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

Many people have questioned us on the *sibha*. Some of them were from among the *munkiruun* (the rejecters) who have lost sight of the clear path and have made careers of searching for the faults of other Muslims; while others were sincere seekers desiring only to place their feet where the *Salaf* have placed theirs - without deviating from their clear path. The first group have become like those about whom Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio said in his *Ihya as-Sunnah*, "Whoever follows after the faults of his brother, Allah will follow after his faults, even if he is in the interior of his home." The second group have become like those about whom Shaykh al-Akbar spoke when he said in his *Risaala*; "Do not place your feet where you have not seen the footprints of your Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. For you should only place your feet upon his footprints if indeed you desire to be among the people of the highest spiritual ranks and to have perfect witnessing in the stations of intimacy with Allah."

The one enduring question which both groups have asked concerning the *sibha* was: "Does it have its foundation in the *sunna*?" And to both we say, and success is with Allah, that the *sunna* is obligatory to follow and it is forbidden to neglect it. This is true in accordance with the Book of Allah, the *sunna* and the consensus of our *sunni* scholars. Allah says in His infallible Qur'an; "Whatever the Messenger gives you take it. Whatever he forbids you, leave it." The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said, "Obligatory for you is my *sunna* and the *sunna* of the Caliphs after me. You should hold to it stubbornly."

As for the consensus of the Companions, Abu Bakr as-Sadiq is reported to have said, "I have not neglected anything which I saw the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, do; except that I did it out of fear that if I neglected anything from his commands that I would go astray." Umar ibn al-Khataab is reported to have said, "I only do as I have seen the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, do," Ali ibn Abi Taalib said, "I will not leave the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, for the words of any man from among the people."

As for the consensus of the *Tabi'uun*; Uways al-Qarani once said; "Beware of separating from the *jama'at* (meaning by that the *jama'at* which follows the *sunna* and avoids innovation) or you will separate yourselves from the religion while you are unawares and be entered into the Fire on the Day of Judgment among the first of those who are thrown in it." Umar ibn Abd'l-Aziz once said, "The Prophet made a *sunna* and those who were given the authority after him made a *sunna*. Taking hold of these is acceptance of the Book of Allah, behaving with obedience of Allah, and showing strength in the religion of Allah. It is not for anyone to change them or to substitute

them, nor to look into the opinions of those who contradict them. Whoever follows them, is guided and whoever seeks their assistance is victorious. Whoever contradicts them and follows other than the way of the believers, Allah will join him to that which he has turned and make his resting place Hell-and evil destiny."

As for the consensus of the *Taabi'u at-Taabi'een*; Imam Malik ibn Anas used to recite, "The best of matters in the deen is that which is *sunna*. The most evil of matters is invented innovation." Imam as-Shafi', may Allah be pleased with him said, "There is nothing left of the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, except to follow it." Imam Abu Hanifa, may Allah be merciful to him, said, "Obligatory upon you are the traditions and path of the *Salaf*."

It is clear from the above that the Companions, the *Taabi'uun* and the *Taabi'u at-Taabi'een*, may Allah be pleased with all of them, were firm in their following and reviving of the *sunna* and in their endeavors to avoid heretical innovation. These are the ones about whom the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace affirmed and praised when he said, "The best of generations is my generation, then those who will follow them, then those who will follow them."

This tradition is a clear proof of the high rank these three generations have above all other generations before or after them. By means of them Allah ta' ala perfected His *deen* for His *Umma*. Thus everything, which is in the Qur'an, the *sunna*, what the Companions were on, and the two generations which followed them - is the *deen* of Allah which every Muslim after them must follow. If you have realized this, then it is obligatory upon you to follow the Qur'an, the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah, the way of the Companions, the *Taabi'uun*, and the *Taabi'u at-Taabi'een* - in their outstanding conditions and praiseworthy lives. For these are the ones about whom the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, testified concerning their high rank and standing. Whatever they did we will do. Whatever they avoided we will avoid. Our master, the *mujaddid* and light of the age - Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio said in his renown *Ihya's-Sunna wa Ikhmad'l-Bid'a (The Revival of the Sunna and the Destruction of Heretical Innovation)*:

"It is obligatory upon everyone who desires to travel the path of salvation, that he examine their way of life and their conditions. He should investigate their words and behavior and place them firmly in front of him. He should be serious in acting in accordance with what they were on, and he should avoid what was invented after them and not pay any attention to it. He should say when he sees something invented after them; 'If there was good in it, they would have done it before us.' Whoever travels in their path will definitely reach where they reached. And whoever turns away from it, it will be said to him, 'Away! Away with you!'"

It is for this reason that we at the **Sankore' Institute** desired to address the many requests to us concerning the permissibility of using the *sibha* for the remembrance of Allah. If we find that the Qur'an, the *sunna*, the Companions, the *Taabi'uun* and the *Taabi'u at-Taabi'een* were averse to such a practice and considered it a heretical

innovation, then it is obligatory for all Muslims to avoid it and pay no attention to those who do. However, if we find the opposite. That is, if we find that neither the Qur'an nor the *sunna* bans the use of the *sibha*. And if we find that the noble Companions and the upright members of the two following generations held to it, then we too will hold to it and not pay the least attention to those who, out of their ignorance and *suu 'l-adab*, censure it. O Allah! Show us the truth of the matter clearly and give us success in following it. O Allah! Show us falsehood clearly and give us success at avoiding it.

I say, and success is with Allah, realize that there have been many proofs related in Prophetic traditions and in the narrations concerning the *Salaf* about the issue of using the *sibha* for the remembrance of Allah. Among them are the following.

It has been narrated by Ibn Abi Shayba, Abu Dawuud, at-Tirmidhi, an-Nasa'i and al-Haakim, and the tradition has been established as being sound; on the authority of Ibn Umar, who said: "I saw the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, keeping count of his glorifications of Allah with his hand."

It has been narrated by Ibn Abi Shayba, Abu Dawuud, at-Tirmidhi, and al-Haakim on the authority of Baseera, who was among the women of the *Muhajirun*, who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "It is incumbent upon you the saying of **sub'haana Allah, Laa ilaha illa Allah** and extolling Allah. And do not be heedless of Him or you will forget the divine unity (*tawheed*). And keep count with your finger tips, for verily the finger tips will be questioned and interrogated."

It has been narrated by at-Tirmidhi, al-Haakim and at-Tabaraani on the authority of Safiyya who said: "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, visited me while in front of me were four thousand stones that I used to glorify Allah with. He then said to me, 'What is that, O daughter of my brother?' I said, 'I glorify Allah with them.' He then said, 'While I have been standing here before you I have glorified Allah more than that.' I then said, 'Teach me how, O Messenger of Allah.' He said; 'Say - **Sub'haana Allah 'adada maa khalaqa min shay'in**'. (Glory be to Allah to the number of all things which He has created.)" This tradition is sound.

I say: Examine the above traditions with the eye of insight. Did the Messenger of Allah disallow Safiyya from using stones in glorifying Allah? Did he show any signs that what she was doing was forbidden (*haraam*) or reprehensible (*makruuh*)? The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, only showed her a way of glorifying Allah, which was more efficient than what she had been doing. This is in no way a prohibition from the Messenger of Allah. Whatever the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, has not prohibited, therefore cannot be prohibited after him. This important tradition also points to the fact that the use of stones or any other object which would facilitate the remembrance of Allah was a custom of the Companions of Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them. Therefore, how can anyone object to those in these times who seek to emulate the best of men or women?

It has been narrated by Abu Dawuud, at-Tirmidhi (who said the tradition was *hassan*), an-Nasa'i, Ibn Maja, Ibn Habban and al-Haakim in a sound tradition on the authority of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqaas who said that he along with the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, entered upon a women who had in front of her stones or pebbles with which she was glorifying Allah. He said: "May I inform you of a way which is easier for you than that and better? It is your saying: **sub'haana Allah 'adada**

maa khalaqa fii as-samaa'i, sub'haana Allah 'adada maa khalaqa fii '1-'ardi, sub'haana Allah maa bayna dhaalika, sub'haana Allah 'adada maa huwa khaaliq, Allahu akbar mithla dhaalika, wa'l-hamdulillahi mithla dhaalika, wa laa ilaha illa Allah mithla dhaalika, wa laa quwwata illa billahi mithla dhaalika'. (Glory be to Allah to the number of what has been created in the heavens. Glory be to Allah to the number of what has been created in the earth. Glory be to Allah to the number of what is between them. Glory be to Allah to the number of what He has created. Allah is the greatest like that. All praises are due to Allah like that. There is no deity except Allah like that. There is no power except with Allah like that.)"

In this tradition also the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did not object to nor disallow the woman for using stones for the remembrance of Allah. He simply demonstrated to her an all encompassing glorification, which if she were to do it, it would be better for her in reward and easier in labor. The proof for this is further established by the fact that had the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, prohibited the woman from the use of stones or any other device in the glorification of Allah, then Sa'd ibn Abi Waqaas would have informed us of that and he would have been the first to avoid such a practice. However, evidence establishes the fact that Sa'd ibn Abi Waqaas utilized stones in the glorification of Allah throughout his life. For it has been narrated by Ibn Sa'd on the authority of Hakiim ibn ad-Daylami, that Sa'd ibn Abi Waqaas used to glorify Allah utilizing stones.

This narration and the tradition before it are proofs that the *Salaf* were in the habit of utilizing stones, pebbles or any device to help them innumerate and increase the amount of glorification and remembrance of Allah. More evidence for this is to follow.

It has been mentioned in the Mu'ajim as-Sahaaba of al-Baghwi and in the Tarikh of Ibn Asaakir by way of Mu'atamir ibn Sulayman on the authority of Abi ibn Ka'b, on the authority of his grandfather, Baqiya, on the authority of Abi Safiyya the *mawla* of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "That he was in the custom of placing down a leather mat and would then bring a palm leaf basket filled with little pebbles. He would glorify Allah with these from dawn until midday. When he had prayed his prayers, he would bring it again and glorify Allah with them until evening came."

It has been narrated by Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal, may Allah be pleased with him, in his az-Zuhd from 'Afan, from Abd'l-Waahid ibn Ziyaad on the authority of Yunus ibn 'Ubayd, on the authority of his mother, who said; "I saw Abu Safiyya, one of our neighbors, a man from among the Companions of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, who used to glorify Allah using stones."

It has been narrated by Abdullah ibn Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal in the Zawa'id az-Zuhd by way of Nu'aym ibn Muharara ibn Abu Hurayra; "That his grandfather, Abu Hurayra, used to have a string which had one thousand knots in it. He would not go to sleep until he had glorified Allah with it."

It has been narrated by Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal in the az-Zuhd from Miskin ibn Nakeer, from Thaabit ibn 'Ajlaan, on the authority of al-Qaasim ibn Abd'r-Rahmaan who said, "Abu ad-Darda used to have stones from the seeds of pressed dates in a bag. When he had prayed in the morning, he would then take each stone out of the bag, one by one and glorify Allah with them, until he had completed the whole bag."

It has been narrated by Ibn Sa'd in the at-Tabaqaat on the authority of 'Ubaydallah ibn Musa on the authority of Jaabir on the authority of a woman who informed him that,

"Fatima the daughter of al-Hussayn ibn Ali ibn Abi Taalib, used to glorify Allah with a string which had a series of knots in it." This Fatima was the great granddaughter of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

The above is evidence that the leaders of the *Salaf*, the noble Companions and the best of the succeeding generations used to utilize stone, pebbles or some device to facilitate the remembrance of Allah. We have already given proof above concerning the obligation of following in the footsteps of the *Salaf*. However, if the reader needs more evidence for emulating their noble pattern, then examine the following. It has been mentioned in the al-Mizaan'l-Kubra of as-Sha'arani that al-Bayhaqi mentioned in the al-Madhkhal on the authority of ibn 'Abaas, that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "Whatever comes to you from the Book of Allah, acting according to it is obligatory. There is no excuse for anyone to leave it. If it is not in the Book of Allah, then it will be in my *sunna* which is sound. If it is not in my *sunna*, then it will be in the words of my Companions. This is because my Companions are like the stars in the heavens. Whichever one you follow, you will be guided. And the difference of opinion among my Companions will be for you a mercy."

It is clear from this that following the Companions is not only a praiseworthy act, but it is an obligation in those matters in which there is no clear guidance from the Qur'an and the *sunna*. The objection which the modernist, among the Wahabiyya and the Taymiyuun, have demonstrated against the use of *sibha* is unwarranted. Their objection and rejection of the use of a device to facilitate the glorification of Allah is itself forbidden, because it is a rejection of the customs of the *Salaf*. However, if their objection of the *sibha* or its like is in order to establish the use of the fingers as the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did for some of his Companions, then this is merely guiding the Muslims to what is better. But in that, there can be no objection, because the Messenger of Allah did not object to it. The *mujaddid* of the eighth century *hijra* Imam Umar ibn Rasin al-Balqini said in his Tuhfat'l-Ubaad in the section concerning the use of the *sibha*; "Some of the scholars said that keeping count of the glorification of Allah with the finger tips is better than using the *sibha*; basing this upon the above tradition narrated by Ibn Umar. However, they add that if the one who does glorification of Allah is secure from making mistakes in his counting, then the use of the finger tips is better; if not then the use of the *sibha* is foremost."

If you were to say: 'I understand that there is no real objection to the use of stones, pebbles or even knotted string to facilitate the glorification and remembrance of Allah. But what proof do you have that the *sibha* as it is called today was permissible during the era of the *Salaf*?' I would answer, and success in that is from Allah, that it has been narrated by ad-Daylami in his Musnad'l-Firdaus from Abduus ibn Abdullah, from Abu Abdullah al-Hussayn ibn Fathuwayhi at- Thaqafi, from Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Nasrawayhi, from Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Hamza al-Alawi, who said that Abd's-Samad ibn Musa informed me, that Zaynab the daughter of Sulayman ibn Ali informed me, that Umm'l-Hassan the daughter of Ja'far ibn al-Hassan informed me on the authority of her father, on the authority of her grandfather (al-Hassan ibn Ali ibn Abi Taalib), on the authority of Ali ibn Abi Taalib, who said, "The best means of remembrance is the *sibha*."

Amir'l-Mu'mineen Ali ibn Abi Taalib, may Allah ennoble his contenance passed the tradition of the use of the *sibha* to his prominent disciple, Hassan al-Basri. Hassan al-Basri was asked about the use of the *sibha* by one of his disciples, Umar al-Makki who

said; "O teacher, with your great rank and excellent worship, yet you still find it necessary to use the *sibha*?" He responded; "What we used to utilize in the beginning of our affair, we will not leave in the end. I love to remember Allah with my heart, with what is in my hand and with my tongue."

When Umar al-Makki was asked about the *sibha* by his disciple, Bishr al-Haafi, he said, "I saw my teacher Hassan al-Basri, and in his hand was a *sibha*." Bishr al-Haafi was asked about the *sibha* by his disciple, Ma'ruf al-Kharki, and he said, "I saw my teacher Umar al-Makki, and in his hand was a *sibha*." Ma'ruf al-Kharki was asked about the *sibha* by his disciple, Sari ibn Mughlus as-Saqti, and he said, "I saw my teacher Bishr al-Haafi, and in his hand was a *sibha*." Sari as-Saqti was asked about the *sibha* by his disciple, Imam al-Junayd al-Baghdadi, and he said, "I saw my teacher Ma'ruf al-Kharki, and in his hand was a *sibha*." Imam al-Junayd al-Baghdadi was asked about the *sibha* by his disciple, Abu 'l-Hassan al-Maaliki, and he said, "I saw my teacher Sari al-Saqti, and in his hand was a *sibha*." Imam al-Junayd was also asked about the *sibha* by another disciple, al-Qadi Abu'l-'Abaas Ahmed ibn Khalkaan, who said, "You with all of your nobility still hold in your hand a *sibha*?" Imam al-Junayd replied: "The path by which I reached my Lord, I will never leave."

Imam Abu'l-Qaasim al-Junayd al-Baghdadi was the leader of the People of *Tasawwuf* who clarified their science and systematized their methodology, clearing the path of obscurities and uncertainties. In the Tabaaat'l-Shaafi'iyya of al-Subki, Imam al-Junayd is reported to have said; "Whoever has not learned the Qur'an by heart, has not formally studied *hadith* and *fiqh* before embarking on *tasawwuf*; has no right to guide people." It was mentioned in the at-Ta'arruf of al-Kalabadhi, that Imam al-Junayd once said;

"*Tasawwuf* is to purge the heart from every wish to follow the path of the common men. It means to relinquish natural characteristics, to wipe out human attributes, to discard selfish claims, to cultivate spiritual qualities, to devote oneself to true knowledge, to do what is best in context of eternity, to wish good for the entire *Umma*, to be truly faithful to Allah, and to follow the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in the matters of the shari'a."

Imam al-Junayd also said as is related in the Usuul'l-Wilaya of Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio; "All the paths have been closed except following in the footsteps of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace." Imam Abu'l-Qaasim al-Junayd passed on the use of the *sibha* to his disciple Abu Bakr ash-Shibli. He in turn passed it on to Abd'r-Rahmaan at-Tamimi. He in turn passed it on to Abu'l-Faraj at-Tartusi. He in turn passed it on to Abu'l-Hassan al-Hakaari. He in turn passed it on to Abu Sa'id al-Mubarak al-Muhrami. He in turn passed on to the Sultan of the Awliyya, the Falcon of gnosis of Allah, the Reviver of the *Sunna* - our master Shaykh Muhyideen Abd'l-Qaadir al-Jaylani, may Allah ennoble his secret. He was the leader of the Junaydi school during his time and all of the people of the science of *tasawwuf* recognized him as their Imam and the formulator of their ideology and thought. Shaykh Abd'l-Qaadir al-Jaylani was known to carry and use the *sibha* throughout his life. It was related by Imam Umar al-Bazaazi; "Whenever Shaykh Abd'l-Qaadir would place his *sibha* down the beads

would move around the string by themselves, one by one.” This was a proof of Shaykh Abd'l-Qaadir's adherence to the Book of Allah and the *sunna* of His Messenger in words and in deeds. Shaykh Abd'l-Qaadir is reported to have said;

"Woe on to you! You claim to be *Sufi*, but you are disturbed and confused. The *sufi* is one whose inner and outer have been purified by following the Book of Allah and the *sunna* of His Messenger. The more his purity increases, the more he emerges from the ocean of his own existence and abandons his own will, choice and volition - all because of the purity of his heart. The foundation of uprightness is following the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in his words and his deeds. The more the servant's heart is purified, the more he will see the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in his sleep, commanding him to do something and forbidding him to do something else...He comes to be with the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, as far as his inner content is concerned. His heart is then trained with him and in his presence. His hand comes to be in his hand. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, then becomes the one to be consulted concerning Allah, as the doorkeeper before His presence."

Shaykh Abd'l-Qaadir then passed the use of the *sibha* to his son Abd'r-Razaaq. He in turn passed it to his son, Ahmed ibn Abd'r-Razaaq. He in turn passed it to his son, Shaykh Ali ibn Ahmed. He in turn passed it to his son, Shaykh Rajab ibn Ali. He in turn passed it on to his son, Ali ibn Rajab. He in turn passed it on to his son, Muhammad ibn Ali. He in turn passed it on to his son, Shaykh Farajallah ibn Muhammad. He in turn passed it to his son, Mahmud ibn Farajallah. He in turn passed it to his son, Abd'r-Razaaq ibn Mahmud. He in turn passed it on to his son, Abd'l-Qaadir ibn Abd'r-Razaaq. He in turn passed it on to his son, Farajallah ibn Abd'r-Razaaq. He in turn passed it to his son, Shaykh Ali ibn Farajallah. He in turn passed it on to his brother, Faydallah ibn Farajallah. He in turn passed it on to his nephew, Shaykh Mahmud ibn Ali. He in turn passed it to his brother Shaykh al-Hajj Ali ibn Ali. He in turn passed it on to his cousin, Abd'r-Rahmaan ibn Faydallah. He in turn passed it on to his disciple, Shaykh Ali al-Hajj al-Maghribi.

Shaykh Ali al-Hajj passed the use of the *sibha* to the eleventh Righteous Caliph, the twelfth *mujaddid*, the light of the age, the reviver of the *sunna*, the sword of truth - our master Shehu Uthman ibn Muhammad Fode' ibn Uthman - famous as Dan Fodio. Shehu Uthman revived the *sunna* of the Prophet and renewed the *deen* for the *Umma*. He first started his *jihad* with lucid teachings and prolific writing until he had filled the regions with learning and piety. He then finished his *jihad* with the spear and the sword until, with the help of Allah, he had subdued all of the lands of the central *bilad's-sudan* and implemented the rule of Allah on earth. The government, which he founded, became the dome of Islam in the whole of the *bilad's-sudan*. He foretold that the reform movement, which he initiated, would continue until the appearance of the Awaited Mahdi. In spite of the fact that Shehu Uthman ruled an area, which included more than

600 thousand square miles, he never altered his lifestyle of personal austerity and intense remembrance and glorification of Allah. It has been related that for one full year he spoke to no one except through signs and spent the entire year doing the prayer upon the Prophet. This spiritual exercise was the sole cause of his obtaining of the stations of nearness to Allah. According to his son and the author of this book, Muhammad Bello, in his Infaaq'l-Maysur;

"The Shehu informed me that at the time he obtained the divine charisma, by means of the *baraka* of the prayer upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, by him being steadfast on it without laziness, boredom or exhaustion; Allah assisted him with the overflowing of divine lights, by the agency of Shaykh Abd'l-Qadir al-Jayli, may Allah be pleased with him, and by the agency of his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He then witnessed some of the marvels of the *malakuut* and received the extraordinary elements of the *jabariyyut*. He then witnessed the functions of the Divine Names, Attributes and the Essence. He examined the Guarded Tablet and unlocked some of its mysteries. The Lord of Truth dressed him in the vestment of inviting people to Him and crowned him with the crown of guidance and spiritual direction to Him...".

Shehu Uthman developed at least 40 men and women who had inherited his inner and outer blessings and were trained to take servants to their Lord through the spiritual path of *tasawwuf*. Among these advanced disciples, were Abdullahi Dan Fodio, Umar 'l-Kammi, Muhammad Bello, Hawwa Inna-garka, A' isha Iya-garka, Khadija, and Ali ibn Abu Bakr. The Shehu clearly passed on the use of the *sibha* to his disciple, Ali ibn Abu Bakr. He in turn passed it on to his disciple, Shaykh Musa. He in turn passed it on to Shaykh Adam al-Karagh. He in turn passed it on to his son, the Imam of the central mosque of Mai Wurno, our teacher Shaykh Muhammad al-Amin ibn Adam al-Khateeb.

On December 15, 1985, at 11:50 in the morning, in the town of Mai Wurno on the banks of the Blue Nile, Shaykh Muhammad al-Amin taught us the use of the *sibha*, as it had been passed down to him from his teachers up until our *Amir'l-Mu'mineen*, Ali ibn Abi Taalib. When we had sought permission from Shaykh Muhammad al-Amin and the Sultan al-Hajj Abu Bakr to return to the United States; the Shaykh took his *sibha* from around his neck and presented it to us as a gift. This therefore is our *isnaad* (chain of authority) concerning the use of the *sibha*. Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio said in his Umdat'l 'Ulama, quoting Imam at-Thawri: "The *isnaad* is the weapon of the believer. If he has no weapon with him, then with what can he fight?" The Shehu goes further saying: "Ibn al-Mubarak said; 'The likeness of the one who seeks to learn matters of the deen without an *isnaad* is like the one who wants to climb to the roof terrace without stairs.' He also said, 'The *isnaad* is apart of the deen. If there is no *isnaad*, then whoever wants to, can say about the *deen* whatever he wants'."

Therefore, realize, that utilizing the *sibha* is neither a forbidden innovation (*bid'a muharaama*) nor a reprehensible innovation (*bid'a makruuha*), as we have established above. The utilization of the *sibha* or its like has been the custom of some of the best of

the *Salaf*, may Allah be pleased with them. Therefore, we invite all those whom Allah has established in his heart the least amount of *imaan* to travel in the path of the *Salaf* and to take hold of the *sibha* for the glorification and remembrance of Allah ta'ala. It is rare that a person sees the *sibha* and is not reminded of Allah ta'ala. This alone is its greatest benefit and it is for this reason that the *Salaf* called it *sibha*. Also among its benefits is that the *sibha* assists a person to be constantly in the remembrance of Allah ta'ala. For when one sees the *sibha*, he is reminded that it is an instrument for the remembrance of Allah. The remembrance of Allah is a superogatory act, and that which facilitates and makes easy a superogatory act is also superogatory. Therefore the least we can say of the *sibha* is that it is superogatory and a means to a praiseworthy end. The *sibha* helps gather one's inner being to Allah ta'ala. Imam al-Ushayri related from the *Salaf*, "Regarding that which helps gather the hearts to Allah, there is no objection to it." Our chief Imam Abu'l-Qaasim al-Junayd al-Baghdadi said, "Anything which will gather the slave to his Lord is permissible."

Here ends what we have to say concerning the matter of the *sibha* in order to remove away the obscurities, which ignorant ones and belligerent *Shayateen* have created around this subject. Our aim in writing this was not to bring shame upon anyone nor to expose their faults. For that is the preoccupation of the hypocrites of the *deen* who are harsh against the believers and who have taken the disbelievers for economic, military and political friends. Our aim was to revive the *sunna* of Muhammad and the path of the *Salaf* concerning the matter of the *sibha*. And we believe what is written above has accomplished that end. All praises are due to Allah, who has guided us this, and we would not have been guided had not He guided us.

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