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[Al-An'ām: 90]*

# **Al-Imām Ahmad Ibn Nasr Al-Khuzā'ī**

**By Al-Hāfith Ibn Kathīr**  
(May Allāh have mercy upon him)

With Commentary by Shaykh Abul-Munthir As-Sā'idī  
Of Al-Jamā'ah Al-Islāmiyyah Al-Muqātilah (Libya)  
(May Allāh preserve him and assist him)

**At-Tibyān Publications**

“Al-Imām Ahmad Ibn Nasr Al-Khuzā’ī”

*A Leader of Scholars, A Leader of Martyrs*

*“So from their guidance, take an example”*

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*“He sold himself, and faced death without fear...”* – Such is what was said regarding him by Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him).

He had felt a danger threatening the *‘Aqīdah* of *Ahl As-Sunnah wal-Jamā’ah*, he could not keep himself confined within his house, nor was he satisfied with sweet words which could be uttered equally by both, the *Mu’min* and the *Munāfiq*... Rather, he plunged into the perilous which none but men can traverse, and he climbed that difficult ascension – excluding those upon whom Allāh makes it easy – and began to gather the Believers of *Ahl As-Sunnah* around him, and incited them to protect their *‘Aqīdah* and defend their *Dīn*, and to fight against the *Mubtadi’* (Deviant) Ruler, Al-Wāthiq, who had tortured the *‘Ulamā* till they gave into his claim of the *“Khalq Al-Qur’ān”* (lit. the Creation of the *Qur’ān*). But the *Imām* did not accept to be subdued with regards to his *Dīn*, nor did he sell his *‘Aqīdah* for a miserable gain such as a ministry of the government, or a dignitary position, or wealth and money... Nor did he search for justifications, such as *“Maslahah”* (“the best interest and benefit”) – with which the “scholars” of today have been mesmerized, excluding upon whom Allāh has had mercy.

Thus, this courageous *Imām* did not cease mobilizing the forces and gathering the resources together... But Allāh had willed a different matter – that he be killed by the sword of Al-Wāthiq himself.

This is his story, we narrate it completely as was mentioned by Ibn Kathīr in *“Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah”* Volume 10, Page 316-320. And then we will briefly mention some benefits contained within the narrative, so that perhaps it will inflame the illuminated rage of *Ghayrah* in hearts which were near dullness; and perhaps it will caution a scholar who was deceived by the smiles of a *Tāghūt* or by the *fitnah* of hollow wealth and properties, or forgot what he learned and taught to his students: that the Appointed Time (death) is only in the Hands of Allāh Alone – but yet he fears that the *Tāghūt* will bring his time nearer!

We mention this story, with hope that it will give life to the hearts of the *‘Ulamā* of the Muslims, and that perhaps, they would fear Allāh with regards to selling His *Āyāt*, and the Land of the *Haramayn*, and *Bayt Al-Maqdis*, the Land of *Al-Isrā’*...

Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said in the events of the Year Two Hundred and Thirty One (231 H):

And in this year was the killing of Ahmad ibn Nasr Al-Khuzā’ī, may Allāh have mercy upon him, and make his abode noble.

And the reason for this man being killed – this man, meaning Ahmad ibn Nasr Al-Khuzā'ī ibn Mālik ibn Al-Haytham Al-Khuzā'ī, and his grandfather Mālik ibn Al-Haytham was one of the greatest campaigners of the state of Banī Al-'Abbās (i.e. the 'Abbasids), those who killed this son of his.

And Ahmad ibn Nasr had prestige and leadership, and his father Nasr ibn Mālik used to be surrounded by the *Ahl Al-Hadīth* (the People of *Hadīth*).

And the laymen gave him the *Bay'ah* (Pledge of Allegiance) upon establishing the Commanding (of the Good) and Forbidding (of the Evil), in the year 201 when the people of corruption, obscenity, and immorality had become widespread during the absence of Al-Ma'mūn from Baghdād – as has been mentioned; and the Nasr Marketplace in Baghdād is named after him.

And this Ahmad ibn Nasr was from amongst the people of knowledge, piety and justice, righteous deeds, and striving in doing good; and he was from amongst the *Imāms* of *Ahl As-Sunnah*, those who would command the good, and forbid the evil, and he was amongst those who called towards the saying that the “*Qur'ān* is the Word of Allāh, sent down, uncreated.”

And Al-Wāthiq was one of the most severe people in insisting the claim that the *Qur'ān* is created – he used to call to it day and night, publicly and privately, based upon what his father, and his uncle Al-Ma'mūn, were upon – void of any evidence or proof, nor argument or explanation, from neither the *Sunnah* or *Qur'ān*.

So this Ahmad ibn Nasr stood up, calling towards Allāh, and to the Commanding of the Good and the Forbiddance of the Evil, and to the statement that the *Qur'ān* is the Uncreated Word of Allāh, and he called the people to much good. Thus, a *Jamā'ah* (group) gathered under him from amongst the People of Baghdād, and thousands of people joined him. Two men were appointed in propagating the *Da'wah* of Ahmad ibn Nasr, and they were Abū Hārūn As-Sirāj, who called the People of the Eastern Province; and another man named Tālib, who called the People of the Western Province – thus, many thousands of people and abundant crowds united under him.

So when it was the month of Sha'bān of this year, the *Bay'ah* was organized for Ahmad ibn Nasr Al-Khuzā'ī in secrecy, upon Commanding the Good and Forbidding the Evil, and to rebel (*Khurūj*) against the Sultan due to his *bid'ah* and his calling to the claim of “*Khalq Al-Qur'ān*”, and due to what he, his authorities, and his entourage were perpetrating of sins (*ma'āsī*) and immorality (*fawāhish*) and such. So they agreed on a time, that on the third night of Sha'bān – on the night of Jumu'ah – a drum would be beaten in the night, and then those who had

given *Bay'ah* would gather together in a place which they had agreed on beforehand - and (after the agreement) Tālib and Abū Hārūn distributed many *Dīnārs* amongst the companions. From amongst the crowd who received the money, were two men from Banū Ashras, and these two men used to drink wine.

So when Thursday night came, these two men drank wine amongst a group of the companions, and the two men thought it was the night of the plan to be executed - which in reality was a night before the planned night; so the two men began to beat the drum in the night so that the people would gather with them both - but no one came. The disarray overtook the organized plan, and the guards heard this in the night time, so they notified the deputy of the Sultan, Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Mus'ab - who was the deputy of his brother, Is'hāq ibn Ibrāhīm, due to his absence from Baghdād... and the people became hysteric, and the deputy of the Sultan did his utmost to capture those two men (who beat the drum). So when he captured them, he tortured them until they confessed about Ahmad ibn Nasr. So they searched for him, until they were able to capture a servant of his - and they held him (and tortured him) until he confessed with the same confession as the two men.

So he captured a number of the leaders of the companions of Ahmad ibn Nasr, along with him, and sent them to the *Khalīfah* - pleasing those who saw them (i.e. the captured rebels led by Ahmad ibn Nasr) in such a state - and this took place at the end of Sha'bān. So he assembled a group of spectators, and the *Qādhi*, Ahmad ibn Abī Du'ād Al-Mu'tazilī attended, and Ahmad ibn Nasr was brought forth- but he (Al-Mu'tazilī) did not display any rebuke upon Ahmad ibn Nasr. And when Ahmad ibn Nasr was made to stand in front of Al-Wāthiq, he did not rebuke him for anything to do with the *Bay'ah* which he took from the populace upon Commanding the Good and Forbidding the Evil and such - Rather, he skipped over all of that, and interrogated: "What do you say regarding the *Qur'ān*?"

He replied, "It is the Word of Allāh."

Al-Wāthiq again asked, "Is it created (*makhlūq*)?"

He repeated, "It is the Word of Allāh."

Indeed, Ahmad had just faced death without fear, and sold himself, and actually, he came wearing *Hanūt* (i.e. a mixture of musk and camphor which is applied to a dead body before burial), and he looked fiercely radiant, and he had tightened that which was covering his private parts (so that it does not get revealed in case of whipping and tortures).

Al-Wāthiq again asked, "What do you say about your Lord? Will you see Him on the Day of Resurrection?"

So he replied, "O *Amīr Al-Mu'minīn*: It has come in the *Qur'ān* and narrations, as Allāh has said, "**(Some) faces, that Day, will be radiant; Looking at their Lord.**" [Al-Qiyāmah: 22-23] And the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Verily, you will see your Lord, just as you see this moon, you will not be impaired in viewing him." [Al-Bukhārī and Muslim] So we are upon what we have been notified (by Allāh and His Messenger)."

And Al-Khatīb (Al-Baghdādī) also narrated that Al-Wāthiq said, "Woe to you! Will He be seen as a limited body is seen?! And He will be encompassed in a place, and the spectator will be able to behold him!? I disbelieve in a Lord with such attributes!"

I (i.e. Ibn Kathīr) say: What Al-Wāthiq said, is neither permissible, nor necessary, nor can it be used to refute the authentic narrations – and Allāh knows best.

Ahmad ibn Nasr replied to Al-Wāthiq, "Sufyān narrated a *Marfū' Hadīth* to me, "The heart of the son of Ādam is in between two fingers from the Fingers of Allāh – He turns it however He Wills." And the Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) used to say, "O Turner of the Hearts! Make my heart firm upon Your Dīn."

So Is'hāq ibn Ibrāhīm said to him, "Woe to you! Look at what you are saying!"

He replied by saying, "You ordered me to say that."

Is'hāq was startled at that, and remarked, "I ordered you?!"

So he replied, "Yes, you ordered me to give sincere advice to him."

Finally, Al-Wāthiq said to those around him, "So what do you say about this man (i.e. Ahmad ibn Nasr)" Hence, they said many things about him.

'Abdur-Rahmān ibn Is'hāq – who was the *Qādhī* of the Western Province until he retired, and had been a friend of Ahmad ibn Nasr before this event – said, "O *Amīr Al-Mu'minīn*: his blood is *Halāl*."

And Abū 'Abdillāh Al-Arminī – the companion of Ahmad ibn Abī Du'ād – said, "Give me a drink from his blood, O *Amīr Al-Mu'minīn*!"

Al-Wāthiq replied, saying, "Definitely, what you desire will come about."

And Ahmad ibn Abī Du'ād said, "He is a *kāfir*, he should be asked to repent, maybe he has a disease, or loss of intellect."

So Al-Wāthiq said, "When you see me getting up (going) towards him, then do not be standing along with me, for I want to be rewarded for my steps (going towards to killing him). Then he got up with a sabre – which was a sword belonging to 'Amr ibn Mu'idd Yukrab Az-Zubaydī, and it was given as a gift to Mūsā Al-Hādī during his *Khilāfah*, and there was a witchcraft inscription attached with nails at the bottom of it – so when he reached him, he struck him a blow upon his shoulder, while he was tied with ropes and standing upon a leather mat special for executions... and then he struck him again, a blow to his head, and then he thrust the sabre into his belly. He succumbed, may Allāh have mercy upon him, and fell upon the leather mat. Indeed, we belong to Allāh, and indeed, to Him we will return, may Allāh have mercy upon him, and pardon him.

Then the Damascene unsheathed his sword, and struck his neck, and separated his head, and hoisted it in display, till it was brought to the field which had Bābak Al-Khurrāmī, and he was crucified therein, while his two legs were still shackled, and he was wearing a dress and trousers. And his head was carried to Baghdād, and was set and displayed in the Eastern Province for a number of days, and in the Western Province for a number of days, and it had guards around watching over it day and night. And attached to his head was a message, and written on it was:

*"This is the head of the deviant pagan infidel, Ahmad ibn Nasr Al-Khuzā'i, from amongst those who were killed at the hands of 'Abdullāh ibn Hārūn, the Imām, Al-Wāthiq Billāh, Amīr Al-Mu'minīn – after he had established the argument against him regarding the Creation of the Qur'ān and the Negation of Anthropomorphism, and he gave him the chance to repent and enabled him to return to the Truth – but he refused except to stubbornly oppose and declare openly otherwise. So all praise belongs to Allāh, Who hastened him to the Fire and His Painful Torment due to his kufr; for which Amīr Al-Mu'minīn permitted his blood and for him to be cursed."*

Afterwards, Al-Wāthiq ordered the prosecution of the leaders of Ahmad's companions (i.e. his movement), and he captured about twenty nine men, and they were sent to prisons, and they were branded as deviants. They were prevented from being visited by anyone, and they were restrained with iron shackles, and they were not given any rations (of food) which were given to the other prisoners – and this is a great injustice.

And this Ahmad ibn Nasr was one of the great 'Ulamā, active, establishing the Commanding of the Good and the Forbidding of the Evil. He had heard *Hadīth*

from Hammād ibn Zayd and Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah and Hāshim ibn Bashīr – and he had all of his writings. And he also heard a great number of *Ahādīth* from *Imām* Mālik ibn Anas, but he did not narrate much from him.

And those who narrated from him, are Ahmad ibn Ibrāhīm Ad-Dauriqī, and his brother Ya’qūb ibn Ibrāhīm, and Yahyā ibn Ma’īn – who had mentioned him one day, and prayed for Allāh’s mercy upon him, and said, “Allāh granted him *Shahādah* (martyrdom) as an ending,”; even though he used to usually not extol people, saying, “I am not worthy of saying (exaltations about people),” – but yet, this Yahyā ibn Ma’īn excelled very much in admiring Ahmad ibn Nasr. And *Imām* Ahmad ibn Hanbal mentioned him one day, and said, “May Allāh have mercy upon him, how generous to Allāh he was with his soul! He sacrificed himself to him.”

Ja’far ibn Muhammad As-Sā’igh narrated, “My two eyes witnessed – and if they did not, may they be gouged out – and my two ears heard – and if they did not, may they go deaf: Ahmad ibn Nasr Al-Khuzā’ī, when he was beheaded, his head was saying, “*Lā Ilāha Illā Allāh*”; And some people had heard him while he was crucified on the tree trunk, his (separated) head reciting, “*Alif, Lām, Mīm. Do people think they will be left alone, just because they say, “We believe,” without being tested?”* [Al-‘Ankabūt: 1-2]. My skin trembled.

- End of quote from *Al-Hāfith Ibn Kathīr*, may Allāh have mercy upon him.

## Points of Benefit

- 1) The praise of Ibn Kathīr upon him, and his describing of him with knowledge (*'ilm*), Commandment of the Good and Forbiddance of the Evil, sincere advice, praying to Allāh for His mercy upon him, and narrating the entire ordeal of him being martyred.
- 2) The legitimacy (*mashrū'iyah*) of partial *Bay'ahs* (pledges of allegiance), and covenants upon *Jihād* (holy war), and Commanding the Good and Forbidding the Evil, and propagating the '*Aqīdah* of the Pious Predecessors. And also, the legitimacy of concealing and keeping secret these *Bay'ahs*, so that the *Tawāghūt* do not oppress its people.
- 3) The permissibility (*Jawāz*) of seeking assistance from a *fājir* (sinner) for the *Jihād* (as the assistance sought from the two drinkers).
- 4) Indeed, Ahmad ibn Nasr (may Allāh have mercy upon him), was of those who viewed the legitimacy of rebelling (*Khurūj*) against the deviant (*mubtadi'*), even if he did not commit *kufr*. And this is apparent due to him calling Al-Wāthiq as "*Amīr Al-Mu'minīn*". And from this, we see that there are uncertainties in the claim of *Ijmā'* (consensus) upon the impermissibility of rebelling against the deviant (*mubtadi'*) and sinful (*fāsiq*) ruler. And how could there possibly be an *Ijmā'* on that, when Al-Husayn ibn 'Alī (may Allāh be pleased with him) – the grandson of the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings be upon) – rebelled against Ziyād the *fāsiq*; and 'Abdur-Rahmān ibn Al-Ash'ath rebelled against 'Abdul-Malik ibn Marwān, and he ('Abdur-Rahmān) had with him Sa'id ibn Jubayr and Ash-Sha'bī and others; and 'Abdullāh ibn Hanthalah (may Allāh be pleased with him) rebelled against Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah... So then, what about when the ruler perpetrates clear-cut *kufr* and replaces the Legislation of Allāh?!!

*Imām An-Nawawī* said [*Sahīh Muslim Bi Sharh An-Nawawī*, 12/229], "*Al-Qādhi 'Iyādh* said, 'The scholars have formed a consensus that the leadership (*Imāmah*) is not to be contracted to a disbeliever (*kāfir*) and that if disbelief (*kufr*) comes from him, then he is to be removed... So if disbelief (*kufr*) and changing the legislation (*Shar'*) or innovation (*bid'ah*) comes from him, then he has left the status of authority and his (right) of obedience falls and it becomes obligatory upon the Muslims to rise up against him and remove him and set up a just *Imām*, if that is possible for them. Then if that is not possible, except for a group (*Tā'ifah*), then it is obligatory upon them (i.e. a group) to rise up and remove the disbeliever (*kāfir*). And that is not obligatory concerning the innovator, unless they

assume that they are able (to do so). Then if the inability is confirmed, then the uprising is not obligatory, but the Muslims must make *Hijrah* away from his land to other than it, and flee with his religion.”

- 5) The danger of the ‘*Ālim* (scholar) mingling with the sultan or ruler, and that it will harm his *Dīn*. As we see how ‘Abdur-Rahmān ibn Is’hāq was a friend of Ahmad ibn Nasr, but the *fitnah* of the ruler blinded him, and he permitted Ahmad’s blood.

Ibn Al-Jawzī said in “*Sayd Al-Khātir*” [pg. 403], “Nothing is more harmful to an ‘*Ālim*, other than going to the sultans – for verily, he will beautify the *dunyā* to the ‘*Ālim*, and will make the evil seem insignificant to him.”

And the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “*Whosoever goes to the doors of the sultan, he will fall into fitnah.*” [*Sahih Al-Jāmi’*, # 6124]

- 6) Preventing the captives from amongst the companions of Ahmad ibn Nasr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) from their foodstuff was a great injustice – so then what about spilling their blood and the blood of Believers like them in each and every era?!!
- 7) The admiration of Yahyā ibn Ma’īn of Ahmad ibn Nasr. And Yahyā ibn Ma’īn is counted as one of the extremely and severely strict scholars (*mutashaddidīn*) when it comes to praising men (*Tazkiyah*), and he is of the greatest ‘*Ulamā* of *Al-Jarh wat-Ta’dīl*.

Ath-Thahabī said in “*Mizān Al-Itidāl*” regarding the scholars who are extremely and severely strict in *Tawthīq* (declaring someone reliable): “A group (of scholars) closely scrutinize before declaring someone reliable, and carefully verify before declaring someone trustworthy – they disparage a narrator for (merely) two or three mistakes, and they consider their narrations limply. So as for such a critic, his *Tawthīq* is accepted, bite onto it with your molar teeth, and stick to it... And from amongst this class of scholars, are Al-Jūzjānī, Abū Hātim Ar-Rāzī, Abū Muhammad ‘Abdur-Rahmān ibn Abī Hātim Ar-Rāzī, An-Nasā’ī, Shu’bah, Ibn Al-Qattān, (Yahyā) Ibn Ma’īn, Ibn Al-Madīnī, and Yahyā Al-Qattān.”

- 8) The praise of *Imām* Ahmad ibn Hanbal – the *Imām* of *Ahl As-Sunnah* – upon Ahmad ibn Nasr; and *Imām* Ahmad ibn Hanbal is also amongst the greatest ‘*Ulamā* of *Al-Jarh wat-Ta’dīl*.

- 9) The miracles (*Karāmāt*) of Ahmad ibn Nasr, which are considered as glad tidings for him dieing upon goodness, and Allāh knows best.

Verily, the '*Aqīdah* of the Pious Predecessors is a treasure that demands a precious dowry (*mahr*) – what have you prepared for it dear reader?

Beware lest the '*Aqīdah* of the Pious Predecessors becomes merely a body without spirit, or like ashes which vanish through any outlet during the storms of trials and tribulations.

*"The Believers are only the ones who have believed in Allāh and His Messenger, and then doubt not, but wage Jihād with their properties and their lives in the Path of Allāh. It is those who are As-Sādiqīn (the truthful)." [Al-Hujurāt: 15]*