بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

مكانة الصحابة في القرآن والسنة

Status of the Prophet's Companions (Sahabah) in the Qur'an and the Prophetic Traditions (Alsunnah)

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Introduction

The Sahabah, as we all know, are the companions of the Prophet Muhammed (pbuh). They were his disciples, friends and defenders, many of whom suffered with him the persecution and harassment he and his early followers suffered at the hands of the polytheist in Makkah. Some of them were his advisers, fathers-in-law or sons-in-law. When we talk about them, let us remember the following basic facts:

- The role of the sahabah in defending the Prophet of Islam (pbuh) and giving him their full support against all odds (persecution in Makkah, military attacks at Badr and Medina and conspiracies and plots made by polytheists, Jews and hypocrites).
- Their role in the many battles and military expeditions against all sorts of enemies, that went as far as the North Western borders of Arabia during the life time of the Prophet (pbuh).
- Their role in the dissemination of Islam to various parts of the known world and their fight against the two super-powers of the time (Romans and Persian Empires) for the sake of Allah, in order to make way for His message of mercy to reach different peoples and to liberate those peoples from the forces of tyranny and suppression.
- Their role in preserving the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) for all mankind. The Qur'an was first compiled during the time of Abu Bakr, ('May Allah be pleased with him') and again in the days of Othman ibn 'Affan (May Allah be pleased with him), whose compilation is called "al-Mus-haf al-Imam" ('The Standard Copy of the Qur'an').
- Our indebtedness to them, after Allah and His messenger, for knowing about Islam and its lofty teachings.
- Above all, the Sahabah were chosen for the Prophet (pbuh) by Allah Who knows what is best for His messenger and for His religion.

The invaluable role of the Sahabah gave them a very special status both in the Qur'an and the Hadeeth of the Prophet Muhammed (pbuh). This is what we will try to look at today, insha' Allah.

I. Status in the Qur'an:

1. From the verse that we quoted from Surat al-Fat-h ('Chapter of Victory', Chapter 48), we can see that the special place of the Sahabah was mentioned even in the earlier revelations to Moses and Jesus (pbut), in the Torah and the Gospel. They are always bowing and prostrating, seeking Divine Pleasure; they are like tall trees that bring pleasure to the ones who planted **them.** They are a sore in the eye of the unbelievers and a cause of their rage. Allah has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds of them forgiveness and great rewards.

2. In the same Chapter of Victory, we read:

"Allah is well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to you (Muhammed) beneath the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down peace of reassurance on them, and has rewarded with a near victory." (Qur'an 48:18)

The story of *Bay'at al-Ridwaan* ('the Oath of Allegiance of 'Divine Pleasure'') and the Truce of Hudaybiyyah

In the sixth year of Hijrah the Prophet (pbuh) "had a vision in which he found himself entering the holy place at Makkah unopposed; therefore he determined to attempt the pilgrimage." He was accompanied by 1400 Muslims on this journey, attired as pilgrims. Upon their approach to Makkah they were warned that Quraish had sworn to prevent his entering the Holy Sacncturay. So the Prophet (pbuh) sent an envoy to inform the Makkans that he came in peace seeking only to perform pilgrimage, but the envoy was not given the chance to deliver the message. So Prophet (pbuh) sent another envoy, Uthman (May Allah be pleased with him) for the purpose. But there were rumors that he was murdered. "It was then the Prophet (pbuh), sitting under a tree at Al-Hudaybiyah, near Makkah, took an oath from all his attending companions that they would stand or fall together." (Abridged from Pickthall's introduction to his translation of the Meanings of the Qur'an.)

This was the oath of allegiance referred to in the above verse.

Our comment on the above verse will concentrate on the following points:
- The key expressions in the above verse: "Allah was well pleased" "He knew what was in their hearts"
- The number of the Sahabah referred to in this verse was 1400.
- Implication of the key expressions, especially if we remember that Allah's knowledge encompasses not only the present but the future as well, is that all those companions deserved Divine Pleasure of Allah.

3- In Surat al-Tawbah ('Repentance', Chapter 9), we read:

"And the first to lead the way of the Muhajirin ('immigrants from Makkah') and the Ansar ('supporters of Medina), and those who followed them in goodness—**Allah is well pleased with them** and they are well pleased with Him, and He has made ready for them Garden underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide for ever. That is the supreme triumph (Qur'an 9:100)

These are contrasted with the hypocrites:

"And among the those around you of the wandering Arabs there are hypocrites, and among the townspeople of al-Madinah (there are some who) persist in hypocrisy whom you (O Muhammed) do no know. We, We know them, and We shall chastise them twice; then they will be relegated to a painful doom." (Qur'an 9:101)

4-The truthfulness of the Sahabah is repeated in the following verse from Chapter 59:

"It is for the poor emigrants, who were expelled from their habitations and their possessions, seeking bounty from God and good pleasure, and helping God and His Messenger; those—**they are the truthful ones.**
And those who made their dwelling in the abode, and in the belief, before them, love whosoever has emigrated to them, not finding in their breasts any need for what they have been given, and preferring others above themselves, even though poverty be their portion. And whoso is guarded against avarice of his own soul, those—**they are the prosperous.**." (Qur'an 59:8-9)

5. Two main categories of the Sahabah are given in Chapter 57, both of whom are promised "Husnaa" ('good/ reward most fair'):

"…Not equal is he among you who spent, and who fought before the victory; those mightier in rank than they who spent and fought afterwards; **and unto each God has promised the reward most fair**; and God is aware of the things you do." (Qur'an, 57:10)
Some Qur'anic commentators point out that the word "al-Husnaa" refers to Paradise.

II. Status in the Prophet's Hadeeths:

There are hundreds of hadeeths of the Prophet (pbuh) that speak about the special status of the Sahabah (May Allah be pleased with them). Some of them are general, while others are more specific. Of the latter are the hadeeths related to "al-'asharah al-mubashshareen bi-ljannah" ('the Ten Promised Paradise') or to specific companions, such as Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) or Omar or Othman or Ali (May Allah be pleased with them). However, I will try to discuss only a few of them, due to the limitation of time. Those who are interested in more examples can see the various compilations of hadeeth, under the sections entitled "faDaa'il al-SaHaabah" or "manaaqib…" ('virtues of the companions' or 'special qualities of …'). We are told that Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal collected in a book of two volumes (called Virtues of the Companions *(faDaa'il al-SaHaabah)*) about 2000 traditions on the subject. (The book was published by Umm al-Qura Univestiy at Makkah in 1403 AH.)

1. Al-Bukhari reports in his Saheeh (Section 62) a hadeeth which we may translate in the following:

"There will come a time when a group of people fight (in the Cause of God). It will be asked of them, "Do you have amongst you a companion of the Prophet (pbuh)? The fighters say: "Yes." They will be victorious. Then, another time comes when a group of people fight (for the Cause of God). They will be asked: "Do you have amongst

you a companion of the companions of the Prophet (pbuh)? The fighters say: "Yes." They will be victorious. Then, there will be a time when a group of people fight (in the Cause of God). It will be asked, "Do you have amongst you a companion of a companion of the companions of the Prophet (pbuh)? The fighters say: "Yes." They will be victorious."

This shows the special blessing the Sahabah were endowed with, to the extent that a companion of a companion of the companions (the Sahabah) will have special blessings that would bring victory to fighters that include them.

In fact, history tells us once of the Muslim armies fighting in the Fertile Crescent (Iraq area) was in trouble. The leader sent to Omar (May Allah be pleased with him) for reinforcements. What he did was simply to send a few well known companions of the Prophet (pbuh), and the battle was won. (C.f. verses 65 and 66 of Chapter 8.)

2. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "The best people are my generation, then the following, then the next…."

3. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Do not call any of my companions names. If one of you spends the amount of Mountain Uhud in gold (for the Cause of Allah) that would not count as much as one mudd (handful) or half a handful of their spending." (Reported by Buhkahri and Muslim)

It is worth noting that this hadeeth was directed to the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) who joined the faith after the opening of Makkah, which indicates the difference between the two categories referred to in the verse 11 of Chapter 57, quoted earlier. This is a further proof of how superior in the sight of Allah are the Sahabah to us and people of later generations!

4. Both Bukhari and Muslim report a hadeeth in which we are told of a companion of the Prophet (pbuh) who committed, under duress, a grievous error. When Omar (May Allah be pleased with him) wanted to kill him, the Prophet (pbuh) ordered to let him go, saying: "How would you know that Allah has said to the fighters of Badr [the first battle in Islamic history]: 'Do whatever you like for I have forgiven you.?'"

This emphasizes the special status of those early companions of the Prophet (pbuh) in the sight of Allah, as all commentaries on this hadeeth agree.

5. Omar ibn al-Khattab (May Allah be pleased with him) reports that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Honour my companions. They are the best of you."

6. The Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said: "Allah has chosen me, **and Has has chosen for me companions,** some of them He made counselors, in-laws and supporters. Whoever calls them names Allah will curse him, so will the angels and people. Allah will not accept any of his deeds on the Day of Judgement."

7. "The most evil ones of my followers are the most daring against my companions."

8. "When Allah wills good for any of my followers he would put in his heart the love of my companions."

III. Special Status of the Four Righteous Caliphs

1. Abu Bakr al-Siddiiq (May Allah be pleased with him):

"If you help him not, still Allah helped him when those who disbelieve drove him forth, **the second of two; when they two were in the cave, when he said to his comrade**: Grieve not. Surely, Allah is with us…." (Qur'an, 9:40)

a. We find that all three roles mentioned in the said hadeeth (counselor –wazeer, in-law, and supporter) in fact apply best to Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him). He was the first man to embrace Islam, only companion in his trip to Medina, and father of 'Ayshah (May Allah be pleased with her) dearest wife to the Prophet (pbuh).

b. "The person I owe most for companionship and possessions is Abu Bakr. Were I to take a khaleel ('a special friend') other than my Lord I would have chosen Abu Bakr. But it is the fraternity of Islam and love in it."

c. Anas ibn Malik reports: "The Prophet (pbuh) went up Mount Uhud, and with him were Abu Bakr, Omar and Othman (May Allah be pleased with them). The mountain trembled. So he said to it: "Be stable for on you are a prophet, a trusting believer (siddeeq) and two martyrs."

We also know that it was Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) who was chosen by the Prophet (pbuh) to lead the Muslims in the prayer in his place just before he passed away.

2. Omar ibn al-Khattab (May Allah be pleased with him):

a. The description neatly fits Omar (May Allah be pleased with him) as well, including the fact that he was in-law to the Prophet (pbuh) who married Hafsah the daughter of Omar (May Allah be pleased with him) and advisor to the Prophet (pbuh) .

b. See hadeeth c above about Mount Uhud.

c. Addressing Omar (May Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (pbuh) said: "By God in Whose Hands is my soul, if Satan found you on a route he would avoid it to another route." (Bukhari)

d. In a Hadeeth by the Prophet (pbuh) "Among the earlier Israelites there were men of inspiration, but not prophets. If there is any [man of inspiration] among my followers it would be Omar."

3. **Othman ibn ‘Affan (May Allah be pleased with him):**

a. The Prophet (pbuh) once said: “Whoever digs the well of Roomah [at al-Madinah] for him is Paradise.” Othman (May Allah be pleased with him) dug it. (al-Bukhari)

b. The Prophet (pbuh) once said: “Whoever provides the supplies for “jaysh al-‘usrah” (an expedition to the North of Arabia) his reward will be Paradise.” The army’s provisions were supplied by Othman (May Allah be pleased with him). (al-Bukhari) This expedition was called ‘the army of hardship’ due to the specially difficult circumstances at the time. But Othman (May Allah be pleased with him), as always, was up to it.

c. Allah’s choice of the companions for the Prophet (pbuh) applies to Othman (May Allah be pleased with him), since he was an early convert to Islam, a counselor and a son-in-law to the Prophet (pbuh). In fact, he was the only man who had the honour of being married to two of the Prophet (pbuh)’s daughters, Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthoum, consecutively of course.

4. **Ali ibn Abi Talib (May Allah be pleased with him)**:

a. Allah’s choice of the companions for the Prophet (pbuh) applies also to Ali (May Allah be pleased with him), though he was much younger in age than the other three Righteous Caliphs, but he also had the honour of being raised in the house of the Prophet (pbuh), being the son of his dear uncle Abu Talib. Ali (May Allah be pleased with him) was given the hands of the dearest daughter to the Prophet (pbuh), Fatimah al-Zahraa’, in marriage.

b. To Ali (May Allah be pleased with him) the Prophet (pbuh) said: “You are from me, and I am from you.”

c. During the Battle of Khaybar the Prophet (pbuh) said: “Tomorrow the standard will be given to someone who loves Allah and His messenger (or someone loved by Allah and His messenger) and Allah will bring victory on his hands.” The standard was given to Ali (May Allah be pleased with him).

IV. **Status of Sayyidah ‘Ayshah bint Abi Bakr al-Siddiq (May Allah be pleased with her)**:

When we talk about the status of the sahabah (Companions of the Prophet (pbuh), we should remember the more special status of the wives of the Prophet (pbuh), because the Prophet (pbuh) is “closer to the believers than their own selves, and <u>his wives are their mothers</u>…” (Qur'an, 33:6)

Allah emphasizes this very special status of the wives of the Prophet (pbuh) in the following verses:

"O you wives of the Prophet! Whosover of you commits manifest lewdness, the **punishment for her will be doubled,** and that is easy for Allah. And whosoever of you is submissive to Allah and His messenger and does right, **We shall give her reward twice over**, and We have prepared for her a rich provision." (Qur'an, 33:30-31)

I think it is quite obvious from these verses that the wives of the Prophet (pbuh) cannot be compared in status to any other follower of the Prophet (pbuh), either in responsibility or in honour.

This probably explains why the clearing of the name of Sayyidah 'Ayshah (May Allah be pleased with her**)** (who was accused of adultery by the hypocrites) was not made by a human being, even the Prophet (pbuh), but Someone far greater, Allah (swt), as we can read in Surat al-Noor (Chapter of Light –24:11-17). In these verses we read that whoever started the rumor and slander of adultery against 'Aysah (May Allah be pleased with her) "for him is a great punishment and torture" by Allah (Qur'an, 24: 11)
"Why, when you heard it, did not the believing men and believing women think good of one another and say: "This is an obvious falsehood?" (Qur'an, 24: 12).

And on the occasion of clearing her pure name, Allah decreed the punishment of slander against innocent believing men and women in general. (Qur'an 24: 4-5).

What is important for us to remember here are the following:

-'Ayshah (May Allah be pleased with her) was the most favourite wife of the Prophet (pbuh).

- She was married to him by instructions brought by Archangel Gabriel when she was only a child.
- She was not only the daughter of his dearest friend, Abu Bakr, but was almost brought up by the Prophet (pbuh), since she was very young (9 years old) when she was married to him.
- To her (May Allah be pleased with her), Muslims owe knowledge of most of the intimate information on the conduct of family affairs of their Prophet as well as his teachings on many female related issues, among others, since she was not only a very bright wife who survived her husband for many long years, but she was a learned lady consulted by many great sahabah in religious matters.
- As a wife of the Prophet (pbuh), she is **a mother to every believer in Islam**. (Qur'an, 33: 6)
- Any slander against the person of 'Ayshah (May Allah be pleased with her) means **defiance of the Words of Allah (Who cleared her name), which amounts to KUFR ('disbelief'**). It is also an insult to the person of the Prophet (pbuh) and to his honour. (Let everyone of us imagine what he would feel and do if his real mother or wife has been falsely accused of adultery!) Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an:

"Surely, those who malign Allah and His messenger, **Allah has cursed them in this world and the Hereafter**, and has prepared for them the doom of the disdained." (Qur'an, 33:57)

No wonder in the last verse about the slander against ‘Ayshah (May Allah be pleased with her) Allah (swt) strongly warns:
“Allah admonishes you that **you ever repeat such a thing, if you are (in truth) believers.”** (Note the closing words “if you are (in truth) believers”, because Allah knows that this admonition **would not be heeded by hypocrites or unbelievers**.

V. What Should our Position be towards the Sahabah?

At this juncture, one may ask: “What should be the status of the Sahabah in **our eyes**?” The Qur’an teaches us the following, which is the verse that comes immediately after the two verses that speak about the Muhajirin and Ansar (‘Immigrants and Supporters’) in Chapter 59 (quoted earlier, example 4):

“And those who came (into the faith) after them say: Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who were before us in the faith, and place not in our hearts any rancour (hatred) toward those who believe. Our Lord, You are Full of Pity, Merciful.” (Qur'an, 59:10)

This verse, as well as some of the hadeeths quoted earlier, confirm the comment made by Imam Malik on the last part of the verses we quoted at the beginning of this talk:

“Muhammed is the messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are hard against the unbelievers, merciful one to another. ., that through them He [Allah] may enrage the unbelievers. God has promised those of them who believe and do deeds of righteousness forgiveness and a great reward.” (Qur'an, 48: 29)

He commented that this verse clearly points out that carrying malice and hatred for the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) is a sign of KUFR (‘disbelief’), because Allah says: “that through them [the Sahabah of the Prophet (pbuh)] He may enrage the unbelievers.”

Let us also remember that, due to political and ideological conflicts, history is full of wrong information and fabrications made sometimes by some parties to support their views or to attack their opponents. The movement of attack on Sahabah (‘Companions of th Prophet (pbuh) was led by the Jewish convert ‘Abdullah ibn Saba’. So we have to be very careful while reading different reports, especially about the Sahabah, and do not take everything at its face value.

VI. Implications of Defiling the Names of the Sahabah

It is a well-known fact that the enemies of Islam have always tried to attack Islam and its teachings and to cast doubt on its teacher the Prophet (pbuh). Having failed in these attempts, they thought of devious and indirect means of undermining Islam and its teachings by casting doubts on the people who supported the Prophet (pbuh) and preserved his teachings. **By making Muslims doubt the integrity of the Sahabah, their faith in the Qur’an and teachings of the Prophet (pbuh) will be lost, since it was the Sahabah (May Allah be pleased with him) who conveyed to them both, and transmitted them to later generations.** One would legitimately wonder, “Whom can we trust if the best generation of Islam was (as claimed by the enemies of the faith) dishonest and corrupt!” “And how can we know that the Qur’an was not

tampered with, if the Sahabah who preserved it for us had dubious characters?" as claimed by the hypocrites and enemies of Islam.

I think it is very important for us to pay special attention to the consequences of accepting the misinformation given to us by the enemies of Islam about the Sahabah (May Allah be pleased with him), and, still worse, even disseminating such claims that undermine the whole religion of Islam. Naturally, any insult to the character of the Sahabah would not affect them in the least, because they are with their Lord, but it will certainly hurt Islam and the feelings of the lovers of the Prophet (pbuh) and his friends and companions.

A Note of Advice:

A final note of advice to the ignorant people who call the Sahabah names or even curse them. According to the hadeeth, "Anyone who says about a Muslim that he is kaafir, he himself has become a kaafir"

As for those who have the insolence to curse the Sahabah, let us remind them of the hadeeth of the Prophet (pbuh) which says:

"Whenever a person curses someone the curse will go up to find the doors of the heavens closed against it; then it comes down to find the doors of earth closed in its face. It will look right and left. If it finds no entrance it will go to the person cursed, if he deserves it. Otherwise, it will go back to the originator of the curse." In other words, anyone who dares to curse a Sahabi he is actually praying for Allah's wrath **against himself,** since we are sure that none of the Sahabah of the Prophet (pbuh) deserve to be cursed. Allah has already told us that He was well pleased with them; so was his Prophet (pbuh), as we have seen in our discussion earlier.

So let us remember two of the Prophet's sayings about the Sahabah and those who call them names.

"**The most evil ones of my followers are the most daring against my companions."**

The Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said: "Allah has chosen me, and Has has chosen for me companions, some of them He made counselors, in-laws and supporters**. Whoever calls them names Allah will curse him, so will the angels and people. Allah will not accept any of his deeds on the Day of Judgement."**