

The Absolute Truth 2

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In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

May Allah bestow his blessings upon the one after whom there shall be no other prophet
Praise be to Allah, the King, indeed.

He sustains everyone surely, indeed.

May Allah's blessings and peace be upon the Messenger.

Ahmadu [the prophet] has surpassed everyone surely, indeed.

All of you listen for I am going to sing a poem so that you may repent;
so that you will be forgiven surely, indeed.

Anyone who does not take an oath of allegiance to the Sultan¹

will die in ignorance surely, indeed.

Anyone who refuses to obey his judgement

will have no excuse² on the Day of Judgement surely, indeed.

Anyone who becomes an Imam and is just

will be prosperous on the Day of Judgement surely, indeed.

Anyone who becomes an Imam for the purpose of punishing people,

hell fire will burn him on the Day of Judgement.

Those who accumulate wealth during their reign,

there is no doubt, they will burn in hellfire surely, indeed.

Anyone who becomes a ruler and is merciful

¹ The word *Sultan* here refers to the Sultan of Sokoto (Ruler of the Sokoto Caliphate).

² Here the poet uses the word *hujja*, an Arabic term meaning religious proof or evidence. See Quran 4:165.

will be saved on the Day of Judgement surely, indeed.

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Assuredly, if he causes his subjects to suffer greatly,

he will be the one to suffer in the hereafter surely, indeed.

He who makes the peasants suffer because of his [bad] leadership

will suffer on the Day of Judgement surely, indeed.

Those who reject their [just] ruler because he is not generous,

they are the ones to be burned in the hereafter surely, indeed.³

Those who persevere in learning to read so that they might advance [their knowledge],

Allah will reward them with *kawsara*⁴ surely, indeed.

Those who travel in different towns recklessly sowing destruction

will be wandering inside hellfire surely, indeed.

Those who shout loudly [in protest] though they have been [justly dismissed]

will cry out on the Day of Judgement surely, indeed.

Those who do not respond to the summons of a [just] judge,

hellfire will call them surely, indeed.

It will be the same for anyone who rejects the ruling

that a [just] judge delivers surely, indeed.

And moreover, if a judge deliberately modifies a [just] ruling,

³ Here, the poet (Shehu Usman ḍān Fodio) was trying to convince his followers to pay allegiance to the Sultan Muhammad Bello, his son.

⁴ *Kawsara* is derived from the Arabic word *kanthar*, which literally means abundance. It also refers to Allah's gift to the Prophet Muhammad: *al-Kanṭhar*, a river in paradise. See Quran 108:1.

he is definitely a *Kafir*⁵ surely, indeed

Those who prevent their relatives from going to the judiciary [for just reasons],

tomorrow, they will go to hell surely, indeed.

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Anyone who alters the judgement of Islamic law [sharia],

will be cudged on the Day of Judgement surely, indeed.

The one who is friendly with torment and suffering [in the afterlife]

will be the slave of hellfire surely, indeed.⁶

Those who encroach onto peoples' land to show their power

will carry it on the Day of Judgement surely, indeed.

Those who consume the public treasury

will be consumed by hellfire on the Day of Judgement surely, indeed.

Likewise, those who misuse war bounty secretly

will be exposed on the Day of Judgement surely, indeed.

All of you who unjustifiably beat or punish others

will be beaten on the Day of Judgement surely, indeed.

Those who find fault in the [just] rulings on land, debt, or seizure issues,

hellfire will burn them on the Day of Judgement surely, indeed.⁷

⁵ The word *Kāfir* has different meanings depending on the context. In this poem, it is used in the religious sense of a nonbeliever. See Quran 31:12; 31:23; 64:2; and 109:1.

⁶ Here the phrase "the one who is friendly with torment and suffering [in the afterlife]" refers to people who were comfortable with sin when they were alive on earth. This is derived from the Quran. See Quran 39: 8.

⁷ Here the poet alludes to the disputes that the Sultan of Sokoto used to adjudicate. These include land disputes and disputes concerning inheritance of farmlands, plots of land, houses, landed properties, and debts. The poet refers to people who question the just rulings of the Sultan on these matters.

Those who call for dividing up the khumus⁸ from war bounties

are the ones hellfire will consume surely, indeed.

Similarly, those who are angry with [just] Muslims

or who do not trust them will be burned surely, indeed.

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Similarly, those who have betrayed people's trust, tomorrow

they will not be trusted surely, indeed.

Those who interfere with trading between Muslims,

on the Day of Judgement, they will enter hellfire surely, indeed.

Those who are not straightforward in market trading,

hellfire will straighten them surely, indeed.

Even the evildoers committing adultery,

all of them are going to hellfire on the Day of Judgment surely, indeed.

Those heads of ward quarrelling about zakat [obligatory Islamic charity],

on the Day of Judgement, they will be damned surely, indeed.

Those who allocate nights to their legal concubines [unfairly],

for all of them hellfire is their share surely, indeed.

Likewise, anyone who does not allocate equal number of nights to his wives,

he will be paralyzed on the Day of Judgement surely, indeed.

Those who bewitch their husbands by tying charms will have the knots untied.

They are the ones to be tied on the Day of Judgement surely, indeed.

⁸ This verse refers to those who refuse to comply with the Quran's instructions on the distribution of war bounties. The Quran teaches that war bounties must be distributed fairly and legally, with the one-fifth (*Khumus*) belonging to God to be given to surviving families, orphans, the needy, and travelers. See Quran 8:41.

As will the women who wander out unnecessarily,
they will not escape hellfire surely, indeed.

Likewise, a woman who mistreats her co-wives,
on the Day of Judgment, she will be damned surely indeed.

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The deceitful and those who shield the wicked,
all of them are headed to hellfire on the Day of Judgement surely, indeed.

One who constantly begs, tomorrow his face
will be paralyzed surely, indeed.⁹

A hypocrite who causes disunity among Muslims
will never enter paradise surely, indeed.

Together with those who create conflict between relatives and friends,
all of them will burn in hellfire surely, indeed.

Those who use lies to acquire wealth from a spiritual leader,
all [the sinners I listed] will be burnt in hellfire surely, indeed.

Except with Allah's mercy and intercession [they might not be burned].

This is the absolute truth!

Here ends the poem with the date:

Friday 1204 H/1786 CE. Take note, indeed!

Oh people, let us repent and seek forgiveness, for those
who repent will be forgiven surely, indeed.

⁹ This alludes to Prophet Muhammad's emphasis on self-reliance and his discouragement of begging as an occupation for able-bodied people. Abū Hurayra reported Prophet Muhammad saying: "[...] And a man does not open the door of begging to usurp wealth, but that Allah will increase his poverty." See Musnad Imam Aḥmad, Hadith No. 9624.

Let us all be grateful to Our Lord and pray

upon Muhammad surely, indeed.

All praise is due to Allah,

Lord of all the worlds.

Amin!