

# THE **F1RST**S

A Lecture Series

**YAQREEN**<sup>™</sup>  
INSTITUTE FOR ISLAMIC RESEARCH

# Abu Bakr

## Second To None in the Pursuit of Good

He was the ultimate ‘first’, quick to believe, quick to do good, never hesitant to follow the Prophet ﷺ and had a natural instinct toward good.

### Noble Character

He was from the tribe of Banu Tame, not one of the larger tribes, it was a small sub-tribe of Quraysh with a good reputation.

His actual name was Abdullah Ibn Othman. His mother’s name was Salma bin Sakr (Um Khair - mother of good). He had many nicknames, and one of them was Abu Bakr (father of a young camel), because of his special interest in raising camels. ‘Ateeq’ (the one who is freed) was another nickname by his mother, since he was born after many miscarriages and she considered him freed when he was born, so even his birth was very special. Even after Islam, the Prophet ﷺ frequently used ‘Ateeq’ to refer to him.

He was born about two and a half years after the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ (around 572). He loved poetry but had an aversion to poetry that contained polytheism. He knew a lot about ancestry and the tribes, had an incredible memory, was extremely eloquent and sharp in intelligence. He was very honest and people liked doing business with him in the marketplace (he traded in textiles).

Idol worship was silly, according to his natural disposition. His father took him to the kaaba at an early age to worship the idols. After talking to the idols and finding that they didn’t benefit him or do anything, he never practiced idol worship.

### Best Friend

He grew up going to Damascus and Yemen because he was a merchant. He knew of his best friend, Mohammad’s ﷺ uniqueness, that was prophesied about by Bahira, the monk in Damascus, when he first met the Prophet ﷺ.

He spent a lot of time with the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, believed in him right away when he told him about revelation, and was the first man to accept Islam. His immediate response to the Prophet ﷺ when he ﷺ told him about the revelation was, “I believe you”. He resembled the Prophet ﷺ most in his character. The Prophet ﷺ, would later say that,

outside of his immediated household, Abu Bakr was the first to accept Islam right away, without any hesitation or doubt, and he loved him very much. They were childhood friends for 38 years. Aisha said the Prophet ﷺ visited Abu Bakr every day.

## Freer of Slaves

Abu Bakr is known as the emancipator of slaves, the most famous was Bilal, at a time in history when no one was doing so. Omar would later call Bilal, 'our master who was freed by our master'. Men and women slaves, who were being tortured for becoming Muslim were freed by Abu Bakr, regardless of their status or benefit their freedom would bring. He freed Lubayna, a slave girl of Omar before he became Muslim. Omar beat her endlessly for becoming Muslim and would only stop when he was tired. When his father asked him why he was freeing weak slaves, he replied that he was seeking by releasing them what is with Allah. Sura Al Layl was revealed after that reply by Abu Bakr. "no one can compensate him for what he is doing except for that which is with Allah and Allah will certainly please him".

He spent the majority of his wealth on the freeing of slaves without hesitation. The Prophet ﷺ would say that "no money had ever benefited me more than the money that was spent by Abu Bakr". Abu Bakr cried when he heard the Messenger ﷺ say that and replied, "am I and my money for anything except you?" His hand was very generous and he was honored for that by the Prophet ﷺ.

## Community Builder

He was integral in building the community of Islam with the Prophet ﷺ, and he brought many people into Islam, including 6 that are all promised Paradise (Othman, Talha, Zubair, Abdul Rahman Ibn Owf, Abu Obaida Al Jarah, Saad Ibn Abi Wakkas). All the good deeds of these 6 people will go to his scale as well. He brought in some of the most important people into Islam and went to meetings with different tribes with the Prophet ﷺ.

He was tortured with Talha in private because of their nobility in the tribe of Tame (by Naufel, Khadija's brother - known as the Lion of Quraysh and the Devil of Quraysh, because of his evilness to Muslims). Abu Bakr and Talha were tied together with the same rope and beaten by Naufel, and would later come to be named 'the two tied ones', because of this.

Abu Bakr supported the Prophet Mohammed ﷺ before anyone. When the Messenger ﷺ asked him not to fight back when provoked, he fought back only verbally, "Will you really kill a man because he says his lord is Allah?" He was attacked violently for this comment and lost consciousness. His face was unrecognizable because of the beating he received for standing for the Prophet ﷺ. The few hairs on his face were drenched in

blood. His mother was treating him and as he woke up, he asked for the Prophet, without even thinking of himself first. They carried him to the Prophet, and they embraced for a long time. Ali relayed the story as he wept and added : “I swear by Allah that Abu Bakr is greater than the man from the family of the Pharoah because that man concealed his faith while Abu Bakr revealed his faith proudly as he defended the Messenger with his words. One moment in the life of Abu Bakr is superior to a thousand from the family of Pharoah.” He was totally selfless as a follower of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ .

## Travel Companion

When the hijrah was granted by Allah, the Prophet visited Abu Bakr, who was anxiously ready to serve. He ﷺ spoke to him privately and told him about the command to make hijra. He immediately asked “my companionship, O Messenger of Allah ?” When the Messenger ﷺ replied, yes. He started to yell out and cry in happiness and joy. Aisha relayed she never knew that someone could cry out of joy until she saw her father at that moment.

Abu Bakr appointed Asma (older daughter ) and Abdullah, his son, to help them in the hijra and the freed slave Amir ibn Fuhayra, who was known as a guide, would accompany them. Abu Bakr would often switch spots during the hijra, circling the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ to protect him from any incoming harm. He was very protective of the Messenger ﷺ. When they arrived at Cave Thawr, a very small cave right outside of Mecca, they hid inside from the Quraysh. When the Prophet ﷺ fell asleep, Abu Bakr saw a scorpion coming in so he put his foot on the hole and let the scorpion pierce away at his foot to protect the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ woke up, hearing the sound of his tears of pain. He would do anything and sacrifice everything to protect his beloved friend.

Later, when the Quraysh approached, Allah put a bird’s nest and a spider web, which indicated to the Quraysh that no one could be inside the small cave. As Abu Bakr shook in fear at the sight of their feet at the cave, the Prophet ﷺ said to him “O Abu Bakr , what do you say of 2 people and God is the third ? - don’t worry, Allah is with us.” Allah refers to this in the Quran, “when the two were in the cave, one of them said to his companion, don’t worry, Allah is with us, so Allah revealed His tranquility upon him (referring to Abu Bakr).”They got out of the cave and would later make it to Medina.

Along the way, they came upon the house of Um Maabad, thirsty and hungry. She gives a long description of the Prophet ﷺ, and said she never saw a man like him. She said she only had one goat, but it didn’t produce milk. The Prophet ﷺ said “in the name of Allah”, rubbed its udders and it began to give milk. He first offered a cup of the milk to Abu Bakr,

who refused to drink until after the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم drank first 3 times. “I looked at him and he drank until I was full”. That’s how much he was connected to him and truly loved him.

## Lessons Learned

- Abu Bakr shared many of the same character traits of the Prophet Mohammad صلى الله عليه وسلم, as close friends naturally affect each other.
- He was the most devoted, loyal and fiercely protective best friend to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم
- His legacy as the freer of slaves, who others viewed as worthless, was a novelty during that period in history, and is a testament to his high moral character and sense of doing the right thing.
- He will be rewarded, God willing, not only for his good works but for the good works of the many that he helped become Muslim, modeling that it is just as important to impact others to do good as it is to do good ourselves.

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