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SAYYIDUNĀ JĀBIR IBN 'ABD ALLĀH

رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا

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SAYYIDUNĀ JĀBIR IBN ‘ABD ALLĀH رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَتُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَتَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضَلِّهِ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ وَنَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَنَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ وَرَسُولَهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَبَارَكَ وَتَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا كَثِيرًا أَمَا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقُوا أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

Introduction

Sayyidunā Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allāh رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا once entered the presence of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ welcomed him with much affection saying, “Welcome to you, O *Juwaybir!*”¹ using the diminutive of his name, to display more compassion.

Today, we welcome this eminent son of Islam, the great Imām, the Ḥāfiẓ, the *faqīh* (jurist), the muftī of Madīnah, the warrior, the Companion of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Abū ‘Abd Allāh, Jābir al-Anṣārī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

His companionship with Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ began at al-‘Aqabah, in Minā, where he along with 70 of the Anṣār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُM pledged allegiance to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, to defend him at all costs. This is known as the second Bay‘at al-‘Aqabah. And Sayyidunā Jābir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was the youngest of those who attended.² He had accepted Islam a year before this meeting and is thus one of the first from the residents of Madīnah to enter the faith.³

After Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ made hijrah to Madīnah Munawwarah, Sayyidunā Jābir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ stayed in his close company. He learnt knowledge, ‘amal (practice), good character, and outstanding qualities from Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

Emulation of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Sayyidunā Jābir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ emulated Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in every aspect. He would wear a headgear and turban, with the end of the turban hanging behind him. His trousers would reach to half his shin. He would trim his moustache off completely and he sometimes dyed his hair with henna.

His emulation of the Sunnah and adherence to the words of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was unique. On one occasion, Mālik ibn ‘Abd Allāh passed by Sayyidunā Jābir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ while moving on an expedition in the Roman lands. Sayyidunā Jābir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was walking despite having a mule so Mālik said, “Mount your mule, O Jābir, as Allah has given you a conveyance.” Jābir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ replied, “It is only the words of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ that prevents me from riding: ‘Anyone whose feet are covered with dust in Allah’s Path, shall be saved from the Hell Fire.’” Mālik rode to the front of the caravan and hollered to Jābir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to repeat what he had said. Sayyidunā Jābir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ repeated what he had heard from Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ at the top of his voice. As soon as the rest of the army heard what Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had said, they all dismounted and also began walking. The narrator says: “No other expedition had so many people walking in the path of Allah as was seen on that day.”⁴

Battles

Sayyidunā Jābir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ participated in 19 battles alongside Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.⁵ He did not participate in Badr and Uḥud,

1 Kanz al-‘Ummāl, Ḥadīth: 33236.

2 Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz, pg. 43; Usd al-Ghābah, pg. 165.

3 Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah, vol. 1 pg. 198.

4 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān: 4604

5 Al-Iṣābah, vol. 1 pg. 546.

however, for his father had left him behind to look after his sisters, who were seven in number and they had no guardian besides him. After his father was martyred at Uḥud, he never missed a single expedition Rasūlullāh ﷺ participated in.¹

The first battle he participated in was Ḥamrā' al-Asad. After the defeat at Uḥud, an announcement was made the next day for the Muslims to prepare themselves to march to Ḥamrā' al-Asad to face the disbelievers and show them the might of the Muslims. The announcement was clear that only those who fought in Uḥud were allowed to come. Sayyidunā Jābir رضي الله عنه resorted to the presence of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and sought permission to participate, despite the fact that he did not participate in Uḥud, explaining the reason why he stayed behind. Rasūlullāh ﷺ allowed him to participate. Thus, he is the only Ṣaḥābī to participate in Ḥamrā' al-Asad despite not participating in Uḥud. Ḥamrā' al-Asad was an open victory for the Muslims for the polytheists did not even dare to arrive. Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى praises those who participated in this expedition in the Qur'ān:

الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقْبَلُوا الْحَرَمَ الَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَآوَىٰ إِلَيْهِمْ وَاللَّهُ يَكْفِيهِمْ
فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ فَانْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَّمْ يَمَسِّنْهُمْ سُوءٌ وَاتَّبَعُوا رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ

*Those [believers] who responded to Allah and the Messenger after injury had struck them. For those who did good among them and feared Allah is a great reward - Those to whom hypocrites said, "Indeed, the people have gathered against you, so fear them." But it [merely] increased them in faith, and they said, "Sufficient for us is Allah, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs." So they returned with favour from Allah and bounty, no harm having touched them. And they pursued the pleasure of Allah, and Allah is the possessor of great bounty.*²

Altogether, Sayyidunā Jābir رضي الله عنه participated in 19 expeditions during the lifetime of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.³

After the demise of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, he fought in the path of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى and Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى granted the Conquest of Shām and other areas at his hands. He informs us of his inclusion in the army of Sayyidunā Khālīd ibn al-Walīd رضي الله عنه who were sent as reinforcements by Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه to Sayyidunā Abū 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrāḥ رضي الله عنه in the siege of Damascus. He participated in Qādisiyyah as well, the epic battle against the Persians.

Knowledge

Sayyidunā Jābir رضي الله عنه acquired an abundance of beneficial knowledge from Rasūlullāh ﷺ and lived for a long while after his demise to pass on this pure knowledge to the Ummah. He lived with Rasūlullāh ﷺ for 10 years and then lived another 60 odd years disseminating knowledge. He is one of the six who transmits the most amount of aḥādīth from Rasūlullāh ﷺ along with Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah, Sayyidunā Ibn 'Umar, Sayyidunā Anas, Sayyidunā Ibn 'Abbās, and Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها.⁴

He lived to become one of the eminent muftīs of Madīnah Munawwarah after Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Ibn Ḥazm regards Jābir رضي الله عنه as the moderate ones among the Muftīs of the Ṣaḥābah, who are 13 in number, including the likes of Mu'adh ibn Jabal and 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنهما.⁵

1 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 19, Ḥadīth: 4466.

2 Sūrah Āl 'Imrān: 172 – 174.

3 Al-Iṣṣabah, vol. 1 pg. 546.

4 Tahdhīb al-Asmā' wa al-Lughāt, vol. 1 pg. 280.

5 A'lām al-Mūqī'im, vol. 1 pg. 13.

Sayyidunā Jābir رضي الله عنه had a circle of learning in Masjid al-Nabawī and would impart knowledge to the people.¹ He reports 1540 aḥādīth. These aḥādīth are on various subjects. He is responsible for narrating a number of interesting happenings of the battles.

The amazing aspect of Sayyidunā Jābir رضي الله عنه is that he acquired an abundance of knowledge from the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم who were senior to him, as well as those junior to him. He travelled to Makkah Mukarramah, Egypt, and Shām in search of aḥādīth. On one occasion, he heard that Sayyidunā ‘Abd Allāh ibn Unays رضي الله عنه—someone junior to him—heard a ḥadīth directly from Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. So he purchased a camel and travelled for one month all the way to Shām. On reaching there, he enquired from Sayyidunā ‘Abd Allāh ibn Unays رضي الله عنه about the ḥadīth, telling him that he feared that either of them would pass away before he heard the ḥadīth directly from him. After the ḥadīth was related, he returned to Madīnah.²

Allah’s Special Help descends

Sayyidunā Jābir رضي الله عنه narrates, “As we were busy digging the trench for the Battle of Khandaq, an extremely hard and huge boulder became an obstacle. When the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم reported to Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم that the boulder posed an obstacle in the digging, he said that he will be coming down there. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم then stood up with a stone tied to his belly (to suppress his hunger) after we had already gone three days without tasting any food. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم then took a pickaxe and with one strike, reduced it to a heap of dust. [Other narrations mention 3 blows.] I then asked permission from Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم to go home and (when I reached home) I said to my wife, ‘I have seen such hunger on Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم that I am unable to bear. Do you have anything?’ She replied, ‘I have some barley and a kid goat.’ I slaughtered the kid and she ground the barley. We placed the meat in a pot to cook and when I went to call Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, the dough had already risen and the pot was on the fire with the food almost cooked. I said, ‘O Rasūlullāh! I have a little food, so why don’t you and one or two persons come?’ When Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم asked me how much food there was, I informed him. He said, ‘That is plenty and most excellent. Tell your wife not to take the pot off the fire and not to take the bread out of the oven until I arrive.’ He then told the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم to stand up (to join in the meal) and the Muhājirīn and Anṣār and all with them stood up. Such extreme embarrassment overcame me that Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى alone knows. When I returned home, I told my wife, ‘O dear! Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم has come with the Muhājirīn, the Anṣār and everyone else!’ She asked surprisingly, ‘Did Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم ask you about this?’ Jābir رضي الله عنه confirmed that Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم did. Upon this she remarked, ‘Then Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى and His Rasūl know better!’

When Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم arrived, she gave him the dough. He mixed some of his blessed saliva in it and supplicated for blessings. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said to the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم, ‘Enter the house but do not crowd it.’ [The Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم entered the house few at a time, ate and left.]

Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم broke the bread into the food and served the meat. As he did this, he kept covering the bread and the meat. In this manner, he continued serving food to the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم until they all were satiated and both the pot and the oven were as full as they had ever been. Thereafter Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said (to the lady of the house), ‘Eat and give others because hunger has afflicted everyone.’ She continued eating and giving others from there the entire day.” A narration states that the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم numbered eight hundred on that occasion.³

Sif al-Baḥr or al-Khabaṭ: Sayyidunā Jābir رضي الله عنه narrates that Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم despatched them—a regiment of 300 men—under the command of Sayyidunā Abū ‘Ubaydah ibn Jarrāḥ رضي الله عنه to intercept a caravan belonging to the Quraysh. They were sent to a coastal area. They were still travelling when their provisions were exhausted. Sayyidunā Abū ‘Ubaydah

1 Al-Iṣābah, vol. 1 pg. 546.

2 Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Book 42, Ḥadīth: 6.

3 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 23, Hadith: 5057, Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah, vol. 2 pg. 220, 221.

ﷺ instructed them to gather together all that was left of the provisions and when it was done, it amounted to only two satchels of dates. He rationed it to them little by little until it was almost finished. They then received only a single date each (for the day). When someone asked Sayyidunā Jābir ﷺ how they managed with one date, he replied, “We would suck on it like a child does and then drink water. It would suffice us throughout the day and night. We also used our staffs to knock leaves off the trees which we would wet and eat.” He says in another narration, “When the rations were finished, we missed even that single date.”

When they arrived at the sea shore, they saw something resembling a gigantic dune. As they observed closely, they realised that it was actually a fish called *al-‘Ambar* (whale). Sayyidunā Abū ‘Ubaydah’s ﷺ initial reaction was to say that it was carrion, but he later changed his mind and said, “No. We are the envoys of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and we are out in the path of Allah ﷻ and have reached the point of desperation. You may therefore eat.” Although they numbered three hundred, they lived off the fish for a month until they even started to put on weight. They used large containers to scoop up oil from its eye sockets and would cut off from it chunks of meat as large as bulls. Sayyidunā Abū ‘Ubaydah ﷺ once took 13 men and seated them in the eye socket. He also took one of its ribs, stood it upright and passed beneath it the tallest man, seated on a carriage on the largest camel. They took large chunks of meat with them as provisions for their journey and when they arrived at Madīnah, they reported the incident to Rasūlullāh ﷺ who observed, “It was your sustenance that Allah ﷻ had taken out for you (from the ocean). Do you have any of it with you to give us to eat?” They sent some for Rasūlullāh ﷺ and he ate.”¹

Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ affections towards him

Sayyidunā Jābir ﷺ was beloved to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ treated him with much affection and softness. This brings us to our final incident which depicts Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ affection towards him. The narration is about Sayyidunā Jābir’s ﷺ camel. He recalls:

I participated in an expedition along with Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ met me (on the way) while I was riding a camel of ours used for irrigation and it had got so tired that it could hardly walk. Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked me, “What is wrong with the camel?” I replied, “It has got tired.” So, Rasūlullāh ﷺ came from behind it, prodded it and prayed for it. As a result, it started surpassing the other camels and going ahead of them. Then he asked me, “How do you find your camel (now)?” I replied, “I find it quite well, now as it has received your blessings.” He said, “Will you sell it to me?” I felt shy (to refuse his offer) though it was the only camel for irrigation we had. So, I said, “Yes.” He said, “Sell it to me then.” I sold it to him on the condition that I should keep on riding it till I reached Madīnah.

Then I said, “O Messenger of Allah! I am a bridegroom,” and requested him to allow me to go home. When I took the permission of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, he asked me whether I had married a virgin or a matron and I replied that I had married a matron. He said, “Why did you not marry a virgin who would have played with you, and you would have played with her?” I replied, “O Rasūlullāh ﷺ! My father passed away and I have some young sisters, so I felt it not proper that I should marry a young girl like them who would neither teach them manners nor serve them. So, I have married a matron so that she may serve them and teach them manners.” [Rasūlullāh ﷺ commended him for his brilliant decision.²]

He continues: When Rasūlullāh ﷺ arrived in Madīnah, I took the camel to Rasūlullāh ﷺ the next morning and he gave me its price and told Sayyidunā Bilāl ﷺ to give me more than the stipulated amount. As I departed from the Masjid, Rasūlullāh ﷺ told me, “Take the price and keep the camel as well.”³

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 5, Book 59, Ḥadīth: 648, *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 3 pg. 634 – 636.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7, Book 64, Ḥadīth: 280.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4, Book 52, Ḥadīth: 211; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 8, Ḥadīth: 3463.

Demise

Sayyidunā Jābir رضي الله عنه was blessed with a long life of 94 years, 80 years of which he spent in Islam. He passed away in Madīnah at the age of 94 and is buried there.¹

This is a brief biography of one of the six greatest transmitters of aḥādīth from the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم. May Allah سبحانه وتعالى bless us with love and honour for him and may Allah سبحانه وتعالى unite us in Jannat al-Firdaws.

May Allah سبحانه وتعالى preserve the legacy of Sayyidunā Jābir رضي الله عنه just as he preserved the beautiful aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم.

و آخر دعوانا أن الحمد لله رب العالمين

¹ Al-'Ibar, vol. 1 pg. 89.