

## **Khalifa Abu Bakr - Death of Abu Bakr**

### ***Appointment of Umar as his Successor***

Nomination of successor. Realizing that his end was drawing near, Abu Bakr felt that he should nominate his successor so that the issue should not be a cause of dissension among the Muslims after his death. Abu Bakr summoned Abdul Rahman bin Auf, and asked for his opinion about the nomination of Umar as the Caliph, Abdul Rahman favored the nomination. Some other companions were also consulted. The general consensus was that Umar was the fittest person to be appointed as the Caliph. Usaid bin Hudai said, "After you, O Caliph, Umar is the most deserving person for the office of the Caliph. There is none more resolute than he among us. His inner self is better than his exterior." Usman favored the nomination and remarked, "What is hidden of Umar is better than what outwardly appears; there is not his equal amongst us." Sayeed bin Zaid supported the proposal emphatically.

The general consensus. The general consensus was that Umar was the fittest person to be nominated as the Caliph. There was, however, an under current of feeling that Umar had the fiery and irascible temper, and he might not be able to show moderation so necessary for the head of the community. Abu Bakr observed that Umar's display of severity was meant to counteract his (Abu Bakr's) leniency. Abu Bakr felt that when the full responsibility of government was devolved upon Umar, he would become moderate in his opinion. Abu Bakr said: "I can say from my personal experience that Umar has always cooled me down whenever I have lost my temper with any one, just as whenever he felt me to be too lenient he counseled greater severity. For this reason I feel certain that with time, Umar will achieve the moderation that you desire."

Objection of Talha. Talha who was related to Abu Bakr, and perhaps coveted the caliphate for himself objected to the nomination of Umar. He said: "O successor of the Prophet, you knew full well how harsh Umar has been towards us all during your regime, and God only knows what he will meet to us when you are gone. You know that you are leaving us forever, and yet you are content to leave us in the hands of a man whose fierce and ungovernable rages are well known to you. Think O Chief, what answer will you give to Your Lord for such a behest?"

At this objection of Talha, Abu Bakr who was lying prostrate on his bed rose up with considerable effort and addressing Talha said: "Have you come to frighten me? I swear that when I meet my Lord, I will gladly tell Him that I appointed as ruler over His people, the man who was the best of them all."

Ali. Thereupon Ali who was present on the occasion rose to say that he would acknowledge no one as Caliph save Umar. Abu Bakr was much impressed with the integrity of Ali for not pressing his own claim, and putting the interests, of the community above his personal interests. Turning to Ali, Abu Bakr said: "Ali, you are indeed a prince in the most exalted sense of the word, for others are mere men."

Umar. Then Abu Bakr sent for Umar, and informed him that he had nominated him as his successor. Umar said that he did not covet the office. Thereupon Abu Bakr said, "But the office needs you. I have prayed to God to direct me rightly to the choice of my successor, and my choice is fundamental for the unity and of the Muslims."

The testament. Umar acquiesced, and Abu Bakr dictated the testament to Usman in the following terms: "In the name of Most Merciful God. This is the last will and testament of Abu Bakr bin Abu Qahafa, when he is in the last hour of the world, and the first of the next; an hour in which the infidel must believe, the wicked be convinced of their evil ways, I nominate Umar bin al Khattab as my successor. Therefore, hear to him and obey him. If he acts right, confirm his actions. My intentions are good, but I cannot see the future results. However, those who do ill shall render themselves liable to severe account hereafter. Fare

you well. May you be ever attended by the Divine favor of blessing."

Approval of the people. The testament having been drawn up, Abu Bakr supported by his wife Asma walked up to the door and addressed the people who had collected there. He told them that he had appointed Umar as his successor. They said, "We approve". After obtaining the approval of the people in general terms, Abu Bakr lay on the bed, and prayed to God: "O Lord! I have made this testament for the welfare of the community in order to counteract discord among them. What my intentions are, You know full well. I have spared no pains in making the best selection, O God, I entrust the Muslims to Your care. O Allah, keep their ruler on the right path. O God, make my successor the most pious of rulers, and confer peace on the Muslims."

Counsel to Umar. Addressing his successor, Umar, Abu Bakr said: "Let not sorrow for me divert you from the service of the Lord. You saw what I myself did when the Prophet died, and there could be no greater sorrow for mankind than that. Truly, if grief had stayed me then from girding my loins in the cause of the Lord and of His Prophet, and if, I swear by Allah, I had shown the slightest weakness in carrying out the command of Allah on that day. He would have punished us by bringing on us destruction. I expect you to do your duty against all odds. May God bless you."

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*Source : Alim.org-Khalifa Abu Bakr History*