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SOME ZAYDĪ VIEWS ON THE COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET

By ETAN KOHLBERG

The history of the Zaydiyya and the growth of Zaydī thought, law, and doctrine have become increasingly well known as a result of studies by R. Strothmann,¹ E. Griffini,² C. van Arendonk,³ W. Madelung,⁴ and others. As Madelung has convincingly shown in his book on al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, Zaydī doctrine, which initially differed appreciably from that of the Mu'tazila on many issues, eventually adopted all of the principal tenets of Mu'tazilism. At the same time, the various Zaydī branches retained the essential Shī'ī belief in an Imām descended from 'Alī and Fāṭima. Yet the Zaydī doctrine of the imāmate differs from the doctrine of Imāmī (or Twelver) Shī'ism in some important respects: the Zaydī Imām is not infallible, sinless, and omniscient,⁵ and, according to the Batri Zaydis,⁶ he need not even always be the most excellent person of his generation.⁷ Most Zaydis maintained instead that the Imām had to prove his leadership by fighting for the faith (*jihād*). The Imāmī claim that all the Imāms had been personally designated by God and His Prophet was restricted by the Zaydis to 'Alī, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn.⁸

With these basic facts in mind, it might prove useful to investigate briefly an important offshoot of the Zaydī doctrine of the imāmate, namely, Zaydī attitudes to the Companions of the Prophet. Since the Zaydiyya occupies a middle ground between Mu'tazilī and Imāmī Shī'ī doctrines of the imāmate, it is not surprising that its views on the intimately related topic of the Ṣaḥāba should also lie somewhere between these two poles.⁹ Yet even within this circumscribed area different, and sometimes conflicting, points of view could be accommodated. This is mainly because Zaydī authors influenced by radical Shī'ism are more severe in their judgement of the Ṣaḥāba than those who have unreservedly adopted the Mu'tazilī line. Since the latter belong in the most

¹ *Das Staatsrecht der Zaiditen*, Strassburg, 1912; *Kultus der Zaiditen*, Strassburg, 1912; 'Die Literatur der Zaiditen', *Der Islam*, I, 1910, 354-68, II, 1911, 49-78; 'Das Problem der literarischen Persönlichkeit Zaid b. 'Alī', *Der Islam*, XIII, 1923, 1-52.

² *Corpus juris di Zaid b. 'Alī*, Milano, 1919.

³ *De opkomst van het Zaidietische Imamaat in Yemen*, Leiden, 1919.

⁴ *Der Imam al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen*, Berlin, 1965.

⁵ Most Zaydī doctors maintain, however, that 'Alī, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn were endowed with infallibility. Cf. below, p. 98.

⁶ On whom cf. Strothmann, *Das Staatsrecht der Zaiditen*, 31 ff.; Madelung, op. cit., index.

⁷ This theory, often referred to as *imāmat al-mafḍūl*, was adopted by some pro-Shī'ī Mu'tazilīs. See, e.g., al-Nāshī' al-Akbar, *Masā'il al-imāma*, in J. van Ess, *Frühe mu'tazilitische Häresio-graphie*, Beirut, 1971, 56-8.

⁸ For further details see Strothmann, *Staatsrecht*, 63 ff.

⁹ Imāmī Shī'ī theories on the subject are dealt with in *The attitude of the Imāmī Shī'īs to the Companions of the Prophet*, unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1971. Sunnī and Mu'tazilī views on the Companions are discussed in the first two chapters; the present article is an elaboration of the second appendix of that thesis.

part to the later period of Zaydī history, it is in the writings of that period that more moderate views prevail. It should also be borne in mind that the Zaydī Imāms, who composed many of the most significant works in Zaydī literature, did not always adhere to currently held dogma or to doctrines laid down by their predecessors, and could strike out in new and unexpected directions.

Zaydī scholars agree that during Muḥammad's lifetime the Companions served the cause of Islam with loyalty and devotion. At the same time they maintain that 'Alī was the legitimate successor to the Prophet. Their problem was to reconcile these two positions with the fact that the Companions elected Abū Bakr and not 'Alī.

An answer given by moderate Zaydīs is that while Muḥammad often praised 'Alī's virtues, he did not issue an unequivocal declaration appointing 'Alī as his successor. 'Alī's designation was not explicit (*naṣṣ jaḥī*) but concealed or implicit (*naṣṣ khafī*), of a kind that could be inferred logically (*naṣṣ istidlālī*) but which could not be proved by reference to an explicit text.¹⁰ In order to discover the identity of the Imām the Companions had to resort to individual reasoning (*ijtihād*), a course of action sanctioned by the Prophet himself. The application of the theory of *ijtihād* to the Companions can be traced back to the early Zaydī Jarīriyya sect.¹¹ It is also attributed to the *mutakallim* al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-Karābīsī (d. 248/862).¹² Al-Ash'arī (d. 324/935–6) adopted this view, which was subsequently incorporated into Ash'arī doctrine.¹³ The Zaydīs, however, unlike al-Ash'arī, believe that the Companions acknowledged 'Alī's superiority to all of them; they therefore have to show which motives prompted most Companions to support Abū Bakr. One such motive is said to have been the fear that any delay in electing a new ruler would cause widespread apostasy among the newly converted and among the *munāfiqūn*. Since 'Alī was engaged in preparing the Prophet's body for burial, the Companions chose Abū Bakr instead.¹⁴ Another reason for the haste in which Abū Bakr was elected was the wish of the Muhājirūn to forestall the Anṣārī plan to elect their own leader Sa'd b. 'Ubāda.¹⁵ Whatever their reasoning, the Companions cannot be accused of having committed any sin, since they were acting within the prescribed rules of *ijtihād*.¹⁶

Other Zaydī authors, while accepting the notion that the Companions in

¹⁰ Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd (d. after 972/1564), *Nuzhat al-absār*, BM MS Or. 3850, fol. 164a.

¹¹ Al-Nāshī' al-Akbar, in van Ess, op. cit., 44.

¹² *ibid.*, 67 (where al-Karābīsī is erroneously identified as the Mu'tazilī Walīd b. Abān al-Karābīsī; see van Ess's explanation, p. 52 of the German section); cf. al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn*, ed. H. Ritter, Istanbul, 1929–33, 457.

¹³ cf. al-Ash'arī, *al-İbāna 'an uṣūl al-dīyāna*, Cairo, 1348/1929–30, 73 (*wa-kulluhum min ahl al-ijtihād*).

¹⁴ 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Najrī (d. 877/1472), *Mirqāt al-anzār*, Leiden MS Or. 6355, fol. 130a.

¹⁵ *ibid.* For an Imāmī account cf. al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Shāfi' fī 'l-imāma*, Tehran, 1884, 100.

¹⁶ Ibn Ḥumayd, op. cit., fol. 167b; cf. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn Mānakdīm (d. 425/1034), *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa* (erroneously attributed to Mānakdīm's teacher 'Abd al-Jabbār), ed. 'Abd

general had the best interest (*maṣlaḥa*) of the community in mind, maintain that the confused and often conflicting reports about the early period make it impossible to gain a clear picture of the precise motives for the actions of individual Companions. The wisest course therefore is to refrain from expressing any opinion on them and to let God be their judge.¹⁷

More radical Zaydis take a different point of view. They claim that although the designation of 'Alī as Muḥammad's successor was implicit, its contents and purport were clear-cut and unambiguous (*nuṣūṣ qat'īyya*), leaving room neither for assumptions (*ẓann*) nor for individual reasoning. Hence the first three caliphs and their supporters are guilty of error (*khata'*). It does not follow, however, that they are also guilty of sin (*fiṣq*), since they did not act in a spirit of rebellion (*tamarrud*) against God.¹⁸ Although the Companions are not perfect, their virtuous deeds during the Prophet's lifetime more than compensate for any subsequent lapses. This is corroborated by a tradition on the authority of Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān in which Muḥammad is quoted as declaring, 'My Companions will err after my death but this will be forgiven them because they were the first to follow me'.¹⁹

The most uncompromising attitude is the one which depicts the community after Muḥammad's death as being divided into two camps: 'Alī and his supporters, who followed the commandments of the Qur'ān, and the rest of the people, who 'went astray like a blind camel'.²⁰ In an account related by proponents of this view, many distinguished Companions are described as opposing Abū Bakr's election. Among them were twelve—six Muhājirūn and six Anṣār—who spoke up for 'Alī's rights.²¹ Their speeches are said to have made such a strong impression on Abū Bakr that he went into seclusion for

al-Karīm 'Uthmān, Cairo, 1965, 763. Ḥamidān b. Yahyā (*fl.* seventh/thirteenth century), who opposed the strong Mu'tazilī influence on Zaydī doctrine (see Madelung, *op. cit.*, 218 ff.), rejects the application of the theory of *ijtihād* to the Companions. See his *Kitāb al-taṣrīḥ*, BM MS Or. 3727, fols. 114a–115a.

¹⁷ Ibn Ḥumayd, *op. cit.*, fols. 164b, 171a; al-Najrī, *op. cit.*, fol. 130b, quoting the Mu'tazilī Abū 'l-Ḥusayn al-Khayyāt (d. 319/931). Al-Khayyāt is also reported to have justified the action of the Companions in passing over 'Alī and electing others instead. See Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Kitāb ṭabaqāt al-mu'tazila*, ed. S. Diwald-Wilzer, Wiesbaden, 1961, p. 86.

¹⁸ Al-Najrī, *op. cit.*, fol. 130b (where this view is attributed to a group of Zaydis known as *al-muḥaqqiqūn* 'those who seek to establish the truth by critical investigation').

¹⁹ *Takūnu li-ashābi ba'dī zalla tuḡfaru lahum li-sābiqatihim ma'ī* (Ibn Ḥumayd, *op. cit.*, fol. 165a). For this tradition see also Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabari, *al-Riyāḍ al-naḍira fī manāqib al-'ashara*, Cairo, 1372/1952–3, I, 21–2; al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-'ummāl*, Ḥaydarābād, 1364–85/1944–5—1965–6, XII, 155 (on the authority of 'Alī).

²⁰ Ḥamidān b. Yahyā, *al-Muntaza' al-awwal min aqwāl al-a'imma*, BM MS Or. 3727, fol. 75b, quoting from the *Kitāb dhann al-ahwā' wa 'l-wuhūm* by al-Qasim b. 'Alī al-'Ayyānī (d. 393/1003) (on whom cf. Madelung, *op. cit.*, 194–5).

²¹ Yahyā b. Hāshim al-Hadawī al-Ṣa'dī, *Najāt al-ṭālib*, BM MS Or. 3727, fols. 4a–5b. This tradition is very popular in Imāmi literature. See, e.g., al-Barqī, *Kitāb al-rijāl*, ed. Kāzīm al-Mūsawī al-Mayāmawī, Tehran, 1963, 63–6; Aḥmad b. Abī Ṭālib al-Ṭabarsī, *al-Ihtijāj*, Najaf, 1350/1931–2, 48–51, cited by Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-anwār*, [Persia,] 1305–15/1887–8—1897–8, VIII, 38–40; 'Abd al-Jalīl al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb al-naqḍ*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥusaynī Urmawī, Tehran, 1952, 655–64; al-Bayyāḍī, *al-Ṣirāt al-mustaḡim*, India Office Library, MS, I, 471, fols. 204b–205a. The list of the twelve Companions in the various sources is not always identical.

three days. His followers, fearing that he might decide to abdicate in favour of 'Alī, marched into the streets and threatened to kill anyone who henceforth dared to challenge Abū Bakr's authority.²²

In their attitude to Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān, some Zaydī writers prefer a position of neutrality (*tawaqquf*) and state that no judgement should be passed on them.²³ Other authors maintain that the three caliphs committed an odious deed (*qabīḥ*) and an act of rebellion (*ma'siya*), but that there is no definite proof that their action constituted a grave sin (*fiṣq*).²⁴ This view is challenged by a third group, whose members claim that the three caliphs are indeed guilty of *fiṣq*, since they committed a major offence (*kabīra*) by usurping power.²⁵ In a detailed accusation, Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and their chief supporters are said to have deliberately broken their own pledge by taking over the reins of power after Muḥammad's death. They thus proclaimed themselves guilty of error and moral blindness (*al-ḍalāla wa 'l-'amā*). Their crime is so obvious that those who oppose them can dispense with any attacks on them.²⁶ In addition, Abū Bakr and 'Umar allegedly proved their inadequacy as rulers by their ignorance of the religious law. When 'Umar became caliph he consistently attacked his predecessor and rejected many of the legal decisions made by Abū Bakr. Such criticism, according to this view, can be interpreted in one of two ways: either 'Umar had not discovered Abū Bakr's errors until after Abū Bakr's death, in which case he is 'the most blind-hearted and unintelligent of God's creatures'; or else he had been aware of Abū Bakr's errors but had hypocritically concealed this knowledge from him, because Abū Bakr's approval was more important to him than the anger of God and His apostle; in that case 'Umar has no share (*ḥaqq*) in Islam.²⁷ Only a short distance separates these formulations from the position of the Jārūdī Zaydīs, who flatly condemned both Abū Bakr and 'Umar as unbelievers.²⁸

²² Al-Hadawī al-Ṣa'dī, op. cit., fol. 6a. Cf. also al-Hādī Yahyā b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 298/911), *Kitāb tathbīt al-imāma*, BM MS Or. 3727, fol. 164a-b; al-Manṣūr Ḥasan b. Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 669/1271 or 670/1272), *Kitāb anwār al-yaqīn fī imāmat amīr al-mu'minīn*, BM MS Or. 3868, fol. 156b.

²³ Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Jundārī, *Simt al-jumān*, Leiden MS Or. 6637 (unpaginated).

²⁴ This view was reportedly held by the Imām al-Mu'ayyad bi-'llāh (d. 411/1020) and others. In fact, most Zaydīs refused to regard Abū Bakr and 'Umar as guilty of *fiṣq* (ibid.); these Zaydīs are known as *al-Ṣāliḥiyya*. See Mānakdīm, op. cit., 761.

²⁵ This minority view is attributed to the Imām Abū 'l-Faḥ al-Daylamī (lived fifth/eleventh century), al-Mutawakkil Aḥmad b. Sulaymān (d. 566/1170), and others (al-Jundārī, op. cit.).

²⁶ Al-Manṣūr Ḥasan b. Badr al-Dīn, op. cit., fol. 163b.

²⁷ ibid., fol. 164a. Many of these accusations are set out in great detail in Imāmī polemical writings.

²⁸ See al-Nāshī' al-Akbar, in van Ess, op. cit., 42; al-Nawbakhti, *Firaq al-shī'a*, ed. H. Ritter, Istanbul, 1931, 48; al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn*, 66-7. Among Zaydī Imāms, al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 246/860), who was the real founder of Zaydī dogmatics, was sharply critical of the first caliphs and the other Companions of the Saqifa, but tried to avoid giving his views a definitive form in the shape of a dogma (see Strothmann, *Staatsrecht*, 38). No such doubts beset al-Qāsim's grandson, the Imām al-Hādī Yahyā b. al-Ḥusayn: he condemned Abū Bakr and 'Umar and declared them to be unbelievers who deserved the death penalty (see van Arendonk, op. cit., 254; cf. Madelung, op. cit., 167).

Of the Companions who plotted against 'Alī, none is said to have played a more sinister role than al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba, who reportedly boasted that he was the first to have wrested power from the *ahl al-bayt*. According to a Zaydī account, Abū Bakr was on the point of giving 'Alī the oath of allegiance when al-Mughīra appeared and warned him that 'Alī would become both the *Qayṣar* and the *Kisrā* of the Muslims, and that authority would henceforth reside solely with the Hāshimīs. When Abū Bakr failed to be impressed by these arguments al-Mughīra turned to 'Umar and succeeded in winning him over to his standpoint. The two men then returned to Abū Bakr and proceeded with him to the Saqifa of the Banū Sā'ida, where the actual usurpation took place.²⁹ It is al-Mughīra, then, even more than the two caliphs, who must, according to this account, bear the responsibility for the injustice perpetrated against 'Alī.³⁰

The different views on the first three caliphs are reflected in the argument as to whether the formula 'may God be pleased with them (*radīya 'llāhu 'anhum*)', known as the *tarḍīya*, should be employed after their names. Some early Zaydīs forbade its use, while others maintained a position of neutrality on that question. Only the later Zaydī authors taught that the *tarḍīya* could definitely be added to the names of the three caliphs.³¹

A good example of the gamut of Zaydī views on specific Companions is provided in the case of 'Alī's opponents during his caliphate, especially the leaders in the Battle of the Camel and at Ṣiffīn. On 'Ā'isha, Ṭalḥa, and al-Zubayr, some Zaydīs adopt the view held by many of the later Mu'tazilīs: the three rebelled against the lawful Imām, and thus committed an error (*khata'*) which reached the degree of a grave sin (*fisq*). Yet they subsequently repented and died as believers who will enter Paradise.³² A minority among

²⁹ Al-Hadawī al-Ṣa'dī, op. cit., fol. 3a-b, quoting from *al-Shāfi* by al-Manṣūr bi-'llāh 'Abd Allāh b. Ḥamza (d. 614/1217).

³⁰ The claim that al-Mughīra played a central part in laying the groundwork for the usurpation seems to be specifically Zaydī. The Imāmīs, too, attribute to al-Mughīra a variety of anti-'Alid actions (cf., e.g., al-Majlisī, op. cit., VIII, 56-7); but in discussing the usurpation itself they usually mention Abū 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrāh as the main collaborator with Abū Bakr and 'Umar. Cf. in general H. Lammens, 'Le "Triumvirat" Aboū Bakr, 'Omar et Aboū 'Obaida', *MFO, Université Saint-Joseph, Beyrouth*, IV, 1910, 113-44.

³¹ Al-Najrī, op. cit., fol. 131a, whence Madelung, op. cit., 45; Ṣāliḥ b. Maḥdī al-Maqbālī, *al-'Alam al-shāmīkh fī ihār al-ḥaqq 'alā 'l-ābā wa 'l-mashāyikh*, Cairo, 1328/1910, 326; cf. also Strothmann, *Staatsrecht*, p. 39, n. 1. But see the report about al-Uṭrūsh, below, p. 98. A list of erroneous decisions and harmful innovations ascribed to the three caliphs by the Imāmīs and by some Mu'tazilīs is reproduced in various Zaydī texts. A description and an analysis of some of these decisions and innovations are given by J. van Ess in *Das Kitāb an-Nakṭ des Naẓẓām und seine Rezeption im Kitāb al-Futū des Gābiẓ*, Göttingen, 1972, 22-47.

³² Al-Najrī, loc. cit. Cf. the exposition of this view by 'Abd al-Jabbār in his *al-Mughnī*, xx, ii, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Sulaymān Dunyā, Cairo, c. 1966, 84-92. The Zaydī Ibn al-Murtaḍā (quoted by al-Najrī, op. cit., fol. 131b) disagrees, however, with 'Abd al-Jabbār's claim that since it is impossible to know man's innermost thoughts, a person may be considered as having repented even when there is no conclusive evidence to that effect. According to Ibn al-Murtaḍā, a definite error (*al-khata' al-maqtū' bihi*) can be rectified only by a clear repentance. Since external, apparent actions (*ẓāhir*) are the basis of all worship, repentance, too, must be regarded as having taken place when there are external proofs for its existence. The implication from Ibn al-Murtaḍā's argument is that no distinction can be drawn between what a man says and what he believes.

the Zaydiyya, clearly influenced by Imāmī beliefs, refuse to acknowledge that such repentance took place, and claim that these three Companions died in error.³³ The claim that the error of ʿAlī and his accomplices actually amounted to disbelief is reported to have been held by the founder of the Jarriyya, Sulaymān b. Jarīr;³⁴ it is not adopted by the mainstream of later Zaydī thought. On the other hand, Muʿāwiya is painted in very dark colours. He is described by some Zaydīs as a grave sinner who did not repent, while his followers at Ṣiffīn are said to be guilty of rebelling against a lawful Imām.³⁵ Other Zaydīs maintain that Muʿāwiya was an unbeliever because of his many sins, which include the slaying of Companions, belief in predestination (*jabr*), and the adoption of Ziyād b. Abīhi despite Muḥammad's decree, 'the child belongs to the [master of the] marriage-bed, and the fornicator shall have nothing'.³⁶

The degree of culpability ascribed to the Ṣahāba as a whole or to particular Companions is directly linked to the question of whether or not it is permissible to vilify the Companions (*sabb al-ṣahāba*). While such vilification was denounced by most Sunnī jurists as a major offence,³⁷ it was widely practised in radical Shīʿī circles.³⁸ In Zaydī literature there is evidence of a considerable divergence of opinion on this issue. The pro-Imāmī position (quoted approvingly in Imāmī texts) is formulated by an anonymous Zaydī (*ba'd al-shī'a al-zaydiyya*) in a discussion which he allegedly held with the Ash'arī theologian Abū 'l-Ma'ālī al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085). The Zaydī scholar points out that God Himself has cursed and has ordered His servants to curse (e.g. *Qur'ān* II, 159

³³ Al-Najrī, op. cit., fol. 131a.

³⁴ Al-Nāshī' al-Akbar, op. cit., 44; al-Nawbakhtī, op. cit., 9; al-Najrī, loc. cit. Cf. in general van Arendonk, op. cit., 73; Madelung, op. cit., 62.

³⁵ Al-Najrī, op. cit., fols. 131b-132a.

³⁶ *ibid.* These and similar points are also discussed in Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt al-mu'tazila*, 23-4; Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Aqīl, *al-Naṣā'ih al-kāfiya li-man yatawallā Mu'āwiya*, ed. Muḥammad Riḍā Khursān, Najaf, 1966, 20; Ibn Abī 'l-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ naḥj al-balāgha*, ed. Muḥammad Abū 'l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo, 1959-64, v, 130-1. Cf. also al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī 'l-ḥakamayn*, ed. Ch. Pellat, *al-Machriq*, LI, 4-5, 1958, 448; J. Wellhausen, *The Arab kingdom and its fall*, repr., Beirut, 1963, 121-2; the article 'Ziyād b. Abīhi' by H. Lammens, in EI, first ed. It is not surprising that the Zaydīs, who generally accepted the Mu'tazilī doctrine of free will, should accuse Mu'āwiya of adhering to deterministic beliefs.

³⁷ Details of the Sunnī doctrine may be found in the following sources: (a) Shāfi'is: Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *al-Sayf al-maslūl*, Leiden MS Or. 2412, fol. 85b; al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb al-kabā'ir*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Razzāq Ḥamza, Mecca, 1355/1936-7, 260-4; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *al-Ṣawā'iq al-muhriqa*, ed. 'Abd al-Wahhāb 'Abd al-Laṭīf, Cairo, 1375/1955-6, 256; al-Maḥallī, *al-Badr al-tālī*, Būlāq, 1285/1868-9, II, 139; (b) Ḥanafis: Muḥammad Amin ibn 'Ābidīn, *Radd al-muḥtār*, quoted by Sharaf al-Dīn al-Mūsawī in his *al-Fuṣūl al-muḥimma*, Najaf, c. 1964, 35; E. E. Elder, *A commentary on the creed of Islam*, New York, 1950, 153-4; (c) Mālikis: al-Shātībī, *al-I'tisām*, Cairo, 1913-14, II, 261-2; (d) Ḥanbalis: Ibn Abī Ya'ālā, *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiḳī, Cairo, 1952, I, 30, 245, 311; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib al-imām Ahmad b. Ḥanbal*, ed. Muḥammad Amin Khānjī, Cairo, 1930, 130; Ibn Abī Bakr, *al-Tamhīd wa 'l-bayān*, ed. Maḥmūd Y. Zāyid, Beirut, 1964, 171; Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Ṣarim al-maslūl*, Ḥaydarābād, 1322/1904-5, 572.

³⁸ cf. Goldziher, 'Spottnamen der ersten Chalifen bei den Schi'iten', *WZKM*, xv, 1901, 321-34 (= *Gesammelte Schriften*, IV, 295-308).

(154)). He then mentions numerous cases in which one Companion cursed another, or branded him a liar, or pointed to some deficiency in him.³⁹ The gist of the argument is clear: once it is established that cursing or vilifying *per se* is not prohibited and that there is no reason to exempt the Companions from the category of ordinary, erring mortals, then there can be no objection in principle to the cursing of Companions, given sufficient reasons to do so.

This point is also made in the seventh/thirteenth century by Ḥamidān b. Yaḥyā. He maintains that 'Ṣaḥāba' is a generic term referring to all those who accompanied the Prophet. As such it includes apostates and hypocrites as well as virtuous men, 'Alī's opponents at the battles of the Camel, Ṣiffīn, and Nahrawān as well as his most ardent supporters. Hence no generalizations should be made about the Companions: they should neither be praised nor vilified as a group. A virtuous Companion should not be cursed; but it is permissible (*jā'iz*) to curse those Companions whose sinfulness has been established beyond doubt. Among them are Mu'āwiya and his followers, al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba, and Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī.⁴⁰

In contrast to such views, many moderate Zaydīs accept the Sunnī doctrine that vilification of the Companions in any form is forbidden. Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad Ibn Ḥumayd, writing in the tenth/sixteenth century, quotes an impressive number of earlier authorities in support of that doctrine.⁴¹ He stresses in particular that the Prophet himself forbade anyone to make derogatory statements about the Companions, and that Zayd b. 'Alī refused to curse Abū Bakr and 'Umar and was therefore forsaken by the Rāfiḍīs.⁴² The Imāmiyya is accused of having adopted the explicit designation theory so as to have a pretext for vilifying the Companions.⁴³

Ibn Ḥumayd's attitude appears to have been shared not only by later Zaydī jurists, but also by some of the early Imāms. Thus it is reported that al-Ḥasan b. Zayd (d. 270/884), the founder of the northern Zaydī state,⁴⁴ ordered the execution of a man who had cursed 'Ā'isha. When the 'Alids protested against this harsh verdict on one of their own, al-Ḥasan explained that cursing 'Ā'isha was tantamount to reviling the Prophet.⁴⁵ Similarly, the Imām al-Hādī b. Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 298/911) is said to have flogged people in Ṣan'ā' who had vilified Abū Bakr and 'Umar.⁴⁶

³⁹ The discussion is quoted in full in Ibn Abī 'l-Ḥadīd, *op. cit.*, xx, 10–35; 'Alī Khān ibn Ma'sūm, *al-Darajāt al-rafi'a*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣādiq Baḥr al-'Ulūm, Najaf, 1382/1962–3, 12–28. Cf. also Ibn 'Aqīl, *op. cit.*, 8–19.

⁴⁰ Ḥamidān b. Yaḥyā, *Kitāb al-taṣrīḥ*, fol. 113a, whence al-Hadawī al-Ṣa'dī, *op. cit.* fols. 25a–26b.

⁴¹ Ibn Ḥumayd, *op. cit.*, fol. 161b.

⁴² *ibid.*, fols. 162b–163b, 168a.

⁴³ *ibid.*, fol. 164a.

⁴⁴ He is not generally liked by the later Zaydī authors. Cf. Madelung, *op. cit.*, 154–9.

⁴⁵ Al-Subkī, *op. cit.*, fol. 85a; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat ulī 'l-baṣā'ir fī ma'rīfat al-kabā'ir*, Princeton MS, Garrett collection, 1896, fol. 169a–b.

⁴⁶ Ibn Ḥumayd, *op. cit.*, fol. 168a. The story seems rather suspect in view of al-Hādī's known hostility towards the leading Companions (cf. above, p. 94, n. 28).

One further point in the context of Zaydī attitudes to the Companions concerns the role of the Ṣaḥāba as transmitters of Muḥammad's utterances. For the Zaydīs, the most reliable and trustworthy authorities are the Imāms belonging to the Prophet's family (*a'immat al-'itra*).⁴⁷ All other members of the *ahl al-bayt* (descendants of 'Alī and Fāṭima) are also commonly accepted as authorities, irrespective of their being recognized as Imāms or not. In contrast, the question of whether or not the transmission of traditions by the Companions can be admitted caused serious disagreement among Zaydī scholars, particularly in the early period.⁴⁸ According to the moderate Batriyya, any member of the community might act as transmitter.⁴⁹ This view was adopted at least by some of the Zaydī Imāms. It is reported that when the Imām al-Nāṣir lil-Ḥaqq al-Uṭrūsh (d. 304/917) dictated traditions on the authority of Abū Bakr and 'Umar he noticed that the person who was taking down the notes did not add the *tarḍiya* after the names of the two caliphs. Al-Uṭrūsh asked him reproachfully, 'Why don't you write the *tarḍiya*? Such knowledge is reported only from them and from those like them'.⁵⁰ In a similar vein, the Mu'tazilī Zaydī al-Ḥākim al-Jushamī (d. 494/1101) attacks the Rāfiḍa for rejecting the authority of the Companions in the transmission of traditions.⁵¹

Some later Zaydī doctors, following Batrī teachings, maintain that transmission on the authority of the Ṣaḥāba is no less trustworthy than that of the *ahl al-bayt*, since it is universally acknowledged (*lil-ijmā'*) that after Muḥammad's death the common people (*'amma*) could choose whether to turn for guidance to members of the *ahl al-bayt* or to other Companions.⁵² At the same time, 'Alī, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, and Fāṭima can also be accepted as authorities in their own right, and not merely as transmitters from the Prophet, since they are the only persons after Muḥammad who were endowed with infallibility (*'isma*).⁵³ This solution enabled the Zaydiyya to accept Sunnī traditions, without compromising the special status enjoyed by the *ahl al-bayt*.

⁴⁷ See Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad ibn al-Wazīr (d. 914/1508), *al-Falak al-dawwār*, BM MS Or. 3850, fol. 26a.

⁴⁸ cf. Madelung, op. cit., 68–9.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 49–50.

⁵⁰ *Inna mithla hādihā 'l-'ilm lā yu'tharu illā 'anhumā wa-'an amthālikihimā* (Ibn Ḥumayd, op. cit., fol. 169b). It is to be noted, however, that al-Uṭrūsh is rather anti-Mu'tazilī and often close to Imāmī doctrine (cf. Madelung, op. cit., 159 ff.). According to al-Manṣūr bi-'llāh, the Companions are the most excellent of the community after the *ahl al-bayt* (Ibn Ḥumayd, op. cit., fol. 171a).

⁵¹ Al-Ḥākim al-Jushamī, *Kitāb sharḥ 'uyūn al-masā'il*, Leiden MS Or. 2584, fol. 31b. The acceptance of this transmission hinges at least on a tacit acknowledgement of the Sunnī principle that all Companions are persons of high morals (*'udūl*). The majority of Zaydī scholars accept that principle, with the reservation that it does not apply to those Companions whose sinfulness has become apparent, such as those who fought against 'Alī and did not repent. See Ibn al-Wazīr, op. cit., fol. 70a; cf. al-Maqbālī, op. cit., 307.

⁵² Al-Najrī, op. cit., fol. 133b.

⁵³ 'Alī, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn are also said to be the most excellent among the Companions (*afḍal al-ṣaḥāba*) (Mānakdim, op. cit., 767). The claim, attributed to some Mu'tazilī authors, that ten of the most renowned Companions (known as *al-'ashara al-mubashsharūn*) were also infallible, is rejected by the later Zaydiyya as dubious (*fīhi naẓar*) (al-Najrī, op. cit., fols. 133b-134a).