

‘Amr ibn Ma’dikarib al-Zubaidi (ra)

(Translated)

<https://alwaie.org/archives/article/20573>

Al Waie Magazine Issue No. 484

Forty-First Year, Jumada al-Awwal 1448 AH corresponding to October 2026 CE

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He is ‘Amr ibn Ma’dikarib (or Ma’ddee Yakrib) ibn ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘ASm ibn ‘Amr ibn Zubayd al-ASghar ibn Rabee‘ah ibn Salamah ibn Mazin ibn Rabee‘ah ibn Munabbih, who is Zubayd al-Akbar ibn al-Haarith ibn Sa‘b ibn Sa‘d al-‘Asheerah ibn Madhhij ibn Add ibn ‘Areeb ibn Yashjab ibn Zayd ibn Kahlaan ibn Saba’ ibn Yashjab ibn Ya‘rub ibn Qahṭaan.

The name Ma’dikarib is an ancient Arabic masculine proper name of Yemeni origin, meaning, (الشخص الذي تعدّاه وتجاوزته الكرب (الغم والحزن) أو الفساد), “the one whom distress (grief and sorrow) or corruption has passed over and transcended.” It has also been said to mean the strong one, the supporter, or the blessed one.

The Prophet (saw) said to ‘Amr ibn Ma’dikarib when he came to him as a delegate and embraced Islam, addressing him and his brethren from the tribe of Zubayd in some narrations related to the rites of Hajj: «أَجِيزُوا بَطْنَ عَرَفَةَ فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ إِذْ اسْتَلَمُوا إِخْوَانَكُمْ» **“Proceed through the valley of ‘Arafah, for indeed, when they embraced Islam, they became your brethren,”** and he taught him and his people the correct form of the Talbiyah supplication.

In the pre-Islamic era (Jahiliyyah), he was a master of raids, renowned among the Arabs. Regarding this, Abu Muhammad Al-Hamdani said: «تَثْلِيثٌ: واد بنجد، وهو على يومين من جرش، في شرقيها إلى الجنوب، وعلى ثلاث مراحل ونصف من نجران، إلى ناحية الشمال. وتثليث لبني زبيد، وهم فيها إلى اليوم، وبها كان مسكن عمرو بن معد يكرب الزبيدي» “Tathlith: a valley in Najd, located two days’ journey from Jarsh to its east and south, and three and a half stages from Najran towards the north. Tathlith belongs to the tribe of Zubayd, and they reside there to this day. It was the dwelling place of ‘Amr ibn Ma’dikarib Az-Zubaydi.”

In another place, he said: «تَثْلِيثٌ وَكَانَ لَعَمْرُو بْنِ مَعْدٍ يَكْرِبُ فِيهِ حَصَنٌ وَنَخْلٌ» “Tathlith, and ‘Amr ibn Ma’dikarib had a fortress and palm trees there.” His sister, Rayhanah, was the wife of As-Summah al-Asghar, and she bore him Durayd ibn As-Summah and ‘Abdullah. He was also the maternal cousin of Az-Zibriqaan ibn Badr.

He was one of the Companions (ra) and a giant in build and stature. Our Master ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (ra), whenever he saw him, would marvel at his physique and height and say, «سبحان من خلقنا وخلقك يا عمرو» “Glory be to the One who created us and created you, O ‘Amr!”

His Embracing of Islam:

Among the narrations concerning his embracing to Islam is that he said to his friend Qays ibn Makshuh when news of the Prophet (saw) reached them: «قَدْ ذُكِرَ لَنَا أَنَّ رَجُلًا مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ يَقَالُ لَهُ مُحَمَّدٌ، قَدْ خَرَجَ بِالْحِجَازِ، يَقُولُ إِنَّهُ نَبِيٌّ، فَاَنْطَلِقْ بِنَا إِلَيْهِ حَتَّى نَنْظُرَ أَمْرَهُ، فَإِنْ كَانَ نَبِيًّا كَمَا يَقُولُ؛ فَإِنَّهُ لَنْ يَخْفَى عَلَيْكَ، كَانَ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ؛ عَلِمْنَا» “It has been mentioned to us that a man from Quraysh named Muhammad has appeared in the Hijaaz, claiming he is a prophet. Let us go to him so that we may examine his matter. If he is a prophet as he claims, then it will not be hidden from you. If he is other than that, we will know.” Qays ibn Makshuh refused this, so ‘Amr went alone to Al-Madinah. He stayed as a guest with Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubaadah, who honored him, and then Sa‘d took him to the Prophet (saw), and he embraced Islam.

He was a poet and a horseman, renowned for his courage and chivalry to the extent that he was nicknamed Faaris al-‘Arab (فارس العرب The Horseman of the Arabs) and he had a sword named “As-Samsamah” (صمصامة the reliable sharp sword). ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab asked ‘Amr ibn Ma’dikarib to send him this famous sword of his. ‘Amr sent the sword to the Ameer al-Mu’mineen (Commander of the Faithful). ‘Umar struck with it but did not find it to be of the level of strength and sharpness he had heard about. ‘Umar wrote to ‘Amr admonishing him

for that. ‘Amr replied to him, saying: (إنما بعثت إلى أمير المؤمنين بالسيف، ولم أبعث بالساعد الذي يضرب به) “I only sent the sword to the Ameer al-Mu’mineen; I did not send the arm that wields it.”

He participated in the Islamic conquests in Ash-Sham and Iraq, and was present at the Battles of Al-Yarmuk and Al-Qadisiyyah, never once failing to join a war alongside the Muslims against their enemies. The Ameer al-Mu’mineen, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭab (ra), recognized ‘Amr’s worth and status, considering him equal to a thousand horsemen, and he would instruct his commanders to consult with ‘Amr ibn Ma’dikarib regarding the conduct of the Islamic conquest campaigns in which he took part.

On the Day of Al-Yarmuk, he fought with courage and self-sacrifice, seeking martyrdom, until the enemy was defeated and fled before the soldiers of Allah (swt). And just before the Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah, the army commander, Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas (ra), requested reinforcements from the Ameer al-Mu’mineen, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭab, to aid him in the war against the Persians. So the Ameer al-Mu’mineen sent to Sa’d only two men: ‘Amr ibn Ma’dikarib and Tulayhah ibn Khuwaylid, saying in his message to Sa’d: «إني أمددتك بألفي رجل» “I have reinforced you with two thousand men.”

When the fighting began, ‘Amr threw himself into the ranks of the enemy, striking to the right and left. When the Muslims saw him, they charged behind him, cutting down the heads of the Persians like a harvest. During the battle, ‘Amr stood amidst the troops, encouraging them to fight, saying: «يا معشر المهاجرين كونوا أسوداً أشداء، فإن الفارس إذا ألقى رمحه يئس» “O company of Muhajireen, be fierce lions, for a horseman loses all hope once he casts aside his spear.” When one of the Persian commanders saw him encouraging his companions, he shot an arrow at him, which hit his bow but did not strike him. ‘Amr charged at him, stabbed him, then took him amidst the ranks of the Muslims, severed his head, and said to the Muslims: «اصنعوا هكذا» “Do like this.” He continued fighting until Allah (swt) granted victory to the Muslims.

And he said regarding his own actions and those of his people during the Battle of Al-Qadisiyyah:

..والقادية حين زاحم رستم ... كنا الحماة بهن كالأشطان

..الضاريين بكل أبيض مخدّم ... والطاعنين مجامع الأضغان

“And at Al-Qadisiyyah, when Rustam jostled... We were the protectors of the womenfolk like protective ropes.

The strikers with every sharp-edged sword... and the stabbers at the centers of skirmishes...”

In the Battle of Nahavand, the conquest of Nahavand proved difficult for the Muslims, so ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭab (ra) sent a message to an-Nu’mān ibn Muqarrin, the commander of the army, saying: «استشير واستعن في حربك بطلحة وعمر بن معد يكرب، وشاورهما في الحرب، ولا تؤلّهما من الأمر» “Seek counsel and seek assistance in your war from Tulayhah and ‘Amr ibn Ma’dikarib, and consult them about the war, but do not appoint either of them to any command, for every craftsman is more knowledgeable about his craft.” And ‘Amr fought in this battle with the fiercest fighting until Allah granted the Muslims victory at Nahavand.

His Death:

He was martyred as a Mujaahid as a result of wounds sustained in the Battle of Nahavand in 21 AH, according to the most reliable accounts. His wounds were numerous. Indeed, ‘Amr ibn Ma’dikarib attained martyrdom in that battle and was buried in the village of Rudhah near Nahavand.