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Biography of Sayyid ibn Tawus

He is Sayyid Raziyuddin Abul Qasim Ali Ibn Sa'aduddin Abi Ibrahim Musa Ibn Ja'far Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Tawus. His holy ancestry reaches to Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (a.s.) from his father's side and up to Imam Husayn (a.s.) from his mother's side and hence he is also called Zul Hosnain.

He is known as Tawus (peacock) because one of his ancestors Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ishaq bin Hasan was a handsome man with ugly legs. Therefore, they called him Tawus, and thereafter his progeny too got the same title. He was born in the middle of Muharram 589 in Hilla. The report that he was born in Rajab of 587 is weak. Ibn Tawus grew up in Hilla and acquired the preliminary training there. He was in Hilla up to year 602 where he was taught by many teachers and got certificates from others who included:

His father Sa'aduddin Musa bin Musa. His grandfather Waram bin Abi Faras Nakhaee. As he himself says, his father and his grandfather, Waram had given special attention to his education and training and had taught him the best of righteousness and courtesy.

Abul Hasan Ali bin Yahya al-Khiyat al-Hanat Sawravi Hilli. Husayn bin Ahmad Sawravi Asad bin Abdul Qadir Muhammad bin Ja'far bin Hibbatullah Hasan bin Alyud Darabi Muhammad as-Sawravi Muhammad bin Ma'd al-Musavi Fakhr bin Muhammad al-Musavi Haider bin Muhammad bin Zaid al-Husayni Salim bin Mehfooz bin Azizat al-Hilli Jibraeel bin Ahmad as-Sawravi Ali bin al-Husayn bin Ahmad al-Jawani Husayn bin Abdul Karim al-Gharvi Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Ali bin Zahra al-Halabi

Ibn Tawus learned from non-Shia teachers and got permission (testimonial) and explained the gracefulness of Shia through their narrations. Among such teachers are: Muhammad bin Mahmood Najjar Muaiyaduddin Muhammad bin Muhammad Qummi.

Ibn Tawus married Zahra Khatoon, daughter of the Shia Vazir of Nasir bin Zaidi. He was not pleased with that matrimony because it involved tendency towards the world. We do not have enough information

about the said persons. We do not know whether or not she bore any child for the Shaykh. The Sayyid's famous children were known by the names of their mothers. The Sayyid had good relations with the ruling diplomats like Vazir Alqami Muhammad bin Ahmad, his brothers, and his son.

He also had good relations with Caliph Mustansir Abbasi so that the caliph built a house for the Sayyid in the eastern part of Baghdad. The caliph had tried to involve Sayyid Ibn Tawus in political affairs and to place all the Talibiyyin under his leadership but the Sayyid emphatically rejected this. Mustansir also tried to send the Sayyid as an emissary to the Mongol ruler, which was not accepted. The first son of the Sayyid was born on the 9th of Muharram 643 in Hilla and the second on the 8th of Muharram 647 in Najaf.

What we come to know from books of biography and translated works is that the Sayyid had returned to Hilla in 641 and had gone to Najaf in 645 wherefrom he had gone to Karbala in 649 and had proceeded on a journey to Samarrah in 652 and on reaching Baghdad he stayed there and when Baghdad fell to Moguls he was in that city.

When Holaku Khan arrived in Mustansariyah he asked the Ulamas (scholars) this query: Who is better, a tyrant Muslim ruler or a Kafir judicious ruler? None gave a reply to this query but the Sayyid said: A Kafir judicious ruler is better. All the ulama followed the Sayyid's reply! It is obvious that the reply of Sayyid saved and protected the lives of the people of the city. Only Allah knows that any Muslim would have remained alive in Baghdad if he had not replied so.

It was on the 10th of Safar 656 A.H. that Holaku Khan called Sayyid and gave him protection and the Sayyid left for Hilla.

On 9th Muharram 658 he was in Najaf in his house. On 14th Rabiul Awwal 658 he was in Baghdad in his residence. It is mentioned that Holaku gave the leadership of the Alawys to Sayyid during 656–661, and it appears that in 656 he was given the leadership of Baghdad and in 661 that of all the Talibiyyin. In the beginning, Sayyid refused the leadership. But Shaykh Naseeruddin Tusi told him that non–acceptance of it would result in his death and thus he was compelled to agree.

The Sayyid expired on the morning of Sunday, the 5 of Zilqad 664 A.H. in Baghdad, and his long time wish for being buried in Najaf was fulfilled. Information about his last days is difficult to obtain.

Some say that he died as the chief, and some state that in the last days of his life he was dismissed from leadership or he and his brother were martyred. He wrote the first part of his book Al–Malahim on 15 Muharram 663 while leaving Baghdad for Ziyarat in Najaf and during his stay in Hilla.

In Jamadiul Awwal 664 A.H. he gave Ijaza (Doctrinal authority certificate) to some of his students. We have no information that he left Iraq in 624 A.H. for a reason other than the Ziyarat of the House of Allah (Ka'ba).

Sayyid's economic condition was good and he reminded his children in his will that, "following the traditions of the holy Prophet (S) and Amirul Momineen (a.s.) he did not leave gold and silver as his heritage. He invested his property and orchards as charity memorials.

It is famous that Sayyid had Karamat (Divine Miracles) some of which have been mentioned in his notes and some have been written by his biographers. It is also said that he had direct contact with Hujjatullah al-Muntazar (a.t.f.s.) and also that he was given Isme Azam but was not permitted to teach it to his children.

Ibn Tawus had three brothers: Sharfuddin Abul Fazl Muhammad Izzuddin Hasan Jamaluddin Abdul Fazail Ahmad, father of Ghayasuddin Abdul Karim Ibn Tawus had four daughters, the names of two; Sharful Ashraf and Fatima are found in books. Sayyid always remembered his daughters with pride, because they had learnt the holy Quran by heart. Sharaful Ashraf had learnt it at the age of 12, and Fatima at 9. Sayyid had willed two copies of the Holy Quran for them.

Sayyid had willed many things whereby his children and the Shias (friends) were urged to fear Allah (taqwa), to be abstinent and to remain away from people as far as possible because (excessive) involvement with people results in getting distanced from the Almighty Allah.

Sayyid Ibn Tawus owned a large library and a list of its books was pre-pared. It is one of the important libraries in history. He always maintained righteousness and regularity, and encouraged others to learn about the holy Prophet (S) and the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). Because such knowledge about the original sources of religion was the actual under-standing of religion (in practice).

His Books

Sayyid Ibn Tawus has written many and various useful books. Some of them are as follow:

1. Al-aman min akhtar al-Asfar waz zaman

2. Anwar Akhbar abi Umar az Zahid

3. Al-Anwar al-bahirah fee intisar al-itratit Tahirah

4. Al-asrar al-muwaddah fee sa'atil lail wan nahar

5. Asrar as-salat wa Anwarud dawat

6. Samarat al-mahjah fee muhimmatil awlad

7. Al-basharat be qazail hajat ala yadil aimmah badal mamat

8. Ad daroo al-waqiat minal akhtar

9. Falah as-sail wa Najah al-masail fee amalil yawm wal lail

10. Farjul mahmoom fee ma arifatil halal wal haram min Uloom nujoom

11. Farhatun nazir wa bahjatul khawatir

12. Fathul abwab baina zavil albbab wa rabbil arbab fil istikharah wa ma feeha min wajoohis sawab

13. Fathul jawab al-bahir fee khalqil kafir

14. Ghayasul sultanul wara li sukkanis sara

15. Al-ibanah fee ma'rifatil asma kutubul khazanah

16. Ighasatud daee wa Iana as-saee

17. Al-ijazat li kashfi tur-uqil mafazat

18. Al-Iqbal bil amalil hasanah

19. Al-istifa fee Akhbaril mamlook wal khulafa

20. Jamal ul usboo' fil amalil mashroo'

21. Al-karamat

22. Kashful mahjah li samaratil mahjah

23. Libabil musarrah min Kitabe Ibn Abi Qurrah

24. Al-malhoof ala qatlit tufoof

25. Al-manamat was Sadiqat

26. Salikil mahtaj ila manasikil hajj

27. Al-mizmar lis sibaq wal lihaq bi saumi shahri itlaqil arzaqi wa itaqil a'naqi

28. Misbahuz zair wa janahul Musafir

29. Mahjud dawat wa manhajul inayat

30. Muhasibatun Nafs

31. Al-muhimmat fee islahil muta abbad wa tatimmat li Misbahi mutahajjad

32. Al-Mujtana minad dua il Mujtaba

33. Mukhtasar Kitabe Ibn Habib

34. Al-muntaqa fil auzi war riqa

35. Al-muwasa wal muzaiqa

36. Al-qabas al-wazih min Kitabil jalees as-saleh

37. Rabiul albab

38. Raiuz zamaan min marviyy Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Sulaiman

39. Rooh ul asrar wa rooh ul asmar

40. As-sadat bil ibadatallati lais laha awqatu muaiyinat

41. Sa'adus suood lin nufoos

42. Shifa ul uqool min dail fuzool fee ilmil usool

43. At-tehseel minat taz yeel

44. At-tehseel min asrari ma za da min Akhbari Kitabil yaqeen

45. At-tamam li maham shahr siyam

46. Taqreeb us salik ila khidmatil Malik

47. At-taraif fee ma'rifati mazahib tawaif

48. At-tarajum fee ma nazkuruhu anil hakim

49. At-ta'reef lil moolidis shareef

50. At-tashreef bil minani fit tareefe bil fitani

51. At-tashreef bi tareef waqtit takleef

52. At-tawfeeq lil wafai ba'da ta-freeqi darul fana

53. Turfaum minalambai wal Manaqib fee sharfi saiyadil ambiya wa itratihil ataib

54. Al-yaqeen fee ikhtisasi maulana Ali (a.s.) bi imratil Momineen

55. Zahrur rabee' fee adiyatil asabee'

This was a brief story of the great and fruitful life of the Sayyid, which we have compiled from numerous

books and most important of them are the writings of Ale Yasin about the life, books, and library of Sayyid Ibn Tawus. Other writings are from Eton Kulburk about the library and the life of the Sayyid in English, which were later translated into Persian.

Sayyid Ibn Tawus in Writings of Scholars

Scholars who have quoted from Sayyid Ibn Tawus:

1. Mirza Abdullah: Riyazul Ulama 4/161;

2. Ali bin Anjab bin al-Sayi: Tarikh Ibn al-Sayi;

3. Khwansari: Rawzatul Jannat 4/325-339;

4. Al-Majlisi: Biharul Anwar 1/12-13, 107/34, 37-45, 63;

5. Ibn al-Taqtaqi: Tarikhul Fakhri: 13;

6. Masharekatul Iraq fee Nashre Turath: Issue no. 58;

7. Zahra Journal: 2/635;

8. Journal of Educational Society of Iraq: 12/192;

9. Mahd al-Makhtootat Journal: 4/216;

10. Abdul Husayn al-Amini: Al-Ghadeer 4/187;

11. Muhammad Hadi al-Amini, Mojamul Rijal al-Fikr wa al-Adab fee Najaf 1/80-82;

12. Jawwad Shahristani: Preface to Kitab Al-Aman: 4-8;

13. Al-Hurr al-Amili: Amalul Amil 2/205;

14. Aliyy Adnani: Muqaddama Kitab Naba-ul Maqalatul Fatemiyya: 12-21;

15. Eton Kulburk: Kitab Khana-o-Athar-o-Ahwal Ibn Tawus (Written in English in 1413 AH and translated into Persian and published in 771 pages);

16. Muhammad al-Hassoon: Preface to Kashful Muhajja 15-34:

17. Hamid al-Khifaf: Preface Kitab Fathul Abwab: 9-41:

18. Kamaluddin Abdur Razzaq bin al-Futi: Al-Hawadisul Jamia wat Tajaribul Nafiqa fil miyatis Sabeqa: 346 and 350 (In this it is to be considered that this book is written by Bin al-Futi) Talkhees Majmu-ul Adab 5/489 and 547;

19. Ibn Unba: Umdatul Talib fee Ansab Ale Abi Talib: 190–191;

20. At–Turaihi: Majmaul Bahrayn 4/83 Tusi Jameul Maqal Fima Yatallaq bi Ahwalul Hadith war Rijal: 142;

21. Ash–Shaykh Yusuf al–Bahrani: Loulouatul Bahrain: Al–Kashkool 1/306–307, 2/196;

22. At–Tafrishi: Naqdur Rijal: 244;

23. Muhammad Aminul Kazmi: Hidayatul Muhaddetheen Ila Tareeqatul Muhammadeen: 306;

24. Sirkees: Mojamul Matbuat 1/145;

25. Al–Ardibeli: Jameur Ruwat 1–603;

26. Abu Ali Muhammad bin Ismail: Muntahiul Maqal fee Ahwalur Rijal: 225 and 357;

27. Al–Wahid al–Bahbahani: At–Taleeqa: 239;

28. Al–Dizfuli: Maqabisul Anwar: 12 and 16;

29. An–Noori: Mustadrakul Wasael 3/467–472;

30. Al–Baghdadi: Hadiyatul Arefeen 5/710 Izahul Maknoon 3/76 and 77, 90, 110, 202, 340, 365, 471, 548, 4/16, 82, 83, 151, 158, 160, 186, 366, 417, 430, 439, 492, 495, 609, 683, and 731;

31. Mamaqani: Tanqihul Maqal: 2/310;

32. Al–Qummi: Al–Kunni wal Alqab: 1/327, Hadiyatul Ahbab: 70;

33. Safinatul Bihar 2/96;

34. Al–Fawaidur Razawiyya: 43, 109, 199, 312, 334, 338;

35. At–Tahrani: Al–Anwarul Sate–ah fil Miyatis Sabeqah (Tab–aat Aalamush Shia): 107–116 and 164;

36. Musfal Maqal: 301;

37. Ad–Dhariah 1/58, 127, 222, 366, 396 and 2/20, 45, 49, 56, 59, 121, 249, 264, 392, 418 and 3/111, 113, 159, 303, 396, 398 and 4/115, 130, 189, 197, 215, 454, 500 and 5/129, 170, 236 and 6/260 and 7/100 and 8/146, 190 and 10/75 and 11/109, 262 and 12/73, 101, 119 and 14/140, 205 and 15/154, 161, 242 and 16/73, 103, 108, 113, 302, 303, 407 and 17/36, 289 and 18/58, 69, 76, 95, 274, 281, 326, 389 and 19/3 and 20/1, 68, 112, 121, 122, 167, 170, 183, 296, 319, 320, 330, 380 and 21/12, 20, 23, 107, 118, 135 and 22/189, 223, 225, 228, 276, 338 and 23/8, 161, 222, 272, 277, 287, 299 and 24/63, 158, 177, 270 and 25/8, 105, 224, 279 and 26/210, 249 and 270;

38. Al-Ameeni: Ayanush Shiah 8/358;

39. Al-Khoei: Mojam Rijalul Hadith 12/188;

40. Az-Zarkulial Alam 5/26;

41. Kahhala: Mojamul Muallifeen 7/248;

42. Ale Yasin: As-Sayyid Ali Ale Tawus Hayate, Muallifate Khazanate Ku-tub page 58;

43. Abdur Razzaq Kamuna: Mawaridul Ittehaf fee Nuqabail Ashraf 1/107-110;

44. Yaqubi: Al-Babiliyat 1/64-66;

45. Haji Khalifah: Kashfuz Zunoon: 166, 752, 1608, 1911;

46. Al-Ansari: Preface Kitabul Yaqeen: 53-84;

47. Muhammad Hasan Zanoozi: Ar-Riyazul Jannah 1/219-224;

48. Al-Mudarris: Raihanatul Adab 8/76-79;

49. Mashar: Muallifeen Kutube Chapi 4/413-417;

50. As-Sadr: Taseesus Shia: 336;

51. Afram: Dairatul Ma'rif 3/296;

52. Journal of the Arabic Educational Society of Damascus: 28/468;

53. Ibn Dawood: Ar-Rijal: 226-228;

54. Ash-Shaheed at-Thani: Haqaiqul Eiman: 156, 170, 177, 252, 256, 260 and 267;

55. Brockleman: Under 1/911-913;

56. Name Danishwaran: 1/161-168.

There are many other sources but we have sufficed with this much.

The study of books by Sayyid Ibn Tawus tell us a lot about his life as he has left many biographical details in many places in his writings out of which we mention some here.

1. Al-Iqbal: 334, 527, 585, 586, 588 and 728;

2. Al-Aman: 107, 116, 143;

3. Al-Ijazat li Kashfi Turuqil Mafazat, In Vol. 107/37-45 Bihar of Allamah Majlisi parts are quoted from the same;

4. Jamalul Usboo': 2, 23, 169, 170 and 172;

5. Mahjud Dawat: 212, 256, 296 and 342;

6. Kasful Muhajja: 4, 86, 109, 112-114, 115, 118, 122, 125 and 127, 130, 132, 134, 136, 137, 138, 151 and 193;

7. Al-Yaqeen: 5, 45, 79-81, 178-191;

8. Falahus Sael: 2, 5, 6, 14-15, 68, 70, 72, 74, 194, 246, 264, 269, 270;

9. Sa'adus So'ud: 3, 25-27, 232-233;

10. Al-Malahim wal Fitan: 81, 82 and 92;

11. Fathul Abwab: 223, 237, 264 and 328;

12. Farjul Mahmoom: 1, 146, 126-127 and 187.

Apart from this, the respected Sayyid has written other books, and in most of them he has written many things about his life; that if all those material is collected we may have a complete book in his biography.

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