

The Risālah of Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī

# THE RISĀLAH

Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī

Arabic-English edition

Translated by Aisha Bewley

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## TABLE OF TRANSLITERATION

ء	’	ض	ḍ
ا	a	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	‘
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	ه	h
س	s	و	w
ش	sh	ي	y
ص	ṣ		
	Long vowel		Short vowel
ا	ā	َ	a [fatḥah]
و	ū	ُ	u [ḍammah]
ي	ī	ِ	i [kasrah]
أُ	aw		
أَيَّ	ay		



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, ALL-MERCIFUL, MOST MERCIFUL.  
MAY ALLAH BLESS OUR MASTER MUḤAMMAD AND HIS FAMILY AND  
COMPANIONS AND GIVE HIM PEACE.

## IBN ABĪ ZAYD'S PROLOGUE

Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdullāh ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī, may Allah be pleased with him and make him pleased, says:

**P**raise be to Allah Who begins the creation of man as a blessing from Him and fashions him in the womb by His wisdom and brings him out into His tender care and to the provision to which He eases him, and teaches him what he did not know – Allah's favour to him is indeed immense.

Allah makes him aware of Himself through the effects of what He has made and has left no excuse for him by virtue of what has come on the tongues of His Messengers, the best of His creation. He guides, by His favour, those to whom He has granted success and He leads astray, by His justice, those whom He has debased. He eases the believers to ease and opens their hearts to the Reminder. So they believe in Allah, articulating that belief with their tongues, being sincere about it in their hearts and acting according to what has come down to them through His Messengers and His Books. They learn what He teaches them and stop at the limits He has prescribed for them. They are satisfied with what He has made *ḥalāl* for them and avoid what He has made *ḥarām* for them.

May Allah assist both us and you in taking care of what He has entrusted us with and in holding to His *sharī‘ah*.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ خَلْقَ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ  
وَسَلَّمَ سَلَامًا

مقدمة:

قال أبو محمد عبد الله بن أبي زيد، القيرواني رضي الله عنه وأرضاه:

الحمد لله الذي ابتداء الإنسان بنعمته، وصوره في الأرحام بحكمته، وأبرزه إلى رفقه وما يسر له من رزقه، وعلمه ما لم يكن يعلم، وكان فضل الله عليه عظيماً.

ونبهه بآثار صنعته، وأعذر إليه على السنة المرسلين الخيرة من خلقه، فهدى من وفقه بفضله، وأضل من خذله بعدله، ويسر المؤمنين لليسرى، وشرح صدورهم للذكرى، فأمنوا بالله بألسنتهم ناطقين، وبقلوبهم مخلصين، وبما أتتهم به رسله وكتبه عاملين، وتعلموا ما علمهم، ووقفوا عند ما حد لهم، واستغنوا بما أحل لهم عما حرم عليهم.

(أما بعد) أعاننا الله وإياك على رعاية ودائعنا، وحفظ ما أودعنا من شرائعه.

You have asked me to write a short treatise for you about what is obligatory in the *dīn*, those things which should be pronounced by the tongue, believed by the heart and acted upon by the limbs; about those *sunnahs* which are associated with these obligatory actions – the confirmed (*mu'akkadah*), the supererogatory (*nāfilah*) and the desirable (*raghībah*); something about the courtesies (*adab*) associated with them; along with certain of the key principles and derived rulings in jurisprudence (*fiqh*) according to the *madhhab* and way of Imam Mālik ibn Anas رضي الله عنه; and in addition to mention what the great men of knowledge and *fiqh* have said about unclear matters in the *madhhab* in order to make them easier to understand.

You have made this request because of your desire to teach these things to children in the same way that you teach them how to read the Qur'an, so that they may first of all gain an understanding of the *dīn* of Allah and His *sharī'ah* in their hearts, which will hopefully bring them blessing and a praiseworthy end. I have responded to this out of the same hope of gaining for both myself and you something of the reward of those who teach the *dīn* of Allah or call to it.

Know that the best of hearts is the one which contains the most good, and those hearts which are most likely to gain good are the ones that no evil has been able to enter. That which the people of sincere advice are most concerned about and which those who desire its reward most want, is to put good into the hearts of the children of the believers so that it becomes firmly established in them; and to make them aware of the fundamentals of the *dīn* and the limits of the *sharī'ah* so that they may be satisfied with that, and to make their hearts believe those things in the *dīn* that they have to accept and that their limbs are required to do. It is related that teaching the Book of Allah to young children extinguishes the anger of Allah and also that teaching something to someone in their childhood is like engraving

فإنك سألتني أن أكتب لك جملة مختصرة من واجب أمور الديانة مما تنطق به الألسنة، وتعتقده القلوب، وتعمله الجوارح، وما يتصل بالواجب من ذلك من السنن من مؤكدها ونوافلها ورغائبها وشيء من الآداب منها وجمل من أصول الفقه وفنونه، على مذهب الإمام مالك بن أنس رحمه الله تعالى وطريقته، مع ما سهل سبيل ما أشكل من ذلك من تفسير الراشخين، وبيان المتفقيين،

لما رغبت فيه من تعلم ذلك للولدان كما تعلمهم حروف القرآن، ليسبق إلى قلوبهم من فهم دين الله وشرائعه ما ترجى لهم بركته، وتحمد لهم عاقبته، فأجبتك إلى ذلك رجوته لنفسي ولك من ثواب من علم دين الله أو دعا إليه.

واعلم أن خير القلوب أوعاها للخير، وأرجى القلوب للخير ما لم يسبق الشر إليه، وأولى ما عني به الناصحون، ورغب في أجره الراغبون، إيصال الخير إلى قلوب أولاد المؤمنين ليرسخ فيها، وتنبههم على معالم الديانة وحدود الشريعة ليراضوا عليها وما عليهم أن تعتقده من الدين قلوبهم، وتعمل به جوارحهم، فانه روي أن تعليم الصغار لكتاب الله يطفىء غضب الله، وأن تعليم الشيء في الصغر كالنقش في الحجر، وقد مثلت لك من ذلك ما ينتفعون - إن شاء الله - بحفظه ويشرفون بعلمه، ويسعدون باعتقاده والعمل به.

it on stone. I have made these things clear, and if Allah wills, they will get benefit from learning them, nobility from knowing them and happiness from believing them and acting according to them.

It has come down to us that children should be ordered to do the prayer at seven years old, be chastised for not doing it at ten years old and also at that time be separated in their beds. Similarly, they should be taught before they reach puberty those words and actions which Allah has made obligatory for people so that when they reach puberty these things are fixed in their hearts and they are at ease with them and their limbs are used to doing them. Allah has made certain beliefs obligatory for the heart and certain acts of obedience obligatory for the limbs.

I will arrange what I have undertaken to talk about in chapters so that it will be easier, if Allah wills, for those who are studying it to understand. It is Him we ask for guidance and Him we ask for help. And there is no power nor strength except by Allah, the High, the Mighty. May Allah bless our Master Muḥammad, His Prophet, and his family and Companions and grant them much peace.

وقد جاء أن يؤمروا بالصلاة لسبع سنين، ويضربوا عليها لعشر، يفرق بينهم في المضاجع. فكذلك ينبغي أن يعلموا ما فرض الله على العباد من قول وعمل قبل بلوغهم، ليأتي عليهم البلوغ وقد تمكن ذلك من قلوبهم، وسكنت إليه أنفسهم، وأنست بما يعملون به من ذلك جوارحهم.

وقد فرض الله سبحانه على القلب عملا من الاعتقادات، وعلى الجوارح الظاهرة عملا من الطاعات. وسأفصل لك ما شرطت لك ذكره بابا بابا ليقرب من فهم متعلميه إن شاء الله تعالى، وإياه نستخير، وبه نستعين، ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العلي العظيم. وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد نبيه وآله وصحبه وسلم وتسليما كثيرا.