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The Love of *Hadrat* Abu Bakr ﷺ By Shaykh Zulfiqar Ahmad (db)

The *Sahabah* were those fortunate Muslims who enjoyed the company of the Prophet during their lifetime. They were a body of lovers whose hearts were chosen by Allah ﷻ to preserve the ways and habits of His Beloved Messenger, ensuring that they reached the Muslims of future generations. We start with the foremost of the *Sahabah*, *Hadrat* Abu Bakr ﷺ.

Hadrat Abu Bakr ﷺ was a great leader and foremost in love for the Prophet ﷺ. His name was Abdullah, but he was known as Abu Bakr ﷺ. His complexion was of a reddish hue, and his build was lean.

Hadrat Abu Bakr ﷺ was the foremost *Sahabi* (Companion) to receive the characteristics of Prophethood from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Allah ﷻ refers to him as *Thani'asnain* and *Lis Sahiba*, the foremost of the *Sahabah*. Negating the companionship of Abu Bakr ﷺ is to fall from Islam into unbelief (*kufir*). *Hadrat* Imam Razi ﷺ explains *Thani'asnain* thus:

He was second to Muhammad ﷺ in most habits and qualities.

This is further detailed below:

- *Hadrat* Abu Bakr ﷺ was second to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in calling people towards Islam.
- He was the Prophet's ﷺ second in all battles.
- He was the Prophet's ﷺ second in all gatherings.
- He was the designated leader of prayers in the absence of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.
- He was buried next to the Prophet ﷺ in Madinah.

Shaykh Syed Mehmood Allusi ﷺ wrote in his book *Ruhul Ma'ani* that, prior to entering the Cave of Thaur, *Hadrat* Abu Bakr ﷺ said to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

I swear by Him who sent you with the Truth, please do not enter this cave until I have surveyed it to make sure it is safe; if there is anything unsafe inside, let it attack me first.

Surveying the cave, he found many holes inside, which he filled by tearing pieces from his own clothing. When he ran out of cloth, he closed the last remaining hole with the heel of his foot.

Shaykh Allama Allusi ﷺ commented in his book:

“There was one hole in the cave in which there were many dangerous snakes, and Abu Bakr ؓ was afraid that this might present a danger to the Messenger ﷺ. Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ placed his own foot over that hole in order to cover it. He was stung repeatedly.”

His eyes involuntarily shed tears as the poison took effect.

Shaykh Allusi ؒ continues:

His tears fell, but he refused to remove his foot due to his intense love for the Prophet ﷺ.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ awoke when the tears fell upon his cheek and asked his friend what was wrong. *Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ* then narrated the chain of events, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ applied his own saliva to the wound, thereby dissipating the effect of the poison.

The taste of this love lies amidst many such dangers.

Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ had cried in gratitude when granted permission to undertake the journey of the Migration with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. *Hadrat Aishah ؓ* said, “I only found out then that men also cry for joy.” One should note that *Hadrat Abu Bakr’s ؓ* entire household was engaged in the Prophet’s ﷺ service.

Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ thus became the companion on the journey. *Hadrat Abdur-Rahman bin Abu Bakr ؓ* brought daily news of the Quraish’s activities to them in the Cave of Thaur. *Hadrat Fahira ؓ* was a slave who herded sheep all day, which allowed him to bring milk to the cave. *Hadrat Asma bint Abu Bakr ؓ* used to bring them food because she was young and could go unnoticed, while *Hadrat Abu Bakr’s wife ؓ* used to cook their food.

One day in the cave, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ noticed that *Hadrat Asma ؓ* appeared distraught and he asked her what was the matter. *Hadrat Asma ؓ* replied, “O Beloved of Allah ﷺ, yesterday when I was returning home from the cave, Abu Jahl confronted me and said, ‘You know where your Prophet is.’ I replied, ‘Yes, I do know, but I will not tell you.’ He threatened to beat me severely, but I still refused, so he slapped me hard, and I fell. My head hit a rock and started bleeding. I stood up amidst tears and told him, ‘Remember this Abu Jahl, you can take my life, but I will never hand over Muhammad Arabi to you!’”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was extremely touched by *Hadrat Asma’s ؓ* words and said, “I have been able to repay everybody’s favors, but only Allah ﷻ will repay Abu Bakr (ؓ) for his favors.”

After three days in the cave, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and *Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ* continued on their way to Madinah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ noticed that at times *Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ* would walk to his right, sometimes to his left, and sometimes to the front and back of him. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked why he was doing this, *Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ* replied, “Beloved of Allah ﷺ, when I walk behind I fear lest an enemy attack from the front,

so I move to the front. When I walk to your right, I fear lest an enemy come from the left, and so I move there.” *Hadrat* Abu Bakr ﷺ was encircling his beloved Prophet ﷺ just as a moth encircles a burning flame.

When they reached the house of *Hadrat* Ummi Maa’bad ﷺ along the way, continuing the journey became difficult due to fatigue and hunger. *Hadrat* Abu Bakr ﷺ milked *Hadrat* Ummi Maa’bad’s ﷺ goats and presented the milk to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. *Hadrat* Abu Bakr ﷺ smiled broadly as the Prophet ﷺ drank to his fill, and when retelling the story later, he said:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ drank so much that I and my heart became happy.

This is a beautiful example of *muhabbah*; *Hadrat* Abu Bakr’s ﷺ heart was filling with joy while the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was drinking the milk, even though he himself was distressed with hunger.

Upon reaching Madinah, the people of Madinah welcomed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and *Hadrat* Abu Bakr ﷺ. The people of Madinah had not seen the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and they encircled *Hadrat* Abu Bakr ﷺ, because the lover and beloved were so alike in appearance. Their mannerisms, walk, speech, and dress were so similar that it proved impossible to tell the difference between the reality and the imitation.

When the sun reached its peak in the sky, *Hadrat* Abu Bakr ﷺ stepped forward and placed his shawl upon his beloved’s head to shield him from the sun. Only then did the people of Madinah see the difference between master and servant.

It is written in *hadith*:

Only when Abu Bakr stepped forward and placed his shawl on the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did the people recognize the Prophet.

This chain of events tells us of a true lover’s beautiful and complete devotion towards his beloved.

Shaykh Amir Khusro ﷺ wrote, “I have become you, and you have become me. The inner self became the body, and you became its life. The two of us are one, and no one can say that you and I are different.”

Allama Ibn Hajr al-Asqalani ﷺ reiterated the following *hadith* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

I love three things in this world: fragrance; a pious wife; and prayer, which is the coolness of my eyes.

Upon hearing this, *Hadrat* Abu Bakr ﷺ became restless with desire and said, “O Beloved of Allah ﷻ, I also love three things in this world: to look upon your face, to spend my wealth on your every order, and having my daughter as your wife.”

Hadrat Umar bin Aas ؓ related:

“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was praying with us one day in the Holy Mosque in Makkah (al-Haram) when Utbah bin Abu Mu’ith stepped forward and started strangling him with a thin cloth. Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ stepped forward and pulled him away, saying, ‘Are you going to kill a man just because he says that Allah ﷻ is my creator?’”

When *Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ* said this, the unbelievers abandoned their primary target and assaulted him instead, beating him so severely that most thought him dead. *Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ* was brought home covered with wounds. The first thing he wanted to know upon regaining consciousness was the condition of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and his mother rushed to the house of Umme Jamil bint al-Khattab ؓ to inquire. Here *Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ* presents an exemplary example of *ishq*, in that he put his pain and suffering second to the condition of his Prophet ﷺ.

Since the unbelievers had sworn to kill him, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ granted *Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ* permission to migrate to what is now Ethiopia. *Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ* started his journey and on the way met an unbeliever named Ibn ad-Daghna. Both returned to Makkah and Ibn ad-Daghna announced to all that *Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ* was now under his protection. The Quraish had to accept this for Ibn ad-Daghna was a man of influence, but they requested that *Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ* not recite the Holy *Quran* out loud, for they were fearful lest their women and children be touched by the words. It is documented in *hadith*:

He should not read Quran in a loud voice because we are afraid lest our women and children are affected.

Hadith also states:

He (Abu Bakr) would pray and read the Quran, and the women and children of Quraish would look at him in amazement. He would not be able to control his tears.

When the Quraish also objected to this, Ibn ad-Daghna withdrew his protection. *Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ* replied firmly:

I return your protection and am content with the protection of Allah ﷻ.

Hadrat Umar ؓ said, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ commanded all of us to give in the cause of Allah ﷻ. I possessed a lot of wealth and thought for once that I would surely surpass (*Hadrat*) *Abu Bakr ؓ*. Therefore I gave half of everything I owned. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked what I left for my family. I was about to reply when (*Hadrat*) *Abu Bakr ؓ* came with his goods and laid them before the Prophet ﷺ.” In reply to the same question *Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ* said:

I have left Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ for them.

At this, *Hadrat Umar* ﷺ said:

I will never again try to compete with you.

Referring to the above incident, Allama Iqbal wrote the following about *Hadrat Abu Bakr as-Siddiq* ﷺ (the Affirmer of Truth):

*The flame suffices the moth; the flower suffices the hummingbird.
The Beloved of Allah ﷻ is enough to fulfill Siddiq's needs.*

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ once noticed that *Hadrat Abu Bakr's* ﷺ clothes were torn in several places. He said, "Abu Bakr (ﷺ), there was a time when you were in great luxury. Now look at what suffering you have to bear for Islam." *Hadrat Abu Bakr* ﷺ replied that friendship of Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ was worth an entire lifetime of toil and suffering.

Hadrat Abu Bakr ﷺ wanted to spend his wealth on the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, but feared the disrespect of having his hand above the one that would receive, and for this he would weep all night. He thus prayed to Allah ﷻ for the Prophet ﷺ to spend his wealth as the Prophet saw fit. Allah ﷻ accepted his prayer, and hence, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to spend *Hadrat Abu Bakr's* ﷺ wealth as his own. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ once said:

Indeed Abu Bakr is the greatest among all people in regards to sincerity, service, and wealth.

During the days of his chronic illness, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ instructed *Hadrat Abu Bakr* ﷺ to lead the prayers. One day, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ entered the mosque when *Hadrat Abu Bakr* ﷺ was leading, and so *Hadrat Abu Bakr* ﷺ stepped back. After the prayer, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked why he had stepped back when he had been specifically instructed to lead the prayers. *Hadrat Abu Bakr* ﷺ replied, "O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the son of Abu Quhafa is incapable of leading in your presence."

The *Sahabah* were joyous at the revelation of *Surah al-Nasr*, which foretold the conquest of Makkah and widespread acceptance of Islam. However, *Hadrat Abu Bakr* ﷺ started weeping and said, "Don't you know that the Prophet's ﷺ mission has been completed, and he will now return to his Lord?"

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was overjoyed the day that Makkah was conquered, and *Hadrat Abu Bakr's* father, *Hadrat Abu Quhafa* ﷺ, accepted Islam. At this *Hadrat Abu Bakr* ﷺ commented, "I would have been happier had your uncle Abu Talib accepted Islam, because that would have made you happier."

Hadrat Abu Bakr ﷺ reached such a peak in his love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that he could not tolerate the slightest disrespect of his Prophet ﷺ. Before his acceptance of Islam,

Abu Quhafa had spoken disrespectfully of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and so his son, *Hadrat Abu Bakr* رضي الله عنه, slapped him.

A mountain of grief crashed down upon the *Sahabah* when the Prophet ﷺ left this world. *Hadrat Umar* رضي الله عنه, one of the bravest *Sahabah*, said that he would behead anyone who even suggested that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was dead; he maintained that the Prophet ﷺ had merely gone to meet Allah ﷻ as *Hadrat Musa* عليه السلام had done so before him. Hearing the grave news, *Hadrat Abu Bakr* رضي الله عنه went to his daughter's house. The following is documented in the book of Imam Bukhari رحمته الله:

Then (Hadrat) Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه *went and kissed the Messenger of Allah* ﷺ *on the forehead and said, "May my parents be sacrificed for you. You spent your life in a state of purity and have gone to meet your Creator in a state of purity."*

Hadrat Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه asked his daughter what type of clothing the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had been buried in so that he could be buried in the same clothing upon his own death. *Hadrat Abu Bakr* رضي الله عنه expressed his wish that his funeral procession be taken to the final resting place of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and that his body be buried there if the doors opened by themselves, and not otherwise not. When his casket was placed outside the burial place of the Prophet ﷺ, the locks and doors opened by themselves and the *Sahabah* heard a voice:

Bring the friend to his friend.

A poet penned the following couplet:

*At last I gave my life at the feet of the Beloved,
Restlessness of my entire life is finally rewarded with peace.*