Khalifa Abu Bakr - Abu Bakr, The Man

Abu Bakr, The Man

Personal description. According to Waqidi, Abu Bakr in personal appearance was a man having a fair color and a slender body. His waist was slightly bent so that the cloth that he wore round it often slipped down. He had a thin face with deeply set eyes and broad forehead. He had no flesh on his finger joints. His height was in proportion to his body. He had curled hair. His voice was sweet. He dyed his beard. Indeed he had the look of a patriarch.

Virtues of Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr was a paragon of virtues. According to a tradition the Holy Prophet addressing his companions one day asked who out of them had attended a funeral; who had paid alms; who had visited a sick person; who had visited a graveyard; and who had kept a fast. Abu Bakr alone answered to all these requirements. The Holy Prophet said that if all the virtues were catalogued these would be three hundred and sixty in number. The Holy Prophet was pleased to observe that Abu Bakr possessed all these three hundred and sixty virtues.

Siddiq. The Holy Prophet conferred on Abu Bakr the honorific title of Siddiq. There may not be much in a name, but there is much in a surname. If we were to sum the qualities of Abu Bakr in one word, that word would be Siddiq. The word Siddiq may be rendered as “truthful, faithful and veracious”. Abu Bakr was truthful. He always spoke the truth. He was a man of strong views. His faith had the strength of rocks. He was a man of iron resolution and when once he formed an opinion, no body could influence him. He was a man of great devotion and dedication. He was a man of great and deep insight and extraordinary judgment. He had a highly developed faculty of perceiving the truth and arriving at unerring judgment. When the Holy Prophet declared his mission, Abu Bakr accepted the call without any hesitation, reluctance or argument. That was because Abu Bakr could perceive where the truth lay. When the Holy Prophet declared that the previous night he had ascended the Heaven, Abu Bakr forthwith believed in such ascension.

Intelligence of Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr was highly intelligent. When men like Umar felt unhappy over the terms of the Hudaibiya Pact, Abu Bakr felt that the Pact was in fact in the interests of the Muslims. When on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage the Holy Prophet declared that God had perfected the religion for them that day and other persons felt happy, Abu Bakr felt sorry for this implied that having completed his mission the Holy Prophet was about to pass away. When during his illness the Holy Prophet declared that God had given his servant the choice between immortality or a return to Him, and he had accepted the latter course, Abu Bakr wept for this implied that the Holy Prophet was not going to survive his illness.

Memory of Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr blessed was with extraordinary memory. He had but to listen to any verses once, and he could thereafter repeat them accurately. He memorized the Holy Quran. He was most eloquent. His addresses were always characterized by deep thinking which impressed the listeners. He could quote the traditions with authority.

Judgment and scholarship of Abu Bakr. About the judgment and scholarship of Abu Bakr, Shah Wali Ullah of Delhi has made the following observations: "He was just like other scholars among the Companions in his knowledge of the Quran and the Sunnah. In what he excelled others was that whenever he was faced with a difficult problem, he would exercise his judgment and deeply ponder over it. The Almighty would cast a ray of enlightenment on his heart and would reveal to him the truth. As the manifestation of this enlightenment was connected with the excellence of the heart it impressed itself in the form of determination and not a mere idea".

Steadfastness of Abu Bakr. Because of his inner insight and conviction, Abu Bakr was always steadfast in
his actions. When the Holy Prophet died and the people would not believe that he was dead, Abu Bakr
made them realize the grim reality, and advised them to be steadfast. When some of the tribes offered to
remain Muslims provided they were exempted from the payment of Zakat, and the Companions around
him advised him to accept the offer, he remained steadfast and refused to compromise. When Usama's
army was to be sent to Syria, many persons advised that it was not the proper time to send the expedition.
He remained steadfast in the decision, and decided that the expedition to Syria would be undertaken,
whatever the consequences.

Courage of Abu Bakr. Because of his faith and resolution he was very courageous. It is stated that once
Ali asked his companions as to whom they considered to be the bravest person. They said that he (Ali)
was such a person. Ali said, "No, Abu Bakr was the bravest. On the day of the battle of Badr, when no one
was forthcoming to stand guard at the pavilion where the Holy Prophet prayed, Abu Bakr stood with his
sword and did not allow the enemy to come near the site."

Abu Bakr's love for Islam. Abu Bakr's love for Islam was of great depth. Islam in fact became the end all
and be all of his existence. In the battle of Badr, Abdul Rahman a son of Abu Bakr who had by that time
not accepted Islam fought on the side of the Quraish. When Abdul Rahman became a Muslim he told his
father that on the day of the battle of Badr, he had on several occasions come within a striking distance,
but he went the other way. Abu Bakr said that if he had such an opportunity, he would not have spared
him. Abu Bakr was a loving father, but when his son Abdullah in his love for his wife Atika neglected his
prayers and did not participate in some expeditions, Abu Bakr took him to task and asked him to divorce
his wife.

Generosity of Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr was very generous. When he became a Muslim he had an amount of
40,000 dirhams. The entire amount was spent by him in the cause of Islam. He paid for the liberation of
slaves. He financed the journey of the Holy Prophet from Makkah to Madina on the occasion of emigration.
He paid for the land acquired for the construction of the Prophet's mosque at Madina. When the Holy
Prophet invited contributions for financing the Tabuk expedition, Abu Bakr contributed all his assets for the
purpose, and when the Holy Prophet inquired as to what he had kept for himself and his dependents he
said that for himself and his dependents he had left Allah and His Prophet.

Selflessness of Abu Bakr. He was an embodiment of selflessness. When he became the Caliph he was
paid a meager allowance from the treasury. On his deathbed he sold a plot of his land and repaid the
entire amount to the treasury. He lived a simple unostentatious life. One of his wives once expressed the
wish to have a sweet dish. Abu Bakr deposited the amount in the public treasury and had his allowance
reduced to the extent of the saving made by his wife, on the ground that such amount was surplus to his
genuine needs.

Humility of Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr was very humble. When he would see a bird he would sigh that he were
like such a bird. He would often say that he would prefer to be a hair on the body of a Muslim. When he
went to perform the 'Hajj', and some people walked in his train, he asked them not to follow him, but to go
their own way. Before becoming the Caliph he used to milk the goats in the neighborhood. After becoming
the Caliph when Abu Bakr passed the street, one of the women said that as he had become the Caliph he
would no longer milk the goats for them. Abu Bakr heard these remarks and said that the caliphate made
no difference to him, and that he would continue to milk their goats. If any one praised him, he would say,
"O Allah, You know me more than myself, and I know myself more than these people who praise me.
Make me better than what they think of me, and forgive those sins of mine of which they have no
knowledge, and do not hold me responsible for what they say."

His avoidance of obligation to others. He took particular care to avoid obligation to others. He would do all
the work for himself with his own hands and would not allow other people to oblige him. Even if he
happened to drop the reins of the camel from his hands he would alight from the camel, and pick up the
reins himself, instead of asking some one else to help him. Once the people around him asked why he did
not let other persons do the petty jobs for him. He said, "My beloved Prophet has ordered me not to seek
the obligation of any human being, for I want to remain obliged to God alone."
His regard for the poor. Abu Bakr looked after the wants of all the poor people. During the winter he would distribute clothes and blankets among the poor. There is story that in an out of the way street in Madina there was a blind old woman. Umar would go to her house every morning, but he always found that someone else had anticipated his visit and supplied all the wants of the old lady. One day Umar went to the house of the lady earlier than usual and found that the man who visited the old lady every morning was none other than Abu Bakr.

Greatness of Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr lived a devoted and dedicated life and he was particular to follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet. Love for the Holy Prophet was a passion with him. The Holy Prophet was pleased to acknowledge that while he had been able to repay all the obligations that he owned to others, he had not been able to repay the obligations that he owed to Abu Bakr. During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, Abu Bakr was only the "second of the two", and he played a supporting and corroborative role. After the death of the Holy Prophet, he rose to his full stature, and he verily proved to be a giant among men. He had to face many crises, but with his wise handling of the situations, all such crises were successfully overcome and Islam was launched on the road to destiny. The Holy Prophet had lit the lamp, and though after the death of the Holy Prophet, a furious storm raged Abu Bakr guarded the lamp with great care, and saw to it that no blowing could extinguish the flame.

Source: Alim.org-Khalifa Abu Bakr History

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