

THE MINISTERS AROUND THE MESSENGER



Abdul Aziz Ash-Shannawi



The Ministers Around The Prophet

(Peace and Blessings of Allah be Upon Him)

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Al-Miqdad bin 'Amr: The First Horse Soldier of Islam

His Lineage

He is Al-Miqdad bin (bin means, son of) 'Amr bin Tha'labah bin Malik bin Rabi'ah bin 'Amir Bin Matrud Al-Bahrari, and it is said, Al-Hadrami. His father is 'Amr bin Tha'labah.

Because he killed someone from his tribe, 'Amr had to flee from his homeland; he traveled to Hadramaut, where he allied himself to Kindah, which is why he later took on the attributive appellation, Al-Kindi. 'Amr married one of the women of Hadramaut, and she bore him a son - Al-Miqdad.

When Al-Miqdad grew up, he got implicated in a situation similar to the one that his father faced years ago. He got into a dispute with Abu Shamr bin Hajar Al-Kindi, and their quarrel quickly precipitated into a physical fight. Al-Miqdad got the better of Abu Shamr, for he struck him with his sword in the leg, but being that this occurred in Abu Shamr's homeland - where he had many relatives who would be eager for revenge - Al-Miqdad had to flee like his father before him. He took refuge in Makkah, where he allied himself with Al-Aswad bin 'Abd-Yaghuth Az-Zuhri. Al-Miqdad then wrote to his father, informing him of his safe arrival, and his father later joined him in Makkah.

Al-Aswad bin 'Abd-Yaghuth took Al-Miqdad to be his adopted son - a not uncommon practice at the time, even if the father was alive - and so he became known as, Al-Miqdad bin Al-Aswad. But during the days of Islam, when the following Verse was revealed:

﴿ادْعُوهُمْ لِآبَائِهِمْ هُوَ أَقْسَطُ﴾

"Call them (adopted sons) by (the names of) their fathers, that is more just." [Quran 33: 5]

- He again became known as, Al-Miqdad bin 'Amr.

His Kunyah

For men, a Kunyah begins with Abu, meaning: 'father of.' Usually, one's Kunyah is based on one's eldest son, so if one's eldest son is named Zaid, one's Kunyah is Abu Zaid. But this is not always the case; one's Kunyah can refer to other children; it can even be used in a figurative sense, denoting a close connection between someone and some object or idea. Because he liked kittens, a famous Companion of the Prophet is known not by the name he was given at birth, but by his Kunyah: Abu Hurairah (Hurairah meaning a small cat).

As for Al-Miqdad's Kunyah, it has been said that it is 'Abul-Aswad; it has also been said that it is Abu 'Umar; and it has also been said that it is Abu Sa'id.

His Acceptance of Islam

Al-Miqdad bin 'Amr (May Allah be pleased with him) was one of the earliest of people to accept Islam; in fact, he was the seventh person to openly proclaim his Islam (which does not mean that he was the seventh person to accept Islam, since some kept their Islam secret in the early days of the Prophet's Mission).

The Punishment He Endured

As we saw from his biography before the days of Islam, Al-Miqdad was not a native of Makkah, never mind one of its chiefs. Thus he shared the lot of other weak Muslims, who were either slaves, people in the lower echelons of Makkan society, outsiders (like Miqdad) who gained protection in Makkah, or people who had no patron or protector from the chiefs of Makkah. Al-Miqdad was tortured over and over again, and all he had to do in order to convince his tormentors to stop hurting him was to renounce his Islam; yet he refused, remaining brave and firm and steadfast upon the truth.

His Description

Al-Mada'ini said: "Al-Miqdad was tall and tanned. He was hirsute, with large eyes and connected eyebrows. And he used to dye his beard yellow." Al-Miqdad's wife, Karimah, described him as having a large stomach.

His Migration

Al-Miqdad bin 'Amr was one of the few who made both migrations, to Al-Habashah and to Al-Madinah.

His Brother from the Ansar

When the Muslims of Makkah (the Muhajireen, or 'the migrators') migrated to Al-Madinah, they received a warm welcome from its Muslim inhabitants (the Ansar, or 'the helper s'). To further strengthen the ties of brotherhood between the Muslims of both cities, the Prophet assigned for each Muhajir a brother from the Ansar. As for Al-Miqdad' the Prophet formed a bond of brotherhood between him and 'Abdullah bin Rawahah (May Allah be pleased with him).

His Noteworthy Contribution on the Day of Badr

In order to confront a Makkan caravan headed by Abu Sufyan, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) set out of Al-Madinah with more than 300 of his Companions (May Allah be pleased with him). Abu Sufyan was able to flee, but the people of Makkah had already set out in order to defend their caravan. This unexpected turn of events called for an important decision and quick resolve, for the Muslims had not come out to fight. The Prophet consulted his Companions , saying, "O people, give me your counsel." Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) stood and spoke well, and then 'Umar bin Al-Khattab stood and spoke well. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) then repeated his request, saying, "O people, give me your counsel." Al-Miqdad bin 'Amr came forth, and he was the only Companion who was riding a horse at the time (a horse called 'Sabhah'). He said:

O' Messenger of Allah, execute that (plan) which Allah has shown to you, for we are with you. By Allah, we will not say to you as the children of Israel said to Musa: 'so go you and your Lord and fight you two, we are sitting right here.' Instead, we say to you, 'go you and your Lord and fight: we are with you and will fight.' And by the One Who sent you with the truth, if you led us to Birkul- Ghimad - a place on the outlying regions of Yemen - we would fight alongside you against those who come before it (and there were many tribes separating Al- Madinah and Birkul-Ghimad), until you reached it. And we will indeed fight from your right, from your left t, from before you, and from behind you - until Allah makes you victorious.

Of this firm and brave stance, the eminent Companion 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud said, "I witnessed a situation with Al-Miqdad (May Allah be pleased with him), which made his companionship more beloved to me

than anything similar to it (from worldly things)." It was a speech that, according to certain narrations, made the Prophet's face shine, so pleased was he with Miqdad's words. In speaking the above mentioned words, Al-Miqdad showed not only his bravery, but his wisdom as well, for his speech prompted others to express similar commitments of loyalty and bravery, which were especially wanted from the Ansar, who had pledged to protect the Prophet from attacking enemies, but not to go out and initiate battle. As soon as Al-Miqdad finished speaking, one of the leaders of the Ansar came forth and expressed similar sentiments on behalf of his people.

His Dedicated Companionship

Al-Miqdad did not miss even a single of the Prophet's battles; rather, he participated in each one, always shining as a brave and formidable horseman.

His Marriage

One day, Al-Miqdad bin 'Amr 4; was sitting with 'Abdur- Rahman bin Awf; when the latter said, "Will you not marry?" Al-Miqdad said, "Marry your daughter to me." Angry at Al-Miqdad's answer, 'Abdur- Rahman gave him a severe rebuke, which prompted Al-Miqdad to complain to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). The Prophet said:

«أَنَا أَزَوِّجُكَ»

"I will marry you (to someone),"

And so the Prophet of mercy (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) married him to Duba'ah' the daughter of Az-Zubair bin 'Abdul- Muttalib. [Ibn Sa'd 3/30]

His Short Stint as Leader

On one occasion, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) appointed Al-Miqdad to govern a specific area. When Al-Miqdad (May Allah be pleased with him) returned from his duties, the Prophet asked:

«كَيْفَ وَجَدْتَ الْإِمَارَةَ؟»

"How did you find your leadership to be?"[Al-Majma 5/210.]

Al-Miqdad answered, "I indeed began to look at myself as if I were above people, and they were all beneath me (in ranking)." He 4" then said, "By the one who sent you with the truth, after today, I will never become leader of (even) two people." The fear of pride and haughtiness becoming a part of his character is what prompted him to make that oath, and he lived up to it, for he never assumed the role of Amir (leader) after that day.

His Wisdom

Al-Miqdad bin 'Amr was wise in his sayings and dealings; after all, he learned from the teacher of mankind, who said:

«إِنَّ قَلْبَ ابْنِ آدَمَ أَسْرَعُ تَقَلُّبًا مِنَ الْقَدْرِ حِينَ يَغْلِي»

"Indeed, the heart of the son of Adam becomes restless faster than does a pot when it is brought to boil." [Ahmad 6/4 and Al-Hakim, in Al-Mustadrak, 2/289 from Al-Miqdad R.A]

Here we will limit ourselves to just one example of Al-Miqdad's profound wisdom. One day, some of his companions who were seated in his company said, "Blessed are your two eyes that have seen the Messenger of Allah By Allah, we truly wish that we saw what you saw, and that we witnessed what you witnessed."

Al-Miqdad said, "What makes one of you wish for something that Allah has made hidden for him. You don't know how you would have conducted yourselves had you witnessed (what I witnessed). And by Allah, Allah - the Possessor of might and glory - overturned some of the Prophet's contemporaries on their noses in the Hell-fire! Should you not rather praise Allah, Who has kept you away from a trial similar to theirs and has made you come out as believers in your Lord and in your Prophet?"

"He Ordered Me to Love Four"

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى أَمَرَنِي بِحُبِّ أَرْبَعَةٍ، وَأَخْبَرَنِي أَنَّهُ يُحِبُّهُمْ: عَلِيٌّ، وَأَبُو ذَرٍّ، وَالْمِقْدَادُ، وَسَلْمَانُ»

"Indeed, Allah ordered me to love four, and He informed me that He indeed loves them: 'Ali, Abu Dharr, Al-Miqdad, and Salman. "[At-Tirmidhi, 3718]

In Egypt

Along with 'Amr bin Al-'A's Al-Miqdad was a part of the Muslim army that went to and conquered Egypt.

Al-Miqdad - A Narrator of Hadith

Al-Miqdad narrated Ahadith from the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), Ali, Anas, 'Ubaidullah bin Al-Khiyar, Hammam bin Al-Harith, 'Abdur-Rahman bin Abu Layla - these, among others, related narrations on the authority of Al-Miqdad.

His Death

After leading a fruitful life, the noble companion Al- Miqdad bin 'Amr (May Allah be pleased with him), died at the age of 70 in the year 33 H, during the caliphate of 'Uthman bin 'Affan.

'Abdullah bin Mas'ud: The First to Openly Recite the Qur'an in Makkah

His Lineage

He is 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud bin Ghafil bin Habib bin Shamkh bin Far bin Makhzurn bin Sahilah bin Kahil bin Al-Harith bin Sa'd bin Hudhail Al-Hadhali. His mother's full name is Umm 'Abdullah bint Wadd bin Suwa'ah.

His Kunyah

Ibn Mas'ud was known by the Kunyah, Abu 'Abdur-Rahman.

His Acceptance of Islam

'Abdullah bin Mas'ud was one of the earliest of people to accept Islam.

The First to Openly Recite the Qur'an

During the early days of Islam, as they were gathered in Darul-Arqam, the Muslims said to one another, "By Allah, the Quraish has not yet heard the Qur'an recited out loud for them, so who will go and make them hear it."

"I (will go)," was the quick reply of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud.

"You?" Mus'ab bin 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) asked in a surprised tone.

Suhaib bin Sinful Ar-Rumi (May Allah be pleased with him) explained the general sentiment: "We fear that they will (harm) you. We want a man who has a large clan to defend him from the people when they will want to (harm) him."

"Leave me to go, for indeed, Allah will defend me," replied 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud (May Allah be pleased with him) as he was walking towards the door.

He proceeded forth until he reached the Station of Ibrahim (Peace be upon him); it was morning time, and the Quraish were nearby in their places of gathering. Then 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud raised his voice, saying, "In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, and the Most Merciful.

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ ۝١ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ۝٢ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ۝٣ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ۝٤﴾

"The Most Gracious (Allah)! He has taught (you) in a kind) the Qur'an (by His Mercy). He created man. He taught him eloquent speech." [Quran 55:1-4,]

As he continued to recite the Verses, the leaders of the Quraish, who could plainly hear him, asked one another, "What is this?"

"It is indeed Ibn Umm 'Abd," said 'Uqbah bin Abu Mu'ait." And what is Ibn Umm 'Abd saying?" asked Abu Jahl bin Hisham.

"He is saying some of the poetry with which Muhammad came," said An-Nadr bin Al-Harith.

"Muhammad allured him, just as he allured some of the slaves, claiming that his new religion puts the slave and his master on an equal footing," added Abu Sufyan bin Harb.

Forthwith, the chiefs of Quraish gathered upon 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud' and they began striking him in the face. As they were beating him, 'Abdullah did not waver; rather, he continued to recite from Suratur-Rahman. He then returned to his companions, bloodied and beaten, a sight that moved them all. Sa'd bin Abu Waqqas (May Allah be pleased with him) washed Ibn Mas'ud's face and said, "This is what we feared upon you." Ibn Mas'ud said, "The enemies of Allah have never been easier (i.e., more insignificant) to me than they are now. And if you wish, I will go to them tomorrow morning with the same (message)."

Az-Zubair bin Al-'Awwam, Talhah bin 'Ubaidullah, Bilal bin Rabah, and 'Uthman bin Maz'iln - these all said, "No, that is enough for you; you have made them hear what they despise." Despite his being poor, emaciated, and weak, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud was able and willing to defy the Quraish; thus he became the first - after the Messenger of Allah - to openly recite the Qur'an in Makkah.

Torture At The Hands Of the Quraish, And the Two Migrations

If a Muslim was weak, if he was a slave, if he did not have status in society, or if he did not have protection from one of the prominent members of Makkan society, he had to undergo physical torture at the hands of his owner - if he was a slave - or the leaders of his clan - if he was a freeman. Of the said torture, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud was not exempt; to the contrary, he was inflicted with a great deal of physical torture and punishment, but he remained brave and steadfast, refusing to renounce his religion. Thus when the opportunity presented itself, when the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) gave his Companions permission to migrate to Habashah - where there was a just king - 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud migrated, fleeing with his religion from trial and affliction. He (May Allah be pleased with him) later returned, but the situation did not get any better for Muslims in Makkah; infact, it got worse, until finally the way to a more permanent migration was made open for them. And so 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud joined the other Muslims in migrating to Al-Madinah.

His Brother from the Muhajireen, And His Brother from the Ansar

In Makkah, the Messenger of Allah formed a bond of brotherhood between 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud (May Allah be pleased with him) and Az- Zubair bin Al-'Awwam, and in Al-Madinah, between 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud and Sa'd bin Mu'adh (May Allah be pleased with him).

The Day of Badr and the Death of Abu Jahl (The Fir'aun of This Nation)

Perhaps no man dedicated more of his time, energies, and resources to fighting the Messenger of Allah and Islam than Abu Jahl. Earlier, we mentioned that a Kunyah - Abu so-and-so, or Abu such and such (father of...) - could have both a literal and a figurative meaning, the latter being intended for the Kunyah of Abu Jahl. In pre-Islamic times, his Kunyah was actually Abul-Hakam, Hakam being derived from Hikmah, which means wisdom; or from Hukm, which means 'to rule.' So his Kunyah indicated that he was a man who was endowed with much wisdom and a man whose judgments were sound. But after the advent of Islam, he took on a new Kunyah, Abu Jahl, and Jahl meaning ignorance. And until this day, the name that he is known by is Abu Jahl.

In the Makkan period of the Prophet's biography, Abu Jahl lost no opportunity in harming the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Muslims. But his reign of terror came to an end

during the battle of Badr, where he was struck to the ground and made to bleed profusely, barely remaining alive.

It was 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud who came across the dying Makkan chief on the battlefield. 'Abdullah recognized him and placed his leg on his neck. Arrogant till the last, Abu Jahl said, "You are climbing (with your leg) something to difficult (and high) for you, O small shepherd of sheep."

'Abdullah said, "Has Allah humiliated you, O enemy of Allah?"

"And how has He humiliated me? There is no semblance of shame upon a man whose own people have killed him." Then he asked, "To whom does victory belong today?"

Having the last say in the matter, 'Abdullah said, "To Allah and His Messenger," after which he beheaded Abu Jahl and carried his head to the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). The Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) then praised Allah (SWT) for the death of the evil oppressor and staunch enemy of Islam.

Special Privileges in the House of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

'Abdullah bin Masud enjoyed the privileges of entering upon the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) putting on his shoes for him, walking in front of him, providing cover for him when he took a shower, and waking him up when he fell asleep. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said to him:

«إِذْنُكَ عَلَيَّ أَنْ يُرْفَعَ الْحِجَابُ وَأَنْ تَسْتَمَعَ سِوَادِي - سَاوَدْتُ الرَّجُلَ
مُسَاوَدَةً إِذَا سَارَرْتَهُ - حَتَّى أَنْهَاكَ»

"You have permission for the veil to be lifted (for you) and for you to hear my private conversations, until I forbid you." [Muslim: 2169 and Ahmad: 1/404 from Ibn Mas'ud (May Allah be pleased with him)]

The Ranking and Merits of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud

One day, the Messenger of Allah ordered 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud to climb an Arak tree, in order to bring down a Siwak - a stick used to brush and clean one's teeth for him. As 'Abdullah was getting up, his calves became exposed, and seeing the extreme thinness of them, the Prophet's Companions. Began to laugh. The doctor of hearts, minds, and souls said:

«وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ! لَسَاقَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَشَدُّ وَأَعْظَمُ مِنْ أَحَدٍ
وَجَرَاءٍ - جَبَلَانِ»

"By the One who has my soul in His Hand, the two calves of 'Abdullah will be stronger and mightier on the Day of Resurrection than Uhud and Harrah (two well-known mountains)." [Ahmad 1/114 and Al-Majma 9/289.]

And on another occasion, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

«مَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَسْمَعَ الْقُرْآنَ غَضًّا كَمَا أُنْزِلَ فَلْيَسْمَعْهُ مِنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ»

"Whoso ever wants to hear the Qur'an fresh as it was revealed, then let him hear it from Ibn Mas'ud." [Al-Majma 9/287 and Ahmad 1/7]

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) loved to hear 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud recite the Qur'an. He once said: "Recite for me, O 'Abdullah." 'Abdullah said: "I recite to you, and to you it was revealed, O Messenger of Allah?" He said:

«إِنِّي أَحِبُّ أَنْ أَسْمَعَ مِنْ غَيْرِي»

"Indeed, I love to hear it from other than me."

Ibn Mas'ud then began to recite these Verses:

﴿فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا
① يَوْمَئِذٍ يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَعَصَوُوا الرُّسُولَ لَوْ تُسَوَّى بِهِمُ الْآرَضُ وَلَا يَكْتُمُونَ
اللَّهُ حَدِيثًا ②﴾

"How (will it be) then, when we bring from each nation a witness and we bring you (O Muhammad) as a witness against these people? On that day those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Messenger (Muhammad) will wish that they were buried in the earth, but they will never be able to hide a single fact from Allah." [Quran 4:41, 42.]

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) then became overwhelmed by tears, tears that continued to flow from his eyes until he signaled with his hand and said: "Enough for you (i.e., stop reciting for now), enough for you, O Ibn Mas'ud." [Al-Bukhari: 4882]

It is reported that 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud said, "I took 70 Surahs (Chapters) from the mouth of the Messenger of Allah, and none can contend with me about them." [Ahmad 1/379.]

And in a narration reported by Muslim, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud said, "By (Allah), none has the right to be worshipped but Him: There is no Surah (Chapter) in Allah's Book except that I know where it was revealed. And there is no Verse except that I know what it was revealed about. And where I to know about anyone who is more knowledgeable than me concerning Allah's Book and who can be reached by (a journey on) camels, I would have ridden to him." [Al-Bukhari 5002, Muslim 2462 and Ahmad 1/411]

'Abdullah bin Mas'ud's eminence was recognized and appreciated by the Prophet's other Companions: 'Umar testified to his eminence with the words: "Ibn Mas'ud is filled with Fiqh (understanding of the religion). Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari said, "Don't ask me about anything as long as this Habr (authority, scholar) is among you. [Ahmad 1/463 and Al-Bukhari 6737.]

“And Hudhaifah bin Al-Yaman said, "I have not seen anyone who bears a more similar resemblance to the Messenger of Allah in his guidance, his dignified comportment, and his character than Ibn Mas'ud." [Al- Tirmidhi 3857.]

In Kufah

After 'Abdullah participated in the conquering of Ash- Sham (Syria and surrounding regions), the Leader of the Believers, 'Umar' sent him along with 'Ammar bin Yasir to Yemen, assigning the former with the duty of teaching people their religion, and appointed the latter as Amir (leader, governor). The following is the message that 'Umar sent with them: "These two are among the most eminent of Muhammad's Companions, so be guided by their examples. [Al- Hakim 3/388]"

Years later, 'Uthman during his caliphate - appointed Tun Mas'ud as Amir of Kufah, only to later discharge him of his duties and call him back to Al-Madinah.

His Narrations from the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

'Abdullah bin Mas'ud was a prolific narrator of Hadith; he took many of his narrations directly from the Prophet, and others by means of the likes of 'Umar and Sa'd bin Mu'adh. And there are many who narrated from him, the most prominent of whom are the following:

'Abdullah bin 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin 'Amr, 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas, 'Abdullah bin Az-Zubair, Abu Musa, Abu Rafi', Abu Shuraih, Abu Sa'id, Jabir bin 'Abdullah, Anas, and Abu Umamah; and from his family, his two sons 'Abd ur-Rahman and Abu 'Ubaidah; his nephew 'Abdullah bin 'Utbah; and his wife, Zainab Ath-Thaqafiyyah. (May Allah be pleased with him).

His Death

'Abdullah bin Mas'ud died in Al-Madinah, in the year 32 H. Though his exact age at the time of his death is not known, he was between the ages of 63 and 69. One narration indicates that he was buried at Al-Baqi' and that the Leader of the Believers, 'Uthman bin 'Affan' led his funeral prayer. However, another narration indicates that it was Az-Zubair bin Al-'Awwam who led his funeral prayer and that, as per 'Abdullah's instructions, he was buried at night. Because of the nature of these instructions, 'Uthman - it appears - did not know of the burial, and so he later reproached Az-Zubair for not informing him about it.