

KYAUTA



MUHAMMAD SA'IDU JIMADA

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INTRODUCTION

I have decided to collate the record of my courting late Asma'u. I am pleased about it and dedicate it to our indeed, beloved mother *Hajiya Fati Sani of Late Alkalin Garka*. It is indeed a proof of goodness, may Allah accept it as part of our worship, Amen.

M.S. Jimada

NITT

ZARIA.

BARKA DA SALLAH?

What does this mean?

What it means to you, I don't know.

What it means to 'Muslims', I don't know.

No, I can only guess...

What it means to Nigerians, I am not certain.

What it means in Islam is what matters to me.

My understanding of it may be wrong.

My understanding of it may be low.

My understanding of it may be weak.

But, it is definitely not strange.

But, it is definitely not foreign.

But, it is definitely not against Islam.

Will you like to know?

I am willing to share it with you.

There is no compulsion in Islam.

I am not and will not ask you for a reward.

That is the path trod by our Model (SAW)

May peace and blessings be upon Him.

Barka, barakatu, is essentially an Arabic word that denotes blessing, bless, blessed, may He bless, May you be blessed, May it be blessed, etc.

Barka da Sallah therefore actually refers to:

BLESSED BE SALAT; BLESSED BE PRAISES; BLESSED BE PLEAS. Blessed be any or all of these that are yours.

Your Salat is in reference because it is you who produced them. These may be the obligatory – five times; they may be voluntary – prescriptions for the five; they may be traditional – specifically enjoined by our Model; or they may be inspired or deduced from these. These may be the first level of the meanings.

But Salat is not devoid of praises. This is why *Zikr* is used, meaning Salat in reference, when the Qur'an said believers should remember Allah in the mornings, evenings etc. This is the second level of the meanings.

And Salat is also characterised by pleas or *du'a*. Man is full of wants, needs, fancies. He always wants and is always asking. And he should always ask because he is lacking and Allah is all-having. The ninety-nine attributes of Allah reveal the essential desires of man. This is why when you call on Allah by these beautiful names, He

responds by blessing you with traits of the attributes. And when you believe and live your life by them, you are promised paradise. This is the third level of the meanings. So, when someone says *Barka da Sallah*, my dear sister, in Islam, it is congratulatory, from the person to you. This is like when a stranger intends to join your company, she says, Peace! *Assalamu 'alaikum*. And in accordance with the tradition of our Model, you respond, wishing the person, Peace (at least or in addition to) compassion and blessing of Allah. The focal subject in greeting is the other person. In *barka da sallah*, it is the different faces of salat for that person, and of the person. The implication is that only those who perform or produce salat can have *barka da sallah* applying to them.

The question then is, when one is congratulated, she should know or ask or be sure of the matter in question. And where it is specified, like happy delivery, the mother knows that she had put to bed, the other party has seen or reliably known that, it was a human being. In addition both of them are satisfied that the child is alive and healthy. If all these conditions are not met, the congratulation will be defective. Thus, with salat, the receiver should reflect on the correctness of having performed all or most of the obligatory, recommended and enjoined salat in the year. And that these were done to the best of one's ability. In other words, since salat is the means of a believer's audience with Allah, was the receiver in close touch with Allah through the year? Was it effective? Indeed, the person congratulating you should have observed the effect of the instruction by our Model that she whose prayer/salat does not curtail her from doing evil has no benefit of salat. This is how to understand our Model's love for salat, and that it cools his eyes. This is why, my sister, in salat, *ihsan* is enjoyed. This is why, my sister, when you are angry standing, it is recommended that you sit, lie down, perform ablution and at most pray two raka'ats.

Thus, in the month of *Dhul-Hajj*, we are either congratulated, reminded or confronted. Did we complete the number? What about the quality of the Salat. Do we keep audience with Allah? If not, then what is there to be happy about? My sister, if we keep in audience and comply, wouldn't we have every reason and all evidence to congratulate ourselves? But, is that the position?

And did we praise Him enough during the year? And we observe or notice the signs of His attributes in our daily lives? In small and great events? Did we recognise these, according to our faith in Him and praised Him and depend on Him and struggled on His Path? When for instance a parent loses up to three children before the age of

majority, do you praise Allah in remembrance of the promise of Allah's paradise for the parents? Did this make you tearful? When you discuss, listen to others, read about events or want to and actually take decisions or act, it is Allah's encompassing greatness and your submission to Him that influences your conclusions and interpretations. During the year, did you mostly refer to Allah and His Messenger on your personal, private, neighbourly, relations', colleagues', fellow faithfuls and unbelievers' matters? When something very pleasant happened to you, how long did you remain praising Allah, obeying him and thanking Him during the year? When something uncomfortable affected you, how did you patiently persevere, as required of the faithfuls? Whenever you look, hear, hold, step, smell or taste or feel anything in health or in ailment, does the unity of Allah through His attributes occur to you first or at all? When you read the Qur'an, do you enjoy it? Did it remind you? Did it motivate you to read or find out more about Allah?

And following the praises are pleas during the year, did you cease to be in need? All the things you wished, wanted, struggled for, did you depend upon Allah to get them? Did you get them? Are you satisfied with not getting them? Did you get annoyed for not getting them? My sister, I actually finished writing my series of books since 1992. I have not stopped praying to get them printed and distributed in the name of Allah. There is a hadith which means that if you don't get as you desire, when you want, don't get annoyed. If you do, it is useless, because no one can compel Allah to do against His desire. Moreover, if I want it for Allah, why should I lose my head or lose my sense? I shouldn't dictate to Allah.

Thus, if during the year we did our best and we all share in the fruits of obedience to Allah, then we can congratulate each other for the special rewards of *Eid* prayer day. The celebration is of thankfulness, praises and more dedication, submission etc. to Allah. Unfortunately, the easiest form of expressing these is by wearing clothes, eating, drinking etc. but we often forget that it is our weakness that subjects us to these. The goal is higher. The Qur'an says it is not fitting that Allah speaks or reveals Himself to anybody except from behind a veil. This means that all creations, all events are His signs. It is for us to be conscious of them. Thus, we are not only to eat food, that is halal, it must be modest. We need to start it by *Basmala* and finish with *Hamdala* – to Allah. Check the story of Abraham and his upliftment by Allah. He was tried with Ismail and the ransom is now a tradition for us – to kill a ram. And Allah

reminds us, it is not the blood that reaches Him, not the meat that we eat that matters but our faith.

My dear sister, for one who therefore sincerely reflects on her salat, *Zikr* and *du'a* between the previous *Dhul-Hajj* and the current one, and finds that she can only regret, she should weep when any one ignorantly congratulates her. She should hide away from people who are fellow Muslims or non-Muslims from 'congratulating' her. It will be a reminder and a warning and a confrontation and a challenge. Allah forbid, it may be evidence against her who claims to be a servant of Allah when she didn't serve. But if she did, then she can share. Thus, the Qur'an says, whithersoever you turn, you will find the face of Allah. Unbelievers, hypocrites, misbelievers and believers must therefore note that they only have a respite in this life. We will all return to Allah with evidences for or against ourselves. It will therefore be unreasonable to congratulate someone you do not know or at least someone that you definitely know that she or he has not done the best affordable, in terms of salat, *Zikr*, *du'a*. The results of these *Barka da Sallah* is therefore a more serious affair in Islam than symbolic cards, outings or merry making. It is so serious that it can be a CURSE rather than a BLESSING.

I therefore write you to take caution, to stick to the course. To hold tight unto the rope that Allah extends to us.

If I may therefore now ask, should I say *BARKA da SALLAH*? Are you personally satisfied with your relationship with Allah? Are you bored or tired? Are you just keeping it? Is it a mere formality?

I therefore implore you to minimise being the cause of another person's curse. And you should not be hasty in jumping about being congratulated. The two parties need to see and be seen. *Sallah* day is not a licence day for all evils. Each prayer is, and it graduates to Fridays and then to the month of Ramadan and then to *Eid* days. The forgiveness of Allah and His responsiveness is not reserved for only *Eid* days and even on *Eid* days, it is not for those who are unclean, disobedient, temporary, adhoc. The Model (SAW) once compared a praying believer to one who baths in a stream five times in a day, if he will have dirt left on him? The companions said, No. That is the cleansing of minor sins for those who avoid major ones.

But, let not this piece of note mislead you to think that I am worthy of the congratulations. I am rather in great need of Allah's forgiveness and mercy all the time. Indeed, I cannot claim to be competent to lead you. Moreover, you are lucky to

be in the family, among the relations and descendants of the heirs of our Model (SAW) – the learned, the scholars, and judges. I am merely a struggler on the path – in search. Thus, for salat, I can only remind you of favourable times from among all times of consulting with Allah. Our Model said, the closest time and point in which a servant is with Allah, is when he is in prostration. And we prostrate in salat or by tradition, on recitation of some portions of the Qur'an. Thus, in salat, we have an opportunity of being with Allah, and especially at *sujud* time or point. If you are to count the number of *sujuds* one makes daily and across a year, if one ignores the opportunities, you can imagine the level of foolishness.

Still within salat, Allah gives indications of emphasis. He says we should take special care of the middle prayer. And we are told in spite of the controversy that the door to the city of knowledge, Sayyidina Ali, said it is Asr. And there is one everyday. My dear sister, our Model indicated that Allah's names are 99, an odd number and that He loves the odd. And in a day, we have Maghrib and Witr prayers. O my sister, Allah does not hate the even. Thus our Model advised his beloved daughter of the superiority of *Subhanallah* 33, *Alhamdulillah* 33 and *Allahu Akbar* 34 (making 100), to getting a slave support to provide her household convenience. And in your ablution, you can wash the parts once, twice or thrice. So Allah can be found in both ways. My dear sister, in salat, subhi, Zuhr, Asr, and Isha'i are all even. All the other supportive *nawafil* are even. These reflect the fact that all and each creation seeks to be even. Only Allah is odd with none, no other thing is like Him. For times, my dear sister, the third part of each night, the break of each day, all the days of the month of Ramadan and especially the last ten; and in the last ten, the odd days for every Friday, between the third part of the night and the break of days is equally emphasised. My dear sister, in every two raka'ats or at the end, for every concluding raka'at the Model instructs us to say *salam* to him after *tahiya*, the *Zikr* and then our pleas. And from the traditions of our Model, we are told that angels of peace circle those in *Zikr* to the heavens and report back to Allah, pleading for the servant's forgiveness. In each raka'at, we praise Allah and plead with Him through *fatiha* and other *Surah* recitations. We praise Him in ruku'u and sujud, in bowing, in rising and in sitting. So my sister, salat, before Allah, envelops the believer in submission. It is therefore only logical that we understand Allah's promise and undertaking through the *hadith-kudsi* which relates that he walks, runs towards whoever crawls or walks towards him

voluntarily until their seeing, grasp, hearing etc. become one. This is salat, the means, the veil to the goal.

And the basis you know, is cleanliness – place, self, dress, thoughts, intakes (food and drink), relations (interaction with people) symbolised by ablution. He provides permanent avenue or excuse for us through *Tayammum* when we have problem with water and that in menses, you can read the Qur'an (incomplete – the strict guide of your friend – the author of *Akhdari*).

THEN WHICH OF THE FAVOURS OF ALLAH WILL YOU DENY?

I am afraid, because I may not be worthy of *Barka da Sallah*. I had abundant opportunities throughout the year. I am still struggling.

But let me congratulate you (*kyakyawar Niyya*).

BARKA DA SALLAH!

THE QIBLA FOR A MUSLIM'S LOVE

Al-Qibla is often associated with turning towards the sacred and protected mosque, the ka'abah. This is not wrong.

But the Qibla before this was Jerusalem. And by the change, Allah tried those early Muslims, whether they believed in Him. Thus, when those who were praying, facing Jerusalem were told of the change, they simply turned towards the ka'abah.

My dear sister, you have been to ka'abah. Did you not notice that while the ka'abah is in the east for those of us in this part of the world, it is not for others? Did you not see that all worshippers were facing the 'House' of Allah? Were not some from its east? some from its west? some from its north? some from its south? We should therefore learn from this that, where ever we may be, we are to turn to the ka'abah. That, the east, the west, the north and south all belong to Allah. This explains the consistency with the rule of praying while in danger or on the run. The meaning is that, the direction and goal is to ALLAH alone.

Submission to the unity of Allah is not only in prayer or a matter of the place you find yourself. It is not applicable only when you are clean. Do you not note that when you are to ease yourself in the open, Shari'ah frowns at your facing or backing the Qibla? It also frowns at exposing your privacy to others and frowns at having your convenience in a shade. This is because, Allah provides the shade as a resting place for men and animals.

Malama, don't you see that Qibla changes? Don't you see that it is always a guide post? Our prayer is to Qibla. Our convenience respects it. We preferably lie, facing it. We rest our dead, facing it. O Asma'u, the object, the goal is one, for all of us. It is Allah. He is the goal, the rules lead to Him. They must not lead to other than Him. In the end, if out of ignorance you face a direction other than that of ka'abah, Shari'ah accepts the worship. And you may confirm from your learned relations about determining the Qibla for a mosque to be established. The principle is that, any direction within the continuum of an average person's spread of arms is acceptable. The Qibla is a structural guide post like road sign. It is for orderliness.

Whoever believes must therefore need to turn to Qibla. Turn to Allah, comply to the commandments. All love is therefore for Allah and should be directed to Him. My dear sister, haven't you already learnt that Allah is THE LOVING? But can you love Him? Is He in His House at Mecca? Remember, your author of *Akhdari*? How to love? Love for Allah's sake. Hate for Allah's sake. For a Muslim, the affair is that of

Allah. You will therefore love Allah without associating any partner to it. This means, you will do all, for Allah's sake, according to what He commands. *Malama*, the critical implication of this is that, what you should learn to be pleased with must not necessarily or always be what you personally think is pleasant. If you do that, you are veering from the path, from the Qiblah of Allah. I am sure, you will not ask me of what will please Allah. Does the Qur'an not explain? Has the Sunnah not clarified? Hasn't the consensus of scholars informed by the stance of four caliphs, the *Tabi'in*; your Imam and the advice of a brother fertile grounds for solving any problem?

This Qiblah of a Muslim's love is what explains the rules of loving Allah without associating anything with Him; loving Muhammad (SAW) more than one's parents; and loving a fellow Muslim like oneself.

My dear sister, do you remember? Allah directed Muhammad (SAW) to cancel pleasing his consorts by proceeding to continue taking the honey that Allah has not prohibited. My dear sister, do you not remember that Muhammad (SAW) was joined in marriage with his cousin after a formal divorce by Zaid?

Such was exemplified by *Khalilullah*, Prophet Ibrahim. In the beginning, it was the star that was mistaken by him as his Lord. Then the amazement he got from the moon cancelled that of the star. And the glory of the sun made him to still change. But all of them did set. However, Allah does not set. He is living and everlasting. He is the first and the last. Better still, He is before the first and after the last. This reminds me of Ibn Arabi, Muhydeen's commentary on the hadith: Whoever knoweth himself, knoweth his Lord. My dear sister, the star, the moon and the sun are all sign posts. The Qur'an calls them ayat(s) of Allah. This is because every variable, every object, everything glorifies, testifies and is a pointer to the unity of Allah.

Thus, after Ibrahim (AS) found Allah and realised that the stars, moon, sun, and all are only means by which one may find Allah or get lost, he thanked Allah, the constant, after finding Him. Thus, in his debate with the ruler, he challenged him, if he makes the sun to rise in the east and to set in the west. The ruler was confounded. The point of love is that, if Ibrahim (AS) had fallen in love with the star, the moon or the sun, just like the wicked king, he would have been disappointed. He would have failed. But, he succeeded because, Allah was his goal.

Allah does not fail, but *SAI DA HAKURI, DA JURIYA, DA MIKA WUYA*.

Lucky you, you can easily learn from your family seniors, the practice of loving and enjoying submission to Allah. If Allah wills, I may tell you of a few things relating to

it. But I may be able to Illustrate only with those aspects of life or matters that I am familiar with.

THEREFORE ALWAYS KEEP TO THE QIBLA i.e. TO ALLAH, AND WHERE MEN ARE INVOLVED, IT SHOULD BE FOR ALLAH'S SAKE.

WHY ASMA'U AND FOR WHAT?

The question is a worthy one. It is a bold one. In fact it never occurred to me. Until you raised it, I wasn't conscious or never considered that it is important. And it was interesting that when I asked you to answer it in your respect, you simply didn't know or even understood why? But all praise be to Allah, that you strongly do not mind and in fact will not want to remain or leave it as neutral. As a Muslim, neutrality is frowned at, if it will contribute to a negative result.

On my part, I have an idea or a basis. If you didn't find my explanation satisfactory, read it over again. If you find it satisfactory, read it over and over again.

May be I should tell you. I am a wonderer, a traveller, a searcher. And I make use of any form of transport that is available. Although I am not rich or wealthy, I don't pray to be wretched. In fact I am always praying that Allah OPENS up favours from His BOUNTIES to flow to me without measure and in protection of my FAITH.

My destination is IMAN and the ruler is ALLAH (S.W.T). The road to Iman is everywhere and all the time. This is because, Allah is everywhere and He is living. The roads are of different types, but I have chosen that which is called SUBMISSION ROAD. This road is ROUGH ENOUGH because it definitely leads to Iman and the reception of Allah is one thing that is foolish to ignore. The road is parked, congested with pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, sailors, aircrafts, trains; it is parked with men, *Jinns*, animals, trees, stones etc. The road leads to a boarder, from where each means and creation takes an independent and freer route. There the pedestrians will follow a path, the motorists will ply a dual carriage way, sailors will find water, the train will find a rail and the aircraft will take off by a tarmac. Don't wonder about trees and stones or animals. Briefly, a date tree is a Muslim isn't it? A scorpion ignored *Rusulullah* and stung him. Didn't you hear about it? And can you recall the mountain that offered to turn into gold but Muhammad (SAW) was not impressed or willing? Oh my sister, lets come back to the road.

I am simply a pedestrian, bare footed. And I have told you the condition of the road. Everybody, everything is there. The Qur'an says: willingly, or unwillingly, the

heavens and the earth are in glorification of Allah. For comfort and assurance, I have chosen to try a spectacle, for a fair view of the road – for at least the distance that I can see. *Ya Asma'u*, the spectacle is not made of glasses. It is a perspective. And it is of Islam. It is with it that I want to look at most things, if not everything. Thus, I have attempted an understanding through the books I have written. Oh Asma'u, you had asked me about love and I attempted to put it in perspective for you, through Qibla. You asked me to watch the film (video): *IN DA SO DA KAUNA* and I have given you my comments. You now ask me why you and for what? Am I not explaining to you? If you recall the prayer I offered you for remembering Allah, I had earlier given you the explanation for the collection. My dear sister, I am ready to clean the glasses if, when and where it gets stained. And I am always ready for assistance.

My dear sister, the fitness of these glasses is not unconnected to the opticians who worked on it for me. And Justice Bashir Sambo is one of the consultants. Thus, if I see well, thanks to Allah, thanks to Bashir and thanks to others. And he didn't charge me what Allah has not provided me. The charge was TIME. My dear sister, his helping me to see has not reduced his own. Indeed he has not objected to be in fact personally involved in my enlarging the glasses into a viewing screen. This will make more people see through it, fairly clearly, like passengers in a car, a train, in an aircraft.

My dear sister, Mallam Bashir has been beneficial to me. And that is an attribute of Allah. It is one of the 99 attributes of Allah, which if one acts according to them, he is promised *Aljannah*. You will remember that even with greeting, the standard is that you should return with equally as good or ever better. And I believe. And you are my sister, my brother's sister, our sister in Islam.

The screen can be used by any and all Muslims. Why not you? O my sister, why not Asma'u? This explains my constant prayer and effort to get my books published, to share with fellow Muslims. You may ask, what is special about you. Not everybody is Asma'u. Not every Asma'u is Mallam Bashir's sister. Thus, I gladly answer your questions when you bother to ask. And I don't mind answering them in writing. O my sister, do you know of any other person that I give this attention? And I will continue to give you a view, this attention, as long as you do not turn your face away, as long as you ask. It will not cost me what I cannot provide. My only fee will continue to be your patience.

Then, should we not both thank Justice Bashir? Allah knows that I am grateful. Moreover, your caring for a view combined with your youth is a pleasant grace of Allah. When this is further combined with your good manners and decency, I cannot resist giving you a front view. And in your position, if you desire to have a view of the sides – with all pleasure. You can be sure that, I am not doing you any favour. And when all of these are further combined with your roots, a daughter and sister/cousin of Judges, I will be deaf, blind and fail to understand, if I do not care for you. And that you are a woman, may be you will become a mother, if I contribute to your seeing. O my sister, only Allah knows the measure of His appreciation. These explain why it is you, Asma'u Sani.

For what? I cannot pretend to know everything. What I do know is that, I desire and will continue to make efforts to reach Iman. In the end, I will lodge with Allah. Both of us are on the same road – Islam. Our meeting point for now is the viewing screen. It is an aiding facility in my transport to *Iman*. But you must note that, if you had preferred a coloured or cracked or smashed or painted screen, we wouldn't have met. Remember Prophet Nuhu and his son? Prophet Lot and his wife? Prophet Ibrahim and his father? Sisterhood is in Islam.

By He who controls my life, the glasses or viewing screen is not in the forefront of things that I need to reach Iman. I need shoes because of the holes, the heat, the slippery and thorny nature of the road. I cannot afford to be naked in the journey. I will need food(s) and drink(s). I will need shelter for rest. And if I am able to take any type of the transport facilities, I will either need to pay, to be a passenger or be skilled to run the facility – drive, ride or fly etc.

My dear sister, the shoes is what Muhammad (SAW) called *Jihad Nafs* or the greater Jihad. It consists of avoiding and trampling on all the things that are prohibited, discouraged etc. My dear sister, the clothing is the garment of righteousness, the pillars of Islam. These make up the don'ts and dos. The food is patience and the drink is constancy. It is thus not enough to remember Allah much, it is more important to be contented with His Will for you and on a regular basis too – after avoiding non-remembrance.

O my sister, I am ready to follow as a passenger, because I am afraid of leading, as a driver or pilot. The modes of transport are familiar. Going by rail is indulging in influence, power or position in society. Going by road is indulging in the search for

wealth as a means to Allah. The blessing and comfort or trial of large following in children is going by sea. And knowledge represents going by air.

Autan Alkalai, do you want to know, the pit holes, the thorns, the broken bottles, the beasts, the chippings, the difficulties? Those things to avoid or to do? These constitute everything in our daily lives that we can employ our power, wealth, knowledge or family to make good out of it or evil out of it. It is in this way that Allah permits the production of evil out of good and good out of evil. If you take power, a daughter can be compelled to marry a good man, which the daughter will later grow to appreciate. And a corrupt parent can 'sell' his daughter for material benefits/exchange, if you take wealth. This can be employed for *sadaqat* to the less privileged just as it can be expanded with usury terms. As you must already know, knowledge (despite its superiority) is not a guarantee for goodness. It can be used to guide a community or used to mislead a followership. And a family can be a goodly example, just as it can be a disgrace.

Malama Asma'u, the submissions above are part of the viewing screen. I have attempted to give you an impression. Don't you see? Can't you imagine it?

My dear sister, the shoes, the dressing, the feeding and the drinking, you will have to learn them. They need to be habits. And these can be taught. And each is in grades. For instance, some people have stopped drinking alcohol while some have never tasted it. Some people are regular in obligatory prayers some top it with voluntary ones. Some people warn offenders, some forgive them. The meeting point is constancy. They all use their power, wealth, knowledge or family.

My dear sister, don't you see that if it is Allah's wish WE MAY JOURNEY TOGETHER? YOU MAY LEAD WHILE I FOLLOW? YOU MAY FOLLOW WHILE I LEAD? WE MAY JOURNEY SEPARATELY? LETS TRUSTINGLY JOURNEY TO MEET OUR FATE.

THE SELF-BROKEN NECKLCE

You just didn't know how it happened. But it happened. It was most annoying. You were angry with yourself and with everybody you can throughout the day for most part of the day very deeply. *Ki yi hakuri don Allah da Ma'aiki.*

Do you remember Muhammad (SAW)? He was with some leaders of Mecca, unbelievers, when a blind man called upon him. He didn't like the interruption from the lovely man. Logically, if leaders are captured, their followership would be a boost to Islam, to the community of believers. Asma'u Hajiya. But Allah who is all-knowing and for whom the affairs belong cautioned: Do not be angry. Do you see the relationship?

My dear sister, in Islam. Allah is not in need of our service. It is we who are in need of Allah. It is not we or what is ours that is most important. It is what is Allah's that is most important. Importance is not in any way related to our wishes. *Malama Kyauta.* Prophet Nuhu preached for hundreds of years and only a handful of men submitted. And the trial of a community commences with its leaders and those of them who are given of the good things of this life. Have you forgotten that the majority are in the wrong and will go to Hell fire? The fire will continue to ask for more until Allah steps on it – for contentment. Belief and submission is therefore not related to status. Status is accidental. No one came with it.

Please try to be patient, and forgive my interference.

Malama, gold is dug from the ground. It is fired to give it the shape and value that it seems to have. Why do you have to bother about a piece of stone? Why angry? Did you not know that it can break? That it can get lost? That it can be forcefully taken away? That it can be taken without your consent? That it can get burnt? But thanks be to Allah that you have now realised this, through one incidence. So, my dear sister, what value should you now give to it? Does it deserve interrupting with your peace? Certainly this is not difficult.

It is out of Allah's mercy to believers that He has not provided unbelievers with houses, staircases and couches of gold and diamond. This would have been a hard test for believers, to restrain from. This is because, the necklace is a veil. This is because of the holiness of Allah. He cannot be reached directly. Remember Prophet Musa? He fell unconscious out of interaction with a reflection of His light. Allah is Great. Glory be to Him. But, it should not be allowed to blind you. Just like similitude, you should gain guidance by it. Only unbelievers will get lost by it.

Malama Kyauta, what makes it precious is hard work in an organised form with specific objectives and the firing of the stone. Wouldn't it be better if you are the precious one? *Haba Asma'u*, strive for greater things – *kada ki karaya* so early. You are the best of creation. Do not go low. If you 'fire' yourself or allow yourself to be washed and 'fired', your value will be far better than that of a stone. You cannot be broken like the stone. And you cannot be stolen. And while, like gold necklace everybody will like and struggle to have you, more than gold, whoever has you will make you a queen. Like gold, you will rule the person. Your servant will be happy. But a worshiper of gold will be an insane. Can you see how and why, your anger with yourself was not worth it? So, why don't you strive to be the gold? The queen? The water you need is cleanliness or avoiding all prohibitions. And the 'firing' is to strive as in a race in all virtues.

Gimbiya, don't you notice that the piece of gold is an asset? Don't you notice that it is an investment? Don't you notice that it costs a lot of money? Don't you consider when and how and the duration and circumstances that led to your having it? Your good and loving parents struggled, were able to get its value and have allowed you to have it freely. But, here you are, not a contributor, just a beneficiary, getting annoyed for what is not wilfully damaged, but an accident.

Asma'u, I invite you to reflect on the truth of the piece of stone, to praise Allah. Do not be like the necklace please. Don't get broken. But be like gold. Strive as in investment. In the case of gold, it is stone dug out, washed and billowed and given shape. The meeting point between you and the production of this necklace is TIME. It is time that is invested as a means through which investments are employed in producing that form of value. The value that can be taken away or even give way itself.

Your performance of ablution and prayer in the form of Zikr or salat and the committing of the reward in favour of those who enabled you get that piece of stone is one form of investment that is always possible. Remember the prayers for the dead and the living? If you do it voluntarily for Allah's sake, it is a loan that Allah promises to refund in multiple(s). Is this not better? If it is in advance for keep, to be delivered to your living relation when he or she dies, how wise? Is not this superior a value? If you do it for keep in favour of yourself, is that not a bigger investment? *Ya Asma'u* which is greater and better? Is an investment that leads to what can break or be taken away as good as one that will be a resource, an allowance or even a capital in

the grave? On the last day? O Asma'u is today, now, the present, temporary, comparable with FOREVER? Did you not hear Muhammad (SAW)'s report that death will eventually be killed? Then there will be no death.

Thus, if the result of a piece of gold from some investment(s) can please you, make you happy, make you angry, strive and acculturate the same states, when you worship. Remember Umar bn Khattab. He lost a Friday prayer and busted into tears because TIME had passed. He cannot benefit from the Friday prayer that has past. Remember a companion of Muhammad (SAW) who fell into the hands of unbelievers? He asked to be allowed to perform two raka'ats after *wudu*. And after, he was executed. *Hajiya* Asma'u BE THE GOLD. Not the stone. And invest a lot or a little but REGULARLY, for the sake of Allah. And you can invest in capital or fundamental form. This is by strictly, devotedly and lovingly keeping the things that are obligatory. And the five daily prayers immediately come to mind. The cash investment is in the form of the Sunnah. Keeping them is rewarding. Others are those investments that are toppings or take their value as beauties of the fundamental and the traditions. Thus, you can make a distinction between *Zakat*, *Zakatu-fitr* and *Sadaqat*.

O Asma'u, in order to defeat the combined army of mislead composed of material goods and ordinary human temptation, enslave the material good. The accomplice will give up for arrest. Try this, my dear sister, once in a week, preferably Friday. Take your bath as usual, as if you will be going for a function. Dress up gorgeously. Perform ablution and go quickly to perform a few voluntary raka'ats. You could do this at the dawn of Friday or in the third part of the night. You may also just do it before going to bed. And you take a festival sleep. That will be queenly. And be happy with Allah and yourself and the good things of life that you have put on. In this way, young you, decent you, clean you, happy you, queenly you, will tear the veil of barrier. Allah will meet you, because He is appreciative of service. When you start, those who do not understand will wonder at you. But, if you keep firmly to Allah, they will submit to you. And change the clothes as you will want to change for ceremonies. If there is anything that you can't use or do in it, then discard it. It must be a property of Satan. Asma'u you don't need to pray with your shoes on. This is for your convenience – provided it is not made of an unclean thing like the sandals of Musa (AS). But it is not because it is prohibited.

Then, when you begin to get eager to get to a Friday, in order to meet Allah in this beautiful form and state and for the purpose of investments, you have begun to enjoy

your company with Allah. And Allah has already undertaken to meet those who crawl, walk or run towards Him willingly. Remember the hadith I asked you to check from the extractions from An-Nawawi? The 42 hadith by Bashir Sambo and Muhammad Higab? It says, after the meeting with Allah; your seeing, your hearing, your grasp etc. will be those of Allah.

This golden superiority can be deduced from the Prophet's explanation of the old and white bones of a camel on a refuse site to his companions. He said, that is the world. The camel was a desire for a LONG TIME of the one-time owner. When he got it, it pleased his heart for a LONG TIME. For a LONG TIME it was a burden, when it got old. And now, if you are to give it to the owner, he will not only refuse to accept it, he will take offence. The same with a car today and all material things. They end in the refuse. And if they don't end in your experience, consider a dead man. His relations accompany him to the grave. His property don't even do this. They remain behind to be inherited by those that Allah wills. He is left with only his deeds.

O my dear sister, TIME is a free capital gift of Allah. We can use it to our maximum benefit, to invest either for eternal and everlasting things or for temporary and useless things that we can even lose here. Can you then see and understand the risk and futility of spending most of one's time, not in the worship of Allah? *Malama* Asma'u, be patient. Don't be angry.

But I am not suggesting that, you should abandon the world. If you can, it is not unislamic, but it is not the rule. What I want to suggest is that in the process of acquiring a worldly thing(s), let it be in the name of Allah. Then it will be part of worship. So, when your relation invites you to do some cleaning for her, do the cleaning in a state of *Zikr* and not small talks. When there is a subject to discuss, let it be in Islamic perspective. When you watch a film, let it be in the perspective of Islam. Do you not know that if you open your eating with the name of Allah, you will be rewarded?

Malama Kyauta, like with necklaces or rings or bangles, some are of gold, some of diamond, some of silver, some are of bronze, of lead or just coated. In the same manner, my dear sister, those material things that we acquire in the name of Allah, when they are legal and proper, they are COATED. And the variation between gold and lead is the grade between those things for Allah, His Apostle, your parents, yourself, fellow neighbours, fellow believers, humanity and creations. So when you want to invest, invest for the highest one. O Asma'u, did you not remember the

Prophet bidding us to ask Allah for *Jannatul-firdausi*? O Asma'u, the means of reaching this is through the expenditure of TIME. Thus, Allah cautions us that we are created only to serve Him.

Autan Alkalai, our creator tells us that we are created with only one heart in our chest. We can only worship Allah. If we believe, it will be voluntarily, because there is no compulsion. If we disbelieve, we will be finally returned to Him for Judgement.

You told me, your teacher has taught you the 99 attributes of Allah. I will give you an arrangement, through which all our needs, wants and fancies are catered for, like in the BRUSH for a believer's heart that I gave you. This is because Allah makes the living out of the dead.

WHAT IS THIS COLD?

All praise be to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, the most beneficent, the most merciful and master of all times, especially on the day of necessary return. May you recover early. But what is this cold?

Don't be discouraged. Don't be disappointed. Don't give up. Don't get annoyed. That you are already a believer, a Muslim, it is a credit. Remember the Qur'an? Do you think you will enter paradise without being tried? And Muhammad (SAW) explained to us. Allah benefits a believer with forgiveness, effacing sins or reward by every form of uninvited difficulty. He specifically gave the example of the prick of thorn. So when we fall sick, we should thank Allah for putting us through the state of cleansing. Are you surprised? Did you not read already that a believer who loses two or more children before they reach the age of maturity, Allah promises him/her paradise? And what about extreme sacrifice? The person who dies in a war in the cause of Allah, dies a martyr. The same with the one who gets caught up in an epidemic. The same for a woman who loses her life in the process of child birth. My dear sister, with Allah, when to Allah, for Allah, one can never be the loser. These are with the body. But the same with what one owns. Thus, difficulty and good deeds are both openings to the compassion and mercy of Allah, for those who believe. May Allah make your cold, an Expiation – *Ameen*. If we don't fall sick, if we don't face difficulty, shall we be able to constantly remember Allah? And if we don't get relief, shall we appreciate Allah's compassion?

Malama Mai Zinari, health and ill health are means by which a believer holds tight to the rope of Allah. But the unbeliever gets arrogant in health and gives up in despair when in ill health.

But, I must caution that such difficulty or ailment does not extend to any that is gotten, not innocently. Thus, a prostitute who gets caught up with venereal disease or a thief who gets shot is not directly inclusive. That is a zone of Allah's pleasure. If He wishes and pleases He may forgive or punish.

Allah ya koro sauki, ya maida maki shi kaffara-amin! Malama Asma'u, your ailment is only one phase of the palaver of the body. This is only the uncomfortable part. The exact opposite is the beautification of the body. The comfort, the joy and sweetness that one may get from this – in health. The head can have weaved hair and a tie. The neck can have necklace, like the broken one, now repaired. The nose, the ears can have rings. The eyes can be painted. The face can be dusted. The hands can have

bangles, the wrist, a watch and the fingers, rings. The waist can have beads. The toes can have rings, like the ankle(s) can have bangles. The whole body can be wrapped between one and three levels. The hands and the feet can be generally dyed with henna. O Asma'u, through the mouth, foods and drinks are given some taste of sweet, nice, sour or bitter nature. The nose smells this. The ear listens to good or bad sounds. And these are put together on a single body that is transported from one place to another and for security in a room or house or palace. My dear sister in Islam, all of these are normally pursued for comfort and convenience.

But, we must not forget that, there is also the soul, the *ruh*, the spiritual self. And the goal of nursing this self is for Allah's forgiveness, reward and mercy. And like the body, the physical, its senses can be sharpened or get weakened. Thus, the Qur'an talks of those who have physical eyes but do not see. In the same context, there are those who are living physically but can be spiritually dead. *Autan alkalai*, and the physical can influence on the spiritual, just as the spiritual can influence the physical. We therefore need not to abandon the physical or material. It will be worst to abandon the spiritual – that is for unbelievers or apostates. May Allah protect our faith and continue to guide us to the right path.

Malama Kyauta, may our problems never get into the spiritual realm. May we never get blind or deaf or crippled or lame; lose the smell or taste or understanding of the higher things. Allah is holy and for the body, may we always endeavour to strive with patience and perseverance. Already, He has promised that He will not burden us with more than we can bear. Allah is great.

And even, with the body, ailment is easier to deal with. You know why and how? With the cold, you may take paracetamol/calpol and Actifed tablets along with Vitamin C. You may just take some rest or induce it. O my sister, whatever you take, the end is the goal. The moment you achieve it, you drop all drugs. The next thing is to bounce back to health. Moreover, you will only take those drugs that are prescribed by a physician, the quantities and times and duration respected. Is ill-health not good, a check, a blessing? Is it not the means of experiencing modesty?

My dear sister, under health, the temptations are inexhaustible. Have you ever considered it? The risks are more, the dangers are higher. Do you not note that under health, there are the levels of needs, wants and fancies? For the body, if you necessarily require clothes, is jewellery not a fancy? Is it not higher, far higher than the application of henna on your hands and feet? Asma'u, do you not note that while

an infant needs milk for growing, it is not as applicable to the aged? But to worsen the situation, facilities that are available for the body, like the spiritual self can be legal and illegal.

Thus, after establishing the legality, if one is patient enough, the next trapping for escaping is the choice of quality. For any single thing, you take – head tie, necklace, shoes, rings, bangles, beads, pomade, powder, perfume you can conveniently have it graded as good, very good or excellent. Among similar types, you can have good, better and best. You can have clothes, shoes, etc all in these grades. And most unfortunately, you will note that these grades can switch positions, with the best becoming just good. What make this possible is the passage of time and the production of a new one. This is the root of fashion, what is current or in vogue. Thus, you are very familiar with different styles and different grades of a particular clothe. In the world of fashion, you can therefore distinguish between the things of the past, now and future. My dear sister, do you not see different makes, models of car? The types and varieties are like races and languages. *Malama* Asma'u, but this is not the end of the depth of bodily temptations. The real trap is sufficiency. In other words, after choosing or not choosing the quality level and the time for it, you are faced with the number to possess. Will one or two or three or four or five or six or seven do? Don't you see that the collection of vehicles other than a merchant is a form of imbalance? Do you remember Mrs. Aquino? She had over one thousand pairs of shoes. For over a year, she never wore a dress for more than eight hours. Her collection of *Zinari* was computed in millions of Carats. O Asma'u, it is better to be modest, contented. Don't get angry over *Zinari* again. And don't fall into despair in ill-health. And don't encourage others to be. Please, please we cannot therefore count the favours of Allah upon us. And for believers, whether in ill-health or in health, the victory is for us.

O Asma'u, the means and conditions for these forms and levels of trials, troubles include the investment of MONEY, TIME, KNOWLEDGE, BODILY STRENGTH and the BELONGINGNESS or SECURITY that gives us identity. And if we must one day die without notice, let us not waste our resources for non-lasting things.

IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO BE GOOD

Try to build the house. Don't lay a block and stop there. Asma'u, do you not note that when you decide to acquire a jewel, a necklace that costs one thousand naira, one naira less will not get you the piece of stone? Is it not true that investing or saving just ten naira will be far from the goal? My dear sister, do you not note that, you never get to your work place at the door step of the office block? Is it not true that, until a photograph is printed, it is not one? You already know all of these.

You are right. What I want to draw your attention to is that all of the examples I have given you, have their ends within reach. If you take building a house, if you like you can have the bill of quantities that will make up the house. The measure of money can be concluded. *Mai Zinari*, your necklace has a determinable value. The distance and exact location of your workplace is measureable. And the time, materials and processes involved in snapping, developing a negative and printing or the total cost can all be finally established. But, Asma'u, the same principle does not apply to Allah or to fellow human beings.

As Muslims, Allah is our goal. We love Him. We fear Him. The goal will be to see Him. Is that not, my sister? And have we not got the Qur'an and the example of Muhammad (SAW) as the way to Him? Do we not have faith already? Do we not pray, fast, give charity for journeying? Have you not been to His house for the same cause? Asma'u, on our way must we not cross the points of lies, murder, *Zina*, *riba*, games of chance, intoxication, backbiting, slandering etc?

My dear sister, are we not sure of the road? Is that not the only justification for continuing till our appointed time? Until death comes? If we stop just before death and leave the path, shall we get to the goal? *Haba* Asma'u.

Remember the Qur'an? Allah says, it is He who comes between man and his heart. You know what it means? Allah is the only justification for the discipline of man, if we care about returning to Him. Thus, those who have faith are those who strive in a race of virtuous doing. They continue in patience and perseverance. They are contented with whatever Allah wills for them. In blessing, they thank Allah, and when discomfort befalls them, they do not abandon Allah. They submit that, from Allah are they and unto Him shall be their return. *Hajiya Kyauta*, they are consistent. They do not jump into despair every now and then.

My dear sister, between you and Allah, the only guide is that you need to be regular. Thus, it is not the amount of charity that you give or voluntary prayer or fast that you

do. It is the regularity, the continuity that matters. But, this is for a Muslim who has already declared his submission. And you remember Muhammad (SAW) saying that Allah is most pleased with the young person who has the strength and opportunity to disobey Allah but decides to obey Him? This is because, in old age, even if he decides to, the strength and opportunities are limited.

Malama Asma'u, the same principles apply to human relations. Once you decide to belong to the community of believers, you are to continue to contribute to building it. You are to avoid the shortcomings by changing them by force, by word of advice or by disassociating yourself. This is the weakest form of faith. And on top of these methods is fighting any anger or jealousy that will not please Allah. Do you not note that anger is for the strong and leader in order to put the weak and follower aright? But for this use, it is harmful, it can be destructive. Never allow yourself to become a child or slave of anger or jealousy that is not in the name of Allah. To be sure, before Allah there is nothing like *HALIN MATA*. It is fear of Allah that matters for all.

My dear sister, never allow your anger and jealousy to waste your precious and limited time that should be wholly devoted to the service of Allah. It can destroy even useless things like the pursuit of worldly things, not to talk of pure things like spiritual activities. To be sure, the worst that can happen is to allow anger or jealousy to separate you from Allah by re-ordering His priority of the things to do. You know how? If someone offends you, as a Muslim, you have no right to keep malice. Allah gives you a rope not exceeding three days. Will you like to exhaust the rope? *Haba Asma'u* don't try even for once. Stick to the road, to the goal. If you believe in Allah and His Messengers and His Books, you will not believe in some and not in others. All will be for you. You will always only necessarily allow anger and jealousy for correcting a wrong, in the way of Allah. If you do otherwise, that is your desire that is not Allah's way.

Malama Asma'u, there was a friend of Allah, who will give his offender forty excuses for forty offences. And at the instance of the forty-first, he will plead to Allah to forgive and not to punish him by using a fellow human being to annoy Him. For him, the man is innocent. Can you do that? Will you like that to be done to you? The only thing that can make it possible is consistency. Whenever, you choose or decide on a thing, you must not allow side "attractions" to dissuade you. If you throw away your bag because of a scratch, you know what it means. It is either madness or arrogance. And Islam has no place for either. You must be modest.

Do you not see the attributes of Allah? He is the Forgiver. When you wrong Him, He forgives you. He is all-Forgiving. Thus, He forgives again and again. Or don't you offend Him? He accepts repentance. So, when you plead with Him sincerely, and don't return to it, He accepts. Is that not a bonus? Asma'u, Allah is the pardoner, effacer of sins. Thus, the sins are completely cleaned. And we enjoy these through daily prayers, the Ramadan fasts and Hajj etc. He is therefore always renewing us. You see how good Allah is to us. And have you already forgotten that the community of believers is like a single body. Whatever affects a part of it is of relevance to the whole?

Mai Zinari, in the body, is the heart not the most important? If and when it is good is the whole body not manageable? If it is sick, is the whole body not sick? My dear sister, in the same manner, Allah forgives all sins except associating of partners to Him. He does this only if you sincerely repent and never go back to it. And even this is His preserve. If He like He forgives, if not He will not. *Hajiya Kyauta*, do you not note that, in the same manner, Shari'ah provides execution for an apostate?

Autan Alkalai, tame your anger and jealousy in the same manner. You must use it only to correct. You must only use it in modest terms. You must only use it to continue in the course of your decided goal. Never allow it to detract you, to distance you. Have you seen someone who finishes block work in building a house and then abandons it for a fresh start. The person will not have a house, no matter how many are littered. The person who perseveres to complete a thatched roof over a mud house is better. Even Europeans whose culture is not Islam say that, those who live in glass houses do not throw stones, as a rule. Allah invites us through His attributes, to FORBEAR, be PATIENT and FIRM. Do not be hasty. Have you forgotten Allah's decision that His judgment may come now or in future? Muhammad's (SAW) role is only to convey the message? Allah will wait for unbelievers to meet Him. Is He not the Patient? For us, why can't we suppress our anger and jealousy in order to achieve the highest possible things? Remember my GAMJI talk? Allah willing I will remind you, if you promise not to shoot me with any.

WILL YOU KINDLY OBLIGE

Beloved daughter of late Justice Sani

Beloved daughter of Fatimatu

Beloved sister of Justice Ibrahim

Beloved sister of Justice Bashir

I have told you the only things that I was told and learnt. That Allah is one. That all things arise from Him. That all things relate to Him. That nothing can avoid Him. That all things will return to Him. I have tried to show this in different ways and forms and times. If all that I have told you do not and have not essentially led to this, my dear sister, please destroy all the correspondence. If they do, do not hesitate to share it with some other person.

But, you see the *Shahada* is only one of the five pillars. To believe, to know and understand that Allah is one who deserves worship and that Muhammad (SAW) is His Messenger is not enough.

My dear sister, it is now my turn to ask. Will you oblige? I am not going to ask for one. To be sure, I have seen at least twenty one. I will ask you of only five. And in this note, I will be modest enough to ask of only one. Will you oblige?

Asma'u, I am not going to ask for what you don't have. If you do not personally possess it now, you can easily and freely get it from your house for me. And it will only cost you sharing. By giving me, it will not reduce what you have. Indeed, because it is abundantly yours, in your family, you may not even take cognizance of its value, its need. Please give it to me.

Autan Alkalai, from the ninety-nine attributes of Allah, judgment, to judge or justice is one. Muhammad (SAW) said the prospect of entering paradise by a judge is likeable to slaughtering one camel with a rope. In another report, he said with a stone. Asma'u, you remember the translation of the work of Imam Razi on the beautiful names of Allah? When you call on Allah by any of His attributes, He responds by benefiting you with that attribute, as a means, a method, a form. Thus, when I feel unsafe with my fellow human beings, I call and bring Him as the Constrictor, Humiliator, Dishonourer, Avenger, Distresser, Subduer and Preventer. You have personally severally heard me sing this. And, when I closed by pleading to Allah to intervene in my protection against my enemies, mischief makers, slanderers, hypocrites, you specifically added, so be it, for us and not me alone. O Asma'u, do

you not appreciate that it is submission for justice? Do you not notice that it amounts to inviting an impartial arbiter?

Malama Kyauta, the above seven attributes, by which I constantly seek and plead to be shielded are informed or built on fourteen other directly related attributes. Is Allah not *HASIB* and *MUHSI*? He is Equitable, Just, Judge, Watchful, Witness, Hearer, Seer, Knower, Aware, Wise, Appreciative and Finder. My dear sister, in every case of arbitration, these attributive characteristics cannot be absent. Thus, a judge from among us is crowned and in the trial of representing and benefiting the Muslim community with twenty-one attributes of Allah. Don't you see that fools don't become judges?

Now, what I want you to give me is to teach me modesty, restraint and non-extremism in living in this material world. In this way, I will be a better Muslim. If you oblige me, then I will understand the RIGHT MEASURE of things. If you will be kind to let me in to prominent cases that will or did reveal evidently, these twenty-one attributes, I will ever be appreciative and I am sure that Allah will reward you and your family in as many multiple folds as He pleases. Justice is settlement of disagreement, giving each party its right due. Is that not essentially what worship is?

And Asma'u, should I not eagerly proceed to want to worship after declaring that none deserves to be worshipped, that there is no deity, except Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger? And if I find you and you are accessible, should I not plead with you to teach me? Or, will you not oblige? Will you hoard what by Allah's pleasure He has entrusted your family with? Didn't it ever occur to you that the central role of judgment in the Muslim community is informed by the simple and complex fact or nature of the inordinate love of wealth by men? Do we not love men, women, wealth, power, assets, of one another? Are we not always competing? Shouldn't we be cleansed of dirt and cheat, through reminder and the law? Or, my dear sister, do you think Justices only pass judgments? They are first and foremost scholars, the torch bearers of Allah's light, and the heirs of the Prophet. They arbitrate only by what Allah commands or His Messenger or their consensus or their considered resolution that is consistent with Allah and harmless to the community.

Autan Alkalai, if you have never bothered, please do so now. And because I am not a propertied person, I will most appreciate if you teach me by cases of social or family relations. This is a realm that is inevitable for my involvement. I will specifically want

you to save me from any case of inheritance. I am most eager to learn from you, what Allah has allowed for our guidance.

To be sure, I am not asking to be trained as a judge. I am not fit. And it will be unfair to ask you to train me, when I am this raw. Without pre-empting what you may teach me, I wouldn't mind even if I can learn of a case each, when one attribute (at a time) is pronouncedly revealed. In fact, for a simple mind like mine, this will be easier to learn and understand.

O Asma'u, I am sincerely and seriously asking for this, because it will sharpen my faith. You will appreciate that cases are embedded in time and among circumstances. And because these constantly change, an education through them will definitely enlighten me, beyond the pure attributive concepts through which Allah can be known.

And after I have learnt this from you, my goal is to use the principles and examples of the measures to live with. If I want to trade or make a claim on my relation or friend or enemy, a Muslim or a non-Muslim should I not know the measure? Are the judges among us not the guides?

My dear sister, will you oblige?

Hajiya Asma'u will you patiently preserve to give me?

Malama Kyauta, will you invest your time to serve Allah?

I am needy

You can get it

And I have asked

Will you oblige?

I will not mind your writing them for me.

I will not mind your recording them for me

I have good eyes and ears to receive them

I will like to ask questions on anything I do not understand

Will you oblige?

THE EXPLANATION FOR CHANGING FROM ONE DECISION TO ANOTHER SUDDENLY

Quite sincerely, I wouldn't know. It baffles you too. You cannot explain it. And he was not able to explain it to you. Then why me? Man is often in a haste. But a Muslim shouldn't fall into such error. A Muslim needs to be most considerate, in the measurement of things before taking a decision. The mind of a believer is not a hopping one. This is why there is no compulsion in religion. And we are invited to consider everything before submitting.

Before you consider and review all or any of the changes, I invite you to consider a few things. There are those matters over which a decision and change in them are completely out of question. These include all of those things that are within the prohibited degree. No Muslim gives thought to whether it is really true or not that Allah is one. This is because it is most fundamental. Thus, no matter how flippant a mind one has, this is not an area of jokes. It is the basis of faith, the licence for meeting Allah. The rough or smooth drive to the destination comes after the driving permit.

My dear one, when Ibrahim asked Allah to give life to his witness, he was not in a state of denial. When Musa requested to see Allah, he was not like the unbelievers who were in the state of denial.

Thus, because of the fundamental nature of this, the punishment is execution. The entrance is not compulsory. And everything can be tolerated except affecting the unity of Allah. *Malama Asma'u*, in the order of priorities, Allah comes first. No believer must do otherwise. The mind and body of a believer, must therefore orient itself to accept and be contented with whatever Allah and His Messengers give to the believers and disallow themselves whatever they are disallowed. And everything must finally rest with Allah.

The importance of the unity of Allah is what explains that whatever He enjoins or commands attracts reward and the failure or refusal to comply attracts sanction. As a believer, it is not enough that believing is for your benefit. More importantly, it is a duty to comply. This is where the RESERVE of Allah comes in. And you have heard or even studied what are known as MAJOR SINS. This is a dynamite field. Any foolish entrance exposes one to explosion and extinction. Neither its side nor the centre of the field is safe. Thus, my dear sister, any decision that amounts to playing

with this realm or zone of commands is simply regretful foolishness. NEVER COME NEAR HERE.

Then, that which is not explicitly instructed on by the Qur'an but is the practice or acceptance of His Messenger is next in the order of a Muslim. This zone attracts reward for commission. But its ignore does not attract punishment. If any, it is a matter of loss, an opportunity cost. But here again, this field of practice is linked to that of Allah. All activities here must therefore not abuse the fundamental. Muhammad (SAW) cannot contradict Allah. My sister, if we must thank Allah for creating us and all other things, we must be ungrateful if we don't send blessings to Muhammad (SAW) for revealing the truth to us. You will remember that as a conveyor, we are reminded by the Qur'an that he is not the father of any of us but the Messenger of Allah. And after the delivery, did he not leave for us the Qur'an and his example as the guide? Is this not the basis for disobeying our loving parents, if they invite us against Allah and His Apostle? *Hajiya Asma'u* is this not the only basis which entitles our leader to our obedience? Is this not the stand of Islam? Remember that, Islam is an advice of Allah, His Messenger, the scholars/learned and fellow brothers in Islam.

The Qur'an reminds us that, we cannot be believers until we totally submit to the decisions of Allah and His Messengers. We are not the ones to separate between them. Thus, all others are only explanatory or interpretive. No scholar or brother is to introduce a contradictory thing. *Mai Zinari*, how many Salam do you send to Muhammad (SAW), when you pray? Cultivate this love and deeply. We are not true until we love him more than ourselves and our parents. May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

Now, the area of the problem is the insatiable scope of attractions to a man's mind. Man is never tired of asking. He always wants this or that. Everything, including those things that are harmful to him, but Allah invites to life. Thus in the scope, my dear sister, you can change your decision every second on a matter that does not contradict the things that Allah and His Apostle give us. Don't you see that, the different shapes of your necklace are permissible? Your dresses are in different styles, according to fashion. You can also change your hair do. The same with your foot wear. Even your uniforms are of different style. And you top with a *hijab* of your choice in colour and make. It is also permissible that you use silk. But a close watch will reveal that even here, you cannot afford not to cover yourself completely or not in

unrevealing style. If you do these, you are approaching what is not permissible. The make or material is also important. Thus, you cannot put on a dress with the name of Allah on it. The same with everything in life. You can choose your friend(s). But you cannot make an unbeliever your trustee and you cannot make a Muslim an enemy.

Hajiya Asma'u, my understanding is that, problem can arise because of two reasons. The first is that, the order or level of importance may be unknown or not understood. Indeed even the project or subject may not be understood. And secondly, after this has been understood, one's mind needs to be cultured as such.

And these constitute the crux of the matter. And this is very disturbing and a thing of concern, because our minds are always wandering – seeking for better and higher things. Unfortunately, we do not have all the time to ourselves. In addition, if we don't decide, we will be the losers. Thus, at certain times and circumstances, we must take certain decisions.

Hajiya Kyauta, the initial answer lies with knowledge. You must therefore seek to know, what is right, when and the importance. But you cannot know all. And this is why people, including you may change in haste and even regret later. But Islam answers the problem.

Autan Alkalai, if you know the problem is solved. But if you are in doubt, you can consult Allah (S.W.T) Himself. He will answer you. And Muhammad (SAW) showed us the way of *ISTIKHARA*. This is contained in your *Sahih Bukhari* collection. But after this, you need to stick to it. All major matters can be understood and resolved in this way. Allah will surely guide a sincere believer.

To support this, in addition to the knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah, is your older relations. You are lucky to be in the family of the learned. And with the school of Imam Malik that we live with, a young and innocent person like you needs to submit respectfully to their guide. Indeed, it will be their duty to compel you to choose and make the correct decision on fundamental matters. The roles of your teacher, leader or friend will be informed by knowledge otherwise, it is irrelevant. My dear sister, the earlier you know and accept that the road is rough, the better. Peace is not for this life. Don't be deceived. Therefore strive to know and patiently persevere in following the guidance. Not self pleasures.

ALLAH IS GREAT

He is the Creator. He is the one who brings forth something from nothing. He intends and it happens. He desires and it is accomplished. He wishes and there it is. No, it is faster than this. But by His mercy, to make us understand, He says: when He intends He simply commands 'Be' and it is. All praise to Allah.

He created Adamu (AS) from sounding clay. He is without mother or father. He then makes the majority of us, his descendants, his opposite. So, me and you have a father and mother each. And those who midwife constantly share in this results. And this does not guarantee that all men and women cohabiting will produce a fellow human being. Then Allah created Hauwa'u from Adamu (AS). Thus, a woman from a man. And brought forth Maryam in chastity, to bring forth Isa (AS) without a man.

And He is living. Thus, He gives life to whatever or whoever He desires. Like a mirror, the living reflects His living attribute. Have you read the Hadith that Allah was hidden, and when He desired to be known He created creations? What it means is that with Allah, nothing can afford to be dead or not respond to Him. Literarily, nothing, everything and all things respond to His call. Remember the fire of Ibrahim (AS)? Remember the pieces of birds that joined together on being called in the name of Allah? Remember the miracles of Isa (AS)? Did not the Qur'an say that it is not fitting that Allah speaks to anybody except from behind a veil? Will death not be killed in the end? Is it not now living? No wonder, our limbs will bear witness for or against us, on the day of necessary return. Are you surprised? What about the witness of Yusuf (AS)? What about Isa (AS), when he was pointed at by Maryam?

He is always original, new, fresh. Have you heard or met anybody who has returned? Have you heard or met your second? Are identical twins second of one another? Praise be to Allah. He has made similarities, yet, He does not duplicate. He repeats, yet different. And He is not comparable in this. In its modesty, smallness or bigness. Do you see not a mosquito compared to an elephant as against a goat? See man, an ant, the entire earth compared to the moon, the sun, stars etc?

And he evolves, responsible for growth. We move and transform from spermatozoa to a clot of blood to a flesh. We are then given a form, we become an infant, then a child, an adolescent and youth, an adult, aged and we return to the weak child's stage. Then some of us are dark, some light, some red, some chocolate, while some are tall, some are short, some fat, some slim, some with bow legs some with 'k' legs etc. Is he

not the best to fashion? Have you noticed the growth of maize, guinea corn, millet and rice? What of the manner in which each is finally fashioned?

Asma'u, do we and even you not always forget these or at best presume them? Even you who is committed to life and health? Not just me, who is ignorant or innocent or not opportune to constantly see or fails to observe even when it happens.

You remind me of all of these, when I see you in sparkling white. Is white not a symbol of clean and pure? Is it not the favourite of Muhammad (SAW)? Is it not why humanity leans and is rest assured with you? Is this not why even in war situation, you are not painted as part of the enemy? Are you not a sign of hope? Does not life come first and any or every other thing then second? Is it not total? Is its material comprehensiveness not what is constantly metaphorically understood? This is life.

Truly Allah is strong and positively too. This is most gratifying and pleasant. This is what we want. This is the simplest manner of understanding Allah. These attributes are necessarily praise worthy.

By the same Allah, Asma'u, you know better than me that the all-compassing, all surrounding power of Allah makes it go beyond this pleasant phase. Is Allah not the creator of death? From nothing to our state, we define as creation. Why do we restrain from recognizing the change of our state as another form or level of creation? But is it not? Is death loss? Is it loss of ourself? Have you ever experienced death? Why do we not appreciate life as a simple equal opposite of death? Is water not opposed by wind? Is fire not opposed by water? Is rock not opposed by iron and iron by fire? Is not a believer's selfless and secret charity stronger than all of these? Then, my dear sister, which one is not a creation?

And wherever, there is a hospital or a pharmacy, do people fail to assemble? When there is a political rally don't people assemble? Do not school children and striking workers do it? Does not Allah hold the power for all of these happenings? Do you remember the sight of the sea of human beings during hajj? So, will He not as promised, gather us together on the day of necessary return? Is this not a fearful thing? Are we not afraid of what we are now sowing? But can we do anything about this? What crosses your mind when more human beings turn sick, then dead and corpses are gathered in the mortuary? We gather wealth, we gather dirt, we gather ourselves. And Allah is the greatest gatherer.

Before your very eyes, some sick people come to the hospital, in little or no time, they get relief from their ailment or complaint on receiving treatment. Some take less than

the prescribed dose and come back to their normal state. Some just complete the dose. But the fastest is reaching Allah, who is everywhere through the grave by death. But some will spend days, weeks and even years before giving up life. Their struggle with the ailment would have come to an end. They are finally cut down. And do we not have the insurance to do whatever we like in this life? And does not Allah, grant us a respite, until we return to Him? And have men not been dying for thousands of years, just as men have been born? It is Allah who expedites and delays as He pleases.

O Asma'u, does not Allah deserve to be feared? He creates. He gives life. He created death. He expedites and delays, allows gathering and will gather. And He is responsible for what is in between. Thus, those who fall sick and recover are restored or restore their health by His will. And it is the basis of hope. Thus, those who fall sick are assured, if you get to the hospital and meet a doctor, you will get cured. Several others have been cured. Even the doctor holds a sense of responsibility for the cure or restoration of many. But, is it not really the hand of Allah? Otherwise, why do doctors fail in some instances, no matter who is involved?

And Asma'u the most fearful, the most uncomfortable is the resurrection, the raising of the dead, the session of accountability by each and every one. And some of us go every second, every minute, hour, day, week, month and year. We can't stop it. My sister, everything is so temporary. Do you remember and remind?

WHAT IS YOUR TIME?

While I may not be sure of what you are putting on, it is most probable that, you are not wearing a wrist watch. But for bangles, this is most probable. All the same it is not the difference between the two that matters to a Muslim.

Ya Asama'u, what should matter to you is the meaning of time, in relation to livelihood. To be sure, it is not the ticking of any unit of measure in period that matters in itself. The second, the minute, the hour, the day, the week, the month, the year, the decade, the century, the generation do not matter. What matters is the consciousness of what we have made of it or have allowed ourselves into. It is therefore not age that is most important in Islam. The value of age is dependent upon knowledge, culture and benefit or reward.

Malama, although this is important, as from birth, in Shari'ah, the age of seven and especially as from ten, is the take off point. And there is no excuse or we get registered at maturity, for reward, for sin, for responsibility. For boys, it is wet dream. For girls it is the menstrual flow. And from then till death, time is most important for our goal, our destination.

Remember the Qur'an? He has not created us and *Jinns* for anything other than to worship Him. What does this mean? Worshipping Him or serving Him, all the time. This means BELIEVING all the time in ALLAH'S unity and the Messengership of Muhammad (SAW) in setting a perfect example; PRAYING all the time; FASTING all the time; SACRIFICE all the time; and VISITING Allah and His Messenger every year. The first step is therefore necessarily informed by knowing Him. And this means that you relate and understand everything by Allah and His Messenger. If you don't do that, for anything and at any moment, you are departing from BELIEVING.

Hajiya kyauta, it is only when you believe in a thing that you apply it for explanation. And the degree of your belief is measureable by the regularity and scope of your understanding and explaining events and your commitments. This means that anything, any person that will support this kind of understanding and explanation will be a friend, a trustee, a brother, a sister, a companion.

For Salat all the time, you are familiar with the obligatory prayers and the *Nawafil* adjoined to them. And there are other voluntary *Nawafil* that you are free to engage in maximally. But, Salat also refers to *Zikr* or remembrance. Thus, if Salat requires ablution, in an unclean state, you can freely remember Allah. It therefore means that you should always be in company of or in the conscious presence of Allah. Your

eating, drinking, dressing, going to toilet, ailment, happiness, sadness, etc must not obstruct this companionship.

O Asma'u. What is fasting? It means restraint and modesty, regarding those things that keep our body together. These physiological needs, wants or fancies are food, drink and sex. They therefore include the supporters, what we look at, listen to, what we speak, what we grasp, where we walk to, what we wish, what we think and the activity that we engage our total body in. Thus, just as in the month of Ramadan, we keep distant for most of the times we are engaged in making our living and we are supposed to keep to legal things and rest in the night, outside Ramadan, we are to keep off all illegal things and enjoy on the minimum or average of legal things. So long as we do this, we are fasting. The contrary will either be going hungry and thirsty or inconveniencing ourselves. That is, if we do not believe.

What about charity? What about sacrifice? For those who are blessed, without measure, beyond their needs, Allah prescribes that they share with others. Thus, here, the right of Allah in our wealth is requiring the duty of giving to those in need. Do you not remember the last sermon of the model? He said, let those who have heard him convey the message to those who were not there? And sharing even a single hadith with a fellow believer is not just rewarding but a responsibility. What of praying for parents, relations, friends, neighbours and the community? What of constructing a well? *Malama* you remember taking away a harmful thing from the road? These are all charitable. These are what we are created to be doing always.

The combination of fasting and charity is what defines the tradition of Muhammad (SAW) that the food of three is enough for six, that of two for four and that of one for two people. This is what makes that person who eats to the fill a donkey and the person with more than one extra bed for a guest, for Satan. In the same manner, we should not take excess food beyond what we can eat.

Asma'u what about a visit to Allah and His Messenger? There is definitely nothing wrong with performing *Umra* and *Hajj* every year. But for clarity, it is required once in a life time, for those who can afford. So, how can this be always? This will be by visiting those who believe in them, those who submit to them and avoiding companionship with those who hate them. And in this regard physical distance must not be a barrier. It may be for search of knowledge, for wealth, for marriage etc. Do you remember the tradition of Musa? He said on the Day of Judgment Allah will confront some healthy person that, he (Allah) was sick and was not visited. The

servant will wonder and will be reminded that a friend of Allah was sick and was not visited. Another will be asked, why he did not feed Allah, when He was hungry. And it will be clarified that it was a neighbour who was not fed.

My dear sister, here comes the *hadith-kudsi* that when you voluntarily submit, as you crawl, Allah will walk towards you. As you walk, He will run towards you; and when you meet, your seeing, hearing, grasp etc. will be His.

Now, my sister, in a day, there are only 24hrs. These cannot be increased or decreased. It is therefore left to us to make the best use of it or waste it. Out of this, between 6 and 8 are used for resting. We are therefore effectively left with only some 16hours. Unfortunately, we have contracted solid 8 hours to earning an insignificant salary. It is solid because the time we use in getting to work and returning home is our business. Indeed, this is so only if our employer does not ask for it. Thus, we regularly commit some 9 hours to another thing. We are thus left with 7 hours. It is within this seven that we do our cooking, our cleaning, most of our salat. It is from this that we can voluntarily commit ourselves to *Zikr*. It is from here that we receive guests or pay visits. It is from this that we watch films, do our studies, and do house work. O Asma'u, why don't you try to keep a record of your time in a week? Who takes most of the time? What time do you devote to your creator? What time do small talks take? Indeed, do you take advantage of your faith, to rest or keep silent in the name of Allah? Do you not know that in that way, you will be rewarded for your sleep or silence? Do you not know that shyness is faith? If you are not able to control your time in a day, a working day, that of the weekend will be most regretful. And as you know, the end of the world, of our life, will come in a twinkling of an eye. As we are arguing. And if there will be measurement of what we have done, then, our best use of time is extremely important. In fact we should feel sorry for the time we have wasted already.

Will you like me to give you a programme?

BEFORE THE PROGRAMME

Malama, if we are created only for worship by Allah and we can only understand and relate our existence in service through time and our engagements, HOW DOES IT RELATE US TO ALLAH? May be this is not clear enough. If we adopt a programme in order to maximize our use of time or opportunities; why the care? Will Allah not understand?

Asma'u, His understanding has been conveyed to us. We shall necessarily die some day. And we shall be made to account for our deeds. Remember the convert who promised Muhammad (SAW) that he will pray only the obligatory salat, fast in *Ramadhan*, pay Zakkat and perform Hajj after submission? Muhammad (SAW) promised in turn, that if he did not add or subtract, he will surely go to *Aljannah*. And do you remember the one time murderer, robber, adulterer and liar who converted? He only accepted to stop telling lies. He kept his promise and the others were discarded. My dear sister, that is the all-surrounding nature of our faith, in other words, we are to be in service all the time.

And the way in which Allah comes in, to reconfirm our insecurity, if we waste time can be appreciated. Do you remember the man in the palace of Sulaiman (AS) who was stared at by the Angel of death? When the Angel disappeared and Sulaiman revealed the identity of the angel, the man stared at got scared. He specifically asked Sulaiman to instruct the wind to take him away to far away India. Sulaiman obliged. And it was when the Angel reappeared and was questioned as to why he stared at the man that he explained: Allah does not fail in His promise. He had instructed me to take the man's soul somewhere far away in India and I was surprised to find him here. But when I went at the appointed time, I found him and I did not fail in what Allah had ordered me. That is Allah. He is timely and precise. None of us will therefore miss his time. *Malama* Asma'u, is this suddenness not enough for maximum organization and caution? Then we must fear Allah and stick to Him in worship all the time.

Malama Kyauta, and when we die, we shall then never die again. Allah promises that death will be killed. And those who finally end up in paradise will be there forever. Those in Hell will be there forever. Is not Allah ETERNAL and EVERLASTING? Just as He is Living and has given us life, as we are His vicegerent on earth, so does He will that we shall be eternally. In relation to time, how long is forever, eternity? There is this story of a brilliant boy who was tested by a king to explain eternity. You

know what he said? The boy said: in a far away land, there is a mountain of brass that goes high into the clouds. Every one hundred years, a small bird will rub its beak on the top of it. And by the time the entire mountain is rubbed off, it will be ONE SECOND in eternity. My dear sister, this is a kid's impression. But eternity has no end. And O Asma'u that is what we are to prepare for in this short life that will certainly end very soon. Must we not therefore, seriously consider organizing our stay here? If we are reasonable, shall we play away our time? Must we not make our time fit into Allah's time? Nothing can be more foolish than to ignore time- the temporary present and the permanent future. Those who are free are those who do not believe.

Let me tell you another story. It was a king who gave his greatest Jester (*WAWAN SARKI*) a crown and staff of office. The agreement was that any day he meets someone who is more foolish; he should handover the articles to the person. And, do you know what happened? The king fell ill. He was bed ridden for a long time. He was visited by the jester and was asked how soon he will leave the sick bed. The king told him that this physician has confirmed to him that his case was a hopeless one. He was surely going to die. Then the jester enquired: I hope you have made enough arrangements. You know, whenever you will go on tour, weeks before, all necessary foods, drinks, servants, horses etc. are arranged to make your outing and engagements hitch free. This is for this temporary life. What have you advanced in arrangement or preparation for eternal life? The king confessed that he was afraid, because he had not prepared anything. The jester rightly told him that he has not met more foolish a person. He handed over to the king, the crown and staff of foolishness.

Autan Alkalai, what about me and you? How many years have we spent in schools? Now we are working and wanting to be promoted or go back to school. We are so ambitious as to expect that in ten to fifteen years or even more, we will become this or that. We will have this or that. But has Allah arranged with us that we will take the next meal? After so many years, we get a cardboard called certificate. We get salary. And we had experienced sleepless nights of studies for examinations. We had worrisomely prayed to Allah that we succeed. And what we will get, with long life, is gratuity and pension. If this is the rating by fellow human beings for all the time and efforts, is it worth it? You just get a car or loan with interest? O Asma'u what then will the preparation for eternity require? What amount of time does Allah deserve? What will be the logic of our use of time in our own interest? If we personally waste it, who will be to blame? If we accept someone else to make us waste it, who will be,

to blame? Shall we use our time to waste the time of another person? By implication, is our time not our own? Shall a father or mother answer for our time? Shall we answer for theirs? What less of a brother, a sister, a nephew, a niece, an uncle, an aunt, a grandparent, a forester relation?

Thus, if we are to be in worship permanently, we will always be with Allah and His Messenger. Anything and anybody who dares to come in-between will be thrown out. That is the only ground of ignoring parents. That is the only ground for executing an apostate. That was why the son of Nuhu (AS) got drowned. That was why the wife of Lut (AS) got the thunderhold/brimstone. That was why Abraham (AS) was cautioned against praying for the forgiveness of his father. O my sister, we have enough examples and guide. Shall we then not always ask: WHOSE TIME? Shall we ever allow a moment to pass without being engaged in something? Shall we not operate a water-tight programme?

Autan Alkalai, you already have THE BRUSH. And I have also given you the TABLET of *Fatihatul Kitab*. Already you have started making advance investments, for which Allah has promised multiple yields. You have done it for late Mallam Sani. You have done it for your mother. And you have continued to make the deposits. Shall you stop? Do you not want more and more rewards? And do you not fear Allah, for the times that have past? O Asma'u will you not join Allah and give in and give up to His will? May Allah always be with us. You will have a programme.

THE COMBINATION

This cannot be the best of combinations. Allah knows best. Those who are gifted with knowledge know better. What is hereby arranged is only known, not to be illegal or harmful, but commendable.

The combination is intended to satisfy the three levels of faithfulness. It was Imam Husaini Ibn Ali who expounded that:

Some people serve Allah desiring His rewards. It is the worship of merchants.

Some people serve Allah out of fear. It is the worship of slaves.

Some people serve Allah out of gratitude. This is the worship of the free. This is the best kind of worship.

The plea for forgiveness is supposed to remind us that we are wrong doing and we deserve to be punished, except Allah forgives us. You will remember that Muhammad (SAW) asks for Allah's forgiveness seventy to one hundred times daily.

The declaration in the name of Allah is to submit with truity, sincerity and belief just as it is the opening of all legal things we are to engage in.

The submission that there is no deity except Allah is reported to be of greater weight than the heavens and the earth and all that they contain.

The chapter of unity is a direct confession and witness. It is the only chapter of the Qur'an that is equivalent to a third of the whole Qur'an. O Asma'u, is the Qur'an not about Allah, His Messenger and the straight path? Are these not three?

The glorification of Allah attracts the reward of freeing slaves.

Allah and His Angels shower blessings on Muhammad (SAW) so why not we, who are commended to?

The assertion of Allah's strength is too evident.

The totality of remembrances will come up to some eighty-seven thousand. And you will notice that Allah's mention is the heaviest. And the clue is the scope of reward indicated in the Qur'an. Allah can reward a good with ten, hundreds or seventy-thousand or more. He rewards as He pleases. This is followed by His beloved Messenger's blessing. All the others or teachings that are supportive of the *kalimatu-shahada*.

For recitation, Sunday is made first simply because it is the first day of the week.

For completion, if one can complete it at a sitting, it will be perfect. However, the best worship is that which is REGULAR, no matter how little, this is a hadith of Muhammad (SAW).

As an investment package, it can be sent to the deceased, persons who are believers. It can be reserved for service of a now living person, when he dies. It can be for self; etc. It can be recited daily, weekly, once a month, once in one's life time. And it can be started any day and completed without commencing from Sunday.

O my sister, you may choose to do only a portion in a week. Thus, for example, you can do that on Sunday this week. The following week, will do that of Monday and then that of Tuesday in the following week. And you do not have to have or be in a state of ablution before you do this. Remember the mother of faithful (Aishatu) who was asked to bring what? From a mosque? She indicated that she was in menstrual state. Muhammad (SAW) asked if the menses was in her hand.

Malama Asma'u, even your teacher, the author of Akhdari will not object to reading from an incomplete text of Qur'an. What more? You are already familiar with this.

WILL YOU MARRY YOUR BEADS?

Malama Kyauta, the free gift for this marriage is that you commit the beautiful names/attributes of Allah to memory. You have already familiarised yourself with these. The difference now is that they have been grouped in such manner that those that immediately relate and strengthen each other are put together. In addition, like they are in number odd, divide them across the days of a week. And these are odd too. Allah is *witr* and loves the odd.

For the opening of each set, the tablet of *fatihatul Kitab* you are already familiar with, will precede the *fatihat* of *zikr* for each day.

Thus, the right of your beads is that you count it as you remember Allah and by your duty of remembrance, Allah will be with you always. And if He is always with you, do you need any special means of reaching Him? You can get so close that, your wish will simply be fulfilled. Allah is everywhere. He may specifically bless you with a gift. He is the beneficent. Thus, this marriage can give you rewards and closeness to Allah.

There is this story of a friend of Allah, who constantly recites some of these attributes of Allah. He was a rich animal farmer and kept a dog and a cat. And at a time he was granted with understanding the speech of animals. On one occasion he heard from the cat that eventually the milking of one of his calves will benefit the cat and the dog because it will spill on the way of being taken to his family. He simply stopped the milking. Then he learnt through their discussions that one of his animals will die and they will feed on its carcass. He sold out the animal before the day of its death. And finally he heard that he will die on the following few days the consequence of which is that hardship will befall these animals. He recorded this and made his will. He indicated the previous incidences and what he did. This was how his knowledge came to light, after his death.

O Asma'u, my own beloved father had a friend in Idah who lived by waterside. His regular recitation of the attributes of Allah enabled him to sometimes live by crocodiles' eggs. They come out to lay them and leave. He collected them and sold. Allah is great. We had lived in Lokoja, Idah, Yola (actually Jimeta), Sokoto and then Minna.

As for the times of remembrance, there is no specific time to restrict it to. But it must be what fills up idle times, while alone or in company of others. A short period to remember Allah will be best. By such marriage, you will be in love with Allah by the

beads. Do you not remember that it is not fitting that Allah should speak with any creation, except from behind a veil?

Thus, on Friday the focus will be the attributes that give strength to Allah's unity and the faith of a believer. For Saturday, it is Allah's strength to do and undo that are invoked, centred on life, the most central to history. On Sunday, it is forgiveness from Allah in His unity, the all-strong. By Monday, all the needs, wants and fancies of man are opportuned through the attributes of Allah's bountifulness. The relationship between these and peace and belongingness are not lost sight of. On Tuesday, the balance attributes of Allah which inform his fairness, accuracy and strictness in adjudicating between creations are invoked. Here enemies and friends are joined together by balances. On Wednesday forgiveness is repeated because it is an utmost need. And His kingship, worship and sovereignty over all matters are invoked on Thursday.

O Asma'u stick to Allah, He does not fail.

THE SUPERIORITY OF SALAT AND THE NEED FOR ITS CARE

Asma'u, the ingredients of the programme we have discussed can be invested anytime of the day or night. They can be invoked in a clean state better. But even in an unclean state (not dirty) these can be done. *Hausawa sai suce tsarki as district from tsabta*. Thus, *dauda* is distinguishable from *najasa*.

But, salat is the only means and state in which or by which a servant is just before Allah. It is like being heard as distinct from giving you a listening ear. This is why in salat, we should be of utmost good manner. The emphasis on *Ihsan* is thus justified. And the model of Islam revealed that the closest position in a servant's submission to Allah is when in *sujud*. This is when all the limbs and the face are degraded in submission, in a clean state and in unity by facing the House of Allah. In that position, the toes, the knees, the palms, the forehead and the tip of your nose are put down. My dear sister, from the time of *takbir* to the time of *salam*, we are before Allah. And for each part (raka'at), we engage in the praise and glorification of Allah. We re-affirm our faith. We make pleas. This is why Muhammad (SAW) illustrated the spiritual value of the five daily prayers with a dirty or ordinary person who washes in a stream five times daily. It is a means of cleansing ourselves of sins. Thus, if we keep off the major sins, the minor ones are cared for. And the consistent and completion of a chain for a week grants us a bonus, on Friday. And the Fridays of a year grants us Hajj.

Hajiya Kyauta, do you note that Allah has placed this cleansing facility within the time frame that we are most engaged? The time we have contracted out for wages? Within that time Zuhr and Asr are involved? Thus, when we retire, there is Maghrib and between our engagement with others and what we choose for our private selves, there is Isha'i. We can then return to Allah, until we start off the new day with a dawn – with Allah.

By Allah's grace, all the five prayers have voluntary supports, with zuhur having a support before and after. These are EXTRAS. And between the same period, the special values of the times of subhi and the middle prayer (Asr, according to Ali) are available daily. In every circle of a week, we have a Friday which is for believers, special. It is a day that should be spent well and deliberately by organised submission. And for the nights, the third part of every night is an opening for getting one's prayers accepted and a short part of the night of Friday is absolutely so. *Hajiya Kyauta*, is voluntary salat then not tempting – after Isha'i and before Al-fajr? Are these not extra openings?

Autan Alkalai, when you are before the Lord of the worlds, is it not best to be conscious of what you are and what you are engaged in? But how can you do this? The starting point is the consciousness of *Fatiha*, which comes up in every rak'at. Are you familiar with it? Do you just recite it? O Asma'u, at any time you stand for zuhr, does your *fatiha* make you reflect on the thing (s) between your sub'i and zuhur? Do you by *fatiha* get eager to look up to Allah? Does this re-occur at every raka'at you perform? And after that, what determines your choice of a surah or ayat to be joined to *fatiha*? That you have merely memorised it? That it strengthens your faith? That, it applies to the circumstance you have just gone through or experiencing?

My dear sister, there is the need for a consistency in your submission to Allah. When the model said a praying person who does not benefit from it is a loser, what we understand by it is being a robot instead of a conscious being. So, why don't you look at the Qur'an again? Ask about the surahs and their meanings. Does not the Qur'an fit into all needs? Thus, the ample opportunities of some thirty – four raka'ats daily may just be a formality, with the value thrown away or lost. In this kind of loss, it is the reward, the benefit, the togetherness, the peace, the contentment, the balance, the understanding. And remember, within the working hours time, we stand to gain or lose the value of the middle prayer. And if we sleep like corpses or animals, we stand to lose the value in the night before *fajr* and just after *fajr*.

Hajiya Kyauta, considering a typical day, if you are to collect wealth, will you prefer to collect for yourself first or for leaving behind, to be inherited? Did you not hear already that what is yours is what you use of this world and what you send in advance for the hereafter? And where do we stand? Do we hate the hereafter or ignore it and love this world? Do we love both? But which do we love more? Or, do we not have any preference? *Malama Asma'u*, this is the fundamental basis for shaping the demand that others make on us, of our time. This is why the Prophet used to go to bed early, in order to disturb his comfort, in submission to Allah. Aisha once observed that his legs got swollen because of standing in prayer, even though Allah had forgiven him his sins. He remarked that, shouldn't he be grateful? Asma'u that is submission to Allah, by a loyal servant.

Malama As'ma'u, since we have been created, only to worship Allah all the time; since we cannot live without some basic needs like food, drink, clothes, shelter and convenience; since Allah has been most merciful in granting us compulsory and voluntary/optimal openings for direct and indirect submission to Him, must we not

organise our time? And shall we not have a priority order? And shall the ultimate end be in the interest of others or our own self? Thus, we need to be regular, all-round, all-the time and more and more. Thus, in addition to salat, *zikh*, the recitation of the Qur'an is another. All of them are forms of remembering Allah. You remember I told you to stick to the memorisation to the heart of the Qur'an. When you finish, ask your seniors to tell you about its status and value. Ask your seniors to demystify the roles related to the heart of the Qur'an. And there are chapters like those of the COW, VICTORY and CAVE that are given the identity of superiority by Imam Bukhari.

O my sister, the day will be incomplete, without a seal. And Muhammad (SAW) has shown us how to do it. The three elements that defines our beingness are catered for. The fruit is faith in the unity of Allah. And you can recite *suratul Ikhlas* thrice. And he recommended to Fatima, the *tasbeih*. And he was used to reciting *suratul Nas* and *falaq* and rubbing all over his body. All of these could be joined with the last two verses of *Baqara* and the verse of the throne-then you go to sleep in peace. He taught us to hang our affair with Allah by recitation of *suratul kafirun* and *Nasr* in the prayers of subhi and Isha'i. You are already familiar with what to do, when you first awake. And if you go to bed with ablution, how beautiful? Shall we then not always worship for our good?

THE BODY AND SOUL OF NAIRA

For me and you, we have our body and soul each. The body has a form, it gives impressions. But it is the soul that is superior. It is responsible for our essence. It is the soul of your family that is scholarship. Have you ever seen *Mamman Shata* in person? I have. His physical feature instils fear. But not his satanic products in the form of perverted employment of talent; His music, the rhythm, the band, the message, e.t.c That is the power of the soul, the essence of life. The difference and comparative value between body and soul reminds me of one friend of Allah. An ignorant approached him to give him a beautiful clothing to cover his body. The friend of Allah asked him the justification of bothering to cover rubbish and valueless thing with an expensive cover. The ignorant failed to appreciate that the cloth is a body, a form, tangible, material, measurable. The friend of Allah was more concerned with his soul. The ignorant should have recognised that the clothing has a soul, that is superior to it.

Malama Asma'u, it is the mixture of the relationship between our combined effort of body and knowledge or talent, with things around us, that produces things of use. Have you seen a blind man weaving? You are familiar with the grass that is used for making soft brooms. What about the making of pottery items? The farmers are not different. Cotton spinners and weavers have only changed the form in refined quality to be textiles today. The physicians, the nurse, the teacher, the tailor, the mechanic are not different.

My dear sister, the result in essence is value. That is the soul. Thus, whether the body is there or not, it is the soul that gives it value. Thus, the physician is paid consultancy fee. The teacher is paid salary, for the farmer, it is a measurable product, like maize, rice, millet, beans.

In consequence, Naira is only a form. It can be a paper, it can be a coin. Its name may be naira, dinar or cowry. My dear sister, what you are reading is on a paper, even larger than naira. But, the value is not like that of naira. It is not even like a cheque or bank draft or money order or postal order. Naira is therefore, only a medium of exchange. We use it to exchange values or souls or measured human efforts (physical and mental), for others. But, what we target in getting can either be a form, a body with the soul not immediately evident or spiritual. Thus, the nursing that one gets cannot be seen, only its effort. But, a tuber of yam has a body. And you can use naira to get either the service or the material thing.

O Asma'u, the means of getting naira are either through inheritance, gift or work. Thus, their ordinary number, like ₦1,000.00k, their pool, like ₦1,000,000.00k; the collection of things that have this degree of values; or things which in themselves are of this value but are further useful for bringing more value, are all the same. The love of money, the love of riches, the love of assets and the love of capital goods are all the same. You women are fond of collecting jewellery in order that in difficult times you can dispose/exchange them for naira. This is because; it is a store of value. In fact, today services include tricky services that have more to do with wits than input. But they are often classified as services. For example banks and insurance companies give services, like trading and merchandise. But in Islam, interest is not profit. Usury is not interest.

Hajiya Kyauta, you will appreciate from this that what we exchange is values. They are either use-values when they have taken a specific form like clothing sewn into gown, a head tie, a cap, a trouser; or exchange value, like naira, dinar, Jewellery, house etc. which you can exchange for another thing or service you may want to have. Do you not notice that the effort (physical and mental) is exerted by men? Is not Allah the beneficent with these? And for the materials that we relate them with to produce values, do they not belong to Allah? Did we not come into this world naked?

Autan Alkalai, is Allah not right then that whatever you have in excess of your need is a TRUST? O Asma'u, is what is yours not only what you make use of? Is Allah not the inheritor of all things? Do we not come, use and participate and leave? *Hajiya Kyauta*, is hoarding and amassing worldly things not madness? Shall we then not give importance to sharing? What will you say of the man who was given some money and he buried it, in order to save others from the temptation of its misuse? O my sister, do you see the relationship between this and time? Muhammad (SAW) once called upon a companion who entered into agreement to pay for a slave girl in a month's time. He told and cautioned him, he was never sure of seeing the sunset and if he does, not sun rise. This is because, the respite is of Allah.

Hajiya Ama'u, is not Allah truthful, when He revealed that man is created in toil? Do we not have to exist and survive through struggling? But are the best not those who merchandise and their children or family do not deter them from the remembrance of Allah? My dear sister, we cannot live without values, but we can be modest. We have the choice to be greedy. To want more and more and more always. We have the choice to be contented with a little. If we do not restrain and control our desires, is it

not true that we can never become satisfied? There was a Sheikh who was given some large amount of *sadaqat*. He did not bother to check the amount; he gave it out to another person as *sadaqat*, to the amazement of the giver. He noticed this and did not say anything. Then another greater *sadaqat* was brought. He gave it to the first giver. This giver asked why. The Sheikh explained that, he was richer because he is contented. The initial giver is poor, because he is in need of more and more.

Malama Kyauta, the fear and caution of Muhammad (SAW) in collecting values of this world was informed by the warning of Allah that He will ask about everything. HOW we got it. WHAT we got and HOW we spent or used it. We are specifically told that wealth will be tied to our necks and will be the cause of weight in movement. O Asma'u, the poor will be light and fly across the bridge of *sirat*. This will be a difference if both rich and poor comply with Allah's commandments. O my sister, do you remember that Muhammad (SAW) always prayed to be joined with the poor? Do you remember that Abubakar gave out a large proportion of what he had? Do you remember that the Prophet died, while one of his shirts was held in security as collateral? Then, what justifications have we to fall in love with money? What justification to be crazy for wealth?

Autan Alkalai, do you remember that the wives of the Prophet had secretly cooperated to consider the glitters of fellow majority Arab women? Allah revealed it to his Messenger and warned them to be modest or they will be sent out, to be replaced by Allah-fearing wives? *Malama Kyauta*, did Muhammad (SAW) not refuse Fatima a house help and asked her to do *tasbir*? I frankly don't understand the root of the tradition of *ANKO*. Imam Ghazzali discouraged eating of eggs for the air of pride. When one of his students asked him what to do if he forgets to mention Allah when he takes his first mouth-full of food, the Imam said he should say it in the second. The student proceeded with an assumption of the mistake or forgetfulness up to the seventh and then the Imam asked; what sweet taste will such meal have that Allah will not be remembered to that point? And what amount of food does the student intend to eat, that it wouldn't have finished? Do you not hear that, it is the unbelievers that fill their stomachs?

O Asma'u, do you not remember that we must remain within the boundaries of *halal*? Do you not note that to accordingly create wealth, it can only be through farming or raising animals? And are not even these questionable today? O Asma'u, do you not remember that the favourite and most of the foods of Muhammad (SAW) were

HONEY, MILK and MEAT? Are these not nutritionally rich and natural? Have you not been told that it was common to spend weeks in the household of Muhammad (SAW) without cooking hot meals? It was dates that were regular.

Hajiya *Kyauta*, Rabi'atu Adawiya was a woman who fasted a lot and of very little provision. She was fond of using stone for headrest/pillow. She will receive charity to break her fast and will give it out in charity to a beggar who asks – in the name of Allah. In this present age of questionable abundance and variety, what will a woman (who is married) need, more than?

2no. night dresses, to change when one is dirty.

3no. household dresses, to change, for household chores

7no. beautiful dress, to be new to the husband daily.

1no. Modest and unattractive dress for outing every five years.

Aisha (r.a) used to have a special dress on when her period was on.

Whose example will you take?

**RULES, REGULATIONS, ENJOINMENTS,
INSTRUCTIONS, COMMANDMENTS, ORDERS
STANDARDS, METHODS, PROCEDURES:
THE QUR'AN AND SUNNAH:
ISLAM
A MUSLIM:**

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROCEDURES AND CONTENTS

Ya As'ma'u, what is your opinion about:

Performing ablution by washing only the *farl* parts?

Performing ablution by starting with the feet?

Performing ritual bath by washing the left side first?

Performing subhi prayer at 3.00am in Nigeria?

Performing Isha'i prayer at noon time or afternoon?

Performing Zuhr prayer at dawn?

Performing salat before ablution?

Performing *taslim* before the intention for a prayer?

Performing *sujud* before ruku'u?

Performing *qabli* or *ba'adi* standing?

Resuming at work at 9.00am?

Closing from work at 1.00pm?

Closing from work at 2.00 am?

Taking your breakfast at 4:00pm?

Going on pilgrimage in the month of Muharram?

Visiting people in the hot afternoon time?

Passing a judgement against an accused before hearing?

A daughter marrying her father?

A son marrying his mother?

What about being a Muslim and a Christian at the same time?

What about imitating the habits of *Nasara/Yahudu*?

What about working in a bank or having bank shares?

What about taking one's parents to court?

What about taking wine after eating?

I will tell you a formula for checking such failings.

**WHOEVER INTRODUCES SOMETHING NEW IN THIS MATTER (ISLAM)
IS NOT ONE OF US. DO NOT GO CLOSE TO THE RESERVE OF ALLAH,
IN ORDER THAT YOU DON'T ENTER INTO IT WITHOUT KNOWING**

Malama Asma'u have you read, been told, taught or heard of hadiths to the effect of the above? But you know already that Islam is for practice. Qur'an is the guide and Muhammad (SAW) gave and showed the example. The principles of the sunnah are security guides, like bulbs, so whenever, on whatever subject and time you employ them to test what you want to do or are invited to do and the bulbs or one of them comes on, you will do better to forget and avoid the thing. If you don't, if you refuse, if you ignore, you will be threading on a path that is threatening the purity of your religion. You will invite unwarranted difficulties or enjoy false pleasures or have empty contentment or all of these. If you are unlucky, you may even destroy your religion, the valve or end-result of your practice, your compliance. Therefore, *Kyauta*, please make all effort to hold tight unto the strong rope of Allah and His Messenger. The Qur'an revealed that the hand of Allah is above those of the Meccans who entered into a treaty with Muhammad (SAW) at *Hudaibuya*.

You may ask: in what circumstance will be bulbs be tested? *Hajiya* in all circumstances, for full security. Of course, testing all matters every minute will not be expected of you, a daughter and relation who lives on the background of scholarship. The implication is that you **MUST NOT DO WHAT YOU DO NOT KNOWN. YOU MUST NOT DO WHAT YOU ARE NOT SURE OF. YOU MUST NOT DO WHAT IS NOT CLEAR TO YOU.** It is YOU that is ultimately important. This is because, it is you who will be accountable for whatever you do. But it is obvious that you cannot know everything. You do not know everything right now. That is the basis for the superiority of your family over others, your advantage over others, the necessity for you to also know for yourself, the need for keeping in company of those who know and ignoring any person or people or activity that is based on ignorance, that contradicts knowledge or that which is doubtful. Of course, you can make mistakes, but they must not be deliberate and regular. You should be able to discard anything, the moment you recognize its misfitness. Do you not remember those believers who were praying and were told that Allah has revealed a change of Qibla from Jerusalem to Ka'abah? They accordingly in their prayer turned to Ka'abah and ended their salat in that direction. And do you not remember after the total prohibition of alcohol, all pots of intoxicants were broken in the residences of believers? O Asma'u, is

Muhammad (SAW) not our guide, then the rightly guided caliphs, then their successors and finally the successors of the successors? Is this not what makes our identity *Ahlus-sunnah*?

But, what is this bulb(s)? Definitely, it's not like the electrician's tester for electric current. It is not a material instrument like his screw-driver. It is a framework, or formula. I will give you the basic ingredients. You will only need to constantly put them together by relationship and test what you want, what you need, what you fancy, what you are invited to, what you find yourself in or with. This is the intellectual basis of living consciously as a Muslim. And the requirement is informed by the fact that our living is totally or at least largely a matter of production and relation of values. You see how NAIRA is only one form. You already know that when we greet, when we put on our clothes, when we eat, when we work any kind of work when we shop, they are all different forms of the relation of the soul of NAIRA. This is why taking or treating NAIRA as great, amounts to reducing oneself to living a life dependent upon only those things that NAIRA can do. But NAIRA cannot accomplish the most basic and ultimate needs of a Muslim.

Autan Alkalai, the first thing to recognize for yourself, in gratitude to Allah, is what pronounced blessings of Allah that are yours are part of your identify? Examples are: are you an Allah fearing and loving person, first and foremost, always? You remember Prophet Ibrahim *Khalilullah*? If it is not very pronounced, it is not too significant. What about your senses? Do you see clearly, hear clearly, taste distinctly, smell effectively and feel effectively either by grasping firmly or stepping on or when you come into an arena e.g. of heat or coldness? O Asma'u is what is pronounced, your record and coordination of the results of engaging the senses through the control of your mind, in the name of Allah and His Messenger? For, that is knowledge. O my sister, is the pronounced one, the attraction of a single human being or a collection of these to you, to share in the knowledge or to enjoy the fruits of your closeness to Allah? For, this is the kind of power or influence that matters. The following in this, of children, of relations, of neighbours, of friends, of human beings, is the power that is directly relevant for Islam. *Mai Zinari*, is it NAIRA that you have, by collection of gifts, charity; by inheritance, or by work, that is *halal*? Do you and people identify you as such? Remember the Hadith which says that when people identify you as a good or bad person and the people are not prejudiced, then you are such? This is especially so, for the dead.

Thus, Asma'u when you intend and set out to do anything you must remember, if you have the resource for it. For example, if its film or an audio-visual material, your sight and hearing are essential, your knowledge or coordination of meaning is relevant. You will then note, if it is going to please your SELF, another PERSON, an ORGANISATION (like if you are going to do overtime) or for ALLAH and His RASUL. My dear sister, the intention is very vital. It is what makes it rewarding or a pass-time. It is what will make an unwanted sudden experience forgivable; make a mistake attract a sin that you can be easily forgiven; and if it contradicts your intention and you do not follow up with the acting out of the evil, you still get a reward. O my sister, it is by means of intention that you can, by Allah's grace get rewards out of evil or get sins out of good. Is Allah not the one who makes good from evil and evil from good, even from the way believers and unbelievers respond to similitude's? By implication, the activity for self borders on arrogance, a feeling of self-sufficiency or satisfaction. This rests on what psychologists call the EGO. If for another person or people, it can amount to living other person(s) life. You will not be living your own life, which you will have to account for. Do you not then see, why your teacher (the author of *Akhdari*) said love or hatred need to be for the sake of Allah? Only then, will it be part of worship.

O Asma'u, after intention, upon setting out, you will realize that, inevitably, what is required of you, is a taxation of either your body/senses, knowledge, money, time, property or right or even your other duty. Then, if you must proceed, you must be rich enough to accomplish it. If you are not you must note that Allah who has all rights over you, does not place a burden on you beyond what you can bear. And this rule, relates to all the resources that can be in our control, in this temporary world. Someone who asks you to show him bacteria with the bare eyes must not have your time and effort wasted. The best you can do is to advise the person to get a microscope. If the person asks for the time of your worship, you must not give it. Indeed, the time that will affect that of salat must not be discussed. Of course, where both of you will recognize a break for worship, it is catered for. In the same vein, by belonging to the Maliki School, your father has the first or upper right over you than your grandfather. Where for some funny tradition this role is threatened, your insistence is what will make Allah be on your side. If you follow the way of unfounded tradition in the sunnah you will eventually suffer or even fail. You probably know, have heard or can confirm. Majority of the civil cases on the breakage

of the families of Muslims in Zaria is resting on the reversal of the order of statuses. Muhammad (SAW) gives the upper hand to the husbands over wives, but wives in Zaria often choose relatives. They remain daughters as primary status after becoming wives. And it is often connected to attendance of ceremonies or occasions of duties they were regularly performing when they were only daughters. And the beginning of it is falling in love with either SELF, OTHERS instead of ALLAH and His RASUL first. There are those, who are so committed to work, that they abandon their family responsibilities. These women, whether civil servants or self-employed are everywhere to see. Before they know, they have broken the sunnah that is half of their religion or weakened it or infected it with an unforgiving condormment by the husband. *Allah ya Kiyaye!* This is why today, the family, which is the bedrock upon which the strength of the Muslim *Ummah* rests is weak and growingly hopeless. And where the man or the husband refuses or fails or ignores to take a firm stand, the future is set for destruction of the family, the *Ummah* and the faith.

Hajiya Kyauta, what must therefore guide you is, whether the thing, the activity requiring your attention, your contribution in the form of the resource that you pronouncely have is *FARILLA*, *SUNNAH*, *MUSTAHAB*, *MAKRUH*, etc. And the more you stick to the first two, the safer. Where, there is a witty adjustment or amendment of the second sample or an expansion or extension of it, you must be careful. It is like smoking. Believe me, it is better if you ignore it, especially if it is identified or given a rating of the first or it is combined with the second. Like you hear of OBLIGATORY TRADITION. You must test it. If you don't it may be the beginning of your end.

O Asma'u, *Autan Alkalai*, always remember that even your breath, your step, your grasp, your sight, your hearing, your taste, your smell, your mind or a collection of these will answer for your deeds. And all deeds are either only rewardable or beneficial only in this world or both in this world and in the next. If you therefore ignore the ultimate goal, you will be one of the people. You will not have an identity. You will just pass among a cluster. Do you not remember Muhammad (SAW)'s saying? If you want people to love you, avoid what they like. Their dislike for you will only be temporary, if you are with Allah. And if you want Allah to love you, you will need to play down on the status and value of the world. So, Asma'u what side will you choose? When? For how long?

**A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING
THE TRIAL IN WEANING, MARRIAGE
OR SUBMISSION**

Malama, Jakadiyan Jisambo, Allah in His wisdom repeats the single message of submission to His Unity in the Qur'an, in order that it may strengthen our faith. He has done this through stories, similitude and parables.

Why don't you give me another attention and follow this framework? O Asma'u, take a TRAIN. That is a family, the basis for society, the foundation for building the *Ummat*. The head of the train is like the parents – the father and the mother. Attached to it are coaches. Each coach has sits, classes, apartments and rooms for convenience. Each also has doors and windows. These are the attributes that members of a family are gifted with. These are the gifts of Allah. They are capital bases, requiring exploitation, to be put into use. The passengers are either members of the immediate family, relatives, neighbours, friends, well-wishers, enemies etc. They are a company. The movement from one coach to another represents interaction between these passengers, these relations, these close associates. And at the tail of it is the guardian coach. It represents the authority for a term, a time, a season, in a family, a ward, and a community. It is like discipline symbolised by the mere presence of the responsible elder, in a generation. Like Jisambo, like *Alkali* Ibrahim, like alkali Sani or Alkali Gambo of the past. You will note that the train can only move on the rail. That is Islam. O Asma'u, the stations where the train stops before proceeding represent suspension points for adjustments, for change. This is the point at which the passengers in the train can drop, while new ones can join the train. What is this joining of Train?

Hajiya *Kyauta*, the joining of a train different from yours is experienced in WEANING, in MARRIAGE, in SUBMISSION. What is common to all is that the weaned, the married, the slave is required to take an independent identity or association from the primary one that one came from. For, my dear sister, how can you be in two trains at the same time? Did not Allah say He has not created two hearts in any single chest?

Autan Alkalai, does the Qur'an not say that neither the father nor the mother is to be blamed for a child's fault? My dear sister, our fathers or mothers, will not be answerable for our faith, our obedience to Allah. Does not the Qur'an specifically say that if our parents invite us to what is not of Allah we must keep away and that we

should return to Him? Does the same Qur'an not narrate to us the failure of the son of Nuhu (AS)? Was the father of Ibrahim (AS) different? How then can relations or relatives, friends or such close associates be allowed to be the other train? Didn't in fact Allah relate to us that the generations of the past that were destroyed simply stuck to what their fathers were doing? And does not the Qur'an challenge, even if they were ignorant? Was Muhammad (SAW) not cautioned that the unbelievers invited him to the fire and He was inviting him to paradise? Doesn't *suratul kafirun* resolve this in faith?

O Asma'u, does not Allah define as the prohibited degree, the close blood relations? Is this not like weaning? The father cannot marry the daughter and the son, not the mother. But the rail of Islam must be the ultimate base. Why then must we keep two hearts by refusing to be weaned? Why must we keep to those within the prohibited degree as a priority over our weaning, over the new and different train of independence? Did not Muhammad (SAW) say that if any man is to be prostrated before, he will recommend or instruct the wife for the husband? Have you seen a candidate admitted into school changing what course to register for, what classes to attend and what examination to write and expecting to be passed? Will you take a child to school and the child objects to use the school uniform? But are the personal clothes not good enough or even better? Why then shall we understand what obtains in the school and not in marriage? *Malama Mami*, why do we easily forget that the Qur'an points at the unbeliever's contradiction? They choose for themselves male children and prefer for Allah the girls that they object.

O Asma'u, in submission, the Qur'an illustrates with the simple logic that if Allah were more than one, any disagreement between them, in the conflict of power will introduce disorder in the solar systems. Allah also illustrates with the servant who serves only one master compared to the one who serves two. And He forgives all sins except association of partners with Him. The only exception is repentance and NEVER returning to it. O my sister, shall we worship idols? Don't you see or know that the sufis reluctantly take drugs in treatment of ailments because of the fear that it tempts association with Allah?

O Asma'u, the Qur'an says, the period for breast feeding, for those who choose to complete it is two years. Has Muhammad (SAW) not left for our guidance the Qur'an and Sunnah? Are these not sufficient? Why then do we need to quarrel over our understanding or variations in interpretations that do not in essence contradict Allah

and His Apostle? Are we not largely from the combination of a father and mother? How will it feel, if one is identified as a child of more than one father? Does not the Qur'an specifically caution against hiding our identity, that we should be called after our father's names? O Asma'u, has not Allah made legal, marriage between a man and woman? Is homosexuality and lesbianism not prohibited? But, *Hajiya Kyauta*, has not Allah placed the male a step above the woman? Is that not what makes the responsible companionship complete?

O my sister, but there is no blame on the couple on weaning before two years or giving the child out for fostering. In marriage, Prophet Yahaya was an example. Marriage is therefore a commendable choice or tradition. For those who choose otherwise or cannot, are to keep fasting. You can marry someone younger than you, your age mate or someone older than you. You can marry your cousin, you can marry an Arab. And Allah has permitted that we marry the women of the people of the Book. For submission, has Islam no five pillars of Islam? Have you forgotten one of those hadith that *sayyidina* Umar has discouraged making popular? At least you remember that, whoever has faith, the weight of which is as little as a mustard grain, will not be a permanent resident of the fire. And what is the foster likeness? You can marry sisters or brothers, provided it is one at a time. Does not Allah say, obey Allah, His Apostle and those in Authority? But has anyone a right to your obedience after leaving the path of Islam? O Asma'u, there is no guarantee in blood relation. No guarantee in close association or associates. No guarantee in a particular place. There is guarantee only on the path of Allah and the Messenger. When we are therefore weaned, let us be *ko kuma mu yaye kanmu*.

WHERE IS JEALOUSY?

What does this mean? But the important question is, to who? Definitely, it is to a Muslim that whatever meaning is given, matters.

I sincerely do not know or understand what is meant by jealousy. If I may ask, does it mean the same thing with competition or malice? What appears to me, to be central to the matter, is, relating or in one's relation to others.

But, the guide of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is that believers should not look at those who are better blessed than them but unto those that are less blessed. This opens up an opportunity for gratitude. Thus, if we are very materialistic, we still have the hope of guidance. The way to modesty here is to step down. On the contrary, if we concern ourselves with those who are more or better blessed, we will give an impetus to some other person's pride, that has no place in Islam. If we are unable to achieve a similar level, we get dejected. We fail to keep to our capacities. We want to drop out of the frame of Allah. But, is it not true that Allah has blessed us differently? Some He has given with measure, some without measure. Are we not placed in different positions, or graded ranks? Are we not created in different nations. But, have we not been guided by Allah that these are not to divide us but to enable us identify ourselves?

O my sister, do you not observe that if the matter is wealth, power, knowledge, children, beauty, men or women, between men or between women, if we thank Allah on considering those lower than us is safer? But, if we do otherwise, what do you think will be our end? Is therefore not the Qur'an and Sunnah the only Qiblah that is correct?

And is the matter that of competition? Over what must a believer compete? Shall this not be in drawing close to Allah? *Autan Alkalai*, do you not observe that we should only compete in matters that can be exhausted? But, to whom do all things belong? If we believe in the ownership of all things belonging to Allah and that whatever we have is only a temporary trust, shall we not ask only Allah what we want? This is the root of holding firmly and constantly unto patience and perseverance as the rope of Allah.

Jakadiyan Jisambo, do you not observe that when the Qur'an says that from among your family are your enemies, it covers husbands, wives, children and in-laws? What do we consider to be the enmity? Shall they necessarily pick up knives, cutlasses, razors etc. with us? No! The enmity is that it is from among us, our family, relatives,

community, gender or those of others that there will be deviants. The deviation is from the Qur'an and Sunnah. The reference point will be other than the Qur'an and Sunnah. Thus, in swearing, the Qur'an instructs that we shall not swear with other than Allah and when we do, it must be in truth. In the same vein, we shall need to distance ourselves from calling a child after a father that is not really his.

Thus, central to our interaction is the need to keep to the limits of Allah. If we go beyond it by overstepping the bounds, we shall not be contented, we shall not find peace, we shall not be grateful. If we therefore find polygamy difficult either as husband or as wife; if we find monogamy as superior to polygamy; if we consider new converts inferior to those born into Islam; if we make suspicion the basis of our knowledge without confirmation, we need to first understand that we are breaking the law of Allah. And if we make our personal desire our law and mistake it for the law of Allah, we have no foundation, no excuse for it.

O Asma'u, do you not remember the case of the Prophet's taking of honey and the destruction of the plan against it? If that is definable as jealousy, is it not a break of Allah's standard? *Hajiya Kyauta*, do you not remember that the secret that Allah revealed to Muhammad, which surprised Aisha (r.a) was that they are to fall prey to the materialism of the women of their times? Did not Allah dissuade and warn them to decide to remain in modesty or leave? Did not Allah promise that if they leave, He will provide Muhammad (SAW) with better, obedient and Allah fearing wives? O my sister, did not Allah reveal that for every offence of the mothers of the faithful, their punishment will be doubled? How then can jealousy have a place in Islam? How? *Malama Mami*, do you not recollect the elderly wife of the Prophet who gave her turn to Aisha freely and willingly? And in return, she got retention under the family canopy of Muhammad (SAW). *Autan Alkalai*, did not Allah expand and restrict the family size of Muhammad (SAW) to nine and that those of the believers are pegged at four? O my sister, like in the case of fasting, Allah desires for us good by restraining us from some things which we love. Why must we allow ourselves to be easily misled, to forget that the way to paradise is lined up with disagreeable things, whereas the way to hell fire is lined up with agreeable things? In another casting Muhammad (SAW) illustrates by using the difference between climbing a mountain and the ease of coming down.

O Asma'u. The attribute of possessiveness is not an encouraging one for believers. Shall we turn away from living in this world as travellers? Do you not note the

cautions by Allah that it is not the business of believers to know about when unbelievers will be punished? Have we not been warned that the decision of Allah will not be tied to our wishes for one another? O my sister, obedience is not enough. For, Allah does as He pleases. Do you not appreciate that if we are to be questioned, we shall not have any excuse against Allah? Shall some servant not be in the shade of Allah? Shall some not have more good than evil? Shall some not have more evil than good? Shall some not have good equal to evil? Shall not some eventually go to paradise only after intervention? O Asma'u, have you considered the value of our gifted senses? Will our absolute worship be sufficient? Will not even Muhammad (SAW) attain peace only by the grace of Allah? Then what excuse or time must we waste in keeping to the rule, no matter how difficult it may initially appear to be? Truly, Allah alone deserves worship, to be feared and to be loved. He alone deserves that we place our trust in Him.

Malama Kyauta, the greater Jihad is to fight the SELF. If we make it submit to Allah, we have succeeded. But, if we allow it to rule us, we are ruined. We should therefore constantly establish the root of all our actions. If it is not based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, it must not be given prominence, if it must not be cancelled outright. When the Qur'an revealed that wheresoever we turn, we shall find the face of Allah, it, among many things means that good is as equal a trial as evil is. Thus, He can make evil out of good and good out of evil. Is Allah not great?

THE TASTE

Malama Asma'u, I had briefly raised the subject of Allah deserving to be feared, based on the simple truth that He does whatsoever He pleases. Our worship gives us only a chance of hope for His mercy. If we are to be assessed without His mercy, we will not deserve anything good. The value of his benefits to us by seeing, hearing, grasping, stepping, smelling, tasting etc. cannot be paid for by any amount of our service. If He is to weigh our service in barter terms with His benefits for us, we will be justifiably lost. Thus, even the model, will attain peace by His mercy. And this circumstance defines only the case of those who believe. We must therefore not pride ourselves with our good works. They cannot be close to sufficient settlement of Allah's favours upon us. Does the Qur'an not reveal that Allah is not in need of our service? But, all the same He is APPRECIATIVE of our service. The state of *Iman* is therefore located between the traditions that only those who have no faith despise of Allah's mercy and that no believer or faithful can feel secure from the plan of Allah except those doomed to ruin.

O my sister, the middle path is that of keeping in touch with Allah. That is taste. Feeling Allah's companionship. Thus, a hadith says whosoever knoweth himself, knoweth his Lord. It is in this state that man is a vicegerent of Allah. You remember that hadith which says that Allah was hidden? He desired to be known and so He created creation. To be in consonance with this truth will produce contentment, the wealth of believers in this world. Thus, Rabia'atu Badawiya lost herself to Allah and declared that her problem is neither paradise nor hell fire, for that is the concern of those who have not fully submitted. For her, which ever Allah offers her, it is right. That is extreme. Ordinary faithfuls will say, certainly that is not the standard for all believers. Have you heard of Mansur Al-Hallaj? He submitted that he learnt a lesson from Pharoah and Satan. They stuck to what they understood best and in that way, they will meet the will of Allah for them. Isn't that crazy? But is it not true? Among the teachers of Imam Bukhari, there was a woman who speaks with the words of the Qur'an. Have you ever heard of her? *Hajiya Kyauta*, that is what I call taste, to be with, to enjoy what you are in. It is like admiring, buying, putting on a golden necklace. Doing it with Allah in all aspects of your life is taste.

Autan Alkalai, what you enjoy, you stick to it. Like you enjoy putting on new clothes always, you should cultivate enjoying obedience to Allah. You should enjoy speaking only the words of Allah and His Messenger. Like one friend of Allah whose story I

read, he sees, hears and feels Allah first in every aspect of life. Thus, when you offend him, he pleads to Allah for forgiveness because it is Allah who has willed and established the offender to reach him. And Allah says, it is not fitting that He speaks to any, except from behind a veil.

O my sister, the foundation for taste is BELIEF and CONSTANCY. Now that I have introduced you to this subject, I will invite you to read my project of seven books culminating in O BELIEVER KNOW YOUR LORD! After you have familiarised with this project content by appreciation, knowledge, understanding and culture or orientation, I will then highlight the risk or danger of knowledge as a form of trial to you. I may consider using the examples of numerology, the science of palmistry, astronomy or philosophy. You will recollect that I was to start you off with philosophy through the first diagrams I gave you on wheresoever you turn you will find the face of Allah. These are tempting tastes. I will then teach you how to live with Allah through His beautiful attributes. But the requirement is that you will give up EVERYTHING YOU LOVE FOR ALLAH.

There is this example of a friend of Allah. He was a teacher in a colonised state. A colonialist brought him charity made up of some valuable coins in a bag. In his presence he saw a poor person come around to ask for charity in the name of Allah. The teacher gave all of it to the man. The colonialist was alarmed and could not withhold his comment that the teacher didn't consider the value of the content of that bag. The teacher asked him if he needed more money? The colonialist answered in the affirmative. Shortly after, another bigger bag of coins was brought in charity to the teacher. He handed it over to the colonialist. The latter indicated that the teacher should consider withholding part of it. The teacher responded that he was contented without the coins. That is a level of the love of Allah. Here at home, late Abubakar Mahmood Gumi was having that kind of attribute and he was often alone, without body guards and in a familiar cloth. I have seen late Aminu Kano in such state of modesty. You must have heard of his inability to pay his medical bills. And he had taken a bag of rice and some few naira from a gift of a trailer load of rice and a box of naira. The balance he ordered to be distributed out. Here in Zaria, there was late *Mallam Zakari* around *Kofan Kuyanbana*, a student of late *Mallam Na-iyu*. He was known for modesty and fear of Allah, with very restrictive movement. There was the late *Innan Dikko* that I told you about, she was a learned woman and even men went to drink from her well of knowledge. She remarried someone at *Kofan Doka* but later

returned to the house she was earlier widowed by Allah. I learnt the house is at the turning junction to *Ungwan Juma*. O my sister, poverty is this rich. Do you not remember Khalif Umar I? He was so modest that at a time he was challenged for having a long gown, until his son explained that the father had joined his to his.

Rabi'atu Badawiya is reported to have been set to break her fast with a guest. She had served the guest some poor and few bread. Then a servant of Allah appeared asking in the name of Allah. She took away the bread before the guest and gave to the servant. The guest reminded her of Muhammad (SAW)'s tradition of honouring guests. She did not respond. Then charity was brought of fried meat, she continued to send the bearer away until Allah willed the increase from the giver to twenty. Then she took and the two of them feasted on it. Only then did she explain that Allah and His Messengers do not fail in their promise. You remember the hadith that for every single good that you advance for Allah he will return twenty fold of it to you? But will you be patient until Allah gives you the twenty? Do you believe? Do you remember the prayer of Musa and his brother (two Prophets of Allah)? Allah did not respond, until after forty years. Do you remember the lady who asked Musa (AS) to pray for her to bear a child? He saw on the tablet that it was not destined for her. He ignored her. The woman met another friend of Allah under a tree and asked him to pray for her. The friend simply said: Allah you have heard her, and continued his remembrance. Allah gave her a bouncing child. Musa protested to Allah, and Allah asked, if it is the Tablet that wills what is contained in the Tablet. Then Musa (AS) understood. And to crown it, Muhammad (SAW) died with his shirt held as collateral. O Asma'u, it is not illegal or impossible to meet Allah by way of plenty, but it is the more difficult path. The wealthy shall leave resources behind for which they will account for and do not know how it will be engaged after then. Do you not note that the greatest Prophets are just Nuhu (AS), Ibrahim (AS), Musa (AS), Isa (AS) and Muhammad (SAW)?