

HISTORY OF ISLAM SERIES

Mohammad Ibn Abu Bakr

رضي الله عنه



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**MOHAMMAD IBN
ABU BAKR
(رضى الله تعالى عنه)**

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Sahih Iman Publication

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PREFACE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين

It is important to know facts of certain events in early Islamic history as a slight misunderstanding will have profound effect on Sahih Iman. It is important that we safeguard our Iman from the extreme opinions of Shias, Salafis, Ikhwan, Deobandis and their like minded groups.

Martyrdom of Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr (رضي الله تعالى عنه) is one of the important incidents in Islamic History. We have described facts about it as contained in authentic Islamic literature.

This book is aimed at clearing the misunderstanding on historical issues. We hope our readers will benefit from it.

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MOHAMMAD IBN ABU BAKR (رضى الله تعالى عنه)

Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه) was the son of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه). His mother's name was Asma bint Umays (رضى الله تعالى عنها). He was born three and a half months before the death of Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم). He was two and a half years old at the time of Hadhrat Abu Bakr's (رضى الله تعالى عنه) death. After Hadhrat Abu Bakr's (رضى الله تعالى عنه) death, Asma bint Umays (رضى الله تعالى عنها) was married to Hadhrat Ali (رضى الله تعالى عنه), and Hadhrat Ali (رضى الله تعالى عنه) took care of Mohammad Ibn Abi Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه) as his own son.

Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه) spent considerable time in Egypt. He headed the delegation that complained about the excesses of the Governor of Egypt to Hadhrat Uthman (رضى الله تعالى عنه) during his caliphate. It is reported that Hadhrat Uthman (رضى الله تعالى عنه) listened to the grievances of the delegation patiently and assured them that he will take remedial actions. He promised that the incumbent Governor of Egypt will be asked to resign. He also agreed to appoint Hadhrat Mohammad Ibn Abu Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه) as the Governor of Egypt as per the wishes of the delegation. Appropriate orders were issued by the Caliph which were to be communicated to the Governor of Egypt by an official emissary.

Marwan Ibn Hakam, the close relative of Muawiya (رضى الله تعالى عنه), who had infiltrated the Caliphate and had become Hadhrat Uthman's (رضى الله تعالى عنه) Secretary, was not happy with this development. He engineered a plan to stall the proceeding. As soon as the delegation left, he wrote a letter addressed to the Governor of Egypt. He used official stationary, official stamp and Caliphate's Official Messenger for this purpose. The letter contained an order from the Caliph to the incumbent Governor of Egypt to eliminate Mohammad Ibn Abu Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه) and his close associates as soon as they enter Egypt. While the emissary was taking this forged letter to the Governor of Egypt, he was caught on the way by the delegation headed by Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه) who were also returning to Egypt at that time. On inquiry, the emissary confessed that he was carrying a secret letter to the Governor of Egypt from the Caliph. When this letter was opened by the delegation, they were aghast to see its contents. They were furious on the Caliph and considered that the Caliph had double crossed them.

Islamic history records the incident as follows.

"A group of seven hundred Egyptians came to complain to Caliph Uthman ibn Affan (رضى الله تعالى عنه) about their governor Ibn Abi Sarh's tyranny, so Uthman Ibn Affan (رضى الله تعالى عنه) said : "Choose someone to govern you." They chose Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه), so Uthman Ibn Affan (رضى الله تعالى عنه) wrote credentials for him and they returned. On their way back, at three days' distance from Madina, a messenger caught up with them with the news that he carried orders from Uthman Ibn Affan (رضى الله تعالى عنه) to the governor of Egypt. They searched him and found a message from Uthman ibn Affan (رضى الله تعالى عنه)

رضى الله تعالى) to Ibn Abi Sarh ordering the death of Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه) and some of his friends. They returned to Madinah and besieged Uthman ibn Affan (رضى الله تعالى عنه). Uthman Ibn Affan (رضى الله تعالى عنه) acknowledged that the camel, the servant, and the seal on the letter belonged to him, but he swore that he had never written nor ordered the letter to be written. It was discovered that the letter had been hand-written by Marwan Ibn al-Hakam."

The above incident shows what was going on inside the Caliphate and how the Khalifa was surrounded by the people who were working for the vested interests. It also shows that Marwan was looking after the interest of certain Governors in the Caliphate.

The atmosphere in Madina was already charged up as trouble makers from other places, particularly from Kufa, Iraq, were demanding Caliph's ouster from office. Hadhrat Uthman (رضى الله تعالى عنه) did not use force to disperse the crowd who had gathered around his house. The Caliph was not in favor of using force on the crowd as it might have resulted in killing of scores of people. The Khalifa was 80 years old and a father figure to his people. His heart was full of love for his people and he never wanted any kind of bloodshed on the street. His approach to the trouble makers was conciliatory. He tried hard to bring sanity to the rioters. During the siege, he used to climb over the roof of his house and address the rioters in a most conciliatory way. His conciliatory approach was viewed as his weakness by the rioters. They thought that the people had abandoned their Caliph. This was wrong perception. They did not know that if Hadhrat Uthman (رضى الله تعالى عنه) had decided to use force, he could have gathered several thousand armed supporters, much higher than the number of rioters who had gathered around his house. In addition, he could have used security personnel to crush the uprising.

Mohammad Ibn Abu Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه) was supporting the agitators because he believed that the Caliph had planned to eliminate him and his close friends. When the news of Marwan's forgery became public, the rioters demanded Marwan to be handed over to them. The Khalifa knew that if he hands over Marwan to them, it will not end with Marwan. There will be killings and counter killings and it may trigger a large scale bloodshed. He refused to hand over Marwan to the rioters and wanted the law to take its own course in a peaceful atmosphere. But Caliph's wise counsel was viewed with suspicion by the rioters.

When we look at the Caliph's virtuous attitude in dealing with the rioters, we find it beyond imagination of human minds. He did not place even official guards to protect himself from the rioters. It was Hadhrat Ali (رضى الله تعالى عنه) who sensed the seriousness of the situation, and risking the lives of his sons, asked Hadhrat Hassan (رضى الله تعالى عنه) and Hadhrat Hussain (رضى الله تعالى عنه) to guard the door of the Khalifa 24 hours of the day. This was done against the wishes of the Caliph. The Caliph was not afraid of his life and preferred to die in the cause of Allah. The human history cannot produce the examples of our Khulafa-e-Rashideen. Alas, rioters could not understand Hadhrat Uthman's (رضى الله تعالى عنه) generosity, extraordinary acumen, farsightedness and care and concern for his people.

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) had asked Hadhrat Uthman (رضى الله تعالى عنه) not to resign if he was pressurized to relinquish the Caliphate. He was following the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) instructions by refusing to resign. Alas, if people had realized it. He was foretold by the

Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) about his martyrdom. He knew it was coming. He never liked anyone else, even among the rioters, to die. He was protecting the lives of the people and waiting for the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) prophesy to come true. Subhanallah. Look at the standard of Iman of our Khulafa-e- Rashideen.

It is in Hadith - Narrated by Ummul Momineen Aisha (رضى الله تعالى عنها): The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said : "O `Uthman (رضى الله تعالى عنه)! It may be that Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) will vest you with a shirt. If they demand that you remove it, do not remove it. (Ibn Hibban, Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, al-Hakim, all with sound chains).

Tirmidhi narration adds, "The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) repeated it three times." Another sound version in Ahmadstates: "If the hypocrites ask that you remove it, do not"

When the siege continued for a long time, the rioters started getting impatient. They were demanding Caliph's resignation. Some trouble makers among the agitators then hatched a plan to enter the house of the Caliph by force. They convinced Mohammad Ibn Abu Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه) to accompany them. It looked they wanted to physically take control of the Caliphate. As the gate was guarded by people, they entered the house from behind, by climbing the wall. It is wrong to say that Mohammad Ibn Abu Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه) entered the house of the Caliph with the intention to kill him (Astaghfirullahal azeem). It is reported in authentic history accounts that when Mohammad Ibn Abu Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه) entered the house along with some rioters, Hadhrat Uthman (رضى الله تعالى عنه) was reading Quran. The Caliph looked at Mohammad Ibn Abu Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه) and told him "Son, if your father was alive today and if he had seen you like this in front of me, he would not have been happy with you.". The fatherly advice of the Caliph touched the heart of 25-year-old Mohammad Ibn Abu Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه). He realized his mistake. His anger turned into repentance. He did not say a word and left the house. However, the rioters who were working for the vested interests, who had used Mohammad Ibn Abu Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه) all along, considered it as an opportunity to do away with the Caliph. They attacked and killed the Caliph. Later they looted the Caliph's house and Government treasury.

The most reliable report on the above incident is, of al-Zuhri from Ibn al-Musayyab, mursal, in Dhahabi's Tarikh al-Islam, as follows:

"Mohammad Ibn Abi Bakr (رضى الله تعالى عنه) led the group that burst in, then Uthman (رضى الله تعالى عنه) mentioned his father to him and he drew back in shame. He later said: "I repented at that moment." But the others pounced on Uthman (رضى الله تعالى عنه) and killed him. Na'ila (رضى الله تعالى عنها) the wife of Uthman (رضى الله تعالى عنه) confirmed this to Ali (رضى الله تعالى عنه), adding: "Nevertheless, he brought in those who killed him!" Rayta or Khansa' the Mawlat of Usama ibn Zayd was in the house at that time and he also confirmed this happening."

The above incident is recorded in Ibn Sa'd Tabaqat, at-Tabari's Tarikh, al-Maliqi's Maqal as-Shahid Uthman (رضي الله تعالى عنه), Ibn Kathir's al-Bidaya wan-Nihaya, and many others.

Imam an-Nawawi in Tahdhib al-Asma' wal-Lughat also mentioned this incident.

"After the assassination of Uthman (رضي الله تعالى عنه) in 35 H, Ali (رضي الله تعالى عنه) used Mohammad ibn Abi Bakr (رضي الله تعالى عنه) in various official positions, the last of them as Governor of Egypt in 37 H which shows he was convinced that Mohammad Ibn Abi Bakr (رضي الله تعالى عنه) was not responsible for the assassination of Hadhrat Uthman (رضي الله تعالى عنه). Mohammad Ibn Abi Bakr (رضي الله تعالى عنه) fought alongside Ali (رضي الله تعالى عنه) at the battles Camel and Siffin. After the battle Camel, Ali (رضي الله تعالى عنه) deputized him to escort (Ummul Momineen) A'isha (رضي الله تعالى عنها) back to Madina. Had Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr (رضي الله تعالى عنه) been responsible for the assassination of Uthman (رضي الله تعالى عنه), Ummul Momineen A'isha (رضي الله تعالى عنها) would never have forgiven him nor wept heavily when he was killed in Egypt in 38 H".

MARTYRDOM OF MOHAMMAD IBN ABU BAKR (رضي الله تعالى عنه)

When the Battle of Siffin ended, Mu'awiya (رضي الله تعالى عنه) invaded Egypt along with the deserters of Hadhrat Ali's (رضي الله تعالى عنه) Army. A strong force of over 10,000 was gathered for this purpose and Amr bin Al-Aas (رضي الله تعالى عنه) acted as commander. At that time Mohammad bin Abu Bakr's (رضي الله تعالى عنه) army consisted of about 2000. Amr bin Al-Aas (رضي الله تعالى عنه) defeated Mohammad bin Abu Bakr (رضي الله تعالى عنه). As the army was defeated, most of the companions of Mohammad bin Abu Bakr (رضي الله تعالى عنه) fled. Mohammad bin Abu Bakr (رضي الله تعالى عنه) took refuge in an old ruined place where he was hunted down. Amr bin Al-Aas (رضي الله تعالى عنه) is reported to have burned Mohammad Ibn Abu Bakr (رضي الله تعالى عنه) alive. Later his remains were reported to have been buried outside Fustat in a mosque called Zimam, but some believe that only his skull was buried there as the entire body was burnt to ashes.