

The Death of the Prophet (SAAS)

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From Ar-Raheeq al-Makhtoom

The Start of the Disease

On Monday the twenty-ninth of Safar in the eleventh year of al-Hijra, he participated in funeral rites in al-Baqee'. On the way back he had a headache, his temperature rose so high that the heat effect could be felt over his headband. He led the Muslims in prayer for eleven days though he was sick. The total number of his sick days were either thirteen or fourteen.

The Last Week

When his sickness grew severe he asked his wives: "Where shall I stay tomorrow?" "Where shall I stay?" They understood what he wanted. So they allowed him to stay wherever he wished. He moved to 'Aishah's room leaning - while he was walking - on al-Fadl bin al-'Abbas and 'Alî bin Abî Tâlib. Head banded as he was, he dragged his feet till he came into her abode. It was there that he spent the last week of his life.

During that period, 'Aishah used to recite al-Mu'awwidhat (Chapters 113 and 114 of the Qur'ân) and other supplications which he has already taught her.

Five days before death

On Wednesday, five days before he died the Prophet's temperature rose so high signalling the severness of his disease. He fainted and suffered from pain. "Pour out on me seven Qirab (water skin pots) of various water wells so that I may go out to meet people and talk to them." So they seated him in a container (usually used for washing) and poured out water on him till he said: "That is enough. That is enough."

Then he felt well enough to enter the Mosque. He entered it band-headed, sat on the pulpit and made a speech to the people who were gathering together around him. He said: *"The curse of Allâh falls upon the Jews and Christians for they have made their Prophets' tombs places of worship."* [Sahîh al-Bukhârî, 1/62; Muatta' Imâm Malik, p.360] Then he said: *"Do not make my tomb a worshipped idol."* [Muatta' Imâm Malik, p.65]

Then he offered himself and invited the people to repay any injuries he might have inflicted on them, saying:

"He whom I have ever lashed his back, I offer him my back so that he may avenge himself on me. He whom I have ever blasphemed his honour, here I am offering my honour so that he may avenge himself."

Then he descended, and performed the noon prayer. Again he returned to the pulpit and sat on it. He resumed his first speech about enmity and some other things. A man then said: "You owe me three Dirhams." The Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said: "Fadl, pay him the money." He went on saying:

"I admonish you to be good to Al-Ansar (the Helpers). They are my family and with them I found shelter. They have acquitted themselves credibly of the

responsibility that fell upon them and now there remains what you have to do. You should fully acknowledge and appreciate the favour that they have shown, and should overlook their faults."

In another version: "The number of believers would increase, but the number of Helpers would decrease to the extent that they would be among men as salt in the food. So he who from among you occupies a position of responsibility and is powerful enough to do harm or good to the people, he should frilly acknowledge and appreciate the favour that these benefactors have shown and overlook their faults."

And said: "Allâh, the Great, has given a slave of His the opportunity to make a choice between whatever he desires of Allâh's provisions in this world, and what He keeps for him in the world, but he has opted for the latter."

Abû Sa'id Al-Khudri said: "Upon hearing that, Abû Bakr cried and said: 'We sacrifice our fathers and mothers for your sake.' We wondered why Abû Bakr said such a thing. People said: 'Look at that old man! The Messenger of Allâh says about a slave of Allâh who was granted the right between the best fortunes of this world and the bounty of Allâh in the Hereafter, but he says: We sacrifice our fathers and mothers for your sake!' It was later on that we realized what he had aimed at. The Messenger of Allâh was the slave informed to choose. We also acknowledged that Abû Bakr was the most learned among us." [Mishkat Al-Masabih, 2/546]

Then the Messenger of Allâh said:

"The fellow I feel most secure in his company is Abû Bakr. If I were to make friendship with any other one than Allah, I would have Abû Bakr a bosom friend of mine. For him I feel affection and brotherhood of Islam. No gate shall be kept open in the Mosque except that of Abû Bakr's." [Sahîh al-Bukhârî, 1/22,429,449, 2/638; Misbkat Al-Masabih, 2/548]

Four days before his death

On Thursday, four days before the death of the Messenger of Allâh he said to people — though he was suffering from a severe pain:

"Come here. I will cause you to write something so that you will never fall into error." Upon this 'Umar bin Al-Khattab said: "The Prophet of Allâh is suffering from acute pain and you have the Qur'an with you; the Book of Allâh is sufficient unto you." Others however wanted the writing to be made. When Muhammad heard them debating over it, he ordered them to go away and leave him alone. [Sahîh al-Bukhârî, 2/637]

That day he recommended three things:

- 1. Jews, Christians and polytheists should be expelled out of Arabia.**
- 2. He recommended that delegations should be honoured and entertained, in a way similar to the one he used to do.**
- 3. As for the third — the narrator said that he had forgotten it. It could have been adherence to the Holy Book and the Sunnah. It was likely to be the accomplishment and the mobilization of Osamah's army, or it could have been performance of prayers and being attentive to slaves.**

In spite of the strain of disease and suffering from pain, the Prophet used to lead all the

prayers till that Thursday — four days before he died. On that day he led the sunset prayer and recited:

"By the winds (or angels or the Messengers of Allah) sent forth one after another." [77:1] [Misbkat Al-Masabih, 1/102]

In the evening he grew so sick that he could not overcome the strain of disease or go out to enter the Mosque. 'Aishah said: The Prophet asked: "Have the people performed the prayer?" "No. They haven't. They are waiting for you." "Put some water in the washing pot." Said he. We did what he ordered. So he washed and wanted to stand up, but he fainted. When he came round he asked again "Have the people prayed?" Then the sequence of events took place again and again for the second and the third times from the time he washed to the time he fainted after his attempts to stand up. Therefore he sent to Abû Bakr to lead the prayer himself. Abû Bakr then led the prayer during those days [Sahîh al-Bukhârî, 1/99]. They were seventeen prayers in the lifetime of Muhammad sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam.

Three or four times 'Aishah talked to the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam to exempt Abû Bakr from leadership in prayer lest people should despair of him, but he refused and said: *"You (women) are like the women who tried to entice Joseph (Yusuf) into immorality. Convey my request to Abû Bakr to lead the prayer."*

A Day or Two prior to Death

On Saturday or on Sunday, the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam felt that he was well enough to perform the prayer; so he went out leaning on two men in order to perform the noon prayer. Abû Bakr, who was then about to lead the prayer withdrew when he saw him coming; but the Prophet made him a gesture to stay where he was and said: "Seat me next to him." They seated him on the left hand side of Abû Bakr. The Prophet led the prayer, and Abû Bakr followed him and raised his voice at every 'Allâhu Akbar' (i.e. Allâh is the Greatest) the Prophet said, so that the people may hear clearly. [Sahîh al-Bukhârî 1/98,99]

A Day before his Death

On Sunday, a day before he died, the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam set his slaves free, paid as a charity the seven Dinars he owned and gave his weapons as a present to the Muslims. So when night fell 'Aishah had to borrow some oil from her neighbour to light her oil-lantern. Even his armour was mortgaged as a security with a Jew for thirty Sa' (a cubic measure) of barley.

The Last Day Alive

In a narration by Anas bin Malik, he said: "While the Muslims were performing the dawn prayer on Monday — led by Abû Bakr, they were surprised to see the Messenger of Allâh raising the curtain of 'Aishah's room. He looked at them while they were praying aligned properly and smiled cheerfully. Seeing him, Abû Bakr withdrew to join the lines and give way to him to lead the prayer. For he thought that the Prophet wanted to go out and pray." Anas said: "The Muslims, who were praying, were so delighted that they were almost too enraptured at their prayers. The Messenger of Allâh made them a gesture to continue their prayer, went into the room and drew down the curtain." [ibid. 21640]

The Messenger of Allâh sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam did not live for the next prayer time.

When it was daytime, the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam called Fatimah and told her something in a secret voice that made her cry. Then he whispered to her something else which made her laugh. 'Aishah enquired from her after the Prophet's death, as to this weeping and laughing to which Fatimah replied:

"The first time he disclosed to me that he would not recover from his illness and I wept. Then he told me that I would be the first of his family to join him, so I laughed." [Sahîh al-Bukhârî, 2/638]

He gave Fatimah glad tidings that she would become the lady of all women of the world [Rahmat-ul-lil'alameen, 1/282]. Fatimah witnessed the great pain that afflicted her father. So she said: "What great pain my father is in!". To these words, the Prophet remarked:

"He will not suffer any more when today is over." [Sahîh al-Bukhârî, 2/641]

He asked that Al-Hasan and Al-Husain be brought to him. He kissed them and recommended that they be looked after. He asked to see his wives. They were brought to him. He preached them and told them to remember Allah. Pain grew so much severe that the trace of poison he had at Khaibar came to light. It was so sore that he said to 'Aishah: *"I still feel the painful effect of that food I tasted at Khaibar. I feel as if death is approaching."* [ibid, 2/637] He ordered the people to perform the prayers and be attentive to slaves. He repeated it several times. [ibid. 2/637]

The Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam breathes his last

When the pangs of death started, 'Aishah leant him against her. She used to say: One of Allah's bounties upon me is that the Messenger of Allâh died in my house, while I am still alive. He died between my chest and neck while he was leaning against me. Allâh has mixed his saliva with mine at his death. For 'Abdur Rahman - the son of Abû Bakr - came in with a Siwak (i.e. the root of a desert plant used for brushing teeth) in his hand, while I was leaning the Messenger of Allâh against me. I noticed that he was looking at the Siwak, so I asked him - for I knew that he wanted it — "Would you like me to take it for you?" He nodded in agreement. I took it and gave it to him. As it was too hard for him, I asked him "Shall I soften it for you?" He nodded in agreement. So I softened it with my saliva and he passed it (on his teeth).

In another version it is said: "So he brushed (Istanna) his teeth as nice as he could." There was a water container (Rakwa) available at his hand with some water in. He put his hand in it and wiped his face with it and said:

"There is no god but Allah. Death is full of agonies." [Sahîh al-Bukhârî, 2/640]

As soon as he had finished his Siwak, brushing, he raised his hand or finger up, looked upwards to the ceiling and moved his lips. So 'Aishah listened to him. She heard him say: *"With those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace with the Prophets and the Truthful ones (As-Siddeeqeen), the martyrs and the good doers. O Allâh, forgive me and have mercy upon me and join me to the Companionship on high."* [ibid, 2/638-641] Then at intervals he uttered these words: "The most exalted Companionship on high. To Allâh we turn and to Him we turn back for help and last abode." This event took place at high morning time on Monday, the twelfth of Rabi' al-Awwal, in the eleventh year of Al-Hijrah. He was sixty-three years and four days old when he died.

The Companions' concern over the Prophet's Death

The great (loss) news was soon known by everybody in Madinah. Dark grief spread on all areas and horizons of Madinah. Anas said: **"I have never witnessed a day better or brighter than that day on which the Messenger of Allâh sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam came to us; and I have never witnessed a more awful or darker day than that one on which the Messenger of Allâh died on."** [Mishkat-ul-Masabih, 2/547]

When he died, Fatimah said: **"O Father, whom his Lord responded to his supplication! O Father, whose abode is Paradise. O Father, whom I announce his death to Gabriel."** [Sahîh al-Bukhârî, 2/641]

'Umar's Attitude

'Umar, who was so stunned that he almost lost consciousness and stood before people addressing them: **"Some of the hypocrites claim that the Messenger of Allâh sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam died. The Messenger of Allâh did not die, but went to his Lord in the same way as Moses bin 'Imran did. He stayed away for forty nights, but finally came back though they said he had been dead. By Allah, the Messenger of Allâh will come back and he will cut off the hands and legs of those who claim his death."** [Ibn Hisham, 2/655]

Abû Bakr's Attitude

Abû Bakr left his house at As-Sunh and came forth to the Mosque on a mare-back. At the Mosque, he dismounted and entered. He talked to nobody but went on till he entered 'Aishah's abode, and went directly to where the Messenger of Allâh sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam was. The Prophet was covered with a Yemeni mantle. He uncovered his face and tended down, kissed him and cried. Then he said: **"I sacrifice my father and mother for your sake. Allah, verily, will not cause you to die twice. You have just experienced the death that Allâh had ordained."**

Then he went out and found 'Umar talking to people. He said: "Umar, be seated." 'Umar refused to do so. People parted 'Umar and came towards Abû Bakr, who started a speech saying:

"And now, he who worships Muhammad sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, Muhammad is dead now. But he who worships Allah, He is Ever Living and He never dies. Allâh says: 'Muhammad sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam is no more than a Messenger, and indeed (many) Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels (as disbelievers)? And he who turns back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allâh, and Allâh will give reward to those who are grateful.' " [3:144]

Ibn 'Abbas said: **"By Allâh it sounded as if people had never heard such a Qur'aanic verse till Abû Bakr recited it as a reminder. So people started reciting it till there was no man who did not recite it."**

Ibn Al-Musaiyab said that 'Umar had said: **"By Allâh as soon as I heard Abû Bakr say it, I fell down to the ground. I felt as if my legs had been unable to carry me so I collapsed when I heard him say it. Only then did I realize that Muhammad sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam had really died."** [Sahîh al-Bukhârî, 2/640,641]

Burial and Farewell Preparations to his Honourable Body

Dispute about who would succeed him broke out even before having the Messenger of

Allah's body prepared for burial. Lots of arguments, discussions, dialogues took place between the Helpers and Emigrants in the roofed passage (portico) of Barn Sa'ida. Finally they acknowledged Abû Bakr (RA) as a caliph. They spent the whole Monday there till it was night. People were so busy with their arguments that it was late night — just about dawn of Tuesday — yet his blessed body was still lying on his bed covered with an inked-garment. He was locked in the room.

On Tuesday, his body was washed with his clothes on. He was washed by Al-'Abbas, 'Alî, Al-Fadl and Qathm — the two sons of Al-'Abbas, as well as Shaqran — the Messenger's freed slave, Osamah bin Zaid and Aws bin Khauli. Al-'Abbas, Al-Fadi and Qathm turned his body round, whereas Osamah and Shaqran poured out water. 'Alî washed him and Aws leant him against his chest.

They shrouded him in three white Sahooi cotton cloth which had neither a headcloth [Sahîh al-Bukhârî, 1/169, Sahîh Muslim, 1/306] nor a casing and inserted him in.

A sort of disagreement arose with regard to a burial place. Abû Bakr said: "I heard the Messenger of Allâh say: *'A dead Prophet is buried where he dies.'*" So Abû Talhah lifted the bed on which he died, dug underneath and cut the ground to make the tomb.

People entered the room ten by ten. They prayed for the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam. The first to pray for him were people of his clan. Then the Emigrants, then the Helpers. Women prayed for him after men. The young were the last to pray.

This process took Tuesday long and Wednesday night (i.e. the night which precedes Wednesday morning). 'Aishah said: "**We did not know that the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam was being buried till we heard the sound of tools digging the ground at the depth of Wednesday night.**" [Mukhtasar Seerat Ar-Rasool, p.471; Ibn Hisham, 2/649-665; Talqeeh Fuhood Ahl M-Athar, p. 38, 39; Rahmat-ul-lil'alameen 1/277-286]