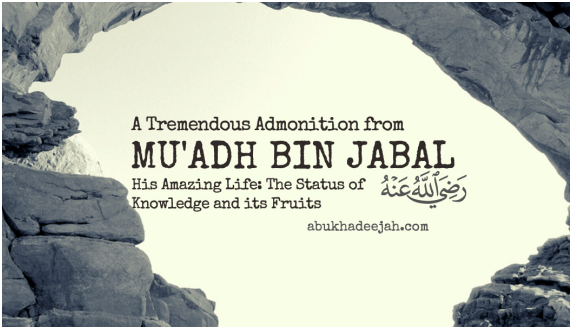

A Tremendous Admonition from **Mu'ādh bin Jabal** رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ

His Amazing Life: The Status of **Knowledge** and its **Fruits**

By Abu Khadeejah Abdul-Wāhid Alam

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلاَ مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلْ فَلاَ هَادِىَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لاَ شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

Praise is due to Allah, we praise Him and we seek His help and His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our own souls and from our bad deeds. Whomsoever Allah guides will never be led astray and whomsoever is led astray, no one can guide. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, alone without partner or associate, and that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His slave and His Messenger. To proceed:

Mu'ādh bin Jabal (رضي الله عنه) was from the great learned men among the Companions of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)— he was considered to be among the foremost of the Scholars. He was from the seventy who wit-

nessed the pledge of Al-'Aqabah. He became Muslim at the age of 18. When he embraced Islam, he would break the idols of the tribe of Banī Salamah along with Tha'labah bin 'Anamah and Abdullāh bin Unays.

The Messenger (ﷺ) made a brotherhood pact between Mu'ādh and Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه). He participated at the battle of Badr at the age of 20, then he joined the battles that followed such as Uhud and Khandaq alongside the Prophet (ﷺ).

And it is known that he was the most knowledgeable of the Ummah concerning the halāl and harām (lawful and unlawful). The Messenger (ﷺ) stated:

أَرْحَمُ أُمَّتِي بِأُمَّتِي أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَأَشَدُّهُمْ فِي أَمْرِ اللَّهِ عُمَرُ
وَأَصْدَقُهُمْ حَيَاءً عُثْمَانُ وَأَعْلَمُهُمْ بِالْحَلاَلِ وَالْحَرَامِ مُعَاذُ بْنُ

جَبَلٍ وَأَفْرَضُهُمْ زَيْدُ بْنُ ثَابِتٍ وَأَقْرَؤُهُمْ أُبَيُّ بْنُ كَعْبٍ وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَمِينٌ وَأَمِينُ هَذِهِ الأُمَّةِ أَبُو عُبَيْدَةَ بْنُ الْجَرَّاحِ

"The most merciful of my nation to my nation is Abu Bakr, and the sternest of them concerning the commandments of Allah is 'Umar, the truly most modest of them is 'Uthman bin 'Affān. The most knowledgeable of them concerning the lawful and unlawful is Mu'ādh bin Jabal, the most knowledgeable of them concerning the laws of inheritance is Zaid bin Thābit, the best reciter of the Qur'an among them is Ubayy bin Ka'b, and every nation has a trustworthy one, and the trustworthy one of this nation is Abu 'Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrāh."[1]

Mu'ādh was from the most virtuous of the youth, devout in obedience, humble, shy, generous, handsome, he would apply kohl to

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1 Ahmad (13991), Ibn Mājah (154), Tirmidhi (3790), Ibn Hibbān (7131), Al-Hākim (5784).

his eyes, he had a bright and radiant face. He would sit behind the Prophet (ﷺ) on the riding beast and and listen to his words and admonitions. The Prophet (ﷺ) took Mu'ādh (رضي الله عنه) by his hand and informed him that he loved him for Allah's sake.[2] The Prophet (ﷺ) walked alongside him and Mu'ādh was on his riding beast and bade him farewell when he sent him to Yemen. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to Mu'ādh (رضي الله عنه):

إِنَّكَ تَأْتِي قَوْمًا أَهْلَ كِتَابٍ فَادْعُهُمْ إِلَى شَهَادَةِ أَنْ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ وَأَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ هُمْ أَطَاعُوا لِذَلِكَ فَأَعْلِمْهُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ افْتَرَضَ عَلَيْهِمْ خَمْسَ صَلَوَاتٍ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ وَلَيْلَةٍ فَإِنْ هُمْ أَطَاعُوا لِذَلِكَ فَأَعْلِمْهُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ افْتَرَضَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَدَقَةً فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ تُؤْخَذُ مِنْ أَغْنِيَائِهِمْ فَتُرَدُّ فِي فُقَرَائِهِمْ فَإِنْ هُمْ أَطَاعُوا

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[2] Abu Dawūd (1522).

لِذَلِكَ فَإِيَّاكَ وَكَرَائِمَ أَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاتَّقِ دَعْوَةَ الْمَظْلُومِ فَإِنَّهَا لَيْسَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ اللَّهِ حِجَابٌ

"You are going to some people among the People of the Book (Jews and Christians). Call them to bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, and that I am the messenger of Allah. If they obey that, then tell them that Allah has enjoined upon them five prayers every day and night. If they obey that, then tell them that Allah has enjoined upon them charity (Zakāt) from their wealth, to be taken from their rich and given to their poor. If they obey that, then beware of taking the best of their wealth. And beware of the supplication of the oppressed, for there is no barrier between that and Allah."[3]

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[3] Ibn Mājah (1783)

The Messenger (ﷺ) died whilst Mu'ādh was still in Yemen. After the death of the Messenger (ﷺ), Mu'ādh moved to Shām.

Mu'ādh (رضي الله عنه) died as a martyr in the 'Amawās plague that afflicted the land of Shām at the age of just 34 in the year 18AH.[4]

His full name was was Mu'ādh bin Jamal bin 'Amr Ibn Al-Ansāri and Al-Khazraji, the Imām of the Jurists, and among the greatest of the scholars (رضي الله عنه).

The knowledge of Mu'ādh is seen in his reminders and admonitions. He would encourage with the seeking of knowledge and explain that the fruits of knowledge are seen in the world even before the Hereafter. He stated:

"Seek knowledge and learn it because acquiring it for Allah's sake is to be in awe of Him

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[4] It is also said he was 33 or 38 years old.

(khashyah), to seek it is worship (‘ibādah) of Him, to revise it is to glorify Him (tasbīh), to search for it and research into it is Jihād, to teach it to someone who doesn’t know it is charity (sadaqah), to impart it to one’s family is to come close to them— that is because knowledge is the milestone and signpost for what is halāl and harām, the beacon (or minaret) for the people of Jannah, it is a friend when there is loneliness, a companion among strangers, a voice that speaks when one is alone, a guide in times of ease and hardship, a weapon against the enemies and a beautification in the company of friends.

Indeed Allah raises people through knowledge and it makes them, through its goodness, into leaders and Imāms. It makes them individuals whose path is followed, and their deeds are emulated, and the views are taken, and the angels seek their close friendship (khullah), their wings cover them, and every living and animate being seeks forgiveness

for them, even the fish in the seas and its insects, the wild predators, the birds and the cattle.

That is because knowledge is life for the hearts from a state of ignorance, and it is the shining lamp for the sights from a state of darkness. One reaches the heights of the virtue through knowledge and the highest of stations in this life and the next.

Reflecting over knowledge is equivalent to fasting; and studying it is equivalent to qiyām (praying at night). By way of it the kinship is connected, and the halāl matters are known from the harām— the limbs and the deeds follow it, the blessed ones are guided by it and the wretched ones are prevented from it."[5]

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[5] *Hilyatul-Awliyā* (1/239 slightly abridged).

Yazīd bin ‘Umairah was a student of Mu’ādh. He said: Whenever Mu’ādh sat in a gathering to teach, he would say: “Allah is a just arbiter and those who doubt that are destroyed.” Then Mu’ādh (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said:

إِنَّ مِنْ وَرَائِكُمْ فِتَنًا يَكْثُرُ فِيهَا الْمَالُ وَيُفْتَحُ فِيهَا الْقُرْآنُ حَتَّى يَأْخُذَهُ الْمُؤْمِنُ وَالْمُنَافِقُ وَالرَّجُلُ وَالْمَرْأَةُ وَالصَّغِيرُ وَالْكَبِيرُ وَالْعَبْدُ وَالْحُرُّ فَيُوشِكُ قَائِلٌ أَنْ يَقُولَ مَا لِلنَّاسِ لاَ يَتَّبِعُونِي وَقَدْ قَرَأْتُ الْقُرْآنَ مَا هُمْ بِمُتَّبِعِيَّ حَتَّى أَبْتَدِعَ لَهُمْ غَيْرَهُ فَإِيَّاكُمْ وَمَا ابْتُدِعَ فَإِنَّ مَا ابْتُدِعَ ضَلاَلَةٌ

“Indeed ahead of you there will be afflictions (fitan) wherein there will be abundant wealth.

And in those times, the Quran will be easy so much so that the believer, hypocrite, man, woman, young, grown up, slave and free man will learn it.

Then perhaps a person will say: "What is wrong with the people that they do not follow me while I read the Quran? They are not going to follow me until I introduce an innovation for them."

So avoid that which is innovated in the religion, for whatever is innovated is misguidance."[6]

So Mu'ādh has highlighted a reality, and that is that there are people who are not satisfied with what they find in the religion. They want novelties and innovations so as to imitate the other nations. So perhaps a reciter learns the Quran and he is misguided or has with him nifāq (hypocrisy) and he invites people to his deviation by claiming his attachment to the Quran.

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[6] Abu Dawud (4611) declared sahīh by Al-Albāni.

Or that he is a man of Sunnah, and he learns the Quran, but people turn away from him until he innovates for them in the Religion because the Quran and Sunnah does not suffice them due to their yearning for deviation and the Shaytān's beguilement of them. So Mu'ādh warned them from innovations, because the Quran and Sunnah (upon the understanding of the Sahābah) are sufficient.

And it is true of our times that the followers of the Sunnah are strangers in their lands and even in their homes. And this is due to the fact that they follow the Sunnah. So it is not permitted to leave the Sunnah due to the large amount of people of misguidance surrounding you. And what matters is that you are upon the truth even if you are few as Ibn Mas'ūd (رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said: **"The Jamā'ah is whatever agrees with the truth, even if you are by yourself."**

Then Mu'ādh (رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ) went on to say:

وَأُحَذِّرُكُمْ زَيْغَةَ الْحَكِيمِ فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ قَدْ يَقُولُ كَلِمَةَ الضَّلاَلَةِ عَلَى لِسَانِ الْحَكِيمِ وَقَدْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُ كَلِمَةَ الْحَقِّ . قَالَ قُلْتُ لِمُعَاذٍ مَا يُدْرِينِي رَحِمَكَ اللَّهُ أَنَّ الْحَكِيمَ قَدْ يَقُولُ كَلِمَةَ الضَّلاَلَةِ وَأَنَّ الْمُنَافِقَ قَدْ يَقُولُ كَلِمَةَ الْحَقِّ قَالَ بَلَى اجْتَنِبْ مِنْ كَلاَمِ الْحَكِيمِ الْمُشْتَهِرَاتِ الَّتِي يُقَالُ لَهَا مَا هَذِهِ وَلاَ يُثْنِيَنَّكَ ذَلِكَ عَنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ لَعَلَّهُ أَنْ يُرَاجِعَ وَتَلَقَّ الْحَقَّ إِذَا سَمِعْتَهُ فَإِنَّ عَلَى الْحَقِّ نُورًا قَالَ أَبُو دَاوُدَ قَالَ مَعْمَرٌ عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ فِي هَذَا وَلاَ يُنْبِيَنَّكَ ذَلِكَ عَنْهُ مَكَانَ يُثْنِيَنَّكَ . وَقَالَ صَالِحُ بْنُ كَيْسَانَ عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ فِي هَذَا الْمُشَبَّهَاتِ مَكَانَ الْمُشْتَهِرَاتِ وَقَالَ لاَ يُثْنِيَنَّكَ كَمَا قَالَ عُقَيْلٌ . وَقَالَ ابْنُ إِسْحَاقَ عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ قَالَ بَلَى مَا تَشَابَهَ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَوْلِ الْحَكِيمِ حَتَّى تَقُولَ مَا أَرَادَ بِهَذِهِ الْكَلِمَةِ

"And I warn you of the deviation of a scholar from right-guidance, for sometimes Shaytān utters a word of error through the tongue of a

scholar. And sometimes a hypocrite may speak a word of truth."

Yazīd bin 'Umairah said to Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal: "I am at a loss to understand, may Allah have mercy on you, that a learned man sometimes may speak a word of error and a hypocrite may speak a word of truth?" He replied: **"Yes, avoid the well-known erroneous speech of a learned man but be not discouraged from him, for it is possible that he may retract [his mistake]— and accept the truth when you hear it, for truth is light."** Ibn Ishāq explained: **"Yes, such that you are doubtful about the speech of a scholar until you say: 'What did he mean by this word?'"**[7]

So this a fitnah that is common upon the people: how to deal with the mistakes of a person who has knowledge. So the people fall into three categories:

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[7] Abu Dawūd (4611), sahīh.

1. A group who just cannot accept that their shaikh can be mistaken. They will not accept criticism of him or accept he was erroneous.

2. A group who see a mistake from a scholar, and they will never excuse him. So they bring him down without a thought and without clarifying the truth to him, or even accepting his correction.

3. The third way is in between the two extremes and that is the way of Ahlus-Sunnah and Mu'ādh (رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ) and the Salaf. That is to respect the level of the scholar, not to blindly follow him in his mistakes and errors, and to wait for his correction after he has been corrected. Leave the 'ulamā to speak concerning his error and the level of his slip— they will inform the layman whether his error is sufficient to remove him from Ahlus-Sunnah or whether it is an acceptable (or erroneous) ijtihād.

Abu 'Umar Ibn 'Abdil-Barr (رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ) stated: **"The scholars have compared the slip of an 'Ālim to a sinking ship because if a ship sinks, then with it will sink a large number of people… so it is not permitted for anyone to give a fatwa or to base his religion on a saying for which he doesn't know the proof."**[8]

Mu'ādh died in 18AH in the plague in Shām. The Prophet (صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, **"Whoever [from the Muslims] dies of an abdominal disease is a martyr, and whoever dies from the plague is a martyr."**[9] He buried his son and daughter who died from the plague, then he was afflicted with it.

Mu'ādh (رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ) narrated that the Prophet (صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **"The people of Paradise shall enter Paradise without body hair, with youth-**

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[8] *Jāmi' Al-Bayān al-'Ilm wa Fadlihi* (2/982) abridged.
[9] Bukhari (5733).

ful features, with Kohl on their eyes and thirty years of age or thirty-three."[10]

In a narration it is stated that people will enter Paradise upon the height of Adam (60 cubits), with the beauty of Yusuf, the age of 'Isā (i.e. 33 years) and the heart of Ayoub (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ).[11] May Allah be pleased with Mu'ādh and enter him into Jannah.

So fear Allah and be dutiful O Muslims! Seek knowledge, hasten to perform righteous deeds, seek forgiveness for your sins and hope for the reward from Allah for He is the Most Generous and Most Kind.

We ask Allah to grant us the success to worship Him, and obey Him as He deserves— we ask Him to forgive us and show us His mercy.

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[10] Tirmidhi (2545). See *As-Sahīhah* (6/1224).

[11] See *As-Sahīhah* (no. 2512), (6/45).

And all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. And may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon the Messenger, his family, his Companions and true followers.

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