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Leyton Business Centre
Unit-17, Etloe Road, Leyton, London, E10 7BT
Tel: 0044 20 8539 4885 Fax: 0044 20 8539 4889
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E-mail: idm@ion.co.za

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Preface

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

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

Allah says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُونُوا إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

“O you who believe! Fear Allah (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 Allah)]. (Aal ‘Imraan 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 [Hawwa (Eve)] and from them both He created many men and women; and fear Allah through Whom you demand (your mutual rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allah is Ever an All-Watcher over you.” (An-Nisaa 4:1)

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

“O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allah 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 Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), 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 Allah and the best guidance is that of Muhammad, ﷺ. 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 Allah 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 Allah. When they spoke, they did so for the sake of Allah and when they kept silent, it was 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'aan, and the reality of the *Sunnah* of Allah's Messenger ﷺ.

Therefore, remembering these people softens the hearts and stirs up idle limbs into action for the sake of Allah. 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 Allah's favor 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 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

[1] *Taqreeb* (6530).

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

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 authorized 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 Allah is the One Who is sought for help.

I beseech Allah 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 Journey in Search of Knowledge

Importance of undertaking journey in search of knowledge:

Undertaking journey in search of knowledge is an extension of propagating Islaam. The scholars had migrated to different Muslim regions that were conquered to spread Islaam and to explain the rules which Allah has ordained for His servants.

During the early years of Muslim conquest,

dispatching troops was not a goal in itself but a means to a mightier and loftier goal which is to liberate mankind from social injustice and the oppression of hegemonic rulers. The people then entered into the religion of Allah in groups. The Prophet's Companions ﷺ and their students spread knowledge among peoples and nations and massive number of the children of these nations became propagators of Islaam and defenders of the Qur'aan and the *Sunnah* and the language of both.

Those who acquired the knowledge of Islaam were innumerable as they spread it all over the horizons and benefited their peoples and others with it. They would move from one place to another without allowing anything to impede them. Rather, as part of their firm-rooted traditions, undertaking journeys in search of knowledge is a status symbol. The greater the number of country a scholar visited in the course of his seeking knowledge the greater is intellectual status; and the more he mixed with the scholars of different regions, the more the people's need for him and their confidence in him. And this is true.

The age of Imaam Ibn Maajah was characterized with enthusiasm for journeying in search of knowledge. This tendency is boosted by another factor: Seeking *Al-Isnaad Al-'Aali*.^[1]

For instance, instead of a successor (a member of the

[1] This is a situation whereby the number of narrators between a scholar and the Prophet ﷺ is as few as possible, without the chain of transmitters suffering from any discontinuity or weakness. This state confers on a narration and the scholar additional reliability. The opposite of this is *Al-Isnaad An-Naazil* where the chain of transmitters is filled with greater number of narrators. [—Translator]

generation after Companions) taking a *Hadeeth* from his fellow successor, he would prefer taking it from a Companion. In order to achieve this, he would travel to where the Companion who heard the *Hadeeth* directly from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ resided, and take the *Hadeeth* from him directly.

Another factor that contributed to the scholars' traveling in search of knowledge was the appearance of fabricated narrations. The scholars would therefore undertake a journey in order to take the *Hadeeth* from its possible sources and to scrutinize its narrators. Most of the scholars who undertook this rigorous task were found in Al-Madeenah, the lively heart of Islaam, the city that is specially positioned in terms of *Hadeeth* and the science of narrating and a known place for strictness in verification of reports.

Abu Qalaabah, Abdullaah ibn Zayd Al-Basri (died 104 A.H.) said:

«لَقَدْ أَقَمْتُ بِالْمَدِينَةِ ثَلَاثًا مَا لِي حَاجَةٌ إِلَّا وَقَدْ فَرَعْتُ مِنْهَا إِلَّا
إِنَّ رَجُلًا كَانُوا يَتَوَقَّعُونَهُ كَانَ يَرُوي حَدِيثًا، فَأَقَمْتُ حَتَّى قَدِمَ
فَسَأَلْتُهُ»

"I stayed in Al-Madeenah for three days. Though I had finished from all that I needed to do, I had to wait for a man whom people thought that he knew a *Hadeeth* which he used to narrate. So I waited until he came and I asked him about the *Hadeeth*."^[1]

It is reported that whenever 'Aamir Ash-Sha'bi narrated a *Hadeeth*, he would tell his students, "We have given it to you for free though a *Hadeeth* that is lesser

[1] *Ad-Daarimi* (581).

than it in importance (or authenticity) could only be acquired after a journey was undertaken to Al-Madeenah.”^[1]

Abu Al-‘Aaliyah Ar-Rayaahi (died 95 A.H.) said, “We would hear narration on the authority of the Companions of Allah’s Messenger ﷺ and we would not be satisfied until we have traveled to them in Al-Madeenah and heard the *Hadeeth* directly from them.”^[2]

Al-Madeenah was then not the only source of *Hadeeth*, though it occupied the leading role in this regard. The students of knowledge also traveled to other cities and regions like Makkah, Taaif, Yamaamah and San’aa^[3] because the Companions had spread to all the regions.

In actual sense, undertaking journeys was instrumental to spread of the knowledge of *Sunnah* and multiplication of chains of narrations of *Hadeeth*. It was also instrumental in the science of accurate identifying of the reporters of narrations. If not for the journey that the scholars undertook in search of *Hadeeth* and chain of transmitters, each region would have had its peculiar traits. And this could have led to intellectual isolation and bigotry that could widen the differences in Islaamic rules. However, the spirit of intellectualism which was the characteristic of the scholars led them to travel length and breadth of Muslim regions in order to acquire knowledge from different intellectual centers.

Nevertheless, it was unfortunate that the scholars of *Hadeeth* did not pay much attention to recording stories of their journeys and descriptions of the cities they visited. If they had done that, they would have left behind a legacy

[1] Ibn Abdul-Barr, *Jaami’ Bayaan Al-‘Ilm Wa Fadlih* 1/94.

[2] *Ad-Daarimi* (564).

[3] *Ibn Sa’d*, in *At-Tabaqaat* 5/443, 503, 523, 549.

of rich and extremely useful information such as those we find in books authored by latter travelers like Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Batutah who are bellow the level of the scholars of *Hadeeth* in terms of trustworthiness.

Another of the distinctive traits of that age from the intellectual aspect is the exceptional attention the scholars gave to writing and recording down the Prophetic *Hadeeth*. This is as opposed to the wrongful assumption of some orientalist such as Goldzier and others who rejected the authenticity of the information relating to writing down and recording of the *Hadeeth* at that early stage of the life of the *Ummah*. They held a view that collection and recording of *Hadeeth* only started at the end of the second century and the first half of the third century of *Hijrah*.^[1]

What the orientalist’s view means is that the Arabs were so primitive then that they could have thought of recording writing down and recording the *Hadeeth* at such an early stage. You will realize in the course of discussing history of writing among the Muslims that the orientalist’s view—that the Arabs knew nothing about authoring books or recording events throughout the Umayyad dynasty and that they only knew knowledge and writing during the beginning of the Abbasid dynasty—was based upon nothing but desire and lack of objectivity.

Even if we have to agree—for the sake of argument—that these orientalist were well-meaning, the fact remains that they were trying to understand Islaamic history in a wrong way. As a result, they arrived at an erroneous conclusion.

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[1] Fu’ad Sazkeen, *Taareekhut-Turaath Al-‘Arabi* 1/122.