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[Died 124 A.H.]

By:

Salaahud-deen 'Ali Abdul-Mawjood

Translated by

Abdul-Raafi Adewale Imâm



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Preface

In the name of Allâh the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

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

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

Allâh says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

"O you who believe! Fear Allâh (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 Islâm (as Muslims (with complete submission to Allâh)). (Al-Imrân 3:102)

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا﴾

"O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him

(Adam) He created his wife (Hawwâ (Eve)) and from them both He created many men and women; and fear Allâh through Whom you demand (your mutual rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allâh is Ever an All-Watcher over you." (An-Nisâ' 4:1)

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ۝ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا﴾

"O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allâh 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 Allâh and His Messenger (peace 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-Ahzâb 33:70-71)

To proceed, indeed, the best speech is the Book of Allâh and the best guidance is that of Muhammad, blessings and peace of Allâh 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 *Muhaddithin* of this *Ummah* which Allâh 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 Allâh. When they spoke they did so for the sake of Allâh and when they kept silent, it was also for the sake of His pleasure.

They illuminated the world with their religiosity, knowledge, worships 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'ân, and the reality of the *Sunnah* of Allâh's Messenger, blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him.

Therefore, remembering these people softens the hearts and stirs up idle limbs into action for the sake of Allâh. 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 is written or said, qualities of these people can never be comprehensively described. But man will never be tired of mentioning them. He might even not be able to stop doing so.

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 *hadîth*. 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 Allâh is the One Who is sought for help.

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

Salaahud-deen 'Ali Abdul-Mawjoood

^[1] See: *Taqreeb* (6530)

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

The Life of Imâm Az-Zuhri

All praise is due to Allâh, in Whose Hand is the reins of all matters and in Whose possession are the keys to all that is good and all that is undesirable. He is the One Who brings His friends out of the darkness to the light and causes His enemies to fall into the swamps of delusion. May everlasting blessings and peace be upon our Prophet, Muhammad, who saved mankind from darkness. Blessings and peace also be upon his family and companions - a people who were never deluded with the life of this world and were never deceived about Allâh by the deceiver [Satan].

The key to happiness is alertness and astuteness; and the cause of misery lies in self-delusion and heedlessness. There is no favour that Allâh bestowed on His servants greater than faith and knowledge. And the only means to this blessing is to be happy with the light of sure knowledge. On the other hand, there is no calamity, greater disbelief and sinfulness and these are caused by a heart that is blinded with the darkness of ignorance.

The hearts of the wise and knowledgeable people are like a niche and within it a lamp: the lamp is in glass, the glass as it were a brilliant star, lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east (i.e. neither it gets sun-rays only in the morning) nor of the west (i.e. nor it gets sun-rays only in the afternoon, but it is exposed to the sun all day long), whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself), though no fire touched it. Light upon Light!

As for the deluded ones, their hearts are like the darkness in a vast deep sea, overwhelmed with waves topped by waves, topped by dark clouds, (layers of) darkness upon darkness: if a man stretches out his hand, he can hardly see it! And he for whom Allâh has not appointed light, for him there is no light.

The wise ones are those whom Allâh wanted to guide, so He made their hearts receptive to Islâm and guidance. The deluded are the ones whom Allâh wanted to send astray, so He made their breasts closed and constricted, as if they were climbing up to the sky.

The deceived is the one whose insight was closed so that he could left to himself and remain in blindness. It is such a person that takes his desire as his lord and Satan as his guide. And whoever is blind [i.e. fails to see the truth] in this life will be blind in the Hereafter and more astray in way.

To proceed, this is the biography of an upright scholar, an erudite narrator of *hadith*, a brilliant, celebrated and generous scholar: Imâm Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn Shihâb Az-Zuhri. Here are paragraphs on the life of this sagacious scholar. I do not think that I have given him enough of what he deserved. When he died - may Allâh have mercy upon him, there was no one on the surface of the earth more knowledgeable than him. Ibn Taymiyyâh sufficiently described him in these succinct but remarkable words: "Az-Zuhri has guarded Islâm for about seventy years."^[1]

So dear brother, these are excerpts from the biography

^[1] *Shadharaat adh-Dhahab* 1/162

of this great Imâm to strengthen your zeal. They afford you the opportunity to peruse the glories of your *Ummah* and the scholars of your religion and how the history has pictured their everlasting words and deeds.

This towering personality, Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn Shihâb Az-Zuhri was a model for the scholars and an exemplar for the pious. He was an embodiment of generosity. When he was in difficult situation, he did not deviate from the truth and when the bounties of this world were opened for him he did not stray. May Allâh bestow His expansive mercy upon him and upon the scholars of the *Ummah* in particular and all the Muslims in general.

His Name and Lineage

He is Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn 'Ubaidullâh ibn Abdullâh ibn Shihâb ibn Abdullâh ibn Al-Harith ibn Zuhrah ibn Kilab ibn Murrah ibn Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy ibn Ghalib.^[1]

His Kunyah and Nickname

A man is given a nickname as a sign of respect and honour. Sometimes, the *kunyah* may take the place of the name whereby the person concerned becomes popular by it. An example of this is Abu Lahab. His name is Abdul-'Uzza but he was popularly known as Abu Lahab, so Allâh referred to him as such.

The Arabs used to attach importance to *kunyahs* because they are an expression of their bearers'

^[1] *Siyar A'laam An-Nubalâ* 5/326

personality. For, every person is free to choose whatever *kunya* he likes, especially if he bears one of the repulsive names like Murrah [bitter], Kalb [dog] or Hanzalah [colocynth] or if the name entails some self-glorification or any other forbidden names. He is therefore free to choose a *kunya* for himself or allow one of the scholars to give him one by which he will be known.

Likewise, nicknames can be an indication of attributes that are in their bearers like 'Al-A'mash [the blear-eyed] or Al-A'raj [the lame]. However, it is disliked that a person who has such an attribute be called by it unless if he is not known by any other name. A person is also addressed by his family name. And this is commendable.

The *kunya* of the personality of this biography is Abu Bakr, and his nickname is Az-Zuhri.

Adh-Dhahabi said: "He is Abu Bakr Al-Qurashi Az-Zuhri Al-Madani; a guest in Syria."^[1]

He was mostly known as Az-Zuhri or Ibn Shihâb.

His Birth

He was born in the year 50 A.H.

In most cases, births of scholars and famous rulers are not recorded for the Arabs did not attach importance to that. And this is a result of their lack of interest in precise reckoning, especially, the common folks among them. They only used to take note of an event and use it to mark the time. For example, the

^[1] *Ibid.*

incidence of Elephant is used to mark the time someone was born. They would say: 'So and so was born in the year of the Elephant or at such and such time before or after the year of Elephant.' This method continued for a long time, even after the advent of Islâm.

Therefore, they did not use to have precise record of births because there was no need for that. There was also no general office in which information about births could be compiled and recorded.

As regards death of the scholars and famous members of the *Ummah*, it is, in itself, a landmark event taken as a date. For instance, they say 'so and so died in the year that 'Â'ishah, may Allâh be pleased with her, died' or 'so and so died in the year that Az-Zuhri died'.

Adh-Dhahabi said: "According to Duhaym and Ahmad ibn Salih, Az-Zuhri was born in the year 50 A.H. And according to Khalifah ibn Khayyat, he was born in the year 51 A.H."^[1]

Al-Wâqidi was, however, of the view that he was born in the year 58 A.H. at the end of Mu'âwiyah's caliphate. It is the same year in which the mother of the faithful 'Â'ishah, may Allâh be pleased with her, died.^[2] This opinion was supported by Ibn Al-Jawzi.^[3]

Abu Zur'ah said, "Abdur-Rahmân ibn Ibrâhîm and

^[1] *Siyar A'laam An-Nubalâ* 5/326

^[2] *Tahdheeb al-Kamaal* 26/440

^[3] See 'Al-Muntazim fee hawaadith sanah 124

Ash-Shafi'i narrated from Mutarrif ibn Mazin that Ma'mar reported on behalf of Az-Zuhri who said, "The first civil unrest occurred during the time of the Prophet's Companions and there was loss of lives and properties. But no one was held responsible for the loss of a life or wealth or for an injury caused as a result of different points of view. But if a property that particularly belonged to someone was found, it was returned to him." Ash-Shafi'i added, "What Az-Zuhri said was also our opinion. During that crisis, there were cases of lost lives in which the killer and the killed was known and in which properties were destroyed. When the war died down, I did not know of anyone who was punished in revenge or forced to pay compensation for any destroyed property. I also did not know of any disagreement among the people that whatever property anyone seized during the crisis should not be returned to its rightful owner, if he is identified."^[1]

^[1] *Al-Umm* 3/20

His Knowledge of History and Arab Genealogy

Ibn Shihâb was an authority in Arab genealogy and history. He, himself, was a pure Arab from the famous tribe of Quraish who gave utmost attention to their genealogy.

Mus'ab ibn Abdullâh said, "The major reason that caused Abdul-Mâlik ibn Marwân to invite Az-Zuhri to his court was the latter's knowledge of genealogy. He was the most knowledgeable person in this field. He learnt it from 'Abdullâh ibn Tha'labah ibn Su'air who was an ally of Banu Zuhrah [Ibn Shihâb's clan]."^[1]

Ibn Abi Dhi'b said that he asked Az-Zuhri about the first person to embrace Islam and he said, "Khadeejah was the first person to embrace Islam among women and Zayd ibn Harithah was the first person to embrace Islam among men."^[2]

Az-Zuhri said, "Yazdajard set out in the company of 100,000 soldiers and he set up camp at Marw. He appointed a man to govern Istakhr. Ibn 'Amir then came and conquered the place and killed Yazdajard and those who were with him at Marw. Then he moved to Abrashahr where the daughters of Chosroes were living and besieged it. Its inhabitants then entered into a truce with him. Thereafter, he sent al-Ahnâf to the inhabitants of Harah and they also signed a truce with him. He also sent Hatim ibn Nu'mân al-

^[1] *Tareekh Dimashq* 27/107

^[2] *Tareekh at-Tabari* 1/540

Bahili to Marw and they signed a truce with him.

"He then moved from Nishâpur and headed to Makkah for 'Umrah to thank Allâh after he had conquered Karman and Sijistan. He was, indeed, one of the greatest Arab kings and heroes. He was also gentle and insightful. Mu'awiyah appointed him as the governor of Basra. He died in the year 59 A.H. On his death, Mu'awiyah said, 'With whom shall we boast after him?'"^[1]

Az-Zuhri said, "The Prophet's biological mother is Âminah bint Wahb ibn 'Abd Manaf ibn Zuhrah ibn Kilab; and Âminah's mother is Barah bint Abd al-'Uzza ibn Uthmân ibn Abd Dar ibn Qusayy ibn Kilab ibn Marrah; and Barah's mother is Umm Sufyân bint Asad ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza ibn Qusayy ibn Kilab ibn Marrah; and Umm Sufyân's mother is Barrah bint 'Awf ibn 'Ubaid ibn 'Uwajj ibn 'Adiyy ibn Ka 'b ibn Luayy ibn Ghalib ibn Fihri; and Barrah's mother is Qalâbah bint al-Harith ibn Sa'sa'ah from the clan of Lahyan ibn Hudhail; and Qalabâh's mother is Bint Mâlik ibn Ghunm from the clan of Banu Lahyan. The Prophet's foster mother is Halimah bint Harith ibn Shajnah as-Sa'diyyah from the clan of Bani Sa'd ibn Bakr ibn Hawazin ibn Mansur ibn 'Ikrimah ibn Khasfah ibn Qais ibn 'Ailan ibn Mudar. Halimah's husband is Harith ibn Abdul-'Uzza. The Messenger of Allâh, blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him grew up among these people [i.e. Banu Sa'd]. The Prophet's other foster mother is: Thuwaibah, the free slave of Abu Lahab — whose name is Abd al-'Uzza. The

^[1] *Siyar A'laam An-Nubalâ'* 3/20

Prophet's grandmother — his father's mother — is Fatimah bint 'Amr ibn 'Aidh ibn 'Imran ibn Makhzum. Her mother is Sakhrâh bint 'Abd ibn 'Imran ibn Makhzum; and Sakhrâh's mother is Takhmur bint 'Abd ibn Qusayy ibn Kilab ibn Marrah; and Takhmur's mother is Salma bint 'Âmir ibn 'Umairah ibn Wadi'ah ibn Harith ibn Fihri; and Salma's mother is the sister of Wathilah ibn 'Adwan ibn Qais."^[1]

Az-Zuhri reported from 'Urwah who narrated that 'Â'ishah, may Allâh be pleased with her, said, "The Messenger of Allâh did not marry any woman while Khadijah was with him, may Allâh be pleased with her, until she died."^[2]

Ma'mar reported that Az-Zuhri said, "The shrewdest persons during the time of civil unrest were five: 'Amr and Mu'awiyah from among the Quraish; Qais ibn Sa'd from among the Ansâr; al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah from the tribe of Thaqif; and 'Abdullâh ibn Budail ibn Warqa al-Khuza'i from among the emigrants. Qais and Ibn Budail were on 'Ali's side, while al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah maintained neutrality during the conflict."^[3]

Az-Zuhri said, "Mu'awiyah called 'Amr ibn al-'Âs and told him: 'Help me on Kufah.' 'Amr said, 'What about Egypt?' Mu'awiyah said, 'I will appoint your son, Abdullâh as its governor.' While they were still on that, al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah, who had remained neutral in the conflict and had stayed in Taif came. So,

^[1] *Tareekh Dimashq* 3/98

^[2] *Ibid.* 3/190

^[3] *Siyar A'laam An-Nubalâ'* 3/22