

# SANKORE'



Institute of Islamic - African Studies International

[www.sankore.org](http://www.sankore.org)/[www.siiasi.org](http://www.siiasi.org)

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

## Chapter Ten

### On the Biography of the Father of the Author, May Allah be Pleased With Both of Them

**A**mong them is the *Shaykh* of Islam, the learned among the scholars, the regal erudite, perpetual deliverer, the scholar of the world, the one realized of the highest stations - **Abu Muhammad Uthman ibn Muhammad ibn Uthman**.

He is famous as **Dan Fuduye'**. He is my father, may Allah elongate his life and make his ending good. The protected friends of Allah foretold him before his appearance. From that is what was mentioned before from the words of *Shaykh* Waldeede and *Shaykh* at-Taahir. From that is what was related from sound narrators on the authority of **Umm Hani al-Fulani**, the righteous saintly women when she said: "There will appear in this region of the *sudan*, a *waliy* from among the protected friends of Allah. He will renew the *deen*, revive the *sunna* and establish the religion. The fortunate people will follow him and his remembrance will be spread throughout the horizons. The common people and the elite will obey his commands. Those connected to him will be known as the *al-Jama`at*. Among their signs is that they will not heard cattle, as is the custom of the Fulani. Whoever encounters that time should follow him." In short, many of the protected friends of Allah recognized him and informed us of his affair even before his appearance and at the time of his appearance.

Realize that this *shaykh* was reared from the time he was young to invite people to Allah. Allah ta`ala reinforced him with the lights of overflowing and drew him to His presence. He revealed to him the presence of His divine actions, names and attributes. Allah ta`ala made him witness the secrets of His essence. By the praises of Allah, he developed into one of the protected friends of Allah and sipped from the cups of His nearness. Allah dressed him in the attire of gnosis and divine love. The Lord of Truth then invested him with the crown of His divine assistance and guidance. He made him suitable to invite people to Him and fit to be a guide to the common people as well as the elite. He informed me of the time when he obtained the divine attraction by means of the *baraka* of the prayer upon the Prophet (*as-salaat `ala 'n-nabiyy*), may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He was persistent with this without boredom, laziness nor laxity. As a result, Allah assisted him with the overflowing of illumination (*fiyd 'l-anwaar*) by means of *Shaykh* Abd 'l-Qadir 'l-Jayli, may Allah be pleased with him, and his grandfather the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He then witnessed the astounding things of the unseen kingdoms (*`ajaa'ib 'l-malakuut*) and realized the mysteries of the kingdom of power (*garaa'ib 'l-jabaruut*). He witnessed the phenomena of the Divine Attributes, Names and Essence. He became acquainted with the Guarded Tablet (*al-lawh 'l-mahfuudh*) and untied its remarkable secrets. The Lord of Truth gave him to drink the sweetness of inviting people to Him and crowned him with the crown of direction and guidance to Him. Then a voice from the divine presence called out once: "O mankind answer the call of the inviter to Allah!" It then recited the verse:

(“Turned aside from it is he who is turned aside.”) Then the Lord of Truth returned him to the place of consciousness in order that the station of guiding others and inviting them came be given to him. Sometimes the lights of majesty (*anwaar 'l-jalaal*) would overcome him and seize him. Sometimes the lights of beauty (*anwaar 'l-jamaal*) would release him and set him at ease. This was along with the fact that he was among the people of firm establishment (*at-tamkeen*) and permanent stations (*al-maqaamaat*), not among the people of transient states and newly arrival. He then established what the Lord of Truth created him for. He made him deserving of inviting people to Him and of being a guide to Him. He thus began calling people to Allah and guiding them to Him. He was then severely afflicted by those people whose characters were loathsome with denial and ridicule. However, he continued to speak to the people according to their intellects and showed kindness towards them. He encountered from their repulsive characters that which I am unable to describe, until Allah gifted him with the permanence of success. Then a group among the believers began to listen to him attentively and he instructed them in the Truth and clarified for them the spiritual path of Truth.

The *Shehu* found among the people of these lands all types of shocking disbelief, corruption, disobedience and repulsive conditions, which had spread and permeated the lands (of central *bilad 's-sudan*). To the point where there was hardly anyone who could be found whose *imaan* were sound and whose worship was correct. The majority of its people were ignorant of *tawheed*, and illiterate of how to properly perform the ablution, prayer, alms, fasting or the remainder of acts of worship. Among them were those who were: pure disbelievers who worshipped stones and the *jinn* and who openly committed acts of disbelief. They did not pray, fast nor give alms. They denounced Allah and said things about Allah, which were not deserving of His exalted rank. These included the majority of the common people of the Blacklands, like the Magandawaa, the insolent Fulani and Tuaregs.

Among them were those who pronounced *tawheed* with their tongues, prayed, fasted and gave alms without completing the prerequisites of these acts. Rather, they performed only the outer forms and gestures of *Islam* while at the same time they mixed these acts with open acts of disbelief, which they had inherited, from their fathers and their grandfathers. While some of them invented these acts themselves. It is about these that *Shaykh* Jibril ibn Umar referred in his poem:

“To continue: realize that one who has incite  
 Into the people of the *Sudan*, rather one who takes note,  
 Will see nothing from them except those who make claims  
 Of Islam with a full, glaring and wide mouth.  
 Concealing himself with fasting and prayer  
 Against being accused of the most foul of accursed sins.  
 For he, in reality, is a manifest disbeliever  
 Because he makes permissible what is clearly forbidden.  
 Constantly in a state of discord and adhering to  
 Beliefs, which contradict the unanimity of the community.  
 Blind to the prophetic traditions and the Book  
 And the teachings of those who possess understanding.  
 Content with the judgments of ignorance which  
 Allah has eliminated by establishing the *shari`a*.  
 Confused in thoughts and of little knowledge  
 For they give judgment in their Islam based on illusion.  
 What is between them and the people of nobility

Is a clear division that is apparent to the people of Truth.  
That becomes evident by the outward  
Those who possess insight are aware of this in them.  
It is perceived by means of information and experience  
And by actions which are apparent to those more clear-sighted.  
Such as none have done except from one who  
Disbelief ensues by the consensus of opinion.  
Whoever demonstrates that is an apostating disbeliever  
Likewise are they to be enumerated as open disbelievers.”

The majority of the rulers of these lands, their civil servants, medicine men and scholars were from this group. Among them were those who pronounced with their tongues *tawheed*, prayed, fasted and gave the alms without completing the prerequisites of these acts of worship, along with the fact that they were firmly established in blameworthy customs and satanic innovations. Among them were those who were firmly fixed in ignorant disobedience, accustomed to it as if it were permissible as though there were no prohibition concerning it. These groups were many and included many of the common people of the Fulani and some of the so-called Muslims of the Blacklands. In fact many of them were originally disbelievers while some of them intermixed belief with disbelief. Among them were those who properly believed and were correctly aware of *tawheed*, performed the ablution, prayer and alms properly in accordance with what is proper. However these groups were few in number.

Thus, the *Shehu* began to invite them to Allah, giving good advice to the worshippers concerning the religion of Allah, demolishing these blameworthy customs, destroying satanic innovation and reviving the *sunna* of Muhammad. He taught them the individual obligations, directed them to Allah, guided them to His obedience and removed from them the darkness of ignorance and the problematic issues of the religion. He found these above-mentioned groups that were in that condition, now among the successful who hurried to him and among the blessed guided ones who were devoted to him. Then the common people began to enter into the religion in large groups and new comers in large groups began to follow him. He cleared for them the spiritual path (*at-tareeq*) and illuminated it for them. For this reason the Professor, his brother, said about him:

“Uthman - who has come to us in a time of dimness  
And has removed from us every intense darkness!  
People answered when his voice was raised  
And renown exalted him above the stations of the moon.  
He invites to the religion of Allah and does not fear  
In that the criticism of the criticizer or slander.  
Good tidings to the *umma* of Ahmad in our lands,  
*as-Sudan* during these joyous times.  
How many *sunan* have you revived, and errors  
Extinguished, which were like live coals blazing.  
You rose up in a land whose customs had multiplied  
And contradicted the *sunna* of the Joyous Prophet.  
The people of these customs considered them great, thus they became like  
lions  
They barred the entranceway to the door of the religion  
The small birds of these customs became as eagles, and like tigers  
Became its rats and pretended to cast a long slender spear.

He who desires the religion of Allah wipes out the honor of these customs  
 You (*Uthman*) subdued them like the overpowering of a strong stallion.  
 For you shattered them with the bright sword from His verses  
 And with the spears of the *sunnan* of the henna eyed Prophet  
 May Allah bless him as long as the east wind blows  
 And shakes the tips of branches in pleasant gardens.  
 For every oppressive *pharaoh* there is a *Musa* who overcomes him  
 For every difficult legal question, and *Ali* spring up.  
 The face of the religion has become bright after it's waning  
 And the face of disbelief has become dark after dawning brightly.  
 The religion is in honor and on a straight way  
 Disbelief is in humiliation and tattered garments.  
 The splendid *sunna* is like a morning manifesting brightly  
 While dark heretical innovation is like a gloomy night.  
 Its signposts are obliterated and its attire threadbare  
 While the religion saunters proudly in embroidered garments.  
 The river of religion is now flowing because of his *baraka*  
 The spring of life now replaces the dirty water of muddy pools.  
 Pure brooks flow to the drinking places filling them  
 With water whose purity says: 'Is there any who will come?'  
 Until it adorns itself like the full moon appearing  
 In the clear night, or like a brilliant shining morning."

Consequently when he excelled the people of his time in regard to inviting them to Allah, the people became divided into two groups: a group who believed in him; and a group who were critical and denied him. As for those who denied him they spread evil rumors about him and attributed his actions to mere passions, showing off and the like.

"Denial attacks good and seeks to belittle its face  
 Out of envy and malice it makes good seem deformed."

In spite of this **Shehu Uthman** made allowance for their detestable character and was tolerant towards their evils. He turned away from their ignorance and was silent against the harmful words they hurled at him. He stood firm with what he was reinforced from giving sound advice, guidance and inviting people to the door of Allah.

Abd'l-Wahaab 's-Sha`rani said in his Lawaag`i al-Anwaar, "My master Abu'l-Hassan as-Shadhili, may Allah be pleased with him said, 'The *sunna* of Allah ta`ala has been determined concerning His prophets and His intimate friends, that He will subject them to the evils of people in the beginning of their affair and in the conditions of their end whenever their hearts lean towards other than Allah ta`ala. Then self-government and victory will be for them at the end of their affair, when they accept whatever Allah ta`ala sends towards them.' This is because the disciple on the spiritual journey seeks to be free of these hardship and he desires an easy road to the presence of Allah ta`ala, while at the same time he inclines towards people and rely upon their belief concerning him. Then the evils of people began to be hurled at him. They blame him, belittle him, abuse and slander him. His soul then flees from them and it no longer relies upon them for moral support. It is then that his heart becomes purified with his Lord and his acceptance becomes sound due to the lack of acceptance from the people. So understand, when the inviter to Allah, then returns after completing this training, to guiding people, they will then be attired with the robe of honor of clemency and pardon. They are then able to endure the evils of

people and they remain content with Allah ta`ala in everything which He issues to his servants. By means of this, their standing becomes exalted among the servants and their lights become perfected. Then their scales become precise in accordance with that of the Messengers in enduring what appeared to them from the evils of people. For this reason the superiority of their rank became apparent. For a person is only afflicted in accordance with the level of his religion. Allah ta`ala says, *“The Messengers before you were denied. They were patient against the denial and evils of people until I came with My assistance.”* This is because the station of perfection does not allow them to be free of these two witnessing: Either they witness the Lord of Truth ta`ala in their hearts. They thus remain with the Lord of Truth and do not turn aside to His servants. Or they witness people and see them as the servants of Allah. He thus honors and respects them out of regard for their Master Allah ta`ala. If those who deny him are under the decree of Allah, then there is nothing to be said since responsibility is removed in this state. Thus realize that it is essential for those who walk in the footsteps of the Prophets, from among the protected friends and the scholars, that they will be harmed in the same manner that they were harmed. Slander and defamation will be said about them in the same manner it was said about them. They should be patient with people just as they were patient. They should behave with people with mercy and compassion. May Allah be pleased with all of them.

My master Ali al-Khawaas, may Allah be pleased with him, used to say: ‘If the perfection of inviting people to Allah depended upon all people accepting, then that would have been foremost for the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and the Prophets before him. However, some people accepted him and were guided by His bounty. While others were barred from accepting and made wretched by Allah means of His justice.’

And since the protected friends of Allah and the scholars are on the footsteps of the Messengers upon them be peace, in the station of conforming to them - the people have become divided about them into two divisions. One division of people believes in them and accepts their teachings. And the other division criticized them and denied them, just as it happened for the Messengers, upon them be blessings and peace. As a result they earned the rank of inheritance from them.

No one accepts them and believes in the truthfulness of their knowledge of Allah except he whom Allah `azza wa jalla desires to connect with Himself, even if after a time. As for those who denied them and rejected them, he is the one who is driven from their presence. Allah does not increase them by that except in remoteness from Himself. Truly those who are acquainted with the protected friends and the scholars, by Allah’s designation of them, assistance to them and choosing them - are few among the people. This is due to the ignorance that has overcome them concerning their path. When heedlessness takes hold of people, most of them hate that anyone will have a more honorable or distinguished position over them. Thus, envy and jealousy emerges from their souls as a result.

The Mighty Book has expressed this regarding the Prophet Nuuḥ, upon him be blessings and peace. He ta`ala says, *“And only few believed in him.”* Again Allah ta`ala says, *“However most of mankind do not believe.”* And again, *“However most of mankind does not know.”* Allah ta`ala says, *“Do you think that most of them listen or use their reason? They are but like cattle, rather they are further astray from the way.”* There are many other verses which express this.” Here ends the words of the Lawaāqī`u al-Anwaar. What these *imams* have mentioned from the mutual envy and denial among the scholars is a covenant which is inherent within the human species. It is for this reason that some of the jurists passed a legal verdict that the testimony of a

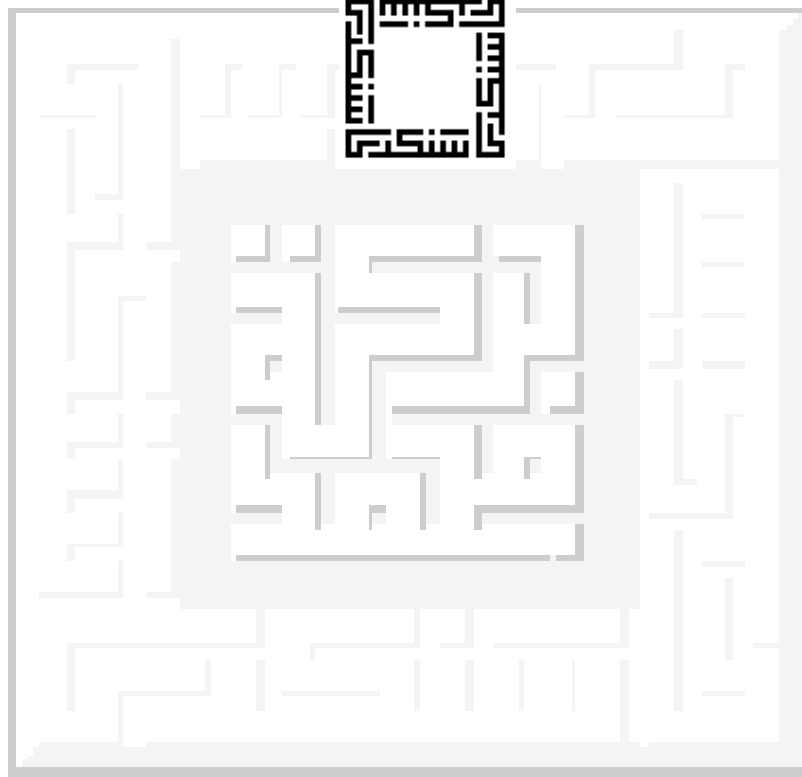
scholar is not to be accepted against another in this regard. It is no doubt that this ruling is not a general rule, although it has become universal.

This *Shehu* encountered from the scholars of these times evil and antipathy, which only Allah could know or enumerate. The Allah assisted him and aided him with a cadre from among the rightly guided scholars. They accepted him and assisted him. About this his brother, the Professor, said encouraging the brothers to assist him and reminding them of the favors of Allah which He has favored them with by his appearance.

“I felt sorrow and bad omens grieved me  
But plentiful evening rain made me happy despite them.  
And wolves crossing on the left caused me to fear,  
But antelopes crossing on the right side made me calm despite them.  
Because of the saying of the Prophet: *“there will always remain a group  
On the truth from us until the Day of Reckoning comes.”*  
Send down on my behalf a letter to my neighborhood  
To which righteous men and women can be attentive.  
To their scholars and students of knowledge, who desire  
To manifest the religion of Allah, giving sound advice therein.  
I say to him: Stand and invite to the religion with an invitation  
Which the common people or the great elite will answer.  
And fear not in manifesting the religion of Muhammad  
The words of one who hates, whom fools imitate.  
And fear not being called a liar nor the rejection of the apostate  
Nor the mockery of the ignorant man gone astray, while the Truth is as the  
morning.  
Nor the backbiting of a slanderer, nor the rancor of one who bears a grudge.  
Who is assisted by those who rely upon evil customs.  
Nothing can destroy what the hand of Allah has built,  
Nothing can overthrow the command of Allah when it comes.  
Clarify for them that evil customs are worthless,  
And that light illuminates our *sunna*.  
The market place for the amusement of youth has this day perished,  
While preservation has been established for the market place of the righteous.  
This day the shadow of influence of the people of this world has shrunk,  
And lofty trees cast their cooling shade over our *sunna*.  
The scale of the one who rejects this religion has become light  
While the scale of he who manifest it has become heavy.  
The one who helps the religion has become exalted among the people  
While the one who rejects it has become humiliated to the elite and common,  
alike.  
Verily the God of the Throne has showered favors  
Upon us, he who is grateful is the one who prospers.  
Whoever denies blessings and follows passions  
For in this world, and in the Judgment, he will perish.  
This is because He made the religion clear to us, by a person  
Who is related to us, we are elevated by him and ennobled.  
If we are receptive to him assisting his teachings  
We will succeed, garner his blessings and all will prosper.  
However, if neglect him he will benefit others,  
For the misfortunes of one people are the advantage of another.

And if there was benefit in relationship alone  
Then Abu Talib, the uncle of the Prophet would not have perished nor grieved.  
It does not harm the sun if the blind man denies its light  
And it does not harm the pool if camels refuse to drink it.  
The most fertile parts of the earth puts forth vegetation wondrously  
By permission of its Lord, when abundant rains pour down.  
Even if poured down continuously, it would never grow  
Not even the meanest weed in the barren earth would grow,  
Guiding others is not hampered by their refusal to accept it  
The One who enters them is their Master, you only open the door.  
For truly if you have delivered the message, then their excuses are useless.  
The One who gives to drink is the Master, you only mix the dosage.  
Being obedient to what the master of mankind said  
“*Deliver from me*”, it has come from sound traditions.  
Commanding the good and forbidding indecency  
According to its rules, showing regard for the Lord of Truth to the people.  
Commanding the good and forbidding indecency  
Is the path of the *Qur'an* manifest and plain.  
Making them understand what is incumbent for a person to believe in  
From the religion which is easy for the senses to comprehend.  
Ritual bathing, ablution, prayer and their *zakat*  
Fasting, trade and then the proper method of marrying.  
What is obligatory for these, what is *sunna* and what is highly recommended  
And what is prohibited from these, for all of these have been clarified in the  
books.  
Teach the women how to cover themselves, the garments only should be seen  
Except over the face and hands there should ample and wide clothing.  
Teach them about *ihsaan* and how to be in a state of attentive watchfulness  
Of their Master, for those sincere ones among them who possess diligence.  
And how to remove themselves from blameworthy characteristics  
And how the sincere among them can take on those traits which are  
praiseworthy.  
And how you should be scrupulous in intention of all of this  
So that those who possess understanding can be precise in obeying you.  
So begin with your own soul, turning away from the abyss of corrupt passions  
It is in its pastures that you herd, thus setting a bad example.  
The most harmful enemy is the one who lives in the house  
Obedient to *satan* and disliking true religion.  
Safety from the faults of the soul is hard to remove  
The shortcomings of disliked things are like sweet pastures  
Thus, you are unable to avoid its passions  
Nor can you endure humiliation and likewise scarcity.  
Your refuge is with your Master and decreasing the amount of food.  
It is the remedy which vanquishes the diseases of the soul.  
Protect the two small things and the two hollow things  
And always watch over the spies and the limbs will obey you.  
The following of the *Qur'an*, the Prophet and his Companions  
And those who followed them - is the antidote of he who is upright.  
Upon the Prophet be the blessings of Allah then peace  
Likewise a peace that diffuses sweet smelling herb.

Books that are concerned with the *Sunna*, like the Madhkhal  
And those derived from it, in these are sound advice.  
The books of Kinaaya and likewise the Ihya as-Sunna  
In the Lubab Tariq as-Saaliheen are advantages.  
The books of Gazzali and likewise those of Zarruq.  
Those of Ibn `Ata, by which spiritual evils are cured.  
The books of Bija`i or those similar to them;  
Those who wicked having passion for this world's life will have nothing to do  
these.  
The Master has giving us success by the rank of our Prophet  
In adhering to his *Sunna* until the calamity comes.  
Upon him be the blessings of Allah then peace  
And upon his Companions as long as singer and wayfarer hum a tune.”



**Institute of Islamic-African  
Studies International**