



(Zubaidah – The Wife of Haaron Rasheed – Part Four)

As mentioned previously, Zubaidah had spearheaded and financed the unprecedented project of digging a water canal in Makkah Mukarramah. Nevertheless, although this was perhaps her most well-known charitable contribution, there were numerous other projects which Zubaidah undertook in an effort to spend her wealth in avenues of virtue and righteousness.

One such example is that of a traveller's inn which she constructed in the mountainous region of Baghraas (south eastern Turkey). Any traveller that came to the city of Baghraas was welcome to reside in this inn, and she had dedicated the income of many waqf properties to the upkeep and maintenance of this inn.

The second project, however, for which she is most well-known, is that of Darb Zubaidah (the Road of Zubaidah). Darb Zubaidah was a 1200km road that ran from Baghdad to Makkah Mukarramah, passing through Kufah and many other places such as Najaf, Qadisiyyah, etc.

As Baghdad was the capital of the khilaafah and center of the Islamic Empire at the time, there were many people who would travel to Makkah Mukarramah to perform hajj from this region of the world. Many of these people were poor and so travelled by foot, or were ill equipped and thus experienced difficulties in navigating this long road to Makkah Mukarramah. In fact, many of those traveling for hajj would die of thirst or lose their lives due to becoming lost in the desert (as the road did not initially have markers).

Although Zubaidah did not build this road, she was responsible for many improvements and facilities that were added to it, such as wells and water pools that were dug at regular distances, building shelters for travellers to rest, deploying soldiers to accompany caravans, lighting fire beacons at night to guide travellers, marking the qiblah for travellers to perform salaah, and

having a map of the entire 1200km road drawn by her engineers. In fact, it is probably due to her contributions to this road being the greatest that this road became known by the title 'Darb Zubaidah'.

Though more than 1200 years have passed, many of the wells and other structures that she built are still existent – testimony to the fact that no penny was spared in building them, as they were meant to last and continue benefiting people.

Ibnu Batootah (d. 779 A.H.), the renowned explorer, journeyed on this road and mentioned, “Every structure, pond or well that is found on this road between Baghdad and Makkah Mukarramah is a result of the generosity of Zubaidah – may Allah Ta‘ala reward her in full. If it were not for her concern and contribution to this road, nobody would have travelled on it.”

Another famous traveller and geographer, Ibnu Jubair (d. 614 A.H.), echoed similar sentiments saying, “These structures, pools, wells and inns that are found on the road from Baghdad to Makkah Mukarramah are the product of Zubaidah, the daughter of Ja‘far, and wife and cousin of Haaron Rasheed. She remained dedicated to (the improvement, upkeep and maintenance of) these facilities throughout her life. Hence, she left on this road various facilities and amenities that are for the benefit of all those traveling for hajj every year, from the time of her demise until now. If it was not for her generous contributions on this road, no person would travel on it.”

(*Hudoodul ‘Aalam* pg. 129, *Rihlah Ibni Batootah* pg. 189, *Rihlah Ibni Jubair* pg. 162, <http://tiny.cc/zubaidah>

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and

http://tiny.cc/zubaidah_2

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Lessons:

1. One of the remarkable qualities that stand out in the life of Zubaidah is the fact that

although she was royalty, living in a palace with hundreds of servants at her beck and call, she never forgot the people who were poor and underprivileged. Rather, she went out of her way to help them.

Furthermore, she did not suffice on helping them in a small way, rather she wanted to help them to the best of her ability.

Hence, she went all out and embarked on massive projects which cost a fortune, but continued to benefit people at large for hundreds of years, reaping her tremendous rewards even after her demise.

2. Sometimes, a person is blessed to complete a huge project for people's welfare.

Thereafter, he becomes complacent, as he feels that he has already earned his Jannah. When we look at Zubaidah, however, we see that she never stopped striving for the Hereafter.

After one huge project, she embarked on another, until she passed away. This is the demand of imaan – that we strive until the grave.

3. There are many people whom Allah Ta'ala has blessed with abundant wealth. Often, such people think to themselves, "We've got the money, so if we don't spend it, what else will we do with it? We may as well enjoy it!"

With this reasoning, they embark on holiday after holiday, "shop till they drop" and splurge money on countless other indulgences (visits to spas, restaurants, etc.).

However, we choose to forget that there are many other things that we can do with our money – such as follow the example of Zubaidah and alleviate the sufferings of others.