

4 Rightly Guided Caliphs

Caliph Abu Bakr (ra)

Why was the relationship between the Prophet and Abu Bakr special?

Among the various friends of the prophet (s.a.w) there have been some who were so close to him that their names are forever mentioned in the history of Islam. One of these names is Abu Bakr (ra). The following paragraphs will elaborate on his life and the relationship between the prophet and himself.

Abu Bakr was from a simple family of the Quraish people. He was two years and three months younger than the holy prophet (s.a.w). He had a common ancestor with the prophet in Murra. He received no formal education but he was known for his experience and high level of intellect and wisdom. Both the prophet and himself were friends from childhood and they were both traders. After the Prophet married Khadijah they lived in the same neighbourhood in Mecca and often met each other. When the Prophet proclaimed Islam, Abu Bakr was the first one to have recognised this as the truth and became the first adult male to become Muslim and declare it openly. It was due to Abu Bakr's persuasion that many of his friends became Muslim such as Uthman bin Affan, Talha, Zubayr, Abdur Rahman bin A'waf, Saad bin Abi Waqqas and Abu Ubaidah bin Jarrah. Abu Bakr gave all of his wealth for the cause of Islam and bought the freedom of many slaves in Mecca who had become Muslim. An example can be Bilal. When the prophet spread Islam the Muslims were persecuted.

Abu Bakr also suffered persecution in Mecca along with the Prophet and other Muslims. The prophet gave him the title of the Testifier of the Truth (as Siddiq) due to his immediate belief in the Night Journey known as Isra wal Mi'raj. The Prophet and Abu Bakr migrated (made Hijrah) to Madina together. Allah mentioned this event in the Qur'an saying "when the unbelievers drove them out, they two were in the cave ...". This verse is an indication of the importance of Abu Bakr though not mentioned by name in the verse. In order to consolidate that relationship Abu Bakr wanted the prophet to get married to his daughter. Then the Prophet married Aisha. Another event showing how Abu Bakr was esteemed by the prophet was when he was asked by the Prophet to lead the first Hajj. The prophet didn't take part but the delegation was under the control of Abu Bakr. When the prophet was in his last months, he allowed Abu Bakr the leadership of swalaat. When the Prophet was ill he said that "I have paid back everyone's debts, but my debt to Abu Bakr will be paid by Allah on Day of Judgement".

Describe how Abu Bakr was elected as Caliph.

After the death of the prophet there was no one as leader to take over the khilafat. The prophet did not nominate a successor and there was confusion. The situation was chaotic and Abu Bakr had to calm people down after Prophet died saying that "if you worship Muhammad know that he is dead. If you worship Allah, know He will never die...". At this the situation changed for the best and the Ansar gathered to discuss the appointment of a successor. There were some prominent companions like Abu Bakr, Umar, and Abu Ubaidah bin Jarrah. The Ansar wanted a Caliph from amongst them and the Muhajiroun wanted one from them. As it was the custom, Abu Bakr said that the Arabs would like an "Amir" from the Quraish. The Ansar suggested one from each group, but this will create problems with 2 leaders at the same place and time. Umar objected as this would create confusion. Abu Ubaidah said "O Ansar, you were the first to uphold Islam. Do not be the first also to sow the seed of dissention in it". The Ansar agreed remembering that the Prophet was a Quraish from the noble tribe of the Quraish and from Banu Hashim.

As such, Abu Bakr proposed the names of Umar and Abu Ubaidah to be considered as future caliph. However, in the presence of Abu Bakr, no one present at that time wanted to become the caliph instead of the friend of the prophet. There were many reasons for that hesitation. Among these reasons we can say that Abu Bakr held unusual honour of being the one who migrated with the Prophet, he was also asked by the

Prophet to lead the prayers when he was ill and he was the best friend of the prophet. As such, Umar held the hand of Abu Bakr reminding everyone that he was mentioned in the Qur'an as being the second in the cave of Thawr and the one having the title of As Swadiq. The companions remembered the Prophet saying 'I have paid back everyone's debts, but my debt to Abu Bakr will be paid by Allah on Day of Judgement'. That was enough as convincing points for Abu Bakr to be accepted by the public. Umar took his hand and the oath of loyalty to Abu Bakr and all those present followed the footsteps of Umar. The next day others pledged their loyalty in the mosque of Medina.

The first caliph thus delivered his unforgettable speech and said that "I have been elected as your Ameer, although I am not better than you. Help me, if I am in the right; set me right if I am in the wrong; obey me as long as I obey Allah and His prophet; when I disobey Him and His prophet, then obey me not". That was the opening speech of Abu Bakr. It is a sign of the continuity of the democratic society set by the prophet and a society based on the words of Allah and His prophet. Abu Bakr didn't want to become caliph but as the Islamic state is a system based on democracy, he was thus chosen by the prominent companions present there and by the public as the one most suitable to continue the work of the last prophet of Islam.

What were the main achievements of Abu Bakr?

Once at the head of the state, he dedicated his time for the smooth running of the society. **Firstly**, he created and founded a truly democratic state where each of his people was authorised to have their say in the society. They had the liberty to choose their own leader and at the same time there was freedom of speech and religion.

Next, he created and reinforced the Majlis Shura for a better consultation with his companions. He increased the number of the members of the Majlis from 7 to 11. In this way, he would have a better control and individual as well as group opinions.

In addition, in order to have a better control over his state, he divided Arabia into provinces – each one with officers to work. They would then meet during the month of Hajj in order to discuss the problems or / and achievements of the respective provinces.

Fourthly, he established Military cantonments and a reserve force for his army and for better security. His security would extend to all members of his Ummah under his flag. He conquered and reinforced different countries like Bahrain, Oman, Mahrah, Yemen, Hadramuth, eastern and western Iraq, Hira, Damascus, Syria, Basrah and Ajnadein.

Moreover, many tribes converted to Islam due to the way his armies would deal with them. That was because of the advice of the caliph. Before setting his armies to different missions and countries he would always advise them not to raise arms against women, children, old persons, priests and even on trees.

In addition, he observed the Rights of both Muslims and non-Muslims ensuring freedom and security for all his people. All those living in the Islamic state were subjected to have the same rights and have the liberty to complain. He was kind with all his fellowmen and also with the unbelievers.

More to the point, he was the first one to undertake the work of Preservation of the Qur'an for the benefit of his Ummah especially for future generations. As such he appointed Zaid bin Thabit who was a hafiz of the Qur'an to collect all Qur'anic verses in circulation from all those who had in their possessions at least one verse.

Eighthly, he emphasized much on the idea and concept of morality and self-respect among his people. His society was known for the high degree of morality and spirituality. It was the period of the blessed Ashab and then the Tabi'in.

However, there had been some problems that were dealt by Abu Bakr and that could be considered as among his achievements. Before the death of the prophet (s.a.w), the latter had assigned Usamah bin Zaid for an expedition to Syria. The army had not the time to leave Madina when the prophet (s.a.w) passed away. Now, many people thought that it would be better not to send any army outside Madina for its security. Some proposed to assign a more experienced commander for the expedition due to his young age and being the son of a slave. However, Abu Bakr adhered by the decision of the prophet (s.a.w). Later after several months, Usamah returned victoriously.

A second important fact is that after the death of the prophet (s.a.w) many persons rose and pretended to be prophets. Among them there was *Aswad Ansi* from the tribe of Ansi in Yemen. He was known as the Veiled Prophet for his ugliness. Another one was *Tulaiha* from north Arabia who claimed prophethood during the time of the prophet (s.a.w). He was known as the Liar. When Khalid bin Walid attacked him at Buzaka, he fled to Syria. When Syria was conquered by the Muslims, he converted to Islam. Another false prophet was Musailima / Musailama – belonging to Banu Hanifa tribe. He wanted to imitate the prophet and reduced the number of namaz, he abolished zakaat and sawm. He Legalised drinking and adultery and composed sentences and pretended them to be Wahy. He was known as *Musailima* the Liar. He was killed by Khalid bin Walid. A false prophetess rose in the name of *Sajjah* – a Christian woman belonging to Tamim Tribe. She got married to Musailima to reinforce their army. When Iraq was conquered, she converted to Islam.

A third problem was the refusal to pay Zakaat by some tribes such as Banu Asad, Banu Ghatafan, Banu Abbas, Banu Murrah. The caliph despatched an army of eleven battalions to face and crush all problems. In less than one year there was calm and security in the Islamic dominion.

Abu Bakr would never allow anyone to go against the Ummah or the Islamic Law. He would instead make it a must that the Law of Allah and His prophet would be established and enforced. At the same time he would respect the rights of all individuals muslims and non muslims.