

SANKORE'



Institute of Islamic - African Studies International

'Uddat'l-Fuqara'



The Groundwork of the Impoverished

Part 2

Institute of Islamic-African Studies International

by

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Institute of Islamic-African Studies International

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ
وَعَلَى وَحْيِهِ وَوَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا الْعَبْدُ الْيَقِينُ الْمُتَضَرِّعُ
لِرَفِيقِ رَبِّهِ عُثْمَانُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ يُتَابِعُ الْمَعْرُوفَ قَابَلِيَّةً
بِوَدَى تَعْمُدُ عَلَى مِرْقَتِهِ أَمِينُ الْعَمَلِ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَأَفْضَلُ الصَّلَاةِ وَأَتَمُّ التَّسْلِيمِ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى
آلِهِ وَحِبِّهِ أَجْمَعِينَ وَرَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنِ السَّادَاتِ
التَّابِعِينَ وَالْعُلَمَاءِ الْعَامِلِينَ وَالْأَيْمَةِ الذَّرِيْعَةِ الْمُحْتَفِدِينَ
وَمَقَلِدِيهِمُ الرَّبُّوْمِ الدِّيْنِيَّامَا بَعْدَ وَهَذَا كِتَابِي عَمْدَتِي
الْعُلَمَاءِ تَابِعِي أَشْهَاءَ اللَّهِ لَمَّا عَوْلَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَنَا سَمِيئَةٌ
عَمْدَتِي الْعُلَمَاءِ لِحَامَا أوردنا فيه الآء آيات الكتاب
وأحاديث السنة وهما معتمد بعمر في اجتهداه
وأستنبطاهم والده الك وبقوا للصوابه انه كل
من تمسك بها لن ينزل وفي الموكه فالصلى الله
عليه وسلم تركت فيكم أمرين لا تغفلوا منهما فمخ

Folio 1 from Umdat'l-'Ulama of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` photographed from the archives of Haedara Muhammad of the blessed city of Tinbuktu

SANKORE'

'Uddat'l-Fuqara

**The Groundwork of the
Impoverished**

Part 2

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The Text
CHAPTER ONE

An Explanation of the *Deen of al-Islam* and the Division of Its Sciences

I say, and success is with Allah and may you and I be among the successful: realize that the *deen* which Muhammad may Allah bless him and grant him peace came with has its foundations (*uṣūl*) and its branches (*furu`u*). As for its foundations, it is **al-imaan** and the science that verifies *al-imaan* is the foundation of the *deen* (*uṣūl d-deen*). As for its branches, it is divided into two an outward branch and an inward branch. As for its outward branch, it is **al-islam** and the science that verifies *al-islam* is the science of the law (*ilm 'l-shari`a*). As for the inward branch, it is **al-ihsaan** and the science that verifies *al-ihsaan* is the science of the reality (*ilm 'l-haqiqa*).

Hence, **al-imaan**, **al-islam**, and **al-ihsaan** comprise the religion in its entirety. He may Allah bless him and grant him peace said about that speaking to his Companions “Verily it was Jibril. He came to teach you your *deen*.” This was said after he was asked about its reality and he may Allah bless him and grant him peace explained it: as it was related in Saheeh Muslim. In the narration of Imam al-Bukhari it says, “That was Jibril. He came to teach humanity their *deen*.”

These three sciences verify the sciences of the *deen* (*ulum'd-deen*). And it is these sciences that were intended by his words may Allah bless him and grant him peace as related in the tradition of Ibn Maja “Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim.” And what is meant by this knowledge is only the science of behavior (*ulum'l-mu`amila*) as the scholars (may Allah be pleased with them) have said. The behavior that we have been made responsible for is divided into three parts tenets (*al-`itiqad*): doing (*fi`il*): and avoiding (*tark*). These three sciences that we have been made responsible for are understood by **al-imaan**, **al-islam**, and **al-ihsaan**: the first by the first, the second by the second and the third by the third.

Success is with Allah.



SANKORE'

'Uddat'l-Fuqara

'Ala Tareeq'l-Aṣfiya fee Sharh 'Ala 'Umdat'l-'Ulama

The Groundwork of the Impoverished

Upon the Path of the Purified Regarding a Commentary Upon the Support of the

Scholars

Part 2

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**In the name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful, there is no power nor might
besides Allah the Exalted the Mighty**

All praises are due to Allah the Lord of the worlds. Blessings and peace be upon the master of the Messengers and seal of the Prophets, Muhammad, the unlettered prophet, and upon his pure family and excellent Companions.

Says the poor needy servant of the mercy of his Magnificent Lord, Abu Alfa` `Umar Muhammad Shareef bin Farid, may Allah ta`ala forgive him, his parents, family, children, teachers, their teachers and all those who follow them in spiritual excellence until the Day of Judgment. To continue: this is the second part regarding the commentary upon the 'Umdat'l-'Ulama called:

The Groundwork of the Impoverished Upon the Path of the Purified

I say, and success is with Allah, the reviver of the religion and the *sunna*, the *Imam* of the *awliyya*, the light of the age, the reformer of the religion, the *Amir'l-Mu'mineen Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, said, may Allah be merciful to him: “**CHAPTER ONE**”, that is to say, it is the first part or the first section; because the expression ‘*baab*’ (chapter) means part, and section. Its plural is ‘*abwaab*’. The expression chapter is in the nominative case due to it being the subject; and the sign of its nominative case is the apparent *damma* at its ending. The expression ‘*awwal*’ (one) is the adjective of the subject; and it is also in the nominative case because the adjective follows the inflection of the noun it describes whether it is nominative, accusative, genitive, definite or indefinite; as Ibn `Ajurum said in his introductory work on grammar.

The *Shehu* said, may Allah be merciful to him: “**on an explanation**”, that is to say, on an explanation of chapter one. Its concern is the disclosure and bringing to light of the essential nature of the religion; because the meaning of the expression ‘*bayaan*’ (explanation) is to clarify or bring to light with intelligence. It is principally, the disclosure of the objective of a thing using the most eloquent expressions. Allah ta`ala says: “*This is an explanation to mankind*”; which means that this *Qur`an* is what clarifies to mankind the evil results of what they are upon in denying the Truth. Thus, the meaning of ‘explanation’ in this particular verse is the disclosure of that which is completely lacking of guidance and it is a warning specifically directed to people in general, although its apparent expression includes those who have fearful awareness as well. Accordingly, the meaning of ‘explanation’ here in the context of this work is the disclosure of the essential nature of the religion.

The *Shehu*, said, may Allah be merciful to him: “**...of the Deen of al-Islam**”; that is to say, the religion that has abrogated all the other religions. The meaning of the expression ‘*deen*’ in Arabic is ‘*jazaa*’ (recompense). Allah ta`ala says: “*He is the King of the Day of Recompense (maliki yawm`d-deen)*”; i.e. the King of the Day of compensation; and means the Day of Divine reward and Divine punishment. This is a direct reference to the Day of Judgment. It is from this meaning that the Arabs say ‘The way you act (*tadeen*) is the way you will be compensated (*tudaan*).’ Another meaning of the expression ‘*deen*’ is ‘*milla*’ (way of life). Allah ta`ala says: “*Indeed the religion (deen) with Allah is Islam, and those given the Book did not differ except after knowledge came to them; as a form of enmity between them. Whoever denies the clear signs of Allah; indeed Allah is swift in reckoning.*” He also says: “*Whoever desires other than Islam as a way of life (deen) it will never be accepted from him; and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers.*” He also says: “*This day have I perfected for you your religion (deen) and completed My favor upon you; and am content with Islam as a religion (deen) for you.*” Subsequently, since every religion or way of life must of a necessity possess knowledge; and this knowledge must be

divided into divisions from which it is constructed, this then requires a citation of the sections of the sciences of the religion.

Thus, the *Shehu* said, may Allah be merciful to him: “**...and the division of its sciences**”; that is to say, the parts or sections of the sciences of the religion, from the perspective of its formation from the whole of the religion and not from the perspective of all of it. Thus, the concern of chapter one is a clarification of the parts of the sciences of the religion. For, the religion which our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace came with is divided in to sections from which it is constructed; which means that the religion of Islam in no way falls outside of these divisions. The religion is therefore divided into three divisions, as the author will explain. Each division or part has a sciences which verifies and corroborates the reality of that part and by which it is known. The meaning of the expression ‘ilm’ (science) in the language of the legalist is the comprehension or discernment of issues based upon clear evidence. Thus, the author, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, explains in chapter one the essential nature of the religion of Islam and the divisions of its sciences.

The *Shehu* said, may the mercy of Allah be upon him: “**I say, and success is with Allah**”; that is to say that success is with Allah in what he says, taking an example from the words of the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace when he said: “A servant will never be successful until Allah gives him success.” The *Shehu* said, may the mercy of Allah be upon him: “**realize**” that is to say, understand “**...and may you and I be among the successful**”, since real success can only be had from Him as it was cited previously: “**...that the deen**”, meaning the way of life “**which Muhammad may Allah bless him and grant him peace came with has its foundations (usuul)**”, that is to say that the religion which our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace came with is divided into sections. The first part of the religion is its foundations, which the plural of ‘asl’. This means the thing upon which other than it is constructed. The *Shaykh* of our teachers, the *Shareef* Murtada az-Zabidi said in his *Taa’jil-Uruus*: “The foundation of anything is that thing upon which its existence relies. Thus, the parent is the foundation (asl) of the child. The river (nahr) is the foundation (asl) of the rivulets (jadwaal); as al-Fayyumi said. Ar-Raghib said: ‘The foundation of anything is the basis or support which if it can be imagined being lifted, then the remainder of it would also be lifted’.”

The *Shehu* said: “**...and its branches (furu`u)**”; which is the plural of ‘far`u’; for the branch of anything is its highest part, as it is cited in the prophetic tradition: “Which part of the tree is furthest from the root?” They said: “Its branch (far`uhaa)”; meaning by that its highest part, its most apparent part or its most noble part. He, upon him be blessings and peace then said: “Likewise is the first line of prayer.” Thus, the meaning intended by ‘branches’ here in this context are those sciences which branch off from the foundations of the religion.

The *Shehu*, said, may Allah be merciful to him: “**As for its foundations**”; that is to say, its basis upon which other parts of the religion is constructed; “**...it is al-imaan**”; which means absolute acceptance and firm established knowledge in the heart; pronunciation of the tongue; and acting in accordance with the remainder of the limbs. The expression ‘imaan’ is a verbal noun taken from the verb ‘amana’ (he believed), ‘yu`min’ (he believes), ‘imaan’ (faithfully). He is thus a ‘mu`min’ (believer). It is the opposite of disbelief. Or, its meaning is genuine acceptance which is the opposite of denial. Az-Zujaaj said: “Belief is the manifestation of humility and the acceptance of the law and what the prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace came with. It is belief in him and acceptance of him in the heart.”

The *Shehu* said in his *Mirat't-Tullab*: “True belief (*imaan*) linguistically means acceptance, while according to the *shari`a* it means, the acceptance of the heart of everything which is known by necessity that the Messenger came with, with exception to matters which emerge from independent judgment.” The expression ‘*tasdeeq*’ (acceptance) linguistically means having proper certainty in what has come; for belief based upon assumption is not sufficient in the requirements of faith, with the majority of the scholars of the *Sunna*. This is corroborated by his upon him be peace: “It is the acceptance of the heart.” Thus, the whole of belief is the acceptance with the heart without it being verified by pronouncement of actions. However, the reality of genuine faith or belief is the acceptance of the heart in everything which our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace came with, the pronouncement with the tongue and acting in accordance with the pillars. Allah ta`ala says: “*Indeed the believers are those who when Allah is mentioned, their hearts tremble and when His signs are recited to them, it increases them in belief; and upon their Lord do they rely; those who establish the prayer; and from what We have provided them, they expend. These are true believers. They have ranks with their Lord, forgiveness, and a generous provision.*”

It has been related by Abu `Amr ibn Hamdan on the authority of `Ali ibn Abi Talib who said: “I once asked the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace about belief and what is it? He said: ‘It is the knowledge of the heart, the pronouncement with the tongue and acting in accordance with the pillars’.”

The *Shehu* said, may the mercy of Allah be upon him: “**...and the science that verifies**”; that is to say, corroborates: “**...al-imaan is the foundation of the religion (*usuul d-deen*)**”; i.e. the science of Divine Unity or the science of doctrine of belief. This science was named by Abu Hanifa, may Allah be merciful to him, as ‘the immense jurisprudence’. This science is also divided into two divisions: [1] the foundations of the religion which is from the individual obligations and [2] scholastic theology which is from the collective obligations. The *Shehu* said, may the mercy of Allah be upon him in his *Fat’h’l-Basaa’ir*: “The science of divine unity is divided into two divisions: [1] the foundations of the religion; and [2] the science of scholastic theology. *Usuul'd-deen* is a part of the individual obligations and the science of scholastic theology is a part of the collective obligations.” The meaning of individual obligations are all the sciences and actions which are an obligation upon every responsible person to know and act upon. As for the collective obligations they are the sciences and actions which when one or some of those responsible establish them, it suffices for the rest of them from having to know or act upon them.

The *Shehu* said, may Allah be merciful to him: “**As for its branches**”; i.e. the branches of the religion; where the expression ‘*furuu*’ is plural for ‘*far`u*’. They are the sciences which branch off from the foundation: “**...it is divided into two**”; the first division being: “**an outward branch**”; that is to say, those branches of the religion related to the outward actions of the tongue, the limbs and social behavior (*mu`amilaat*); “**and**”; the second division being “**an inward branch**”; that is to say, those branches of the religion related to the inner hearts of humanity and what emerges from them, the comprehension of the hearts’ secrets and the inner transformation of human character.

The *Shehu* said, may Allah be merciful to him: “**As for its outward branch, it is al-islam**”; that is to say, surrender, submission and compliance with the outward actions which include the verbal articulation of the two testimonies, performing the obligations and desisting from the prohibitions. For, the obedience of the bodily limbs and compliance with all the outward actions and behaviors are what

branches off from genuine belief, which is the acceptance of the heart. Allah ta'ala says: “*The Bedouin Arabs say: ‘We believe’, say: ‘You have not yet believed, but say: ‘We have surrendered’.*” This means that they have acted in accordance with the outward actions, but their belief is still weak and inadequate; as Ibn Abbas explained the interpolation of this verse. *Imam Ahmad* narrated a prophetic tradition on the authority of *Anas* who said: “The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said: ‘al-Islam is open and overt actions, while al-Imaan is in the heart.’” This means that Islam is an expression or idiom for obedience and outward compliance; while al-Imaan (belief) is an expression for the acceptance of the inner heart.

The *Shehu*, may Allah be merciful to him continues: “**...and the science that verifies**”; i.e. corroborates; “**al-islam is the science of the law (ilm 'l-shari'a)**”; that is to say, the science of jurisprudence (*fiqh*). *Imam al-Jurjani* said: “The terms *shari'a* (law) and *shar'u* (revealed canon) are both synonyms. The term ‘*shar'u*’ (revealed canon) is what Allah ta'ala enacted as law from the legal judgments which a Messenger from among the prophets, upon them be blessings and peace clearly came with; or the decisive evidence they brought. Thus, the science of the *shari'a* is the science related to outward legal judgments which are obligatory upon every responsible person to learn and act upon. The etymological root of the term *shari'a* is from the verb ‘*shara'a*’ (to commence, begin or start), that is to say, to come and take water with the mouth. The meaning of the *shari'a* in the language of the Arabs is a watering place. It is the resort for those desiring to drink which was commenced or started by humans; from where they drink and water their beasts. Its meaning in the religion, as al-Layth said: ‘It constitutes the places where creatures descend to take water. It is for this reason that the codes Allah enacted for His servants, such as fasting, prayer, pilgrimage, marriage and the like from outward acts, is called *shari'a*. Allah ta'ala says: ‘*For every people We have made for them a law and methodology.*’ Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him said that its meaning is that the law is what the *Qur'an* has transmitted, while the methodology (*minhaaj*) is what the *Sunna* transmitted’.” It is from this that we know that all the outward actions and behavior is constructed upon the Book and the *Sunna*.

The *Shehu* said, may Allah be merciful to him: “**As for the inward branch, it is al-ihsaan**”; that is to say, it is the excellence of obedience, sincerity, piety, acute awareness and direct witnessing. The etymological root of ‘*ihsaan*’ is from the verb ‘*ahsan*’ (to do something well); ‘*yahsanu ihsaanan*’ (he performs excellently). It is the verbal noun of the expression ‘*ahsan*’ and different from ugliness and repulsiveness and is the opposite of that which is evil. It is actually that which is in excess of what is just. Allah ta'ala says: “*Indeed Allah commands justice and spiritual excellence (ihsaan).*” Thus, spiritual excellence means in this context to give more than what is expected and to take less than what is required. As for the meaning of the *ihsaan* with the people of spiritual verification, *Shaykh Abd'l-Karim al-Jayli*, may Allah be merciful to him said in his *al-Insaan'l-Kaamil*: “It is the name of a spiritual station in which the servant is in, marked by the influences and traces of the Names of the Absolute Being and His attributes upon him. This spiritual station takes form within the worship of the servant as if he is in the presence of Allah ta'ala; where he continues to observe these manifestations of Being. The least of the ranks in *ihsaan* is the state of acute awareness. This station can never be sound except with seven preconditions: [1] repentance; [2] resorting to Allah; [3] austerity; [4] reliance; [5] leaving matters to Him; [6] contentment; and [7] sincerity.”

The gnostic Ahmad al-Kamshakhanuwi said: “*Ihsaan* is the verification of worship by means of direct witnessing of the presence of Lordship with the light of clear discernment. That is to say, by means of the actual vision of the Absolute Being as He is described with His Divine Attributes with the eye of His attributes. He thus, envisions Him with certainty and does not see him with his eyes in reality.” Allah ta`ala says: “*Is there a reward for ihsaan other than more ihsaan?*”

The *Shehu* continues: “...and the science that verifies”; i.e. corroborates: “*al-ihsaan is the science of the reality (‘ilm ‘l-haqeeqa)*”; that is to say, the science of divine secrets. For the expression ‘*haqeeqa*’ (divine realities) is the verification of the Attributes of the Absolute Being. The reality of a thing is what is real or true about that thing when it is firmly established. One of the realized ones said: “A thing by which it is known to be what it is with respect to its true reality that is the *haqeeqa* of that thing.” It is the very opposite of metonymy or metaphor. Its plural is *haqaa’iq*. Thus, the *haqeeqa* in the language of the people of *tasawwuf* means the manifestation of the Essence of the Absolute Being without veils of individualization. It is the effacement of illusory multiplicity in the light of the Divine Essence. *Imam* al-Qushayri said in his *ar-Risaalat*: “The *shari`a* is adherence to servitude and worship, while the *haqeeqa* is direct witnessing of Lordship. Every *shari`a* uncorroborated by the *haqeeqa* is unacceptable. Every *haqeeqa* uncorroborated by the *shari`a* is unproductive; since the *haqeeqa* can never be realized except by means of the *shari`a*.” The knower of Allah, Jamal`d-Deen ibn Turmart al-Andalusi said: “As for *ihsaan*, it is the conformity of knowledge with action from the reality of the *haqeeqa* during direct witnessing. This reality is the truth of certainty and is sincere religion and uprightness with Allah `izza wa jalla.”

Thus, the science of the *haqeeqa* is the science of spiritual purification, which is divided into two divisions. The first division comprises spiritual purification for the transformation of character; and means the freeing from the heart of all blameworthy traits such as arrogance, conceit, rage, stinginess, envy, the love of this world, love of rank, showing-off and other than these from the destructive attributes. It also comprises adorning the heart with praiseworthy traits, such as: repentance, fearful awareness, austerity, leaving matters over to Allah, reliance, patience, praise, gratitude and other redemptive attributes. This division is a part of the individual obligations. The second division is spiritual purification for Divine realization. It comprises knowledge of the spiritual states of the disciples, knowledge of the spiritual stations of the *awliyya*, gnosis of the Self Disclosure of the Acts of Allah ta`ala, gnosis of the Self Disclosure of the Names and Attributes of Allah and gnosis of the Self Disclosure of the Divine Essence. This division is a part of the collective obligations; rather it is from the sciences which are designated specifically for the People of Allah, and His *awliyya* from among the Messengers, Prophets, scholars, martyrs and the righteous.

The *Shehu* said, may Allah be merciful to him: “**Hence, al-imaan**”; i.e. the foundations of the religion, “**al-islam**”; i.e. jurisprudence, “**and al-ihsaan**”; i.e. spiritual purification: “**comprise the religion**”; that is to say, the religion of Islam, “**in its entirety.**” This means that the gathering of the religion which our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace came with is in the three matters of Iman, Islam and Ihsan. It is for this reason that Ibn `Ashir said in his *Murshi`l-Mu`in*: “The religion is these three so take your strongest bond.” That is to say, the religion is gathered together in al-Iman, al-islam and al-Ihsan and whoever takes hold of it: “*has taken hold of the strongest bond.*” The knower of Allah, Jamal`d-Deen Muhammad ibn Turmart al-Andalusi said: “The reality of Islam is the

establishment of the physical body with the functions of the religious legal judgments. The reality of Iman is the establishment of the heart with the functions of submission and surrender. The reality of *Ihsan* is the establishment of the spirit with direct witnessing of the All Knowing King.”

Thus, the sciences of Iman, Islam and *Ihsan* are the supports of all the sciences of the religion; since nothing from the obligations, the *Sunnan*, the desirable, prohibited or reprehensible matters fall outside of these three divisions. “**It is for this reason**”; that is to say, because the entire religion comprises Iman, Islam and *Ihsan* that “**he said**”; i.e. the Prophet, “**upon him be blessing and peace speaking to his Companions**”; who were present at that time; but it is also an address to all of mankind until the Day of Judgment. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “**Verily it**”; that is to say, the man asking the question, “**was Jibril.**” He is our master Jibril, the best of the Arch Angels and their leader based upon a well-known prophetic narration: “My *amir* among the Angels is Jibril.” The etymology of his name as Kira` said is from the expression ‘*jabara*’, which means in the Syrian language ‘the servant’ (*‘abd*). Al-Aṣ`ami said: “The meaning of the suffix ‘el’ or ‘il’ is lordship. Thus, the expression ‘*jibr*’ which is servant combined with the expression ‘*il*’ which is Allah, means ‘the servant of Allah’.” Abu `Ubayd said: “His name is thus the servant of El, or the servant of Allah.” He is the Angel responsible for Divine revelation, making war against the enemies of Allah and the weighing of actions on the Day of Judgment. Jibril, upon him peace was sent to all the Prophets and Messengers among mankind. Thus, Jibril, upon him be peace, is considered a messenger and the community to whom he was sent were all the prophets.

The Prophet, upon him peace continued: “**He came**”; to you “**to teach you**”; that is to say, to you my Companions; or to you mankind in general; “**your deen.**” This means your religion which you were made responsible for. Ibn al-Muneeb said regarding his words: ‘to teach you your religion’: “This is evidence that the excellent question is called knowledge and instructions, because nothing emerged from Jibril besides questions. Yet, he called him a teacher. For this reason, the statement has become a well-known axiom: ‘The excellent question is half of knowledge’,” It is conceivable for us to also extract from this prophetic tradition that advantage in it emerges from both questions and answers together. Al-Qurtubi said: “It is correct to say of this prophetic tradition that it is ‘the mother of the *Sunna*’, since it comprises a summation of the science of the *Sunna*.” As Ibn Hajar said: “realize that this prophetic tradition gathers together a variety of sciences, knowledge, courtesies and subtleties. Rather, it is the foundation of Islam as *Qadi `Iyad* related it. Thus, he upon him be peace said: ‘Indeed it was Jibril who came to you to teach you your religion’.” This was said: “**after he was asked**”; by Jibril: “**about its reality**”; that is to say, the essential nature of the religion. This means that he asked about its totality and its parts; or it means after Jibril asked about the *ihsaan* of the religion, because the science of *al-Ihsaan* is called ‘*ilm`l-haqeeqa*’ (the science of reality).

The *Shehu* said, may Allah be merciful to him: “**...and he may Allah bless him and grant him peace explained it**”; i.e. he clarified its meanings; or he gave an exegesis on the essential nature of the religion: “**as it was related in Saheeh Muslim**”; on the authority of `Umar ibn al-Khattab. As for the narrator of this blessed prophetic tradition, he was Abu`l-Husayn Muslim ibn al-Hujjaj ibn Muslim ibn Ward ibn Kushadh al-Qushayri an-Naysaburi, the author of the *Saheeh*. He was born in the year 204 A.H. and was from the scholars of humanity and the conveyors of knowledge. Abd`r-Rahman ibn Abi Hatim said: “Muslim was among the most reliable of the scholars of prophetic traditions.” *Imam* Muslim, himself said: “I

originally composed this Musnad Saheeh from three hundred thousand prophetic traditions which I heard directly.” Ahmad ibn Salma said: “I was with Muslim when he authored his Saheeh which took fifteen years; and originally composed of twelve thousand prophetic traditions.” Again Muslim said: “I did not compose anything in this Musnad except with clear evidence, and I did not omit anything from it except with clear evidence.” Muslim died in the month of *Rajab* in the year 261 A.H. in the city of Naysaburi at the age of 50 and some years.

As for our chain of authority (*sanad*) in this blessed prophetic tradition from the licenses of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`; they are many. However, I will restrict myself to mentioning as a means of taking from his *baraka* what I took from the direction of the maternal and paternal uncle of the *Shehu*, *Shaykh* Abu Muhammad Muhammad ibn ar-Raj at-Turuudi al-Fulati as-Sudani. For, I received it from my support in the sciences of the *shari`a*, my proof in the sciences of the *tareeqan* and my lamp in the sciences of the *haqeeqa*, the learned jurist, the *Imam* and *Khateeb*, *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Amin ibn Adam Kari`angha ibn Muhammad Tukur ibn Muhammad Sanbu ibn Muhammad Leeli ibn Abu Bakr ibn *Amir* Hadijia Muhammad Sanbu Dirnima, may Allah be merciful to them. This spiritual master of mine, *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Amin used to teach the Saheeh Muslim with his *sanad* every day during the forenoon hours in his *rabat* in Maiurno, Sennar, Sudan. He was the one who gave me license in it and in all the licenses and books of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`. He took it from his father the jurist and *khateeb*, *Shaykh* Adam Kari`angha; who took it from *Shaykh* Musa al-Muhajir; who took it from the jurist, the *khateeb*, the *Imam ratib*, *Shaykh* `Ali Dinbu ibn Abi Bakr Ma`lami. He took it from the author, the light of the age, the reformer of the religion, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, may Allah be merciful to him. He took it from his paternal and maternal uncle *Shaykh* Abu Muhammad Muhammad ibn ar-Raj ibn Modibo Dittu ibn Hamm ibn `Aal ibn Muhammad Jubba ibn Muhammad Sanbu ibn Maasiran may Allah ta`ala be merciful to all of them. He took it from his teacher Abu`l-Hassan as-Sindi al-Medini, on the authority of *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Hayyat, on the authority of *Shaykh* Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn `Ala`d-Deen al-Babili al-Misri, on the authority of Abu`n-Najaa Saalim ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn `Ali al-Qayti, on the authority of the *Shaykh* of Islam, Abu Yahya Zayn`d-Deen Zakariya ibn Muhammad al-Ansari, on the authority of the traditionist Abu Nu`aym Ridwan ibn Muhammad al-Uqbi, on the authority of *Shaykh* Abu`t-Taahir Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Abd`l-Lateef ibn al-Kuwayk, on the authority of the traditionist Ibn Hajr, on the authority of Abu`l-Farj Abd`r-Rahman ibn Abd`l-Haadi al-Hanafi al-Maqdasi, on the authority of Abu`l-`Abbas Ahmad ibn Abd`d-Da`im an-Nabalusi, on the authority of the jurist the Sacred Precinct Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn al-Faql ibn Ahmad al-Firawi, on the authority of Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn `Isa al-Juludi, on the authority of Ibrahim ibn Sufyan an-Naysaburi, on the authority of *Imam* Muslim ibn al-Hujjaj al-Qushayri an-Naysaburi, may Allah ta`ala be merciful to him.

Imam Muslim said: “Abu Khuthayma Zuhayr ibn Harb an-Nisai` related to me, that Wakee` ibn al-Jaraah ar-Ra`asi related to us, on the authority of Abu`l-Hassan Kahmas ibn al-Hassan at-Tamimi, on the authority of Abdallah ibn Bareeda al-Aslami, on the authority of of Yahya ibn Ya`mir al-Basri, on the authority of Abdallah ibn `Umar ibn al-Khattab who said: `Umar ibn al-Khattab related to me saying: ‘One day we with with the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, when there appeared a man wearing exceedingly white attire with exceedingly black hair. No sign of travel was seen on him and no one knew him. He came until he sat in front of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace

placing his knees to the knees of the Prophet and placing his hands upon his thighs. He then said: ‘O Muhammad, inform me about Islam?’ The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: ‘Islam is that you testify that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, that you establish the prayer, give the alms, fast in *Ramadan* and make the pilgrimage to the House of Allah if you have the ability.’ He said: ‘You spoke truthfully.’ `Umar said: ‘We were amazed that he would question him and verify his truthfulness.’ He then said: ‘Inform me about Iman?’ He said: ‘It is that you believe in Allah, His Angels, His Heavenly Books, His messengers, and the Last Day; and that you believe in the decree: its good and harmful.’ He said: ‘You spoke truthfully.’ He then said: ‘Inform me about *Ihsan*?’ He said: ‘It is that you worship Allah as if you saw Him. If you do not see Him, then he sees you.’ He then said: ‘Inform me about the Hour?’ he said: ‘The one questioned knows no more about it than the one questioning.’ He then said: ‘Then inform me about its signs?’ He said: ‘When the servant girl gives birth to her mistress; when you see the backward naked Arab herders of sheep competing in the constructing of tall buildings’. Then the man got up and left. We then sat there for some time. Then he said to me: ‘O `Umar, do you know who the questioner was?’ I said: ‘Allah and His messenger know best.’ He said: ‘Indeed, it was Jibril, who came to you to teach you your religion’.” Allah willing, I will follow with the interpolation, exegesis and meaning of this prophetic tradition after a bit.

The *Shehu* said, may Allah be merciful to him: **“In the wording of”**; this blessed prophetic tradition from **“the narration of Imam al-Bukhari.”** He was Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Isma`il ibn Ibrahim ibn al-Mughira, known as al-Bukhari. He was born in the month of *Shawwal*, in the year 194 A.H.. Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn al-Faḍl al-Balkhi said: “I once heard my father say that: ‘The sight of Muhammad ibn Isma`il was lost when he was young. As a result, his mother saw Ibrahim al-Khalil in her sleep who said to her: ‘O woman, Allah has returned the sight to your child due to your excessive weeping for him.’ When she awoke, Allah had returned the sight to his eyes; and he thereafter became by the bounty of Allah the most superior of mankind regarding the science of prophetic traditions; to the extent that he was named ‘*amir`l-mu`mineen*’ in the prophetic traditions.” He composed his *KItab`t-Tarikh* as well as his famous *Saheeh*. The later work being the soundest of books composed for Muslims after the Immense *Qur`an*. He himself said about it: “I did not place a single prophetic tradition in this book of mine except after first making the ritual bath and praying two *rak`at*.” He also said: “I only entered into this that which was absolutely sound. I even neglected some sound traditions in order not to make this work excessively long.” He also said: “I composed the *Saheeh* in sixteen years and made it a proof of what is between me and Allah ta`ala.” An-Najm ibn al-Fuḍayl said: “I once saw the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace in my sleep as if he were walking and Muhammad ibn Isma`il was walking behind him. Each time the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace lifted his foot, Muhammad ibn Isma`il would place his foot in its place.” Al-Hassan ibn Muhammad said: “I never saw anyone like Muhammad ibn Isma`il; and Muslim ibn al-Hujjaj did not reach the level of Muhammad ibn Isma`il.” Abu Zayd al-Maruzi said: “I was once asleep between the Yemeni corner and the station of Ibrahim in the Ka`aba, when I saw the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, who said to me: ‘O Abu Zayd why are you studying the book of as-Shafi` and you have not studied my book?’ I said to him: ‘O Messenger of Allah, what is your book?’ He said: ‘The *Jaami* of Muhammad ibn Isma`il’.” *Imam* Muslim ibn al-Hujjaj once said to him: “I bear witness that there is no one in this world like you.” Al-Bukhari died on a

Saturday the night of the *al-Fitr* during the *isha* prayer. He was buried on the *Eid'l-Fitr* after the *dhuhr* prayer in the year 256 A.H.. He lived thirteen days short of sixty two year.

As for the wording of this blessed prophetic tradition from the narration of al-Bukhari from the *sanad* of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`; I took also many licenses in it. However, here I will mention what I took from the perspective of the *Shehu*'s paternal and maternal uncle, *Shaykh* Abu Muhammad Muhammad ibn ar-Raj at-Turuudi al-Falati as-Sudani, as a means of garnering their *baraka*. For, I received it from my previously mentioned teacher the learned jurist, the *Imam* and *Khateeb*, *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Amin ibn Adam Kari`angha, may Allah be merciful to them. He gave me license in it with a general an unrestricted license, just as he gave me license in all of the books of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`. He took it from his father, *Shaykh* Adam Kari`angha; who took it from *Shaykh* Musa al-Muhajir; who took it from the jurist, the *khateeb*, the *Imam ratib*, *Shaykh* `Ali ibn Abi Bakr. He took it from the author, the light of the age, the reformer of the religion, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, may Allah be merciful to him. He took it from his teacher *Shaykh* Abu Muhammad Muhammad ibn ar-Raj He took it from his teacher Abu'l-Hassan as-Sindi al-Medini, on the authority of *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Hayyat, on the authority of *Shaykh* Abdallah ibn Saalim al-Bagri, on the authority of *Shaykh* Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn `Ala'd-Deen al-Babili al-Misri, on the authority of Abu'n-Najaa Saalim ibn Muhammad as-Sanhuri, on the authority of an-Najim Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn `Ali al-Qayti, on the authority of the *Shaykh* of Islam, Abu Yahya Zayn'd-Deen Zakariya ibn Muhammad al-Ansari, on the authority of the traditionist of the age Shihab'd-Deen Abu'l-Faql Ahmad ibn `Ali ibn Hajr al-`Asqalani, on the authority of the professor Ibrahim ibn Ahmad at-Tanukhi, one the authority of Abu'l-`Abbas Ahmad ibn Abu Talib al-Hijar, one the authority of as-Siraj al-Husayn al-Mubarak az-Zabidi al-Hanbali, one the authority of Abu'l-Waqt Abd'l-Awwal `Isa ibn Shu`ayb as-Sajzi, one the authority of Abu'l-Hassan Abd'r-Rahman ibn Madhfir ibn Dawud ad-Dawudi, one the authority of Abu Muhammad Abdallah ibn as-Sarakhsi, one the authority of Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Yusef ibn Ma`ar ibn Saalih al-Firabri, one the authority of the traditionist, the proof, the *amir'l-mu'mineen* in the science of prophetic traditions Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Isma'il ibn Ibrahim ibn al-Mughira ibn Dazba al-Bukhari al-Ja`fiy.

Imam al-Bukhari said: "Ishaq related to me, one the authority of Jareer, one the authority of Abu Hayyan, one the authority of Abu Zar`a, one the authority of Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was openly with the people, when a man came to him walking. He said: 'O Messenger of Allah what is Iman?' he said: 'Belief is that you believe in Alllah, His Angels, His messengers, the meeting with Him, and that you believe in the Final Resurrection'. The man said: 'O Messenger of Allah, what is Islam?' He said: 'Islam is that you worship Allah and not associate anything with Him, that you establish the prayer, give the obligatory alms and fast *Rama`dan*'. The man then said: 'O Messenger of Allah, what is Ihsan?' He said: 'Spiritual excellence is that you worship Allah as if you see Him. If you do not see Him, then He sees you.' The man said: 'O Messenger of Allah, when is the Hour?' He said: 'The one questioned knows no more about it than the one questioning. However, I will inform you of its prerequisites: when a woman gives birth to her mistress. That is among its prerequisites; when the barefooted naked destitute herders of sheep become the leaders of the people; then that is among its prerequisites. The Hour is among five things that no one knows except Allah. *Indeed with Allah is the knowledge of the*

Hour. He is the one who brings down abundant rain and He knows what is in the wombs'. Then the man left. He the prophet then said: 'Bring him back to me.' We then went to bring him back but could not find anyone." He then said what the *Shehu* narrated: **"That was Jibril. He came to teach humanity their *deen*."** In this narration the attributing of instruction to Jibril is figurative because he was the causative factor in the emergence of the answers. It is for this reason he, upon him be peace ordered others to take from him, as Ibn Hajr explained in his Fath'l-Baari.

As for the meaning of this blessed prophetic tradition from the narration of al-Muslim, I say, and success is with Allah that the words of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah ta'ala be pleased with him: "One day we were with the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace." This was during the final period of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace after he had performed the farewell pilgrimage as it was explicitly stated in the narration of Sulayman at-Taymi. In the narration of al-Bukhari it states: "The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was openly with the people", which means that he was apparent to them and not concealed from them or obscured from them. The meaning of the expression '*buruuz*' (prominent) is '*dhuhuur*' (apparent). In the narration of Furwa: "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was sitting among his Companions." The meaning of the words of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him: "...when there appeared a man"; that is to say, an Angel in the form of a man. However, the people did not recognize him.

The meaning of the words of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him: "...wearing exceedingly white attire with exceedingly black hair"; is as it was clarified in another narration: "he was the most handsome of humans in his face and the most pleasant of them in fragrance". The meaning of the words of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him: "No sign of travel was seen on him"; is as another narration clarified: "...as if his attire had not been touched by dirt." The meaning of the words of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him: "...and no one knew him"; is that he described him with these traits in order to give evidence that this man was completely unknown by anyone who had been gathered among them. This is because this individual was neither among the *muhajirun* nor the *ansaar*. He was basically a stranger. This was corroborated by the narration of Furwa: "...then a stranger came which no one knew. So we sought to give him a place in the assembly customary for strangers in order to get to know him."

In this statement is clear evidence that the appearance of this man among them was a miracle because there was no sign upon him of travel, like excessive dust in his hair or dusty clothing as is the custom of a traveler. Also from this narration we know that he was among the righteous because he dressed in the attire of white which is the attire of the righteous; as it was related by at-Tirmidhi in his as-Shima'il'l-Muhammadiyya on the authority of Samra ibn Jundub who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Wear white clothing because it is purer and better; and wrap your deceased in it." In another narration on the authority of Ibn `Abbas who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "It is necessary for you to wear white attire. The living among you should wear it and you should wrap the deceased among you in it. For, it is the best of your attire."

The meaning of the words of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him: "He came until he sat in front of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace placing his knees to the knees of the Prophet"; is that the man supported his knees against the knees of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless

him and grant him peace. This means that that he sat in front of him without any distance or space between them. The meaning of the words of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him: "...and placing his hands upon his thighs"; is that the man placed his palms on his own thighs and sat in the manner of one accustomed to instructions or as one educated; as *Imam* an-Nawwawi cited. In another narration: "...he approached until he kneeled down in front of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace like one of us sits in the prayer." However, in the two narrations of Ibn `Abbas and Sulayman at-Taymi respectively it states that the man actually placed his palms upon the thighs of the prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This was confirmed by Isma`il at-Taymi, al-Baghawi, at-Tayyibi and others.

The meaning of the man's words: "O Muhammad, inform me about Islam?"; is teach me or instruct me about Islam. That is to say, the verbal and bodily actions of Islam. The meaning of the words of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him: "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said"; is that he answered his questions. This is evidence of the obligation regarding the right of the Messengers upon them be peace to deliver the message; and that concealing the message is impossible to them regarding their rights. Also we can extract from this the prohibition of scholars concealing beneficial knowledge when someone questions them.

The meaning of his words, upon him be blessings and peace: "Islam is that you testify that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah"; is that this testimony must be with the acceptance of the heart along with the verbal articulation of the tongue. It comprises verbally articulating acceptance of the Divine Unity of Allah and the messenger-ship. Included in this verbal articulation of the messenger-ship is the acceptance of everything that he came with regarding the matters of the Afterlife. For this reason, the four matters mentioned after the testimony are constructed upon it, since nothing of outward actions in Islam are accepted without the prior testimony of the *shahada*. Its likeness is like a house made from five pillars where the first of them is the central pillar and the remaining four are supporting columns. As long as the central pillar remains standing then the house can be said to be standing regardless if any of the other supporting pillars collapse. However, when the central pillar collapses then what is normally called a house also collapses. This is similar to what was related by al-Bukhari on the authority of Ibn `Umar, may Allah be pleased with them who said: "I once heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace say: 'Islam is constructed upon five things: the testimony that there is no deity except Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, establishing the prayer, giving alms, pilgrimage and fasting *Ramadan*'." In another narration: "I have been commanded to fight the people until they testify that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." Thus, the two testimonies is the first and central pillar of the house of Islam. Without the two testimonies nothing of the prayer, alms, fasting, pilgrimage or other than them from the other pillars of Islam will be sound.

The meaning of his words, upon him be blessings and peace: "...that you establish the prayer"; where the origin of the expression 'establish' is '*iqaama*' (institution, formation and erecting). Thus, what is meant by the establishment of prayer is to be persistent in it; or unrestricted performance of the prayer with all of its prerequisites, obligations, pillars, and *Sunnan*, in a state of servitude, submissiveness, sincerity and intimate converse with Allah *subhaanahu wa ta`ala*. The meaning of his words, upon him be blessings and peace: "...give the alms"; is to give it over to its rightful people. Thus, what is intended by the giving of alms is the extracting of a

portion of one's wealth in a specific manner to be given to a specific group of people for the sake of Allah ta'ala. The meaning of his words, upon him be blessings and peace: "...fast in *Ramadan*"; is to withstand from food, drink, and sexual intercourse throughout the day during the month of *Ramadan* sincerely for the sake of Allah ta'ala. The meaning of his words, upon him be blessings and peace: "...and make the pilgrimage to the House of Allah if you have the ability"; is to the House of Allah which is called the *Ka'aba* in the Sacred city of Mecca.'

These are the five principles upon which Islam is constructed, which constitute the outward branches of the religion. Allah ta'ala says: "*Do they seek other than the religion Allah, when to Him surrenders those who are in the heavens and the earth, willfully and forcefully and to Him is the final Return.*" Allah ta'ala says: "*Indeed the religion with Allah is Islam.*" Allah ta'ala says: "*Whoever seeks other than Islam as a religion it will never be accepted from him.*" Allah ta'ala says: "*He has not made hardship for you in the religion. It is the way of life of your father Ibrahim who named you Muslims.*" Allah ta'ala says: "*This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you and am pleased with Islam as a religion.*" Allah ta'ala says upon the tongue of some of His servants: "*I was commanded to be among the Muslims.*" He also says upon one of their tongues: "*And I am the first of the Muslims.*" And again He says: "*Do not die except that you die as Muslims.*" All of these verses prove that the desired religion with Allah is Islam and it has outward pillars which branch off from its foundations.

The meaning of the man's words: "You spoke truthfully"; is that you spoke truthfully regarding the news about the outward branch of the religion, which is Islam. The man said this as if he was well aware of the correct answer. This is proof of the permissibility of questioning a scholar about a matter which the one questioning is not ignorant, but in order to instruct others that are listening. The meaning of `Umar's words, may Allah ta'ala be pleased with him: "We were amazed that he would question him and verify his truthfulness"; is based upon what *Imam an-Nawwawi* said: "The reason for their amazement was that his actions were contrary to the custom of a questioner who is ignorant. His words were that of a person aware of the matter about which he was questioning. At that time there was no one among those present other than the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace who knew these issues. Thus, they were amazed with the man for his courtesy and character with the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, but also with the extent of his knowledge."

The meaning of the man's words: "Inform me about Iman?"; is teach me or instruct me about belief and faith. That is to say, instruct me about the actions of the heart and the soul; for the reality of faith as we mentioned previously, is firstly the acceptance of the heart of everything which our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, then articulation with the tongue and acting in accordance with the principles. It was related by Abu `Amr ibn *Hamdan* on the authority of `Ali ibn *Abi Talib* that he said: "I once asked the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace about Iman and what it was? He said: 'It is knowledge with the heart, articulation with the tongue and acting in accordance with the principles'." For, the knowledge or gnosis with the heart is from the inner branches of faith called *al-Ihsan* and the articulation with the tongue and acting in accordance with the principles is from the outward branches of faith called *al-Islam*. It is as if, he, upon him be peace said that that faith which is the foundation comprises and includes the two branches: the knowledge with the heart which is the inward branch and the articulation with the

tongue and acting in accordance with the principles which are from the outward branch.

The meaning of his words, upon him be blessings and peace: “It is that you believe in Allah”; that is to say, acceptance of His existence; and that He the exalted is described by every attribute of perfection; free of every attribute of deficiency. It is belief that Allah ta`ala exist without first-ness to Him nor last-ness; that there is nothing like Him; that He does not possess mass; nor direction; and that He is independently rich beyond place or designation. He is one in His essence, attributes and actions; and omnipotent over every possibility. It is belief that He is a Willer and nothing exists except what He wills. It is belief that He is all knowing and is not ignorant of anything. It is belief that He is ever living and does not die; all hearing of every existing thing without ears; all-seeing of every existing thing without eyes; and He is a speaker without tongue or sound. It is belief that He is not obligated to do anything; that divine reward is from His bounty and divine punishment is from His justice. It is belief that He was when there was nothing with Him; and that He is now as He was. It is belief that He is not in a particular place and nor is place created for Him. Far exalted that He settle in a place or that any place be free of Him or that he be outside of place. Rather He was when there was no place and He is the one who manages time. He is unique in His oneness from being qualified with first-ness and last-ness by means of the most beautiful Names and Attributes. Thus, this is the meaning of belief in Allah.

The meaning of his words, upon him be peace: “...(belief in) His Angels”, is that you believe that they sentient spiritual entities composed of light; that they are neither male or female; that they neither eat or drink and that they do not have conjugal relationships. The Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace cited the Angels prior to the heavenly books and the messengers out of consideration of the order in which revelation occurs. This is because He *subhaanahu wa ta`ala* sent the Angels with the heavenly books to His messengers; in that order. There is no evidence in this order for those who hold that Angels are superior to the messengers. The meaning of his words, upon him be peace: “...(belief in) His Heavenly Books”, is that you believe in the heavenly Books of Allah and means acceptance that they are the Divine Speech of Allah and that all they comprise is the truth. The meaning of his words, upon him be peace: “...(belief in) His messengers”, is that you believe in the veracity of the messengers; that they are trustworthy; truthful in what they conveyed from Allah ta`ala; that they delivered what Allah ta`ala ordered them to convey to His creatures; and that they were reinforced with miracles as evidence of their truthfulness. It also comprises belief that treachery, lying and failing to deliver the Divine message is impossible with regard to their rights. In addition it comprises belief that all non-essential human qualities which do not lead to deficiency in their status as prophets are permissible for them. The meaning of his words, upon him be peace: “...and (belief in) the Last Day; is that you believe in the Last Day or Hereafter; and that It is the last of the days of this worldly life; or it is the last of delineated time. What is meant here is that sincere belief in the Last Day and genuine acceptance of what will occur on that Day from the reckoning, the scale, the Paradise, the Hell Fire and other than these from the matters of unseen affairs of the after-life. The meaning of his words, upon him be peace: “...and that you believe in the decree: its good and harmful”, is that you believe that Allah ta`ala knows the decrees of all things as well as its times before they come into existence. Then He causes these decrees to exist just as they existed in priority in His knowledge. For, every in-time event whether good or harmful emerges from His prior knowledge, power and will.

This is something which is known and accepted from the religion by means of decisive proofs; and it is upon this belief that the ancestors from the Companions and best of the following generation adhered to.

These six issues constitute the pillars of true faith which comprise the science of the foundation of the religion. Hence, Islam, the outward branch of the religion, cannot be sound except by means of these pillars because they are the foundation and basis of the religion. Allah ta'ala says: *“Believe in Allah, His Messengers, the Book which He revealed before. Whoever disbelieves in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His messengers and the Last Day has gone far astray.”* He ta'ala says: *“Indeed the believers are those who when Allah is remembered their hearts tremble and when His signs are rehearsed to them it increases them in faith; and who rely completely upon their Lord.”* He ta'ala says: *“The believers have definitely succeeded, those who are humble in their prayers; those who turn away from empty speech; those who perform the alms; those who guard their private parts, except from their wives and what their right hands possess. These shall not be blamed. Whoever desires beyond that then they are those who have crossed the limits. The believers are those who are scrupulous regarding their trust and covenants; those who preserve their prayers. These are the ones who are the inheritors, who will inherit Firdaus in which they will reside forever”*; and other than these from the *Qur'anic* verses regarding the traits of genuine faith.

The meaning of the words of the man questioning: “You spoke truthfully”; is that you have spoken truthfully in your words regarding the foundation of the religion which is *Iman*. The meaning of the words of the man: “Inform me about *Ihsan*?”; is teach me or instruct me about excellent character and purifying it from contemptible traits. The etymological root of ‘*ihsaan*’ as we mentioned previously is from the verb ‘*ahsanu*’ (to perform well), ‘*yahsanu ihsaanan*’ (he acts excellently with spiritual excellence). It is a verbal noun of the verb ‘*ahsanu*’ and its meaning is the opposite of repulsiveness (*qubhi*). The meaning of his words, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him: “It is that you worship Allah”; is that it is conceivable that what he meant by worship is direct experiential knowledge of Allah because Allah ta'ala says: *“I have not created jinn and mankind except to worship”*; which means to know. Rather, He did not create the entire creation except to know Him directly. The meaning of his words, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him: “...as if you saw Him”; is an omitted adjective in the form of a verbal noun and means ‘to worship Him with worship as if you saw Him’; or it is a circumstantial phrase and means ‘worship Him in a state as if you saw Him.’ Al-Karmani said: “It means that you worship Allah resembling one who saw Him.” Al-'Ayni said: “This implies that *Ihsan* is your worshipping of Allah ta'ala in a state of your being in your worship like the state your actually seeing Him.” What is not intended in this statement the implication of circumstance of awaiting for that state in order to worship Him; where you do not worship Allah prior to that state. On the contrary, what is intended here is for you to attain that particular state while in worship. The bottom line is that *Ihsan* is being in compliance with the states of fear and humility and in all that falls under the meaning of servitude in worship from the perspective of being scrupulously pious as if you were seeing Him directly. There is no doubt that if Allah could be actually be seen during the state of worship then no one would abandon or neglect what is possible for him from fear and other than that. This state of compliance can never emerge where he is actually seeing his Lord, except that He is watching, knowing and aware of his state. This is the reality as it really is, even when the servant is incapable of seeing Him. The meaning of his words, may the peace and blessings of Allah be

upon him: "If you do not see Him, then he sees you"; is that even though you cannot see Him, yet perfect and make your worship of Him excellent because He definitely sees you. This is sufficient in being in compliance with the state of fear from that perspective. Since this state is means and not a prerequisite. In this prophetic tradition is proof that the ocular vision of Allah ta'ala in this world's life does not and will not occur. Hence, the vision which the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace had of his Lord *'izza wa jalla* did not occur in this temporal worldly life, but rather it occurred in the exalted world of the unseen kingdoms; since this world life is not fit for such a vision. The most explicit proof of the non-existence of the occurrence of the vision of Allah ta'ala with the eyes in this world's life is what was related by Muslim from the prophetic tradition of Abu Umama that he upon him be peace said: "Realize that you will never see your Lord until you die." As for the vision of Allah in the Hereafter, the ideology of the people of truth is that it will occur with the eyes. Some of the extremist among the *sufis* claim the vision of Allah ta'ala with the eyes in this world's life is permissible. However, there is no truth to their claim. Hence the spiritual vision of the people of gnosis of their Lord in this world's life does not occur by means of the eyes; but with the hearts and secrets in the lifting of the veils of the worlds of the unseen in the world of sleep visions. The meaning of the lifting of the veils in this context is the lifting of the destructive barriers from the vision of the servant which bar him from seeing Him if He did the opposite.

Imam an-Nawwawi said: "What is intended by this speech is an motivation to have sincerity in worship. Thus, the attentive awareness of the servant of his Lord comes about in the completion of fear, humility and other than these." Thus, the answer the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace indicates two spiritual states: [1] the highest of them is that the direct witnessing of the Absolute Being overcomes his heart until it is as though he sees Him with his eyes directly. This is corroborated by his words: "...as if you see Him"; that is to say, He sees you. The second is that he makes it present in his heart that the Absolute Being is aware of him and sees everything that he does. This is corroborated by his words: "...for He sees you." These two spiritual states bear the fruit of direct experiential knowledge of Allah and fear of Him. This was explicitly stated in the same narration on the authority of 'Amaara ibn al-Qa'qaa' by his words upon him be peace: 'It is that you fear Allah as if you see Him.' This was the same in the narration related by Anas. *Imam an-Nawwawi* said: "It means that you must be scrupulous in the above mentioned courtesies since you see Him and He sees you. This is done, however, because He sees you and not because you see Him. This is because He sees you forever. Thus you are obligated to perfect your worship and make it excellent even when you do not see Him. Thus the implications of this prophetic tradition is that if you cannot see Him, you must persist in the perfection of worship and its excellence because He sees you. This extent in the meaning of this prophetic tradition is an immense foundation from the foundations of the religion and an important principle from the principles of the Muslims. It is the support of the champions of truth, goal of the spiritual wayfarers, the treasure of the gnostics and the customary practice of the righteous. This prophetic tradition constitutes the comprehensive speech which was given to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Indeed the people of spiritual realities encourage people to be among the assemblies of the righteous so that this can be a preventative from be drawn by anything from deficiencies, out of respect to them and shame. So how is it for the one whom Allah is constantly aware of in secret and in open?" Thus, we realize that *Ihsan* comes in two spiritual stations: the first as is he said is: "That you worship Allah as if you saw Him" which is the

highest of stations; and the second is his words: "...if you do not see Him, then He sees you"; which is the lowest of the two stations.

Abd'l-Jalil ibn Sulaym said: "The first of the stations is divided into three divisions. The first is the station of Islam which is that all matters of the sensory world are three: disobedience, obedience and that which is lawful for one's livelihood. As for the division of disobedience it is further divided into different varieties. For the servant is commanded to know that Allah sees him, so when he considers doing an act of disobedience and knows that Allah sees and perceives every state and that He knows the treachery of the eyes and what is hidden in the recesses of the breast; he thus holds himself back from disobedience and reverts from it. However, humanity both neglects and overlooks the fact that the gaze of Allah is upon him and he forgets during his disobedience that Allah sees him. Or he is a person who is completely ignorant and assumes that Allah ta'ala is far and remote from him; and fails to remember and realize that Allah ta'ala is the one who moves his limbs when he performs an operative action. He, thus, forgets that. Or he is ignorant and falls into disobedience unknowingly. If he knew and realized for example that his parents or an important person were to see him during his disobedience, that would stop him from committing it and he would inadvertently flee from that. Similarly, if the servant knew that Allah saw him during his disobedience then he would desist from it by means of the proof of the spiritual excellence inherent in him. This spiritual excellence is thus an evidence which Allah ta'ala provides him with similar to what was related regarding Prophet Yusef, upon him be peace. This spiritual excellence stands as clear knowledgeable evidence that Allah ta'ala exists in reality and that He perceives everything, manages everything and is the Prime Cause of every movement and stillness. Thus whomever Allah ta'ala causes to experience this evidence during all important matters, it will ward off from him every evil and the repulsive actions in all detestable matters. Second is the station of obedience. It is that you realize that Allah ta'ala exists and you stand as a proof with Him that He sees you without doubt, except that he has become a renegade heretic who pays no attention to the Lord. Even though he may recognize the existence of Allah, yet he abandons worship. He leaves it neglectfully due to the deficiency of the proof of spiritual excellence with him. This is the spiritual state of those who forfeit the obligations due to their ignorance of the extent of His affair. The third is from permissible matters; which is always the locus of heedlessness and forgetfulness from that high station of spiritual excellence. For when the servant remembers that Allah ta'ala sees him during the discharging of his affairs and that He sees him by his drawing near to Him and diminishing his turning away from Him, he thus becomes embarrassed that He would see him devoted to lowly transient matters, drowning in his preoccupation with them from His remembrance and on drawing near to Him. The second spiritual station is in the world of the unseen where the servant when he reflects upon the places of the Hereafter such as death, the grave, the gathering, the presenting of deeds, the reckoning and other than these; and he then realizes that he will be presented to Allah ta'ala in that world and its places, he thus rushes to make himself presentable for that presentation. He thus adorns himself for the Hereafter with the adornment of the people of the Hereafter in what he is capable. As for the third spiritual station in *Ihsan*, it is that the servant when he realizes what is in the hearts of His *awliyya*, he thus seeks to remove destructive qualities, purifies his heart from these and seeks to be described with praiseworthy qualities until his inner secret becomes like a mirror in which emerges his words: '...as if you see Him.

If you do not see Him, He sees you'." Here ends what Abd'l-Jalil said and what he said is priceless.

Thus *Ihsan* is to be intense in sincerity to Allah ta'ala with obedience and attentive awareness to Him in all social behavior with His creatures in all things. The reality of *Ihsan* is that you be in all your states the way the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was in those same states. If it were not for him Allah ta'ala would not have created Adam or anything besides him from His creation. For, Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was what was originally desired in bringing creation into existence, because He did not create humanity or *jinn*, or He did not create the whole of existence except to worship Allah ta'ala; meaning to know Him directly. There is nothing in creation which worships Allah ta'ala and knows Him the way that our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace worships and knows Him. He is, as the *Sultan* of the scholars, my master *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn al-*Habib* al-Meknesi described him: "...the first of the lights which overflowed from the immense oceans of the Divine Essence. He is the first to be realized in the worlds of the hidden and the manifest of the meanings of the Divine Names and Attributes. He is the first to give praise and worship with the varieties of forms of worship and drawing near to Him." It is for this reason that my master Abu Hamza al-Baghdadi, may Allah be pleased with him said: "There is no guide on the path to Allah ta'ala except in following the Beloved, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Whoever causes his soul to adhere to the courtesies of the *Sunna*, Allah will illuminate his heart with the lights of gnosis. For there is no path more noble than in following the Beloved, may Allah bless him and grant him peace in his commands, actions, words and character."

This in essence, is the reality of *Ihsan* which is the inward branch of the religion. Its pivot is purifying the heart until it is acutely aware of Allah ta'ala in all states. Allah ta'ala says: "*Behave with spiritual excellence, for indeed Allah loves those who are spiritually excellent.*" Allah ta'ala says: "*Give good news to those who are spiritually excellent.*" He says: "*Indeed Allah will not cause the reward of those spiritually excellent to perish.*" He says: "*Indeed the mercy of Allah is near those who are spiritually excellent.*" He says: "*Indeed Allah is with those who are spiritually excellent.*" He says: "*Likewise do We redeem those who are spiritually excellent.*" He says: "*We will increase those who are spiritually excellent.*" He says: "*Is the reward for spiritual excellence anything more than spiritual excellence?*" He says: "*and likewise do We reward those who are spiritually excellent?*" and other than these from the *Qur'anic* verses which incite humanity to the stations of spiritual excellence (*ihsan*).

The meaning of the words of the man: "Inform me about the Hour?"; is inform me about the time of the Hour; or as it was related in another narration: "When is the Hour?" The questioner did not intend by his question: 'Inform me about the essential nature of the Hour or inform me about what the the Hour is'; because at that time the affair of the Hour was a matter well known to all the Muslims. For, Allah ta'ala had clarified the essential nature of the Hour in many *Qur'anic* verses in the beginning of Islam up until that time. Allah ta'ala says: "*Oh mankind fear your Lord indeed the quaking of the Hour is an immense thing. The Day when you see each mother neglect her suckling child and when every pregnant woman will lay aside her burden; and you will see mankind as drunk but they will not be drunk. However, the punishment of Allah will be severe.*" Allah ta'ala says: "*Indeed the Hour is coming, there is no doubt about it; and Allah will resurrect those who are in the graves.*" He says: "*And the Day the Hour is established the guilty ones will swear*

that they only tarried an hour; likewise they used to invent falsehoods. Those who were given knowledge and faith will say: 'You have tarried for a time recorded in the Book of Allah until the Day of Resurrection. This is the Day of Resurrection, however you were unawares. On that Day those who were unjust their excuses will be of no avail to them, nor will they be postponed'." This affair of the Hour was an issue that was well known with the Muslims then. Thus, the man did not ask about the essential nature of the Hour, but he asked about when the Hour would occur. In another narration of Muslim on the authority of Abu Farwa: "Then, he, (the Prophet) bowed his head and did not answer him. Then the man repeated it three times without receiving an answer. Then the Prophet raised his head and then said: 'The one being questioned knows no more about it than the one questioning'." In this is an indication of the superiority of our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace over the Angels and the remainder of the Messengers; because our master 'Isa ibn Maryum once asked Jibril about the Hour and his wings began to shake and he said: "The one being questioned knows no more about it than the one questioning." Then Jibril asked the same question to our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace showing recognition of his knowledge, superior bounty and his priority in existence; and Allah knows best.

The meaning of his words, upon him be blessings and peace: "The one questioned knows no more about it than the one questioning"; is that just as you do not know, likewise I do not know of it. Allah ta'ala has clarified in many Qur'anic verses that no one knows the exact time of the Hour except Him. Allah ta'ala says: "They ask you about the Hour: 'When will Its appointed time be established?' Say: Indeed its knowledge is with my Lord. No one can reveal Its time except Him. Its burden has over weighed the heavens and the earth. It will only come upon you suddenly'. They ask you as if you were well acquainted with it. Say: 'Verily its knowledge is with Allah, however most mankind are unawares'." Alla ta'ala says: "Mankind ask you about the Hour. Say: 'Verily its knowledge is with Allah, it is not known whether Hour is near'." He says: "With Allah is the unseen of the heavens and the earth and the matter of the Hour will only be like the blinking of the eye or closer. Indeed Allah has power over all things." He says: "Verily Allah with Him is the knowledge of the Hour." He says: "Blessed be the One to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, and with Him is the knowledge of the Hour." All the above means that neither the Angels, the messengers, the prophets, the *awliyya* from men or *jinn*; or other than them from the creation of Allah knows the exact time of the Hour, except Allah ta'ala. This answer from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace gives evidence that it is necessary for the scholar, the one who gives legal judgments and others, when they are asked about something which they do not know to say: 'I do not know' or 'I have no comprehension'; and this admission does not diminish him. On the contrary, it gives evidence of his scrupulous piety, fearful awareness and the true depth of his knowledge.

The meaning of the words of the man: "Then inform me about its signs?"; is its preconditions, prerequisites, its tokens and its antecedents, It is said that it means its minor affairs or tokens which signal its completion. The phrase '*ammaara*' (conditions) in the plural of '*amara*'; where every sign which is enumerated then these are its conditions. The Arabs say: "They are the conditions that are between you and I." (*hiya 'ammaaratun maa baynee was baynaka*); that is to say: 'its signs or tokens.' In the narration of the same prophetic tradition of al-Bukhari the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said after acknowledging his lack

of knowledge of exact time of the Hour: "...I will inform you about its prerequisites"; which means: however, I will speak to you about some of its signs. In the narration on Abu Farwa he upon him be peace said: "However it has signs by which it is known." This means that the Hour has preconditions by which the nearness of its occurrence will be known. In the narration of Sulayman at-Taymi, he upon him be peace said: "However, if you wish, I can foretell about its prerequisites"; and the questioner said: "Certainly."

The meaning of his words upon him be blessings and peace: "When the servant girl gives birth to her mistress"; is her master or owner, male or female. In another narration he said: "...when slave girl gives birth to her temporal lord"; which means this is a direct reference to concubines. It is said that it means that slave girls will give birth to a monarch where mother of this monarch will be from the number of his subjects. Thus, he becomes, in effect, her master and the master of others from his subjects. This was the interpolation of Ibrahim al-Harbi. The likeness of this is what we see today in the kingdoms of the Arab peninsular where many of the mothers of the Arab princes are from concubines. It is said that it means that the circumstances of the people will become so corrupted in the end of time in which many will purchase the children of concubines; and their increase will be enhanced in the hands of those purchase them until a person will end up purchasing his own child unawares. It is conceivable based upon these words that this is not just specific to concubines; because it encompasses a description of others as well. For, a servant girl can give birth to free person without her master; or she can give birth to a child who becomes manumitted by either marriage or through illicit sex. Then the servant girl can be purchased in two forms: either through valid sale and she is exchanged through hands until her own child eventually ends up purchasing her. This manner is more prominent and general in the affair of concubines. The bottom line, is that the scholars ancient and modern, have differed about the meaning of these words in about seven different interpolations. Among them being that what is meant by 'temporal lord' (*rabb*) is the one who raises, trains and educates. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalaani said: "The bottom line of this prophetic tradition is that it is an indication that the Hour as it approaches it will occur during the overturning of customary affairs where those who needing education and training will become the educators; and lowly will become the socially elevated." This is related to the one of the other signs of the End of time: when the barefooted will become kings in the earth; as it will be discussed next.

The meaning of his words, upon him, be blessings and peace: "...when you see the barefooted..."; is that the expression '*hufaat*' (barefooted) is plural for '*hufwa*' and means someone who has nothing on his feet with something that covers the foot or shoes. The meaning of his words, upon him be blessings and peace: "...naked..."; is that the expression '*uraat*' is plural for '*urwa*' (nakedness) and means someone who is bare of clothing. This means those who do not wear the kind of clothing normally worn in the cities. The meaning of his words, upon him be blessings and peace: "...destitute..."; is that the expression '*aalat*' is plural for '*aa'il*' and means impoverished. Its root etymological root is from the expression '*aylat*' which means poverty. A man becomes destitute (*aala*) when he is impoverished with poverty (*ya'eelu 'aylatan*); that is to say he becomes destitute. Thus, the destitute (*aalat*) are the impoverished (*fuqara*). The meaning of his words, upon him be blessings and peace: "...herders of sheep competing in the constructing of tall buildings"; is as it was cited in the narration of al-Bukhari: "...the herders of camel." The expression '*ra'aa'u*' is plural for '*ru'aat*' (shepherd or

herder). In another narration he upon him be blessings and peace said: "...when the herders of small beasts compete in building tall buildings"; where the expression 'bahm' is plural for 'bahima' and means the small offspring of goats and sheep. In another narration he upon him be blessings and peace said: "...become the leaders of people"; and means that they will become their rulers and chiefs. In the narration of Isma'il, he upon him be blessings and peace said: "...the dumb and deaf will become the monarchs of the earth"; and means that they will be extreme in their description of ignorance and their hearing and sight will not be able to be utilized in the affairs of the religion in anything; even though their physical organs will be sound. Some of the Companions interpolated that the meaning of barefooted and naked to refer to the Bedouin Arabs; and thus its meaning is that the people of steppes and semi-deserts and their like from the people normally in need, impoverished and ignorant will have governments and worldly matters extended to them in the End of time until they will eventually end up competing with one another in constructing edifices. The meaning of the expression 'tataawwala' (constructing tall) in the narration of al-Bukhari is that they will boast with one another in the constructing of tall buildings and this phenomenon will increase. Al-Khaṭaabi said: "What is meant here is a reference to the herders of camel and sheep, the Arab Bedouin and the people of desert steppes who follow after the places of rainfall and who have no settled home." Thus, when the lands are eventually conquered, settled and then these Bedouin Arabs will eventually gain control of the kingdoms who will then compete with one another in the constructing of tall edifices as we see openly in these times of ours in the Arab cities of Abu Dhabi and Jeddah. Al-Qurtubi said in his *at-Tadhkira*: "The objective of this narrative is to inform about the transformation of circumstances where the people of desert waste lands will gain control over the political affairs of the people, gain mastery over the lands by force and increase in wealth. Then they will expend all their resolve in constructing edifices and being ostentatious over them."

In the narration of al-Bukhari the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: "...in five signs which no one knows except Allah." This means that there are five signs of the time of the Hour included among the matters of the unseen which only Allah knows. Abadallah ibn Mas'ud, may Allah ta'ala be pleased with him said: "Your prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace came with the knowledge of everything except those five matters." Thus, it is not permissible for anyone to claim that he knows anything from the five matters. Whoever claims knowledge of anyone of these five matters without attributing it to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is a liar in his claim. In the another narration of al-Bukhari it says: "Then the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace recited: *'Indeed Allah with Him is the knowledge of the Hour'*." This means that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace recited this verse to the end of the chapter *Luqman*; as it was stated explicitly in the two narrations of Isma'ili and 'Amaara and it is His words: *"Indeed Allah with Him is the knowledge of the Hour. He causes the abundant rain to descend. He knows what is in the wombs. No soul knows what it will earn tomorrow and no soul knows in what land it will die. Indeed Allah is knowing aware."*

The meaning of the words of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah ta'ala be pleased with him: "Then the man got up and left"; is that he left and departed from the presence of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and his Companions. In the narration of al-Bukhari: "He then turned away"; which means he turned away from them as it was stated explicitly in the narration of Abu 'Aamir: "He then turned away from them." In the narration of Sulayman at-Taymi he

said: "He then got up and then turned away." What is meant by his leaving is that he became hidden and veiled from them as it was stated explicitly in the narration of al-Bukhari. The meaning of the words of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah ta`ala be pleased with him: "We then sat there for some time"; is that we remained there for a long time or a long period. In another narration he said: "He sat there for some time"; meaning by that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was the one who remained sitting for a long period without speaking. Each of the narration, however, is sound because both an-Nawwawi and al-Baghawi said that `Umar ibn al-Khattab actually left after the man got up and departed. Then `Umar remained for three nights and after three days he was again in the presence of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and he explained to him who the man was. However, in the narration of Abu Hurayra who was present with the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace at the time `Umar ibn al-Khattab left; he said: "Then he then turned away"; which means that the man then turned away as it was stated explicitly in some of the narrations.

In the narration of al-Bukhari the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Go and return him"; that is to say: go and retrun the man to me. In the narration of Sulayman at-Taymi, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Bring the man to me"; which means return that man to me. Then some of those present got up to return him. Abu Hurayra then said: "But they did no see anything"; which means that they did not see anything from the man's traces or the path he took. In the narration of Sulaymn at-Taymi: "We then sought him out in every manner possible, but we were unable to find him." This was because he had become veiled from them or he had ascended into the heavens as is required of an Angel. This in fact was explicitly stated by Abu `Aamir in his narration. In the narration of Abu Farwa, then he upon him be peace said: "By the One who sent Muhammad with the truth, I did not know better than any of you who the man was. Indeed he was Jibril." In the narration of Abu `Aamir the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Glory be to Allah! That was Jibril who came in order to teach the people their religion. By the One in whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, he never came to me and I did not know who he was except this time." In the narration of Sulayman at-Taymi he said: "Do you all know who that was? That was Jibril, who came to you in order to teach you about your religion. So take from him, for by the One in whose Hand is my soul, he never came in that resemblance before this time. For, I did not recognize him until he left." All that occurred after the man got up and left was not seen by `Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah ta`ala be pleased with him because he left just after the man left. It is for this reason `Umar did not narrate these events in his narration.

The meaning of his words upon him be blessings and peace: "O `Umar, do you know who the questioner was?" He said that after three nights had passed as we previously cited. In this prophetic tradition is evidence for the permissibility of a scholar questioning his disciples or students about an issue in order to further clarify it or in order to have insight into the boundaries of their knowledge regarding it. The meaning of the words of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah ta`ala be pleased with him: "Allah and His messenger know best"; is that it is conceivable that he said this because he did not know the answer. It is also conceivable that the answer of who he was reached him from some of those who remained present with the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Thus he knew the answer and said: Allah and His messenger know best'; out of courtesy and in order that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace could increase him in wisdom, comprehension and

certainty. He said: ‘Indeed, it was Jibril, who came to you to teach you your religion’.”

The meaning of his words, upon him be blessings and peace: “Indeed it was Jibril who came to you to teach you your religion”; is that Jibril came to you in order to instruct you that *Iman*, *Islam* and *Ihsan* all together is called the religion. In this is an indication that increase in knowledge does not unfold except by means of unequivocal transmission. The attribution of instructions to Jibril is metaphorical because he was the causative factor for the answers provided by the Prophet, upon him be peace. It is for this reason that the Prophet ordered us to take from him as Ibn Hajar said in his *Fath’l-Baari*. He, upon him be peace also said: “...in order to teach the people their religion”; is evidence that the excellent question is called knowledge and instructions because nothing emerged from Jibril except questions; as we cited previously.

The *Shehu* said, may Allah be merciful to him: “**These three sciences**”; that is to say, the science of the foundation of the religion, the science of jurisprudence and the science of spiritual purification are the sciences: “**...that verify**”; i.e. corroborate: “**...them**”; meaning these three sciences: “**...are the sciences of the deen (ulum'd-deen)**.” This means that they are the foundation of the sciences of the religion from which emerge all the remaining sciences; such as the science of grammar, the science of inflection, the science of conjugation, the science of eloquence, the sciences of logic, the science of prosody, the science of speech, the science of *Qur’anic* exegesis, the science of *Qur’anic* recitation, the science of the chains of authority, the science of prophetic traditions, the science of the men of narration, the science of the foundation of jurisprudence, the science of inheritance, the science of calculations, the science of medicine, the science of the stars, the science of cosmology, the science of the Divine realities and other than these from the sciences which branch off from these three sciences: i.e. the science of *Iman*, the science of *Islam* and the science of *Ihsan*.

“**And**” it is these sciences “**that were intended by his words upon him be blessings and peace as related in the tradition of Ibn Maja**”; in his *Sunnan*. He was Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Yazid, known as Ibn Maja. He was a traditionist, legal proof and *Qur’anic* exegetist who authored the *Sunnan*, a work of history and a *Qur’anic* exegesis. He was born in the year 209 A.H. Ibn Maja was a meticulous memorizer and critique of the sciences. He was truthful and vast in knowledge. He died on a Monday and was buried on the Tuesday eight days remaining from *Ramadan* in the year 273 A.H. We received license (*ijaaza*) in his *Sunnan*, from my support in the sciences of the *shari`a*, my proof in the sciences of the *tareeqa* and my lamp in the sciences of the *haqeeqa*, the learned jurist, the *Imam* and *Khateeb* Shaykh Muhammad al-Amin ibn Adam Kari`angha ibn Muhammad Tukur ibn Muhammad Sanbu ibn Muhamamd Leeli ibn Abu Bakr ibn `Amir Hadajiya Muhammad Sanbu Dirnema, may Allah be merciful to them who gave me license in the entire text, and all the licenses and books of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`. He took it from his father Shaykh Adam Kari`angha. He on the authority of Shaykh Musa al-Muhajir. He on the authority of Shaykh `Ali ibn Abi Bakr. He on the authority of the author the light of age, the reformer of the religion *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, may Allah be merciful to him. He on the authority of his paternal and maternal uncle, his teacher Abu Muhammad Muhammad ibn ar-Raj at-Turuudi al-Fulani as-Sudani with license, on the authority of his teacher Abu`l-Hasan as-Sindi al-Medini by listening to it through the reading of Bahri al-Effendi, on the authority of Muhammad al-Hayyat, on the authority of *Shaykh* Abdullah ibn Saalim al-Basri; on the authority of *Shaykh* Abu

Abdullah Muhammad ibn `Ala`d-Deen al-Balbili al-Miṣri; on the authority of al-Burhan Ibrahim ibn Ibrahim ibn Hassan al-Laqaani and Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Halbi, both on the authority of as-Shams Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ar-Ramli, on the authority of the *Shaykh* of Islam Zakariyya, on the authority of Abu`l-Faḍl ibn Ḥajr with his reading of the majority of it and license in the remainder, on the authority of Abu`l-`Abbas Ahmad ibn `Umar ibn `Ali al-Baghdadi al-Luulawi with his reading of it, on the authority of the traditionist Abu`l-Ḥajjaj Yusuf ibn `Abd`r-Rahman al-Muzani by his listening to the whole of it, on the authority of the *Shaykh* of Islam `Abd`r-Rahman ibn Abu `Umar ibn Qudaama al-Miqdasi by his listening, on the authority of *Imam* Muwaffaq`d-Deen Abdallah ibn Ahmad ibn Qudaama by listening, on the authority of Abu Ru`at, on the authority of al-Miqqawami al-Qazwini by listening; who said: Abu Talḥa al-Qaasim ibn Abu`l-Mundhir al-Khaṭeab informed us; who said: Abu`l-Hassan Ali ibn Ibrahim ibn Salma al-Qattan related to us (*haddathunaa*); who said: on the authority of the traditionist and author of the *Sunnan* Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Yazid ibn Maja al-Qazwini.

Ibn Maja related this prophetic tradition on the authority of Hisham ibn `Amaar ibn Naṣeer as-Salami ad-Damashqi on the authority of Anas ibn Malik ibn an-Nadar al-Anṣari who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: **“Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim.”** This prophetic tradition was also related by at-Tabarani on the authority of Ibn Mas`ud. It was also transmitted by al-Bayhaqi and al-Khaṭeab on the authority of `Ali ibn Abi Talib. However, Ibn Maja related this transmission with additional expressions. The complete text of the traditions is: “Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim. And depositing knowledge with other than its rightful people is like adorning pigs with precious jewelry, pearls and gold.” Ibn Abd`l-Barr related on the authority of Anas using his expressions: “Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim. The one who seeks knowledge everything seeks forgiveness for him, even the fish of the oceans.”

The meaning of his words, upon him be peace: “Seeking knowledge”; is that which is necessary from beneficial knowledge which is obligatory upon every responsible person to know and act in accordance with. The meaning of his words, upon him be peace: “...is obligatory...” is that it is individually obligatory; or it means in an unrestricted sense that the seeking of the science of the *shari`a* is obligatory. Part of it is individually obligatory and part of it is a collective obligation. The meaning of his words, upon him be peace: “...upon every Muslim”; is inclusive of every Muslim woman as well as it was related explicitly in the prophetic tradition. Thus, seeking the sciences of the religion is an obligation upon every responsible Muslim man and woman. Al-Bayḍawi said: “What is meant by knowledge in this context is that knowledge which is absolutely necessary for the servant to learn; like the gnosis of the Creator, knowledge of His oneness, the prophethood of His messenger and how to pray. Indeed this knowledge is an individual obligation.” *Shaykh* as-Sahrawardi said: “It is said that it includes the science of sincerity with the knowledge of the destructive nature of the souls and what corrupts and invalidates actions; because sincerity is what is demanded of knowledge.” It is said that it is the science of the knowledge of thoughts and notions since by means of it one knows the distinction between the notions of an Angel and the notions of a devil. It is said that it is seeking knowledge of what is lawful to the extent that knowing the consumption which is lawful becomes obligatory. It is said that it is the science of buying, selling, marriage and divorce since entering into anything from these matters makes seeking that knowledge obligatory. It is said that it is seeking the knowledge of the five

obligations upon which Islam is constructed. It is said that it is the science of Divine unity by means of reflection and proof. It is said that it is seeking knowledge of the inward and in what increases the servant in certitude. All these diverse interpolations were explicitly cited by *Imam* al-Qaari in his Sharh Musnad Abi Haneefa.

The *Shehu*, may Allah ta'ala be merciful to him said regarding the meaning of the desired knowledge mentioned in the above prophetic tradition: **“And what is meant by this knowledge is only the science of behavior (*ulum'l-mu`amila*) as the scholars (may Allah be pleased with them) have said.”** The etymological root of the expression '*mu`amila*' (behavior) comes from the word '*amal*' (action). You say: So-and-so acted with an action (*amal fulaanun al-`amala*), thus he behaves with an action (*ya`maluhu `amalan*) and he the actor (*fa huwa `aamilun*). Thus, behavior is the dynamic movement which emerges from the body and heart of the servant. It applies specifically to action because it is the words and actions connected to the bodily limbs and the heart. Some of the scholars, may Allah ta'ala be merciful to them, apply the expression '*mu`aamilaat*' (social behavior) to all the obligations, the highly recommended acts, the lawful acts, the reprehensible acts and the forbidden acts from the legal judgments of the *shari`a*; such as doctrines of belief, the prayers, the obligatory alms, fasting, marriage, divorce and the remainder of the matters related to the affairs of this world's life with respect to the continuity of the individual such as buying, selling, license, contracts, the governmental authority and the like. The *Shehu*, may Allah be merciful to him limited the meaning of social behavior (*mu`aamilaat*) to the religious responsibilities and the individual obligations such as doctrines of belief, purification, prayer, the obligatory alms, fasting, pilgrimage, the purification of the heart from repulsive character and the adornment of the heart with meritorious character. It is for this reason that he composed his own work which he named Kitaab `Uluum al-Mu`aamilaat regarding the sciences of the religious responsibilities. He named it 'the sciences of social behavior' (*uluum'l-mu`aamilaat*) because social behavior is an expression which refers to the science of the covenant to behave in accordance with the prerequisites and conditions of *Iman*, *Islam* and *Ihsan*.

The *Shehu*, may Allah ta'ala be merciful to him said: **“The behavior that we have been made responsible”**; that is to say, made obligatory or which has been enacted by law; **“for”** us from the obligatory sciences upon every responsible individuals; thus it is named the science of the responsible person or the science religious responsibilities. *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Yusef al-Kaafi said: “The responsible person (*mukallaf*) is the one responsible for establishing and performing the religious responsibilities (*takleef*). It means to adhere to what is in it as a responsibility or to seek out what is in it as a responsibility.” The prerequisites for religious responsibilities as Abd'l-Waahid ibn `Aashir said are:

“Every religious responsibility comes with the precondition of reason

Along with maturity defined by menstrual blood or by pregnancy

Or by sperm or by means of the growth of facial hair

Or by the age of eighteen years when it manifest.”

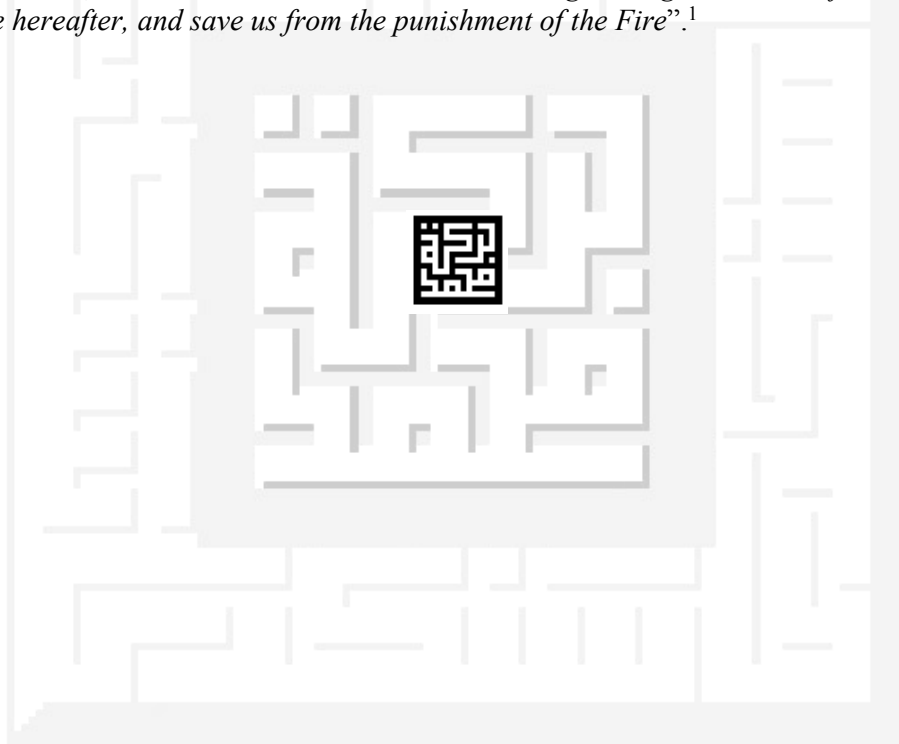
The meaning of his words: “...what we have been made responsible for” is what we have been made responsible for from the obligatory sciences as individuals and collectively together are: **“...divided into three parts”**; i.e. three divisions. The first one is: **“tenets (*al-`itiqaad*)”**; an refers to what is to be believed as doctrines of belief in the hearts from belief in Allah, His Angels, His heavenly Books, His messengers, the Last Day, and other than these from the doctrines of belief of sound faith. The expression '*itiqaad*' (tenets of belief) is what is to be believed in the heart

from faith. Its etymological root is from the word ‘*‘aqd*’ (contract) and emerges from the verb ‘*‘aqada*’ (to agree) and ‘*ya‘aqidu*’ (he concurs) when he is absolutely certain about a thing. It is the opposite of ‘to unravel’ (*halla*). Allah ta‘ala says: “*And the nearest of kin and those which your right hand has made a contract with.*” Abu Zayd said in the meaning of the words of Allah ta‘ala: “*and those which your right hand has made a contract with*” it is an affirmative and binding contract. Thus, tenets of belief is what one believes firmly in the heart. The jurists utilize the phrase to refer to various contracts from business transactions. The scholars of the legal foundations utilize the phrase to refer to determination and resolved belief; as the *Shaykh* of our teachers, al-Murtaḍa az-Zibidi said. Ibn Mandhūr said in his *al-Lisaan*: “You say when a cord is tied that it is ‘*ma‘quud*’ (tightened). Likewise with a covenant from which we get the phrase ‘*‘uqdat’n-nikaah*’ (a contract of marriage) and ‘the cord is tied tightly’ (*an‘aqada ‘l-hablu in‘iqaadan*).” Allah ta‘ala says: “*O you who believe fulfill your contracts*”; meaning your covenants. It is said that it refers to the obligations which you must adhere to. Az-Zujjaj said that the meaning of: ‘*fulfill your contracts*’ is that Allah is addressing the believers with fulfilling the contracts which Allah ta‘ala has contracted with them and the social contracts which some of them make with others which the religion necessitates. The second is: “**doing (fi‘il)**”; which is the actions which have been lawful for you from the obligations, the highly recommended and the permissible which are firmly established by the *Sunna*; either by the bodily limbs such verbally acknowledging the words of the *shahada*, the prayer, the obligatory alms, fasting, pilgrimage and other than these; or by the heart such inward acceptance of the existence of Allah, His divinity, His lordship, acceptance of prophethood and other than these from the beliefs of the after-life; as well as adorning the hearts with praiseworthy traits such as repentance, fearful awareness, austerity, reliance, leaving matters over to Allah, praise, gratitude and other than these from the redemptive qualities. “**And**” the third is; “**avoiding (tark)**”; which means the abandoning or avoiding of everything which has been made lawful to abandon, such as the prohibitions, reprehensible deeds and invented heretical innovations either by the limbs such as prostrating to idols, making partners with Allah, acts of disobedience and other than these from sins; or by the heart such as denial of the existence of Allah, denial of His Oneness, denial of His lordship, rejection of what the messengers came with from necessity, upon them be peace, relinquishing from the hearts all of the blameworthy traits such as arrogance, conceit, anger, stinginess, showing-off, love for rank, love for this world’s life and other than these from destructive character traits.

The *Shehu*, may Allah be merciful to him said: “**These three sciences**”; that is to say these three sciences of behavior which are the science of the foundations of the religion, the science of the *shari‘a* and the science of the Divine realities: “**that we have been made responsible for**”; i.e. made obligatory for: “**are understood by al-imaan, al-islam, and al-ihsaan: the first**”; that is tenets of beliefs **by**”; learning: “**the first**”; i.e. by learning the science of the foundation of the religion or Divine unity which is *Iman*; “**the second**”; that is doing: “**by**”; learning: “**the second**”; i.e. by learning the science of the *shari‘a* which is *Islam*; “**and the third**”; that is to say avoidance has been responsible; “**by**”; learning: “**the third**”; i.e. by means of the science of the Divine realities or secrets or spiritual purification; which is *Ihsan*. Thus, *Iman* is tenets of beliefs with the heart. *Islam* is the compliance the limbs; and *Ihsan* is direct witnessing with the inner secrets. It has been related in a sound prophetic narration that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “*Islam* is actions. *Iman* is acceptance. *Ihsan* is direct vision.” The master

of these three stations is the one responsible for the three religious responsibilities, as the Knower of Allah, Sidi Ahmad ibn Mustafa al-Mustaghanimi said in his al-Manhi'l-Quduusiyya: “There are religious responsibilities for his corporeal body, religious responsibilities for his spirit and religious responsibilities for his secret. For each level among them there is a particular spiritual service. The spiritual service of the corporeal body is *Islam* and its religious responsibilities. The spiritual service of the spirit is *Iman* and its tenets of beliefs. The spiritual service of the secret is *Ihsan* and its direct witnessing. Thus, whenever the master of these stations becomes weakened in one of the descriptions from these descriptions, then he is deficient with regard to the others.”

The *Shehu*, may Allah be merciful to him said: “**Success is with Allah**”; that is to say that success is from Allah ta`ala in what he said, in what he delivered, and in what is understood from it. It is complete, and with its completion, I have completed the second part of the commentary from the first chapter of the 'Umdat'l-'Ulama called 'Uddat'l-Fuqara `Ala Tareeq al-Asfiya Fee Sharh `Ala 'Umdat'l-'Ulama (The Groundwork of the Impoverished Upon the Path of the Purified Regarding a Commentary Upon the *Support of the Scholars*) during the time of *dhuhr*, Thursday the 29th of *Dhu'l-Hijja*, 1436 A.H. (October 23, 2014) in the city of Cotonou, Benin West Africa, and success is with Allah. “*Our Lord give us good in this life and good in the hereafter, and save us from the punishment of the Fire*”.¹

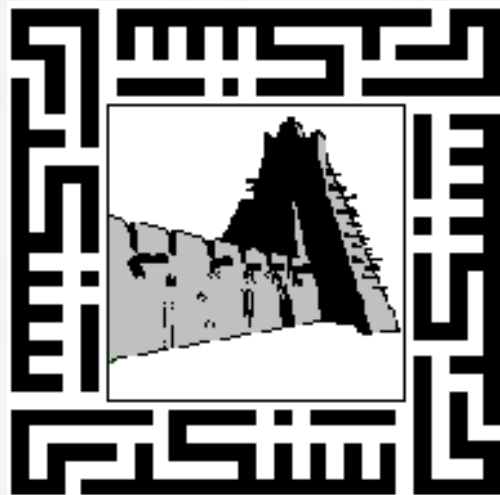


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¹ With the praises to Allah ta`ala and the best of His assistance, I completed the translation of this work into English at the call to prayer for *`asr* on Monday, the 2nd of *Sha`baan*, 1437 A.H. (May 9, 2016) at the *zawiyya* of *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye` in Zerni Yirimadio district of Bamako, Republique Du Mali, West Africa.

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