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Supplementary Notes: SAYYIDAH 'ABD ALLĀH

IBN MAS'ŪD رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ



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Additional Information: Sayyidunā ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd

Birth, Name, Lineage

Sayyidunā ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd Hudhalī رضي الله عنه was born approximately seventeen years after Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. An exact date of his birth could not be found to the writer’s knowledge. However, by looking at his age and year of his death, his approximate birthday could be established.

He was from the tribe of Hudhayl and his entire lineage is as follows: ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd ibn Ghāfil ibn Ḥabīb ibn Shamkh ibn Fār ibn Makhzūm ibn Ṣāhilah ibn Kāhil ibn Ḥārith ibn Tamīm ibn Sa‘d ibn Hudhayl ibn Mudrikah ibn Ilyās ibn Muḍar.¹

The tribe of Hudhayl were a wealthy tribe. The tribe consisted of many branches.² They owned—among other areas—‘Urnah, Baṭn Nakhlah and Awṭās. From among the famous wells, they owned the Well of Rajī and the Well of Ma‘ūnah.³

Agnomen

His agnomen was Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. This agnomen was given to him by Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم himself. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه says: Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم nicknamed me Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān before I had children.⁴

Titles

He had one famous title: *Ibn Umm ‘Abd*. Umm ‘Abd was his mother’s name. Al-Dhahabī mentions: As for his title: He used to be known by his mothers’ name. He used to be called: Ibn Umm ‘Abd.⁵

Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said: I am pleased for my Ummah what Ibn Umm ‘Abd is pleased with for them.⁶

His family

His father was Mas‘ūd ibn Ghāfil. His mother’s name was Umm ‘Abd bint ‘Abd al-Wudd.⁷ She is from among the Ṣaḥābiyyāt of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم.⁸

He had two brothers. ‘Utbah ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه and ‘Umays ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه. As for ‘Utbah ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه, he was from among the early pioneers to accept Islam and was also knowledgeable. He also took part in the battle of Uḥud.⁹ Not much biographical detail is found regarding ‘Umays ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه.

His had two wives. Zaynab رضي الله عنها is one of them. The second wife’s name is unknown. Zaynab’s رضي الله عنها title was Rā’iṭah.¹⁰ She was from the Ṣaḥābiyyāt of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. She narrated ḥadīth from Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, Ibn Mas‘ūd, as well

1 Muḥammad Ibn Sa‘d: *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 3/150.

2 ‘Umar Riḍā: *Mu‘jam Qabā’il al-‘Arab*, 3/1213-1214.

3 ‘Umar Riḍā: *Mu‘jam Qabā’il al-‘Arab*, 3/1213-1214.

4 Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, 1/333.

5 Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, 1/333.

6 Al-Ḥākim: *al-Mustadrak*, 3/317.

7 Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī: *al-Istī‘āb*, 7/20.

8 Muḥammad Ibn Sa‘d: *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 8/289.

9 Muḥammad Ibn Sa‘d: *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 4/126.

10 Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī: *Faḥ al-Bārī*, 3/328-329.

as ‘Umar رضي الله عنه. She narrated the ḥadīth of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم regarding women going to the Masjid without any sweet scent.¹

‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه had three sons. The names of two are: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, ‘Āmir Abū ‘Ubayd.² As for the third son, not much biographical details are available regarding him. He had few daughters, one of them was named Sārah.³ He had two grandsons. Both were the sons of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān viz. Qāsim and Ma’n.⁴

The household of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه was built on taqwā and strengthened with ‘ilm (knowledge). The breeze of wisdom emitted from his house. His mother had the opportunity of narrating from Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, his wife memorised many aḥādīth from Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, he was the leader of the ‘Ulamā of the Ṣaḥābah, his sons were praised by all the historians of Islam, and his grandsons were praised by the most reliable critics. Thus, we notice that Allah honoured ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه with this prestigious lineage.⁵

Appearance

‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd was uniquely short and skinny and he was dark in complexion. He was pleasantly-scented and would wear white clothes.

Ibn Sakhbarah, one of his prominent students, narrates:

كان رجل آدم له ضفيران عليه مسحة اهل البادية

‘Abd Allāh was a dark-skinned man with two braids, and looked a little like the desert people.⁶

Zayd ibn Wahb narrates:

إني لجالس مع عمر إذ جاء ابن مسعود يكاد الجلوس يوارونه من قصره

I was sitting with ‘Umar when Ibn Mas‘ūd came to him. Due to his [Ibn Mas‘ūd’s] shortness, his height came in line with the sitting posture of ‘Umar رضي الله عنه.⁷

Qays ibn Abī Ḥāzim narrates:

رايت عبد الله ابن مسعود رجل خفيف اللحم

I saw ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه as a skinny man.⁸

Nāfi‘, The freed slave of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه narrates regarding the attire and scent of Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه:

كان عبد الله ابن مسعود من اجود الناس ثوبا ابيض و من اطيب الناس طيبا

1 Sunan al-Nasa’ī: Ḥadīth: 8/154.

2 Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb: 6/215-216.

3 Al-Dhahabī: Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’, 1/343.

4 ‘Abd Sattār Shaykh: ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd, 32.

5 ‘Abd Sattār Shaykh: ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd, 33.

6 Musnad Aḥmad, Ḥadīth, 3961.

7 Usd al-Ghābah, 3/389.

8 Muḥammad Ibn Sa’d: Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, 3/157.

‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه was from among the most generous of people, he would adorn the whitest of clothes and was the most pleasantly scented from among the people.¹

Islam

Ibn Mas‘ūd’s رضي الله عنه father passed away when he was young. He was approximately thirteen years old. The responsibility of earning fell on his shoulders. ‘Uqbah ibn Abī Mu‘ayṭ employed him as a shepherd. It was during his time as a young shepherd that Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم visited him and performed a miracle which led him to accept Islam.

Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه narrates: I was a young shepherd boy responsible for the sheep of ‘Uqbah ibn Abī Mu‘ayṭ. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم once came with Abū Bakr as they were fleeing from the Mushrikīn and said, “O boy, do you have milk for us to drink?” I said, “I have been entrusted with them. I can’t let you drink their milk.” Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “Do you have a virgin sheep that has never mated with a male?” I said, “Yes” and brought it to them. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم caught it and touched its udder and prayed to Allah till the udder filled. Abū Bakr brought him a concave rock into which he milked the sheep. Abū Bakr drank the milk, and then after that Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said to the udder, “Shrink,” and it did. I went to the Prophet after this incident and said to him, “Teach me this kind of speech.” Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “You are already a learned boy.” He says, “I learnt seventy Sūrahs from Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. No one can dispute this.”²

In a narration reported by Imām Aḥmad in his *Musnad*, we note that after Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم filled the milk in the concave rock, Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه accepted Islam. Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه says in this narration: I brought him the concave rock, he milked the sheep, then I accepted Islam and went to him.³

The most preponderant view is that he was the twenty second person to accept Islām.⁴ Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī رحمته الله reports a narration wherein Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه says that he was the sixth person to accept Islām.⁵ To reconcile this, the ‘Ulamā state that Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه made this statement without knowing the others who had already accepted Islam.⁶

He came to be from among the *Sābiqūn Awwalūn* (forerunners of Islam). Thus, he is included in those whom Allah is pleased with.⁷ Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه then remained in the company of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Ibn Ḥajar رحمته الله mentions: He is one of the forerunners of Islam, he accepted Islam in the early stages of Islam, made both migrations [to Madīnah and Abyssinia], he participated in Badr and the battles after that, he stayed close to Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and would carry the shoes of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم.⁸

Hijrah

By analysing the various narrations, it is clear that Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه did not make the first emigration to Abyssinia.⁹ Ibn Ḥajar رحمته الله¹⁰ and Ibn Ishāq¹¹ are of this view. However, he did participate in the second emigration to Abyssinia.¹² He remained in Abyssinia until Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم emigrated to Madīnah.

1 Muḥammad Ibn Sa‘d: *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 6/209.

2 Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, 1/335. Al-Dhahabī says: the chain is reliable.

3 *Musnad Aḥmad*, 1/462.

4 Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, 1/334.

5 *al-Iṣābah*, 6/215.

6 ‘Abd Sattār Shaykh: *‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd*, pg.44.

7 Sūrah al-Tawbah: 100.

8 *Al-Iṣābah*, 6/214.

9 ‘Abd Sattār Shaykh: *‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd*, pg. 33.

10 *Fath al-Bārī*, 7/187.

11 *Sīrah ibn Hishām*, 1/322-323.

12 Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, 1/151.

When the news arrived that Rasūlullāh ﷺ was going to emigrate to Madīnah, he left for Makkah as he desired to accompany Rasūlullāh ﷺ on the journey. However, on reaching Makkah he did not find Rasūlullāh ﷺ, hence he immediately left for Madīnah, without being detected in Makkah, and joined Rasūlullāh ﷺ in Madīnah.¹

Battles

Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ accompanied Rasūlullāh ﷺ in all the major battles and events which occurred after emigration. It can be noted how close he was to Rasūlullāh ﷺ in these battles as he reports details of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his movements during each battle. He accompanied Rasūlullāh ﷺ in Badr, Uḥud, Khandaq, Khaybar, Faṭḥ Makkah, Ḥunayn and Tabūk.²

In Badr

It can be noted how close he was to Rasūlullāh ﷺ during the journey to Badr. Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates: On the Day of Badr, three of us shared one camel. Abū Lubābah and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib were sharing a camel with Rasūlullāh ﷺ. It was Rasūlullāh's ﷺ turn to get off the camel. So 'Alī and Abū Lubābah said, "We will walk." Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "You are not stronger than me nor am I not in need of reward than you."³

Killing of Abū Jahl

Allah made it such that the man with the smallest stature killed the man with the most pride. Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ gave the final blow to Abū Jahl. Anas ibn Mālik رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates:

Rasūlullāh ﷺ asked, "Who will go and see what Abū Jahl is doing?" So, Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ set out and found that the two sons of 'Afrā' had attacked him and he was close to death. So, he [Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ] grabbed Abū Jahl's beard and said, "Are you Abū Jahl?" Abū Jahl replied, "Can there be one superior to the one you have killed," or he said, "Can there be a man superior whom his own people have killed?"⁴

Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates the happiness of Rasūlullāh ﷺ at his killing of Abū Jahl:

I then returned until I came to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and he stood up quickly, I informed him [of the killing of Abū Jahl]. He said, "Is there any deity besides Allah?" he repeated this question three times. Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ says, "I said: Is there any deity besides Allah?" Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ states: Then he [Rasūlullāh ﷺ] set out until he stood by Abū Jahl's body and said, "All praise is to Allah who has disgraced you, O enemy of Allah. This was the Fir'aun of this Ummah."⁵

Abū Jahl was the leader of *kufr* (disbelief) and his demeanour became apparent in his statement, "Can there be one superior to the one you killed?" When Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was close to finishing him off, he retorted, "If only someone else other than a lowly person killed me."⁶

However, it never occurred to the Pharaoh of the Quraysh that Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ would kill him. This was Allah's will and it was inevitable to occur.⁷

1 'Abd Sattār Shaykh: 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd, pg. 59.

2 'Abd Sattār Shaykh: 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd, 61-77.

3 Musnad Aḥmad, Ḥadīth: 3901.

4 Faṭḥ al-Bārī, 7/293.

5 Musnad Aḥmad, Ḥadīth: 3824.

6 Jāmi' al-Uṣūl, 8/197.

7 'Abd Sattār Shaykh: 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd, pg. 66.

If Abū Jahl really knew who Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه was he would not have said “If only someone else other than a lowly person killed me.” Rather, he would be happy as his desire of being killed by an honourable person would have been fulfilled.

In Uḥud

Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه fought alongside Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم in the Battle of Uḥud. It was this battle that Allah intended to teach the believers complete obedience to Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Furthermore, he intended to teach the believers the grave nature of not following the orders of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم during a battle in which the Muslims experienced wounds, pain, and martyrdom. The extent of this was such that even Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم was not free from being afflicted by wounds.¹

Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه described this decisive battle wherein he was in the midst and engaged in combat. He narrates: The women were treating the believers for the wounds afflicted by the mushrikīn. If I had taken an oath on that day, I would have wished to break my oath. None of us desired the world until Allah revealed:

مِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ

*Among you are some who desire this world, and among you are some who desire the Hereafter. Then he turned you back from them [defeated] that He might test you.*²

When the Companions of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم did not obey his commands, Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم was left alone with nine Ṣaḥābah, seven from the Anṣār, two men from the Quraysh and Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم was the tenth among them. When the mushrikīn drew close, Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “May Allah have mercy on so and so, he repelled them from us.”

Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه then said: A man went forward from the Anṣār. He fought for a while and attained martyrdom. When the mushrikīn drew close once again, Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “May Allah have mercy on so and so, he repelled them from us.” Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم continued saying this until seven of the group attained martyrdom. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم then said to the last two companions, “Our people have not been fair to us.”³

This ḥadīth makes it evident that Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه was very close to Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم in the battle and he was from those who remained steadfast with Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم when the believers’ weakness was exposed. He knew the number of people who defended Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. He also knew how many were from the Anṣār and Quraysh. Furthermore, he heard the address of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم to them and he seen the martyrdom of each one.⁴ His steadfastness has been highlighted by Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه when he said:

ما بقي مع رسول الله صلي الله عليه و سلم يوم أحد إلا أربعة أحدهم ابن مسعود

Only four people remained with Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم on the day of Uḥud. One of them was Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه.⁵

Jihād during the Caliphate of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما

He participated in the battle against the apostates in the era of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه.⁶ He participated in the Battle of Yarmūk.⁷ This was a decisive battle between the Muslims and the Byzantine empire. Allah granted the Muslims victory. This battle opened the door for many more Islamic conquests.

1 ‘Abd Sattār Shaykh: ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd, pg. 68.

2 Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān: 153.

3 Musnad Aḥmad, Haith: 4414.

4 ‘Abd Sattār Shaykh: ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd, pg. 69.

5 Al-Dhahabī: Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā, 1/336.

6 Tārīkh Ṭabarī, 3/244-245.

7 Tārīkh Ṭabarī, 3/397.

He also participated in the conquest of Ḥimṣ. The battle took place in winter. The Muslims surrounded Ḥimṣ. However, the people of Ḥimṣ thought they deterred the Muslims by keeping them at bay for a long period of time. Rather, the Muslims had patience and perseverance. Finally, they made *ṣulḥ* (truce) and agreed that the Muslims will take their dwellings and wealth.¹

Thus, Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه was in the forefront of the battles in the times of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما. Furthermore, his narrations make it clear that he was close to Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم in the battles. He narrated minute details of the actions of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. He also had the ability of witnessing miracles at the hands of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم at Khaybar and Ḥunayn.² Allah favoured him with knowledge and gave him the ability to defend Islam with the sword. May Allah make him our role model!

His service to Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم

By means of his amazing insight, Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه realised that one of the main aims of Islam is to seek Islamic knowledge. In order to attain this knowledge, he realised the need to stay close to Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم because Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم received Waḥī. Furthermore, Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم spoke concise yet comprehensive speech about the teachings of Islam and Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم performed actions which were a form of education for the Ummah.

He therefore remained close to Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, memorised the Qur’ān from him, and learnt aḥādīth from him. He attained such a strong relationship with Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم that Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم would allow him to enter by lifting the curtain and entering. He did not need to seek permission from Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. He narrates: Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said to me, “Your permission [to enter] is lifting the veil [to enter without the need to formally ask for permission]. And you are allowed to listen to my secrets until I command you not to do so.”³

Allah gave him the opportunity to serve Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم daily. He says: Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم fell asleep on a straw mat and the mat left imprints on the side of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. When he awoke, I began wiping his side and I said, “O Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, will you not give us permission to put something [soft] on your straw mat? Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم replied, “What is the world to me? What am I to the world? Verily, the example of this world and myself is that of a rider who seeks shade under a tree, then he moves on and leaves it behind.”⁴

He would help cover Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم during his ritual bath and wake up Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Ibn Sa‘d narrates in his *Ṭabaqāt*: ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Mas‘ūd would cover Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم when he used to take his ritual bath, wake him from sleep and walk with Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم alone.⁵

He would put Rasūlullāh’s صلى الله عليه وسلم shoes and walk in front of him with a stick. Ibn Sa‘d narrates in his *Ṭabaqāt*: ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه would put on the shoes of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and then walk in front of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم with a stick. When Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم reached a gathering he would take off Rasūlullāh’s صلى الله عليه وسلم shoes, place them under his forearms and give Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم the stick, and when Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم intended to leave the gathering, he would put on Rasūlullāh’s صلى الله عليه وسلم shoes and walk in front of him with a stick until he would enter the room of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم before Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم.⁶

1 *Tārīkh Ṭabarī*, 3/601.

2 ‘Abd Sattār Shaykh: *‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd*, pg. 73, 75.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 2169.

4 *Musnad Aḥmad*, Ḥadīth: 3709.

5 Muḥammad Ibn Sa‘d: *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 3/153.

6 Muḥammad Ibn Sa‘d: *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 3/153.

He would serve Rasūlullāh ﷺ on journey as well. Ibn Sa‘d narrates in his *Ṭabaqāt*: ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd would know the secrets of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, would lay his sleeping mat for him, keep his miswāk, shoes and water for ablution. This was during travel.¹

Ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ would not suffice with congregational prayer, he would also read tahajjud Ṣalāh with Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ says: I read ṣalāh with Rasūlullāh ﷺ one night, Rasūlullāh ﷺ remained standing until I began having bad thoughts. We asked, “what thoughts you had? He replied, “I thought of sitting and leaving Rasūlullāh ﷺ.”²

He would frequent Rasūlullāh ﷺ so often that the Ṣaḥābah who came to Madīnah would think he was a family member of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Sayyidunā Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ acknowledges: “My brother and I came from Yemen. For a period of time, we considered Ibn Mas‘ūd from the members of the Nabī’s ﷺ family because we saw him and his mother entering the house of Rasūlullāh ﷺ frequently.³

عَنْ عَلْقَمَةَ، دَخَلْتُ الشَّامَ فَصَلَّيْتُ رَكْعَتَيْنِ، فَقُلْتُ اللَّهُمَّ بَسِّرْ لِي جَلِيسًا. فَرَأَيْتُ شَيْخًا مُقْبِلًا، فَلَمَّا دَنَا قُلْتُ أَرَجُو أَنْ يَكُونَ اسْتَجَابَ. قَالَ مِنْ أَيْنَ أَنْتَ قُلْتُ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكُوفَةِ. قَالَ أَفَلَمْ يَكُنْ فِيكُمْ صَاحِبُ النُّعْلَيْنِ وَالْوَسَادِ وَالْمِطْهَرَةِ أَوْلَمْ يَكُنْ فِيكُمْ الَّذِي أُجِيرَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ أَوْلَمْ يَكُنْ فِيكُمْ صَاحِبُ السَّرِّ الَّذِي لَا يَعْلَمُهُ غَيْرُهُ كَيْفَ قَرَأَ ابْنُ أُمِّ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ { وَاللَّيْلُ إِذَا يَغْشَى * وَالنَّهَارُ إِذَا تَجَلَّى * وَالذِّكْرُ وَالْأُنثَى }. قَالَ أَفَرَأَيْتَهَا النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَهَّ إِلَيَّ فِي، فَمَا زَالَ هُوَ لَا حَتَّى كَادُوا يَرُدُّونِي.

‘Alqamah narrates: I went to Shām. I offered a two-rak‘at prayer and supplicated, “O Allah! Bless me with a (pious) companion.” Just then, I saw an old man coming towards me. When he came near, I said, (to myself), “I hope Allah has given me my request.” The man asked (me), “Where are you from?” I replied, “I am from the people of Kūfah.” He said, “Wasn’t there amongst you the Carrier of (Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ) shoes, miswāk and the ablution water container? [Referring to Sayyidunā ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ] Wasn’t there amongst you the man who was given Allah’s Refuge from Shayṭān? [Referring to Sayyidunā ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.] And wasn’t there amongst you the man who used to keep the (Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ) secrets which nobody else knew? [Referring to Sayyidunā Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.]”⁴

His Sermon

Allah gave him the opportunity to deliver a sermon in Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ presence. His sermon was then affirmed by Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He beautifully summed up matters of dīn. Abū al-Dardā’ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates:

Rasūlullāh ﷺ addressed the people briefly. After the sermon he said, “O Abū Bakr, stand and address the people.” Accordingly, Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ addressed the people shorter than Rasūlullāh ﷺ. When he completed, Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “O ‘Umar, stand and address the people.” So he stood and addressed the people shorter than Rasūlullāh ﷺ and Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. When he completed, Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “O so and so, stand and address the people.” The person began stuttering, so Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “Sit, for stuttering is from Shayṭān and verily eloquent speech is as effective as magic.” Then Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “O Ibn Umm ‘Abd, stand and address the people. He stood and praised Allah and said, “O people! Allah Most Glorified and Exalted is our Lord, Islam is our religion, the Qur‘ān is our guide, the House of Allah is the direction we face in prayer, and this is the Messenger [of Allah] sent to us [gesturing towards the Rasūlullāh ﷺ].” He then concluded, “We are satisfied with what Allah and His Messenger are satisfied with for us.” Rasūlullāh ﷺ remarked, “I am satisfied for my Ummah with what Ibn Umm ‘Abd is satisfied with.”⁵

1 Muḥammad ibn Sa‘d: *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 3/153.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 1135.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3763.

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3761.

5 Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, 1/343.

This is the sermon which attained the approval of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ then reiterated the fact he is happy for the entire Ummah with that which Ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is happy with. This is a great honour for Ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and highlights to us his worth in Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ eyes.

Qur’ān of Ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

Ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ remained in Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ company and learned a great portion of the Qur’ān directly from Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He himself attests this fact where he says: “By Allah! I have learnt approximately seventy Sūrahs directly from Rasūlullāh ﷺ. By Allah! The companions of Rasūlullāh ﷺ know that I am the most knowledgeable regarding the Book of Allah. However, I am not the best of them.” Shaqīq¹ says, “I sat and listened to what they [the Companions] said. I did not hear anyone refuting the claim of Ibn Mas‘ūd.”²

Rasūlullāh ﷺ requested him to recite Qur’ān so that he could listen. Ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates: Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to me, “Recite [the Qur’ān] to me.” I said, “O Rasūlullāh ﷺ, shall I recite [the Qur’ān] to you while it has been revealed to you?” He said, “Yes.” So, I recited Surah al-Nisā’. When I recited the Verse:

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَىٰ هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا

*How [will it be] then when We bring from each nation a witness and We bring you [O Muḥammad] as a witness against these people.*³

He said, “Enough,” I looked at him and behold! His eyes were overflowing with tears.⁴

Sayyidunā ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was honoured by Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ commanded his companions to learn the Qur’ān from ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: Learn the Qur’ān from four people: From Ibn Umm ‘Abd (Rasūlullāh ﷺ began with Ibn Mas‘ūd), Mu‘adh ibn Jabal, Ubayy ibn Ka‘b and Sālim, the freed slave of Abū Ḥudhayfah.⁵ Rasūlullāh ﷺ listed his name first.

The Book of Allah is something which Allah has Himself promised to protect. This ḥadīth makes it clear that the means of this was these four Ṣaḥābah, one of them being Ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ encouraged the companions to read like Ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: “Let him who wishes to read the Qur’ān as it was sent down, read according to the *qirā’ah* (mode of recitation) of Ibn Umm ‘Abd (i.e. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd).”⁶

عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ يَزِيدَ، سَمِعْتُ ابْنَ مَسْعُودٍ، يَقُولُ فِي بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَالْكَهْفِ وَمَرْيَمَ وَطَةَ وَالْأَنْبِيَاءِ إِنَّهُمْ مِنَ الْعَتَاقِ الْأَوَّلِ وَهُمْ مِنْ تِلَادِي

He was from among the first Ṣaḥābah who learnt Qur’ān from Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Moreover, he learnt the initial Sūrahs which were revealed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Yazīd, who was one of Ibn Mas‘ūd’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ students, said: I heard Ibn Mas‘ūd commenting regarding [Sūrah] Banī Isrā’īl, Kahf, Maryam, Ṭāhā, and al-Ambiyā’, “Verily these are from the early Sūrahs and they are from the initial Sūrahs I memorised.”⁷

1 One of the senior students of Ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 823.

3 Sūrah Al-Nisā: 41.

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 2462.

5 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3760.

6 *Musnad Aḥmad*, Ḥadīth: 4255.

7 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 4994

As for the remainder of the Qur’ān, he learnt it from the Ṣaḥābah. Ibn Ḥajar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ adds the following statement with the above mentioned narration of Zirr ibn Ḥubaysh: Ibn Mas’ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: I learnt the remainder of the Qur’ān from the Ṣaḥābah.¹

Allah made it such that Ibn Mas’ūd was the first person to read the Qur’ān in public after Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Yaḥyā ibn ‘Urwah narrates this event from ‘Urwah ibn Zubayr wherein ‘Urwah says:

The first person to recite the Qur’ān publicly in Makkah was ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas’ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. The companions of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ were together one day in Makkah. They said, “The Quraysh have not yet heard the Qur’ān being recited openly and loudly. Who is the man who could recite it for them?” “Abd Allāh ibn Mas’ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ volunteered and said: “I!” The Ṣaḥābah said, “We are afraid for you; we only want someone who has a clan who would protect him if they intend him [to harm the reader].” ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas’ūd replied, “Let me, Allah will protect me.” He then went out in the mid-morning to the Masjid until he reached Maqām Ibrāhīm. The Quraysh were sitting around the Maqām Ibrāhīm. ‘Abd Allāh stopped at the Maqām and began to recite:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ

The Most Merciful, Taught the Qur’ān, Created man, [And] taught him eloquence.

He went on reciting. The Quraysh pondered and then some of them asked: “What is Ibn Umm ‘Abd saying? He is reciting some of what Muḥammad brought!” They went up to him and began hitting him on his face as he continued reciting until where Allah wished him to read. When he went back to his Companions and they were affected by the condition of his face. They said, “This is what we feared for you.” Ibn Mas’ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “By Allah! At this moment the enemies of Allah are not lower in my eyes than them and if you wish, I shall go out tomorrow and do the same.” They said, “You have done enough, you have made them hear what they dislike.”²

Abū Mas’ūd proclaimed: “I do not know whether Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ has left after him anyone having better knowledge of what Allah has revealed than the man who is standing, (indicating to (Ibn Mas’ūd)).”³

Verses revealed regarding him

The fact that verses in the Qur’ān were sent regarding Ṣaḥābah highlights their great status. There are verses revealed regarding Ibn Mas’ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as well. He narrates:

- A group from the Quraysh passed by Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and Ṣuhayb, Bilāl, ‘Ammār, Khabbāb and other weak companions were with Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. They said, “O Muḥammad, are these the ones who Allah has favoured over us, send them away! Perhaps if you send them away, we will follow you. This ayah was then revealed:

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ وَكَذَلِكَ فَتَنَّا بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لِيَقُولُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِالشَّاكِرِينَ

And do not send away those who call upon their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His countenance. Not upon you is anything of their account and not upon them is anything of your account. So were you to send them away, you would [then] be of the wrongdoers?⁴

1 *Fath al-Bārī*, commentary of Ḥadīth: 5000.

2 *Sīrah ibn Hishām*, 1/314-314; *Usd al-Ghābah*, 3/385-386.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 2461b.

4 *Sūrah Al-An’ām*: 52-53.

Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was also referred to in this verse. Imām al-Dhahabī reports a narration from Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ wherein he says:

This verse was revealed regarding six people, [among them was] Ibn Mas'ūd and I.¹

- 'Alqamah reports that Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said:

When this ayah was sent:

لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعَمُوا إِذَا مَا اتَّقَوْا وَآمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَآمَنُوا ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَأَحْسَنُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

There is not upon those who believe and do righteousness [any] blame concerning what they have eaten [in the past] if they [now] fear Allah and believe and do righteous deeds, and then fear Allah and believe, and then fear Allah and do good; and Allah loves the doers of good.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to me: "It was said to me that you are from them."²

Imām Nawawī confirms that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ did address Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.³

Allah has mentioned in this ayah that he loves those who do good. This is great testimony to the fact that Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was loved by Allah and further highlights his status.

Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ had the honour of having multiple verses revealed and he was included in those who the verse spoke about. 'Alqamah reports that Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said:

When this ayah was revealed:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

*They who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice - those will have security, and they are [rightly] guided.*⁴

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to me, "You are among them."⁵

The last portion of the above-mentioned verse bears testimony to the fact that Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ will attain salvation on the Day of Qiyāmah and was guided on the straight path in this world.⁶

Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates: Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to address the people while standing on the Day of Jumu'ah. A Caravan came from Syria. The people [left the gathering and] went to the caravan. Only twelve people remained in the gathering. The verse of Sūrah al-Jumu'ah was then revealed:

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا انفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَمِنَ التِّجَارَةِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

1 Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā*, 1/. 73, 255.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 2459.

3 *Sharḥ al-Nawawī li Muslim*: 5/323.

4 Sūrah al-An'ām: 82.

5 *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr*, 3/288.

6 'Abd Sattār Shaykh: *'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd*, pg. 368.

But when they saw a transaction or a diversion, [O Muḥammad], they rushed to it and left you standing. Say, “What is with Allah is better than diversion and then a transaction, and Allah is the best of providers.”¹

Ibn Ḥajar رحمته الله has mentioned the twelve who remained in the gathering of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. He reports a narration of ‘Uqaylī from ibn ‘Abbās:

From among them were the four Khulafā, Ibn Mas‘ūd رحمته الله and some people from the Anṣār.²

The Qur’ān has gathered four great qualities of Ibn Mas‘ūd رحمته الله. He is from those who done good and Allah loved them. He was counted from among those who sincerely worshipped Allah. His sincerity was emphasised by the fact that he was free from any form of shirk. Finally, he was mentioned from among those who will achieve salvation on the Day of Qiyāmah. Added to this, he did not desire much of the world, rather, he preferred the Hereafter.³

- Ibn Mas‘ūd رحمته الله highlights his knowledge of the Qur’ān. It is reported that he said:

By the one who there is no deity besides him, there is no *Sūrah* in the book of Allah except that I know where it was revealed and the reason it was revealed. If I know someone who is more knowledgeable of Allah’s Book than me who is within travelling distance, I will travel to him.”⁴

- Furthermore, he highlights how thoroughly the Ṣaḥābah in his time knew the Qur’ān. He says:

When a man from us learnt ten verses, he would not learn more until he knew their meaning and practiced on them.”⁵

Ibn Mas‘ūd رحمته الله the Mufassir

Ibn Kathīr رحمته الله mentions that the best tafsīr is commentating on the Qur’ān using verses of the Qur’ān. If that can’t be done, then using aḥādīth to commentate on the Qur’ān is the best. If no commentary is found in the Qur’ān and aḥādīth, then the views and interpretations of the Ṣaḥābah will be looked at. The reason for this is because they are the most learned regarding the verses of the Qur’ān because they witnessed the revelation of the Qur’ān and the circumstances that occurred at the time of revelation. Furthermore, they had complete understanding, correct knowledge, and good actions. These qualities were found specifically in the Scholars and senior Ṣaḥābah like the four rightly guided Khulafā and ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رحمته الله.⁶

Ibn Mas‘ūd رحمته الله had the ability to extract rulings from the Qur’ān. He had various perspectives on the verses of the Qur’ān. When his opinions are sought, it will become apparent that he had an explanation for difficult texts.

Furthermore, he had explained verses on Jihād, inheritance, Ḥalāl and Ḥarām, Battles, nations and verses of warning and encouragement. Added to this, he corrects errors and opinions. Moreover, he gives detailed explanations at times and brief explanations at times. At times he supports his opinions with the narrations of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and at times he supports his views with verses of the Qur’ān.⁷

1 *Sūrah al-Jumu‘ah*: 11.

2 *Fath al-Bārī*, Commentary of Ḥadīth: 936, Chapter: The book on Jumu‘ah.

3 ‘Abd Sattār Shaykh: *‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd*, pg. 369.

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 2463.

5 *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr*, 1/13.

6 *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr*, 1/12-13.

7 ‘Abd Sattār Shaykh: *‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd*, pg. 146.

- Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه highlights his knowledge of the Qur'ān. It is reported that he said:

By the one who there is no deity besides him, There is no Sūrah in the book of Allah except that I know where it was revealed and the reason it was revealed. If I know someone who is more knowledgeable of Allah's Book than me who is within travelling distance, I will travel to him."¹

- Furthermore, he highlights how thoroughly the Ṣaḥābah in his time knew the Qur'ān. He says:

When a man from us learnt ten verses, he would not learn more until he knew their meaning and practiced on them."²

His Commentary of the Qur'ān using the Qur'ān

His ability to make connections from the verses of the Qur'ān highlights to us his deep understanding of the Qur'ān. Abū al-Aḥwas narrates that Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه said:

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتْنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ وَأَحْيَيْتَنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَاعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَى خُرُوجٍ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ

They will say, "Our Lord, You made us lifeless twice and gave us life twice, and we have confessed our sins. So is there to an exit anyway?"³

The commentary of the verse which is in Sūrah al-Baqarah:

وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ مِمِّتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

You were lifeless and He brought you to life; then He will cause you to die, then He will bring you [back] to life, and then to Him you will be returned.⁴

Through another verse of the Qur'ān, Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه clarified the meaning of *been giving life and death twice*.

Using Qur'ān as a proof for his view

In another narration Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه narrates:

When we narrate to you something then we bring a proof from the Qur'ān. Verily when a Muslim slave says:

سبحان الله و بحمده و الحمد لله ولا اله الا الله و الله اكبر

An angel places these words under his wings, then he ascends into the sky, the angel does not pass other groups of angels except that they seek forgiveness for the one who uttered these words, until he brings these words before the Countenance of Allah, then he [Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه] recited:

إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ

To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it.⁵

1 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Ḥadīth: 2463.

2 Tafsīr ibn Kathīr, 1/13.

3 Sūrah Al-Ghāfir: 11.

4 Sūrah al-Baqarah: 28.

5 Sūrah al-Fāṭir: 10.

Mukhāriq reports that Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه explained: Verily when a slave passes away, he will be made to sit in his grave, it will be said to him, “Who is your Lord? What is your religion? Who is your Prophet?” Allah will then grant him steadfastness. Thus, he will say: “My Lord is Allah, my religion is Islām, and my Prophet is Muḥammad.” Then Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه recited the following verse:

يُبَيِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ

Allah keeps firm those who believe, with the firm word, in worldly life and in the Hereafter.^{1, 2}

Abū al-Aḥwaṣ reports that Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه said:

A dung beetle could be punished in his hole because of the sins of humans. Then Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه recited:

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ

And if Allah were to impose blame on the people for their wrongdoing, He would not have left upon the earth any creature.^{3, 4}

Proof of the commentary of Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه from Ḥadīth:

Zirr ibn Ḥubaysh reports that Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه said regarding the following ayah:

وَلَقَدْ رَأَاهُ نَزَلَةً أُخْرَىٰ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ

*And he certainly saw him in another descent At the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary.*⁵

He [Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه] said, “Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said, I seen Jibrīl and he had six hundred wings and there were beautiful adornments of different colours falling from his wings: jewels and pearls.”⁶

In summary, Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه was a master of the Qur’ān. He was an embodiment of the Qur’ān. He learnt directly from Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم ordered the Ṣaḥābah to learn Qur’ān from him. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم commanded the people to read Qur’ān in the dialect of Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه. He was the first person to read the Qur’ān in public after Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم requested to listen to his recitation. There were verses revealed regarding him and he was a great Mufasssīr of the Qur’ān as he would comment on the Qur’ān through other verses of the Qur’ān and ḥadīth.

Fiqh

Kūfah was built in 17 AH by the orders of Sayyidunā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه. He sent Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه to Kūfah to teach the people Qur’ān, and to give them an understanding in Dīn, telling them, “I, by Allah besides Whom there is no deity, have favoured you with ‘Abd Allāh over myself. So learn from him.”⁷

1 *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr*, 4/416.

2 *Sūrah Ibrāhīm*: 27.

3 *Sūrah al-Nahl*: 61.

4 *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr*, 4/416.

5 *Sūrah al-Najm*: 13-14.

6 *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr*, 4/416. Ibn Kathīr says the chain is very strong.

7 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, 1/491.

Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه remained in Kūfah and taught the people from then till the latter years of the khilāfah of Sayyidunā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه, Kūfah was filled with Qurrah', Fuqahā', Muḥaddithūn; some counting them close to 4000 in number.¹

Sayyidunā 'Alī رضي الله عنه was pleased to see so many Fuqahā' in Kūfah and remarked, "May Allah have mercy on Ibn Umm 'Abd. He has certainly filled this area with knowledge and fiqh."²

Sa'īd ibn Jubayr said, "The students of 'Abd Allāh were the lanterns for this city i.e. Kūfah."³

Kūfah became incomparable to any other city of the Muslims, in the abundance of Fuqahā', Muḥaddithūn, those devoted to the knowledge of the Qur'ān, and knowledge of the Arabic language.

1500 Ṣaḥābah stayed in Kūfah. Among them 70 Badriyyīn.

Masrūq ibn al-Ajda', the distinguished Ṣaḥābī said, "I found the knowledge of the Companions of Muḥammad to reach six: 'Alī, 'Abd Allāh, 'Umar, Zayd ibn Thābit, Abū al-Dardā', and Ubayy ibn Ka'b. I then found the knowledge of these six reached 'Alī and 'Abd Allāh (ibn Mas'ūd)."⁴

Ibn Jarīr says, "No one has students who are well-known who have penned their verdicts and rulings in fiqh besides Ibn Mas'ūd."⁵

The Fuqahā' among the Ṣaḥābah would advise their students to cling to Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه attesting to his extensive knowledge as was done by Mu'ādh ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه with his student 'Amr ibn Maymūn al-Awdī.⁶

Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī was one of Ibn Mas'ūd's رضي الله عنه famed students. His student is Ḥammād ibn Sulaymān. Abū Ḥanīfah studied at the feet of Ḥammād ibn Sulaymān. Hence, the Ḥanafī fiqh is greatly influenced by the opinions of Sayyidunā Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه.

Al-Dhahabī introduces him as the Imām, the *Ḥibr* (erudite scholar), the Faqīh of the Ummah, Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Hudhalī al-Makkī al-Muhājirī al-Badrī, the ally of the Banū Zuhrah.⁷

Sayyidunā 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه impacted strongly in spreading knowledge and ḥadīth in Kūfah, owing to the abundance of his knowledge and his long stay there. He stayed there during the khilāfah of Sayyidunā 'Umar رضي الله عنه well before Sayyidunā 'Alī رضي الله عنه came to Kūfah. Ibn Mas'ūd relocated there in the year 21 AH after the people of Kūfah complained of their governor Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنه. And the complaints were false.

About 60 of his distinguished students were in Kūfah like Masrūq, 'Ubaydah ibn 'Amr al-Salmānī, al-Aswad ibn Yazīd al-Nakha'ī, Shurayḥ ibn al-Ḥārith al-Kindī, Ibrāhīm ibn Yazīd al-Nakha'ī, Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, and 'Āmir ibn Sharāḥīl al-Sha'bī.

The muḥaddithīn did not rely on the ḥadīth and fatwā attributed to Sayyidunā 'Alī رضي الله عنه except those on the authority of the students of Ibn Mas'ūd. Muslim says in the muqaddamah of his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Abū Bakr 'Ayyāsh: I heard Muḥīrah saying, "They would not believe attribution to 'Alī in ḥadīth except from the students of 'Abd Allāh (ibn Mas'ūd)."⁸

1 *Fiqh Ahl al-'Irāq wa Ḥadīthuhum*, pg. 41, 42.

2 *Naṣb al-Rāyah*, pg. 15; *Fiqh Ahl al-'Irāq wa Ḥadīthuhum*, pg. 42.

3 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, 4/170; *Fiqh Ahl al-'Irāq wa Ḥadīthuhum*, pg. 42.

4 *Fiqh Ahl al-'Irāq wa Ḥadīthuhum*, pg. 43.

5 *Fiqh Ahl al-'Irāq wa Ḥadīthuhum*, pg. 43.

6 *Fiqh Ahl al-'Irāq wa Ḥadīthuhum*, pg. 43.

7 *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, 1/461.

8 *Dawr al-Ṣaḥābah fī Ḥifẓ al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah wa Nashrihā*, pg. 74.

The students of ‘Abd Allāh who taught people Qur’ān and taught them the Sunnah and whose opinions people followed were six: ‘Alqamah, al-Aswad, Masrūq, ‘Ubaydah, Ḥārith ibn Qays, and ‘Amr ibn Sharāḥīl.”¹

Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه had the greatest impact on the Madrasah of Kūfah from all the Ṣaḥābah.²

Following of the Sunnah and his Worship

‘Abd al-Raḥmān says: We went to Ḥudhayfah and said, “Tell us about the one who resembled Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم the closest in ways and character so that we may learn and listen from him.” He said, “The person who most resembled Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم in his ways, character and in being an embodiment of dīn was Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه. He would be away from us and in the house of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. The Companions of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم who were protected by Allah from any verbal or physical evil knew that Ibn Umm ‘Abd was the closest from among them to Allah.”³

Sa‘d ibn Hishām says: I asked ‘Ā’ishah to inform me of the character of the Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم? She said, “Do you read the Qur’ān?” I said, “Yes.” She said, “His character was the Qur’ān.”⁴

These words are enough to give an accurate picture and idea of the piety of Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه, his worship, fear of Allah and following Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم.

Abū ‘Aṭīyah says: Masrūq and I went to ‘Ā’ishah and said, “O mothers of the believers, there are two men from the companions of Muḥammad, one of them hastens in breaking his fast and reading ṣalāh and the other delays in breaking his fast and delays his ṣalāh. She said, “Which of the two are hastening in breaking his fast and hastening to perform his ṣalāh?” We said, “‘Abd Allāh [ibn Mas‘ūd].” She said, “Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم used to do this.”⁵

‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه would strive to follow Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم in everything. To this extent, he even smiled at the times when Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم smiled. Imām Muslim narrates an amazing ḥadīth regarding this:

It was narrated from Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه that the Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “The last one to enter Jannah will be a man who will walk once, stumble once and be burned by the Fire once. When he gets passed it, he will turn to it and say: “Blessed be the One Who has saved me from you. Allah has given me something that he has not given to the first and the last.”

A tree will be raised up for him and he will say: “O Lord, bring me closer to that tree so that I might find shelter in its shade and drink of its water.” Allah the Mighty and Sublime will say: “O son of Ādam, perhaps if I gave you that, you will ask Me for something else.” He will say: “No, O Lord,” and he will promise that he will not ask Him for anything else, and His Lord, the Most High, will excuse him because he has seen something that he cannot help wanting. So, he will be brought near to it and he will take shelter in its shade and drink of its water.

Then another tree will be raised up for him that is more beautiful than the first, and he will say: “O Lord, bring me closer to this tree so that I might drink of its water and take shelter in its shade, and I will not ask for anything else.” He (Allah) will say: “O son of Ādam, did you not promise me that you would not ask Me for anything else?” Allah will say: “Perhaps if I bring you close to it, you will ask Me for something else?” He will promise that he will not ask Him for anything else, and his Lord, the Most High, will excuse him because he has seen something he cannot help wanting. So, he will be brought near to it and he will take shelter in its shade and drink of its water.

1 *Dawr al-Ṣaḥābah fī Ḥifẓ al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyah wa Nashriḥā*, pg. 75.

2 *Dawr al-Ṣaḥābah fī Ḥifẓ al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyah wa Nashriḥā*, pg. 75.

3 *Al-Dhahabī: Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, 1/ 338.

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 746.

5 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 1099.

Then another tree will be raised up for him at the gate of Paradise that is more beautiful than the first two. He will say: "O Lord, bring me closer to this tree so that I might take shelter in its shade and drink of its water, and I will not ask You for anything else." He (Allah) will say: "O son of Ādam, did you not promise me that you would not ask me of anything else?" He will say: "No, O Lord, I will not ask You for anything else." His Lord, the Most High, will excuse him because he has seen something that he cannot help wanting.

He will be brought close to it, and when he draws close to it, he will hear the voices of the people of Paradise and will say: "O Lord, admit me therein." He (Allah) will say: "O son of Ādam, what will make you stop asking? Will it please you if I gave you the world and as much again? He will say: "O Lord, are you making fun of me when you are the Lord of the worlds?"

Ibn Mas'ūd smiled and said: "Why don't you ask me why I am smiling?" They said: "Why are you smiling?" He (Ibn Mas'ūd) said: "This is how Rasūlullāh ﷺ smiled and they [the people around him] said: "Why are you smiling, O Messenger of Allah?" He said: "Because the Lord of the worlds will smile when He says: "Are you making fun of me while you are the Lord of the Worlds?" And He (Allah) will say: "I am not making fun of you, but I am Able to do whatever I will."¹

As far as his obedience to Rasūlullāh ﷺ is concerned, Ibn 'Asākir reports a narration from Jābir رضي الله عنه:

When Rasūlullāh ﷺ got onto the pulpit on the Day of Jumu'ah, he said, "Sit!" So 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd heard this, may Allah be pleased with him, so he sat at the door. Rasūlullāh ﷺ seen him and said, "Come here, O 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd."²

Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه would go to the masjid early on Fridays. 'Alqamah says: I went with 'Abd Allāh for Ṣalāt al-Jumu'ah. He seen three people who came to the masjid before him, so he said, "The fourth and the fourth is not far from Allah. Verily I heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying, 'Indeed, people will sit by Allah on the Day of Qiyāmah according to their journeys to Jumu'ah. The first, then the second, then the third, then the fourth. And the fourth is not far from Allah."³

Sayyidunā Ibn Ḥarām⁴ narrates, "I have attended numerous gatherings of the Companions of the Rasūlullāh ﷺ. However, I never met anyone more averse from the material world and more concerned about the Day of Judgment and I would not like to follow his way than 'Abd Allāh bin Mas'ūd."⁵

He was very particular about the four rak'āt before Ṣuhr. Masrūq and Aswad among others report that Ibn Mas'ūd used to say: "There is no ṣalāh of the day that is equal to a ṣalāh of the night like the four rak'āt before Ṣuhr. The superiority of the four rak'āt over other [Sunnah] prayers of the day is like the superiority of ṣalāh in congregation over the ṣalāh of an individual."⁶

'Alqamah bin Qays says: I spent the night with Ibn Mas'ūd – May Allah be pleased with him. He slept in the first portion of the night, then he stood to pray. He would read the amount the Imām would read in the Masjid of his locality. He would read clearly and not stammer. Those around him could hear him and his voice would be fluent with no stammering. [He

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 187.

2 *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah*, 2/628.

3 *Al-Tarḥīb wa al-Tarḥīb*, 1/503. Al-Mundhirī says: Ibn Mājāh and Ibn 'Āṣim. Their chain of transmission is *Ḥasan*. (reliable).

4 Some manuscripts have: *Ḥadhlam*. Some Manuscripts have: *Ḥadīm*.

5 *Al-Iṣābah*, 6/377.

6 *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah*, 3/610-611. Al-Haythamī (2/221) says: The chain has Bashīr ibn al-Walīd al-Kindī, a group regarded him as reliable, however there is some discussion on him. The remainder of the transmitters are all reliable. Al-Mundhirī in *Tarḥīb* (1/401): He is *mawqūf* and there is no issue regarding him as a transmitter.

performed Tahajjud] until there remained from the morning light the time it would take between the Adhān of Maghrib and leaving from [Ṣalāt al-Maghrib]. He would then read Ṣalāt al-Witr.”¹

Al-Bayhaqī narrates: We narrate from Ibn Mas‘ūd that he used to complete the Qur’ān in three days in Ramaḍān, and [he would complete the Qur’ān] between two Jumu‘ahs out of Ramaḍān.²

Zirr ibn Ḥubaysh reports from ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd that he used to fast on Mondays and Thursdays.³

His Dhikr and caution in usage of the tongue

Abū ‘Ubayd would describe his father and say: It was difficult for ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd to speak except the remembrance of Allah.⁴

Speaking of matters of dīn was easy for him and speaking about other matters was difficult for him.

He used to say: Remember Allah abundantly. Do not take anyone as your companion except those who assist you in the remembrance of Allah.⁵

It is narrated that he said: “By the Being besides whom there is no deity, there is nothing on the face of this earth that is in need of a long time in prison than this tongue.”⁶

Abū Wā’il reports that ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd one ascended mount Ṣafā and said: “O tongue, speak that which is good, you will reap benefit. Remain silent from that which is evil and you will be saved, otherwise you will regret. Then he said, I heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ say: ‘Most of the sins of the son of Ādam are because of his tongue.’”⁷

Regarding his crying, Zayd ibn Wahb narrates: I seen two lines by the eyes of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd from excessive weeping.⁸

His Desire for Reward

Razīn reports: ‘Abd Allāh fell ill, so we visited him. He began to cry and was rebuked. So he said, “I am not crying because of the illness because I heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying, ‘Sickness expiates sins.’ I am crying because my sickness afflicted me when I was in a condition wherein, I was not making effort [for Dīn] and it did not afflict me when I was making effort for Dīn. The reason for this is that reward is written for a sick person based on what was written for him before his sickness [i.e. a person will get reward for the good he used to do before he was sick, but can’t do it now because he is sick]. However sickness has prevented him attaining that reward.”⁹

1 *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah*, 3/617. Al-Haythamī says, al-Ṭabarānī narrated it and the transmitters are reliable.

2 *Al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, 2/396.

3 Muḥammad Ibn Sa’d: *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 3/155.

4 Ṭabarānī: *Al-Kabīr*, al-Haythamī says (2/219): Abū ‘Ubaydah did not hear from his father, however the remainder of the narrators are reliable. *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah*, 4/12.

5 *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah*, 8/4.

6 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, 1/134.

7 *Al-Targhib wa al-Tarhib*, 3/526. Al-Haythamī said: (10/300), the narrators are reliable. Al-Mundhirī said: Ṭabarānī narrated it and his narrators are reliable.

8 Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā*, 1/ 354.

9 Al-Nasa’ī: *Jāmi’ al-Uṣūl*, 7/574. Al-Ḥākim said: the chain of transmission is reliable.

Abū Al-Aḥwaṣ says: One day Ibn Mas‘ūd was giving a sermon and a snake was moving on the wall. So he stopped his sermon and hit the snake with a stick or a cane until he killed it. Yūnus [who is one of the narrators to al-Aḥwaṣ] said it was a stick. Then he said, “I heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying, ‘He who kills a snake, it is as if he is killing a polytheist man whose blood is permissible. [i.e. he can be killed].’”¹

Ordering Good and Forbidding Evil

Abū Kanūd reports: ‘Abd Allāh passed by an orator who was admonishing the people. So he said, “O speaker! Why are you making the people despondent?” Then he recited:

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

Say, “O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”²

It is reported from Ibn Mas‘ūd that: Once, when he entered his home, he noticed his wife wearing a knotted object round her neck. He took it away and broke it. Then he remarked: “The family of ‘Abd Allāh has become so arrogant that they now associate with Allah those for whom He has sent down no authority (proof).” Then, he added: “I have heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ saying: ‘Verily, spells, amulets, and love charms are acts of shirk.’” The people said: “O Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān! We are familiar with spells and amulets, but what is a love charm?” “He replied: “It is a sort of magical formula by which women sought to gain their husbands’ love.”³

Contentment with Allah’s Decree and Predestination (Taqdīr)

It is reported that Ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: “By the one whom there is no deity besides him, it does not harm a believer if he begins the morning and evening upon Islām even if he never attains anything of the world.”⁴

Sayyidunā ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ admitted: “It does not matter to me, when I return to my family, in what condition they are in—whether in a good condition, bad condition, or in harm. I do not wake up in a condition and desire to be in another condition.”⁵

His Humility

Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit says: One day ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd set out and people began to follow him. So, he said to them, “Do you have a need?” They said, “No, but we wish to walk with you.” He said, “Return, as it is a disgrace for the followers and a test for the one being followed.”⁶

He used to tell the people: “If you knew my sins, even two men will not walk behind me.”⁷

1 Musnad Aḥmad, Ḥadīth: 3746, 3996. Al-Ṭabarānī narrated it in his Kabīr up to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and upto a Ṭābi‘ī. He said: The narrators of Bazzār are reliable.

2 Tafsīr ibn Kathīr, 7/99.

3 Al-Nasa‘ī: Jāmi‘ Al-Uṣūl, 7 / 574. Al-Ḥākim narrated it briefly and commented: the chain is reliable.

4 Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’, 1/132.

5 Ṣīfat al-Ṣafwah, 1/408.

6 Ṣīfat al-Ṣafwah, 1/406.

7 Al-Dhahabī: Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā, 2/ 472.

His Status in the Eyes of Rasūlullāh ﷺ

Sayyidunā Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān says: We were sitting with Rasūlullāh ﷺ and he said, “Verily I do not know for how long I will remain among you. So, follow those after me, he pointed to Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, and follow the guidance of ‘Ammār and whatever Ibn Mas‘ūd narrates to you then believe him.”¹

لو كنت مؤمرا أحدا من غير مشورة منهم لأمرت عليهم ابن أم عبد

‘Alī رضي الله عنه narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: “If I were to appoint anyone leader without consulting the believers, it would be Ibn Umm ‘Abd.”²

عَنِ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَقْتَدُوا بِاللَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِي مِنْ أَصْحَابِي أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ وَاهْتَدُوا بِعَمَّارٍ وَنَمَسْكُوا بِعَهْدِ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: “Take as examples the two after me from my Companions, Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. Act upon the guidance of ‘Ammar, and hold fast to the advice of Ibn Mas‘ūd.”³ [*Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth: 4175]

Umm Mūsā⁴ said: I heard ‘Alī say that Rasūlullāh ﷺ commanded ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd to climb a tree and bring him something from it. His Companions looked at ‘Abd Allāh’s shin and laughed at its thinness. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “Why are you laughing? ‘Abd Allāh’s foot is heavier in the balance than the mountain of Uḥud.”⁵

It has also been narrated that he was among those who guaranteed Jannah in this world. Sa‘īd ibn Zayd says: We were with Rasūlullāh ﷺ upon mount Ḥirā’, so he mentioned ten people who are will enter Jannah. Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Ṭalḥah, Zubayr, ‘Abd Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf, Sa‘d ibn Mālik, Sa‘īd ibn Zayd and Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd—May Allah be pleased with them.⁶

The Nabī ﷺ, Abū Bakr, and some of the Companions passed by ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه one night while he was praying in the Masjid. On hearing his recitation, Rasūlullāh ﷺ observed, “Verily, ‘Abd Allāh recites the Qur’ān as fresh as it had been revealed.” After his ṣalāh, ‘Abd Allāh began praising Allah’s Majesty and supplicating to Allah with all his heart. He supplicated, “O Allah, I ask You for such īmān that will never apostatise, such favours that will never end, and the company of Muḥammad ﷺ in the highest abode of Your gardens, the gardens of eternity.” Meanwhile, the entire time Rasūlullāh ﷺ kept saying, “Ask, and you will be granted. Ask, and you will be granted.”⁷

قَالَ سَمِعْتُ عَلِيًّا، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ يَقُولُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ قَبْلِي نَبِيٌّ إِلَّا قَدْ أُعْطِيَ سَبْعَةَ رُفَقَاءَ نَجَبَاءَ وَرِزَاءَ وَإِنِّي أُعْطِيتُ أَرْبَعَةَ عَشَرَ حَمْرَةً وَجَعْفَرٌ وَعَلِيٌّ وَحَسَنٌ وَحُسَيْنٌ وَأَبُو بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ وَالْمِقْدَادُ وَعَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مَسْعُودٍ وَأَبُو ذَرٍّ وَحُدَيْفَةُ وَسَلْمَانَ وَعَمَّارٌ وَبِلَالٌ

Sayyidunā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “There is no Prophet who came before me but he was given seven chiefs, advisors, nobles. I have been favoured with fourteen viz. Ḥamzah, Ja‘far, ‘Alī, Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, al-Miqdād, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd, Abū Dharr, Ḥudhayfah, Salmān, ‘Ammār, and Bilāl.”⁸

1 *Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth: 3804. He said: the sanad is reliable.

2 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 3/154.

3 *Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth: 4175.

4 She was the slave of war of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. Her name was said to have been Fākhtā, Ḥabībāh or Maqbūlah.

5 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 3/154.

6 *Al-Istī‘āb*, 7/22-23.

7 *Al-Mustadrak*, 3/358, Ḥadīth: 5386. Al-Dhahabī declared it ṣaḥīḥ.

8 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 2 pg. 311, Ḥadīth: 1263, Grade: Ṣaḥīḥ; *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*, vol. 9 pg. 159. Kathīr al-Nawā‘ī in the isnād. Ibn Ḥibbān deems him reliable while majority regard him ḍa‘īf. The rest of the narrators are reliable.

His Status in eyes of the Ṣaḥābah

Zayd Ibn Wahb says: I was sitting with ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ when Ibn Mas‘ūd came to him. Due to his [Ibn Mas‘ūd’s] shortness, his height came in line with the sitting posture of ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. ‘Umar smiled when he seen him. ‘Umar began talking to him and being jovial with him while he was standing. He [Ibn Mas‘ūd] then left. ‘Umar followed him with his eyes until he was out of sight then commented, “a container full of knowledge.”¹

Abū al-Bakhtarī says: We came to ‘Alī and we asked him of the Companions of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. So he said, “Regarding who?” Abū al-Bakhtarī says: We said, “Tell us regarding ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd.” He said, “He learnt the Qur’ān and Sunnah then he desisted [from learning other than that] and sufficient is that as knowledge.”²

Ḥabbah ibn Juwayn relates: We were with ‘Alī. We mentioned some of the statements of ‘Abd Allāh. The people then praised him. They said, “O Amīr al-Mu‘minīn, we have not seen a man better in character, gentler in teaching, nobler as a companion, and more Allah fearing than ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd.” ‘Alī said, “I implore you in Allah’s name, is this the truth from your heart?” They said, “Yes.” He said, “O Allah, I say the same regarding him as they say or even better [words].”³

Qays reports that Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was questioned about Sayyidunā Ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to which he replied, “He recited the Qur’ān and withheld with regards to its *shubuhāt* (*Mutashābihāt*). He believed its ḥalāl as permissible and ḥarām as forbidden.”⁴

Ḥabbah also narrates: When ‘Alī came to Kūfah, he praised ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ in the following manner, “He read the Qur’ān, deemed Ḥalāl what was Ḥalāl in the Qur’ān and Ḥarām what was Ḥarām in the Qur’ān, had a deep understanding of Dīn, and was knowledgeable of the Sunnah.”⁵

Ḥurayth ibn Zāhīr says: The news of the death of ‘Abd Allāh reached Sayyidunā Abū al-Dardā’ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ who commented, “He did not leave anyone like him after him.”⁶

‘Amr Shaybānī narrates: Someone asked Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ a ruling regarding inheritance. So, he made a mistake and Ibn Mas‘ūd differed with him on the ruling. Abū Mūsā said, “Do not ask me anything as long as this learned man is among you.”⁷

Abū ‘Ubaydah says: I heard Abū Mūsā saying, “A single gathering of Ibn Mas‘ūd according to me is worth more than that of a year’s nafl worship.”⁸

Ḥasan narrates: It was said to ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to love you and used you [for his dīn]. He said, “It was like that and Allah does. I don’t know if he loved me or he wanted to create unity, but I can bear testimony that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ passed away and loved two men: ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd and ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir.”⁹

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ بْنِ صَالِحٍ، عَنْ رَبِيعَةَ بْنِ بَرِيدٍ، عَنْ أَبِي إِدْرِيسَ الْخَوْلَانِيِّ، عَنْ يَزِيدَ بْنِ عَمِيرَةَ، قَالَ لَمَّا حَضَرَ مُعَاذُ بْنُ جَبَلٍ الْمَوْتَ قِيلَ لَهُ يَا

1 Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, 1/351.

2 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 2/346.

3 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 3/156.

4 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr*, 6/213, Ḥadīth: 6041.

5 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 3/156.

6 Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, 1/352.

7 Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, 1/352.

8 Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, 1/352.

9 Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, 1/345.

أَبَا عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ أَوْصِيًا . قَالَ أَجْلِسُونِي . فَقَالَ إِنَّ الْعِلْمَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مَكَانَهُمَا مِنْ ابْتِغَاهُمَا وَجَدَهُمَا يَقُولُ ذَلِكَ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ وَالتَّمَسُّوا الْعِلْمَ عِنْدَ أَرْبَعَةِ رَهْطٍ عِنْدَ عُومَيْرِ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ وَعِنْدَ سَلْمَانَ الْفَارِسِيِّ وَعِنْدَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ وَعِنْدَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ سَلَامٍ الَّذِي كَانَ يَهُودِيًّا فَأَسْلَمَ فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ إِنَّهُ عَاشِرُ عَشْرَةِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ

Sayyidunā Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “Seek knowledge from four men: ‘Uwaymir Abū al-Dardā’, Salmān al-Fārisī, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd, and ‘Abd Allāh ibn Salām.”¹

Abū Mas‘ūd proclaimed: “I do not know whether Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ has left after him anyone having better knowledge of what Allah has revealed than the man who is standing, (indicating to (Ibn Mas‘ūd).”²

Sayyidunā Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ stated while Ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was standing, “The protected Companions of Muḥammad the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ are aware that he will be the closest in means on the Day of Qiyāmah.”³

Sha‘bī narrates: It is mentioned that ‘Umar met a caravan on one of his travels. ‘Umar sent someone to call out, “Where has the group come from?” ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd answered, “We have come from *Fajj al-‘Amīq*, i.e., from a distant track.” He then asked, “Where are you heading to?” He answered, “To the *Bayt al-‘Atīq* (Ancient House)” i.e. to the Ka‘bah. ‘Umar said, “There is a scholar among them!” He then instructed someone to ask them which verse of the Holy Qur‘ān is the loftiest. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd, who was in that delegation answered:

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ

*Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep.*⁴

He completed the verse. ‘Umar then asked, “Which is the most encapsulating verse of the Holy Qur‘ān?” ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd answered:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۗ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

*Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.*⁵

‘Umar then instructed the man to ask which is the most comprehensive verse of the Holy Quran. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd answered:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

*So whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it.*⁶

He then asked which verse of the Quran causes one to tremor the most. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd answered:

لَيْسَ بِأَمَانِيكُمْ وَلَا أَمَانِي أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ - مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ بِهِ وَلَا يَجِدْ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا

1 *Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth: 4178.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 2461b.

3 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, 1/127.

4 Al-Baqarah: 256.

5 Al-Naḥl: 91.

6 Al-Zalzalah: 7-9.

Paradise is not [obtained] by your wishful thinking nor by that of the People of the Scripture. Whoever does a wrong will be recompensed for it, and he will not find besides Allah a protector or a helper.¹

‘Umar told him to ask which of the verses of the Quran is the most promising. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd replied:

قُلْ يُعْبَادِي الَّذِينَ اسْرَفُوا عَلَيَّ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

Say, “O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”²

After hearing all of this ‘Umar then said, “Ask if among them is ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd.” The group said, “Yes, by Allah, he is amongst us.”³

His Advises

Murrah narrates from ‘Abd Allāh that he said: “If you want knowledge then learn the Qur’ān, for verily there is in its knowledge regarding the early and later generations.”⁴

Abū Al-Aḥwaṣ reports that ibn Mas‘ūd said: “Verily this Qur’ān is Allah’s provision. One who has the ability to learn from it should do so. The most deprived house of good is that house wherein there is no Qur’ān. And that house wherein there is nothing of the Qur’ān is like an empty house with no inhabitants. Verily Shayṭān leaves that house wherein Sūrah al-Baqarah is recited.”⁵

He used to say: A scholar that does not practice is like a sick person who describes medicine and like a hungry person who is describing deliciousness of foods but he did not come across it himself.⁶

Wā’il ibn ‘Abd Allāh reports that Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه said: Verily Allah looked at the hearts of people and chose Muḥammad and then sent him to His creation. Allah sent him with His message and granted him from His knowledge. He then looked at the hearts of people after him and chose for him his Companions. He made them the helpers of His Dīn and the representatives of His Nabī. That which the believers [Ṣaḥābah] see as good, is good, and that which the believers [Ṣaḥābah] see as evil, is evil in Allah’s eyes.⁷

Al-Ṭabarānī narrates that Ibn Mas‘ūd said: Verily Allah has distributed your character like how He has distributed your sustenance. Verily Allah gives wealth to whom He loves and those whom He does not love. He only gives īmān to those whom He loves. When Allah loves a slave, He gives him īmān.⁸

He would say: People will remain on good as long as they take ‘ilm from their seniors. When they take ‘ilm from the juniors they will be destroyed.⁹

1 Al-Nisā:124.

2 Al-Zumar: 54.

3 *Ṣifāt al-Ṣafwāh*, 1/400.

4 *Tadhkirah al-Ḥuffāz*, 1/16.

5 *Ḥilyat Al-Awliyā’*, 1/130.

6 *Iḥyā al-‘Ulūm al-dīn*, 1/63.

7 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, 1/375-376.

8 *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah*, 3/412. Al-Haythamī says (10/90): Al-Ṭabarānī narrates this upto ibn Mas‘ūd and the transmitter are reliable.

9 *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah*, 3/407.

Abū Al-Aḥwaṣ narrates that Ibn Mas‘ūd said: A person is not born as a scholar. Knowledge comes with learning.¹

He would say: “Slumber in war is from Allah and in ṣalāh is from Shayṭān.”²

He would say regarding Ṣalāh: “As long as you remain on ṣalāh, you are knocking the door of the King [Allah]. He who knocks many times on the door of the King, the door will be opened.”³

He would say reading choosing the Hereafter: “He who desires the world will lose out in the Hereafter, and he who desires the Hereafter will lose out in the world. O people, lose out in that which temporary in place of that which is eternal.”⁴

Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Yazīd narrates that from ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه said: “Moderation in practising on the Sunnah is better than making an effort against innovations.”⁵

He would say to his companions: “Become sources of knowledge, lanterns of guidance, carpets of your house i.e. stay indoors and away from fitnah, lanterns of the night, clean hearted, and adorn simple clothes—you will be recognised in the sky and you will be hidden from the people on the earth.”⁶

He used to also say: “Knowledge is not memorising many Aḥādīth, verily knowledge is attaining the fear of Allah.”⁷

He used to say: “Verily the hearts have desire and ability to go forward [for good], and the hearts have a listlessness and the tendency to hold back from good. Take advantage of the heart when it is desiring and going forward [to good], and ignore it when it becomes listless and holds back [from good].”⁸

“It is appropriate for the Bearer of Qur’ān to be distinguished by his night, when people are asleep; by his day, when people are not fasting; by his grief when people are happy; with his crying, when people are laughing; with his silence, when people are socialising; with his humility, when people feel self-important. It is befitting for the Bearer of the Qur’ān to be crying, sad, wise, tolerant, knowledgeable, and silent. It is befitting for the Bearer of the Qur’ān not to be uncouth/rude, negligent, noisy, loud-mouthed, or sharp.”⁹

He said, “I dislike seeing a man idle, not in any worldly action nor any Hereafter action.”¹⁰

Death

Abu Ḍabyah narrates: ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه lived to the time of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه. When he was sick and on his deathbed, ‘Uthmān came to visit him and said: “What is your ailment?” He replied, “My sins.” ‘Uthmān asked him, “What do you desire?” He said, “The mercy of my Lord.” ‘Uthmān asked, “Should I not call a doctor?” He said, “The doctor will make me sick.” ‘Uthmān asked, “Shall I not give you your stipend [which you have refused to take for years now]?”

1 *Iḥyā al-‘Ulūm al-dīn*, 1/8.

2 *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr*, 3/562.

3 *Al-Sunan Al-Kubrā*, 2/486.

4 *Ḥilyat Al-Awliyā’*, 1/138.

5 *Tadhkirah al-Ḥuffāz*, 1/16.

6 *Jāmi’ Bayān al-‘Ilm*, 1/126.

7 *Iḥyā al-‘Ulūm al-dīn*, 1/64.

8 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, 1/134.

9 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, 1/130.

10 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, 1/130.

He replied, “I have no need of it.” ‘Uthmān said, “Let it be for your daughters after you.” Ibn Mas‘ūd said, “Do you fear poverty for my children? I have commanded them to read Sūrah al-Wāqī‘ah every night for I have heard the Prophet saying, ‘Whoever reads al-Wāqī‘ah every night shall never be afflicted by poverty.’”¹

Abu al-Aḥwaṣ narrates: “After the demise of ‘Abd Allāh bin Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه, I was in the presence of Abū Mūsā and Abū Mas‘ūd. One of them said to the other, ‘Has ibn Mas‘ūd left behind anyone like him?’ The other responded, ‘At present, there is no one amongst us like him. Perhaps after we pass, someone like him may be born.’”²

He passed away in 32 AH.³ He was sixty-three years old.⁴ He left behind ninety thousand silver coins⁵ and Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān performed his Ṣalāt al-Janāzah.⁶

Sayyidunā Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه performed the ṣalāt al-janāzah of Sayyidunā Abū Dharr رضي الله عنه. Ibn Mas‘ūd passed away few days after this in Madīnah.⁷

1 *Uṣd al-Ghābah*, 3/389-390. Al-Tirmidhī says: the chain is reliable but unique.

2 *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 3/147.

3 *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr*, 1/13.

4 Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā*, 1/357.

5 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 3/160.

6 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 3/160.

7 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 7 pg. 109.