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- See also:** BEGULEMENT; DEATH; JĀHILIYYA; LIFE OF THIS WORLD; PERSEVERANCE, PATIENCE, AND FORTITUDE; POVERTY; REMEMBRANCE AND REMINDER OF ALLAH; REPENTANCE; RIGHTEOUSNESS AND VIRTUE; TRUST IN ALLAH

GIBRIL FOUAD HADDAD

ABŪ BAKR

ALLAH BE WELL-PLEASED WITH HIM

This article comprises the following sections: i. His Ancestry and Appellation; ii. His Life before Islam; iii. His Conversion and Life in Makka after Islam; iv. Attempted Hijra to Abyssinia; v. Hijra to Madina; vi. His Life in Madina; vii. His Role in the Events Surrounding the Demise of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace; viii. His Caliphate; ix. The Compilation of the Qur‘ān; x. His Death; xi. His

Character and Personality; xii. His Eminence and Virtues; xiii. Verses of the Qur’ān Related to Him; xiv. Hadiths in his Praise; xv. Bibliography.

‘Abd Allāh b. Abū Quḥāfa (ca.50_{BH}-13/573-634), known as Abū Bakr, the first male adult to accept Islam, the father-in-law of the Prophet—upon him blessings and peace—and his successor (*khalīfat al-Rasūl*), the first of the four rightly guided caliphs (*al-khulafā’ al-rāshidūn*) (see CALIPH), and, by consensus of exegetes, referent of the phrase *second of the two (thānī ithnayn)* in Q 9:40.

His Ancestry and Appellation

His father, Abū Quḥāfa ‘Uthmān b. ‘Amir b. ‘Amr b. Ka’b b. Sa’d b. Taym b. Murra b. Ka’b b. Lu’ayy (d. 14/635), and mother, Umm al-Khayr Salmā bint Ṣakhr b. ‘Amr b. Ka’b (d. before her husband, 13 or 14/634 or 635), were both fifth-generation descendants of Taym b. Murra through whom they were related to the Prophet (al-Kalābādhi, *al-Hidāya wal-irshād* 1:381; Ibn Sa’d; Nawawī, *Tahdhīb* 2:181). Abū Bakr is the only Companion whose genealogical tree includes four successive generations of Companions, including his parents, children, and some of his grandchildren: his mother, one of the early converts, accepted Islam at the hand of the Prophet himself in Makka at the house of al-Arqam b. Abī al-Arqam (d. ca.53/673) (Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī‘āb* 4:1934 §4141; Ibn al-Athīr, *Uṣd al-ghāba* 7:314 §7436; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba* 8:386 §12010); his father entered Islam on the day of the conquest of Makka (see CONQUEST) (*al-Istī‘āb* 3:1036 §1773; *Uṣd al-ghāba* 3:575 §3582; *al-Iṣāba* 4:374 §5458); his son ‘Abd al-Raḥmān and grandson Abū ‘Atīq Muḥammad; his daughter Asmā’ and her son ‘Abd Allāh; and his daughter ‘Ā’isha, a wife of the Prophet, upon him peace and blessings (Nawawī, *Tahdhīb* 2:181; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu’jam al-kabīr* 1:11; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 88). Of his other two children, Muḥammad (10-38/631-658) and Umm Kulthūm (born 13/634), the former was born a few months before the death of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, and the latter, a Successor and narrator of Hadīth, was born shortly after his own death.

According to Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1071), he was called ‘Abd al-Ka’ba (“Slave of the Ka’ba”) in the pre-Islamic era (see JĀHILIYYA) until the Prophet renamed him ‘Abd Allāh (“Slave of Allah”). He was also called ‘Atīq, meaning either “the Handsome”, because of the comeliness of his face (*li-‘atāqat wajhīh*) or “the Freedman,” either because of a brother who died before him

(as he escaped the death that had befallen his brother) or, according to his daughter ‘Ā’isha, because the Prophet gave him this name on account of his being “liberated by Allah from Hell-Fire” (*‘atīq Allāh min al-Nār*) (Tirmidhī, Manāqib, bāb; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī‘āb* 3:963 §1633; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba* 4:146 §4835; al-Nawawī, *Tahdhīb* 2:181; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 26).

There are no explanations offered in the sources as to how he came to be known as Abū Bakr (“Bakr” being a young camel). He was, however, also known by two other epithets: “al-Awwā” (meaning “one given to sorrow due to intense compassion”), indicating his tenderness of heart and compassion for others; and “Ṣāḥib Rasūl Allāh” (“Companion of the Messenger of Allah”), indicating his unique privilege of continuous companionship with the Prophet (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt* 3:127 §46; Ibn al-Athīr, *Uṣd al-ghāba* 3:310 §3066; and more on this below). He was a close friend and neighbor of the Prophet in Makka before the prophetic mission began, and entered Islam as soon as he was invited. The Prophet said, “Everyone I called to Islam hesitated, deliberated, and delayed [acceptance], except for Abū Bakr b. Abī Quḥāfa; when I invited him, he neither hesitated nor delayed” (Ibn Hishām, *dhikr man aslama min al-ṣaḥāba bi-da’wat Abī Bakr* 1:166; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* 3:37; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 31-32).

His most famous title, however, is “al-Ṣiddīq” (“the one who wholeheartedly confirms the truth”), by which he became known on the morning after the Prophet’s Night Journey and Ascension (see NIGHT JOURNEY AND ASCENSION). The disbelievers came and asked him: “What do you say of your companion, as he claims to have travelled by night to the Sacred House (*bayt al-maqdis*) [in Jerusalem (*q.v.*)]?” He replied: “Did he really say that?” They said: “Yes.” Abū Bakr said: “Then verily he spoke the truth. Indeed, I confirm him (*la-uṣaddiqah*) and believe that he speaks the truth about something more wondrous (*ab’ad*) than this: messages from Heaven, coming to him morning and evening” (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt* 3:127 §46; Ḥākim, 3:65 §4407; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh*, p. 28). The Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, himself refers to him by the sobriquet al-Ṣiddīq in the hadīth about Ḥirā’, when the mountain started to quake while the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, and Abū Bakr and ‘Uthmān, Allah be well-pleased with them both, were standing on it. The Prophet said, “Be still, O Ḥirā’, for upon you are none less than a Prophet, a confirmer (*ṣiddīq*), and a martyr” (Bukhārī, *Fī faḍā’il aṣḥāb al-Nabī*, manāqib ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān; Muslim, *Fī faḍā’il al-ṣaḥāba*, min faḍā’il Ṭalḥa wal-Zubayr raḍiya Allāh ‘anhumā).