

Chapter Thirteen

Where did Imam-e-Aazam get his Fiqh from?

My Companions

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: “The most superior of my Ummah, are the people of my era, (the companions) then it is those who will proceed them, thereafter are those who will come after them. Following these will be such people that will bear testimony will not be needed, they will be disloyal and deceiving and they will not be trusted, and they make vows but will never fulfil them.”¹

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) warned: “Beware of Allah in every matter concerning my companions. Do not make them the targets (of your criticism) after me. Whoever loves them then it is by detesting me that he detests them. Whoever inflicts them with any trouble, has troubled me and whoever has troubled me has troubled Allah and it is quite possible that Allah may seize him.”²

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) commanded: “If you observe those who swear at my companions, say ‘Allah’s curse be upon your evil.’”³

Life of ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud

He narrated his first meeting with the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace): “I was a young Shepard boy responsible for the sheep of ‘Uqbah ibn Abu Mu’ait. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace): once came with ‘Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) and said, “O boy, do you have milk for us to drink?” and I said, “I can’t let you drink their milk.” The Messenger of

1 Bukhari and Muslim

2 Tirmidhi

3 Tirmidhi

Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “Do you have a virgin sheep that has never mated with a male?” I said, “Yes” and brought it to them. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) caught it and stroked its udder and prayed to Allah till the udder filled. ‘Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) brought him a concave rock into which he milked the sheep. ‘Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) drank the milk, and then after the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said to the udder, “Shrink,” and it did. I went to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) after this incident and said to him, “Teach me this kind of talk.” The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “You are already a learned boy.”

The Messenger of Allah’s (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) prophecy about him which said, “You are a learned boy” was true. Indeed, Allah endowed him with knowledge till he became the most learned of this Ummah and the best one to know Qur’aan by heart. Ibn Mas’ud described himself saying, “I Infact took from the mouth of Allah’s Messenger more than seventy Surahs of the Qur’aan. I have a better understanding of the Book of Allah than any one of you.”

‘Abdur Rahman ibn Zaid narrates, “I enquired from Hudhayfah (to inform me) regarding somebody who closely resembled the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in manner, conduct and behaviour, so I could acquire (knowledge) from him. He replied, ‘We are not aware of anybody who holds a closer resemblance to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in manner, conduct and habit than ibn Ummi ‘Abd, until he is not hidden in the house (meaning his social behaviour is just like the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)).’”⁴

It must be noted that ibn Ummi ‘Abd was a nickname for ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud, Ummi ‘Abd being his mother’s name.

‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud narrates, “By the One besides who there is no Lord, there is no Surah revealed in the Book of Allah, but I am the most

⁴ Bukhari and Tirmidhi

knowledgeable regarding where it was revealed. There is no verse from the Book of Allah, which was revealed, but I am the most knowledgeable regarding the circumstances preceding its revelation. If I was to learn of somebody possessing greater knowledge than me of the Book of Allah, who a (journey on a) camel could reach, I would mount it (in order to visit him).”⁵

Abu Musa narrates, “My brother and I arrived from Yemen and we remained for some time (in Madinah). We thought ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud and his mother were part of the Ahle Bayt of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), due to their (frequent) entry onto him (in his house) and the Messenger of Allah’s (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) attachment to them.”⁶

‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud narrates that when the (following) verse was revealed, “On those who believe and do righteous good deeds, there’s no sin for what they ate (in the past), if they are afraid of Allah (by keeping away from his forbidden things), and believe and do the righteous good deeds, and again..... the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) informed me, “You are from them.”⁷

Regarding ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud, ‘Umar ibn Khattab said, “A small person filled (the knowledge of) jurisprudence.”⁸

Hudhayfa narrates that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “Whatever hadith ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud narrates to you, accept it.”⁹ This is certification from the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) for ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud as being a totally competent and reliable narrator of ahadith.

5 Bukhari and Tirmidhi

6 Bukhari and Muslim

7 Muslim and Tirmidhi

8 Tabarani

9 Tirmidhi

Hudhayfa (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “Whatever ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud narrates to you, accept it.”¹⁰

This proves that ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud was considered (as all companions are) a competent and reliable narrator of hadiths.

It is reported that when Mu’adh ibn Jabal was about to die, he advised, “Acquire knowledge from four people: from Uwaymir (meaning Abu Darda, Salmaan, ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud and ‘Abdullah ibn Salaam who was once a Jew but later embraced Islam.)”¹¹

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) instructed: “Learn the Qur’an from four people: ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud, Saalim slave of Abu Hudhayfah, Ubay ibn Ka’ab and Mu’adh ibn Jabal.”¹²

Ibn Hajar ‘Asqalani states that the mention of someone’s name before others indicated the superiority of that person.

‘Ali ibn Abi Talib narrates: “Once the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) ordered ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be pleased with him) to climb a tree to bring something down for him. Some of the Companions caught sight of his calve while he was climbing and began to laugh at their thinness. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) remarked, “What are you laughing at? One leg of ‘Abdullah will be heavier in the scale than mount Uhud.”¹³

Imam Sha’bi states: “No Companion of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) entered Kufa whose knowledge was more beneficial (for the people) or who was a greater jurist than ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be pleased with him).

10 Sunan al-Tirmidhi

11 Tirmidhi

12 Bukhari and Tirmidhi

13 Musnad Ahmad, Abi Ya’la, Mu’jam al-Tabrani.

Imam Dhahabi describes the status of the great companions, writes: “ ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be pleased with him), the learnt leader, Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘Abdullah ibn Umami ‘Abd al-Hudhali; Companion and personal servant of the Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace); among the first to embrace Islam; among the veterans of the battle of Badr; among the expert jurists and teachers of the Qur’aan; among those who strove to convey (the words of the Messenger) very accurately scrupulous in (his) narrations; and one who would admonish his students upon negligence in recording the exact words (of the Messenger)...(Due to extreme caution) he would narrate very little (himself)...His students would not give preference to any Companion over him...Surely he was from among the leading Companions, the bearers of sacred knowledge, and the exemplars (a’imma) of guidance.”

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The above is some of what has been related concerning the excellence and virtues of ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be pleased with him). There is no doubt that every Companion is deserving of high praise, especially those who have been complimented by the Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). As we have learnt, ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be pleased with him) was one of the elect Companions, renowned and praised for his learning and deep insight into the religion.

Criticising any person close to Allah means incurring the wrath of Allah. In a Hadith-e-Qudsi the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) relates that Allah says, “Whoever harbours enmity towards a Friend (Wali) of Mine, I declare war against him”¹⁵ therefore, it is considered a very serious crime to belittle the position of a companion in anyway, especially on who possessed so many virtues.

It was Allah’s bounty on him that he was counted among the first ten Companions of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) who were promised Paradise while they were still alive. He participated in all the victorious wars with the Prophet (may Allah bless

14 Tadhkirat al-Huffaz, 1:13-16

15 Bukhari

him and grant him peace) and his caliphs. Such a man was guided by Allah, educated by the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), and enlightened by the Qur'aan. Every companion of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) is destined to Paradise and Allah states in the Qur'aan, *“Allah is well pleased with them and they are pleased with Allah.”*

*“O people! Ask the men of knowledge if you know not.”*¹⁶

¹⁶ Surah Nahal. Surah No: 16, Verses 43