

AN EVALUATION OF MODERN SCHOLARSHIP ON THE PROPHET'S COMPANIONS (*Ā—ĀBAH*)

Muhammad Abdul Jabbar Beg

Muslims today have renewed their interest in Islamic history and have sought inspiration from the lives of the *Ā—Ābah*, or Companions of the Prophet Mu—ammad (p.b.u.h.)—a subject which was developed by early Muslim scholars, especially during the 'Abbāsīd and Mamlūk periods of history. Such scholars included Ibn Sa'd (168-230 A.H./784-845 C.E.),¹ Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (368-463 A.H./978-1070 C.E.), Ibn Qutaybah (213-276 A.H./828-889 C.E.),² Ibn —ibbān al-Bust™ (d. 354 A.H./965 C.E.), Ibn al-Ath™r (555-628 A.H./1160-1231 C.E.), Ibn Qudāmāh al-Maqdis™ (541-620 A.H./1147-1223 C.E.), Ibn —ajar al-'Asqalān™ (773-852 A.H./1372-1447 C.E.) and Shams al-D™n al-Dhahab™ (673-748 A.H./1274-1348 C.E.).

In the course of the twentieth century the study of the Prophet's Companions has been advanced through the editing of hitherto unpublished histories of the *Ā—Ābah*, together with the publication of biographies of the Companions. Manuscript material in Arabic and other languages on subjects including philology, theology, science, philosophy, geography, history and biography, has contributed to the revival of interest in Islamic heritage, not only in Muslim but also in non-Muslim countries of the world. Much of this Islamic intellectual heritage has been reclaimed by the effort to regenerate Islam. Although prevailing political circumstances in some Muslim countries do not favour the '*ulamā'*' in the political arena, no Muslim government has opposed the editing of old manuscripts.

The publication of *Ta'r™kh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk* by al-Ēabar™ ("The History of al-Ēabar™: History of the Prophets and Kings"), initially by nineteenth century Dutch Orientalist De Goeje and the subsequent editions of 1905 (Cairo) and 1961 (Beirut) have revived scholarly interest in early Islamic history. Recently, the 'History' has been translated by a team of Orientalists and published by the State University of New York. However, Al-Ēabar™'s 'History' is less useful for the study of the Prophet's Companions than a recently discovered manuscript of Al-Ēabar™'s entitled *al-Muntakhab min kitāb dhayl al-mudhayyal min ta'r™kh al-Ā—Ābah wa'l-tābi™n* which was specifically written for the *Ā—Ābah* and the *Tābi™n*.

Other notable works transcribed by Orientalists include: *MashâhTM 'ulamâ' al-amṣâr³* by Mu-ammad ibn —ibbân al-BustTM, which was edited by Manfred Fleischhammer and published in Wiesbaden in 1959. This work supplies brief biographies of the Companions arranged under the names of Islamic garrison cities, such as Basrah, Kufah, Damascus, Fustât Miṣr, Yaman and Khurasan. Another unique biographical encyclopaedia, *Kitâb al-wâfTM bi'l-wafayât⁴* was compiled by KhalTM ibn Aybak al-ġafadTM and was edited by a number of Muslims and non-Muslims. Al-ġafadTM (d. 764 A.H./1363 C.E.) wrote about many Muslims from the Prophet Mu-ammad (p.b.u.h.) and Companions (*ġa-ābah*) to intellectuals, Caliphs and Ministers. The book, consisting of 28 volumes, took more than sixty years to complete. The biographies of the *ġa-ābah* in it are well-researched but they are arranged as biographies of people belonging to the Islamic *Ummah* and beyond. Al-ġafadTM's book, which is perhaps the lengthiest biographical dictionary written by any scholar before the 20th century, had the unique distinction of being published in many Middle Eastern and European cities, such as Beirut, Damascus, Cairo, Istanbul, Leipzig, Stuttgart and Wiesbaden.

Other outstanding biographical studies of the Companions edited from manuscripts and published during the 20th century include *Kitâb bad' al-Islâm wa-sharâ'ī' al-dTMr⁵* by Ibn Sallam al-AbaḍTM, which was edited by Werner Schwartz and Shaikh SalTMm ibn Ya'qūb and published in Wiesbaden in 1986. With six biographies of the *ġa-ābah* (namely Abū Bakr, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Abū 'Ubaydah, 'Abd al-Ra-mān ibn 'Awf, 'Ammār ibn Yāsir and 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd), this book gives a valuable insight into the 'IbādTM branch of the Khawārij sect. Among other editions of Arabic manuscripts recently published, mention should be made of 'Abd Allāh ibn Qudāmah al-MaqdisTM's *al-Istibṣār fTM nasab al-ġa-ābah min al-anṣār⁶*,⁶ edited by 'AlTM Yūsuf Nuwayhiḍ and published in Beirut by Dār al-Fikr. The uniqueness of this book lies in the fact that apart from being a genealogical study of the *ġa-ābah*, it includes biographical details on Companions such as Barā' ibn Mālīk, Anas ibn Mālīk, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Hassān ibn Thābit, Abū Ayyūb Khālid ibn Zayd al-AnṣārTM, Zayd ibn Thābit, Sa'd ibn 'Ubādah, 'Abd Allāh ibn Rawā-ah, Abu al-Dardā', Mu'adh ibn Jabal, al—ubāb ibn al-Mundhir, Ka'b ibn Malik ibn AbTM Ka'b, 'Abd Allāh ibn Salām (al-Isrā'TM) al-AnṣārTM, Usayd ibn —uḍayr, 'Abd Allāh ibn al—anṣalah al-Ghāsil, Kulthūm ibn Hīḍm, Umm Waraqah and Umm Laylā al-Anṣāriyyah.

Among similar shorter works on the *ġa-ābah* which appeared during the 20th century, Ibn Qunfudh's *al-Wafayāt⁷*,⁷ which was edited by 'Ādil Nuwayhiḍ in 1971 deserves mention. Though containing fewer than a hundred brief biographies the extensive footnotes are a useful addition. Unfortunately, the biographical dictionary of Ibn Khallikan entitled *Wafayāt al-a'yān* ("Biographies of leading personalities") excludes the generation of the *ġa-ābah* altogether.

The remaining Arabic editions of accounts of the Companions will be dealt with briefly. These tend to be of three kinds, either arranged chronologically, genealogically or alphabetically. Ibn Qudāmah's book is

based on genealogy, for instance, as are the works on *Kitāb nasab Quraysh*⁸ by Muṣ'ab al-ZubayrTM and *Nihāyat al-'Arab*⁹ by al-QalqashandTM, and BalādhurTM's multi-volume book, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*. The first volume of *Ansāb al-ashrāf*¹⁰, which was edited by Muhammad Hamidullah (Cairo, 1959), is very useful for the study of the life of the Prophet and his Companions. Volume Two of the *Ansāb al-ashrāf*¹¹ (edited by Mu-ammad Bāqir al-Ma-mūdTM) covers biographies of those Companions involved in politics during the reign of KhalTMfah 'AlTM ibn AbTM Êālib. Volume Three of *Ansāb al-ashrāf* (edited by 'Abd Al-'AzTMz al-DurTM)¹² (Wiesbaden, 1978) deals with the Prophet's uncle, al-'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, and his children, especially 'Abd Allāh ibn al-'Abbās. The Fourth Volume of *Ansāb al-ashrāf*¹³, edited by I-sān 'Abbās (Beirut, 1979), gives an account of Ban≠ 'Abd Al-Shams, especially the biographies of Ab≠ Sufyān, YazTMd ibn Ab≠ Sufyān and Mu'āwiyah ibn Ab≠ Sufyān. In Volume V (edited by Goitein,¹⁴ Jerusalem, 1936) the reign of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān and those governors and officers among the Companions who served him are covered. On the whole, BalādhurTM is a reliable historian whose volumes on the *ġā-ābah* shed interesting light on the early history of Islam.

Other notable books relating to the *ġā-ābah* were edited and published during the same century. For instance, we may mention KhalTMfah ibn Khayyāt's *Kitāb al-Ēabaqāt*.¹⁵ This organises its biographies around a genealogical tree about one paragraph on each Companion. Other manuscripts published for the first time include Ab≠ Zakariyya Ya-yā al-NawawTM's *Kitāb tahdhTMb al-asmā' wa'l-lughāt*¹⁶ (2 volumes, Cairo, 1940s), a hagiographical work which belongs to the same group as Ibn 'Abd al-Bārr's *al-Istī'āb fi-asmā' al-Aḡ-āb*¹⁷ (Cairo, 1939) and Ibn —ajar al-AsqalānTM's *al-Iḡābah fi-tamyTMz al-ġā-ābah*.¹⁸ The most valuable biographical books on the *ġā-ābah* are, of course, Ibn al-AthTM'r's 7-volume *Uṣd al-ghābah fTM ma'rifat al-ġā-ābah*.¹⁹ This covers over 7,000 entries on the *ġā-ābah*. Volumes III and IV of Ibn al-AthTM'r's historical treatise, *al-Kāmil fi'l-ta'rTMkh*²⁰ are also useful. Shams al-DTMn al-DhahabTM was an outstanding historian and biographer whose *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā*²¹ contains several hundred biographies of the Companions.

Among the monographs on individual Companions one can cite Ibn al-JawzTM's *STMrat 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb*.²² Mu-ammad ibn 'AlTM al-Mazandrani's (d. 588 A.H./1192 C.E.) *Manāqib Āl AbTM Êālib*,²³ 'Abd al-Ra-mān ibn A-mad al-NasāTM's (d. 303 A.H./915-6 C.E.) *Kitāb khaḡā'iḡ AmTMr al-Mu'minTMn 'AlTM ibn AbTM Êālib*²⁴ (Cairo, n.d. pp. 55) and a biography of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, *al-TamhTMd wa'l-bayān fTM maqtal al-ShahTMd 'Uthmān*²⁵ by Mu-ammad ibn Ya-yā ibn AbTM Bakr (d. 674 A.H./1275-6) which was edited by Ma-mūd Ziyād. Many other manuscripts in private and public collections are also currently being edited throughout the Muslim world.

All these early Islamic works on the *ġā-ābah* display the intellectual vigour of these Muslim scholars who wanted to lay the foundations for a proper study of the lives of the Prophet's contemporaries who had first hand experience of Islam. Not surprisingly, some early Islamic writers have

treated many of the Companions as saints. Abū Nu'aym al-IsfahānīTM did so in his *—ilyat al-awliyā'*,²⁶ especially in volumes One and Two.

Inspired by the Muslim scholars, some modern historians have published biographies of the *īa-ābah*. The Egyptian journalist, Muhammad —usayn Haykal, wrote on *al-īiddTMq Abū Bakr*, a book which extends to nearly four hundred pages. Critical biographies of the *Khulafā' al-rāshidīn* have been written by Ēāhā —usayn. His volume on the lives of Abū Bakr and 'Umar was entitled *al-Shaykhān*²⁷ and his books on the Caliphates of 'Uthmān and 'AlīTM appeared in the series *al-Fitnah al-kubrā* (the great civil war). Part One of *al-Fitnah al-kubrā* was devoted to Caliph 'Uthmān.²⁸ The second volume was entitled *'AlīTM wa banūhu*.²⁹ Both are works by a literary critic and hence are not entirely historical but partly polemical. —asan Ibrāhīm —asan has also written a monograph on the conqueror of Egypt, bearing the title *Tārīkh 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ*.³⁰

More recently an attack on Abū Hurairah,³¹ the greatest narrator of —adTMth among the Prophet's Companions, was made by 'Abd al—usayn Sharaf al-Dīn al-MusāwīTM. Mu—ammad A—mad Jād al-Mawlā Beg has written a modern apology for Caliph 'Uthman entitled *Insāf 'Uthmān*³² and A—mad Mu—ammad Dāwūd has written a similar book on 'AlīTM ibn AbīTM Ēālib,³³ while another has been written on *Maqām AmrTM al-Mu'minTM 'AlīTM ibn AbīTM Ēālib 'ind al-Khulafā' wa-awlād al-īa-ābah*³⁴ by Najm al-Dīn al-Sharīf al-'AskarTM. Similarly, there is a hagiographical work on the *īa-ābTM*, *'Aqīm ibn AbīTM Ēālib*³⁵ by Ēāhir al-Sayyid —asan al-KhaṭībTM. I have also read 'Abd al-Majīd —asan al-Hā'irTM's work on Abū Dharr's life, *Shahīd al-Rabadhah Abū Dharr al-Ghifār*.³⁶ There is a Saudi study on Mu'āwiyah entitled *Khilāfat Mu'āwiyah ibn AbīTM Sufyān*³⁷ by 'Umar Sulaymān al-'AqīmīTM. Other Companions' hagiographies have also been written. For instance, a small booklet in Arabic focuses on *Usayd ibn —udayr* and another, *Abqarīyat Khālid ibn al-Walīd*TM, highlights the military genius of Khālid ibn al-WalīdTM.

I recently discovered these books in a Malaysian collection. Also recently I came across some Arabic books of juvenile stories in the series *Qaṣaṣ al-dīnTM: Qaṣaṣ al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidīn* regarding Abū Bakr, 'Umar, Uthmān and 'AlīTM³⁸ by 'Abd al—amīd Jawdah al-Sa—ār (Cairo, n.d.). In all, there are twenty pamphlets of such religious stories regarding the Khalīfahs. These are published to teach anecdotes relating to Islamic leaders who were profoundly influenced by the Prophet of Islam.

I have chosen a selection of books that represent current scholarship on the *īa-ābah*. A detailed analysis of this literature would require a separate lecture or series of lectures. Nevertheless, such books can be recommended for their value in keeping the memory of the Companions alive and may motivate modern readers to set good examples in private and public life.

We may now turn our attention to some of the more recent books in English on the *īa-ābah*. Let me start with some general comments. I have noticed that there has been a diminution in the quality of books written by modern Arab Muslim writers and a still lower quality of those books written in English. However, the assessments of quality of scholarship can differ

over a range of subject matter. As with the early Muslim authors, there is a tendency of some writers to approach a group of *ġa-ābah* differently from an individual Companion. In the remote past, we found more books on groups than on individuals whereas now there are more books on individuals than on groups. This could be due to the perception of some writers that monographs serve a better purpose than a compendium or some similar work. Whatever the motivation there is a suggestion that the author is promoting the Islamic cause by reviving part of the heritage of the *Ummah*.

Most of the books on the Prophet's Companions in the English language are either some form of biography or a collection of anecdotes or stories. Because biography is a branch of history, some biographical books are cast in the context of Islamic history. Some of these books are translations or adaptations from Arabic sources and, most being aimed at the general reader, lack a bibliography. All these books serve a useful purpose by highlighting a noble personality or an aspect of Islamic religion or history. All good books on the *ġa-ābah* written from an Islamic perspective are welcome, although they may not reflect a high standard of scholarship.

One of the most delightful ways of presenting the pious and inspiring lives of the Prophet's Companions is to recount anecdotes and stories about them. The raconteur has always been a welcome figure. This method of teaching has been effective, but there is a danger of creating folk-heroes out of the most notable personalities of Islamic history, like Abu Bakr, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, 'AlīTM ibn AbTM Ēālīb and Salmān al-FārisTM. *The stories of the ġa-ābah*³⁹ by Shaikh Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhalwi is a good example of this. The stories in this book are concerned with their honesty and heedfulness of Allah (*taqwā*), their zeal for knowledge, bravery and devotion to the Prophet. Many of the *ġa-ābah* (e.g. Bilāl, Anas ibn Malik, Abū 'Ubaydah (ibn al-Jarrā-), Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umar, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Ibn 'Abbās, Zaid ibn Thābit, 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr, KhadTMjatūl Kubrā, 'Ā'ishah bint AbTM Bakr, Fāṭimah al-Zahrā, Umm Salamah, Umm —abTMbah and Abū Dharr al-GhifārTM, among others, figure in these stories. However, although I value this book, there are inaccuracies in the text. For instance, the name of the *ġa-ābTM*, Khabbāb ibn al-Aratt has been misspelt as Khubbab bin Alirat (p. iii), and Khubbab (p. 11) a few times. Similarly, the name of the *ġa-ābTM*, 'Abdallāh ibn al-Mughaffil has been misspelt as Abdullah bin Maghfal (p. 153). The author has also included the story of faith ('TMmān) of SaTMd ibn Jubayr (pp. 116-121) in the stories of the *ġa-ābah*; moreover, SaTMd ibn Jubayr was a *tābiTM* (Successor) and not a *ġa-ābTM*. Next we come to Abdul Wahid Hamid's anecdotal book on the *Companions of the Prophet*.⁴⁰ Abdul Wahid is, strictly speaking, not the author of the book but the translator and adapter of 'Abd al-Ra-mān al-Ra'fat al-Bāsha's book, entitled *ġuwar min —ayāt al-ġa-ābah* ("Aspects of the life of the Companions") which was published in Arabic in 1979. Abdul Wahid added some additional material to Ra'fat's book from Mu-ammad Zaydan's book *STMrat baṭal* (Biography of Heroes). The three parts of the *Companions of the Prophet* contain

selected anecdotes from the lives of sixty *ġa-ābah*. The stories are told pleasantly, but the background of ġuhaib ibn Sinan al-RTMm (part 3, p. 27) is exaggerated. Some spelling mistakes of Arabic place names and proper names are disturbing too. For instance, the word Dinawar is misspelt as Daynawar and al-Muqarrin as Maqran (part 2, page 28). The name of the *ġa-ābTM*, —akTMm ibn —izām (cf. Ibn —ajar, *TaqrTMb al-tahdhTMb*, Cairo, 1960, vol. i. p. 194) is misspelt as Hakim ibn Hazm (part 2, p. 46). The Islamic term *al-‘asharah al-mubashsharah* somehow becomes *al-asharatu’l-mubashshirin* (part 3, p. 42). The term *Umm al-Mu‘minTMn* is printed as *Umm al-mu‘mininin* (p. 68, part 3). Abdul Wahid makes the common mistake of misspelling al-FārisTM as al-Farsi (Part 1, pp. 51-6), and creates confusion by stating that AbTM ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrā—’s father was called ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Jarrā—, each of them having al-Jarrā— as their parent (Part 1, pp. 7-8). In fact the son’s (the former’s) full name was ‘Āmir ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Jarrā—, while his patronymic (*kunya*) was AbTM ‘Ubaydah. (see Ibn Sa’d, *Ēabaqāt*, Vol. III, Beirut, 1957, pp. 409-15).

The above compiler explains the term *Ḥuffah* (in Part 2, p. 154 and Part 3, p. 159) as “Raised platform or bench. Part of the Prophet’s mosque which was a sort of reception point for poor Muslims and newcomers to the city and destitute persons”, while a more appropriate meaning of the word is “portico of the Prophet’s mosque”. These errors should be corrected in future editions.

Khurram Murad’s booklet on *The Kingdom of Justice*⁴¹ (The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1983, 46pp.) also belongs in the category of stories about the *ġa-ābah*, in this case Usāmah ibn Zayd and ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. This imaginatively illustrated book makes an ideal gift for a Muslim child.

Among historical studies of the *ġa-ābah*, *al-Khulafā’ al-RāshidTMn*⁴² (*The Rightly-guided Khalifs*) by Safa Khulusi and Sabiha al-Dabbagh (Taha Publishers and UMO, London, 1990, pp. 44) stands out. Though the tone is admirable, this short book is rather disappointing. There are some novel features in it; however, a synopsis (pp. 9-10) includes al—asan ibn ‘AlTM (r. ‘a.) (pp. 42-43) as the continuation of the Rightly-guided KhalTMfahs. Unfortunately, there are also many mistakes and misprints. For instance, the name of Saja as a false Prophetess (p. 15) should be spelt Sajā—. The author of *Kitāb al-imtā’ wa’l-mu‘ānasa* is not Tarshid⁴³ (as stated by Safa Khulusi, p. 22) but AbTM —ayyan al-Taw—TMdTM. The term for ‘garrisons’ in the early Islamic era was not *al-murābiṭTMn* (p. 23) but *amḤār* (singular *miḤr*).⁴⁴ Moreover, the death of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb was said to have occurred in 22 A.H. (p. 24), whereas he died on 26 Dhu’l—ijjah, 23 A.H. The authors also maintain that the reign of KhalTMfah ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān⁴⁵ extended from 24 to 36 Hijrah (pp. 29-30), but in fact ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān was assassinated on 18 Dhu’l —ijjah, 35 Hijrah/17 June, 656 C.E. In the final page of the book, *Mu‘jam al-buldān* is referred to as Yaqut al-Hamaqi (*sic*) (p. 44), whereas the surname was al—amāwTM, (a man from the city of —amā in Syria). Last but not least, Safa Khulusi and his co-author have cited the names of *al-‘Asharah al-mubashsharah* (literally, “the ten who received glad tidings” of Paradise, p. 19), but the ninth name is not given,

which is indeed very surprising as the missing name is, in fact, that of the Companion 'Abd al-Ra-mān ibn 'Awf (r. 'a.). It is possible that for some reason the authors had no access to Arabic reference books, which is a pity. Nonetheless, the book contains good material though it deserves a more attentive proof-reader.

In *Some Companions of the Prophet*,⁴⁶ Fazl Ahmad deals with seventeen *ā-ābah*, including 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar, Osāmā ibn Zaid, Ab≠ Dharr al-GhifārTM, Miqdād ibn al-Aswad, Salmān the Persian, 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'≠d, 'Uhaib bin Sinan, Zayd bin Thābit, Mu'āwiyah, Bilāl the Negro, Salim the slave of Huzaifa, Ab≠ Obaida al-Jarrā-, Hamzah, 'Abbās, Sa'd bin AbTM Waqqāṣ, Muṣ'ab bin Omair and Ab≠ Huraira. This semi-biographical collection contains no bibliography, no glossary, and as the author sub-titles it, "Life stories of some of the leading Companions" is perhaps intended for a young readership. This is a hagiographical work in which the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is referred to as "Master" (cf. pp. 15, 20-21, 38-39, 54, 58-59 etc.). No relationship of master and slave existed between the Prophet and the Companions, but the author seems to assume otherwise. The author erroneously states that "Khālid bin WalTMd had been governor of Damascus till 17 A.H." (part 2, p. 106) whereas Khālid was never appointed governor of Syria by anyone, but commanded the Muslim army until the succession of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb to the Khilāfat in 13 A.H. Khālid was replaced by Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrā- c. 15 A.H., before the battle of Yarmuk in 16 A.H./637 C.E. Similarly, the date of Zayd ibn Thābit's death is said to have occurred in 54 A.H./665 C.E. (part 2, p. 31), whereas it took place in 45 A.H./665 C.E. Other errors regarding the spelling of the names of the Companions can be found.

Few monographs in English on the Prophet's Companions have appeared, but A.J. Cameron's *Abu Dharr al-Ghifār*⁴⁷ (an examination of his image in the hagiography of Islam) is a scholarly work in the Orientalist tradition; 'AlTM Shariati's brief *And Once Again Abu Dharr*⁴⁸ (translated by Laleh Bakhtiar and Husayn Salih, Tehran, 1985, pp. 75) discusses the careers of Ab≠ Dharr and other *ā-ābah*. It reads like a manifesto of the *mustaḍ'af*TMn. Ab≠ Dharr served as a voice of protest against the government. Both these studies have political overtones.

Besides these two books there is an Indonesian book entitled, *Wasiat Nabi Pada Abu Dzar R.A.* (The Prophet's advice to Ab≠ Dharr) compiled by H. Salim Bahreisy (Surabaya, Indonesia, 1981, 91 pages). It contains hagiographical account of the *ā-āb*TM, Ab≠ Dharr and a useful collection of 194 pieces of advice to Ab≠ Dharr by the Prophet (in Arabic with Indonesian translation). The book serves the purpose of Islamic education.

Two monographs have been written on a senior Companion, *Bilāl ibn Rabāh*⁴⁹ by Muhammad Abdul Rauf (American Trust Publications, 1977, p. 73) and *Bilāl* by H. A. L. Craig⁵⁰ (London, 1979, pp. 158). In the concluding part of his book, Craig states that "the date of Bilāl's death is uncertain. It was probably C.E. 644—year 22 of the Hegira" (p. 155). In fact, Bilāl ibn Rabāh⁵¹ died, according to all reliable Arabic sources, in 20

A.H./641 C.E. The Egyptian-born Islamic writer, Muhammad Abdul-Rauf, in his monograph on Bilâl claims,

Our hero, Bilal ibn Rabah, was one of the few who, in their wisdom, recognized the validity of the sensible teaching of the new faith and is said to have been the second adult male person to accept Islam after Abu Bakr.⁵² (p. 4)

This is a serious error and comes as a great surprise from a scholar who has rendered great service to Islamic missionary work in Africa, Malaysia and North America. Dr. Abdul-Rauf was once the Director of the Islamic Cultural Centre in Washington, D. C. and attracted many Americans to Islam. The above statement was addressed to a specific type of audience. Assuming that it was a genuine error and not a statement with an ulterior motive, I should counter it by stating that Bilal ibn Rabah was not the second male adult convert to Islam. Had he been, notable Islamic historians like al-DhahabTM would have undoubtedly included him among the *al-Sâbiqîn al-awwalîn* (literally "Senior pioneers" among early converts) along with more than fifty others. The name of Bilâl ibn Rabâ— was not included in the published list of the first fifty or so converts to Islam.⁵³ In fact, the adult person who accepted Islam after Ab— Bakr al-İiddTMq was named by al-DhahabTM as Zayd ibn —ârithah (cf. *Siyar*, vol. i, p. 99). It is most likely that Abdul-Rauf was confusing Zayd ibn —ârithah with Bilâl ibn Rabâ—. Both men were of slave origin. Nevertheless, it was an extraordinary blunder.

İadruddTMn SharafuddTMn is a Lebanese writer whose 'Ammâr Yâsir⁵⁴ is a sizeable hagiographical study of 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir. The translation from Arabic into English is not quite satisfactory and abounds in errors. The book was originally entitled —alTMf al-Makhz—m (pp. 10 & 16). "—alTMf" according to *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* means a confederate or ally. This translator, however, has added an 'e' making 'Ammâr "an alley or narrow thoroughfare of Makhzum" (p. 16). Also many names of the Prophet's Companions are misspelt; Zayd bin Harith (p. 43) for Zayd ibn —ârithah; Khubab bin Art (p. 59) for Khabbâb ibn al-Aratt; Abuzar Ghiffari (p. 143) for Ab— Dharr al-GhifârTM; Abudur Rahman bin 'Awf (p. 171) for 'Abd al-Ramân ibn 'Awf; Hay bin Akhtab (p. 85) for —uyaiy ibn Akhtâb; 'Amr 'Âs (pp. 256 and 261) for 'Amr ibn al-'Âs. The author (İadruddTMn) incorrectly refers to Muhammad Hamidullah's book *The Holy Prophet in the Battlefield* (p. 84) for *The Battlefields of the Prophet Muhammad* (Madras, 1973).

The book also includes factually incorrect statements. İadruddTMn writes, "Ammar was one of the seven earliest supporters of the sacred movement of Islam" (p. 10), but, alas, it is not so. In fact, Ammâr ibn Yâsir was converted to Islam before İuhayb and Ab— Dharr, but after forty others. He is listed in reliable historical sources as the 48th convert to Islam. The author acknowledges that KhalTMfah 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb appointed 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir as a governor of K—fah (p. 156) but again exaggerates his position by stating that he was "governor and ruler of Iraq"

(p. 158). Īadrudd™n forgets that K̄fah never occupied the whole of Iraq in early Islamic history.

Some of the author's remarks resemble political statements of modern Lebanon in that they distort early Islamic history. Sometimes the author does not realise which century he is talking about. For instance he puts "Abu Bakr's ruling party" against "the Party of 'Al™" (p. 145). This fighting language is a negation of the cordial relationship that existed between the two men. But by far the most damaging statement is that "Ēal-ah, Zubayr and Sa'd ibn Ab™ Waqqāṣ killed 'Uthmān by means of the money spent by them and their underhand plots."⁵⁵ This is a malicious allegation by a scholar with an apparently shallow knowledge of early Islamic history. In fact, Ēal-ah ibn 'Ubaydullāh, al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām, Sa'd ibn Ab™ Waqqāṣ together with 'Al™ ibn Ab™ Ēālib were among the most exceptionally virtuous ten chosen *īa-ābah* who were informed of the glad tidings of eternal bliss in Paradise. The author appears to belong to a group which abuses certain *īa-ābah* in order to magnify a certain Companion. Such a view of the global Islamic community (*Ummah*) is divisive.

Īadrudd™n and other writers like him do not see Islam as a brotherhood of the whole community (*Ummah*). One personality is elevated at the expense of others. There is no demonology in Islam and no one has the right to demonise any *īa-ābah* of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). The Prophet urged Muslims, "Do not abuse (or denigrate) my Companions."⁵⁶ There are Traditions which propagate the view that those who criticise the Prophet's Companions, members of his family and his wives, will incur the curse of Allah Ta'ālā, His angels and mankind. This –*ad™th* should correct our attitudes towards the *īa-ābah*. We should study the Companions of the Prophet not only to appreciate their contributions, but also to avoid the un-Islamic tendency to criticise anyone of them. According to a –*ad™th* quoted by al-Dhahab™, it is one of the major sins⁵⁷ (*Kabā'ir*) to abuse any of the Companions of the Prophet Mu-ammad (p.b.u.h.). The currently available writings on the *īa-ābah* do not take into account these teachings regarding the first-generation Muslims. A proper Muslim should not criticise any members of the generation of the *īa-ābah* because the Prophet of Islam taught us that "the best generation of the *Ummah* is my generation, then those who came after them, and those who came after them." I interpret this –*ad™th* as a reference to the generation of the *īa-ābah*, then the generation of *Tābi'īn*, (successors) and then the *Tābi' al-tābi'™n* (successors to the successors).

Before their acceptance of the message of *al-Qur'ān al-Kar™m*, the Arabs of the era of the Prophet were ordinary men and women, but after their conversion their lives were transformed by the sacred teachings of *taw-™d* (divine unity) and their close companionship with the Prophet Mu-ammad (p.b.u.h.). Some enthusiastic Muslim writers like Ibn 'Arab™ thought that the *īa-ābah*'s knowledge of Islam (*'ilm*) was infallible. This does not imply that the Companions of the Prophet were infallible, rather that they were sincere Muslims imitating the Prophet's excellent life-style (*uswah –asanah*).

Notes

1. Mu-ammad Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-Ēbaqāt al-kubrā*, ed. by I-sān 'Abbās, 9 volumes, including one volume of index, Beirut, 1957-62.
2. Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Ma'ārif*, Beirut, 1970.
3. Mu-ammad ibn —ibbān al-BustTM, *MashāhTMr 'ulamā' al-amḤār*, ed. by Manfred Fleischhammer, Wiesbaden, 1959.
4. Īalā- al-DTMn KhalTMl ibn Aybak al-ĪafadTM, *Kitāb al-wāfTM bi'l-wafayāt*, ed. by a team of Orientalists and Arabs, 28 volumes, published in Cairo, Beirut, Damascus, Istanbul, Wiesbaden, Stuttgart and Leipzig from 1931 to 1993; (This encyclopaedic work had many editors including Hellmut Ritter, Sven Dederling, Dorothea Krawulsky, Bernd Radke, Josef van Ess, Jacqueline Sublet and 'Abd al-A-ad, Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, Widād al-QāḍTM, ShukrTM Faisal, 'AlTM 'Amarah, Mustafā al—iyārTM, Mu-ammad 'Adnān Bakhit, Mu-ammad al-HugairTM, Ramaḍān 'Abd al-Tawwāb, Mu-ammad Y=suf Najm, etc.
5. Ibn Sallam al-'AbāḍTM, *Kitāb bad' al-Islām wa-sharā'i' al-dTMn*, ed. by Werner Schwartz and Shaikh SalTMm ibn Ya'q=b, Bibliotheca Islamica, Wiesbaden, 1986.
6. 'Abd Allāh ibn Qudāmah al-MaqdisTM, *al-IstibḤār fTM nasab al-Ḥa-ābah min al-anḤār*, ed. by 'AlTM Y=suf Nuwayhiḍ, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1972.
7. Ibn Qunfudh, *al-Wafayāt*, Beirut, 1971.
8. MuḤ'ab ibn 'Abd Allāh al-ZubayrTM, *Kitāb nasab Quraysh*, ed. by E. Levi-Provençal, Cairo, 1953.
9. Ab≠'I-'Abbās al-QalqashandTM, *Nihāyat al-'Arab fTM ma'rifat ansāb al-'Arab*, Cairo, 1959.
10. A-mad ibn Ya-yā b. Jābir al-BalādhurTM, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, vol. i, ed. by Dr Muhammad Hamidullah, Cairo, 1959.
11. BalādhurTM, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, vol. ii, ed. by Mu-ammad Bāqir al-Ma-m≠dTM, Beirut, 1974.
12. BalādhurTM, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, vol. iii, ed. by Abdul Aziz al-Duri, Wiesbaden, 1978.
13. BalādhurTM, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, vol. iv, ed. by I-sān 'Abbās, Beirut, 1979.
14. BalādhurTM, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, vol. v, ed. by S.D. Goitein, Jerusalem, 1936.
15. KhalTMfah ibn Khayyāt's *Kitāb al-Ēbaqāt*, ed. by Suhayl Zakkar, Damascus, 1966.
16. Ab≠ Zakariyya Ya-yā al-NawawTM, *Kitāb tahdhTMb al-asmā' wa'l-lughāt*, 2 vols, Cairo, 1940s.
17. Ibn 'Abd al-Bār, *al-Isti'āb fTM asmā' al-AḤ-āb*, 4 vols, Cairo, 1939.
18. Ibn —ajar al-AsqalānTM's *al-IḤābah fTM tamyTMz al-Īa-ābah*, 4 vols., Cairo, 1939.
19. Ibn al-AthTMr, *Usd al-ghābah fTM ma'rifat al-Īa-ābah*, ed. by Mu-ammad IbrāhTMm al-Bannā *et al.*, Al-Sha'b Publications, 7 volumes, Cairo, 1970.
20. Ibn al-AthTMr, *al-Kāmil fTMl-ta'rTMkh*, 8 volumes, Beirut, 1967.
21. Shams al-DTMn al-DhahabTM, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, 3 vols., Cairo, 1958-1963.
22. Ibn al-JawzTM, *STMrat 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb*, Cairo, 1931, pp. 226.
23. Mu-ammad ibn 'AlTM al-Mazandrani, *Manāqib Āl 'ĀlTM ibn AbTM Ēālib*, Najaf, Iraq, 1956.
24. 'Abd al-Ra-mān ibn A-mad al-Nasā'TM, *Kitāb khaḤā'iḤ AmTMr al-Mu'minTMn 'AlTM ibn AbTM Ēālib*, Cairo, n.d. p. 55.
25. Mu-ammad ibn Ya-yā ibn AbTM Bakr, *al-Tam-TMd wa'l-bayān fTM maqṭal al-ShahTMd 'Uthmān*, ed. by Mahmud Ziyad, Beirut, 1964, pp. 277.

26. Abū Nu'aym al-IsfahānīTM, *—ilyat al-awliyā'*, (vols. i-ii cover the *lā-ābah*), Cairo, 1932-33.
27. Ēāhā —usain, *al-Shaykhān*, Cairo, 1966.
28. Ēāhā —usain, *'Uthmān* (in the series *al-Fitnah al-kubrā*, part I), Cairo, 1951.
29. Ēāhā —usain, *'AlTM wa banTMhu*, Cairo, (*al-Fitnah al-kubrā*, part II), Cairo, 1956.
30. —asan IbrāhTMm —asan, *Ta'rTMkh 'Amr ibn al-Āḡ*, Cairo, 1929; 2nd edition, Cairo, 1931.
31. 'Abd al—usayn Sharaf al-DTMn al-MusāwTM, *AbTM Hurairah*, Sida, 1365, pp. 335.
32. Mu—ammad A. Jād al-Mawlā Beg, *Inṣāf 'Uthmān*, Cairo, 1944.
33. A—mad Mu—ammad DawTMd, *'AlTM ibn AbTM Ēālib*, Cairo, 1969, pp. 63.
34. Najm al-DTMn al-Sharīf al-'AskarTM, *Maqām AmTMr al-mu'minin 'AlTM ibn AbTM Ēālib 'ind al-Khulafā' wa-awlād al-lā-ābah*, Najaf, c. 1963 (pp. 72+4).
35. Ēāhir al-Sayyid —asan al-KhaṭTMb, *'AqTMl ibn AbTM Ēālib*, Najaf, 1383 A.H., pp. 144.
36. 'Abd al-MajTMd —asan al-Hā'irTM, *ShahTMd al-Rabadhah AbTM Dharr al-GhifārTM*, Najaf, 1968, pp. 160.
37. 'Umar Sulaymān al-'AqTMlTM, *Khilāfat Mu'āwiyah ibn AbTM Sufyān*, Riyad, 1984, pp. 220.
38. 'Abd al—amTMd Jawdah al-Sa—ār, *Qaṣaṣ al-Khulafā' al-RāshidTMn*, 20 pamphlets in Arabic, published by Dār al-Miṣr, no date of publication is given.
39. Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhalwi, *The Stories of the lā-ābah*, Taj Company, Delhi, 1990, pp. 256.
40. Abdul Wahid Hamid, *Companions of the Prophet*, Umran Publications, London, 3 parts, 1982, 1985.
41. Khurram Murad, *The Kingdom of Justice*, The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1983, pp. 46.
42. Safa Khulusi *et al.*, *Khulafā' al-Rāshidin*, Taha Publications, London, 1990, p. 44.
43. *ibid.*, 22.
44. cf. Iālī—A—mad al-'AlTM, *al-TanzTMmat al-ijtimā'iyah wa 'l-iqtisādiyyah fTM 'l-Baṣrah fTM 'l-qarn al-awwal al-HijrTM*, Baghdad, 1953.
45. *ibid.*, 29-30.
46. Fazl Ahmad, *Some Companions of the Prophet*, 3 parts, Sh. Mohammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1975.
47. A. J. Cameron, *Abu Dharr al-Ghifari* (an examination of his image in the hagiography of Islam), Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1973, pp. 175.
48. 'AlTM Shariati, *And Once Again Abu Dharr* (translated from Persian by Laleh Bakhtiar *et al.*), Tehran, 1985, pp. 75.
49. Muhammad Abdul-Rauf, *Bilal ibn Rabah*, American Trust Publications, USA, 1977, p. 73.
50. H. A. L. Craig, *Bilāl*, Quartet Books, London, 1979, pp. 158. M.A. Rauf, *Bilal ibn Rabah*, p. 4.
51. cf. M. A. J. Beg, *The Founders of Islamic History* (Ms.), Cambridge, 1992, p. 168.
52. M. A. Rauf, *Bilal ibn Rabah*, p. 4.
53. DhahabTM, *Siyar a'lam al-nubalā'*, Cairo, c. 1958, p. 99.
54. IadrudTMn SharafuddTMn, *'Ammār Yāsir—the distinguished Companion of the Holy Prophet*, Islamic Seminary Publications, New York, Karachi, Bombay etc., 1984, pp. 264.
55. *ibid.*, 225.
56. 'AlTM al-MuṭṭāqTM, *Kanj al-'ummāl*, Aleppo, 1974, vol. xii, 485.
57. Shams al-DTMn DhahabTM, *Kitāb al-Kabā'ir*, Aleppo, 1978, p. 383.