

THE **F1RST**S

A Lecture Series

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Abu Bakr - Part III

There Will Never Be Another One

During the first Hajj, Prophet Mohammad ﷺ appointed Abu Bakr as the Amir of Hajj. The next Hajj, the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ performed Hajj and Abu Bakr didn't because his wife, Asmaa, delivered their baby son at the Meeqat (he named him Mohammad).

Abu Bakr accompanied Prophet Mohammad ﷺ on the conquest of Mecca, when he returned from Madina. The last person in his family became Muslim on that day, his father, Abu Kuhafa. He could not walk, was totally grey and was blind when he brought him to the Prophet ﷺ to take the shahada. The Prophet ﷺ said to Abu Bakr that he would have gone to him instead, out of respect for his father's age, but Abu Bakr said it wasn't fitting for the Prophet ﷺ to go to someone. Abu Bakr began to cry when his father took the shahada and when the companions asked him why he was crying, Abu Bakr said he had hoped that the one that would take shahada on that day was Abu Talib instead because that would've made the Prophet ﷺ happier. Once again, in his sincerity, he wanted the Prophet's ﷺ happiness more than his own.

The Prophet ﷺ was keen to always remember and honor 'the firsts', for their support, suffering and sincerity. Abu Bakr's honor surpasses everyone else's, including Omar. The Prophet ﷺ was sitting in the masjid, Abu Bakr walked in holding his garment up from the floor. He looked upset so the Prophet ﷺ, knowing his friend very well, assumed he had been in an argument. He told the Prophet ﷺ that he and Omar got into an argument. He said that he said some things he shouldn't have said, without mentioning anything about Omar's side of the story. He asked Omar for forgiveness but Omar was so upset that he refused to forgive him so he came to ask the Prophet ﷺ to convince Omar to forgive him. The Prophet put his hand on Abu Bakr's shoulder and told him 3 times that Allah has forgiven him. Meanwhile, Omar had gone to Abu Bakr's house to forgive him but didn't find him, so he went to the masjid looking for him.

The Prophet ﷺ locked eyes with Omar and looked visibly extremely upset. Abu Bakr noticed and tried to diffuse his anger by telling the Prophet ﷺ that he is the one that did wrong, and that it was his mistake. The Prophet ﷺ said to Omar "Allah sent me to you and you all said I lied and you denied me, except for Abu Bakr who said I was telling the truth and he supported me with all of himself and his wealth, he gave me his all (same way he had described Khadija)." He put his hand on Abu Bakr and said "will you all leave my friend alone?" 2 times. He was pointing out that while Abu Bakr had no reluctance in believing in him, Omar was reluctant to forgive Abu Bakr, and he shouldn't have been

reluctant because of the way Abu Bakr believed in the Prophet ﷺ. No one dared mess with Abu Bakr after that moment. He had a very special status with the Prophet ﷺ.

Loved & Honored by the Messenger ﷺ

“We repaid every single person who did a favor for us, except for Abu Bakr, who I can never pay back, and only Allah will reward him on the Day of Judgement.”

“No one’s wealth benefitted me like Abu Bakr’s did. If I was to take a special, exclusive friend, he would’ve been Abu Bakr, but Allah already took me as a special best friend.”

Chosen Leader

When the messenger ﷺ was starting to become ill, before anyone noticed, he ﷺ stood up in the masjid and said “Allah has given a choice to one of his servants between that which is in this world and that which is in the Hereafter, and that servant chose that which is with Allah.” Abu Bakr started to weep, and said “may our mothers and fathers be sacrificed for you”. No one understood what the Prophet ﷺ meant and why Abu Bakr was crying, but they all started crying because of Abu Bakr’s crying. The Prophet ﷺ continued, “the person who has favored me most with himself and his wealth is Abu Bakr.” He ﷺ pointed to all the gates of the masjid and said “all of these doors should be closed, except for the door of Abu Bakr [where he entered the masjid], because no matter what I do, I cannot repay him for everything he has done for me.” As the Prophet’s health ﷺ began to deteriorate, he directed that Abu Bakr lead prayers. Abu Bakr’s voice was low and he got very emotional when he led prayer. Aisha and Hafsa suggested to the Prophet ﷺ that Omar lead instead because he had a stronger voice, and didn’t get soft and emotional. But the Prophet ﷺ insisted on his choice of Abu Bakr. When he once heard Omar leading prayer, he sat up in his bed and said, “Where is Abu Bakr ? Allah and his Messenger ﷺ refuse anyone to lead except for Abu Bakr.” After leading prayers instead of the ill Prophet Mohammad ﷺ for 3-1/2 days, the Prophet ﷺ came out to lead, wrapped up in one garment, barely able to stand on his own. He sat next to Abu Bakr and prayed. It is not clear if he ﷺ led or prayed behind Abu Bakr. Most likely the Prophet ﷺ led and Abu Bakr led the people, because the Prophet’s voice ﷺ was too weak at that point, to be heard.

Farewell to a Best Friend

Upon hearing of the death of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, Abu Bakr walked past everyone in the masjid, where there was panic, and didn't talk to anyone. Aisha narrates, "he came in, knelt down, unveiled the face of the Prophet ﷺ, put his head on him and started to weep. He kissed the Prophet's ﷺ forehead, whose face was shining with light and said "how pure are you, Messenger of Allah ﷺ when you are alive and when you are dead, Allah will not combine for you 2 deaths, as for the death Allah has written for you, never again will you suffer another death."

He walked out to the masjid, Omar was extremely upset and said the Prophet ﷺ would come back, and he could not accept his death. Abu Bakr gathered the people and said "Mohammad is only a messenger, whoever worshipped Mohammad, know that he is dead and whoever worshiped Allah, know that He is alive and does not die." Anas mentions that when Abu Bakr spoke like that, the people knew how close he was with the Prophet ﷺ and that he didn't say it in a dismissive way, his words weighed a lot with the people. He was able to give clarity to people at a very difficult time when they needed it the most, even though he was in so much grief himself.

The First Caliph

He never became arrogant in knowing how special he was to the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ. He had a constant pursuit to do better at all times. This showed when he became the Caliph. He was always humble, saying "O people, I've been placed in charge of you but I am not the best of you, so if I do good support me and if I do bad, straighten me out". He set a clear tone asking for support of the people but wanted to make sure they let him know if he misused his authority. "Truthfulness is a trust...follow me as long as I follow Allah and His Messenger". The greatest quality of leadership is integrity and lack of corruption. The Prophet ﷺ said that one of the signs of the Day of Judgement is that trust is lost, and the righteous leaders pass away.

Abu Bakr was the first person to assume leadership of the umma (Muslim community), and his tone of humility and integrity won over people and he was able to govern properly. He was the only one not assassinated. He was transparent and sincere to Allah, the Prophet ﷺ and the people he governed.

The way he led taught Omar how to be a successful leader, with a balanced mind. The Prophet had appointed 17 year old, Osama ibn Zayd (son of a freed slave), to be in charge of the Muslim army. Some of the elders didn't like that. After the Prophet's passing ﷺ, some

companions asked Omar to suggest to Abu Bakr to replace Osama with someone older with more experience. When Omar brought it up to Abu Bakr, regardless of his much smaller physique, he grabbed Omar's beard, looked him sternly in the eye and said " may your mother lose you O Omar, (an expression commonly used by arabs to show shock and displeasure) do you want me to disobey the Prophet Mohammad's ﷺ orders ?" Omar was embarrassed and apologized, walked out and told the companions waiting outside, "may all your mothers lose you, you made me upset Abu Bakr and I hate to upset him". He knew that Abu Bakr was right and always put the sunnah first.

The Prophet had described a dream. He ﷺ saw a well and he drew from it and then gave the vessel to Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr drew from the well but not very much, then gave it to Omar, who gave water to everyone and everything around. Although he didn't have amazing accomplishments as Omar later did, but in his 2 ½ years of leadership, Abu Bakr was able to set the vision of the Prophet ﷺ as the trajectory and hold things together. Omar was able to execute based on what he learned from the Prophet ﷺ and from Abu Bakr. He made sure Islam, post Prophet Mohammad's life stayed on track.

He took a bath and became sick with a high fever for 2 weeks. He asked Aisha to find out how much wealth he had and to compare his wealth now with before his caliphate. He asked her to giveaway any increase from the time he became a Caliph and not include it in his estate after his death. She only found a few dirhams extra. He then asked her how old the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ was when he died, she said 63, he said "alhamdulillah, I am 63". He then asked her which cloths were used to wrap him ? She said 3 pieces from Yemen. He asked her to buy one because he already had 2. She asked him why not buy all 3 to have all new ones instead. He replied that the new clothes would be more beneficial to those who are living than one who has died, "I don't need new cloths, they are meant only to absorb the blood of the dead body and cover its awra (private parts)", and insisted she only purchase one.

He took his cloths, laid down, and asked Aisha what day the Prophet ﷺ died. She said, Monday, He replied, "insha Allah [God Willing] today". He wanted to die the same day of the week, same age, and with the same number of cloths as the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ. He shivered because of his fever and reminded Aisha about her dream of the 3 moons descending in her room. He had told her that it meant that three righteous people would die and be buried in her room, Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, and Abu Bakr were 2 of those . He died reciting and repeating the words of Yusuf (Joseph) " Allow me to die as a believer and follow in the path of the righteous." Aisha witnessed his death, and said those were his last words. He took his last breath between Maghrib and Isha.

Abu Bakr was buried just next to the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ with the top of his head at the Prophet's ﷺ shoulder, side by side as they were in life.

Usad ibn Safwan relayed, the day Abu Bakr died, people wept as much as the day the Prophet ﷺ died. Ali spoke at the funeral and mentioned virtues of Abu Bakr, “May Allah have mercy on you, O Abu Bakr, you were the first of the people to become muslim, the most sincere of them in faith and the strongest of them in certainty. You were to the Prophet ﷺ what hearing and sight are to people. You believed in him when everyone else called him a liar and so Allah named you, in his revelation, the most truthful. And you supported him when others deserted him and you remained firm by his side when others left him and you were there with your companionship in the most noble of ways, and his companion in the cave, and the one on whom Allah transcended tranquility. You were the softest of them in voice, but the highest in them in distinguishment. You were to the believers like a merciful father when they suddenly became orphans [after the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ passed away]. You have surpassed everyone by a distance that no one else can ever reach.

It was narrated that Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said the sun has never risen or set on anyone, after the prophets, that is better than Abu Bakr. His status is sanctified as the first, after the prophets.

Abu Huraira relayed that when Prophet Mohammad ﷺ told Abu Bakr about his Night Journey, “Jibreel showed me the gate of Jannah [Paradise] which my followers would enter from, Abu Bakr told him “I wish I could've been with you to see it. The Prophet ﷺ said “you will be the first who will enter Paradise from my nation through that gate.

Lessons Learned

Even if we can't surpass Abu Bakr in rank, he was an amazing example for us to follow.

- Just as Prophet Mohammad ﷺ always remembered and gave respect to ‘the firsts’, we should always do the same for those who came before us and paved the way for us. To ignore them and their struggles is to be arrogant and ungrateful, two very harmful traits.
- He was able to stay clear and calm in the midst of the most challenging times
- He stayed humble and focused on furthering the cause of Islam
- He was a sincere, loyal friend who always favored his friend over himself
- He led the Muslim nation in its infancy with the humility and gentleness that it needed to stay together
- His softness in tone and heart was loved by the Prophet over strength and power.

- Even though he loved the Prophet more than himself, that love was still within the boundaries of loving him as the servant and Messenger of Allah, and not turning him into a superstar and worshipping him instead of His Creator. This is important in our culture of loving people we don't even know personally, for all the wrong reasons.

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