allah be merciful to him, then makes a genitive prepositional phrase the object of the verb (*maf'uul*), by using the genitive particle ‘*fee*’, in his words: ‘*fee uluumi'l-`arsh*’ ([in/from] the sciences of the Throne). *Imam* an-Nafrawi said in his commentary upon the *al-Ajurumiyya*: “The meaning of the particle ‘*fee*’ is adverbial and infers ‘enveloping/enclosing’ (*dharfiyya*), like when you say: ‘*al-maa' fee l-kawz*’ (The water is in the glass).” Thus, the genitive particle ‘*fee*’ indicates a share or portion of an entirety. It was as if the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, is telling us that the sciences of the Throne are innumerable, and that he himself realized only part of these; or he obtained the fundamentals of all of them in general. This science was nevertheless, one of the sciences that were exclusively disclosed to the perfected saints of the *Fudiawa*; and which will be disclosed to the rest of humanity by the awaited *Imam al-Mahdi* I discussed at length the linguistic, legal and numinous interpolations of the expression ‘Throne’ (*arsh*) in footnote 45 where reference was made to the Throne as the sixteenth of the nineteen sensory realities (*haqaa'iq hisiyya*) which are the first manifestation of the orbit of forms (*falak 'l-ashkaal*). I demonstrated there that the diverse meanings of this concept when we examine it from its linguistic/etymological vocabulary; its legal view; its theological/religious perspective or from the meticulous and incandescent perception of the Knowers of Allah, denote that the sciences of the Throne, like its fundamental outward form, are immeasurable. Consequently, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him designated the inestimable extent of the sciences of the Throne by his use of the expression ‘*uluum*’

(sciences) using the plural to indicate multiplicity. All that I can say about these sciences, I said in footnote 45. This science, along with the seven other sciences, comprises the wisdom with which the Absolute Being (*al-Haqq*) distinguished the *Fudiawa* from the remainder of the *awliyya* of the world. In my own travels throughout the *bilad's-sudan* and those regions just south of them, I encountered examples of this intergenerational transmission of esoteric sciences. In all my interviews with the scholars and saints of the *Fudiawa*, (from Tokar on the Red Sea coast; to Maiurno on the Blue Nile of Sudan; to the western steppes of Jabbal Marra; to the northern hills of Kadugli; to Agadez; to Sokoto; to Gwandu; to Niki along the northeastern coast of Benin) they all demonstrated awareness of the fundamental meanings of the mystical terms cited in this section of the poem. Unfortunately, few of these sages were willing or able to adequately divulge their understanding of these terms, and those that did comprehend them articulated the fundamentals without disclosing details. Even the three sages: *Shaykh* Abu Bakr Basambu, *Shaykh* Muhammad Bello ibn Abdallahi and *Shaykh* Umar ibn Ahmad Zaruq refused to reveal more than what was already said by the *awliyya* about these sciences. It was as if they had a superbly manufactured machine, but only knew a small fraction of its vast utilities. Thus, the poet said at the onset of this section of the poem that these eight sciences were: "...the Sciences of the Greatest Unveiling which no one except us have craved for and which none will disclose except the *Muhammadan* Seal, who is the *Mahdi*, upon him be peace." If anything, this claim constructs for the *Fudiawa* an exclusivity of knowledge which helps them define an identity construct for themselves which is not only historical in its view but forward looking as well. It legitimizes them as a community of sages connected to the finality of the seal of Muhammadan sages in the person of *Imam* Muhammad ibn Abdallah al-Mahdi al-Muntadhar; and connects them also to the finality and remnant of '*nabuwwa*' (prophethood) – designated in the use of the true dream (*ru'yaa saadiq*) as the elemental conduit for the transmission of these sciences. The poet, may Allah be merciful to him substantiated this by his words: **"...in the world of sleep without any difficulty."** This means that these eight sciences or the last of them was obtained and transmitted through the dream visions of sleep. *Shaykh* Umar ibn Ahmad Zaruq said that all of the eight sciences cited in this section of the poem were obtained through the medium of dream vision. *Shaykhs* Abu Bakr Basambu asserted that this statement by the poet refers to all the sciences of spiritual unveiling (*'ilm 'l-makaashifaat*). This view is the soundest view as the poem will attest. However, Muhammad Bello ibn Abdullahi said that all of the sciences be they inward esoteric sciences or outward exoteric sciences can be known, verified and transmitted through the conduit of dream vision. Thus, the poet's stipulation refers to the last two sciences of the eight sciences. He added that the referent for *Shaykh* Dan Tafa's words: '...in the world of sleep...' are the last two sciences of the eight sciences of the great unveiling. While all the sciences can be obtained through the medium of the dream; the science of the *Ka'ba* of Secrets and the sciences of the Throne are acquired exclusively through the medium of sleep. It is for this reason that the poet, wisely stated that these last two sciences are connected to the 'House of Allah' (*bayt Allah*), which take its origin from the verb '*baata*' (to spend the night; to be in a continuous situation). Thus, 'a house' (*bayt*) is a place where people stay overnight and sleep (*baata*). It is a place of domestic intimacy and family privacy, where secrets are disclosed and divulged. Ideally, it is in the home during sleep that dreams are seen. Aristotle described dreams as: "...an activity of the faculty of sense perception, but

belongs to this faculty *qua presentative*.” That is to say, dreams are representations of the sensory which leave an affect in the sensory during sleep and carries with them symbolic meaning. This is fascinating because it connects the highest systems of the *Fudiawa* epistemology to the very genesis of ‘prophecy’ (*nubuwwa*) and it’s only remaining remnant – the True Dream. It is well known among the scholars of the *Sunna* that revelation began for Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace with the true dream (*ru’yaa saadiq*). Thus, the highest level of comprehension for the *awliyya* is the commencement of Divine comprehension for the Prophets, upon them be blessings and peace. The ‘true dream’ (*ru’ya saadiq*) is the locus where prophecy (*nabuwwa*) and sagehood (*wilaaya*) convene. In his most courageous work on the science of dream visions, the Muqaddima Fee `Ilm al-Maraa’iya (The Introduction Regarding the Science of Dream Visions), the poet said: “Allah ta’ala says: ‘*For them is the Good News in this lower life and in the Hereafter.*’ The scholars of exegesis have said: ‘This means the righteous dream in this lower life and Divine accompaniment in the Hereafter.’ The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: ‘The righteous dream is a 46th part of prophecy.’ He, upon him be peace said: ‘Whoever does not believe in the righteous dream, does not believe in Allah and the Last Day.’ Whenever the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace used to complete the evening prayer he would say: ‘Did any of you see a dream vision in the night?’ He used to also say: ‘Nothing of prophecy will remain after me except the righteous dream.’ For he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace used to always interpret dreams for the people; as did the Companions after him; and the *Taabi`uun* after them. Yusef (Joseph), the prophet upon him be peace was an interpreter of dreams; who said: ‘*That is what my Lord has taught me.*’ Note: The instruments which are advantageous in given proper interpolation of dreams are: the *Qur’an* and Its like (from other heavenly Scriptures); the prophetic traditions; and the speech of the Arabs and its like (from other languages) which convey symbolic meaning.” The highest of the true dreams is to see the Absolute Being or His Messenger, upon him be blessings and peace. Our master, *Shaykh* Muhy’d-Deen Abd ‘l-Qaadir al-Jaylani, may Allah be merciful to him said in his Fat’hu ‘r-Rabbaani: “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 hands come 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.” The Spiritual Falcon, may Allah sanctify his secret demarcated that the means of having the highest dream visions is inexorably connected to the extent to which one has annihilated oneself into the self-form of the *Sunna*. He infers that the illumination of one’s sleep is a mirror reflection of the illumination of one’s actions and deeds. The poet, Dan Tafa, himself, composed the his Bayaan ‘t-Ta`abudaat, delineating the legal status in Islam of dream visions citing verified prophetic traditions and other sources, in order to establish that the true dream is a lawful source for transmission; and in some realms and circumstances remain the only source of transmission. In it he said: “It is well known and accepted that the excellent dream is a conduit for transmission for the people of righteousness. This has been corroborated by the Book and the

Sunna. Rather, it is also a conduit for those who are not righteous as well; as it can be seen in the story of the King of Egypt; the dream of the victory of Talut; the dream regarding the call to prayer, and other than these. In that case, the dream vision of the believer is even more substantial. It has been related by the two *Shaykhs* on the authority of Anas, may Allah be pleased with him that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: ‘The dream vision of the believer is a 64th part of prophecy’. It has been related by Ibn Maja on the authority of Abu Sa`id, may Allah be pleased with him; going back to the Prophet (*marfu`an*): ‘The dream vision of a righteous Muslim man is a 70th part of prophecy’. It has been related by at-Tabarani on the authority of al-Abass, may Allah be pleased with him that he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: ‘The dream vision of the righteous believer is good news from Allah, and it is a 50th part of prophecy’. It has been related by at-Tirmidhi on the authority of Abu Razeen that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: ‘The dream vision of the believer is a 40th part of prophecy; and it is upon a flying foot as long as it is not divulged. When it is divulged, it falls. Thus, do not divulge dreams to anyone except to someone intelligent and beloved’. It has been related by at-Tabarani and ad-Diyaa on the authority of Ubaada ibn as-Samit, that he upon him be peace said: ‘The dream vision of the believer is the genuine speech by which the servant speaks to his Lord during sleep’. It has been related by Ibn Maja on the authority of Umm Karza al-Kufi who said: ‘I once heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace say: ‘Prophecy has gone. There only remain dreams announcing good news’. It has also been related by Ibn Maja on the authority of Ubaada ibn as-Samit who said: ‘I once asked the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace regarding the words of Allah ta`ala ‘for them is Good News in the life of this world and in the Hereafter’; and he said: ‘These are the righteous dreams which the Muslim sees, or which are shown to him’. It has also been related by Ibn Maja on the authority of Ibn Abass who said: ‘The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace opened the curtain from his home during his final sickness; and the people at that time were standing in ranks behind Abu Bakr; and said: ‘O mankind, nothing remains from the Good News of prophecy except the righteous dream vision which a Muslim sees or is shown to him’. *Shaykh* Abd`l-Wahaab as-Sha`rani said in his *Lataa`f `l-Manan*: ‘My spiritual master Ali al-Khawaas once said: ‘These events which occur to humanity in their sleep are forces from the forces of Allah, by which He strengthens the faith of the dreamer in the Unseen, if the person is deserving of that; even though this could be considered a deficiency regarding the right of belief.’ He used to also say: ‘Only a person ignorant would take for granted what he sees in his sleep. Most of what the believer sees in his sleep is a part of the revelation of Allah (*wahyi Allah*) which comes on the tongue of an Angel of dream inspiration (*malak `l-`ilhaam*).’” The poet, may Allah be merciful to him clearly establishes the veracity of dream visions as a conduit for the transmission of knowledge in Islam. Sleep to the prophets and *awliyya* is not like the sleep of the common people. It is the world of the ‘*khiyaal*’ which is capable of encompassing dream visions and providing them with meanings. In his *Kashaf`l-Ghita`*, the poet said: “Then realize that all that the sleeper sees during his sleep are similitudes from a commissioned Angel responsible for transmitting it to him. The traditionist Jalal`d-Deen as-Suyuti said in his *al-Habaa`ik Fee Akhbaar al-Malaa`ik*: ‘The issue which al-Qurtubi narrated from some of the people of knowledge that Allah ta`ala has an Angel responsible for showing dream visions in the locus of comprehension for the one sleeping. It, thus, formulates for him excellent

forms. Sometimes they take shape in accordance with the actual form it has in existence. Sometimes they take the shape of intelligible meanings (*ma`an ma`quula*). Sometimes they take the shape of the two circumstances, in order to either announce good news or warn.’ Al-Qurtubi said: ‘It is required regarding that transmitted from the Angel to verify it from the premise of the Lawgiver.’ I say: the like of this has been cited by the author of the al-Fuutuhaat`l-Makiyya where he discussed this at length. The interpolations given by the Prophet and his Companions for dreams seen while sleep, are issues that are well known in the *Sunnan*. Similarly, this has been well documented in the exegesis of dreams composed by Ibn Sireen.“ In his Muqaddima Fee `Ilm al-Maraa`iya the poet said: “Realize that sleep is an expression referring to the return of the sense perceptions directing themselves to the world of the sensory. These then enter the interior of the heart by means of an ascending mist to the brain. There then emerges natural events in a locus of appearance called the ‘*khiyaal*’ (conceptualized vision) in the anterior of the brain; where the forms of living things take shape in that locus of appearance. Thus, every type of sensory perception which thought has substantiated is seen. What is understood from this is that the ‘*khiyaal*’ (conceptualized vision) is an interjecting realm between the world of meanings and the sensory world. A part of its judgment and wisdom is that in it every meaning takes corporeal form as its substitute. This rule is unvarying in all existence, be it necessary existent, possible existent or impossible existent. There descends in it meanings clothed in the form of similitudes, which in reality have no fixidity at the same time. When these imaginary forms are not corroborated by the sensory; or when these result from the suggestions of the lower self; then these are confused dreams that have no judgment in the world of dream interpolation. As for what humanity knows to be in his soul and he has sought the good in it; then he will see it in his sleep. This type of vision is not from confused dreams, but rather from genuine knowledge transmission; so understand.” The poet goes on to describe in this concise work how meanings descend and take on corporeal form in the ‘*khiyaal*’. In footnote 43, I discussed at length the world of the ‘*khiyaal*’ (conceptualized vision) and how sleep for the illuminated is a realm for the transmission of knowledge. In the Muqaddima, the poet discusses the symbiotic relationship between the animal soul (*nafs hayawaani*) and the corporeal forms (*haykal jasmaani*) during sleep; and the resemblance of this state to death. He demarcates the physical, emotional and spiritual advantages of the world of sleep to the heart. He said: “Realize that a human is never afflicted with good or evil except that he sees it in his dream before it actually occurs. This is based upon the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace who said: ‘There is no one except that he sees in his sleep what he will see in the waking state. Among you are those who know it, and those who are ignorant of it’.” The poet described his chief spiritual master, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, as having transformed the world of sleep into a virtual university of knowledge, from which he became thoroughly acquainted with the sciences of the Unseen and the meticulous details of faith. In this realm, *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu sat with the prophets of old, the Companions and many of the scholars and sages of the past and took knowledge directly from them. The poet asserted that this maternal uncle and chief spiritual master actually had a tenured professorship in this realm in which he conducted assemblies in advanced esoteric sciences and metaphysics to the men of the Unseen and *jinn*, alike. This form of spiritual comprehension is the essence of what Chinese sages call ‘*wu wei*’ (no action); where the servant is in the most in-active of actions – sleep. Yet in this state the servant receives his most illuminating, pragmatic

spiritual unveilings. In his al-'Uhuud wa'l-Mawaathiq, the poet asserted: "I have taken an oath and covenant not to search into the Unseen by means of divination, soothsaying, astrology, or any of the baseless occult sciences. Yet, independent of these sciences, I have procured knowledge of the unseen by means of the true dream (*ru'ya saadiq*). For nothing has occurred in these times except that I have seen it effortlessly in my dream before it actually occurred." The last assertion is almost an exact quote of the stanza where he said: '...without any difficulty.' Thus, to the sages of the *Fudiawa* in general, and to the poet in particular, the realm of sleep was the clearest and soundest realm of transmission of knowledge. Again in his Muqaddima Fee 'Ilm al-Maraa'iyah, the poet describes the best methodology in attaining the most advantageous dream visions. He discloses the most preeminent seasons for dreams and the seasons which are the least favorable. He delineated the times of the night or day in which the most auspicious dreams are seen and how long after these dreams will they actually be experienced in the waking state. For example, he said: "Whoever sees a dream vision during the pre-dawn (*sahr*), will have to wait no longer than six years or less for that vision to actually occur." On Saturday morning around 3:45 a.m. 'sahr' time June 29, 2002, I had an auspicious dream about the Beloved Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. In this dream, I was the representative of the African American Muslim national minority and I was discussing confederation with a representative of the Anglo American Muslim national minority. In it, I actually formulated a confederation with the Hui Muslims national minorities of China and the Muslims of Africa. In it I encountered the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace who requested that I recite portions of the *Qur'an* to him; which I did. This dream occurred about three months after our *jama'at* and UMMA registered our joint confederation with United Nations Commission on Human Rights. For a long time I was oblivious of the meaning of this dream. I was simply so overjoyed at seeing the beautiful luminous face of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, that I overlooked the events of the dream. Because, in exactly three years, I was forced to emigrate to China and had the honor of residing among the vibrant Hui Muslim national minorities throughout the country. One year later, the People's Republic of China convened its Sino-Africa Accord, where I had the chance to meet many African diplomats, statemen, businessmen, academics and laymen. Among these African thinkers were many Muslims, with whom I discussed the need for Africans to recognize the right of African American Muslims to internal self determination within the US under international observance and supervision. All this occurred within three to four years after I had my dream vision of the Prophet; just as the poet, may Allah be merciful to him stipulated in his Muqaddima. This scientific approach to sleep, the world of dreams and spiritual transmission was a method of comprehension unique to the *Fudiawa*; and would be crystallized and openly transmitted by the Awaited *Imam al-Mahdi*. It was through the medium of the dream vision that the sages of the *Fudiawa* obtained their highest forms of spiritual unveiling. It is for this reason that the poet ended this section of the poem with his words: "**Each of these sciences are from the sanctified realities...**", i.e., symbolic knowledge. Although, I discussed at length the concept of '*haqaa'iq*' (the realities) as the term was used by the Muslim sages, it is important here to fortify this concept within the hermeneutics of the African esoteric mind. The '*haqeeqa*' (reality) of a thing is the deeper meaning or purpose that defines that thing. The ancient Egyptian sages referred to this form of symbolic mode of thinking as '*medu neteru*' - (vital principles conveyed by signs). Thus, the immediate gnosis which the symbols – the Primordial

فَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي بِحَمْدِهِ تَتِمُّ فِيْنَا صَالِحَاتِ رَفْدِهِ

So, all praises are due to Allah who by means of His praise
Has perfected in us the righteousness of His divine support

ثُمَّ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ سَرْمَدًا عَلَى النَّبِيِّ الْهَاشِمِيِّ أَحْمَدَ

Then blessings and peace eternally
Be upon the Haashimi Prophet Ahmad

وَأَلِيهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَكُلِّ مَنْ بِنُورِهِ أَهْتَدَى عَلَى مَرِّ الزَّمَنِ

And upon his family, Companions and everyone who
By means of his light is guided throughout the ages

Pen, the Guarded Tablet, the Throne, the Footstool etc. indicate the interactions between the Absolute Being and the Perfect Human – Muhammad ibn Abdallah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This symbolic knowledge cannot be negotiated through reasoned discourse but emerges in the heart of the illumined sage, as the poet said: “...**from vision during sleep...**” Here, he refers to all the sciences of the Divine realities that he cited in this last section of the poem. He referred to them as ‘sanctified realities’, using the adjective ‘*qudsiyya*’ (immutable/invulnerable/sanctified/holy) to acknowledge their source which is from the overflowing of the Absolute Being in the realm of sleep. The poet negated these immutable sciences from ever being realized through sensory perception by his words: “...**not from the sensory.**” Only the human spirit (*ruuh*) can access this realm of cognition, and it is forever inaccessible to cerebral intelligence; which by its very nature cannot envisage qualitative abstract thought disengaged from a concrete image. It is for this reason that, both the Perfect Human and the best human community are described in the *Qur’an* as being ‘*ummi*’/‘*ummuyuun*’ (unlettered). This does not mean ‘illiterate’ as some scholars define it, but it refers to what ancient Egyptians sages referred to as ‘the intelligence of the heart’, where everything in creation is seen as an ‘*ayat*’ (sign) for the ‘*haqaa’iq*’ (realities). The grandfather of the poet, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` explains this in his *Hisn’l-Afhaam Min Juyush al-Awhaam*: “Haluuli said: ‘Ibn Rushd and others narrated that the attainment of direct knowledge of Allah (*ma`arifa*) is not designated by the path of the scholastic theologians.’” This means that the ‘*haqaa’iq*’ cannot be understood through cerebral intelligence, through the medium of sensory perception, or through any form of speculative philosophy. It’s domain of comprehension is the world of sleep. The poet acknowledged that he had expanded upon a system of sleep illumination that had been inherited from his maternal uncle, Muhammad Sanbu and maternal grandparents, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` and *Iyya Gharka* A`ishatu Ghabindu bint *Shaykh* Muhammad Sa`d. Both the *Shehu* and his son, Muhammad Sanbu, narrated in poetry and prose that their spiritual unveilings came to them from the niche of *mahdiyya*. Thus, we have the intentional transmission of an advanced spiritual method cutting across seven generations going back to *Shaykh* Aal ibn Muhammad Jubba and his brother *Shaykh* Muhammad Ghurtu. This intergenerational spiritual tradition was aware of itself, self correcting and dialoguing with itself, to the extent that by the mid 19th century, it had crystallized into a ‘guild’, which had a clear eye on the future trends that would lead to the appearance of the *IMAM* in the End of Time.

تمت وبالله التوفيق

It is complete and success is with Allah⁶⁶

⁶⁶ The poet, *Shaykh* Dan Tafa, may Allah be merciful to him and grant us with his *baraka*, closed this poem with four stanzas which sum up the entire objective of this song. He said: “**So, all praises are due to Allah who by means of His praise has perfected in us the righteousness of His divine support**”. The poet ends the *Shukr'l-Waahib* in the same manner as he began it, with the praises to Allah. He infers by this that the poem was originally composed as a form of praise and gratitude to Allah for this blessing, since continuity and persistence in all its domains are dependent upon giving thanks and praises. The author made the act of praising and thanking Allah ta`ala the secret (*sirr*) of the poem where he said: “So, all praises are due to Allah who, by means of His praise, has completed and perfected in us the righteousness of His divine support.” This secret reveals that the essence of the blessings of spiritual unveiling which the *Fudiawa* attained and transmitted over seven generations was a result of being in a constant state of praise and gratitude to Allah. The poet defines this ‘divine support’ as the perfection and completion of the sciences of *Iman*, *Islam* and *Ihsan* in the sages of *Fudiawa*. He repeatedly utilizes the first person plural to indicate: [1] that this unmediated knowledge was transmitted via an intergenerational chain of spiritual guides (*murshid*); and [2] that this intergenerational epistemology or system of spiritual transmission was specific to a bounded ethnicity, making this canon of knowledge apart of their historical consciousness and identity construct. When the poet uses ‘we’, he is referring to the sages of the *Fudiawa* in general; from their common ancestor – *Shaykh* Musa Jokolli, to their progenitor – *Shaykh* Aal ibn Muhammad Jubba, including *Fuduye`* Muhammad ibn Uthman and his offsprings – *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` and *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye`. More importantly, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him, makes reference to his grandmother *Iyya Gharka* A`ishatu Ghabindu bint *Shaykh* Muhammad Sa`d, his father *Shaykh* Mustafa ibn Muhammad, his mother Khadijatu bint *Shehu* Uthman; but more specifically his maternal uncle the illuminated sage *Shaykh* Muhammad Sanbu ibn *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`. The poet’s use of the first person plural throughout the *Shukr'l-Waahib* denotes that there was a conscious preservation and diffusion of a canon of knowledge and metaphysics which represented both a collective and communicative memory for the *Fudiawa*. This intergenerational historical consciousness embraced the broadest realm of Islamic epistemology and mysticism. This identity construct consisted of three integral factors without which it could not and cannot persist: [1] knowledge (*ilm*); [2] saintliness (*wilaayat*); and [3] sovereignty (*khilaafa*). Each of these factors supported one another in a symbiotic liaison which gave birth to a rearward and forward looking spiritual/secular government which saw itself as the herald and final link to the appearance of the Seal of the Muhammadan Saints (*al-Mahdi*) and the heavenly descent of the Seal of the Universal Saints (Jesus the son Mary). Thus, the identity construct of the *Fudiawa* as illustrated in the *Shukr'l-Waahib* and exemplified in the three treasures of knowledge; saintliness and sovereignty given to the sages of the entire ethnicity; guaranteed their persistence. This premeditated historical consciousness revolved around being in a constant state of praise (*al-hamd*) and gratitude (*as-shukr*); and cannot be perfected except through showing gratitude for the causative factors of His blessings reaching us. There is no causative factor (*asbaab*) more advantageous to us and the whole of creation than the advantage granted us

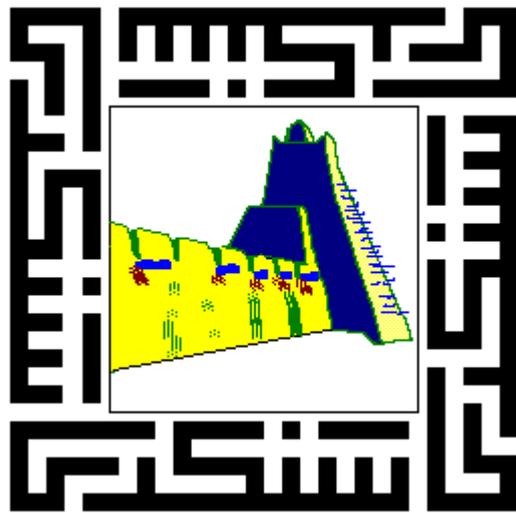
through the Beloved Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. It is for this reason, the poet, may Allah be merciful to him said: “**Then blessings and peace eternally be upon the Haashimi Prophet Ahmad.**” The poet utilized the particle of conjunction ‘*thumma*’ (then) which denotes sequential order (*tarteeb*) and chronological delay (*taraakhi*); in order to infer that concomitant with praise and gratitude to Allah ta`ala; is commendation and appreciation for the secondary causes (*asbaab*). Here the poet evokes the eternal blessings and peace from Allah ta`ala which is eternal with His Eternity upon the Master of the Messengers, our chief Muhammad, who is the first breaking of the dawn of the lights of Divine Oneness; the first appearance of the sun of the secrets of Lordship; the splendid full moon of the eternal divine realities; the bridegroom of the presence of universal compassion; the essential light and radiance of every Messenger; the fundamental secret and guidance of every Prophet; the quintessence and core of every *wali*; and the impetus and zeal of every *saalih*. Likewise the illuminations of the Living *Sunna* could never have reached us without those who inherited the spiritual states and stations of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, from among his pure family, Companions and *awliyya*. For this reason the poet, may Allah be merciful to him showed his gratitude for the subsequent causative factors by whom the blessings of Allah ta`ala reached us; in his words: “**And upon his family, Companions...**” who are the oceans of the illuminations of Allah, the mines of His secrets, the translators of His proofs, the bridegrooms of His kingdom, the treasures of His mercy, the paths to His sacred law; and who take pleasure in His direct witnessing. The poet, may Allah ta`ala be merciful to him included in his recognition of the causative factors for the blessings of Allah; the perfected *awliyya* in every age, by his words: “**...and everyone who by means of his light is guided throughout the ages.**” This is a direct reference to the 124,000 *awliyya* in every age who inherit the character, *sunnan* and spiritual stations of the Beloved Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This inheritance is the property of the right acting scholars who guide humanity by the light of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace until that unfortunate day when there will be no one on earth who says: ‘There is no deity except Allah, Muhammad is the messenger of Allah’. The poet ended with the words: “**It is complete and success is with Allah.**” This means that the **Shukr’l-Waahib al-Mufeda’l-Mawaahib** (Showing Gratitude to the Benefactor for the Divine Overflowing Given to Those He Favors) composed in sixty seven stanzas by the mystic, the poet, the *amir*, and academic dean, *Shaykh* Abd’l-Qadir ibn Mustafa ibn Muhammad at-Turuudi ibn Ibrahim ibn Musa ibn Uthman ibn `Aal was completed, (according to the scholars of Arewa in Nigeria and those of Maiurno in Sudan), during the last years of his life between the years of 1280/1862 and 1283/ 1864; and Allah ta`ala knows best. Here ends folio 4. With its ending I have completed my commentary, which I called: **’Ilaawat’l-Muttaalib Fee Shukr’l-Waahib al-Mufeda’l-Mawaahib** (The Increase of the Aspirant in Gratitude of the Benefactor for the Divine Overflowing Given to Those He Favors); with the praise of Allah, and the best of His success. I completed it in sixty-six footnotes in concurrence with the numerical value of the Majestic name ALLAH, tabaraka wa ta`ala; after sunrise on Saturday, the 11th of *Safar*, 1435 A.H. (December 14, 2013); in the city of Cotonou, Benin in West Africa. It was twenty-seven years ago when I was first presented this resplendent poem by one of the poet’s descendents on the Blue Nile. After reading it, I realized that its author had condensed into sixty-seven poetic verses the entire mediated and unmediated epistemology of Islam as it was articulated by the *Fudiawa*

sages throughout their long history. This achievement alone indicated that spiritual excellence (*ihsaan*), direct gnosis (*ma'arif*), and the greatest spiritual unveilings (*mukaashifaat*) were apart of the mystical secrets which had been passed among them from generation to generation. I recall reading this poem with my spiritual guide *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Amin ibn Adam Kari`annga, and asking him to make supplication to Allah that He grant me openings in this text. It is fitting that He allowed me to complete this work after my repatriation back to Africa as a sign of the acceptance of my *hijra*. I ask Allah ta`ala: to illuminate the burial place of *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir ibn Mustafa with the Lights of His Pleasure and Contentment and to make us inherit his gnosis and spiritual states. O Allah bless the descendents of *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qadir wherever they are: in Salame`, Arewa, Sokoto, Wurno, Kano, Maiurno and the Hijaz and make them be examples of the persistence of the wisdom/practice promulgated by the *Fudiawa*. 'Glory be to Allah above what they associate with Him and peace be upon the messengers and all praises are due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.'



SANKORE'

SANKORE'



Institute of Islamic-African Studies International

Institute of Islamic-African Studies International