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Institute of Islamic - African Studies International

'Uddat'l-Fuqara'



The Groundwork of the Impoverished

by

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ صَلَّيْهِ اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِهِ مُحَمَّدٍ
 وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا أَلْعَبْدُ الْفَقِيرُ الْمَذْمُورُ
 لِرَحْمَةِ رَبِّهِ عُثْمَانُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ تَعَزَّاهُ الْمَعْرُوفُ قَابَاةُ
 يَوْهَنَّا تَعْمَدُ اللَّهُ بِرَحْمَتِهِ وَأَمِينُ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
 وَأَجْزَلُ الصَّلَاةِ وَأَتَمُّ التَّسْلِيمِ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى
 آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ وَرَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنِ السَّادَاتِ
 التَّالِعِينَ وَالْعُلَمَاءِ الْعَامِلِينَ وَالْأَيُّمَةِ الدَّرَجَةِ الْمُحْتَضِرِينَ
 وَمَقَلَدِيهِمُ الْيَوْمَ الدِّينِيَّ أَمَّا بَعْدُ وَهَذَا كِتَابُهُ عَمْدَةُ
 الْعُلَمَاءِ نَاجِعُ الْأَشْيَاءِ اللَّهُ لَمْ يُولِ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْفَاسُ مَيِّتَةٍ
 عَمْدَةُ الْعُلَمَاءِ لَا نَامَا أَوْ رَدْنَا فِيهِ الْأَيَّاتُ الْكُتُبُ
 وَأَحَادِيثُ الْمَنَاقِبِ وَهَمَّا مَعْتَمِدُ فِيهِمْ أَجْتَهَادُ
 وَاسْتِثْبَاتُكُمْ وَالذَّكُّ وَفَقُولُ الصَّوَابِ أَدَّ كُلُّ
 مَنْ تَقَسَّكَ بِهَا لَا يَنْفُلُ فِي الْمَوْكَافِ صَلَّيْهِ اللَّهُ
 عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَزَكَّتْ وَيَكْمُرُ أَمْرِي لَا تَضَلُّوا تَضَلُّوا

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

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

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. There is no might or power except with Allah the Exalted the Immense.

Peace and blessings be upon our master Muhammad, the generous Unlettered Prophet who was sent as a mercy to all the worlds, and was made '*kind and compassionate to the believers*'; and upon his Companions and purified family, and those who follow them in spiritual excellence until the Day of Judgment.

Says the most destitute slave in dire need of the mercy of his Lord, the one chained with his abundant sins, veiled by his ignorance, impotent in his articulation due to the ungrammatical utterances of his tongue – Abu Alfa Umar Muhammad Shareef bin Farid, may Allah forgive him, his parents, family, children and all those related to him – Amen. All praises are due to Allah who: '*taught the Qur'an, created humanity and taught them clear articulation*'; who lifted the veils of secrets from the divine realities in the hearts of the scholars, the possessors of crystalline gnosis; '*who taught by means of the Pen; taught humanity that which they did not know*'; who opened the breasts of the spiritually realized to accept the secret of His Most Holy Essence; who '*taught Adam all the Names*' and settled His love in the spirits of the lovers; who '*placed over every possessor of knowledge one more knowing*'; and who guided to the nearest of His paths the spiritual journey of those sincere.

All praises are due to Allah who favored us with the blessings of *Iman* and *Islam*; and who guided us to *Ihsan* by means of the Living *Sunna* of our master and chief Muhammad, the Unlettered Prophet; who is the breaking dawn of the lights of Divine Oneness, the first appearance of the secrets of Lordship, the resplendent full moon of the eternal Divine realities, the bridegroom of the presence of universal compassion, the light of every Messenger and their radiance, the secret of every Prophet and their guidance, and the intrinsic nature of every *waliy* and their continuity. Upon him be the most joyous, the most favorable, the most perfect, the most correct, the most pure, the most fulfilling, the most harmonious and most superior blessings with the most abundant greetings and peace; and upon his pure family and Companions all of them. To continue:

I was asked by an *amir* whose affair is immense, whose good is abundant and whose command is matchless – I mean by that, *Amir* al-Hajj Tahir Umar Abdallah, may Allah strengthen us by his days, extend his age and connect him to the shade of Allah on earth, the redeeming *Qutb Sultan* al-Hajj Abu Bakr ibn *Sultan* Muhammad at-Tahir ibn *Sultan* Muhammad Bello Mai Wurno ibn *Sultan* Muhammad at-Tahiru I ibn *Sultan* Ahmad Zaruk ibn *Sultan* Abu Bakr Atiku ibn *Amir 'l-Mu'mineen*, the Light of the age, the sword of Truth, the renewer of the religion, the *Imam* of the *Awliya*, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, may Allah engulf him and all of them in His mercy – Amen. He asked me to gather together a commentary and annotation of the book *Umdat'l-'Ulama* of the reviver of the religion and *Sunna*, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`. At the time he requested this of me, I was preoccupied with the emigration, as well as the afflictions and plots from the disbelievers of America and their helpers from among the hypocrites. At that time I could not find an opportunity to answer his request until I was able to make the *hijra* and return to the *Bilad's-Sudan*. Thus, when I arrived, with the praises to Allah, and eventually rejoined with my family and children safely, I was able to answer his request, hoping by that to attain for me and him the immense reward and encompassing good by being included among those about whom the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Whoever obeys me has obeyed Allah, and whoever obeys my *amir* has obeyed me.

Whoever disobeys me has disobeyed Allah and whoever disobeys my *amir* has disobeyed me.” I also hoped to avoid the severe threat delineated in that definitive prophetic tradition: “Whoever is asked about some knowledge, and then conceals it, Allah will bridle him with a bridle of fire.”

Therefore, I say and success is with Allah, that I have studied this book repeatedly with many scholars from the *Bilad’s-Sudan*. In particular, I studied it four times in Maiurno, Sennar in present day Sudan, with my spiritual guide, my support and lamp, 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 Sanbu Darneema, may Allah ta`ala be merciful to all of them. He gave me license in it, just as he took it from his father, *Shaykh* Adam Kari`angha; and he from *Shaykh* Musa al-Muhajir and he from *Imam* Ali ibn Abu Bakr; and he from the blessed author, the Light of the age, the renewer of the religion, the *Imam* of the *Awliya*, the sword of Truth, the *Amir’l-Mu’mineen*, my master *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, may Allah engulf him in His mercy – Amen.

I have named this commentary and annotation: ‘Uddat’l-Fuqara ‘Ala Tareeq’l-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*). It will be of benefit, if Allah ta`ala wills, to those who rely upon it from among the common Muslims and their spiritually elite. I ask Allah ta`ala that He make it purely for His Generous sake, for He is sufficient for me and the best of guardians, since there is no power nor might except with Allah, the Exalted the Immense.

I say: and with Allah is my full reliance: the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said: **‘In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful’**. This of course, is the renowned *basmalla* which encompasses the greatest immense Name of Allah that when it is supplicated by it answers are given and when it is asked by it, it gives. Gathered in this pronouncement are the sciences of the first and the last. The *Wazir* and minister of public welfare, Abd’l-Qaadir ibn Gidadu ibn Layma said in his Bast’l-Fawaa’id wa Taqreeb’l-Maqaasid: “The learned Abu’l-Abass Sidi Ahmad ibn Abd’l-Aziz said in his commentary upon the al-Mukhtasar: The reason matters commence with the *basmalla* is out of imitation of the Generous *Qur’an* and the *Sunna* of the generous Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, as well as following what has been related from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace in the best traditions, following the behavior of the excellent spiritual masters and the narratives of the righteous exemplars. As for the *Qur’an*, it commences in both expression and transcription in the *al-Fatihah* and every chapter except *at-Tawba*. As for the *Sunna*, it is well known in the prophetic traditions that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace commenced all of his correspondences with the *basmalla*.”

My master *Shaykh* Muhy’d-Deen Abd’l-Qaadir al-Jaylani said in his al-Ghunya Li Taalib ‘l-Haqq: “The People of spiritual realities have always maintained that the meaning of the expression - in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful – is an invocation, and a means of taking blessings. They have incited humanity to commence all of their words and deeds with the *basmalla*, just as Allah *subhaanahu wa ta`ala* opened His Mighty Book” Further, the use of the *basmalla* is a confirmed *Sunna* of the previous Prophets, upon them be blessings and peace. The Prophet Sulayman, upon him be blessings and peace began his letter to the Queen of Ethiopia and Yemen with it. Allah ta`ala says: “It is from Sulayman and it is in the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.” Consequently, the Prophet, may Allah

bless him and grant him peace commanded us to invoke it in all our affairs, as it was related by Abd'l-Qaadir ar-Rahaawi in his al-Arb a'een on the authority of Abu Hurayra that he said: "Every matter of importance which is not begun in the name of Allah, then it is severed." In another version of this prophetic tradition he said: "...then it is cut off"; and in yet another he said: "...then it is clipped." The bottom line is that the transmitted teachings regarding the *basmalla* are an abounding ocean whose ultimate goal cannot be attained nor can its end be reached. The scholars have transmitted that whoever desires to study knowledge in the manner which is necessary and wants to attain the objectives related to that science, then it is incumbent upon him to recite the *basmalla* abundantly. The advantages of the *basmalla* cannot be truly enumerated. For those who desire to know some of these advantages, then let him examine the book Qiraa'l-Ahibaa of the gnostic *Shaykh* Muhammad Tukur ibn Muhammad, as well as the Bast'l-Fawaa'id of the above mentioned government minister *Wazir* Abd'l-Qaadir ibn Gidadu.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said: **"...may Allah bless our master Muhammad and upon his Family and Companions and give them much peace..."** He said this following the words of Allah ta'ala: *"Verily Allah and His Angels send blessings upon the Prophet, O you who believe send blessings upon him and much peace."* He also did this out of obedience to the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace when he said: "Whoever sends blessings upon me in a book, there will persist Angels who seek forgiveness for him as long as my name remain in that book." Allah willing, I will again cite some persuasive words regarding the inner meanings, secrets and advantages of sending blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: **"Says the poor slave in need of the mercy of his Lord..."** He said this out of recognition of the absolute absence of power in every respect whether in his essence or in his non-essential human qualities. He designated himself as: 'poor slave in dire need' as a way of describing the reality of his essence as servitude, impoverishment, poverty, need and other than these from the attributes which are the reality of humanity and creation. As for the expression 'servant', it refers to someone owned who is not free. It is said that it refers to any human whether he be free or slave, since by nature he is sustained and owned by his Originator *'izza wa jalla*. Allah ta'ala says: *"be in servitude to your Guardian Lord"*; which means be among the slaves of Allah. This address is directed to all creatures from men and *jinn*; rather it is addressed to everything besides Allah *'izza wa jalla*.

As for the expression 'poor', it refers to a person that is in abject need and has nothing to himself. Allah ta'ala says: *"O mankind it is you who are poor with regard to Allah and Allah is Independently Rich and Praiseworthy."* *Shaykh* al-Hatimi said: "The impoverished one is he who is in need of everything and nothing is in need of him. In the opinion of the realized ones the impoverished one is the pure absolute slave, whose state in the reality of his existence is the same as his state in the reality of his non-existence." *Shaykh* Ibn al-Hajj said regarding the impoverished one: "He is the one who has left worldly affairs behind him and has turned towards his Hereafter in preoccupation with his Lord; and has embarked upon the correction of his soul and purifying it of 'otherness'. For each heart in which there resides other than Allah is in the realm of abandonment and dejection. And in each heart in which nothing resides besides Him, glory be to Him the Exalted there occurs spiritual openings, Self manifestations and intimate converse in his secret in congruence with the strength of his spiritual state."

The *Wali* Abu Yazid al-Bustami, may Allah be merciful to him said: “The Absolute Being once said to me: ‘Draw near to Me with that which is not Mine: humiliation and impoverishment’.” *Shaykh* Ahmad ibn `Ajiba, may Allah be pleased with him said: “As for the truly dependent and impoverished he is deficient of everything except Allah. He has rejected everything which preoccupies him from Allah. It is for this reason that the masters of this station say: ‘The truly impoverished one is he who does not control nor is he controlled.’ This means that he does not own any created thing and no created thing owns him. The prerequisites of the person of this station are four: [1] elevated spiritual purpose; [2] excellent service; [3] extolling that which is sacred; and [4] piercing determination.” Impoverishment is the causative factor for the appearance of Divine gifts and it is for this reason that the gnostic Ibn `Aṭa’illah said in his *al-Hikam*: “If you desire the appearance of Lordly gifts to descend upon you, then it is incumbent upon you to reinforce yourself with impoverishment and want; for *‘indeed the alms are for the destitute’*.” This refers to the outward material alms which are for the impoverished and needy of worldly wealth as well as the inward Divine alms which are for the impoverished and needy of spiritual wealth.

As for the expression ‘the one in dire need’, it refers to someone in straightened circumstances. Its etymology is from the word detrimental. Allah ta’ala says: “... *as for the one in straightened circumstances...*” and refers to a person compelled to consume carrion and other forbidden items; where his affair has become constrained due to hunger; or where the dangers of an empty stomach coerces a person to consume what is forbidden. Allah says: “...*without being covetous...*” for other needs; “...*and without being repetitive...*”; that is to say, consuming what is forbidden repeatedly beyond what is required of necessity or to allay death; “...*for indeed Allah is Forgiving Merciful.*” This means that Allah ta’ala will not hold him accountable for that. The *Shaykh* of our spiritual guides, *Imam* Muhammad Murtada az-Zabidi said: “The expression dire need means to urgently require something.” Thus, the one in dire need of the mercy of his Lord is the one who desperately requires Allah ta’ala in all things until he becomes as he was in the beginning of his affair, completely absent and anonymous without existence, ‘*a thing unremembered.*’ It is in the darkness of this prior pure non-existent state that the Absolute Being showers upon him from His light, spirit and mercy. Thus, he comes to experience through immediate tasting that this primordial emptiness is the reality of the affair for all of creation. For, everything is in dire need and want of the mercy of his Lord. This spiritual station flows from the words of Allah ta’ala: “...*It is You that we worship and it is You that we seek help.*”

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: “**Uthman ibn Muhammad ibn Uthman, famous as Ibn Fuduye**” He was the *Amir*’l-Mu’mineen the reformer Abu Muhammad Sa’d, Uthman ibn Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Saalih ibn Haruun ibn Muhammad Ghurṭu ibn Muhammad Jubba ibn Muhammad Sanbu ibn Maasiran ibn Ayyub ibn Buuba Baaba ibn Abu Bakr ibn Musa Jakolli ibn *Imam* Danbuba at-Turudi al-Fulani as-Sudani. He was known in the Hausa tongue as ‘Dan Fodio’. The expression ‘*dan*’ in Hausa means the ‘son of’ and ‘*fuduye*’ in the language of Fulfulde’ means ‘the jurist’. That is to say, that his father, Fuduye’ Muhammad was a majestic scholar well known for his erudition and piety. As for the mother of the author, she was Hawa the daughter of Muhammad ibn Faṭima bint Muhammad ibn Abd’s-Samad ibn Ahmad as-Shareef ibn Ali Yanbui’ ibn Abd’r-Razaaq ibn as-Saalih ibn al-Mubaarak ibn Ahmad ibn Abi al-Hassan as-Shadhili ibn Abdullahi ibn Abd’l-Jabaar ibn Tamim ibn Hurmuz ibn Hatim ibn Qusay ibn Yusef

ibn Yusha' ibn Wardi ibn Baṭaal ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Eiṣa ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hassan as-Sabt ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib and Faṭima az-Zahra, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and his pure family and pleasing Companions. See the introduction for a brief sketch of his life.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: “**...may Allah engulf him in his mercy, Amen**”; that is to say may Allah envelope him and enfold him in it. At-Tabaraani has narrated a prophetic tradition on the authority of Usama ibn Shurayk that the Prophet may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “There is no one who will enter Paradise by means of his actions.” They said: ‘Not even you?’ He said: “Not even myself, except if Allah engulfs me completely in His mercy.” Abu 'Ubayd said: “The meaning of his words ‘engulfs me completely’, is to completely enclose me, to completely surround me and conceal me by means of His mercy.” There is no doubt that this was the case with the Messenger of Allah, upon him be blessings and peace since Allah ta'ala said about him: “*We have not sent you except as a mercy to all the worlds.*” Clearly, the indication made in the statement of the *Shehu*, by ‘the mercy of Allah ta'ala’ is to the Prophet of Mercy, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Thus, his words: “may Allah engulf him in his mercy”, means may Allah engulf him in the character of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, envelope him in his Living *Sunna*, and flood him with the abundant overflowing of his illuminations, and Allah ta'ala knows best.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: “**All praises are due to Allah the Lord of the worlds.**”, keeping to the pattern set by the Infallible Book of Allah when He says in its Opening: “*All praises are due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds*”; and acting according to the judgment of his words, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: “Every important affair that is not begun with the praises to Allah and sending blessings upon me, then it is cut off”; as it was related by Abd'l-Qadir ar-Rahaawi in his *al-Arba'een* on the authority of Abu Hurayra. For praise was the first speech which our father Adam, upon him be peace articulated when the spirit from his Lord was blew into him. Allah ta'ala willing, the last of our supplications will be: “*...that all praises are due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.*”

For praise, with respect to creatures, is extending adoration with the heart, the tongue and the limbs to the Praiseworthy with His beautiful attributes with the objective of exaltation; whereas, praise, with respect to the Creator, is His extolling Himself with all the varieties of praises, as well as His praise for the spiritually elite of His servants from His Prophets, Angels and *awliya*. *Shaykh* Maa' l-'Aynayn said in his *Daleel'r-Rifaaq*: “Praise is divided into four divisions: two pre-eternal praises and two in-time created praises.” The two pre-eternal praises, as we cited previously, are those related to the Eternally Pre-Existent, by His extolling Himself and His praises for the purified ones from His servants. The praises given by in-time creation for Allah is accomplished through the hearts, the tongues and the bodily limbs and emerges from every segment of creation, as Allah ta'ala says: “*There is nothing except that it glorifies Him with His praises.*” Some of the scholars say that praise is the essence of gratitude based upon his word, upon him be blessings and peace: “Praise is the fountainhead of gratitude.” It is said that praises is done with the heart and tongue, while gratitude is accomplished with the bodily limbs in various forms of obedience to Allah.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said in his Tareeq'l-Janna in an abridged form: "O brothers...praise and gratitude is incumbent upon you for two matters. The first is in order to make blessings persistent. The second is in order to achieve increase. As for the persistent of blessings, it occurs because gratitude is that which binds blessings. By means of gratitude blessings persists and by abandoning gratitude blessings depart. Allah ta'ala says: *'Indeed Allah does not change what is with a people until they change what is with themselves.'* As for achieving increase, there are the words of Allah ta'ala: *'If you are grateful I will increase you'.*" The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Praise for blessings is the guardian against them departing."

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said in his Kitab'l-Wird: "It is a right upon us that we praise Allah with the praises that are due Him, as an incumbent obligation without limit." This means that we must praise Allah without limit, for His infinite blessings, with the gnosis of our hearts, the glorification of our tongues, the obedience of our bodily limbs and with every variety of our worship. Allah ta'ala says: *"If you were to try and enumerate the blessings of Allah, you could not count them, Indeed Allah is Forgiving Merciful."* The brother of the *Shehu*, the most erudite scholar of the *Bilad's-Sudan*, the professor, Abdullahi ibn Fuduye' said in his Ta'leem'l-Anaam "It is said regarding His exalted words: *'If you were to try and enumerate the blessings of Allah, you could not count them, Indeed Allah is Forgiving Merciful'*; these are His blessings which emerge by means of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace." This means that it is not conceivable to count the blessings of Allah, or to even begin encompassing them due to their abundance; such as the blessings of hearing, sight, the establishment of the physical form, well being, wealth, existence, Islam, knowledge, Divine gnosis and other than these. All of these blessings are from Allah and the causative factor for the blessings of Allah is our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. For if it were not for him, Allah would not have created these blessings, nor would He have created anything from creation; as it has been transmitted in the sound prophetic traditions. It is for this reason that it is incumbent upon us to love him, upon him be peace, follow his *Sunna*, behave with his character traits and send blessings upon him forever. *Shaykh* Ali al-Qaari said in his commentary upon the as-Shifa: "Indeed he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace is a mercy to the whole of the creation of Allah...If it were not for the light of his existence and the appearance of his nobility and generosity, the heavenly orbits would not have been created nor would the Angels have been brought into existence. For, he is the locus of the manifestation of Divine mercy which extends the realities of existence to all things; he is that created being which mandated the blessings of coming into existence; and then he is the act of Divine kindness which reinforces existence."

It is for this reason that the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him then said: **"Abundant blessings and the most perfect peace be upon our master Muhammad"**, that is to say, the blessings of Allah and His peace be upon the Prophet because there is no blessing and peace more superior or more perfect than that given by Allah. This is because, in reality, there is no beginning nor ending to His actions. For, His blessings and peace persists with His eternal persistence which has no end. Allah ta'ala says: *"Verily Allah and His Angels send blessings upon the Prophet."* So, since the *Shehu*, praised Allah *subhaanahu wa ta'ala* and extolled Him with the praises due Him, by his words: 'All praises are due to Allah the Lord of the worlds'; then it is a part of the gratitude to Allah to be grateful to the means, following the

principle set by the words of Allah: “*O you who believe send blessings upon him and abundant peace.*”

There is no means or intermediary of the blessings of Allah more immense, expansive and perfect than our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace...For, showing gratitude to the means is gratitude towards the Cause. He, upon him be blessings and peace said: “Whoever is not grateful to people is not grateful to Allah.” It is for this reason that it is incumbent to be grateful to our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace by sending abundant blessings and peace upon him. The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said in his Kitab’l-Wird: “Sending unlimited blessings upon the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace is incumbent upon us as an eternal obligation.” It is for this reason that a part of the litanies of the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him was to send blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, endlessly. It was by means of the *baraka* of sending blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace that the *Shehu* achieved Divine magnetism. Allah reinforced him with overflowing illumination and the greatest spiritual unveiling, since he persisted in sending blessings without exhaustion, laziness or pause. Likewise, this was a part of the litanies of his community; as one poet said regarding the sages of Sokoto:

“In it are righteous servants whose innate nature is
To send blessing upon the chosen one night and day
In it they send blessings a thousand times and two thousand after that
And then proceed to recite all of the litanies of the *Qaadiriyya*.”

The complete *qutb*, *Shaykh* Maa’l-`Aynayn ibn *Shaykh* Muhammad al-Faḍl, may Allah be merciful to both of them said in his al-Maraafic `ala ‘l-Muwaafic: “Realize that what is desired from the servants in sending blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace is increase in it. As for its achievement, it was realized before the coming into existence of creation, based upon the words of Allah ta’ala: “*Verily Allah and His Angels send blessings upon the Prophet.*” The sending of blessings of Allah ta’ala upon the Prophet, upon him be peace transpired prior to the existence of every created thing. Among the advantages of sending blessings upon the Prophet are: atonement of errors; the purification of actions; the raising of spiritual rank; the forgiveness of sins; sufficiency in worldly matters and the Hereafter; redemption from the remaining terrors; being measured with the measure of fulfillment; seeing ones place of nearness in Paradise before death; the beautification and enrichment of assemblies and the discharging of debts. Among the advantages of sending blessings upon the Prophet, upon him be blessings and peace are: it is a victorious help against enemies; it purifies the heart of hypocrisy, hardness and inflexibility; it necessitates companionship with the believers and finally, only a hypocrite can hate the one who sends blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.”

The brother of the author, the most erudite of the *Bilad’s-Sudan*, *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye’ said in his Diya’l-Qawaa’id: “There is no doubt that sending blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is from among the most noble of the rites of the religion. Subsumed beneath it are all the stations of spiritual certainty. When Allah revealed His words: ‘*Verily Allah and His Angels send blessings upon the Prophet*’; the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: ‘Indeed Allah has made me independent of your sending blessings upon me. However, Allah ‘*izza wa jalla* commands you to do it as an ennobling miracle for you’.” A poet said:

These nobilities have you ever heard the like of them

Therefore be persistent in all hours perfuming them with its fragrances
Send blessings upon him and send him peace, and this will suffice you

For the best that you can gather for yourself is settling under its abode.

The sending of blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace is the spiritual ascent (*mi'raaj*), for the student who has not encountered a guiding *shaykh*. He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: 'The sending of blessings upon me is illumination in the heart, and it will be illumination upon the *Siraat*.' When this illumination enters the heart darkness leaves it and the heart becomes rightly guided. Whenever spiritual aspirations become difficult for you, and then do much sending of blessings upon him, for he is the means between you and your Exalted Lord. He is the guide for us to Him. The ontological support of the entire creation from the Prophets to the *awliya*, comes from him, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This is because all of their good deeds are shown to him, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. By means of sending blessings upon him, illumination is earned, and darkness cannot be removed except by means of illumination. What is meant by darkness is that which is related to the lower soul from impurities and what is related to the heart from the reverberations of those errors which preempt the heart from good. In reality no one can achieve following his actions and character except by going to the extremes in love for him; and this cannot be achieved except by means of much sending blessings upon him. For when you love a thing you increase in mentioning it. He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: 'Every supplication is veiled until one sends blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad.' This was related by at-Tabaraani in his *al-Awsat*."

The *Shehu* named the Prophet 'master' following his words, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: 'I am the master of the children of Adam and this is no boast'; and his words, upon him be peace: "I am the master of humanity on the Day of Judgment." The Knower of Allah, *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Manlaa said in his *as-Safeena'l-Qaadiriyya*: "The *sayyid* is the one who leads his people (*yasuudu qawmahu*), which means that he takes priority over them due to what is in him of the traits of perfection and complete nobility. It is said that the *sayyid* is the perfected one whose need is required by other unrestrictedly, or he is the most immense of the people who is needed by others. It is said that the *sayyid* is the one who is the head of his people (*ra'as qawmihi*). It is said that he is the ruler (*maalik*) that is is incumbent for the people to obey. It is for this reason one says: 'the master of the slave' (*sayyid'l-ghulaam*). One does not say: 'the master of the reward' (*sayyid't-thawwaab*). It is said that the *sayyid* is the one who is forbearing (*haleem*). It is a name used unrestrictedly to a husband based upon the words of Allah: '...and he encountered her master just beyond the door.' This is the definition of *sayyid* based upon the teachings of the linguists. As for its meaning with the people of *Qur'anic* exegesis; Ibn Abass said: 'The *sayyid* is the one who is generous (*kareem*) with regard to his Lord *izza wa jalla*.' Qatada said: 'The *sayyid* is the forbearing scrupulously pious servant (*'aabid wara'a haleem*).' Ikrama said: 'The *sayyid* is the one whose anger never overcomes him.' The mastership of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace is the most majestic, the most apparent and so clear that there is no need to proffer evidence for it. He is the master/leader of the entire cosmos absolutely without restriction and without limitation in this world and the Next." There are more like this from the priceless words of the Knower of Allah, *Shaykh* al-Manlaa, may Allah be merciful to him. Whoever desires to examine them, let him refer back to his *As-Safeena*. The *Shehu*, may Allah be merciful to him also named him 'Muhammad' because it is the

most renowned of his names. His grandfather, Abd'l-Muttalib named him 'Muhammad' on the seventh day of his birth, on his *'aqeeqa*. It was said to him: 'Why did you name him with such a name when it was not the name of any of your fathers?' He said: 'I desired that he be praised in the heavens and the earth.' It is said that it was his mother, Amina, who commanded that he be named 'Muhammad' before he was born.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said: “**...and upon his Family...**”, that is to say, the people of his household. The etymology of the expression ‘aal’ is from the verb ‘to attribute’, like when you say: ‘it is attributed (*aala*) to something’; which means that it refers (*raja`a*) back to it or returns (*`aada*) back to it. Thus, the family of a man refers to his wives, children and descendents who are attributed by lineage to him or those who are connected to him. Allah ta`ala says: “*We gave to the family of Ibrahim the Book and the Wisdom*”; referring to his immediate family and those who follow him in his religion. Thus, the meaning of the “family” of Muhammad is his wives, children, and descendents. It is said that it refers to his followers. It is said that it refers to his *Umma*.

The soundest opinion is it refers to the people of his household, who are forbidden to accept public alms, but who are given the right to the fifth of the spoils of war. They include the core of the Banu Hashim and the Banu Muttalib, who are the ones Allah chose from His creation after His Prophet, blessings of Allah be upon all of them. It is related in a prophetic tradition: “Public alms are not permissible for Muhammad and the family of Muhammad.” Ibn al-Athir said: “There is disagreement regarding the family of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace to which public alms are forbidden.

The majority of the jurists uphold the opinion that they include the people of his house. That is to say, his wives, children, Ali ibn Abi Talib and his children and descendents from Faṭīma, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace; Ja'far ibn Abi Talib and his children; `Aqil ibn Abi Talib and his children; al-Abass ibn Abd'l-Muttalib and his children; and al-Haarith ibn Abd'l-Muttalib and his children." *Qadi* Abu Fadl `Iyad said in his As-Shifa: "There is unanimous agreement regarding the permissibility of sending blessings upon other than the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace." Among these for whom it is lawful to send blessings upon are his family, as the Messenger of Allah, himself, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "O Allah make Your blessings and *baraka* be upon the family of Ahmad"; in which he was referring to himself; meaning people of his household.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said: "...and **Companions...**"; that is to say, may the best blessing and most perfect peace be upon all of his Companions. This statement is further evidence for the permissibility of sending blessings upon those other than the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace as *Qadi* `Iyad said: "It is related in a prophetic tradition of Ibn Umar that he used to send blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, Abu Bakr, and Umar may Allah be pleased with them. This was cited by Malik in the al-Muwatta from the narration of Yahya al-Andalusi." The Companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace were every man and woman among humans and *jinn* whom Allah distinguished with seeing the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, listening to his words, accepting Islam during his time and assisting him and died as Muslim; even if their companionship with him was a single day.

The *Shehu* said in his Ihya's-Sunna: "Indeed Allah *`izza wa jalla* distinguished them with establishing His religion and elevating His words...For, Allah distinguished them with distinctions that it is impossible for anyone to measure up to even the dust of a single one of them, let alone measure up to their actions. Indeed Allah, *`izza wa jalla* distinguished them with seeing His Prophet, upon him be peace, witnessing his miracles and witnessing the descent of the *Qur'an* upon them fresh and new. They took it directly from the mouth of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, just as he took it directly from the mouth of Jibril, upon him be peace. He also distinguished them with fighting in front of His Prophet, assisting him, giving victory to him, humiliating and destroying disbelief and raising and elevating the banner of Islam. They memorized the verses of the *Qur'an* which descended piecemeal, little by little. Allah also made them deserving of protecting it until they did not neglect even a single letter from it. They gathered it together and made it easily assessable to those who would come after them. They conquered the lands and regions on behalf of the Muslims and paved the way for them. They preserved the traditions of their Prophet in their breasts and established them against what would necessarily emerge from grammatical mistakes, errors, forgetfulness and heedlessness." For, Allah distinguished them with distinctions that He did not give to any people before or after them. He says regarding them: "*You are the best community which has emerged for humanity.*"

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said: "...all of them"; that is to say, blessings and peace of Allah upon all the Companions of the Prophet without exception, from the people of his household, the emigrants, the *Ansaar*, and others. In this he made no distinction between them. In this is a secret from the secrets of the *Shehu* regarding his belief about the nature of the sanctity of the Companions of our

master Muhammad, blessings of Allah and His pleasure be upon them. This is because there has been transmitted sound narratives delineating that love for the people of the household of the Prophet, his Companions, the *Muhajiruun*, and *Ansaar* and showing enmity to those who show enmity to them is among the signs and tokens of true faith. It has been related by Ahmad, Abu Dawud and at-Tirmidhi on the authority of Abdallah ibn Mas'ud that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Do not convey anything to me about my Companions except good. I like going out to them and my heart is at rest." In another narration: "No one should allow there to reach me anything regarding any of my Companions." The meaning in both traditions is prohibition. It means 'do not allow anything to reach me from anyone of you among mankind, regarding anyone of my Companions. Or it means from anyone who comes after them from his *Umma*. In another narration: "...anything about my Companions...", which means any words which are reprehensible regarding them or which would cause Divine anger to afflict the speaker, such as abusive speech (*shatim*), harmful words or other than these from actions or words. This means that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace forbade any reprehensible speech regarding his Companions except that which intends to convey wellbeing, benefit and increases the excellence about them. Ibn'l-Malik said: "This prophetic tradition means that the Prophet wished to leave this world while his heart was content with his Companions and not having any anger against anyone of them."

The bottom line is that this prophetic tradition is among the abundant narratives which prohibit abusing the Companions of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace or to believe any evil regarding them. Al-Baghawi related this prophetic tradition in his *as-Sunna* in the chapter regarding the Divine threat of slander as evidence that this prophetic tradition is a general prohibition against backbiting and slander. Specifically, it is a prohibition against abusing the Companions of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. However, subsumed in these narrations are the obligations of having respect for them, acting virtuously regarding them, recognizing their rights, imitating them, giving excellent praise of them, seeking forgiveness for them and being silent regarding the controversies that occurred between them; as *Qadi 'Iyad* clarified in his *as-Shifa*".

He also said in his *as-Shifa* on the authority of Hudhayfa, may Allah be pleased with him that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Obey and follow those who come after me, Abu Bakr and Umar." He also said: "My Companions are like the stars; whichever one you follow, you will be guided." It has been related on the authority of Anas, may Allah be pleased with him that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "The likeness of my Companions is like salt in food, for food cannot be suitable except with it." He also said: "Allah! Allah!; regarding my Companions. Do not take them as targets after me. For, whoever loves them, he loves them due to his love for me. Whoever hates them, he hates them due to his hatred of me. Whoever harms them has harmed me. Whoever harms me has attempted to harm Allah. Whoever attempts to harm Allah, then Allah will soon seize him." He also said: "Do not insult my Companions; for, if anyone of you were to expend gold the amount of mount Uhud, it would not equal even a hand span or half of that of anyone of them." He also said: "Whoever insults my Companions, then upon him is the curse of Allah, the Angels and people all together. Allah will not accept anything from him." He also said: "When my Companions are mentioned, hold your tongues."

He also said in a prophetic tradition of Jabir's: "Indeed Allah chose my Companions above the entire world, with the exception of the prophets and messengers. He chose for me among them Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali. He made them the best of my Companions, and in all of my Companions is good." He also said: "Whoever loves Umar, has loved me. Whoever hates Umar has shown hatred towards me." Malik ibn Anas and others related from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: "Whoever hates the Companions and abuses them, and then he has no right from the spoils of war of the Muslims." Then the verse from the chapter called *al-Hashr* was recited: *"And that which Allah gave as spoils to His messenger from them, you did not urge any horse or riding camel for the sake thereof, except that Allah gave His messenger authority over which He wills. Allah is Omnipotent over all things. That which Allah gives as spoil to His messenger from the people of the townships, it is for Allah and His messenger, the near of kin, the orphans, the needy and the wayfarer, that it not become a commodity between the rich among you. And whatever the messenger gives you, take it. Whatever he prohibits you, then abstain from it. Keep your duty to Allah, and behold Allah is severe in punishment. The spoils are for the poor fugitives who have been driven from their homes and their belongings, seeking by that the bounty of Allah and His pleasure. They are those who assist Allah and His messenger. These are the sincerely loyal ones. And those who entered the city and entered the faith before them, love those who fled to them for refuge. They do not find in their breasts any need for what was given to them, but they prefer them to themselves though poverty became their lot. Whoever is redeemed from their own avarice, such are those who are successful. And those who came after them say: 'Our Lord forgive us and our brothers who came before us in the faith, and do not place in our hearts any rancor towards those who believe. Our Lord indeed You are Kind and Merciful'."*

It has been related by Abu Nu'aym on the authority of Abd'r-Rahman ibn 'Awf that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said: "My intercession is lawful except to the one who insults my Companions." In the narration of ad-Daylami he said: "...except for the one who abuses my Companions." In short, he upon him be blessings and peace prohibited all of mankind until the Day of Judgment from insulting the Companions, the pleasure of Allah be upon them, in order to protect and preserve their honor and to not make any distinctions between them. It is for this reason that the *Shehu* utilized the expression: 'all of them', in order to include them under the sanctity of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said: **"May Allah be pleased with the best of the Followers..."**; that is to say, may Allah ta'ala be pleased with the generation after the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. They were known as the *Tabi'uun*, who were responsible for meticulously delineating the matter of the *shari'a* in the most precise manner, They were those who took the legal judgments, the exegesis of the *Qur'an* and the prophetic traditions from the mouths of the Companions, may Allah ta'ala be pleased with them. The *Tabi'uun* achieved an abundant portion in establishing the religion, since they saw and encountered those who accompanied the one entrusted with the *shari'a*, upon him be blessings and peace. It is for this reason that they are better than all those who come after them.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said: “...the right acting scholars...”; that is to say, may Allah ta’ala be pleased with the scholars or knowers of Allah and the *awliya* of the people of the *Sunna* and *Jama’at* who acted according to their knowledge from among the third generation. They were known as the *Taabi`’t-Taabi`een*, who inherited the sciences and spiritual stations from the *Tabi`uun*. The *Shehu* said in his *Ihya’s-Sunna*: “It was among them that there emerged the jurists who are followed; those who removed difficulties, who were the authentic authorities regarding legal actions and judicial cases. This third generation found the *Qur’an*, with the praises of Allah, completely collected and assessable, and discovered the prophetic traditions already established according to the requirements of the principles of the *shari’a*. They then extracted the fundamental principles of the *Qur’an* and prophetic traditions. They also deduced from these many advantages, gave legal decisions, established these decisions upon the requirements of the foundations, put in writing the collected works, and made the principles of the *shari’a* assessable to the people. They were the ones responsible for removing the problematic issues of the religion by extracting the legal branches from their foundations, referring the branch back to its legal root and clarifying the root from its branch. They were able to systematize the circumstances of the *shari’a* and thus, because of them, the matter of the religion was made firmly affixed for this Muhammadan *Umma*. Subsequently, they also achieved a distinction in establishing this religion, by encountering those who saw those who saw the one entrusted with infallibility, upon him be peace. They were, as the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said, the inheritors of the sciences and spiritual stations of the Prophets, based on his words as related by Abu Ya’ala in his *Musnad* on the authority of Abu’d-Darda: “Indeed the scholars are the heirs of the Prophets. The Prophets are not inherited in gold or silver. They are inherited in knowledge. Whoever has taken knowledge has taken a portion of prophecy.”

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said: “...the four *mujtahid Imams*...”; that is to say, may Allah ta’ala be pleased with *Imam* Malik ibn Anas, *Imam* Abu Hanifa Nu’mān, *Imam* Muhammad ibn Idris as-Shafi’ and *Imam* Ahmad ibn Hanbal, may the pleasure of Allah be with them. These were also from among the blessed *Taabi`’t-Taabi`een*; however the *Shehu* singled them out for mention because they were the axis of their legal opinions, the poles of their differences and the sources of their legal branches. The *Umma* unanimously agreed that these four *Imams* are the leaders of the schools of thought leading back to the source of the *shari’a*. The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said in his *Tawfiq’l-Muslimeen*: “Each of them was a *mujtahid* in the religion of Allah, and their schools of thought are paths which connect to Allah ta’ala.” He also said after a little: “The scholars of the *Sunna*, may Allah be pleased with them unanimously agree that whoever follows a school of thought from these four schools, will encounter Allah safely and that school of thought will connect him to Paradise.”

These three blessed generations: the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace; the *Tabi`uun*; and the *Tabi`’t-Taabi`een*, may the pleasure of Allah be with them; they are the best generations that have ever emerged from the first and last of humanity. They are as the *Shehu* said about them in his *Ihya’s-Sunna*: “...those about whom the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace testified to regarding their spiritual merit and superiority, by his words: ‘The best generations, are my generation, then those who follow them, and then those who follow them’. Nothing remains to be established for those coming after them. Rather, everyone who comes after them is a blind follower (*muqallid*) of

them in the majority of issues and adheres to them. If there emerges a jurisprudence other than their jurisprudence, or some legal advantage other than their legal advantages; then all of that will be thrown back at him. The path of these three generations is the religion of Allah which is required to adhere to. Whatever contradicts it is heretical innovation and error which will be thrown back at its doer without being accepted.”

These three generations are the people known as the righteous ancestors (*as-salaf as-saalih*) and no one can be called ‘*salafi*’ except them. As for those who, in our times, claim that they are ‘*salafi*’; they are in reality the people of deluded whims, heretical innovation and error. This is because they anathematize the People of Allah and murder the Muslims without right. They have abandoned the praiseworthy Muhammadan character traits, which are the source of the *Sunna*, while claiming, at the same time that they are ‘the people of *Sunna*’. The genuine people of the *Sunna* are those who have annihilated their souls in love of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, inwardly and outwardly.

I say: from the perspective of spiritual indication that subsumed in this supplication of the *Shehu*, is every knower of Allah who is followed and imitated in their school of thought. This is its meaning in the outward. As for its inner meaning, it is an indication of the four *mujtahid Imams* who are the four spiritual poles who exerted every effort on the Path to Allah and His gnosis. They were *Shaykh* Muhy’d-Deen Abd’l-Qaadir al-Jaylani, the gnostic *Shaykh* Ahmad ar-Rufai’, the gnostic *Shaykh* Ahmad al-Badawi and *Shaykh* Ibrahim ad-Dasuqi, may the pleasure of Allah be with them and may He ennoble their secrets.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said: “**...and upon those who follow them until the Day of Judgment...**”; that is to say, may Allah ta’ala be pleased with those who follow these three generations and adhere to their Path in spiritual excellence until the Day of Judgment. The etymology of the expression ‘*muqallid*’ (follower) is from the verb ‘to entrust’, like when you say: ‘*qalladahu ‘l-amr*’ (He entrusted himself to the matter); that is to say, that he adhered to it without question. This expression of course has a metaphorical meaning as *Shaykh* az-Zabidi cited in his *Taaaj’l-Uruus*. To adhere to a matter means to take it on as a burden. One says: ‘*qalladtuhaa qilaadatan*’ (I held to it blindly), which means I placed it upon my neck as a responsibility. From this derives the expression ‘*taqleed fee’l-fiqh*’ (adherence in matters of jurisprudence) or ‘*taqleed ‘l-wulaat ‘l-a’maal*’ (adherence to the government officials). All these usages are metaphorical as it was also cited in the *Taaaj*. Thus, the ‘*muqallid*’ is the one who has not yet reached the rank of *mujtahid*. Every person who has not attained the rank of the *ijtihaad*, then he is a *muqallid* with respect to the *mujtahid*. It is incumbent upon the common people and those intermediate to follow the scholars and place their teachings upon their necks. It is also incumbent for the scholar to adhere to the evidence of the *mujtahids*. However, it is not permissible for a *mujtahid* to follow another *mujtahid* because as a *mujtahid*, he is not in need of the *ijtihaad* of others. The affair of ‘*taqleed*’ (following without question) is for those who have not attained the station of giving independent judgment, and this will remain until the Day of Judgment.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: “**To continue...**”; that is to say, to continue after the *basmalla*, the praising and extolling of Allah, showing gratitude for the cause of blessings and supplication for the *Umma*. It is said; that the beginning of speech is the expression ‘to continue’. It is said that Prophet Dawud, upon him be peace was the first to articulate the statement: ‘to continue’, as it was transmitted by at-Tabaraani going back to the prophetic tradition of Abu Musa al-

Ash`ari. However in this transmission there is some dispute regarding its veracity. Abu Salama said: “The first to articulate the phrase: ‘to continue’ was Ka`b ibn Luway.” It is said that the first to articulate the phrase was Prophet Ya`qub (Jacob), as ad-Daraqutni transmitted it. It is also said that the first to articulate the phrase was Yu`arib ibn Qahtan. It is said that the beginning of speech is utilized in jurisprudence during legal judgments. Abu`l -`Abass said: “The meaning of: ‘to continue (*amaa ba`d*)’ is ‘to continue with what was being discussed from speech’, ‘such-and such’, to the end of one’s speech.” Sibawayhi said: “The meaning of: ‘to continue (*amaa ba`d*)’ is ‘to continue with whatever occurs after this’. Or its meaning is: ‘to continue after the naming of Allah ta`ala, praising Him, sending blessing and peace upon His Messenger, followed with his family, Companions and *Umma*. Legally, it is considered highly recommended to say ‘to continue (*amaa ba`d*)’ at the commencement of the Friday prayer sermon. Regarding this expression, there have been transmitted many prophetic traditions in the sound compilations, as is well known. Al-Bukhari designated an entire chapter in his Saheeh specifically discussing the saying of the expression ‘to continue (*amaa ba`d*)’ at the beginning of the Friday sermon. In this chapter he cited many prophetic traditions which give evidence of the lawfulness of articulating this phrase. The meaning of his words: **“This is the book called”**, is that this transcription, or this collection in front of you.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: **“The Support of the Scholars”**, which means that this work is the foundation of the scholars upon which they rely. The *Shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, Imam Muhammad Murtada az-Zabidi said: “The expression ‘*umdat*’ inflected with *damma* is that which one relies upon, leans upon and to place one’s confidence in something or someone. One says: ‘*itamadtu `ala `s-sha`y*’ (I have taken support upon something); meaning I have leaned upon it for support. One says: ‘*itamadtu `alayhi fee kadhaa*’ (I have taken support upon him in a certain thing); meaning I have relied upon him in that. You say to a people: ‘*antum `umdatunaa alladhina yu`tamadu `alayhi*’ (You are our buttress upon which we rely). Allah ta`ala says: ‘*He created the heavens without any support that you can see.*’ Imam al-Fara’ gives two interpretations of His words: ‘*without any support that you can see*’. The first is that He created the heavens elevated without any supports, thus your vision of the heavens does not require any proof. The second is that He created it with supports but you cannot see them. It is said that the supports which you cannot see is His power. Imam al-Layth stipulated that the supports of the heavens are the mountain range called *Qaaf*, which completely encompasses this physical world. Thus, the heaven is like a dome or canopy whose edges rest upon the *Qaaf* whose hue is like a greenish blue chrysolite. It is said that the greenish blue of the heavens comes from this mountain range.”

Thus, the meaning of ‘support’ in this context is that this work is the authority of the scholars in the sciences of the religion; which means it is their foundations upon which the scholars take reliance in extracting their legal judgments. He named it Umdat`l-`Ulama because it is the legal basis of the scholars in those sciences which are obligatory for them. The support of the possessors of knowledge is in two matters as the *Shehu* will explain. They are the Book of Allah and the *Sunna* of His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This means that the *Shehu* established in this book every *Qur`anic* verse and prophetic tradition upon which the scholars can take as reliance in proofs for their doctrines of belief, social behavior, spiritual purification, legal extractions, independent judgments, spiritual gnosis and unveilings; as it will be shown.

As for the issue of Divine Unity or the foundation of the religion called *al-Iman*, the *Shehu* said in his al-Qawa'id 'l-Kashfiyya: “Realize my brother, that the scholars of Islam did not compose the science of scholastic theology in order to establish knowledge of Allah for themselves or others. Rather, they composed this science as an impediment against the arguments of those who are natural philosophers and *Mu'tazila*. Thus, the scholars, may Allah be pleased with them merely sought to establish decisive proofs against them in order to return them back to the doctrine of beliefs which the Messengers came with from their Lord and obligates us to believe in.” He then said: “Realize that whoever desires to protect his doctrine of beliefs from errors and corruption, then it is incumbent to draw his beliefs from the sources which are successive, decisive and infallible.”

As for the issue of jurisprudence or the *shari'a* also called *al-Islam*, the *Shehu* said in his Najm'l-Ikhwaan: “Abd'l-Wahaab as-Sha'raani said in his al-Yawaaqeat: ‘I heard my master Ali al-Khawaasi, may Allah be merciful to him say: Behave with all of your endeavors in accordance with all of the views of the scholars. This is because acting in accordance with two views is better than casting aside one of them. In this way you will rarely ever conflict with the teachings of the scholars. For whoever arrives at the station of spiritual unveiling will find that none of the *Imams* of independent judgment have ever gone outside of the Book and the *Sunna* in any of their teachings. He will innately perceive that all of their teachings are actually beams from the rays of the light of the *shari'a*. This is because all of them followed upon the tracks of the Messengers. For this reason it is obligatory for you to have faith and accept the validity of what the scholars of independent judgment extracted, even when these are in conflict with the *madh'hab* of your *Imam*’.”

As for the issue of spiritual purification or the science of secrets related to the purification of the hearts, also called *al-Ihsan*, the *Shehu* said in his Usul'l-Wilaayat: “Realize O brother, that the foundation of sainthood and its prerequisites is constructed upon: adherence to the Book and the *Sunna*; abandoning passions and heretical innovations; extolling the sanctity of the spiritual teachers; envisioning the annihilation of creation; persistence upon the litanies and avoiding concessions. Abu'l-Qaasim al-Junayd, may Allah be pleased with him said: ‘All of the paths have been closed except following the traces of the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.’ Sahl ibn Abdallah, may Allah be pleased with him said: ‘Our foundations are built on six things: the Book of Allah; the *Sunna* of His Messenger; consuming what is lawful; preventing harm; avoiding sins and discharging rights.’ Abu Hamza al-Baghdadi, may Allah be pleased with him said: ‘Whoever knows the Path of Truth then traveling it has been made easy for him.’ He also said: ‘There is no guide or proof on the Path to Allah ta'ala except in following the Beloved, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. For, whoever makes his soul adhere to the courtesies of the *Sunna*, Allah will illuminate his heart with the lights of Divine gnosis. There is no path more noble than in following the Beloved, may Allah bless him and grant him peace in his commands, prohibitions, actions, words, and character.’ As-Shaybaan, may Allah be pleased with him was once asked about spiritual purification (*tasawwuf*) and he replied: ‘It is simply following the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace’.”

As regard to this blessed work, 'Umdat'l-'Ulama, *Shaykh* Muhammad Mu'allah'idi ibn Abd'l-Qaadir ibn Mustafa said in his Nabdhath Yaseera: “I saw in my own father's hand that the *Shehu* had attained the rank of *ijtihaad*. Whoever closely examines his books, such as the Sawq'l-Umma and the 'Umdat'l-'Ulama will realize it.” Thus, the pivot around which the 'Umdat'l-'Ulama revolve are the verses of the

Qur'an and the prophetic traditions of the *Sunna* of His Messenger, upon him be blessings and peace. The government minister *Waziri* Gidadu ibn Layma said that this book was among those books which acted as proof that the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him had attained the station of *ijtihaad*.

My teacher, *Shaykh* Muhammad Bello ibn Abdullahi held the view that the *Shehu* composed this work around the year 1218 A.H. (circa 1795-1796 C.E.) during the reign of Nafata ibn Barbari the ruler of Gobir. It was during his reign that camels were driven from the east and west to meet *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye'; and he filled the western regions of the *Bilad's-Sudan* with spiritual gnosis and disciples. The people of his time stopped with his teachings and he became the pivot of council, legal decisions and independent judgment. As a result, he became the spiritual pole with the spiritually elite and the elite of the elite; and to the scholars and the common people, he became the reformer of the twelfth century of the *hijra*.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: **"It will be of benefit"**; that is to say, that it will be what can be relied upon for assistance in arriving at what is good. The expression '*Naafi*' (The Beneficial) is one of the Beautiful Names of the Allah and means that He is the One who brings advantage to whomever He wills from His creation, since He is the Creator of advantage, harm, good and evil as *Shaykh* az-Zabidi interpolated it. Thus, this book can be helpful in attaining the sciences of social behavior, which are a part of the beneficial knowledge which is incumbent for every responsible individual to know and act upon. The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: **"Allah willing"**; that is to say, if Allah ta'ala desires it because whatever Allah wills will be, and whatever He does not will shall never be. '*Allah guides whomever He wills to the straight path.*'

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: **"...to whoever relies on it"**; that is to say, that this book will be of benefit to whoever takes it as help and relies upon it. The meaning of the expression '*awl*' (reliance) is to take something as a sort of help. Thus, one can both 'rely in something or upon something'. One says: '*awwil 'alayhi*' (Rely upon him); which means to take him as a means of help. The expression '*awwala 'alayhi*' (to rely upon him) means to depend on him and to take him as a means of support. It has been related on the authority of Tha'alibi that al-Lahyani once said: "From this expression comes the saying: '*ila Allahi minhu al-mushtakaa wa'l-mu'awwalu*'; (It is to Allah that complaints are taken and upon which reliance is made)." One says: '*awwalnaa ila fulaanin fee haajatinaa fa wajadnaahu ni'ma'l-mu'awwali*' (We relied upon so-and-so regarding our needs and discovered him to be the best of supports.) Abu Zayd said: "A man becomes reliant and dependent when he aspires for something." Thus, the expression: '*awwaltu 'alayhi*'; (I have become reliant upon him); means that I have taken him as a proof or evidence. One says: '*fulaanun iwwalee mina'n-naas*'; (So-and-so is my reliance among people); meaning that he is my support and carries my burdens.' Thus, the meaning of the words of the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him: 'It will be of benefit, Allah willing, to those who rely upon it'; is that he made the reliance and need as the causative factor for attaining benefit.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: **"We have named it the 'Support of the Scholars'."** Here, the *Shehu* clarifies the reason that he named this work '*the Support of the Scholars*'. It is an indication of his exposition, objective and intent. Some of the wise say that your end is in your beginning and your beginning is in your end. In many sound narratives on the authority of Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, he said: "Verily actions are based upon intention, for every person will have what he intends. Whoever makes *hijra* in order to attain

some worldly matter; or for a woman in order to marry her, then his *hijra* is for what he made it.” This prophetic tradition is a foundation from the foundations of the religion of Islam. It establishes that every action of humanity, whether it is insignificant, important, minute or immense; the judgment of that action is based upon its objective at the beginning.

Ibn al-Hajj clarified this in a way which cannot be made clearer in his famous Madkhal where he stipulated that a person can perform a single act in which he intends multiple objectives. In this way he multiplies the good of his actions until this one act encompasses all of the advantages that these multiple objectives intended. It is by means of this principle that it is known that the most immense of the people in spiritual station and those of them who attain the most good and *baraka* is based upon the multiplicity, intensity and immensity of their intentions. Thus, *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye' gathered two objectives in his intention in composing this work.

The *Shehu* said: “**...because we have only quoted in this book the verses of the Book and the traditions of the Sunna.**” He said this in order to clarify that the foundation of all the beneficial sciences are the verses of the Wise *Qur'an* and the prophetic traditions of the pure *Sunna*. As for the boundaries of the Book, the *Shehu* said in his Ihya's-Sunna citing as-Suyuti who said: “It is the revealed Speech of Allah sent down to Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace as a miracle in the form of chapters.” As for the boundaries of the *Sunna*, the *Shehu* also said in his Ihya's-Sunna quoting Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Abd'r-Rahman al-Manjuri in his Minhaj'l-Muntakhib: “The *Sunna* linguistically is a path or custom. As a technical term, it shares between a kind of worship and a kind of proof. The *Sunna* as a kind of worship are the superogatory acts which the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace constantly performed, or it was understood that it should be done regularly, even if the causative factor for it occurred repeatedly, such as the eclipse prayer. Some of the scholars added that he manifested it in congregation. As for what the *Sunna* as a proof is meant here, it refers to what emerged from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, other than the *Qur'an*, such as his words, deeds or his silent consent.”

Thus, the *Shehu* confined this book to the proofs of the *Qur'an* and *Sunna*, since these two are the foundation of the scholars; as he said: “**It is these two**”; that is to say, the Book of Allah, and the *Sunna* of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: “**...that are the scholars object of reliance in their legal judgment...**”; that is to say, that these two are authorities for the scholars in their extensive extractions by achieving the answers in matters which require accountability and exertion. The etymology of the expression ‘*ijtihaad*’ (independent judgment) is from the word ‘*juhd*’ and means to reference or corroborate a judgment by way of analogy back to the Book and the *Sunna*. Thus, the concept of independent judgment is a metaphor taken from the expression ‘exerting effort’, as it was cited in the book called al-Asaas.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: “**and their legal deduction**”; that is to say, in their extraction of legal rulings. Thus, the Book and the *Sunna* are the reliance of the scholars and their authority in extracting decisions and legal rulings. The expression ‘*istinbaat*’ (deduction) is from the verb ‘*nabata*’ and applies to the extraction of a well; meaning extracting its water. It mentions in the al-Basaa'ir: “Anything which becomes manifest after it was initially hidden, is called ‘drawing out’ or ‘extracting’.” In the Taaaj'l-Uruus it says: “From a abstract sense comes the expression ‘the extracting of jurisprudence’; which means taking out the inner aspects of jurisprudence by means of comprehension and independent

judgment.” Allah ta’ala says: “...the scholars among them who extract legal judgment...”.

Just as the Book and the *Sunna* are the reliance of the scholars in their deducing the foundations of doctrines of belief and the legal rulings of the *shari’a*, likewise they are their foundation in the lifting of what is between them and their Lord in the issue of spiritual purification (*tasawwuf*). The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him placed the Book and the *Sunna* firmly in front of him in his spiritual journey to his Lord. He then transmitted this spiritual Path to his wives, siblings, children, and the remainder of the knowers of Allah from his ethnicity and others. Thus, the *Shehu* established an important principle in the foundations of the Path to Allah through the unification of the gnosis of the Book and the *Sunna*, since he held the view that gnosis which occurs by means of the *Qur’an* is the same source of gnosis obtained by means of the *Sunna*. He made no distinction between them, since their source is One – Divine revelation. For this reason the traditionist Ibn Ahmad al-Hakami said in his *al-Lu’lu’ al-Maknuun*:

“The science of prophetic traditions is the clarification

Of what has been revealed in the *Qur’an*

Thus, the *Sunna* of the Prophet is the second revelation

It is about these two that the title ‘the Two revelations’ apply.”

The *Shehu* thus clarified to his disciples and students that gnosis which takes its advantages from the divine law is the most invaluable kind of gnosis and the most perfect form of spiritual unveiling. It is superior to gnosis derived through reason, since the divine law is what Allah has used to inform about Himself; as the son of the eldest daughter of the *Shehu*, the gnostic Abd’l-Qadir ibn Mustafa said in his *Ma’rifaat’l-Haqq*. Subsequently, all of the *mujtahid* Imams, the right acting scholars, and the perfected *awliya* near Allah have never departed from the Book and the *Sunna* in any of their words, deeds or spiritual states. It has been witnessed and confirmed that all of their teachings are simply an excerpt from the beams of the light of the *shari’a*, since they have traveled firmly in the traces of the Messengers; as it was meticulously indicated by sages such as *Shaykh* Ali al-Khawaasi, *Shaykh* Abd’l-Wahaab as-Sha’raani, *Shaykh* Maa’l-’Aynayn and others from the religious reformers.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: “**Due to this**”; that is to say, by reason that the Book and the *Sunna* are the reliance of the scholars in their independent judgments and legal deductions. Then the *Shehu* asked Allah for himself and all those who come across this book, for success in arriving at the correct desired objective by his words: “...**may you have success at arriving at the truth.**” The expression ‘*sawaab*’ (that which is correct) is from the word ‘*sawb*’ (desirable) and means the objective or what is intended. It is the opposite of error (*khata*). Thus, upright objective (*mustaqeem’s-sawb*) is when a person does not deviate right or left in his intended objective, as it was cited in the *Taaaj*. Thus, what is intended here is “may you find out or obtain all good”; or “may you make it a means of guidance.” It is said: “A servant can never attain success except with the success of Allah”; as it was explicitly stated in a prophetic tradition: “A servant can never obtain success until Allah gives him success.” The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: “...**everyone who takes hold of the Book and the Sunna will never go astray.**” This means that everyone who takes hold of the Book and *Sunna* will never astray in his doctrine of beliefs, jurisprudence or in the purification of his heart from other than Allah ta’ala. This axiom is the most important principle in the religion as it will be explained.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: “**In the Muwatta**”; that is to say, in the narration of the Muwatta of *Imam* Abu Abdallah, Malik ibn Anas ibn Malik ibn Abi `Aamir ibn `Amr ibn al-Haarith ibn Ghaymaan ibn Khuthayl ibn `Amr ibn al-Haarith al-Aṣḡahī al-Medini, the *Imam* of the land of *hijra*, the leader of those certified, the most notable of those well established. He was the preeminent *Shaykh* of Islam and proof of the *Umma*. His mother was `Aliya bint Shareek al-Azadiyya. His paternal uncles were: Abu Suhayl Naafi`, Uways, ar-Rabee` and an-Nadr, the sons of Abu `Amr, who was among the most notable of the scholars of the *Tabi`uun*, who took knowledge from Uthman and a large contingent of Companions. Malik was born, according to the soundest opinion, in the year 93 A.H.; the year that Anas, the servant of the Messenger of Allah, died. He began to seek knowledge when he was a young child.

It has been related by `Ubaydallah ibn Umar on the authority of Sa`id ibn Abu Hind on the authority of Musa al-Ash`ari who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said: “The people will come out from the east and the west in search of knowledge, and they will not find a scholar more knowledgeable than the scholar of al-Medina.” This scholar was Malik, who had no equal in al-Medina. *Qadi* `Iyad said: “This is an authentic assertion made on the authority of Sufyan. Ahmad ibn Abi Khaythama said that Mus`ab related that Sufyan said: ‘We saw this prophetic tradition, and it is a reference to Malik’.” For the age in which he lived, Malik was the paradigm of knowledge, who possessed excellent jurisprudence and spiritual bounty. He was a firm speaker of the truth and a commander of good. He kept himself in solitude from people. Ibn `Uyayna said: “Malik is the most knowledgeable of the people of the *Hijaz*. He is the proof of his times.” As-Shafi` said: “As for truthful sincerity and virtue, when the scholars are mentioned – Malik is the star.” *Imam* Malik died on the morning of *Rabi`al-Awwal* in the year 179 A.H. and lived to be 86. *Qadi* `Iyad said: “Asad ibn Musa once said: ‘I once saw Malik in my dream after he died and on him was a long turban and shirt of green color. He was on a camel flying between the heavens and the earth. I said to him: ‘O Abu Abdallah, haven’t you died?’ He said: ‘Indeed!’ I then said: ‘Where have you come from?’ He said: ‘I have just come from my Lord and He spoke to me face to face. He said to me: ‘Ask and I will give. Seek bounty from me, for I am pleased with you’.”

As for the renowned Muwatta, it was not the first book to be called with that name. At that time there were many Muwattas. It was transmitted in the Tarteeb’l-Madaarik: “The first to compose a Muwatta was Abd’l-`Aziz ibn al-Majishun who placed in it legal teachings without prophetic traditions. When Malik examined this he said: ‘What an excellent work. If I were you I would have begun with the prophetic narratives.’... Then, eventually, Malik made the resolution to compose the Muwatta.” Regarding the Muwatta of Malik there are many advantages and tremendous *baraka*. Abu Musa al-Ansari said: “A fire once befell the house of a man and everything in his home was burnt except the *Quran* and a copy of the Muwatta.” Ibn Mahdi said regarding the Muwatta: “There is no book after the Book of Allah which is more beneficial to the people than the Muwatta.” *Imam* as-Shafi` said: “There is no book of knowledge on earth which is more correct than the book of Malik.” Sulayman ibn Bilal once said: “When Malik initially composed the Muwatta there were four thousand or more prophetic traditions in it. However, when he died there were about one thousand or more prophetic traditions in it. Each year he would abridge it little by little to the extent that he considered it would be advantageous for the Muslims and most exemplary in the religion.”

Umar ibn Abu Salama said: “There is no person who recites the whole of the Muwatta except that I saw in my sleep a man saying to me: ‘That is the tradition of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace’.” Safwaan ibn Umar ibn Abd’l-Waahid said: “Malik once transmitted the entire Muwatta in forty days, and then said: ‘A book which I composed in forty years, you have taken it in forty days! You will not give due diligence to understanding it!’” The secret of the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him in citing the Muwatta in the beginning of the Umdat’l-Ulama is to indicate that the Muwatta is the foundation of the books of the roots of prophetic traditions; as *Qadi* Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi once said: “The Muwatta is the first foundation and the core, and the book of al-Bukhari is the second foundation in this issue. It was upon these two texts that all the subsequent books of prophetic tradition, such as Muslim and at-Tirmidhi were constructed.”

The source of this particular expression was related in the Muwatta from the narration of Yahya ibn Yahya al-Laythi al-Andalusi. The meaning of the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: “**I have left...**”; is ‘After my death, I have left...’; or ‘I have left among you after me...’ The meaning of the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: “**...with you...**”; where this address is to his Companions, or his *Umma*, or all humanity and *jinn*. It means that I have left among my Companions; or I have left among my *Umma*; or I have left among the two species (men and *jinn*). The meaning of the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: “**... two matters. ...**” these are two momentous matters or two important matters. In another narration of Abu Hurayra, he said: “I have definitely left two...”; that is to say, two things. The meanings of the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: “**Whoever takes hold of them...**” is whoever adheres to them or preserves them, because the expression ‘*masaka bihi*’ (hold to something) or ‘*amsaka bihi*’ (cling to something) means ‘to devote oneself solely to it (*ihtabas*) and to maintain it (*i’tasama bihi*)’. For holding to a thing means having a committed relationship to it and safeguarding it. Allah ta’ala says: “...and those who hold to the Book”, meaning those hold to it strongly and preserve it; which means to believe in it and judge by means of it. Allah ta’ala says: “...he has indeed held to the firm rope”; meaning he has taken refuge with it. The meaning of the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: “**... will never go astray**”, is that they will never go astray in their doctrine of beliefs, social behavior and in the purification of their hearts. This will never happen forever, because the particle of negation ‘*lan*’ is an eternal negation. The meaning of the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: “**They are the Book of Allah...**”; is that they will never go astray as long as they hold strongly to the Heavenly Book revealed to Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace; “**...and...**”, they will never go astray as long as they hold strongly to “**...the Sunna of His Messenger.**” This refers to the spiritual path of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, his character, manners, customs and proofs which emerged from him, (other than the *Quran*) such as his words, actions, silent approval and his superogatory acts of worship that he did openly in congregation, or it was understood from it that it was to be done regularly even if the cause was repetitive.

There have been established many *Qur’anic* verses regarding the obligation of holding strongly to the Book of Allah and the *Sunna* of His Messenger. Among them are the words of Allah ta’ala: “Then hold firmly to what was revealed to you.” Allah ta’ala says: “We have revealed to you the Reminder in order that you may clarify to mankind what was revealed to them.” Allah ta’ala says: “...however, We have made it

a Light that We may guide by means of it those whom We will from Our servants. And indeed you guide to the Straight Path.” Allah ta’ala says: “Obey Allah and the Messenger so that you may receive mercy.” And there are many other verses from the *Quran* like these which incite humanity to adhere to the Book and the *Sunna*. As for the prophetic traditions which prove the obligation of taking firm hold of the Book of Allah and the *Sunna* of His Messenger, they are also innumerable. Among them is what was transmitted in the *at-Tamheed* of Ibn Abd’l-Barr, on the authority of Malik, that it has reached him that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Two matters will never lead astray those who take hold of them: the Book of Allah and the *Sunna* of His Prophet.” This prophetic tradition is also preserved, well known and famous on the authority of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, then from the people of knowledge have made this tradition so well known that it is hardly in need of a chain of authority. However, there has been related a narration from a single narrator from the prophetic traditions of Abu Hurayra who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “I have left two things which you will never be lead astray after them; the Book of Allah and my *Sunna*.” It has been related on the authority of Kathir ibn Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Awf on the authority of his father, on the authority of his grandfather, who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “Two matters which will never lead you astray if you hold to them; the Book of Allah and the *Sunna* of His Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.”

In a narration of az-Zuhri on the authority of Abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “This *Umma* will behave for a short while by the Book of Allah. Then they will behave for a short while by the *Sunna* of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Then they will behave after that according to opinion. For when they began to act according to opinion, they will have gone astray.” Ma’an ibn ‘Isa once said: “I heard Malik say: ‘Indeed, I am but a human who sometimes makes mistakes and sometimes gets it correct. Therefore, examine my opinions closely and each time it accords with the Book and the *Sunna*, then take hold of it. But when it is not in accord with the Book and the *Sunna*, then abandon it’.”

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: “**We have placed in this blessed book seven chapters**”; that is to say, we have deposited in it, or we have mentioned in it seven chapters. He named it ‘blessed’ (*mubaarak*) taking blessings with the blessed Book of Allah. Allah ta’ala says: “*We have revealed this Blessed Book, so follow it.*” This means that it is a Book of abundant advantages due to what is in it of vast expansions, varieties of good, and increased blessings, as the most erudite of the *Bilad’s-Sudan*, the professor Abdullahi ibn Fuduye’ said in his *Diya’t-Ta’weel*. The *Shehu* named this book ‘blessed’ as an indication of the augmented growth innately in it; the abundant overflowing of good; and the Divine happiness that emerges in it and from it, from where it cannot be sensed, in a direction that it cannot be counted or enumerated.

I once asked my spiritual master, *Shaykh* Muhammad Bello ibn Abdullahi in Maiurno, Sudan: ‘Why did the *Shehu* name the *Umdat’l-’Ulama* ‘blessed’? Is there any *baraka* inherit in the text?’ He replied may Allah be merciful to him: “Yes, in it is much *baraka*, because he only transmitted in it the verses of the Blessed *Quran* and the traditions of the Prophet. Whoever reads the *Umdat’l-’Ulama* it is as though he recited a *wird*, a *wadheefa* or a *hizb*. He gathers in his reading a kind of worship and a kind of gathering of knowledge.” He also said: “The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah

be upon him described the Umdat'l-'Ulama with the attribute of 'blessed' in order to take blessings by that from the *Fatihah* of the Book. He placed in it seven chapters just as the *Fatihah* of the Book was revealed in seven verses." Among the advantages of the *Shehu* arranging this blessed book into seven chapters is an indication of its tremendous secret and its relationship with the rest of the books of the scholars.

For the station that the Umdat'l-'Ulama has in relationship to the remainder of the books of the scholars is like the station that *Fatihah* of the Book has to the remainder of the *Quran* and the remaining heavenly books. In the *Fatihah* of the Book are seven verses which embrace all the sciences of the religion and the objectives of all the Heavenly Revealed Books. Al-Hassan al-Basri said: "Indeed Allah has deposited all the sciences of the *Quran* inside *al-Fatihah*. Whoever knows its exegesis then he is upon the sciences of the *Quran*." This is because this blessed chapter embraces: extolling Allah with what He deserves; worship with commands and prohibitions; and Divine promises and threats. Just as the *al-Fatihah* embraces all these sciences, similarly the Umdat'l-'Ulama embraces all the verses of the Book and traditions of the *Sunna* by which the sciences of the foundation of the religion, the outward branch of the religion and the inward branch of the religion are established.

The text Umdat'l-'Ulama includes a preamble and a summation of all the sciences of *al-Iman*, *al-Islam* and *al-Ihsan*. Imam at-Tayyibi said regarding the *al-Fatihah*: "It encompasses four kinds of sciences which are the very anchor of the religion: [1] the science of the foundations, the beliefs and knowledge of Allah and His attributes. This is indicated by His words: '*All praises are due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds; the Beneficent the Merciful*', knowledge of prophethood and this is what is intended by His words: '*those You have favored*'; knowledge of the contract to the Final End, indicated by His words: '*the King of the Day of Judgment*.' [2] Is the science of the branches and its cognomen is 'worship', and it is what is intended by His words: '*It is You that we worship*'. [3] This is the science which brings about perfection, and it is the science of character. Its root is arrival at the Eternal Presence, encountering the focal point of Divine Uniqueness, traveling its Path and being upright in it. This is indicated by His words: '*...and it is You we seek help. Guide us on the Straight Path*.' [4] This is the science of narrated stories and transmitted news about the foregone religious communities, the blessed among them and the wretched, as well as what they achieved from the promises of the spiritually excellent and threats of the evil among them. This is what is intended by His words: '*Those You have favored, and not those who have incurred anger, nor those who have gone astray*'."

It has been related by Abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said to Ubayy: "Shall I not inform you of a *Qur'anic* chapter which was not revealed in the *Torah*, the *Injil* and the *Quran*?" He said: "Indeed O Messenger of Allah." He said: "It is the *Fatihah* of the Book. It is the seven oft repeated verses and the Mighty *Quran* which I was given." The gnostic al-Qunawi said in is Mirat'l-'Arifeen: "In the *al-Fatihah* is subsumed and amalgamated what is in detail in the other Books. What is subsumed in the *al-Fatihah* is concealed in the *al-basmalla*. What is subsumed in the *al-basmalla* is concealed in the letter 'ba' and hidden. What is hidden in the letter 'ba' is secreted and obscured in the dot." Likewise the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him made this blessed book into seven chapters and subsumed in it all the sciences of the religion its foundations and branches in a comprehensive manner; just as Allah ta'ala gathered all of the Heavenly Books in the *al-Fatihah*. Whoever knows the exegesis of each *Qur'anic* verse and

prophetic tradition in the Umdat'l-'Ulama, memorizes them and acts upon them, then will be among the right acting scholars.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: **“Chapter One: An Explanation of the religion of Islam and the Division of Its Sciences”** This means that he deposited in the first chapter what clarifies the reality of the religion, because the etymology of ‘explanation’ (*bayaan*) is from the verb ‘*baana*’ (to clarify), that is to make it plain and to make it apparent. Allah ta’ala says: “...then upon Us is its clarification”; which means it is upon Us to make its meanings plain and to manifest it to others. As for the expression ‘*deen*’ (religion), it’s origin is from the verb ‘*daana*’ (to requite) and means to reward, recompense or adjudicate. Khuwaylid ibn Nawfal said in one of his poems: “Realize just as you judge, you will also be judged (*kama tadaanu tudaanu*)”; which means just as you recompense others you will also be recompensed with the same judgment. The expression ‘*deen*’ with *kasra* means reward, custom, religion, worship and obedience. What it means here by *deen*, is the religion of Islam, which has abrogated all the earlier religions; as Allah ta’ala says: “Verily the religion with Allah is Islam. Those who were given the Book did not differ in it until after knowledge came to them, out of hatred between them. Whoever denies the signs of Allah, for indeed Allah is swift in reckoning.” Allah ta’ala says: “Whoever desires other than Islam as a religion, it will not be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter, he will be among the losers.” Allah ta’ala says: “Who is best in religion than he who surrenders his entire self to Allah and he is spiritually excellent.” Allah ta’ala says: “There is no coercion in religion.” Allah ta’ala says: “This day have I perfected My religion for you and completed My favor upon you, and am content with Islam as a religion for you.” The religion of Islam has sciences and these sciences are divided into three: the foundations of the religion; the inward branch of the religion; and the outward branch of the religion, as it will be explained.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: **“Chapter Two: An Explanation of the Verses of the Foundations of the Deen. Chapter Three: An Explanation of the Traditions of the Foundations of the Deen.”** This means that the *Shehu* placed in chapters two and three a clarification and presentation of the *Qur’anic* verses and prophetic traditions regarding the foundations of the religion, the science of Divine unity or the science of doctrines of belief that is obligatory for every responsible person to know and believe, with the exception of scholastic theology. The foundation (*asl*) of a thing refers to its bottom, base, origin, genesis and that from which a thing derives. Its plural is ‘*usuul*’. For, the foundations of the religion (*usuul’d-deen*) refer to the fundamental principles of the doctrines of belief. The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said in his Fat’h’l-Basaa’ir: “The discipline of the Divine unity is divided into two divisions: the foundations of the religion and scholastic theology. The foundations of the religion are a part of the individual obligations (*faruud’l-’ayaan*); while scholastic theology is a part of the collective obligations (*faruud’l-kifaaya*).” What is meant by individual obligations is every science and behavior which is obligatory for every responsible person to know and act with. As for the collective obligations these are those sciences and actions that when one or more persons perform them, it suffices for the rest. Thus, the science of the foundations of the religion is the most important science for the responsible person to know and understand, because its pivot is sound faith and genuine acceptance in the heart.

In reality, what distinguishes the perfect believer, the disobedient Muslim, the hypocrite and the apparent disbeliever, is in their faith, acceptance and understanding of the foundations of the religion. The apparent disbeliever denies the oneness of Allah, or he associates partners with Him in his worship; or he denies the Prophets, or some of them, and denies all of what the Prophets came with regarding the after-life. The hypocrite, on the other hand acts in accordance with the outward matters of the religion, such as the prayer, the giving of alms, and other than these. However, in their inward they deny some or all of the foundations of the religion. Thus, the hypocrite is distinguished from the believer, by their denial of the matters of the foundations of the religion. As for the disobedient Muslim, they are those who believe in the matters of the foundations of religion, however, their understanding and comprehension is deficient. Their characters in the inward branches of the religion is marred with errors, or veiled due to their corrupt passions. It is for this reason that their actions in the issues of the outward branches of the religion, and their characters in the inward branches are deficient by reason of their lack of comprehension of the foundations of the religion. If the disobedient Muslim were to delve deeply into the realities of the foundations of the religion, their hearts would be filled with the light of genuine faith; they would repent and commence with the rectification of their inward character and outward actions. As for the perfect believer, their faith, their acceptance and understanding of the foundations of the religion is complete and free of doubt. For this reason, their faith in all the affairs of the foundations of the religion is what incites them to improve their inward characters and to correct their outward actions.

Thus, the science of the foundations of the religion, Divine unity and doctrines of belief is the most important of the issues of the religion and is the pivot of everything. The *Shehu* divided the issue of the foundations of the religion into two chapters. In chapter two he cites the verses of the *Qur'an* which establish the matters of divinity (*ilaahiyyaat*), prophethood (*nabawwiyyaat*) and the after-life (*sami'yyaat*). In chapter three he narrates the prophetic traditions of the *Sunna* by which all the matters of the foundations of the religion from these three subdivisions are established.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: **“Chapter Four: An Explanation of the Verses of the Outward Branches of the Deen. Chapter Five: An Explanation of the Traditions of the Outward Branches of the Deen.”** This means that the *Shehu* deposited in chapters four and five a clear explanation and presentation of the *Qur'anic* verses and prophetic traditions regarding the outward branch of the religion, the science of jurisprudence or the science of the *shari'a*. It is a science that is related to the outward legal judgments which are incumbent upon every responsible person to know and act upon. The etymology of the expression '*shari'a*' (the Divine law) is from the verb '*shara'a*' (to commence to drink); that is to say, 'to take or obtain water with the mouth.' Thus the meaning of '*shari'a*' in the language of the Arabs is applied to a watering hole (*mashra'a 'l-maa'*) which is a place of destination for drinkers, where people drink and water their livestock. The meaning of '*shar'ia*' in the religion, as al-Layth defined it, is: “the places in which water descends and is taken from. It is from this meaning that it was named, since it is what Allah has enacted as law for worship such as fasting, prayer, pilgrimage, marriage and other than these from the outward acts.

I say, that in the outward branch of the religion is the source of the sciences of the Divine realities. For, the secrets of the Divine realities can never manifest without first establishing the outward principles. The exoteric branches of the religion are the loci of the manifestation of the esoteric branches and its sciences, as it will be explained, Allah willing. In this section the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon

him, only cites the verses of the Mighty Book and sound prophetic traditions of the *Sunna*, in order to clarify that his methodology after attaining the station of spiritual pole, religious reformer, independent judgment and the greatest spiritual unveiling, is that he witnessed that all the teachings of the *mujtahids* are beams from the rays of the lights of the Book and the *Sunna*.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: “**Chapter Six: An Explanation of the Verses of the Inward Branches of the Deen. Chapter Seven: An Explanation of the Traditions of the Inward Branches of the Deen.**” This means that the *Shehu* deposited in chapters six and seven a clear clarification and presentation of the *Qur`anic* verses and prophetic traditions regarding the inward branch of the religion; which is an affair which branches off from the foundations of the religion and is related to the inward nature of humanity; that is to say, their hearts. It is called *Ihsan*, the science of *tasawwuf* or the science of Divine realities (*`ilm`l-haqeeqa*). The Divine realities refer to the science of secrets which are connected to the hearts of mankind, their purification and what they attain from gnosis, spiritual unveilings and the remainder of the Divine realizations, as it will be explained, Allah willing. Abu Zakariyya al-Fara` said: “It refers to everything in the *Qur`an* regarding what is incomprehensible about the Absolute Being and His gnosis. The reality of an affair is what is real about it and is necessary regarding it. For, one attains the reality of a thing when he attains certainty regarding its affair.”

The scholars have named this science the science of purification (*tazkiyya*) or the science of spiritual purification (*tasawwuf*). They have divided it into two divisions: [1] ‘*tasawwuf li`takhalluq*’ (spiritual purification for the reformation of character) and [2] ‘*tasawwuf li`t-tahaqquq*’ (spiritual purification for Divine realization). In his at-Tafriqa Bayna `Ilm`t-Tasawwuf Alladhi Li`t-Takhalluq wa Bayna `Ilm`t-Tasawwuf Alladhi Li`t-Tahaqquq the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said regarding the key issue of the science of spiritual purification for the reformation of character: “It is the cleansing of the inward being by means of acquiring praiseworthy character and purifying it from blameworthy attributes.” Some of the spiritual guides name this process ‘*`ilm`t-takhaly*’ (the science of relinquishing) and ‘*`ilm`t-tahaly*’ (the science of adorning); which means relinquishing all destructive attributes from the heart, such as conceit, arrogance, showing-off, rage, envy, stinginess, rancor and other destructive qualities; as well as adorning the heart with every redemptive attribute, such as repentance, fearful awareness, patience, reliance, fear, hope, praise, gratitude and other redemptive qualities.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said in his Umdat`l-Bayaan: “It is obligatory for every responsible person to learn as much of this science which will enable him to acquire praiseworthy characteristics and to keep him from blameworthy characteristics.” The *Shehu* only cited in these two chapters the verses of the *Qur`an* and the prophetic traditions of the *Sunna*, since *Ihsan*, like *Iman*, is a reality whose judgment is not decided in this life. The judgment of *Iman* and *Ihsan* is in the Hereafter, since they both are among those matters which are connected to the inner core of humanity and what is concealed in their hearts; as the *Shehu* delineated in his Fath`l-Basaa`ir. The cure for both *Iman* and *Ihsan* only requires the words of Allah ta`ala and the *Sunna* of His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace under the guidance of a right-acting scholar and perfected teaching *Shaykh*, with the prerequisites of sound knowledge, clear experience, exalted resolution, pleasing states and piercing inward insight.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: **“This is the sum total of the chapters of this book”**; that is to say, that these seven chapters are a summation of this blessed book. The expression ‘*jumla*’ with *damma* as its inflection means an assemblage of a thing. Allah ta’ala says: *“Those who disbelieve say: Why does not the Qur’an descend upon him in one collection?”* This means why does it not descend upon him in its complete collection; not the way it descended piecemeal and in sections. What the author, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, means here is that all of these *Qur’anic* verses and prophetic traditions and the legal judgments, sciences and wisdom that are extracted from them are the summation of the *‘Umdat’l-‘Ulama*.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him then said: **“Whoever understands all that has been evidenced to him in every chapter from these chapters with its verses and traditions and memorizes it, subsequently he is a scholar (*‘alim*).”** This means he will become a savant/scholar of the sciences of the religion, if he can truly comprehend all the *Qur’anic* verses and prophetic traditions which were transmitted in this book. What is meant by the expression ‘to understand a thing’ (*fahima’s-shay*) is to know it and have gnosis of it in the heart. As *Shaykh* az-Zabidi explained it: *“(Understanding) is the swiftness by which the soul transforms, exteriorizes and transmits matters to others. It is said that ‘understanding/comprehension’ means the ability to formulate meaning from verbal expressions. It is said that ‘understanding/comprehension’ is a rational form which the soul exteriorizes in order to realize it through its best viewpoint. It states in the Ahkaam of al-Amidi: ‘(Understanding/comprehension) is the excellence of the mind from the perspective of its ability to formulate and exteriorize an idea or concept by instantaneously apprehending the real objective of that idea or concept.”*

Thus, what the *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him meant by understanding/ comprehension in this context is the comprehensive discernment of the meanings of all the *Qur’anic* verses and prophetic traditions transmitted in this blessed book; from their causative factors, their abrogating and abrogated resolutions, their legal judgments, their exegesis and explanation and other than these from the various forms of consciousness. Thus, whoever understands all that has been transmitted in the *‘Umdat’l-‘Ulama* based on the meanings previously mention, then he is among the right-acting scholars and knowers of Allah. (O Allah make us among their disciples!)

The *Shehu* makes a clear distinction between a genuine scholar and others in his *Masaa’il ‘l-Muhimma* where he quotes *Shaykh* Ahmad Zarruq who said: *“Mankind are three kind: [1] the scholar firmly established in his researched insight by apprehending issues through proof, (that is if he is not a mujtahid); [2] the intermediate between the two affairs of the common people and the scholars. It is not valid to follow such a person except for the one who has researched insight into his affair; or it is required for him based upon what is known to be from the shari’a corroborating that it is from someone to be followed. Even then, that which can be taken from him should only be what he actually comprehends from the principles of the shari’a, since it is not lawful for anyone to overstep his knowledge and none should stop where his knowledge does not comprehend. [3] The common person whose right or duty is to stop with that wherein there is no doubt regarding its reality from the rights of Allah, His remembrance, and acting with earnestness in that about which there is no doubt. If not, then he is a person who makes fun of his religion and plays with it.”*

Here the *Shehu*, may Allah be merciful to him encourages the people to memorize knowledge in their breasts by his words: “...and memorizes it...”; which means to learn it by heart and preserve it in the limbs. For, the scholar in reality is the one who learns knowledge in his breast and acts upon it. Abu Zayd al-Qayrawani said about that: “Do not take books from the people stuck to books, nor take the *Qur'an* from those who are stuck to the scripture, although, in the End of Time, books will be the treasure house of knowledge. Realize that the key to opening this treasure is memorization in the hearts. For knowledge during the first period of Islam was a treasure that resided in the hearts of humanity when there were no books, and in the End of Time the majority of knowledge will be inside of books and little if any will be in the hearts of humanity. The increase in the number of books will come from their own manufacturing and commentaries.”

Allah ta'ala says: ‘*Ask the People of the Reminder if you do not know*’. That is, if you do not know, ask those who have learnt and memorized it by heart, who understand its meaning and who act in accordance with it; and be like them in memorization, comprehension and behavior. For He did not say: ‘Peruse the books if you do not know’. The genuine scholar in the meaning used by the *Shehu* is one who knows the Book of Allah and the *Sunna*, preserves them in his heart and acts upon it. He does not learn the sciences of the religion for wealth, rank, renown or any other worldly motive. It has been related in the prophetic traditions that he, upon him be peace once said: “One of the signs of the wrath of Allah ta'ala upon a scholar is when his heart dies.” *Shaykh* Ahmad ibn Idris was once asked: “How can the heart of a scholar die?” He responded: “By the scholar seeking after worldly matters by means of his knowledge.”

Thus, when the *Shehu* delineates the concept of scholar, he does not mean a ‘scholar’ who only knows the outward/exoteric aspects of the religion. For, the scholars of the outward bereft of the inward/esoteric, is precisely the one who places worldly affairs in the *qibla* of his heart; he makes rank his *mihrab* and the company of government officials his assembly. A great deal of this person’s knowledge is the sciences of competition, boasting and the science of getting the hearts of people to incline towards himself (‘PR’). His knowledge becomes his partner in his own destruction and it becomes his supporting aide in his wanton disobedience. This person is the venial/malevolent scholar, among the helpers of Satan who has sold his knowledge to purchase the world.

Shaykh ‘I-Akbar said: “Genuine knowledge is a trait that requires it be attained through the heart. For, the true scholar is the heart itself and genuine knowledge is that which the heart truly attains.” The receptacles of this knowledge are the prophets and messengers, who were responsible for delivering the Divine Warnings and the Good News. When they were seized with the death of their Seal, may Allah bless him and grant him peace; the scholars who act upon their knowledge stood in their places. The meanings of all the *Qur'anic* verses and prophetic traditions which corroborate all the sciences of the religion were firmly established in their hearts, breast and intellects. Thus, the scholars articulate knowledge with the light of the prophets as their representatives. It is for this reason that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: “The scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets.” This means that they inherit their sciences, spiritual states, illuminations and spiritual stations. Thus, all the *Qur'anic* verses and prophetic traditions established in this blessed book will be sufficient for the servant of Allah in attaining the station of right-acting scholar based upon the foregoing definition. This is a

binding contract from the *Shehu*, may Allah sanctify his secret and benefit us by means of his *baraka*. I have tested this and discovered it sound.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: **“Everything that has been evidenced to him from the chapters from these chapters will be sufficient, if Allah wills, for him whose researched insight has been illumined by Allah in order for him to arrive at everything he needs in the religion from its verses and traditions.”** Perhaps the most important technical term in the lexicon of the scholars and gnostics is the expression ‘*baseera*’ (researched insight). It is actually evidence for the meaning which the *Shehu* intended in his words: “scholar” in that he meant the knower of Allah who gathers together the ranks of the *shari`a* and the *haqeeqa*. It is for this reason that it is said regarding a man who is knowledgeable that he is ‘*baseeran*’ (discerning/perceptive); which means he is insightful in his affairs. The word ‘*baseera*’ (researched insight) is from the verb ‘*basara*’ (to see/envision) and is the sense perception of the eyes. It is the light by which objects are perceived by the organs of sight. The locus of ‘*baseera*’ (researched insight) is the eyes and the heart, The vision of the heart are its reflections and thoughts. The ‘*baseera*’ (researched insight) is the strength of the heart and its comprehensions. Al-Layth once said: “The ‘*baseera*’ (researched insight) is a name referring to what is believed in the heart regarding the religion, as well as it is verification of matters.” Allah ta’ala says: “*Invite to Allah based upon researched insight*”; which means based upon corroborated knowledge and verification. *Shaykh* az-Zabidi said that ‘*baseer*’ (one acutely perceptive) is a scholar who is perceptively insightful in knowledge or he is considered erudite. *Shaykh* al-Qaashani said in his *Istalahaat as-Suufiyya*: “The ‘*baseera*’ (researched insight) is an innate power of the heart which is illumined with the light of sanctity, by which one can envision the realities of things and their inner natures. It serves the same function to the soul that physical sight which sees the form of things and its outward aspects. The ‘*baseera*’ is an inward power which the wise call the power of intellectual reflection. As for the illumination with the light of sanctity and the lifting of the its veils by means of the guidance of the Absolute Being, the wise call this kind of perception the strength of spiritual sanctity.”

Shaykh Lisan’d-Deen al-Khateeb divided the ‘*baseera*’ into three divisions: [1] The first is the righteous indignation that one who establishes a principle of the *shari`a* has for transmission due to the awareness in his heart that its final result is not to be feared. [2] Is the witnessing of justice inherent in guidance and error. [3] Is a kind of ‘*baseera*’ which is the cause of the essence of gnosis of Allah, establishes spiritual indication and results in spiritual intuition. Thus, the genuine scholar is a person whom Allah has opened his researched insight with direct gnosis of Allah and has illumined his heart with its lights. For, every *Qur’anic* verse and prophetic tradition cited in this book will be sufficient in corroborating the outward and inward affairs of the religion, for he whom Allah has illumined his spiritual insight with the light of Divine sanctity.

It is for this reason that the *Shehu* said: **“If what he desires is not apparent, he will find it subsumed elsewhere in the book.”** This means that if what he desires cannot be found in a particular chapter, then it can be found subsumed in another chapter. Or it means that if it cannot be found in a *Qur’anic* verse then it can be found subsumed in the prophetic traditions; and its opposite; since the prophetic traditions are an explanation and exegesis upon the verses of the Book. Likewise the *Qur’anic* verses are the source, foundation and causative factor for the prophetic traditions. Or it means if an issue from the foundation of the religion cannot be found in its respective chapters, then it can be found subsumed in the chapters regarding the

outward and inward branches of the religion. Or if an issue from the outward branches of the religion cannot be found in its respective chapters, then it can be found in the chapters regarding the foundations and the inward branch of the religion. Or it means if an issue from the inward branch of the religion cannot be found in its respective chapters, then it cannot be found subsumed in the chapters on the foundations and the outward branch of the religion. Or it means, and Allah knows best, that if the evidence of a specific teaching cannot be found in the apparent verbal expressions of the Book and the *Sunna*, then it can be found through research subsumed in its inner meanings from the view of allusion, analogy and metaphor by way of summation and similitude. Or it means that everything is subsumed in the book because the author only placed in it the verses of the *Qur'an* and the prophetic traditions of the *Sunna*. These two sources are not free of anything. Allah ta'ala says about the richness of the verses of the *Qur'an*: *"We have not left out anything in the Book."* Allah ta'ala says: *"...and it is a detailing of everything."* Allah ta'ala says about the comprehensiveness of the sanctity of the prophetic traditions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: *"He does not speak from his whims, for, it is only revelation revealed."* Or it means that naturally one cannot find the secrets of a thing in its outward exoteric aspects. Its secrets are subsumed in its inward esoteric aspects. Therefore seek after success from Allah and the illumination of the researched insight; then you will discover secrets subsumed in all things.

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, said: **"Success is with Allah"**; that is to say that success is from Allah ta'ala in what the *Shehu* says, in what he conveys and in what is understood from him. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali said: "Success is something that no human being can do without in every circumstance. It means that accomplishment is the ultimate desire of humanity, but its fulfillment is from the decree of Allah ta'ala and His power. Thus, success can be considered the most suitable action to be taken in good or evil; yet it becomes known as success when it encompasses actions of good and spiritual joy." *Shaykh* Ali al-Hujwiri in his *Kashf'l-Mahjuub*: "Success is the power of obedience during actions. When the servant is obedient to Allah, there then comes to him additional strength from Allah. This additional strength by which the servant obeys Allah is called success." *Shaykh* al-Jurjani said in his *at-Ta'reefaat*: "Success is when Allah makes the actions of his servant to conform completely with what He loves and is pleased with." It is for this reason it was related in the prophetic tradition: "The servant can never attain success until Allah gives him success."

The *Shehu* seals every chapter from these seven chapters with this expression in order to negate conceit and arrogance from his heart, and in order to protect his righteous actions from corruption. As-Samaraqandi once said: "Whoever desires to break the back of conceit, incumbent upon him are four matters: the first is that he should see that all success is from Allah ta'ala. When he sees that all success is from Allah ta'ala, then he will preoccupy himself with being in a state of gratitude and he will not be conceited with himself. The second is that he examines all the blessings which Allah has favored him with. When he closely examines His blessings, he will then be preoccupied with thankfulness, his actions will become affixed, and he will not be conceited with them. The third is that he should fear that perhaps his actions may not be accepted from him. When he becomes preoccupied with the fear of acceptance from Allah, he will no longer be conceited with his actions. The fourth is that he closely examines his own sins which he committed in the past. Thus, when he is fearful that his evil deeds will outweigh his good deeds, then his conceitedness will be diminished. For, how can a person be conceited with his actions and he at the same

time is unaware of what will be revealed from his book of deeds on the Day of Judgment!?” Allah ta’ala says: “*There is no success except with Allah the Exalted the Immense.*”

The *Shehu*, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said in his Tareeq’l-Janna: “What will encourage you to avoid conceit are two matters: the first is that conceit veils you from achieving success; and secondly that conceit corrupts all your virtuous deeds with things besides Allah *‘izza wa jalla.*” Here ends what the *Shehu* said and with its ending, I end the commentary upon the introduction of the ‘Umdat’l-‘Ulama during the pre-dawn hours on Friday, the 7th of *Ramadan*, 1435 A.H. [July 4, 2014 C.E.], (I completed the English translation of this section of the commentary on Monday, the 24th of *Ramadan*, 1435 A.H. [July 21, 2014 C.E.]) in the cool coastal city of Cotonou, Benin, AFRIKA 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.*”



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