

Author's Introduction

The Shaykh, imam, gnostic, exemplar, verifier of truths, crown of the knowers, tongue of the speakers, the leader of his time and unique one of his period, the proof of the early righteous ones and leader of the later followers, example for the voyagers to °Allāh, and the argument of the God-fearing: Shaykh Aḥmad Tāju-d-Dīn Abu'l Fadl Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abdi'l Karīm ibn °Ata'llāh as-Sakandari ؒ, said:

All praise belongs to °Allāh, the Sole One in Reality and Regulation, the Only One in ordaining and decree, the Sovereign King like Whom there is none, and He is the Hearing and Seeing. There is no one for Him in His kingdom who can take responsibility for His duties.

- King (*Malik*): outside of His kingdom there are none, big or small,
- Holy (*Muqaddas*): in the perfection of His attribute from having or taking unto Himself a similar,
- Purely Transcendent (*Munazzah*): in the perfection of His Essence from having a form or likeness,
- Knower (*°Ālim*): Nothing in the conscience of man is hidden from Him. "Does He not know Who created, and He is the Subtle, the Aware" (Q67:14),
- Omniscient (*°Ālīm*): whose knowledge encompasses the beginning and end of all affairs,
- All-Hearing (*Samī°*): for Whom there is no difference between declared sounds and concealed,
- All-Provider (*Razzāq*): the Giver to creation by bringing to them their sustenance,
- Self-Subsisting (*Qayyūm*): the One responsible for it in all its states,
- Bestower (*Wāhib*): and He is the One Who bestowed upon the selves the existence of their being,
- Capable (*Qadīr*): the One who brings it back after the arrival of its final term,

- Accounter (*Ḥasib*): Who rewards it the day of its coming before Him according to its good and evil deeds.

Glorified be such a Lord, Who gave the servants through His generosity before existence, and took charge of their sustenance regardless of their states of acceptance or denial of Him, and sustained all beings by His giving. He Who, by His Being, has maintained and preserved the being of the world by the support of His everlastingness, Who is manifested on earth by His order and in heaven by His power.

And I bear witness that there is no god but ʾAllāh, One without a partner, the witnessing of a slave committed to His Decree, submitted to His order and command. And I bear witness that our liege-lord Muḥammad ﷺ is His slave and messenger, the favored over all His Prophets, the chosen by His immense grace and bestowal, the opener and seal (and that is for none other than him), the intercessor for all servants on the day when He will gather them for the enactment of His decree. Blessings and peace be upon him and all the prophets, and his family and companions.

As to what follows:

Know, my companion, may ʾAllāh ﷻ make you to be from among His lovers and enrich you with His nearness, and cause you to drink from the cup of His beloveds, and safeguard you from His absence by His perpetual presence, and unite you with His servants whom He chose for His communion and message, those servants whose crushed hearts He consoled and comforted when they realized that their perceptions could not attain to Him due to the glorious lights of His manifestations. He opened for them the gardens of proximity and from them granted their hearts the inspirations of the fragrant breezes of His bestowal. He caused them to witness His pre-eternal planning for them, so that they submitted confidently to Him, and He revealed to them the secret distillation of His subtle mercy in His actions, so they left off contention with Him.

They are therefore submitted to Him, dependent upon and trusting Him in all affairs, knowing that no servant reaches contentment except through contentment and no one attains to sincere servitude except by complete submission to the decree. So

—Introduction—

they are not influenced by others, nor are they touched by turbidity, as one has said:

“The evils of the times are not guided to them,
and the bridles of the great misfortunes are in their hands.

His orders flow over them and they are subservient to His
sublimity, and surrendered to His commands.”

So know that he who wishes to arrive to  Allāh should enter from His door by the means He has provided. The most important of these is that he should purify himself from the existence of his own planning and his contesting the will of  Allāh.

For this reason I have composed this book and named it “Illumination on the Cessation of Self-Direction”, so that the very title should make clear the subject and the words should agree with the meaning.

And I ask  Allāh to make it solely for His noble countenance, and to accept it by His extensive grace, and to benefit by it the elite and the common, by Muḥammad, upon whom be the greatest blessings and peace.

Indeed He is capable of what He wills, and fit to answer.

*as-Shaykh Aḥmad Tāju-d-Dīn Abu'l Fadl Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad
ibn 'Abdi'l Karīm ibn  Ata'illāh as-Sakandari* ﷺ