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ABDUL MALIK MUJAHID

The Biography of Imaam Zaid ibn Thaabit

[May Allaah be pleased with him]

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Preface

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allaah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

All praise is due to Allaah. We praise Him; we seek for His help, forgiveness and guidance. We seek refuge with Allaah from the evils of our own souls and misdeeds. None can mislead whomsoever Allaah guides, and none can guide whomsoever Allaah causes to go astray.

I testify that there is no deity worthy of being worshiped except Allaah. He is One and He has no partner. I equally testify that Muhammad is the servant of Allaah and His Messenger.

Allaah says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُوا إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

"O you who believe! Fear Allaah (by doing all that He

has ordered and by abstaining from all that He has forbidden) as He should be feared. (Obey Him, be thankful to Him, and remember Him always), and die not except in a state of Islaam [as Muslims (with complete submission to Allaah)]. (Aal 'Imraan 3:102)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَوَضَعَ لَكُمْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ
وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِإِحْسَانٍ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ الْمَوَدَّةُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا اللَّهَ
وَأَنفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ سِرًّا وَمُنْجِبَاتٍ وَأَلَّامُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

"O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife (Hawwaa (Eve)) and from them both He created many men and women; and fear Allaah through Whom you demand (your mutual rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allaah is Ever an All-Watcher over you." (An-Nisaa 4:1)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ۚ يُصِغْ لَكُمْ
أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُطِيعُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ فَارْتَقِبْ
يَوْمَ تَأْتِي سَمُومًا تَرْجِفُ ۚ تُصِفُّ الْأَرْضَ وَالرُّجُومَ أَنَّهَا تَأْتِي
سَافِرًا ۚ فَارْتَقِبْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَارُ ۗ حَسْبُ الْعَاقِلِ ۗ

"O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth. He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allaah and His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him), he has indeed achieved a great achievement (i.e. he will be saved from the Hell-fire and will be admitted to Paradise)." (Al-Ahzaab 33:70-71)

To proceed, indeed, the best speech is the Book of

Allaah and the best guidance is that of Muhammad, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him. The worst of all affairs are new things introduced into the religion and every introduced thing is *Bid'ah* [innovation]; and every *Bid'ah* is error.

This is a series of biographies of some scholars and some *Muhadditheen* of this *Ummah* which Allaah has endowed with glory and sublimity till the Day of Judgement. We will focus on private and public aspects of the lives of these scholars, such as their characteristics, manners, etiquettes, knowledge, religiosity and worship. How dire our need to these qualities in this age is! For, there is no way, by which this *Ummah* can reclaim its lost glory and strength except by adopting those qualities that were the characteristics of our predecessors, and to revive what has become extinct of these attributes.

Stories of the lives of these scholars have, for sometime now, become unknown to many Muslims, let alone non-Muslims. This led to the extinction of the light by which the confused find guidance. This light is waiting to be rekindled so that the path (to success in this world and the Hereafter) might continue to be illuminated. People are now fed up with mere talks. They now want to see the reality of this religion, as was the case during the time of those scholars and other Muslims who followed them.

Living the reality of this religion was an integral part of the lives of these outstanding scholars. Their breathings and movements were all for Allaah. When they spoke, they did so for the sake of Allaah and when they kept

silent, it was for the sake of His pleasure.

They illuminated the world with their religiosity, knowledge, worship and deeds. If you look at their conducts and manners, you would say: 'These are conducts and manners of the Prophets.' If you read about their business transactions and their dealings with people, you would see a practical interpretation of the Qur'aan, and the reality of the *Sunnah* of Allaah's Messenger, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him.

Therefore, remembering these people softens the hearts and stirs up idle limbs into action for the sake of Allaah. This will perhaps make you join the group of the righteous.

Whenever a quality of one of the righteous people was mentioned in the presence of Makhlad ibn al-Husayn,^[1] he would say: "Do not make any mention of us while you speak about them; for a healthy person who walks is not like a crippled."^[2]

Whatever one may write or say, qualities of these people can never be exhausted. Nevertheless, man will never be tired of mentioning them.

It is therefore, of Allaah's favour that 'Darussalam Publishing House' in Riyadh decided to bring out the biographies of these scholars. The goal is to spread them among Muslims all over the world and to explain to them how these scholars lived their lives. This will enable the Muslim youth to emulate them. It

[1] *Taqreeb* (6530).

[2] Abu Nu'aym, *Al-Hilyah* 8/266.

will facilitate the linking of the past of this blessed *Ummah* with its present.

I have been requested by the brothers who manage this publishing house to write books through which Muslims could know more about their scholars.

I have tried to compile their biographies from different sources and to bring to light what is previously unknown of their stories, so that they can serve as a guide for this *Ummah* and its youth who, hopefully, will emulate them and follow their path.

While doing the above, I have tried to avoid unnecessary elaboration or inappropriate brevity. I mentioned the reference of all the quotations, but did so succinctly to avoid lengthening the footnotes or boring the reader. The stories I mentioned are those authorised by the scholars, though I did not commit myself to abiding by the rules regulating the narration of *Hadeeth*. If a story is recorded by erudite and trustworthy scholars like Adh-Dhahabee, I deem that an enough verification, though I avoided reprehensible stories or any story rejected by the learned scholars. And Allaah is the One Who is sought for help.

I beseech Allaah to make this work useful and to guide the youth of this *Ummah* to all that is good and successful.

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His Search for Knowledge

Zayd started acquiring knowledge very early. He embraced Islaam at age of eleven and he learned the Qur'aan and perfected its recitation and learned other branches of knowledge.

Adh-Dhahabi said, "His father was killed during the battle of Bu'aath – a war that broke out between the clans of Aws and Khazraj. When the Prophet, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him emigrated to Al-Madeenah, Zayd was an 11-year-old young clever boy. He embraced Islaam and the Prophet, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him ordered him to learn writing. So he served as the Prophet's scribe, writing the revelations for him. He memorized the Qur'aan and perfected its recitation. He also became erudite in the law of inheritance."^[1]

Zayd's Teachers

He narrated *Hadeeth* from the Prophet, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him and his two Companions (Abu Bakr and 'Umar). He learnt the whole or part of the Qur'aan directly the Messenger of Allaah,

^[1] *Tadhkirah Al-Huffiaaz* 1/30.

blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him.

He was one of the scribes who wrote revelations for him. He reported narrations from Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthmaan.^[1]

His Students

Zayd ibn Thaabit was one of the pious scholars. That is why he had great students and the knowledge he taught was spread far and wide.

Ali ibn Al-Madeeni said, "None of the Prophet's Companions had as many students who preserved their sayings on Islaamic jurisprudence except three: Zayd, Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood and Abdullaah ibn 'Abbaas."^[2]

Abu Hurayrah and Ibn 'Abbaas reported narrations from him. Among those who learnt the Qur'aan from him are Ibn 'Abbaas, Ibn Umar, Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudri, Anas ibn Maalik, Sahl ibn Sahd, Abu Umaamah ibn Sahl, Abdullaah ibn Yazeed Al-Khatmi, Marwaan ibn Al-Hakam, Sa'eed ibn Al-Musayyab, Qabeesah ibn Dhu'ayb, his two sons Khaarijah and Sulaymaan, Abaan ibn Uthmaan, 'Ataa ibn Yasaar, Sulaymaan ibn Yasaar, Ubayd ibn Sabbaaq, Qaasim ibn Muhammad, 'Urwah, Hajar Al-Madari, Taawoos, Busr ibn Sa'eed and many more.

His Position among the Companions

Zayd enjoyed a high position among the Companions. He was one of the closest Companions to the Prophet,

[1] *Siyar A'laam An-Nubalaa* 2/472.

[2] *Ibid* 2/438.

blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him. He was also one of the closest persons to his successors, Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthmaan. It is enough an honor for him that he was one of the scribes entrusted with writing down the revelations for the Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him. It was also enough an honor for him to be among those who compiled the Qur'aan.

Ibn Is'haq said, "Zayd was one of the scribes who recorded the revelations. He also wrote the Prophet's letters to the kings. Whenever Abdullaah ibn Al-Arqam and Zayd ibn Thaabit were absent and the Prophet, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him needed to write to some heads of armies, kings or personalities, he would ask whoever was around to write the letter."^[1]

Adh-Dhahabi said, "He was one of the bearers of the proof. Umar used to appoint him to manage the affairs of Al-Madeenah when he was on *Hajj*. He was the one who portion out the booties of the battle of Yarmook. His father was killed during the battle of Bu'ath that took place before the Prophet's emigration. So, he was raised an orphan and he was very intelligent. When the Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him migrated to Al-Madeenah, Zayd embraced Islaam though he was then eleven years old. The Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him commanded him to learn Jewish writing so that he could read their messages to him and said: 'I do not trust them.'^{''[2]}

[1] *Al-Istee'aab* 3/865.

[2] *Siyar A'laam An-Nubalaa* 2/427.

Khaarajah reported that his father said: "I was brought to the Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him when he arrived from Al-Madeenah and they told him: 'Messenger of Allaah, this is a young boy from the clan of Banu Najjaar. He had memorized seventeen soorahs of what was revealed to you.' When I read the *Soorah* to the Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him he was impressed and said: 'Zayd, go and learn the writing of the Jews, for, by Allaah, I do not trust them on my messages.' I then learnt their language and perfected it within two weeks. I would then write for the Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him when he wanted to send them a message."

Al-A'mash reported from Thaabit ibn Ubayd on the authority of Zayd who said: "The Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him asked me: 'Do you know Syriac language?' I said: 'No.' He said: 'Go and learn it.' And I learnt in seventeen days."^[1]

Waleed ibn Abu Waleed reported that Sulaymaan ibn Khaarajah ibn Zayd narrated from his father on the authority of his grandfather who said, "Whenever the revelation came to Allaah's Messenger, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him he would send for me and I would write it down."^[2]

Masrooq said, "The knowledge of the Prophet's Companions was with six persons: 'Umar, 'Ali, Ibn

[1] Ibid 2/429.

[2] Ibid.

Mas'ood, Zayd ibn Thaabit, Ubayy ibn Ka'b and Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari."^[1]

Sa'eed ibn Abdul-Azeez said, "After Mu'aadh ibn Jabal, the next category of scholars comprises: Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood, Abu Dardaa, Salmaan and Abdullaah ibn Salaam. After this category, the scholars were: Zayd ibn Thaabit, followed by Abdullaah ibn Umar and Abdullaah ibn 'Abbaas — may Allaah be pleased with them."^[2]

His Love for Knowledge and Scholars

Zayd was a great lover of knowledge and respecter of the scholars.

Ammaar ibn 'Ammaar reported that Zayd ibn Thaabit rode a camel one day and Ibn 'Abbaas held his the bridle of this animal. Zayd then told Ibn 'Abbaas: 'Move aside, O cousin of the Messenger of Allaah!' Ibn Abbaas said: 'That is who we were commanded to treat our scholars and elders.' Zayd said: 'Show me your hand.' When Ibn 'Abbaas brought out his hand, he kissed it and then said, 'That is how we were commanded to treat members of our Prophet's household.'^[3]

His Spread of Knowledge

Zayd was a scribe whom the Messenger of Allaah, blessings and peace of Allaah be upon him trusted him with recording down revelations. He was a year older

[1] *Tahdheeb Al-Kamaal* 6/436.

[2] *Al-Ahhaad Wal-Mathaani* 4/86.

[3] *Taariikh Ibn 'Assakir* 19/326.