

THE
FIRSTS

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Abdullah ibn Masood (ra)

Abdullah ibn Masood (ra) was one of the supreme companions of the Prophet ﷺ. He was from the tribe of Hudhayl. The tribe of hudhayl was a tribe of bedouins, and considered weak/marginalized, unprotected in society. His father Masood bin Ghafil had formed an allegiance to the tribe of Banu Zuhra (Saad ibn Abi Waqqas (ra)'s tribe). Abdullah ibn Masood (ra) followed in those footsteps and would shepherd sheep, and not get involved in the politics of the elite of Makkah.

His Unique Appearance

Before Islam, his nickname was Ibn Umm 'Abd. After Islam, it was Abu AbdurRahman. In the books of fiqh and hadith, if only 'Abdullah' is written, it refers to *the* Abdullah ibn Masood (ra). His physical description is important to his legacy in Islam. He was uniquely short and skinny, not much facial hair, and he had dark skin. He was known for his perfume, he was pleasantly-scented and would wear the cleanest, whitest *thawb*. One of his students once described him:

Ibn Sakhbarah narrates: "I went out in the morning with 'Abdullah b. Mas'ood from Mina to 'Arafât, and he was chanting the talbiyah. 'Abdullah was a black man with two braids, and looked a little like the desert people. A crowd of the common people began to gather around him, and they said: "O Bedouin man, this is not a day to make talbiyah, but it is rather a day of takbeer. In that instance he turned to me and said: "Are the people ignorant, or have they forgotten? I swear by the one who commissioned Muhammad ﷺ with the truth, I went out with the Messenger of Allah (saws and he did not stop [chanting] the talbiyah until he cast at the Jamrah al-'Aqabah, except to mix it with a takbeer or tahleel."

His unique appearance would put him in situations that showed that Allah (SWT) does not look at the size of a person's body, posture, strength, title - rather, He looks at the heart and character of a person.

Accepting Islam

Abdullah ibn Masood (ra) was sent to be a shepherd of Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'eet at the age of 13 years old, so he was another teenager accepting Islam. Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'eet is one of the most evil oppressors of the Prophet ﷺ, he was the one who put the camel guts on the back of the Prophet ﷺ. He was one of the cruelest elite of the Quraysh.

Abdullah ibn Masood (ra) says that one day he was caring for the sheep of Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'eet on the outskirts of Makkah and this man comes, and he's traveling with someone else, and he says to me, "Can we have some milk from these goats? We're travelers." Ibn Masood (ra) replied, "Yes, but I do not own these sheep. I am entrusted with them." Then the man said to bring one of the goats that has no milk in it. So he brought it, and that man (who was Rasulullah ﷺ), put his hand on the udders of the sheep and said *Bismillah*. All of a sudden, the udders started to flow with milk. The Prophet ﷺ took the milk and drank, and he gave to his companion, Abu Bakr (ra) to drink, and he gave Ibn Masood (ra) to drink as well. When the Prophet ﷺ finished, the goat went back to how it was -- not producing milk anymore. So Ibn Masood (ra) said to the Prophet ﷺ, "Ya 'amm (Oh uncle!). Teach me about these words you just said." So the Prophet ﷺ wiped his hand on Ibn Masood (ra)'s chest and smiled at him, and said you are a knowledgeable young man. This sparked a curiosity in Abdullah ibn Masood (ra), and after they left, he began to try to find out more information about who they were.

Abdullah ibn Masood (ra) went to Al-'Abbas who was selling *i'tr* and he asked him about the Prophet ﷺ. Right after he found out about him ﷺ, Ibn Masood (ra) went to Darul Arqam and said the *shahadah* to the Prophet ﷺ. He is widely regarded as the 6th man to enter into Islam. One of his nicknames is *Sudus al-Islam* (at one point, he was 1/6 of Islam). Another nickname was *Saahib un-Na'layn* (Keeper of the Prophet ﷺ's Sandals). He would walk so close to him ﷺ, he would carry his sandals. He was also the keeper of secrets of the Prophet ﷺ. He maintained a closeness to the Prophet ﷺ throughout his life.

He was the First to Recite Qur'an Publicly

Some of the companions longed to hear the Qur'an recited publicly in front of the Ka'bah. They started to think of people like Uthman (ra) who would be protected and not beaten if he recited publicly. They thought of the noble ones, who were protected by their tribes. Ibn Masood (ra) didn't fit the description they were thinking of -- he had no tribe to take care of him, and the Quraysh didn't want to see the Prophet ﷺ with him. Despite not having sympathizers or people to protect him, Abdullah ibn Masood (ra) said "I will and Allah 'Azza wa Jal will protect me."

He recited Surah ar-Rahman, and the people around started wondering if this was poetry. When they realized that he was reciting what was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ, they pounced on him and beat him so badly that he became unconscious, and his collar bone was broken.

The sahabah took him out of that and treated him, and told him, "Why did you do that?" We told you that you'll probably be killed, etc. He said, "There's no day that the enemies of Allah

were lighter in my sight than they were today.” He said if he could, he would go again the next day and recite again.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “Whoever wants to hear Qur’an as fresh as it was revealed, let him hear it from Ibn Umm Abd.” In another hadith, the Prophet ﷺ said, “Learn Qur’an from four persons: Ibn Umm ‘Abd (i. e. ‘Abdullah b. Mas‘ud) [he started from him] -then Mu‘adh b. Jabal and Ubayya b. Ka‘b, then Salim the ally of Abu Hudhaifa.”

Ibn Masood (ra) loved and revered the Prophet ﷺ more than anything else because of the Qur’an, he used to even refer to the Prophet ﷺ as “the one who Surah al-Baqarah was revealed upon.” He said, “Whoever loves the Qur’an will love Allah and His Messenger.” He received 70 surahs of the 114 fresh from the mouth of the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ asked Abdullah ibn Masood (ra) to recite Qur’an to him ﷺ. He was shocked at this request and said, “Shall I recite (it) to you while it has been revealed to you?” He ﷺ said, "I like to hear it from another person."

His Status

Abdullah ibn Masood was once with the Prophet ﷺ, and he was picking something for the *araak* tree, and the wind blew up his garment so his legs were exposed. His legs were extremely small, and because of that, some of the sahabah laughed. The Prophet ﷺ doesn't let that go. He says, “Why are you laughing?” They said, “Ya Rasulallah, we’re just laughing at his legs.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “You’re laughing at the legs of Ibn Masood?” They said, “Yes, we’re laughing at the size of his legs.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “I swear by Allah, they are heavier on the scales on the Day of Judgement with Allah (SWT) than the mountain of Uhud.”

He would stay so close to the Prophet ﷺ, to the point that Abu Musa al-Asha’ri (ra) said that when he came from Yemen and accepted Islam, “We thought that Ibn Masood and his mother were from *Ahl ul-Bayt* (members of the household of the Prophet ﷺ).” The most upright of the companions knew that Ibn Masood (ra) was from among the closest to Allah (SWT).

Once the Prophet ﷺ, Abu Bakr (ra), and ‘Umar (ra) were walking, and they heard someone making dua’a, it was Abdullah ibn Masood (ra). The Prophet ﷺ stopped to hear his dua’a, and said, “Ask, you will be given.” Ibn Masood (ra) made this dua’a:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ إِيمَانًا لَا يَرْتَدُّ، وَنَعِيمًا لَا يَنْفَدُ، وَمُرَافَقَةً مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ فِي أَعْلَى جَنَّةِ الْخُلْدِ

“Oh Allah I ask you for faith that does not expire, for blessings that will not be taken away, and for companionship of the Prophet ﷺ in the highest level of Paradise.”

He witnessed every significant event in Islam with the Prophet ﷺ. He and his mother made *hijrah* twice, to Abyssinia and Madinah. He witnessed all of the battles and *Bay'at ir-Ridwan*. Allah honored him in Badr with finishing off Abu Jahal, the *fir'oun* of this Ummah. He was the one who narrated Rasulullah ﷺ saying "O Allah! Forgive my people, because they certainly do not know," at Uhud.

He learned *salah* from the Prophet ﷺ. Abdullah Ibn Masood (ra) is reported to have said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught me *tashahhud* taking my hand within his palms, in the same way as he taught me a surah of the Qur'an, and he narrated it as narrated above.

His Marriage

Abdullah ibn Masood (ra) avoided marriage for quite some time due to his poverty and his closeness to the Prophet ﷺ. Ibn Masood (ra) narrated: “We used to fight in the holy battles in the company of the Prophet ﷺ and we had no wives with us. So we said, ‘O Allah's Messenger ﷺ! Shall we get castrated?’ The Prophet ﷺ forbade us to do so.”

Ibn Masood (ra) met 'Uthman (ra) at 'Arafah and spoke to him in private. Uthman (ra) said to Ibn Masood: "Are you interested in a girl so that I marry her to you?" 'Abdullah (ra) called 'Alqamah (ra) and he told him that we were once sitting in the masjid talking about marriage and the Prophet ﷺ came and sat between us and said: 'Whoever among you can afford to get married, let him do so. Whoever cannot afford it, let him fast, for fasting will be a restraint for him.’”

He did eventually marry Zainab Bint Abi Mu'awiya (ra). There is an incident with her that shows the permissibility of a wife giving *sadaqah* to her husband: Abu Sa'id(ra) narrated, ‘Zainab Bint Abi Muawiya the wife of Ibn Masood came to ask the Prophet ﷺ. When she sought permission Bilal said Zainab is here to see you, he said which Zainab? He said the wife of Ibn Masood. She then entered and said to the Prophet “O Messenger of Allah ﷺ! You have commanded us today to give *Sadaqah* (charity). I have some jewelry of mine and I wanted to give it as Sadaqah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Your husband and your family are most worthy of those who receive *sadaqah* from you.”

‘Umar (ra) and Ibn Masood (ra)

‘Umar (ra) had a special love for Ibn Masood (ra). This shows how *iman* transformed people. He had a really close relationship with Ibn Masood (ra), and he sought his advice. He used to serve him and laugh with him, honor him. If anyone disrespected Ibn Masood (ra) in front of ‘Umar (ra), ‘Umar (ra) would literally throw something at them.

Later on, ‘Umar (ra) appointed Ibn Masood (ra) as the governor of Kufa, Iraq. ‘Umar (ra) said, “I have given you Ibn Masood even though I can’t bear to live without him.” SubhanAllah that gift that ‘Umar (ra) gave to Kufa, is indeed where we start to see the schools of *fiqh* and Qur’an come from Kufa.

There’s a story that a group of people had come to Madinah, and ‘Umar (ra) asked, ‘From where do you come?’ ‘From a deep valley,’ came the reply, using the Qur’anic expression - *fajjin ‘amiq*. ‘And where are you going?’ asked Umar (ra). ‘To the ancient house,’ came the reply, using the Qur’anic expression - *al-bayt al-’atiq*. ‘There is a learned person (‘*alim*) among them,’ said Umar (ra) and he commanded someone to ask the person, ‘Which part of the Qur’an is the greatest?’ ‘Allah. There is no Deity except Him, the Living, the Self-subsisting. Neither slumber overtakes Him nor sleep,’ replied the person answering, quoting the Ayat al-Kursi (the Verse of the Throne). ‘Which part of the Qur’an is the most clear on justice?’ ‘Allah commands what is just and fair, the feeding of relatives,’ ‘What is the most comprehensive statement of the Qur’an?’ ‘Whoever does an atom’s weight of good shall see it, and whoever does an atom’s weight of evil shall see it.’ ‘Which part of the Qur’an gives the greatest hope?’ ‘Say, O my servants who have wasted their resources..’ Thereupon Umar (ra) asked, ‘Is Abdullah Ibn Masood among you?’ ‘Yes, by Allah,’ the men in the caravan replied. ‘Umar (ra) was so happy, and he sat at his feet, and caught up with his friend for hours.

When ‘Umar (ra) became Muslim, there was no one happier on that day than Ibn Masood (ra).

His Death:

Abdullah ibn Masood (ra) passed away at the time of the *khilafah* of ‘Uthman (ra), before the *fitnah*. He willed in his *wasiyyah* (will) that Az-Zubayr (ra) - his brother in *hijrah* - would pray upon him.

After his *janazah*, Abu Mas’ud al-Badri (ra) said to Abu Musa (ra), “Do you think he has left anyone comparable to him in knowledge?” Abu Musa (ra) said, “No, because he was with the Prophet ﷺ when we were absent and witnessed things we couldn’t.”

May Allah be pleased with him and make us among the people of the Qur'an like he was.
Ameen

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