



Imām Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī¹

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Imām Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ḥusaynī al-Zabīdī, Abu’l Fayḍ and is widely known as Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī. [1145-1205 AH/ 1732-1790 CE]

He was a Ḥanafī scholar, lexicographer, linguist, a grandmaster in ḥadīth, genealogy, biographies and personal histories [*ḥadīth, ansāb, rijāl*]. He was a prolific writer. Apart from Arabic, he was proficient in Turkish, Persian and a language of Karaj.

Originally from Wāsiṭ in Iraq, he was born in Belgram in India and migrated to Zabid in Yemen; hence his title, Zabīdī. He traveled to Hijāz [Jiddah, Makkah and Madinah] and then to Egypt and was renowned in the Islamic world. Kings from Hijāz, India, Yemen, Levant [Shām], Iraq, Morocco, Turkey, Sudan and Algiers corresponded with him; people sent him presents and gifts from everywhere.

He was admired and venerated so much that some people in Western Africa believed that their Hajj was incomplete if they did not visit and honor Murtaḍa Zabīdī!

Al-Kattānī notes in his *Fahris al-Fahāris*:

¹ Sources used:

Al-Zirkily, *Al-A’lām* Vol.7

Hāji Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn*

Ismā’īl Pāshā Appendix of *Kashf al-Zunūn*, vol.6/pg.271 Entry under Muḥammad/Al-Zabīdī

Al-Zabīdī, *It’ḥāf al-Sādah* Vol.1

Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, Vol.1

The foreword of *Badhl al-Maj’hūd* published by Dār as-Şaḥābah, Tanta, Egypt; quoting from *Fahris al-Fahāris* of ‘Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī, Vol.1/pg.526.

‘Zabīdī was peerless in his time and age. None after Ibn al-Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī and his students can match al-Zabīdī in terms of his encyclopaedic knowledge of traditions and its associated sciences; nor in fame or list of students.’

He passed away in Egypt during an epidemic plague in the year 1205AH / 1790CE. May Allah be pleased with him and grant him an extensive paradise and make us benefit from his knowledge.

Among his works are small booklets and encyclopedias spanning volumes. In spite of his mastery in the sciences, he was a self-effacing man, a glimpse of which is visible from his introduction to his masterpiece, *It’ḥāf – An Exegesis of Iḥyā’a*.

Sharīf Murtaḍā Zabīdī says:

‘I sought the help of Allāh in naming this book: *Presents of the Pious Leaders, an Exposition of the Secrets of the Book: ‘Revival of Religious Sciences’*. Having written this book, I do not absolve myself or my book that it is without mistakes or misgivings; nor do I sell my [fare] with the condition that it has no flaw in it. Rather with a profound acknowledgement of my shortcomings, I ask Allāh ta’ālā to erase the slips that occurred, by the pen that erred, in these lines that are lettered. And I tell the reader who looks at my compilation: do not hold back if you find something unconvincing, because everyone has their own way of thinking and a writer has his own viewpoint towards a thing.

O, the unbiased and just reader! I ask you to forgive me my mistakes and slips, for the finest of horses can stumble and falter; and the young are childish – and cannot see beyond the lapses of a learned man. Even the expert money-changer will [sometimes] be hoodwinked by counterfeiters. It is obvious that criticizing a book is easier than writing one; particularly for a lengthy book, it is easy to comment and nitpick than conceive and compose one. As it is observed from surveying ancient buildings and structures of yore – people comment on their strength and quality, those who are unable to match a stone with another! This is my answer in defence to those who voice objections to my book.’

The erudite and eloquent master Qaḍī ‘Abdu’r Raḥm al-Bīsānī wrote to ‘Imād al-Aṣbahānī, the scribe apologetically: ‘A thing occurred and I don’t know if I should fight with you [for that] or not, and here I tell you why: I have seen that nobody has written a book except they say on the morrow: ‘perhaps, if I change this passage it would look more elegant; or if I add something it may look more beautiful; If I change the order it looks better; and if I remove a thing it looks grander.’ This is a great admonition, on the fallibility of humans and that they are prone to error. I hope, my readers will forgive me, and they are worthy of such kindness. I count on the beautiful ones among them, and they are the magnificent ones.’

In Tāj al-‘Arūs, under the listing **q- m - s**:

al-qams [القمس]: to dive into the sea; it is read with both *ḡamm* and *kasr*, thereby: *yaqmusu*, *yaqmisu* [يقمس يقمس] similarly, *qamisa fihi qamsan* [he dived into it]; *qamūsan*: to be absorbed and then rise; every thing that is immersed in water and then taken out is termed, '*qamis*';

many related entries later:

al-qawmas [القومس]: the ocean, as reported by Ibn Darīd; it is said that [*qawmas*] is the great body of water [mu'zamu mā'a al-baḥr]: *al-qāmūs*. In the Ḥadīth of Ibn 'Abbās raḍiyAllāhu 'anhumā, where he was asked about the flood and ebb of the tide [madd wa'l jazr]: 'an angel is appointed upon the deeps of the ocean [bi qāmūsi'l baḥr] – whenever he puts his foot down it rises and when he lifts it is subsides.'

further down he writes:

al-qāmūs is the ocean [as reported by Ibn Darīd], the author – may Allāh have mercy on him – named this book of his and it was discussed in its introduction. It [al-qāmūs] also means that it is the deepest spot [in the ocean], the abyss [ab-'adu mawḍi'in fihi ghawrā].

The preface of the book in ten sections should be counted as a separate work in itself; wherein he describes the reason for compiling his extended lexicon and history of Arabic lexicography and Arabic lexicons; a linguist's discussion of the Arabic language and its beauty; and a fairly detailed biography of the author Al-Fayrūzābādī and a review of his exceptional dictionary. And an explanation of the preface of *Al-Qāmūs*, which is considered as a literary masterpiece and exemplary in its eloquence.

His Works

1. Tāj al-'Arūs min Jawāhari'l Qāmūs [The Crown of the Bride made from the Gems of the Ocean]: Even though *qāmūs* means a 'dictionary' in usage, its literal meaning is 'ocean'.

Majduddīn Al-Fayrūzābādī [d.818AH/1415CE] compiled a specialist philological dictionary, *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ* [The Encompassing Ocean]. In this dictionary, he ordered root words alphabetically by the last letter of the word, instead of the first; somewhat like a rhyming dictionary. . Therefore *qāmūs* and '*arūs*' are both listed under the letter *sīn*, whereas *tāj* is listed under *jīm* . Some have noted, it was meant to be a reference for scholars.

Zabīdī expanded this into a multi-volume dictionary and is considered as his magnum opus. It has been published by *Dār al-Fikr* in 20 volumes.

2. It'hāf al-Sādah al-Muttaqīn [Presents from Pious Chieftains] is an exegesis of an

already detailed *Ihyā'a*, of Imām Al-Ghazālī. It was published in 14 volumes recently and is the second of Zabīdī's two masterpieces.

3. Asānīd al-Kutub al-Sittah [The Authentication Chains of the Six Books]: Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nasayi, Abū Dawud, Ibn Majah are the six motherbooks of Ḥadīth and termed as *sittah* or 'The Six'. Zabīdī collected the narrators and their chains in this book as is apparent from the title.

4. 'Uqūd al-Jawāhir al-Munīfah fī Adillati Madh'hab al-Imām Abū Ḥanīfah [Stringing the Blessed Pearls on the Evidences used in the Madh'hab of Abū Ḥanīfah]

5. Kashf al-Lithām an Ādāb al-Īmān wa'l Islām [Raising the Curtain on Etiquette in Faith and Islām]

6. Ra'fa al-Shakwā wa Tarwīḥ al-Qulūb fī Dhikr Mulūki Banī Ayyūb [Removing the Grievance and Comforting the Hearts in the mention of the Kings of Bani Ayyub]

7. Mu'jam al-Shuyūkh [A Dictionary of Zabīdī's Teachers]

8. Alfiyyah al-Sanad, [A Thousand Liner on Chains of Authentication] in Ḥadīth; which is a poem of more than 1500 lines and its explanation.

9. Mukhtaṣar al-'Ayn: An abridgement of the book *Al-'Ayn* attributed to Khalil Ibn Aḥmed, the grammarian [d.175AH]. It is also said that it is written by Layth ibn Naṣr al-Khurāsānī, his student. *Al-'Ayn* could mean 'a wellspring' but it is also said that Khalil could complete only until the letter '*ayn*, Layth wrote the rest; hence the name. Therefore the first part is not in the same style as the rest. Ibn Rāhwiyyah said that he wrote only for the letter '*ayn* and Layth wrote the rest.

The reason for such a disagreement is because the book contains mistakes which even the most amateur among his students would not commit, let alone the master, Khalil. Al-Zirkily lists this book in *Al-A'alām* but it could be an erroneous ascription to Murtaḍā Zabīdī too, since Hājī Khalīfah writes under the entry *Al-'Ayn* in *Kashf al-zunūn* that Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Al-Ḥasan Al-Zabīdī, the linguist-lexicologist who passed away in 379AH/989CE, wrote an abridgement of the book named *Al-Istidrāk 'alā Kitāb al-'Ayn* and he said in it: 'It is not correct that it was written by Khalil nor is there any evidence; probably, he attested it but died before it was completed..'

10. Al-Takmalah wa's Ṣīlah wa'dh Dhayl li'l Qāmūs [Completion, Supplement and Appendix to the dictionary *Al-Qāmūs*] in two hefty volumes.

11. Īḍāḥ al-Madārik bi'l Ifṣāḥ 'ani'l 'Awātik [Shedding Light on the Senses about Noble Women]; a monograph.

12. 'Iqd al-Jumān fī Bayāni Shu'ab al-Īmān [String of Pearls: A Description of the book '*Branches of Faith*']

13. **Tuḥfatu'l Qamā'il fi Mad'hi Shaykh al-'Arab Ismā'il** [Present of Chieftains in Praise of the Grandfather of Arabs Sayyidunā Ismā'il 'alayhi's salām]

14. **Taḥqīq al-Wasāyil li Ma'rifati'l Makātabāt wa'r Rasāyil** [An Analysis of the Means for Knowledge of Letters and Epistles]

15. **Jadhwatu'l Iqtibās fi Nasabi Banī al-'Abbās** [An Extracted Ember on the Genealogy of Bani Abbas]

16. **Ḥikmatu'l Ishrāq ilā Kuttāb al-'Afāq** [Sparkling Wisdom for Writers of the World] : A book on calligraphy.

17. **Al-Rawḍ al-Mi'ṭār fi Nasabi's Sādati Āli Ja'far al-Ṭayyār** [A Fragrant Garden: On the Genealogy of the Descendants of Ja'far al-Ṭayyār]

18. **Muzīl al-Niqāb al-Khafā'a 'an Kunā Sādātinā Banī Al-Wafā'a** [Removing the Concealing Veil on the Apellation of our Lords from Bani Wafa] which was probably also named as: *Raf'a al-Niqāb al-Khafā'a 'amman Intamā ilā Wafā wa Abi'l Wafā* [Raising the Hiding Veil from those who are related to Abi'l Wafā]

19. **Bulghātu'l Gharīb fi Muṣṭalaḥi Āthār al-Ḥabīb**: [The Necessary Provision for the Stranger: in Understanding the Terminology of the Beloved's Tradition ṣallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam]

20. **Tanbīh al-'Aārif al-Baṣīr 'alā Asrārī'l Ḥizb al-Kabīr** [A Warning to the Discerning Knower on the Secrets of the 'The Great Collection'] on the Hizb of Imām Shādhilī.

21. **Safīnatu'n Najāh Al-Muḥṭawiyah 'alā Biḍā'atin Muzjāh mina'l Fawāyidi'l Muntaqāh** [The Rescue Ship Carrying Rare Provisions from the 'Distinguished Benefits'] probably a commentary on the book *Al-Fawāyid al-Muntaqāh* by Shaykh Abū 'Abdullāh Al-Qāsim Ibn Faḍl ath-Thaqafī al-Aṣbahāni [d.489AH/1095CE] – a book on Ḥadīth.

22. **Ghāyatu'l Ibtihāj li Muqtafi Asānīdi Muslim ibn Al-Ḥajjāj** [Intense Joy for the Follower of the Chains of Muslim ibn Al-Hajjaj]

23. **'Iqd al-La'ālī al-Mutanāthirah fi'l Aḥādīth al-Mutawātirah** [A Necklace of Scattered Pearls: A Collection of Massively Transmitted Ḥadīth]

24. **Nishwatu'l Irtiyāh fi Bayāni Ḥaqīqati'l Maysiri wa'l Aqdāh** [Exulting in Gratification: An Exposition on the Reality of Gambling and Drinking]

25. **Al-'Arāyis al-Majluwwah fi Dhikri Awliyā'yi Fuwwah** [Presenting the Resplendent Grooms – Chronicles of the Awliya of Fuwwah]: Fuwwah is a well-known place in Yemen.

26. **It'hāf al-Ikhwān fi Ḥukmi'd Dukhān** [Presents to Bretheren on the Ruling of Smoking]

27. **Irshādu'l Ikhwān ila'l Akhlāq al-Ḥisān** [Guide to Bretheren towards Lofty Character and Morals]
28. **Al-Ishghāf bi'l Ḥadīth al-Musalsal bi'l Ashrāf** [Fondness : about those Ḥadīth transmitted only through the Noble Progeny]
29. **Iklīl al-Jawāhir al-Ghāliyah fi Riwayati'l Aḥādīth al-'Aāliyah** [A Crown of Precious Gems concerning the Transmission of Lofty Traditions]
30. **Tuḥfatu'l Mawdūd fi Khatmi Sunan Abū Dāwūd** [Present of the Beloved in the Conclusion of Sunan Abū Dāwūd]
31. **Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍarah fi Ādābi'l Baḥthi wa'l Muḥāḍarah** [A Beautiful Sermon on the Etiquette of Debate and Discussion]
32. **Badhl al-Maj'hūd fi Takhriji Ḥadīth 'Shayyabatnī Hūd'** [Expending Efforts in the Analysis of the Ḥadīth: 'The Sūrah Hūd has Greyed Me']
33. **It'ḥāf al-Aṣfiyā bi Silāki'l Awliyā'a** [Presents of the Pure on the Chains of Awliya]
34. **It'ḥāf Ahl al-Islām bimā Yat'allaqu bi'l Muṣṭafā wa Āli Baytihi'l Kirām** [Presents of Muslims Concerning Muṣṭafā and His Noble Household]
35. **It'ḥāf Sayyidu'l Ḥayy bi Salāsili Banī Ṭayy** [Presents of the Living Masters on the Chains of Banu Tayy]
36. **Al-Iḥtifāl bi Ṣawmi's Sitti min Shawwāl** [The Rejoicing in the Additional Six Fasts of Shawwal]
37. **Al-Arba'un al-Mutakhallafah fimā Warada fi'l Aḥādīth fi Dhikri 'Arafah** [The Forty Inherited Ḥadīth that have been reported mentioning Arafah]
38. **Is'āf al-Ashrāf** [The Aid of The Progeny]
39. **Is'āf al-Rāghibīn fi Sīrati'l Muṣṭafā wa Āli Baytihi't Tāhirīn** [Salvation of the Aspirants on the Path of Muṣṭafā and his Pure Household]
40. **I'lām al-A'lām bi Manāsiki Bayti'llāhi'l Ḥarām** [Declaration of the Knowledgeable on the Rituals of the Sacred House of Allāh]
41. **Manāqib Aṣ'ḥāb al-Ḥadīth** [Merits and Praise of the Scholars of Ḥadīth]
42. **Al-Intiṣār Li Wālidī'n Nabīyyi'l Mukhtār** [In Advocacy the Father of the Chosen Prophet ṣallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam]
43. **Al-Ta'līqah 'alā Musalsalāti Ibn 'Alīqah** [A Commentary on the Chains of Ibn Aliqah]

44. **Al-Taftish fi Ma'nā Lafz 'Durwīsh'** [An Investigation in the meaning of the word 'Durwish' or the 'Mendicant']
45. **Tansīq Qalāyid al-Matan fi Taḥqīqi Kalāmi'sh Shādhilī Abi'l Ḥasan** [Organizing the Sturdy Necklaces in the Study of the Sayings of Abū'l Ḥasan Shadhili]
46. **Ḥadīqatu's Ṣafā fi Wāliday al-Muṣṭafā ṣallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam** [The Immaculate Gardens : Concerning the Parents of Muṣṭafā ṣallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam]
47. **Rashfu Zulāl al-Raḥīq fi Nasabi Haḍrati's Ṣiddīq raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu** [Imbibing the Pure Nectar : concerning the Ancestry of Abū Bakr al-Siddīq raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu]
48. **Rashqatu'l Mudām al-Makhtūm al-Bikri min Ṣafwati Zulālī Ṣibghī'l Quṭub al-Bakrī** [Sealed Wine from the Cleanliness of a Pure Flavored Drink of the Spiritual Pole Al-Bakri]
49. **Rafu'sh Shakwā Li 'Aālimi's Sirri wa'n Najwā** [Raising a Complaint towards the Knower of the Open and Hidden]
50. **Rafu'l Kalal 'ani'l 'Ilal** [Removing the Exhaustion in the matter of Justification] assuming that *ilal* is not 'disease.'
51. **Zahr al-Akmām al-Munshaq 'an Juyūbi'l Ilhām bi Sharḥi Ṣayghati 'Abd al-Salām** [A Lone Flower from the Pockets of Inspiration in the Explanation of 'Abd al-Salām's Formula]
52. **Sharḥ al-Ṣadr fi Sharḥ Asmāyi Ahli Badr** [Expanding of the Chest concerning the names of those who participated in the expedition of Badr]
53. **Al-Arūṣ al-Mujliyyah fi Ṭuruqi Ḥadīth al-Awwaliyyah** [Shining Brides concerning the Chains of the 'First Ḥadīth']
54. **Al-'Iqd ath-Thamīn fi Ṭuruqi'l Ilbāsi wa't Talqīn** [A Precious String concerning the Paths of Wearing Cloaks and Instruction]
55. **'Aqīlatu'l Atrāb fi Sanadi't Ṭariqati wa'l Aḥzāb** [Lords of the Same Age: Concerning the 'Path' and the 'Groups'] *
56. **Qalansuwatu't Tāj** [A Diadem]
55. **Al-Qawl al-Mathbūt fi Taḥqīqi Lafzi't Tābūt** [Veritable Statement researching the etymology of the word 'Ark']
56. **Kashf al-Ghiṭā 'an Ṣalāti'l Wustā** [Lifting the Curtain to reveal the 'Middle Prayer']
57. **Luqat al-La'ālī mina'l Jawhar al-Ghālī** [Gleaning of Pearls from a Treasure of Priceless Gems]

58. **Al-Murabbī al-Kābili fiman Rawā ‘an Shams al-Bābilī** [The Short Master concerning that which has been narrated from Shams al-Babeli]
59. **Al-Mirqāt al-‘Aliyyah bi Sharḥi’l Ḥadīth al-Musalsal bi’l Awwaliyyah** [The Lofty Steps in Explanation of the Continuously Narrated *First Ḥadīth*]
60. **Al-Maqām al-’Indiyyah fi’l Mashāhid al-Naqshbandiyyah** [The Station of ‘Nearness’ near the Stations of the Naqshbandis]
61. **Al-Minaḥ al-‘Aliyyah fi’t Ṭarīqati’n Naqshbandiyyah** [Lofty Presents Concerning the Naqshbandi Path]
62. **Minaḥ al-Fuyūḍāt al-Wafiyyah fimā min Sūratī’r Raḥmān min Asrāri’sh Ṣifati’l Ilāhiyyah** [Exuberant and Lavish Gifts : concerning the Secrets of the Attributes of the Lord Almighty in the Chapter *Al-Raḥmān*]
63. **Al-Mawāhib al-Jalīyyah fimā Yat’allaqu bi Ḥadīth al-Awwaliyyah** [Prominent Presents : concerning the First Hadith]
64. **Mawāhibu Rabb al-Bariyyah Bi’l Imlāyi’sh Shaykhūniyyah** [Presents of the Lord of the Universe concerning the Dictation of Shaykhuniyyah]
65. **An-Nafḥatu’l Qudsiyyah fi Wāsitati’l Biḍ’ati’l ‘Īd al-Rūsiyyah** [Ethereal Breeze : concerning the Innovation of the Russian Festival]
66. **An-Nawāfiḥ al-Miskiyyah ‘ala’l Fawāyiḥ al-Kishkiyyah** [Fragrance of Musk on the Perfume of Kishk]
67. **Hadiyyatu’l Ikhwān fi Shajaratī’d Dukhān** [A Gift to the Bretheren: Concerning the Tobacco Weed]²



² Note: Some names have been translated by mere guessing as the translator does not have access to most of these books. These are merely taken from the lists in the sources mentioned. Because having knowledge of the subject matter equips one better in making a more accurate translation some translations may sound amusing or appalling; the translator apologizes for this.