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

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent the Merciful, may Allah bless our chief Muhammad, his family and Companions and give them peace. Says, the poorest slave in need of the mercy of his Lord, the one negligent, bereft and drowning in the sea of sinful deeds, Abu Alfa Umar, Muhammad Shareef bin Farid, may Allah engulf him in his mercy – Amen. All praises are due to Allah who has made *Ramadan* a blessed month to attain His mercy and forgiveness, and has revealed His Infallible *Qur'an* in *Ramadan* to the heart of the best of His creation. All praises are due to Allah who has sent our chief Muhammad as a giver of good news and a warner to all of humanity in order to make the *deen* of Allah prevail over all religions and ways of life, even though the disbelievers may hate it.

I say and success in this is from Allah ta'ala, realize that our *Sultan*, may Allah prolong his rule ordered us to study and comprehend the *Minhaj* of scholars of our *Jama'at* and to disseminate these teachings to the people. Thus, this is a letter to the *Jama'at* of *Shehu* Uthman Dan Fuduye' in America and to all those under confederation with us, our friends, families and the remainder of the Muslims. This letter comprises an abridgement of the rules of fasting *Ramadan*, its obligations, *sunnan*, its courtesies, (*adab*) and the merits of spiritual struggle (*mujaahida*). I have simply abridged what has been detailed in the books of our African Muslim ancestors, who were dedicated to reviving the *Sunna* and renewing the *Deen* of our beloved Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. My objective in this letter is the same objective of our *Amir'l-Mu'mineen* and *Mujaddid*, *Shehu* Uthman Dan Fuduye', may Allah be merciful to him, when he said:

“I am simply a leader of his people who guides them to correct their affairs. I am simply inviting them to the religion of Allah, seeking by means of that His forgiveness, His mercy and desiring His pleasure. I am following the ways of my fathers and imitating the traces of my grandfathers who have passed. This is because our ancestors were the people of uprightness, guidance, learning, and struggle in the Way of Allah against the enemies of the religion in order to make it wide and to deliver it. I am doing this following the command of the Prophet and answering his call when he said, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: “Deliver the message from me even if is just a single verse.”

I pray that Allah will make this letter purely for His sake and make it a proof for us and not against us on the Day of Standing. If there are mistakes and errors in it, then it is from me, for which I ask Allah's forgiveness and pardon. If there is good and benefit in for the Muslims, then it is from Allah ta'ala. I ask Allah ta'ala to give the reward of it to the spirit of our Beloved Messenger, whose light proceeded his creation and whose appearance is a mercy to all the worlds. O Allah send blessings and peace upon our chief Muhammad, to the extent of Your creation, to the extent of Your pleasure with Yourself, to the extent of the beauty of Your throne, and to the scope of Your words. O Allah send blessings and peace upon our chief Muhammad, to the number of all those mindful who remember him and to the extent of all the heedless who forget him. O Allah! increase him in nobility and generosity and cause him to alight upon the station of nearness to You on the Day of Standing. O Allah! send blessings, abundant peace, and *baraka* upon our chief Muhammad and upon his family, Companions, wives, and descendants to the extent of what is in Your knowledge, with a blessing, which is eternal and continues with the eternity of Your kingdom. O Allah send blessings upon our chief Muhammad, the unlettered Prophet, to the extent of all those who have passed away and to all those who are continuing, to the extent of those among them who attained bliss and those who have attained wretchedness; with a blessing which engulfs enumeration and encompasses all limits; a blessing which has no end, no termination, and no cessation; a blessing which will remove the veil from his noble face during our sleep and waking states; a blessing which will procure for us contentment from You; a blessing which is eternal with Your eternity and continuous with Your continuity until the Day of Judgment; and upon his family and Companions the same way. All praises are due to Allah for that.

On Adherence to Living Sunna of Muhammad and Avoiding Bida`

Shehu Uthman Dan Fuduye' said in his *Sawq'l-Umma Ila Ittibai` as-Sunna*:

اعْلَمُوا يَا إِخْوَانِي أَنَّ الْخَيْرَ كُلَّهُ فِي الْإِتِّبَاعِ وَالشَّرَّ كُلَّهُ فِي الْإِبْتِدَاعِ وَقَدْ حَضَّ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى إِتِّبَاعِ سُنَّتِهِ وَتَرْكِ مُحَدَّثَاتِ الْأُمُورِ فِي أَحَادِيثَ كَثِيرَةٍ

“Realize O brothers that all good is found in adherence (*itibaa`i*) and all evil is in heretical innovation (*ibtidaa`i*). For this reason, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, spurred all of us on to follow his Sunna and to avoid invented matters (*muhdathaat`lumuur*) in many traditions.” This admonition by the *Shehu*, may Allah be merciful is an indication of the methodology (*minhaaj*) that he took in approaching his Lord, both outwardly and inwardly. This is a proof that the *Shehu* built his *aqeeda*, developed his *madh`hab* and established his *tareeqa* upon the firm foundation of the Living Sunna of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and nothing else. The *Shehu* took the hold if the strongest handhold, which is the Living Sunna, that will never falter. He said in his *Sawq*: Among them are his words, may Allah bless him and grant him peace as related by Muslim on the authority of Jabir ibn Abdullahi:

إِنَّ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَخَيْرَ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحَدَّثَاتُهَا وَكُلُّ مُحَدَّثَةٍ بَدْعَةٌ وَكُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ وَالضَّلَالَةُ وَصَاحِبُهَا فِي النَّارِ

“Verily the most excellent speech is the Book of Allah and the best of conduct is the conduct of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. The worst of matters

is invented matters. Every invented thing is an innovation. Every innovation is error and every error and its dower shall be in the Fire.” *Imam Ibn Hajr* said in his Fat’hu: “The meaning of the above words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: ‘Verily the most excellent speech is the Book of Allah’, this is a restatement taken from the words of Allah ta`ala:

اللَّهُ نَزَلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا

“Allah has revealed the best of speech as a Book.” The word ‘conduct’ in the above tradition means a manner (*samt*) or path (*tareeqa*). However, in certain narrations of the above prophetic tradition, the word utilized is ‘guidance’ rather than ‘conduct’, meaning the opposite of error. Thus, the tradition means ‘his behavior’ (*seera*), ‘his pleasing spiritual path’ (*tareeqa radiyya*), and ‘his honorable bearing’ (*hai’at sawiya*).” This interpolation by *Imam Ibn Hajr*, may Allah be merciful to him, is the clearest indication that the *Sunna* of the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him constitutes the spiritual path (*tareeqa*) of elite of the People of Allah. *Ibn Hajr*, continued: “The word ‘invented matters’ are those heretical innovations which are contrary to the Book, the *Sunna* and the consensus (*al-ijma`*) of the *Umma*.” In the prophetic statement: ‘Every invented thing is an innovation. Every innovation is error and every error and its doer shall be in the Fire’, this statement needs interpolation. *Shehu Uthman Dan Fuduye’* said about this in his Ihya as-Sunna: “However, this prophetic tradition does not include all invented matters in general, especially when the *shari`a* encompasses it within its principles. In that case it is attributed to the *shari`a*.” The realized ones (*al-muhaqqiqun*) have said, “Some innovation has been included among the branches of the *shari`a*, with regard to invented matters in general and as far as language is concerned. Pertaining to this is the words of *Umar ibn al-Khataab*, may Allah be pleased with him, regarding the matter of the supererogatory night prayers of *Ramadan* (*at-taraaweeh*), “This innovation is a benefit”. He called it an innovation (*al-bid`a*) with respect to the form in which it had been established. Otherwise it is a *sunna* owing to the fact that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did it three nights in *Ramadan* during his life-time. Its performance was established by the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, “Truly I was afraid that you would make it obligatory upon yourselves.”

The *Shehu* said in his Sawq al-Umma: “He words as it is mentioned in the Saheeh of *al-Bukhari* and *Muslim* on the authority of *A`isha*, may Allah be pleased with her:

مَنْ أَحَدَّثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ

“Whoever introduces into this matter of ours which is not from it will be rejected.” *Imam Ibn Hajr* said: “His words, upon him be peace, ‘this matter of ours’ means this clear and perfect matter, which is not in need of any invented addition or supplement. And his words upon be peace, ‘which is not from it’ means anything which is not from the Book and the *Sunna*, either supported through outward meaning, obscured expressions or through legal extraction.” *Imam an-Nawwawi* said about the above tradition: “The people of Arabic language say that ‘rejection’ here means ‘objected to’, which implies that it is false and not to be relied upon. This prophetic tradition is an immense principle from the principles of Islam. It constitutes the comprehensive speech of the Messenger of Allah,

may Allah bless him and grant him peace. It is clear in its rejection of every innovation and invention.” In the narration of Muslim it says,

مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُنَا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ

“Whoever does an act which is not in accordance with our matter will be rejected.” *Imam* an-Nawwawi said: “This additional tradition which is considered good (*hassan*) meaning by that the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, “Whoever does an act which is not in accordance with our matter, then it is rejected.” That is, that some of the perpetrators might cling stubbornly to an innovation that others had invented before them, and this tradition is brought as a proof against them. Meaning by that the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, “Whoever invents something in this matter of ours which is not from it, will be rejected.” Then the perpetrators might say, “I have not invented anything”. Then the other additional narration that is related in Muslim should be brought as a proof against them. And it is the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, “Whoever does an act which is not in accordance with our matter, then it is rejected”. For that is the clearest way to answer every person who invents matters in the *deen* - regardless if he be the inventor himself or if someone invented it before him.” He then said, “It is necessary for you to memorize this tradition, circulate it and utilize it in thwarting reprehensible actions”. The author of *al-Iftaah* said concerning the above tradition, “It is understood in this from a jurisprudential point of view that whoever invents something in the *deen* which is not from it, is then rejected; meaning it is returned to him and not accepted from him.” And his saying”,. . .that which is not from it. . .”, means that which is disapproved from it”.

From the above it is clear that all good is in following the Living *Sunna* of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, while all evil lies in heretical innovations. I have qualified the *Sunna* with the word ‘Living’ based upon the prophetic tradition related by al-Asbahaani in *At-Targheeb* and al-Alkaa’iy in his *as-Sunna* that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said:

رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى خُلَفَائِهِ

“The mercy of Allah is with my *khalifas*.” It was said: “Who are your *khalifas* O Messenger of Allah?” He said:

الَّذِينَ يُحْيُونَ سُنَّتِي وَيُعَلِّمُونَهَا النَّاسَ مَنْ أَحْيَا سُنَّتِي فَقَدْ أَحْيَانِي وَمَنْ أَحْيَانِي كَانَ مَعِيَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ

“Those who revive my *sunna* and teach it to the people. Whoever revives my *sunna* has given life to me. Whoever gives life to me will be with me in Paradise.” This prophetic tradition establishes the notion of the ‘Living’ *Sunna*, which is a spiritual path (*tareeqa*) that takes its source from the fountain spring of the *Sunna*. This concept was the foundation of the spiritual path of the *Shehu* Uthman Dan Fuduye’. It was built upon: [1] the eradication of one’s bad character and replacing it with the praiseworthy traits of the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace; [2] adherence to the *Sunna* outwardly through the gradual substitution of one’s own will and customs for that of the words and deeds of the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace; and [3] through the constant sending of blessings upon the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace, until the heart is illuminated with the lights overflowing from the Living *Sunna* of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

Thus, the concept of the Living *Sunna*, to us, is the life spring of our spiritual life. It is the fountain (*al-kawthar*) in which we make our *ghusl* each day and in every waking moment. The Living *Sunna* is the life after spiritual death and it is the new birth after which there is no death. The Living *Sunna* is the Primordial Waters that purifies the outer limbs from disobedience, purifies the heart from heedlessness, purifies the soul from blameworthy traits, and purifies the secret from the veils that lie between the servant and his Lord. The *Shehu* said about this in his ad-Daaliya:

شَمْسُ الضُّحَى تَاجُ الْهُدَى بَحْرُ النَّدى
هُوَ وَابِلٌ عَمَّ الْأَنْامَ نِعَامُهُ
لَا خَيْرَ إِلَّا فِي إِيْتَابِ مُحَمَّدٍ
بَلْ كُلُّ خَلْقٍ اللَّهُ دُونَ مُحَمَّدٍ

“He is the bright sun of forenoon, the crown of guidance, the sea of appeal
There is no good except in following Muhammad.

He is an abundant downpour whose blessed Waters pervade all creatures
Rather, the entire creation of Allah is less than Muhammad.”

The *Shehu* also said about the primordial guidance of Muhammad in his al-Ishrinniyat:

عَطُوفٌ رَعُوفٌ ذُو جَلَالٍ مُرْفَعٌ
عَلِيٌّ مَقَامٌ فِي الْأَنْامِ مُشْفَعٌ
عَجَائِبُهُ مِنْ بَعْضِهَا الْمَاءُ يُنْفَعُ
عَزِيزٌ لَهُ كُلُّ الْمَعَارِجِ تُرَضَّعُ
عَظِيمٌ لَهُ نُورٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ يَلْمَعُ

“He is affectionate, compassionate, possessing of majesty, dignified
Among his amazing feats is the flowing water that brings benefit.
An exalted station that brings intercession to creatures
Honorable, with him every place of spiritual ascent takes it’s nourishment
Prodigious, who has a primordial Light from Allah that shines forth. ”

We ask Allah ta`ala to give us success in annihilating ourselves and eradicating our souls into the Living *Sunna* of Muhammad, inwardly and outwardly. We ask Allah to make us die to our souls which commands to evil, our disobedience, our passions and heretical innovations and bring us back to life in Muhammad in accordance with his Light, character, words and deeds, by the rank of His love for Muhammad and by the sanctity of Muhammad’s love for Him, and send blessings and peace upon our master Muhammad as long as the universe turns on its Axis and as long as those responsible for supporting the Throne adhere to their responsibility.

On the Secrets of Fasting *Ramadhan*

Realize that the etymological root of the term fasting (*as-sawm*) means withholding oneself (*al-imsaak*) as well as elevation (*ar-rif'a*). This is true because the religiously prescribed fasting is elevated above all the rest of the acts of worship in rank, for this reason it is called *sawm*. Allah ta`ala elevates the fasting by negating resemblance or likeness to it in any of the acts of worship. He ta`ala also strips the fasting from the servants even though they worship Him by means of it, He then attributes the fasting to Himself *sub'hannahu wa ta`ala*, and He finally rewards those who are described as fasting by His own Hand from His Divine assistance. Allah ta`ala attaches fasting to Himself in the negation of resemblance and likeness, because fasting actually is the avoidance of action, not an action. And due to the fact that the negation of likeness to fasting is an attribute of negation, it strengthens the relationship between the one fasting and Allah ta`ala. Allah ta`ala says about Himself:

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ

“There is nothing like Him.” Thus, Allah ta`ala negates all resemblance and likenesses to Himself, for He has no likeness whether through evidences of reason of Divine Law. Similarly, Allah describes fasting as being unlike other acts of worship, upon the tongue of His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace as related by an-Nasai' on the authority of Abu Amama, who said: “I once came to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and said: Command me to do an order that I can take from you. He said:

عَلَيْكَ بِالصَّوْمِ فَإِنَّهُ لَا مِثْلَ لَهُ

“Obligatory upon you is fasting, for it has no likeness.” Thus, likeness and resemblance to any of the various acts of worship that have been made lawful have been negated from fasting. Whoever realizes that this is the description of negation since it is avoiding eating and drinking, knows without doubt that He too is known through negation of likeness and resemblance to all created essences described with the attributes of existence. It is for this reason that He said in a *hadith Qudsi* narrated by Imam Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said that Allah *azza wa jalla* said:

كُلُّ عَمَلِ ابْنِ آدَمَ لَهُ إِلَّا الصِّيَامَ فَإِنَّهُ لِي وَأَنَا أُجْزِي بِهِ وَالصِّيَامُ جُنَّةٌ فَإِذَا كَانَ يَوْمٌ صَوْمٍ أَحَدِكُمْ فَلَا يَرْفُثُ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَسْخَبُ فَإِنْ سَابَهُ أَحَدٌ أَوْ قَاتَلَهُ فَلْيَقُلْ إِنِّي أَمْرٌ صَائِمٌ . وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَخُلُوفٌ فَمِ الصَّائِمِ أَطْيَبُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ رِيحِ الْمَسْكِ وَاللِّصَائِمِ فَرِحَتَانِ يَفْرَحُهُمَا إِذَا أَفْطَرَ فَرِحَ بِفِطْرِهِ وَإِذَا لَقِيَ رَبَّهُ فَرِحَ بِصَوْمِهِ

“Every action of the son of Adam is for him except fasting, it is for Me. I am the One who rewards for it. Fasting is a protection. When one of you is fasting he should not behave obscenely nor go into a rage. For when someone curses him or fights him, he should say: ‘I am fasting’. I swear by the One in whose Hand is the sole of Muhammad, the unpleasant smell from the mouth of the one fasting will be more pleasant to Allah on the Day of Judgment than the fragrance of musk. The one fasting will have two joys: when he breaks his fast he will be joyous with his eating, and when he meets his Lord, he will be joyous with his fasting.” In this prophetic tradition are countless secrets. Among

them is that Allah ta`ala attributes an act which is in reality the avoidance of action, or the negation of action to Himself because it is unlike any act of worship, in the same manner that He is unlike any created thing. This is a tremendous secret because the consensus of the People of the spiritual Path agrees that there are four means through which the servant can come to know his Lord and have intimate gnosis of Him. The master of our master, *Shaykh* al-Habib Abdullahi ibn Abi Bakr al-`Aydaruus said in his al-Kibreet'l-Ahmar:

واتفق المشايخ الصوفية على أن بناء أمرهم على: قلة الطعام وقلة الكلام وقلة المنام واعتزال
الأنام

“The *shaykhs* of *tasawwuf* are agreed that their affair is built upon: decrease of food; the decrease of speech; the decrease in sleep and solitude from people.” Each of these acts are actually non-actions or the negation of actions, and it is through these that the servants are opened up to direct gnosis of their Lord. Through negation of action one is able to realize and know the One who negates all created attributes to Himself. In the same manner fasting constitutes the highest gnosis of Allah because it is the negation of action or the withholding of food, drink, conjugal relations, and much talk during the daylight hours. The one who is fasting is in the essence of slaveness to his Lord do to his lack of action and through the negation of attribution of fasting to himself, for fasting is for Allah ta`ala. Since Allah ta`ala is known through negation and not affirmation, the one who is in negation knows Allah through the highest mode in which He can be known. *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Abi Bakr al-`Aydaruus said about this is his al-Kibreet:

قال العلماء بالله وجميع المشايخ الصوفية: أشرف كلمة في التوحيد ما قال سيدنا أبو بكر الصديق
رضي الله تعالى عنه: فسبحان الذي لم يجعل للخلق سبيلاً إلى معرفته

“The knowers of Allah and all of the *Shaykhs* of *tasawwuf* have said that the most noble word regarding the Divine Unity is what our master Abu Bakr as-Sidiq, may Allah be pleased with him said: Glory be to Him who has not made any way for creation to know Him.” Thus, the negation of comprehension of Allah is the greatest comprehension of Allah. In the same manner that the lack of action or the negation of action which fasting comprises is the greatest form of worship, thus it is associated with Allah, when He said: “Fasting is for Me.” This is what was meant when the Messenger of Allah described the one fasting as having two joys: one when he breaks his fast, he is joyous with the breaking of the fast; and the second joy when the one fasting meets his Lord, he becomes joyous due to his fast. You notice that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace did not say: ‘He will be joyous with the meeting of his Lord.’ The reason for this is that every one who meets his Lord encounters Him through the prism of his volition and deeds, and every deed or volition has at its core one of the Names and Attributes of Allah ta`ala. It is to these Names and Attributes that all human actions and will return. Allah ta`ala says:

Institute of Islamic Studies International وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

“Allah created you and what you do.” And Allah ta`ala says:

وَمَا يَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ

“They do not even have volition except that Allah wills it.”

This is so regardless if the actions and deeds are those of beauty comprising the varieties of remembrance, obedience and drawing near to Him or if they are actions and deeds of majesty comprising the varieties of heedlessness, disobedience and rebellion of Allah ta`ala. Allah ta`ala says:

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ

“Verily Allah leads astray whom He pleases and He guides whom He pleases.” Thus, all actions and volition has a Name that is its Lord and its source and its Final Return. However, because fasting is the negation of action and is associated with His essence, which as He says:

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ

“There is nothing like Him”, it has a unique source of manifestation from the Essence of Allah ta`ala as He said: “Fasting is for Me.” It is for this reason that the Messenger of Allah said:

عَلَيْكَ بِالصَّوْمِ فَإِنَّهُ لَا مِثْلَ لَهُ

“Obligatory upon you is fasting, for it has no likeness.” Fasting has no likeness among the other varieties of worship because it is attributed to the Essence of Allah ta`ala that has no likeness in creation. It is for this reason that the gnosis of Allah ta`ala which emerges from fasting is stronger than the gnosis that flows from the other acts of worship because its witnessing emerges from the negation of likeness. The leader of the Champions of Truth (*as-siddiqeen*), Abu Bakr as-Sidiq said:

عَدَمُ الْإِسْتِدْرَاكِ إِسْتِدْرَاكٌ

“The inability to comprehend is comprehension.” Since the Essence of Allah ta`ala is incomprehensible because it is unlike anything upon which created comprehension can attach itself, gnosis at this level can only emerge through annihilation and obliteration of the locus, and this can only be attained through the non-action of fasting. Unlike other acts of worship which emerge from the Beautiful Names and Attributes of Allah ta`ala and to which these acts return, fasting is emptiness, abstinence and returns to its source which is lack of resemblance. *Shaykh* Abd’l-Qaadir ibn al-Mustafa clarified this subtle point in his *Ma`rifat’l-Haqq*, when said:

“This experiential knowledge is the utmost limit and the most exalted form of self-manifestation (*aqsaa’l-ghaayaat wa `aalaat-tijalliyyaat*). And there is no way for the servant to attain this level of knowledge except after the spiritual pulverization (*as-sahqi*) and the spiritual obliteration (*al-mahwi*) of all the essences. For the servant first becomes annihilated from himself (*fayanfaa awalan `an nafsih*) by the manifestation of his Lord (*bi dhuhuur Rabbihi*). Then secondly he becomes annihilated from his Lord (*yanfaa thaaniyan `an Rabbihi*) by the manifestation of the secrets of His lordship (*bi dhuhuur sirri rubbuubiyatihi*). Then thirdly he becomes annihilated from the relationships and correlations of His Divine Attributes (*yanfaa thalithan `an muta`aliqaati Sifaathi*) by means of the abundant realization of His Essence (*bi dhuhuur bi mutahaqqiqaati Dhaatihi*). At this point the servant realizes spiritual obliteration

(*al-mahqi*), annihilation (*al-fana'*) and cutting off (*al-inqittaa'*). For when he realizes spiritual obliteration (*al-mahqi*), then this is the source of Real Establishment (*`ayn ithbaat haqeeqi*). For when he realizes spiritual annihilation (*al-fanaa'*), then this is the source of Eternal Continuity (*`ayn baqa' daymuumi*). For when he realizes spiritual cutting off (*al-inqittaa'*), then this is the source of Sacred Arrival (*`ayn ittissaal qudsiyyi*).”

The bottom line is that only Allah ta`ala knows Himself in His Essence and the one fasting has gnosis of this fact in this world before the Next. It is for this reason the Messenger of Allah ta`ala says that the one fasting has two joys: one in this life when he breaks his fast and one in the Next Life when he realizes the gnosis of the incomprehensible Essence of Allah ta`ala that could only come through the medium of fasting. And Allah knows best. I have, with the help of Allah ta`ala revealed a subtle secret and opened a portal to the Astonishing Vision (*ar-ru'ya 'l-mudh'hil*). Since the Vision of Allah ta`ala is the goal of fasting, let us commence our discussion regarding the obligations of fasting, its *sunnan*, merits and what the people have invented in it of heretical innovation, by first discussing the sighting of the new moon (*ru'ya 'l-hilaal*).

On Sighting the New Moon for *Ramadan*

Realize, that *Shehu* Uthman Dan Fuduye' said in his *Ihya as-Sunna*: "As for the path of the *sunna* of Muhammad concerning the issue of fasting (*sawm*), it is that each person must fast just as the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace performed the fast. It is related in the *Saheeh* of al-Bukhari on the authority of Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him who said that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said,

صُومُوا لِرُؤْيَيْتِهِ، وَأَفْطِرُوا لِرُؤْيَيْتِهِ، فَإِنْ غُمَّ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَكْمِلُوا عِدَّةَ شَعْبَانَ ثَلَاثِينَ

"Fast by sighting (the new moon) and stop fasting by sighting (the new moon). If it is concealed from you then complete the number of the month *Sha`baan* with thirty days." The scholars of the *Sunna* have said that the above imperative statement "fast" means: "to make the intention to fast during the night when the new moon of *Ramadan* is sighted by at least two men considered upright. This is the opinion of Malik, al-Layth, al-`Awzai', at-Thawri, and as-Shafi`. Their proof is the following tradition related by Abd'r-Rahman ibn Zayd ibn al-Khataab (the nephew of Umar ibn al-Khataab), when he was giving a *khutba* on a day of doubt when the new moon of *Ramadan* was concealed behind clouds, he said: "I was once sitting with some of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and I questioned them about the sighting and they said to me that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said:

صُومُوا لِرُؤْيَيْتِهِ، وَأَفْطِرُوا لِرُؤْيَيْتِهِ، وَأَنْسَكُوا لَهَا فَإِنْ غُمَّ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَتَمُّوا ثَلَاثِينَ يَوْمًا فَإِنْ شَهِدَ شَاهِدَانِ مُسْلِمَانِ فَصُومُوا وَأَفْطِرُوا

"Fast by sighting (the new moon), stop fasting by sighting (the new moon), and adhere to your spiritual sacrifices for it. If it is concealed from, you then complete the thirty days. If two Muslim men testify that they have seen it then fast and stop the fast" Thus, the scholars of the *Sunna* are agreed that the witness of a single upright man is not sufficient regarding the beginning of *Ramadan* or its ending, except in the opinion of Abu Thawr, who said that the sighting of a single upright Muslim was acceptable.

Another proof of the obligation of fasting and stopping the fast of *Ramadan* based upon the sighting is from a sound tradition related by Abu Dawud and ad-Daaraqutni from the *amir* of Mecca, al-Haarith ibn Hatib, who said: "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace took a covenant with us that we would only abstain based upon sighting (the new moon). And if we did not see it, then we would accept the witness of two upright witnesses who have seen it, and then abstain based upon their witnessing."

The benefit of the above mentioned prophetic traditions is that the obligation of fasting (*wujuub as-sawm*) and the obligation of stopping the fast (*wujuub al-iftaar*) is based purely upon the sighting of the new moon (*al-hilaal*) by at least two upright Muslim men who have seen it. As for the meaning of the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: "If it is concealed from you then complete the number of the month of *Sha`baan* with thirty days." It means if the thirtieth night of *Sha`baan* and the first night of *Ramadan* are concealed because of clouds preventing the sighting of the new moon, then determine the beginning of the month of *Ramadan* based upon the enumeration of the thirty days of *Sha`baan*. This is true based

upon the following prophetic tradition related by at-Tirmidhi on the authority of Abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said:

أَحْصُوا هَلَالَ شَعْبَانَ لِرَمَضَانَ

“Count the moon phases of *Sha`baan* for the month of *Ramadan*.”

According to *Shaykh* Muhammad ibn Abd'r-Rahman in his Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi, the commentary upon the Jaami` of *Imam* at-Tirmidhi, the meaning of the above prophetic tradition is: “The word ‘count’ is an imperative verb from the noun ‘calculation’ (*al-ahsaa*) and its etymological root means: ‘enumeration by means of counting’. Its synonym is: ‘enumerate’ (*iduu*). His words: “*the moon phases of Sha`baan*”, means counting its days. His words: “for the month of *Ramadan*”, means because of the month of *Ramadan*, or in order to preserve the fasting of *Ramadan*. Ibn al-Malik said: “It means so that you will know the beginning of *Ramadan*. Ibn Hajr said it means: “Strenuous effort should be made in exactly enumerating the days of *Sha`baan* by examining its moon phases until nothing of the days is overlooked in order that you can be upon researched insight regarding the actual sighting the new moon of *Ramadan*.”

It is also related in the Saheeh of al-Bukhari on the authority of Ammar ibn Yaasir that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said,

مَنْ صَامَ يَوْمَ الشَّكِّ فَقَدْ عَصَى أَبَا الْقَاسِمِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

"Whoever fast on the day of doubt has disobeyed Abu'l-Qaasim." Ibn Hajr said this tradition means: “What is intended here is the day in which there is some doubt whether it is the thirtieth of *Sha`baan*, since the new moon could not be seen due to clouds which concealed it, or for another reason. This day is called doubtful because it is conceivable to be the last of *Sha`baan* or the first of *Ramadan*”. *Imam* as-Suyuti said in his Quut'l-Mughtadhi: “This action has been prohibited as a form of precaution of considering that day to be apart of *Ramadan*.” The scholars of the *Sunna* have said: “The meaning of the this prophetic tradition is that one should not meet *Ramadan* with any fasting, intending by that taking precaution for *Ramadan*. This is based upon the prophetic tradition:

لَا تَقْدَمُوا شَهْرَ رَمَضَانَ بِصِيَامٍ قَبْلَهُ بِيَوْمٍ أَوْ يَوْمَيْنِ

“Do not proceed the month of *Ramadan* with fasting by a day or two days.”

Principle: From the above we realize the obligation of beginning the fast and ending the fast of *Ramadan* by the sighting (*ruyaa*) of the new moon (*hilaal*) by two or more upright Muslim men (*aadilaan muslimaan*), not by men whose *adaala* (uprightness) is in question. This would naturally exclude those Muslims who are considered *mudajjin*. That is those who have emigrated from the lands of Islam to the lands of disbelief for worldly reasons and who have become content to remain under the jurisdiction of the Christians. This also excludes determining the sighting by means of any technological astronomical means, especially if a disbeliever has decided this determination. From the above we also realize the obligation of reckoning the number of the days in *Sha`baan* in order to know with some certainty the time in which the new moon of *Ramadan* can be sighted. This will also give us the means by which we can determine the beginning and ending of *Ramadan* when the new moon is hidden. This means that the confirmation of the beginning and ending of *Ramadan* will be based upon the testimony of two or more Muslim men from our *Jama`at* or from two or more Muslim men who are under confederation

with our Jama`at, like the Jama`at of Imam Jamil al-Amin or the jama`ats we are under confederation with in the Caribbean. This is regardless of the region of the country in which it is sighted.

On Standing During Taraaweeh and Tahajjud During Ramadan

Shehu Uthman Dan Fuduye' said in his *Ihya*: "From the path of the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, during *Ramadan* is it being highly recommended to stand in prayer (*al-qiyaam*) during the nights of *Ramadan*. It is related in the *Saheeh* of al-Bukhari on the authority of Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said,

مَنْ قَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

"Whoever stands in prayer during the nights of *Ramadan* with true faith and with self reckoning will have all his previous sins forgiven him." *Imam* an-Nawwawi in his commentary upon the *Saheeh* of *Imam* Muslim said: His words 'with true faith' here means: "Acceptance that it is the truth and intending by it to obtain the merits of fasting. His words 'self reckoning' means: That one desires Allah alone in the fasting and that the objective is not to be seen by people or any other objective other than true sincerity." *Imam* al-Khataabi said: "His words 'self reckoning' in the prophetic tradition means that he should fast with the idea of yearning for the rewards of fasting, while his soul is content with it. He should not belittle the fasting nor complain of the length of its days." *Imam* an-Nawwawi said: "What is meant by his words 'during the nights of *Ramadan*' is prayer of *at-taraaweeh*. The scholars of the *sunna* are agreed upon the prayer of *taraaweeh* being highly recommended. However, they differ regarding the superiority of praying singularly at home or in congregation in the *masjid*. *Imam* as-Shafi`, and a large group among his students, Abu Hanifa, Ahmad, some of the Malikis and others have said: It is best to do the prayer in congregation as Umar ibn al-Khataab and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them established, along with the continual behavior of the Muslims on that. This is because this is among the apparent rites of Islam and it resembles the prayer of the Eid. However, *Imam* Malik, Abu Yusef and some of the Shafi`s say: It is best to pray the *taraaweeh* singularly in the home based upon the saying of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace

أَفْضَلُ الصَّلَاةِ صَلَاةَ الْمَرْءِ فِي بَيْتِهِ إِلَّا الْمَكْتُوبَةَ

"The best prayer is the prayer that a person prays in his home, except the prescribed prayers."

Imam an-Nawwawi said: "His words '...will have all his previous sins forgiven him', it is understood by the jurists that this forgiveness is specific for small sins but not the major sins. While some of the jurists say: 'It is conceivable that this prophetic tradition means that the major sins will be reduced once the small sins have been removed.'" The essence of the prophetic tradition: "Whoever stands in prayer during the nights of *Ramadan* with true faith and with self reckoning will have all his previous sins forgiven him", is that the servant can give life to the nights of *Ramadan* with every variety of worship and drawing near to Allah ta`ala which has been confirmed in the *Sunna* of the Beloved Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant peace. This includes superogatory prayers, seeking forgiveness, remembrance of Allah, supplication, recitation of *Qur'an*, and reflection.

Amir'l-Mu'mineen Muhammad Bello said in his Infaq'l-Maysuur describing apart of the night vigils that the *Shehu* prescribed for the servants of Allah ta'ala: "You should pray at least two *rak`ats* for *tahajjud* in the middle of the night. You should recite in the first *raka`at* the *al-Faatiha* and then *surat'l-Kahf* ('the Cave') and in the second *raka`at* the *al-Faatiha* and then *surat'l-ad-Dhukhaan* ('the Smoke'). Or you can recite *Yaaseen* in the first *raka`at* and then *al-Mulk* in the second. Or you can recite *al-Kaafiruun* in the first and *al-Ikhlaas* in the second. All this should be based upon what you have memorized and the extent of the time. You should say in the prostration;

اللَّهُمَّ أَرْحَمَ ذَلِي وَضِرَاعَتِي إِلَيْكَ وَأَنْسُ وَحَشْتِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْكَ وَأَرْحَمَنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

"O Allah, be merciful with my humility and submissiveness towards You, and make my solitude in front of You be the source of intimacy. Be merciful towards me, verily You have power over all things." You should send blessings upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace one hundred times after the two *rak`ats*."

On Rushing to Break the Fast During Ramadan

Shehu Uthman Dan Fuduye' said in his Ihya: "From the path of the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, during *Ramadan* is it being highly recommended of hurrying to break the fast (*ta`jeel 'l-fitr*). It is related in the Saheeh of al-Bukhari on the authority of Sahl ibn Sa'd that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said,

لَا يَزَالُ النَّاسُ بِخَيْرٍ مَا عَجَّلُوا الْفِطْرَ

"The people will continue in good as long as they hurry to break the fast."

Imam Muhammad ibn Abd'r-Rahman said in his Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi said: "This is what the people of knowledge from among the Companions of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and others chose regarding it being highly recommended to rush to break the fast. This was the opinion of as-Shafi`, Ahmad and Is'haq." He also said: "The meaning of his words 'The people will continue in good...', is understood from another tradition related by Abu Hurayra;

لَا يَزَالُ الدِّينُ ظَاهِرًا

"The religion will remain apparent..." Thus, the manifestation of the *deen* necessitates the persistence of good. This means the people will persist in manifesting the *deen*, 'as long as they hurry to break the fast', as the tradition narrates. This means as long as they persist in establishing the *sunna* of rushing to break the fast." The scholars of the *sunna* are agreed that rushing to break the fast applies when the setting of the sun has been ascertained by sighting or by the testimony of two upright men or a single upright man."

Imam Ibn Hajr said: "The meaning of his words 'as long as they hurry to break the fast', the good is attained at the time that they do that, following the *Sunna*, stopping with its limits without relying on their own intellects in altering its principles. Abu Hurayra added in another narration:

لَأَنَّ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى يُؤَخِّرُونَ

“This is because the Jews and Christians postpone breaking the fast.” Abu Dawud, Ibn Khuzayma, and others narrated this. The custom of postponing of breaking the fast of the People of the Book is until the appearance of the stars.

Ibn Habaan and al-Haakim related a tradition from Sahl in his words:

لَا تَزَالُ أُمَّتِي عَلَى سُنَّتِي مَا لَمْ تَنْتَظِرْ بِفِطْرِهَا النُّجُومَ

“My *Umma* will remain on my *sunna* as long as they do not wait for the appearance of the stars to break the fast.”

The *Mujaddid* Ibn Daqeeq al-`Eid said: “This prophetic tradition is an answer against the sect of the *Shia`* who postpone the breaking of the fast until the appearance of the stars. This is because rushing to break the fast is the causative factor of the existence of good, thus by postponing it, one enters into the actions of those who act contrary to the *Sunna*.”

Imam al-Qari said: “Some of the scholars say that when the breaking of the fast is postponed in order to discipline the soul or in order to connect the two evening prayers with superogatory prayers, without believing in the obligation of postponing the breaking of the fast, then there is no harm in that. However, I say that the harm comes from the loss of the *sunna* of rushing to break the fast, because breaking the fast with just water does not negate disciplining the soul or connecting the two evening prayers with extra acts of worship. Along with the fact that rushing to break the fast is a manifestation of one’s innate inability (*`ajaz*) with regard to slaveness as well as hastening to accept the license (*rukhsa*) from the presence of Lordship.”

On the Postponing Taking the Pre-Dawn Meal in *Ramadan*

Shehu Uthman Dan Fuduye’ said in his *Ihya`*: “From the path of the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, during *Ramadan* is it being highly recommended of postponing the dawn meal (*ta'kheer 's-sahuur*). It is related in the Saheeh of al-Bukhari on the authority of Sahl ibn Sa`d who said: "I used to take the dawn meal with my family. I would then rush to catch the prostration with the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace."

Qadi` Iyad said: “Sahl ibn Sa`d intends in this statement to say that the furthest extent of his hurrying was because his dawn meal was near to the appearance of dawn, to the extent that he almost failed to catch *subh* prayer with the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.” Ibn Muneer said: This tradition means that the Companions used to take the dawn meal very close to the time of dawn to the point of shortening it and rushing out of fear of missing the prayer.”

It is also related in the Saheeh of al-Bukhari on the authority of Anas on the authority of Zayd ibn Thaabit who said, "We took the dawn meal with the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace and he then stood to establish the prayer". I then said, "How long should it be between the call to prayer and the pre-dawn meal?" He said, "The space of (time it takes to recite) fifty verses". Ibn Hajr said: “This tradition proves that gathering in congregation to take the pre-dawn meal is a *sunna*. This also establishes that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace used to postpone the pre-dawn meal out of compassion to his *Umma*. He would do so because if he had not taken the pre-dawn meal they would have followed him in that, causing the fast to be

difficult for some of them. If he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace had taken the pre-dawn meal in the middle of the night, this would also have been difficult for those who would perhaps be overcome by sleep to the point where they would end up missing the *subh* prayer, or they would be in need to make spiritual struggle by means of staying awake all night (*sahr*).”

Sahl ibn Sa`d determined the time between the pre-dawn meal and the *subh* prayer by means of recitation (*qira'at*). This is an indication that this time was normally a time of superogatory worship, which was filled with the recitation of the *Qur'an* by the Companions of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. For if they were occupied with any other action at that time, he would have measured and determined that time using another means of measurement. However, he measured the time based upon a particular act of worship, which was a specific measurement of recitation of *Qur'an*. This is a proof that this time was normally a time of recitation.

On Recitation of the *Qur'an* During Ramadan

This brings us to addressing a question raised by *Amir* Dawud of San Diego regarding the best times to recite *Qur'an* and the best methodology of reciting it. Realize that the recitation and sealing of the *Qur'an* is an immense secret with Allah and one of the most important means of attaining forgiveness, reduction of sins, physical as well as psychological cures, and spiritual openings with Allah ta`ala. This is because the *Qur'an* is the uncreated word of Allah ta`ala which emanated from His Holy Essence, revealed by means of the Arch Angel Jibril into the pure heart of the best of creation, the seal of the Prophets and Messengers, our chief Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. *Shaykh* Abdullahi Dan Fuduye', may Allah be merciful to him said in his Fara'id al-Jaleela where he raises the question whether reciting the *Qur'an* in a slow measured manner (*tarteelan*) or reciting it rapidly (*hadran*) is better. He said:

تَرْتِيلُهُ لِلْأَكْثَرِينَ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ حَذْرِهِ تَالِثًا يُفْصَلُ

“Its recitation in a slow measured manner to most (scholars) is considered better

Than reciting it rapidly, (but in this) there are three opinions that justify it.”

Here the *Shaykh*, may Allah be merciful to him, demonstrates that the scholars differ regarding the superiority of reciting slow or rapidly. Some of the scholars believe that slow measured recitation is best unrestrictedly, while others believe that rapid recitation is best unrestrictedly. He begins by explaining the judgment of those who say that rapid recitation is best by delineating three opinions regarding this. He says, may Allah be merciful to him:

مَنْ شَقَّهِ وَعَارِفًا مَعْنَاهُ وَمَا يَوْمُ النَّاسِ مِنْ سِوَاهُ

“The one who is in difficulty, the one who knows its meanings

And the one who acts as *Imam* for people other than himself.

Here the *Shaykh*, may Allah be merciful to him, gives three opinions regarding the legality of reciting rapidly (*hadran*). [1] The first opinion is for the one who is in difficulty (*shaqqa*). Difficulties for the one reciting are in three varieties. The first one is the one pressed for time and he wants to recite a particular amount (*hazb*) at a particular time. The second one is the one in difficult circumstances spiritually or worldly and he wants relief from Allah ta`ala immediately. The third one is the wayfarer (*ibn as-sabeel*) who is on the journey, whether that journey be traversing the earth to attain the bounties

of his Lord, or the traveler (*saalik*) on the spiritual journey (*suluuk*) to his Lord. In both cases, the traveler encounters difficulties. The scholars have said: “Knowledge is extensive and times is short”. [2] The second opinion is ‘the one who knows its meanings’. This means the one who understands the Arabic language and knows what he is reciting. It also means the scholar who is firm in his understanding of the legal judgments of the *Qur’an*, along with its rules, and its *adab*. It also means the one who knows its outer meanings and inner meanings. This is the one firm in the knowledge and gnosis of his Lord and understands with piercing insight the lights and sciences, which manifest from the letters, the words, the separated letters, the verses, and the chapters of the Mighty *Qur’an*. Neither its outer forms veil him from its hidden meanings, nor do its hidden secrets drown him from its outer aspects. “One hour’s contemplation of the scholar is worth seventy years worship of the ignorant one.” [3] The third opinion is ‘the one who acts as *Imam* for people other than himself.’ This one is the example and the paradigm that leads the common people in the prescribed prayers. Sometimes he may lead the weak, the old and sick, which gives him license to shorten the prayer for those following. “O Allah Whoever is appointed over any affair of my *Umma* and he makes it difficult for them, make things difficult for him. Whoever is appointed over any affair of my *Umma* and he makes it easy for them, make things easy for him.” Thus, avoiding making difficulties for the followers and yearning to make things easy for them requires shortening the prayer, which in turn requires the *Imam* to recite rapidly. He is also the *Imam* of those who are firm and resolute in their desire for spiritual rewards, who fulfills the trust in adhering to the *Sunna* of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace by standing sometimes long in prayer and sometimes reciting the longer chapters of the *Qur’an*, in accordance with the way of the *Salaf as-Saalih*, may Allah be pleased with them.

Imam al-Manjuuri said in his *Jaami` at-Talqeen*: “The one who is the *imam* reciting rapidly regarding his right as *imam* is better, while reciting in a slow measured manner is best for others.” The proofs for all these three opinions is from the *Qur’an*, the *Sunna* and by reason. As for the *Qur’an* Allah ta`ala says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا

“O you who believe remember Allah with much remembrance.” As for the *Sunna* there is the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant peace as related in the *Saheeh* of al-Bukhari on the authority of Abu Hurayra:

إِذَا صَلَّى أَحَدُكُمْ بِالنَّاسِ فَلْيُخَفِّفْ فَإِنَّ فِيهِمُ الضَّعِيفَ وَالسَّقِيمَ وَذَا الْحَاجَّةِ وَالْكَبِيرَ وَإِذَا صَلَّى أَحَدُكُمْ لِنَفْسِهِ فَلْيُطَوِّلْ مَا شَاءَ

“When one of you prays with the people, he should lighten the prayer, for among them are the weak, infirm, the one who has needs, and the elderly. But when one of you prays by himself, he can elongate the prayer as he likes.” As for as reason is concerned, ‘much remembrance cannot occur except through reciting much *Qur’an* and this cannot be accomplished except through rapid recitation (*hadran*). Further, And Allah knows best.

دَلِيلُ الْأَكْثَرِينَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ وَسُنَّةِ النَّبِيِّ وَالْمَعَانِي

“The proof for the majority is in the *Qur’an*

And the *Sunna* of the Prophet, and by implication.”

Here the *Shaykh*, may Allah be merciful to him, informs us that the majority of the scholars who are of the opinion that reciting the *Qur'an* in a slow measured manner (*tarteelan*) is best, have their proofs from the Infallible *Qur'an*, from the *Sunna*, and by means of reason. As for the proof from the *Qur'an* there is the words of Allah ta`ala:

وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلاً

“And recite the *Qur'an* in a slow measured manner.” And there is His Exalted words:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ

“Will they not be attentive to the meanings of the *Qur'an*?” And there is His Exalted words:

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ

“A Blessed Book, which We have revealed to you so that they may be attentive to the meanings of its verses.” As for the *Sunna* there is the practice of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace as related by Abd'r-Razaaq, Abdu ibn Humayd, Ibn Nasr and Ibn al-Mundhir on the authority of Qatada who said regarding Allah's words: “And recite the *Qur'an* in a slow measured manner”; ‘It has reached us that the most general recitation of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was drawn out.’ As for as the proofs for reciting in a slow measured manner based upon reasoned implication (*ma`ana*), the scholars of the *Sunna* believe that *tarteel* is nearest to showing dignity and respect for the *Qur'an*, along with the fact that *tarteel* is stronger in leaving influence and having effect upon the heart, more so than rushing and destroying the *Qur'an* with one's tongue.

Then *Shaykh* Abdullahi clarifies that each opinion has its proofs which are all valid and that some of the scholars of the *Sunna* consider that reciting the *Qur'an* in a slow measured manner (*tarteelan*) as well as rapidly (*hadran*) are equally valid, by his words:

كَغَيْرِهِمْ قِيلَ لَذَا سَيِّانٍ مَنْ قَالَ بِالتَّفْضِيلِ ذُو بَرَهَانَ

“Like other scholars, it is said that slow and rapid are equal

Those who hold to the superiority of one over the other have their proofs.”

After establishing the legality of reciting slowly or rapidly, *Shaykh* Abdullahi then introduces the servants to the methodology and merits of reciting the *Qur'an* in one week (seven days). He said:

وَأَخْتَمُهُ فِي الْأَسْبُوعِ فَهُوَ أَكْمَلُ لِلشَّهْرِ مَا وَرَاءَهُ تَسَاهُلُ
يُكْرَهُ فِي أَقَلِّ مِنْ ثَلَاثٍ وَقِيلَ لَا فِي أَشْهُرِ الْأَبْحَاثِ

“And seal the *Qur'an* in a week, for this is

The most perfect way due to its renown, and less than that is what is easy. It is reprehensible to recite it less than three days

It is also said that it is not reprehensible in the most famous of researches.”

The proof for this is in what *Imam* an-Nawwawi said in his commentary upon the *Saheeh* of *Imam* Muslim: “As for the saying of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace:

وَاقْرَأِ الْقُرْآنَ فِي كُلِّ شَهْرٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ فِي كُلِّ عَشْرِينَ ثُمَّ قَالَ فِي كُلِّ سَبْعٍ وَلَا تَزِدْ

“Recite the *Qur’an* every month.” He then said: “Every twenty days”. He then said: “Every seven days and no less”. The *Salaf* had different customs in their every day recitation based upon their spiritual states, comprehension, and daily litanies. Some of them used to seal the *Qur’an* every month. Some of them used to seal the *Qur’an* every twenty days. Some of them used to seal it every ten days, while the majority of them finished it in seven days. Many of them used to finish it in three days as well as in a day and a night. Some of them used to finish it in one night. Some would even complete the *Qur’an* three times in one night, while some went as far as to complete the *Qur’an* eight times in one night. This is the most that I have heard that it had been done.”

As far as the reprehensibility of sealing the *Qur’an* in less than three days as *Shaykh* Abdullahi said the proof for this is from the *Sunna* as it has been narrated by Abdullahi ibn `Amr that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said:

لَمْ يَفْقَهُ مَنْ قَرَأَ الْقُرْآنَ فِي أَقَلِّ مِنْ ثَلَاثِ

“The one who recites the *Qur’an* in less than three days will not be able to understand it.” Ibn Hajr said that this means, that the person will not be able to understand the outward meanings of what he recites. Although some of the scholars give a license to seal the *Qur’an* in less than three days based upon what was related on the authority of Uthman ibn `Afan, that he would recite the *Qur’an* in a single *raka`at*. It has also been related on the authority of Sa`id ibn Jubayr that he would recite the *Qur’an* in a single *raka`at* while in the Ka`aba. Muhammad ibn Nasr said regarding the standing at night in prayer: “Sa`id ibn al-Masayyib used to seal the *Qur’an* in two nights.” At-Tahawi related with his chain of authority going back to Ibn Serin who said: “Tamim as-Daari used to give life to the whole of the night by reciting the entire *Qur’an* in a single *raka`at*.” This is the meaning of *Shaykh* Abdullahi’s words: ‘It is also said that it is not reprehensible in the most famous of researches’

The *Shaykh* Abdullahi explains how the recitation of the *Qur’an* in seven days should be accomplished. He said:

قُرْآنُهُ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ أَنْصَفُ
 مِنَ غَيْرِ تَقْسِيمٍ وَبَعْضُ وَظَفْوًا
 لِالَّيْلَةِ الْأُولَى ثَلَاثُ يَفْرَوُ
 خَمْسَ فَسَبْعَ ثُمَّ تِسْعَ عَشْرَ
 بِسُورَةٍ فَمَعَ ثَلَاثُ يَتْلُو
 مِنْ قِ إِلَى الْخَتْمِ هِيَ الْمُفْصَلُ

“Its recitation in seven days is the middle way

Without division or splitting up, is the way it is done

For the first night the first three chapters should be recited

Then the next five, then the next seven, then nine, then ten

Along with a chapter, then the same along with three more

Then recite from chapter *Qaf* until the ending, which is its elaboration.”

Here *Shaykh* Abdullahi Dan Fuduye’ delineates the methodology of reciting the *Qur’an* in seven days. He defines this way as the middle way because this was the method utilized by most of the Companions of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He said that the first three chapters of the *Qur’an* should be recited the first day, stopping after *surat’l-Nisaa*. Then the next five chapters should be recited the second day, stopping after *surat’l-Tawba*. Then the next seven chapters should be recited the third day, stopping after *surat’l-Nahl*. Then the next nine chapters should be recited the fourth day, stopping after *surat’l-Farqaan*. Then the next eleven chapters should be

recited the fifth day, stopping after *surat'l-Yaaseen*. Then the next thirteen chapters should be recited the sixth day, stopping after *surat'l-Hujaraat*. Then the last day one should recite from *surat'l-Qaaf* until the end of the *Qur'an*. *Shaykh* Abdullahi then says:

بِأَوَّلِ اللَّيْلِ أَوْ النَّهَارِ وَكَمْ بِهِ وَالْخَتْمِ مِنْ أَخْبَارِ

“Seal it in the beginning of the night or the beginning of the day

And how many narrations have come regarding the sealing of the *Qur'an*?”

What the *Shaykh* means here, is that there are innumerable narrations from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace extolling the merits of sealing the *Qur'an*. Among them is what was related on the authority Sa`d that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said:

مَنْ خَتَمَ الْقُرْآنَ صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ حَتَّى يَمْسَى وَمَنْ خَتَمَهُ آخِرَ النَّهَارِ صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ حَتَّى يَصْبِحُ

“Whoever seals the *Qur'an* the Angels send blessings upon him until evening. Whoever seals the *Qur'an* in the last part of the day, the Angels send blessings upon him until morning.” It has been related on the authority of Ibn Mas`ud that the Messenger of Allah may Allah bless him and grant him peace said:

مَنْ شَهِدَ فَتْحَ الْقُرْآنِ فَكَانَ شَهِدَ فَتْحِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ حِينَ تَفْتَحُ وَمَنْ شَهِدَ خَتْمَ الْقُرْآنِ فَكَانَ شَهِدَ الْغَنَائِمِ حِينَ تَقْسِمُ

“Whoever is present at the commencing of the recitation of the *Qur'an*, it is as though he were present at the victory of Muslims when attaining victory. Whoever is present at the sealing of the *Qur'an*, it is as though he were present at the spoils of war when it is being divided.” It has been related on the authority of `Amr ibn Shu`ayb that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said:

إِذَا خَتَمَ الْعَبْدُ الْقُرْآنَ صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ عِنْدَ خَتْمِهِ سِتُّونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ.

“When the servant seals the *Qur'an*, more than sixty thousand Angels pray upon him when he finishes it.” It was related on the authority of Anas ibn Malik that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said:

إِنْ لَصَاحِبِ الْقُرْآنِ عِنْدَ كُلِّ خَتْمٍ دَعْوَةٌ مُسْتَجَابَةٌ وَشَجَرَةٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ

“Verily with the one who recites the *Qur'an* when he seals is accepted supplications and a tree in Paradise.”

Shaykh Abdullahi then informs the servants about the *adab* of supplication at the sealing of the *Qur'an* and who should be included in one’s supplication. He said:

وَأَدْعُ بِرَحْمَةِ وَنَيْلِ السُّؤْلِ وَكَمْ دُعَاءٍ بَعْدَ لِلرَّسُولِ

“And supplicate for mercy and the attainment of request

And how many supplications after it have been narrated from the Messenger?”

لِلنَّفْسِ وَالْأَهْلِ وَمَنْ قَدْ آمَنُوا وَقُلْ لَهُمْ إِذْ دَعَوْتُمْ آمَنُوا

And supplicate for oneself, the wives, and those who have believed

And say to them when you have finished your supplication: ‘Say: Amen.’”

Here the *Shaykh* delineates the permissibility of gathering the family and the *jama`at* to seal the *Qur'an* in order for the blessings to descend upon everyone present. The evidence for this from the *Sunna* is in what was related by Ibn an-Najaar on the authority of Anas ibn Malik in his *Musnad* where the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said:

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا خَتَمَ جَمَعَ أَهْلَهُ وَدَعَا

“The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, when he would seal (the *Qur'an*) he would gather his wives and make supplication.” *Shaykh* Abdullahi, may Allah be merciful to him informed us that there are many prophetic traditions narrated regarding the supplications at the sealing of the *Qur'an*. However, it goes with out saying that among the best supplications for this *Jama`at* at the sealing of the *Qur'an* are those supplications narrated from *Shehu* Uthman Dan Fuduye', *Shaykh* Abdullahi Dan Fuduye' and *Sultan* Muhammad Bello, may Allah be pleased with them. Among these are the *Munaajat*, the *Dalaa'il*, and the *Daaliyat* of *Shehu* Uthman Dan Fuduye'. Among them are the *Hizb al-Ashraar* and the *Wird al-Adhkaar wa'd-Da`awaat* of *Shaykh* Abdullahi Dan Fuduye'. Among them is the *Majmu` al-Istighfaar* of *Sultan* Muhammad Bello. There are many other supplications from the *Saaliheen*, like the *ahzaab* of *Shaykh* Abu'l-Hassan as-Shadhili, the *awraad* of *Shaykh* al-Haddad, the *awraad* of *Imam* an-Nawwawi and all the supplications and *adhkaar* narrated from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

Shaykh Abdullahi Dan Fuduye' clarified the means that the servant can obtain *baraka* through the recitation of the *Qur'an* in his *Diya`Uluum ad-Deen* when he said:

وَيَبْغِي أَنْ يَكُونَ الْقَارِءُ عَلَى وَضوءٍ مُسْتَقْبِلَ الْقِبْلَةِ مُطْرَقًا رَأْسَهُ يَجْسِرُ جُلُوسَهُ فِي الصَّلَاةِ
وَفِي الْمَسْجِدِ أَفْضَلَ مَرْتَلًا مُتَفَكِّرًا بَاكِيًا بِسَبَبِ إِحْضَارِ الْقَلْبِ بِتَأْمُلِ مَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْوَعِيدِ وَالْعُهُودِ مَعَ
تَقْصِيرِ الْعَبْدِ فِي أَوْامِرِهِ وَزَوَاجِرِهِ وَأَنْ يَرْعِنَ حَقَّ الْآيَاتِ، فَإِذَا مَرَّ بِآيَةٍ سَجْدَةٍ سَجَدَ وَدَعَا مَا يَلِيْقُ
بِالْآيَةِ الَّتِي قَرَأَهَا، وَأَنْ يُحَلِّيَ بَاطِنَهُ بِعَشْرَةِ آدَابٍ: [1] بِفَهْمِ أَصْلِ الْكَلَامِ، [2] ثُمَّ التَّعْظِيمِ، [3] ثُمَّ
حُضُورِ الْقَلْبِ، [4] ثُمَّ التَّدَبُّرِ، [5] ثُمَّ التَّفْهَمِ، [6] ثُمَّ التَّخْلِيَّ عَنِ مَوَانِعِ الْفَهْمِ كِإِصْرَارِ عَلَى ذَنْبٍ
وَهَوَى مُطَاعٍ، [7] ثُمَّ التَّخْصِيمِ بِيَنْ يُفَدَّرُ أَنَّهُ الْمَقْصُودُ بِكُلِّ خِطَابٍ فِي الْقُرْآنِ، فَيَعْمَلُ بِمُقْتَضَى الْأَمْرِ
وَالنَّهْيِ وَالْوَعْدِ وَالْوَعِيدِ وَقِصَصِ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْأَنْبِيَاءِ، بَأَنْ يَعْتَبِرَ بِهِمْ وَيَقْتَدِيَ بِالْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ فِي
صَبْرِهِمْ عَلَى الْأَذَى وَتَبَاتِهِمْ فِي الدِّينِ لِإِنْتِظَارِ نَصْرِ اللَّهِ، [8] ثُمَّ التَّائِبِ بِالْخَوْفِ وَالْخَشْيَةِ وَالرَّجَاءِ،
[9] ثُمَّ التَّرَقِّيِّ مِنَ الْإِسْتِمَاءِ إِلَى الشُّهُودِ وَالْمُنَاجَاتِ، [10] ثُمَّ التَّبَرِّيِّ مِنَ الْحَوْلِ وَالْقُوَّةِ وَالْإِنْتِفَاتِ
إِلَى النَّفْسِ، وَاللَّهُ يَخْصُ فِي ذَلِكَ مَنْ شَاءَ بِمَا شَاءَ، وَيَبْغِي أَنْ يَخْتَمَهُ كُلُّ جُمُعَةٍ أَوْ شَهْرٍ أَوْ نِصْفِ
سَنَةٍ، وَمَا وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ تَسَاهُلٌ.

“It is necessary that the one reciting *Qur'an* that he have ablution, face the *qibla*, bow his head, and sit as though he is sitting in the prayer. It is best that he do so in the *masjid*, while reciting in a slow measured tone (*tarteelan*), and being in a state of reflection. The presence of his heart in his recitation should cause him to weep, hoping in that to attain the divine promises and fearing to fall into the divine threats. The servant

should also realize his shortcomings in performing the obligations and limitations of Allah ta`ala. He should be scrupulous in given each verse of the *Qur'an* its rights. Thus, when he comes upon a verse of prostration, he should prostrate and make the supplication that is connected to the verse that he is reciting. In addition to this, the servant should beautify or adorn his inner-self with the following ten sequential courtesies (*adab*): [1] first comprehension of the root of the words; [2] then glorification of Allah; [3] then the presence of the heart; [4] then being attentive; [5] then understanding; [6] then removal of those barriers which prevent understanding, like being persistent in sins and obeying one's corrupt passions; [7] then taking the *Qur'an* as one's argument. This means considering that he is the one intended in every expression in the *Qur'an*. Thus, the servant should assess carefully the obligations, the prohibitions, the divine promises, the divine punishments, the stories of the foregone people and the Prophets and take lessons from them. He should also imitate what he reads from the Prophets and the righteous regarding their patience against afflictions and their firmness in the religion as a means of expecting divine assistance and victory. [8] Then, the servant should take on the influence of fear, dread, and hope. [9] Then, he should move from there and rise up in his recitation to the station of direct witnessing of his Lord and intimate conversation with Him. [10] Ten finally, the servant should free himself of all power, strength and attachments to the self and rely solely on the Power, Strength and Divine Ability of Allah ta`ala la in his recitation. Truly, Allah specifies this favor for whomever He wills with whatever He wills. It is also necessary that the servant seal the *Qur'an* every week (in seven days) or every month or at least twice a year or less than that which is easiest for him.”



Institute of Islamic-African Studies International

On the Obligations, the *Sunnan* and *Adab* of *Ramadan*

As far as the obligations, *sunnan* and *adab* of fasting *Ramadan* is concerned, *Shaykh* Abdullahi said in his *Diya`Uluum ad-Deen*:

وَوَاجِبَاتُهُ ثَلَاثَةٌ: الْأَوَّلُ مُرَاقَبَةُ أَوَّلِ الشَّهْرِ حَتَّى يَثْبُتَ بِرُؤْيَةِ الْهَلَالِ أَوْ اسْتِكْمَالَ شَعْبَانَ ثَلَاثِينَ، الثَّانِي نِيَّةُ صَوْمٍ جَمِيعِهِ حَالَ كَوْنِ النِّيَّةِ مُبَيَّنَةً جَازِمَةً فَلَا تَصِحُّ نَهَارًا أَوْ النِّيَّةُ الْمُرَدَّدَةُ بِاطْلَءِ، الثَّلَاثُ تَرْكُ إِيْصَالِ شَيْءٍ إِلَى الْجَوْفِ بِالْأَكْلِ وَالشَّرْبِ وَالسُّعُوطِ وَالْحَقْنَةِ وَتَرْكُ الْجَمَاعِ وَإِخْرَاجِ الْمَنِيِّ بِأَيِّ وَجْهِ وَإِخْرَاجِ الْقِيءِ، وَيُسْتَحَبُّ فِيهِ تَعْجِيلُ الْفِطْرِ وَتَأْخِيرُ السَّحُورِ وَتَكْثِيرُ الْجُودِ وَقِرَاءَةُ الْقُرْآنِ وَكَفُّ اللِّسَانِ عَنِ الْمُبَاحِ وَكَفُّ الْقَلْبِ عَنِ الْأَفْكَارِ الدُّنْيَوِيَّةِ، وَكُلُّ مَا يَشْغَلُ عَنِ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَدَمُ تَكْثِيرِ الْحَلَالِ عِنْدَ الْإِفْطَارِ.

“Its obligations are three: [1] Being watchful for the first of the month by certifying the sighting of the new moon, or by the completion of the thirty days of *Sha`baan*. [2] Making the intention to fast the whole of the month, clearly and with resolution, but not during the day of the actual fasting, or with an indecisive intention, which invalidates the fasting. [3] Avoiding anything reaching the stomach by means of food, drink, snuff, or injection, that includes avoiding conjugal relationships, releasing of sperm by any means, and intentionally vomiting. It is highly recommended to rush to break the fast, to postpone the pre-dawn meal, increase in acts of generosity, and to recite the *Qur`an* (as discussed above). It also highly recommended to make the tongue desist from excessive permissible speech and to refrain the heart from reflecting on worldly matters. It is also highly recommended to avoid everything which preoccupies you from the remembrance of Allah as well as not eat much permissible food during the breaking of the fast.”

On Looking for the Night of Power During *Ramadan*

Shehu Uthman Dan Fuduye` said in his *Ihya`*: “From the path of the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, during *Ramadan* is it being highly recommended to search (*iltimaas*) for the night of power (*laylat 'l-qadr*) during the last ten odd nights of the month. It is related in the *Saheeh* of al-Bukhari on the authority of 'Aisha that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said,

تَحَرَّوْا لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ فِي الْوَتْرِ مِنَ الْعَشْرِ الْأَوَّلِ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ

"Search for the Night of *Qadr* in the odd nights of the last ten days of *Ramadan*." It is clear that the Night of *Qadr* (Power) is confined to the month of *Ramadan* in the last ten nights. The foundation for the Night of *Qadr* is what Allah ta`ala says in His *Qur`an*:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ

“Verily We have revealed it in the Night of *Qadr*.” *Imam* Muhammad ibn Jareer at-Tabari said in his *Jaami` al-Bayaan`An Ta`weel Ayyi 'l-Qur`an*: “*Ibn`Abaas* said: ‘The Night of *Qadr* is the blessed night from *Ramadan* in which the *Qur`an* was revealed completely at one time from the Tablet to the Oft-Visited House (*Bayt'l-Ma`muur*) at the place of the stars in the lower heaven. Then it was revealed to the heart of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace regarding commands, prohibitions, and war little by little.

His words: “Search for the Night of *Qadr*...” means intend or make effort in seeking it by means of all forms of worship and drawing near to Allah ta`ala. The above tradition further limits this night to the odd nights, which are the 21st, the 23rd, the 25th, the 27th, and the 29th. Ibn Hajr noted that the scholars of the *Sunna* have had many disagreements about the reality of the Night of *Qadr*, which amounts to more than forty opinions. However, what is agreed upon about it is that it falls on one of the last ten odd nights of *Ramadan* and that it fluctuates and is not fixed as it has been related by Abu Qilaaba that he said: “The Night of *Qadr* fluctuates through the last ten nights and should be sought in the odd nights.” *Imam* as-Shafi` said: “It should be sought in the 21st or the 23rd of the month.” The majority of the scholars of the *Sunna* say it should be sought during the 27th night of *Ramadan*. This is what Malik, at-Thawri, Ahmad and Is`haq narrated. Al-Mawardi said: “This is what the scholars are agreed about.” He took his proof for that from the tradition of `Ubay ibn Ka`b. However, al-Haafidh said: “The Companions are agreed that the Night of *Qadr* falls on the last ten nights, but they differed regarding specifying which of these nights it is.”

On the Making `Itikaaf in the Masjid During Ramadan

Shehu Uthman Dan Fuduye` said in his Sawq al-Umma Ila Ittibai` as-Sunna in the chapter concerning what has been related on seclusion into the *masjid* (*itikaaf*). “It is related in the Saheeh of al-Bukhari on the authority of A`isha, may Allah be pleased with her, who said, “The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to go into retreat (*ya`takifu*) during the last ten days of every *Ramadan*. He did this up until his passing. Then after him his wives used to go into retreat in the same manner.” The scholars of the *Sunna* differ regarding the one who goes into *itikaaf* and interrupts it before the completion of what he intended. Some of the people of knowledge say: “If his *itikaaf* is canceled then it is obligatory for him to make it up. This is proven by the tradition: “When the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, would leave his *itikaaf*, he would do the ten days *itikaaf* in the month of *Shawaal*”. This was the opinion of *Imam* Malik. While others say: “If the person making *itikaaf* did not make a solemn pledge (*nadhr*) to go into *itikaaf* or there is nothing legally obligating him to do it and he is doing it as a superogatory act, if he leaves it then there is no obligation upon him to make it up, except if he wants to as choice on his part. But this is not obligatory upon him.”

In this prophetic tradition is a proof that going into *itikaaf* was not abrogated because the wives of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace continued this action after him. It also demonstrates that the practice of *itikaaf* is a compelling *sunna* specific for the last ten days of *Ramadan* in order to seek after the Night of *Qadr*. The fact that the wives of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace used to perform the *itikaaf* in the *masjid* is evidence that women are the same as men when it comes to this practice. However, some of the scholars of the *Sunna* said that the *itikaaf* of women has been abrogated in the *masjid* based upon the words of Abu Hanifa, may Allah be pleased with him: “It is correct for the woman to make *itikaaf* in the *masjid* that is in her home, which is a place in the home which has been set aside specifically for worship and prayer.” A`isha, may Allah be pleased with her said: “The *sunnan* of *itikaaf* are that one does not visit the sick, not to accompany the dead to be buried, not to fondle

women or have relationships with them, and not to leave the *masjid* to take care of one's needs except those which are indispensable.”

Ali, an-Nakhai` and al-Hassan al-Basri said: “If the one who is in *`itikaaf* leaves it to witness a burial, to visit the sick, or leaves it for the *juma`a* prayer, then his *`itikaaf* has become invalid”. This was the opinion of the scholars of Kufa (meaning by that those who follow Abu Hanifa) as well as Ibn Mundhir, especially regarding the *juma`a* prayer. At-Thawri, as-Shafi` and Is’haq said: “If he makes it a prerequisite to do those things at the onset of his *`itikaaf*, then his *`itikaaf* is not invalidated by doing them.” This was narrated by *Imam Ahmad*, which demonstrates that this was his view as well. Some of the scholars disagree whether *`itikaaf* is a *Sunna* or a superogatory act which is highly recommended.

Shehu Uthman Dan Fuduye` said in his *Mirat ‘t-Tullab*:

قال الخَرَّاشِيُّ فِي شَرْحِ الْمُخْتَصَرِ عِنْدَ قَوْلِ الْمُصَنِّفِ: الإِعْتِكَافُ نَافِلَةٌ، أَي مُسْتَحَبٌّ عَلَى الْمَشْهُورِ
وَلَيْسَ سُنَّةً لِأَنَّهُ وَإِنْ فَعَلَهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَلَكِنَّهُ لَمْ يُؤَاطَبْ عَلَيْهِ لِأَنَّهُ تَارَةً يَعْتَكِفُ وَتَارَةً يَنْزُكُ، وَلَا
يُصَدِّقُ ضَابِطَ السُّنَّةِ عَلَيْهِ

“Al-Kharashi said in his commentary upon the *al-Mukhtasar* when the author said: ‘Seclusion (*al-`itikaaf*) is a superogatory act’, this means it is highly recommended according to the most well known opinions and is not a *Sunna*, because even when he, upon him be peace performed it, he was not persistent. This is due to the fact that some times, he would go into seclusion and sometimes he would avoid it. Thus, the term *Sunna* cannot be applied directly to it.”

On Increasing Acts of Generosity During *Ramadan*

Shehu Uthman Dan Fuduye' said in his *Ihya*: "From the path of the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, during *Ramadan* is it being highly recommended to increase in good deeds (*ziyaadatu 'l-khayr*). It is related in the *Saheeh* of al-Bukhari on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas,

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَجْوَدَ النَّاسِ بِالْخَيْرِ، وَكَانَ أَجْوَدَ مَا يَكُونُ فِي رَمَضَانَ، حِينَ يَلْقَاهُ جِبْرِيْلُ، وَكَانَ جِبْرِيْلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَلْقَاهُ كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ فِي رَمَضَانَ حَتَّى يَنْسَلِخَ، يَعْرِضُ عَلَيْهِ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ، فَإِذَا لَقِيَهِ جِبْرِيْلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ كَانَ أَجْوَدَ بِالْخَيْرِ مِنَ الرِّيحِ الْمُرْسَلَةِ.

"The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was the most generous of all the people, and he used to reach the peak in generosity in the month of *Ramadan* when *Jibril* convened with him to rehearse the *Qur'an*. *Jibril* used to meet him night of *Ramadan* to review the *Qur'an* with him. Allah's Apostle was the most generous person, even more generous than the strong wind (in readiness and haste to do charitable deeds)". Ibn Hajr said: "The meaning of Ibn Abass words 'the most generous of people' is that he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was more generous than any other human. Generosity means munificence and is among the praiseworthy characteristics. It has related by *Imam* at-Tirmidhi on the authority of Sa'd that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَوَادٌ يَحِبُّ الْجُودَ

"Verily Allah is Munificent and He loves munificence." In the above tradition one may imagine that the generosity of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was specific for *Ramadan*, however munificence was his character by nature however he would increase in generosity and openhandedness during the month of *Ramadan* more so than in any other time. There is also two other prophetic traditions that explain the meaning of the generosity of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Anas ibn Malik related the first, but there is some question about its chain of authority:

أَنَا أَجْوَدُ وَلَدِ آدَمَ وَأَجْوَدُهُمْ بَعْدِي رَجُلٌ عَلَّمَ عِلْمًا فَنَشَرَ عِلْمَهُ وَرَجُلٌ جَادَ بِنَفْسِهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

"I am the most generous of the children of Adam. And the most generous of them after me is a man who learned some knowledge and disseminates it and a man who is generous with his life in the Way of Allah." Anas ibn Malik also related the second tradition, and its chain is sound:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَشَجَعَ النَّاسِ وَأَجْوَدُ النَّاسِ

"The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was the most courageous of men and the most generous of men." The above description of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace being: "even more generous than the strong wind", means that his action, may Allah bless him and grant him peace during *Ramadan* was persistent, continuous without end. In this tradition are several principles. Among these principles is that the merits of time is obtained through increase in acts of worship. Among these is that persistence in recitation of the *Qur'an* necessitates increase in good. This is true based upon his words: "and he used to reach the peak in generosity in the month of *Ramadan* when *Jibril* convened with him to rehearse the *Qur'an*". Among these

is it being highly recommended to increase in acts of worship in the final years of one's life. Among these is that the nights of *Ramadan* are superior to its days. Among these is the fact that even though the *Qur'an* would be revealed throughout the year, Jibril, upon him be peace would review what had been revealed throughout the year during the month of *Ramadan*, then Allah would establish His judgments in certain verses and abrogate certain verses. Among these principles is that acts of worship should always be accompanied with acts of generosity in charity in order for them to be accepted by Allah ta`ala.

The key element about the above mentioned tradition by the *Shehu* is to establish that *Ramadan* is the time that the servants of Allah ta`ala increase in acts of generosity and munificence. This brings us now to the questioned Sister Amina of Hartford, Connecticut raised regarding the secrets of giving alms (*sadaqa*) in the manner that the *Shehu* had delineated to us. The following was related by *Shaykh* Adam Abdullahi al-Ilorin in his book *Qaala as-Shaykh* ('The *Shehu* says'): "Whoever gives alms on Sunday when the sun rises (*tuluu` as-shams*) will find his supplications answered and will attain merit with Allah ta`ala. Whoever gives alms on Monday during the forenoon (*duhaa*) Allah will accept all of his actions and take care of all his needs. Whoever gives alms on Tuesday during midday (*nisf`n-nahaar*) his enemies will not be able to approach him with injustice or wrong. Whoever gives alms on Wednesday during the time of *dhuhr* he will not be harmed in his worldly affairs by magic, thievery or the evil glance. Whoever gives alms on Thursday between the times of *dhuhr* and *asr* Allah will send down upon him miraculous signs of actions, belief, *baraka*, and love. Whoever gives alms on Fridays after the *asr* prayer Allah will forgive him of his sins and accept his supplications. Whoever gives alms on Saturday at the setting of the sun (*ghuruub as-shams*) Allah will give him this world and the Hereafter and enter him in Paradise without reckoning."

On the *Zakat'l-Fitr* (The Obligatory Alms of Breaking Fast)

Shehu Uthman Dan Fuduye' said in his *Sawq'l-Umma*: "It has been related in the *Saheeh* of al-Bukhari on the authority of Ibn Umar, who said,

فَرَضَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ زَكَاةَ الْفِطْرِ صَاعًا مِنْ تَمْرٍ، أَوْ صَاعًا مِنْ شَعِيرٍ عَلَى الْعَبْدِ وَالْحُرِّ، وَالذَّكَرِ وَالْأُنْثَى، وَالصَّغِيرِ وَالْكَبِيرِ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَأَمَرَ بِهَا أَنْ تُؤَدَّى قَبْلَ خُرُوجِ النَّاسِ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ.

"The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, made the *zakaat'l-fitr* obligatory. It was either four double-hand scoops of barley or dates for the captive, freeman, male, female, child, or adult among the Muslims. And he ordered it to be given before the people went to the prayer." In the narration of *Imam* Muslim related from Malik on the authority of Nafi': "...he made the *zakaat'l-fitr* from the month of *Ramadan* obligatory." This is legal proof that the time of the obligation of the *zakat* is at the setting of the sun of the night when the new moon has been sighted for stopping the fast (*al-fitr*) of *Ramadan*. This is the opinion of at-Thawri, Ahmad, Is'haq, and as-Shafi' (in one of his latter narrations from Malik). Some of the scholars of the *Sunna* say that the time of its obligation is at the emergence of the dawn on the day of the *Eid*. This is because this night is not a time when fasting is done. It also because the real breaking of fast occurs by the eating that takes place after the appearance of dawn. This is the opinion of Abu Hanifa, al-Layth, and as-Shafi' (in one of his former narrations from Malik).

For the most part, the scholars of the *Sunna* have not disagreed about the above assessment of Ibn Umar of restricting the payment of *zakaat'l-fitr* to the two types of foodstuff. However, Abu Dawud, an-Nisai' and others have narrated a prophetic tradition by way of Abd'l-Azeez ibn Abu Dawud on the authority of Nafi', who added to the two foodstuffs: *salit* (which a type of barley); and raisins.

Ibn Umar mentioned 'the captive and 'the freeman'. The apparent meaning of this tradition is that the captive has to give the *zakaat'l-fitr* himself. It was only Dawud who explicitly stated this when he said: "It is obligatory upon the captive's owner to pay *zakaat'l-fitr* for the captive except when the captive earns his own living. Then the captive must pay himself." Those who disagreed with that and the apparent opinion of Ibn Umar relied upon the tradition narrated by Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayra: "There is no alms to be given on the captive, except the alms of *al-fitr*." In another narration attributed to Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayra: "It is not obligatory upon the Muslim to pay the *zakaat'l-fitr* on his captive nor his horse."

Ibn Umar mentioned in the above tradition: 'the male and the female'. The apparent meaning of the tradition is that it is obligatory upon every woman, whether she be married or not, to pay the *zakaat'l-fitr*. This was the opinion of at-Thawri, Abu Hanifa, and Ibn al-Mundhir. However Malik, as-Shafi', al-Layth, Ahmad and Is'haq said it is obligatory for her husband to pay because it is connected to providing for her. In this there is some consideration because they say if the wife is a captive, then it is obligatory for the *zakat 'l-fitr* to be paid by the owner who is also her husband. The scholars of the *Sunna* agree a Muslim is not obligated to pay the *zakat 'l-fitr* on a wife who is disbeliever, although he must provide for her.

Ibn Umar mentioned in the above tradition: 'the child' and 'the adult'. The apparent meaning of this is that it is obligatory upon the child to pay the *zakat 'l-fitr*.

However, the one addressed in this tradition is the child's guardian. For it is only obligatory upon the child when it has its own wealth, then the guardian must pay the *zakat* from it on behalf of the child. Other than that, the guardian is obligated to pay the *zakaat 'l-fitr* for those he is responsible for economically. This is the opinion of the majority of the scholars.

Muhammad ibn al-Hassan said: "It is absolutely obligatory upon the father to pay the *zakat 'l-fitr*. However, if the child has no father, then there is no *zakaat* to be paid." Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib and al-Hassan al-Basri said: "It is not obligatory for the *zakaat 'l-fitr* to be paid on the child except if the child is fasting." The legal evidence that they relied upon was the tradition related by Abu Dawud on the authority of Ibn Abass: "The alms of breaking fast purifies the one fasting from empty talk and obscene behavior committed during the fast." Ibn al-Mundhir related: "The consensus (*al-ijma'*) upholds that the *zakaat 'l-fitr* for a baby in the womb is not obligatory, although Ahmad said it is highly recommended but not incumbent." However, some of the Hanbali scholars related that it is obligatory. This is what Ibn Hazm said except that, he made a condition that the fetus be at least one hundred and twenty days old.

Ibn Umar mentioned that 'he ordered it to be given before the people went to the prayer.' This gives evidence that it is reprehensible to postpone paying the *zakaat 'l-fitr* beyond that time. However, the *Dhahiri* opinion led by Ibn Hazm is that the wording in the tradition makes it prohibited to postpone paying beyond the above-mentioned time. Ibn at-Teen said: 'It means before the people leave for the 'Eid prayer and after the dawn prayer.' Ibn 'Ayayna said in his commentary upon this tradition on the authority of 'Amr ibn Dinar, on the authority of 'Akrima who said: 'A man should pay his *zakaat* during the time of the 'Eid prayer because Allah ta'ala says:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَرَكَى وَذَكَرَ إِسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى

He has prospered who purifies himself by giving zakaat and remembers the Name of his Lord, then prays. Further, according to Ibn Khuzayma by way of Katheer ibn Abdullah on the authority of his father on his grandfather that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace was asked about the meaning of the above verse and he said it was revealed regarding the *zakaat 'l-fitr*. The followers of as-Shafi' uphold the view that the *zakaat 'l-fitr* should be paid before the 'Eid prayer. The evidence for this is from Abu Ma'shar who related on the authority of Nafi' on the authority of Ibn Umar who said: 'We were ordered to pay the *zakaat* before we performed the prayer.' Thus, when the people dispersed the wealth would then be divided among those to whom it was to be paid.

The above tradition cited by the *Shehu* from al-Bukhari on the authority of Ibn Umar gives evidence that it is reprehensible to postpone the *zakaat 'l-fitr* beyond the 'Eid prayer. Ibn Hazm went as far as to say it is forbidden to do so. There is a tradition related that Ibn Umar use to pay the *zakaat 'l-fitr* at least one or two days before the 'Eid. In this is proof of the permissibility of paying the *zakaat 'l-fitr* ahead of time before the day of breaking of the fast. As-Shafi' permitted it to be paid in the beginning of *Ramadan*, and this was the same with Abu Hanifa. Ahmad said: 'One can only pay it ahead of the time meaning that it is actually obligated by one or two days.' *Imam* Malik said: 'It is absolutely not permissible to pay it ahead of time.' This is based upon the outward meaning of the tradition related by Ibn Umar.

About this *Shehu* Uthman Dan Fuduye' said in his *Mirat 't-Tullab*:

قُلْتُ إِنَّ زَكَاةَ الْفِطْرِ وَاجِبَةٌ وَقِيلَ بِالْكِتَابِ، قَالَ الشَّبْرَخِيْتِي: ... وَهُوَ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ نَزَكَى﴾ { أَي أَخْرَجَ زَكَاةَ الْفِطْرِ } { وَتَذَكَّرَ إِسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى } أَي صَلَاةَ الْعِيدِ، ... قَالَ الْخَرَّاشِيُّ فِي شَرْحِ الْمُخْتَصَرِ عِنْدَ قَوْلِ الْمُصَنِّفِ: وَهَلْ بِأَوَّلِ لَيْلَةٍ أَوْ بِفَجْرِهِ خِلَافٌ وَهَلْ يَتَعَلَّقُ الْخَطَابُ بِزَكَاةِ الْفِطْرِ عَلَى مَا كَانَ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا بِأَوَّلِ لَيْلَةِ الْعِيدِ، وَهُوَ غُرُوبُ الشَّمْسِ مِنْ آخِرِ يَوْمِ رَمَضَانَ، ... وَهُوَ مَذْهَبُ ابْنِ الْقَاسِمِ، وَفِي الْمُدَوَّنَةِ: وَشَهْرُهُ ابْنُ الْحَاجِبِ بِنَاءً عَلَى إِنْ الْفِطْرِ الَّذِي أُضِيفَ إِلَيْهِ هُوَ الْفِطْرُ الْجَائِزُ الَّذِي يُدْخِلُ وَقْتَهُ بِغُرُوبِ الشَّمْسِ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ أَوْ بِفَجْرِ يَوْمِ الْعِيدِ، رَوَاهُ ابْنُ الْقَاسِمِ وَالْآخَرُونَ عَنْ مَالِكٍ وَشَهْرُهُ الْأَبْهَرِيُّ وَصَحَّحَهُ ابْنُ الْعَرَبِيِّ بِنَاءً عَلَى إِنْ الْفِطْرِ الَّذِي أُضِيفَ إِلَيْهِ هُوَ الْفِطْرُ الْوَاجِبُ الَّذِي يُدْخِلُ وَقْتَهُ بِطُلُوعِ الْفَجْرِ

“I say: the *zakaat'l-fitr* (the obligatory alms of breaking fast) is obligatory. It is said that the Book confirms its obligation. A-Shibrakhiti: ‘It is His words, the Exalted: ‘*He has prospered who purify himself by giving the alms*’, by paying the *zakaat 'l-fitr*, ‘*and remembers the Name of his Lord*’, by means of the ‘*Eid* prayer.’ Al-Kharashi said in his commentary upon the *al-Mukhtasar* where the authors say: ‘Is it to be given at the first part of the night or during the dawn. In this, there is disagreement. The one addressing this statement connects it to the *zakaat'l-fitr* for the one who is with his family during the first part of the night of the ‘*Eid*, which is the setting of the sun of the last day of *Ramadan*. This is the opinion of Ibn al-Qaasim. It states in the *al-Mudawwana*: ‘Ibn al-Haajib proclaimed this view basing it on the fact that the breaking of the fast that the *zakaat* it is linked to is the permitted one, which commences with the setting of the sun of the month of *Ramadan* or the dawn of the day of the ‘*Eid*. This was narrated by Ibn al-Qaasim and others on the authority of Malik. However al-Abhari proclaimed the view, and Ibn al-`Arabi verified it, basing it on the fact that the breaking of the fast, that the *zakaat* it is linked to is the obligatory one, which commences with the time of the appearance of dawn.”

On the Merits of Hunger and Disciplining the Soul

Realize that hunger is one of the best methods of training and disciplining the soul. The *Shehu* said in his *Usuul al-Wilaayat*: “The roots which cure the sickness of the soul are five as Ahmad Zarruq delineated. The first is reducing the amount of intake of food.” He also said in the same text: “*Imam* al-Ghazaali said in his *al-Ihya*: “Realize that the seeker has four ranks regarding his stomach and what he eats. The first rank is that he only eats except what is permissible (*halaal*). There remains three more ranks specific for eating. They are: [2] to estimate the quantity of food one eats, whether much or little; [3] to estimate the speed with which one eats it; and [4] to determine the varieties of food.” The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said:

جَاهِدُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ بِالْجُوعِ وَالْعَطَشِ فَإِنَّ الْأَجْرَ فِي ذَلِكَ كَأَجْرِ الْمُجَاهِدِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ

عَمَلٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَمِنْ عَطَشٍ

“Struggle against the lower self by means of hunger and thirst. Truly, the reward for that is like the reward of the one who struggles in the Way of Allah. There is no action more beloved to Allah than hunger and thirst.” He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said:

لَا تَدْخُلُ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَاءِ مَنْ مَلَأَ بَطْنَهُ

“The one who fills his stomach will never enter the unseen kingdoms of the heavens.” He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said:

أَفْضَلُكُمْ مَنْزِلَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَطْوَالُكُمْ جُوعًا وَتَفَكُّرًا

“The best of you in stations with Allah are those who are the longest in hunger and reflection.” He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said:

رَأْسُ كُلِّ بَرٍّ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ الْجُوعُ، وَرَأْسُ كُلِّ فَجُورٍ بَيْنَهُمَا الشَّبَعُ

“The head of ever righteousness that lies between the heavens and the earth is hunger. The head of every corruption that lies between them is in sedation.” He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace once said:

أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ هَذِهِ الزَّمَانَ لَا يَنْجُو أَحَدٌ فِيهِ النَّجَاةَ إِلَّا بِذَبْحِ نَفْسِهِ وَقَتْلِهَا بِالْجُوعِ وَالصَّبْرِ وَالْجِهَادِ

“Realize that in these times no one can attain salvation except by sacrificing the self and fighting it by means of hunger, patience and struggle.” In this, same light Abd’-Waahid ibn Zayd said: “I swear by Allah no one can be truly purified except by means of hunger from food.”

On the Merits of Silence

Finally, it is appropriate here to discuss the merits of silence because this is among the traits that are highly recommended during the month of *Ramadan*. *Sultan Muhammad Bello* said in his *Tanbeeh Ahl'l-Uquul*: “Realize that silence is among the traits of the people of sound faith. Allah ta`ala says:

لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنْ نَجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ

‘There is no good in most of their intimate conversations except for the one who commands to charity, good, or amelioration between people.’ Thus, whoever comes to you speaking intimately regarding that, then accept his conversation. And whoever comes to you speaking intimately regarding something else then cut yourself off from that, and do not engage him in discussion”. It has been related by Muslim, al-Bayhaqi in his *as-Shu`b* on the authority of *Abi Shareeh al-Khaza`iy* who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said:

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ

“Whoever believes in Allah and the Hereafter, let him speak the good or be silent.” *Imam Muhammad ibn Abd'r-Rahman* said in his *Tuhfat 'l-Ahwadhi*: “The meaning of this prophetic tradition is that person, when he desires to speak, he should reflect before he speaks. Thus, when he realizes that he speech will not effect corruption in others, nor lead to what is forbidden or reprehensible, then he should speak. Even when the speech is permissible, he should show caution because safety is in silence, so that permissible speech does lead to what is prohibited and reprehensible.” *Imam an-Nawwawi* said: “This prophetic tradition means when a person desires to speak, he should see if the speech is truly good in the sense of being obligatory or highly recommended in which he can be rewarded. In that case he should speak. However, if it appears to him that no good will emerge from his speech then he should remain silent. This is regardless if the speech is forbidden, reprehensible or even allowable. Based upon that, even permissible speech has been commanded to restrain from it out of fear that it will cause him to fall into what is prohibited or reprehensible. This is something that befalls many and most people.” He said in another place: “It is essential for the person who desires to express a word or speech that he should carefully examine his soul and see if his speech will bring about some advantage, if not then he should restrain from speaking.” *Imam Ibn Hajr* said in his *Fath'l-Baari*: “All speech is either good or evil or it leads to one of the two. Thus, included in good speech is everything whose objective is that which is obligatory and highly recommended. Thus, permission regarding any type of speech is based upon the difference of its category, which means indulging in it is based upon what it leads to. Thus, when one desires to indulge in speech, when it is malevolent or leads to what is malevolent, the correct thing is to be silent instead.”

Sultan Muhammad Bello, may Allah be merciful to him said in his *Tanbeeh Ahl'l-Uquul*: “It has been related by al-Bayhaqi on the authority *Abu `Amr as-Shaybani* who said *Abdallah ibn Mas`ud* informed him saying: ‘I asked the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace about the best action. He said: “The prayer done in its proper time”. I then said: ‘Then what O Messenger of Allah’. He said:

أَنْ يُسَلِّمَ النَّاسَ مِنْ لِسَانِكَ

“That the people are safe from your tongue.” Our *Sultan* said in another place in the same text: “It has been related by al-Bayhaqi on the authority of Anas ibn Malik that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace encountered Abu Dharr and said:

يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ أَلَا أَدُلُّكَ عَلَىٰ خَصَلَتَيْنِ هُمَا أَخْفُ عَلَى الظَّهْرِ وَأَثْقَلُ فِي الْمِيزَانِ مِنْ غَيْرِهِمَا؟

“O Abu Dharr shall I guide you to two characteristics, which nothing is lighter than them on the back nor heavier than them on the Scales?” He said: ‘Indeed O Messenger of Allah.’ He said:

عَلَيْكَ بِحُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ وَطُولِ الصَّمْتِ، وَالَّذِي نَفَسَ مُحَمَّدٌ بِيَدِهِ مَا عَمَلُ الْخَلَائِقِ بِمِثْلِهِمَا

“Essential to you are excellent character and being long in silence. I swear by the One in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, there is no action in the whole of creation like these two actions.” *Imam* Muhammad ibn Abd’r-Rahman said in Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi: “The interpolation of the meaning of ‘excellent character’ is to put up with the evils of others, showing little anger, presenting a friendly face towards others, and speaking well to others.” He also said in another place: “The lowest level of good character is avoiding harming people and its highest level is returning good to those who do you evil”. His statement ‘being in long silence’ means refraining from speaking evil as well as speech which is allowable in order that the Angels are not preoccupied with recording needless actions. It has been related by ad-Daylami in his Musnad ‘I-Firdaus on the authority of Ibn Abass that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said:

العَافِيَةُ عَشْرَةٌ أَجْزَاءُ تِسْعَةٌ فِي الصَّمْتِ وَالْعَاشِرُ فِي الْعُزْلَةِ عَنِ النَّاسِ

“Well-being has ten parts. Nine of them are in silence and the tenth is in seclusion from people.” Silence and restraining one’s words is the spiritual exercise that our *Sultan*, the *Quth al-Hajj* Abu Bakr ibn *Sultan* Muhammad at-Tahir may Allah protect his secret, has practiced for many years now. It is the badge of the *saaliheen* and the crown of the *‘aarifeen*. This blessed month of *Ramadan* should be filled with recitation of *Qur’an*, remembrance of Allah ta`ala, sending blessings upon the Prophet, and making supplication for the *Umma* of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

O Allah bless our chief Muhammad, whose character is the medicine of hearts and their remedy, whose *sunna* is the well-being of the bodies and their cure, and whose light is the radiance of sight and its illumination. O Allah send blessings and peace with the variety of Your perfections in all of Your manifestations upon our chief Muhammad, the first of the lights that overflowed from the seas of the immensity of Your Essence. He was the realizer of You in the worlds of the unseen and seen with the meanings of the Your Divine Names and Attributes. He was the first to give praises to You and abundant devotions with all the varieties of worship and drawing near to You. He is our helper in the worlds of the spirits and bodies in all the varieties existences. O Allah, send blessings upon him with a blessing that will remove the veil from his generous face in our dreams and waking states. O Allah acquaint us with our chief Muhammad and with You in all the matrices and presences. O Allah, be subtly kind to us by means of our chief Muhammad, in all our movements, stillness, moments and thoughts. O Allah be pleased with the spirit of the liberator of men and *jinn* our chief *Shaykh* Abd’l-Qadir al-Jaylani. O Allah be pleased with the spirit of the light of the age, the renewer of the *deen*, reviver of the *sunna*, the *imam* of the *awliya*, the sword of Truth, our chief and *Amir’l-Mu’mineen*

Shehu Uthman Dan Fuduye', their *Shaykhs* and our *Shaykhs*, the first of them and last of them. O Allah I ask you by the veracity of the Living *Sunna* of Muhammad, his light and his spirit, to be merciful to our *Sultan* the *Qutb* al-Hajj Abu Bakr ibn *Sultan* Muhammad Tahir ibn *Sultan* Muhammad Bello Maiurno ibn *Sultan* Muhammad Tahiru ibn *Sultan* Ahmad Zaruku ibn *Amir'l-Mu'mineen* Abu Bakr Atiku ibn *Amir'l-Mu'mineen* *Shehu* Uthman Dan Fuduye', expand his wealth, extend his authority, strengthen his hand and prolong his leadership until it reaches the rule of the Awaited *al-Mahdi*, upon him be peace. O Allah be merciful to all our *amirs*: *Amir* Tahir Abdullahi, and all the men and women under his charge. O Allah be merciful to our wives, children, and helpers. O Allah send Your Divine assistance to our *Imam* Jamil al-Amin and aid him with the aid that You gave to Ibrahim in the fire, and Yusef in prison, and Yunus in the belly of the whale. O Allah help him with an assistance that will increase the believers in belief and confound those who disbelieve. O Allah protect his *Jama`at* and all the *jama`ats* we are in confederation with in Yemen, Africa and the Caribbean. O Allah be merciful to the leaders, men, women and children of MANA, the MIB, the IRM and all those individuals and organizations giving assistance to Your religion. O Allah make them and us conquering with Your *deen* in these lands of disbelief. O Allah assist the Muslims in the autonomous regions of the People's Republic of China, to maintain their internationally recognized right of autonomy, uniqueness and vitality. O Allah assist the Muslims in Sudan and its president, the Muslims of Palestine, the Muslims of Somalia, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmere, and in ever region in which Muslims are being oppressed. O Allah illuminate our hearts with the lights of Your *ma`arifa*, transforms us with the character of our chief Muhammad, upon him be blessings and peace, make our tongue eloquent with sending blessings upon our chief Muhammad, upon him be blessings and peace, and strengthen our bodies with his Living *Sunna*, upon him be blessings and peace. O Allah be merciful to the entire *Umma* of our chief Muhammad, upon him be blessings and peace, with a universal mercy. Amen O Most Merciful of the merciful.

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Shabaan 27, 1431 (8/8/10)
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Institute of Islamic-African Studies International