

The Jurist of Kufa

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Irāq was conquered at the hands of Sayyidunā Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ during the reign of Sayyidunā Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Sayyidunā Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ ordered the building of Kūfa, a city of Irāq, which was completed in 17 A.H. Sayyidunā Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ possessed profound foresight. This was seen at various occasions during the lives of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. During his *khilāfah*, he enhanced and developed the Muslim society at every level. From the household provisions of the Muslims to the governors of the Islāmic lands. Teaching and developing Islāmic sciences was of prime importance to building the Muslim world. Sayyidunā Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ therefore settled the most eloquent Arab tribes around Kufa and sent Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to teach the Qur'ān and *Dīn* to them. Sayyidunā Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said at this time, "I give preference to Abdullāh over myself for you." Approximately one thousand five hundred *ṣahābah* رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ settled in Kufa, seventy of them had participated in Badr. Sayyidunā Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ later moved to Kufa and made it the capital of the Islāmic world during his reign as *khilāfah*.

Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ held a great standing amongst the *ṣahābah* رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ. Many *ahādīth* testify to his close relationship with Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, his grand status and prolific knowledge. Sayyidunā Abū Mūsā رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates, "My brother and I came from Yemen. We stayed for some time and we could not think of Ibn Mas'ūd and his mother except to be part of the household of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ because of their frequent entering and leaving."

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ is reported to have said with regards to the knowledge and understanding of Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, "Indeed I am pleased for my *ummah* with whatever Ibn Umm e 'Abd is pleased with." Another *hadīth* states, "Whoever it pleases to recite the Qur'ān fresh, just as it was revealed, should hear it from Ibn Mas'ūd." Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "Hold onto the way of Ibn Mas'ūd."

Sayyidunā Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ says regarding himself, "By the being besides whom there is no deity, no *sūrah* was revealed except that I know where it was revealed, and no verse was revealed except that I know with regards to what it was revealed. And if I learn of anyone more knowledgeable than I regarding the book of Allāh who could be reached by camel, I would go to him."

It is very rare for a contemporary to acknowledge ones status. This was not the case with Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Abu al Aḥwas says, "We came to Abū Mūsā and we found Abdullāh and Abū Mas'ūd there. They were looking into a copy of the Qur'ān. We spoke a little while and then Abdullāh left. Abū Mas'ūd then said, "No, by Allāh, I do not know of anyone that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ has left that is more knowledgeable of the book of Allāh than this person that has stood up." Among the *ṣahābah* that were *fuqahā'*, there were those who used to bequeath to their students to link themselves to Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, attesting to his vast knowledge. Sayyidunā Mu'adh Ibn Jabal رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ did this before 'Amr bin Maymūn

Those junior to Sayyidunā Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ also attested to his knowledge. Masrūq Ibn al Ajda' رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ - a senior tābi'ī - said, " I found the knowledge of the companions of Muḥammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ encompassed in six of them. Alī, Abdullāh, Umar, Zayd Ibn Thābit, Abū Dardā and Ubayy bin Ka'b. I then found the knowledge of these six encompassed in Alī and Abdullāh."

This Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ as well as the other eminent ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ strove in teaching the people of Kufa from the time it was built until the last part of the *khilāfah* of Uthmān رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ to such an extent that Kufa became filled with *qurrā'* and *fuqahā'* who were *muhaddithīn*. The number of students and companions of Sayyidunā Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ reached four thousand. When Sayyidunā Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ moved to Kufa, he became very happy with the multitudes of *fuqahā'* and said, "May Allāh have mercy on Ibn Umm e Abd. Indeed he has filled this city with knowledge." Regarding the companions of Ibn Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, he said, "The companions of Ibn Mas'ūd are the beacons of this city."

Anas Ibn Sīrīn says, "I came to Kufa and I saw four thousand students of *ḥadīth* and four hundred who had become *fuqahā'*." In which of the Muslim cities besides Kufa do you find such a huge amount of *muhaddithīn* and *fuqahā'*? Affān says, "We came to Kufa and stayed for four months. If we wanted to write a hundred thousand *aḥādīth*, we could have. We did not write except fifty thousand." When Imām Bukhārī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was mentioning the number of times he entered the other cities, he said, "I cannot count the number of times I entered Kufa in search of *ḥadīth*."

There were Copts living in Egypt, Romans in Shām and every type of stranger came to Hijaz, especially after the era of the senior tābi'īn. In addition, there were no linguists who protected the Arabic language from mistakes and foreign expressions. Arabic was put together in Kufa and Basrah. The people of Kufa gave due consideration to gather all the Arabic dialects that were present during the era of *wahī*. This was done to help them understand the hidden meanings of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Similarly, they collected and codified the modes of reciting the Qur'ān. Three of the seven Imāms of Qir'ah are from Kufa, namely Imām 'Āsim رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Imām Hamzah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and Imām Kisā'ī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

Kufa stood as a centre of Islāmic sciences, Qur'ān, *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, language and eloquence. The scholars of each of these sciences reached the highest of stages in knowledge and piety. They laid the foundations in the Islāmic sciences for every generation to this day. May Allāh سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى reward them with the best of rewards in the *ākhirah*. *Āmīn*.

Sources:

- (1) *Fiqhu Ahl il Iraq wa Ḥadīthuhum*, Allāmah Muḥammad Zāhid al Kautharī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, pp.40-52. Al Maktabah Al Azhariyyah lit Turāth, Egypt.
- (2) *Siyar A'lām an Nubalā'*, vol.1 pp. 461-500. Imām Shams ud Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Uthmān adh-Dhahabī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Mu'assassatur Risālah, Beirut.

