

THE **F1RST**S

A Lecture Series

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Saad ibn Abi Waqqas (ra)

Saad ibn Abi Waqqas (ra) was one of the ten promised Paradise. He was from the tribe of Banu Zuhra. He is related to the Prophet ﷺ by his grandfather Wuyayb, who was the brother of Wahab (the Prophet ﷺ's maternal grandfather). The Prophet ﷺ would say, "This is my maternal uncle (when he'd look at Saad (ra)), so let one of you show me his khaal (maternal uncle)." Though he's a maternal uncle in that sense, he is at least 20 years younger than the Prophet ﷺ. He was a teenager when the Prophet ﷺ began preaching. His kunya was Abu Ishaaq.

Saad (ra) used to make bows and arrows, and he was known for his skill in archery. His physical appearance is described as a lion: short, very hairy, dark, strong. He had a sharp eye. He was someone who didn't have power in society, but was honest and known for his archery.

Accepting Islam

Saad (ra) describes when he accepted Islam:

"I saw a dream before becoming a Muslim. I was in a dark place where I could see nothing; then a moon was illumined in front of me and I followed it. I was looking for people who preceded me in seeing the moon and they were Zayd ibn Harithah, Ali ibn Abi Talib and Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq (ra). I was asking them: when did you come here? They said: Just a short while ago. When I woke up, I heard that the Prophet ﷺ was calling to Islam privately, so I went quickly to the streets of Ajjaad, and I found Abu Bakr (ra), and Abu Bakr (ra) called me to Islam, and I accepted Islam."

And he was amongst the first to accept Islam.

Saad ibn Abi Waqqas (ra) also narrated that, "No man embraced Islam before the day on which I embraced Islam, and no doubt, I remained for seven days as one-third of the then extant Muslims." Some say he was the seventh -- the timing of when some of the sahabah embraced Islam is not as certain (we have multiple narrations about different sahabah (ra)).

He was only a teenager when he accepted Islam -- and this is a trend we see with the ten promised Paradise - half of them accepted Islam as teenagers, and half of them embraced Islam from Abu Bakr (ra).

Saad ibn Abi Waqqas (ra) lived with his mother. He recounts what happened when he came back home to tell his mother: "When my mother heard the news of my Islam, she flew into a rage. She came to me and said: "O Sa'ad! What is this religion that you have embraced which has taken you

away from the religion of your mother and father...? By God, either you forsake your new religion or I would not eat or drink until I die. Your heart would be broken with grief for me and remorse would consume you on account of the deed, you have done and people would censure you forevermore.' 'Don't do (such a thing), my mother,' I said, 'for I would not give up my religion for anything.' However, she went on with her threat... For days she neither ate nor drank. She became emaciated and weak." "Hour after hour, I went to her asking whether I should bring her some food or something to drink but she persistently refused, insisting that she would neither eat nor drink until she died or I abandoned my religion. I said to her, 'Yaa Ummah! In spite of my strong love for you, my love for Allah and His Messenger is indeed stronger. By Allah, if you had a thousand souls and each one departs one after another, I would not abandon this religion for anything.' When she saw that I was determined she relented unwillingly and ate and drank."

This is another level of torture and blackmail towards him, which some of the early converts faced - may Allah reward them.

Allah(SWT) revealed Qur'an about this incident, the ayat in Surah al-Ahqaf and/or Surah Luqman, they do not reprimand Saad (ra)'s mother - instead, they speak of being good to one's parents. She was commanding him with kufr, and Allah (SWT) commanded him with shukr towards her. He was not to follow the kufr, but he was to treat her in a good manner.

Defending the Prophet ﷺ

Saad (ra) was the first to shed blood defending the Prophet ﷺ. This happened when the Prophet ﷺ and some of the sahabah went to pray in a valley and they were attacked. He was also the first to throw an arrow in Islam protecting the Prophet ﷺ. He fought alongside the Prophet ﷺ in every battle. At Badr, he fought bravely. One of the shuhadaa' of Badr (which were few in number) was the little brother of Saad (ra), who embraced Islam in Makkah.

In Uhud, Saad (ra) also has a special distinction. Not only is he one of the few not to flee from the side of the Prophet ﷺ, he also continued to fight bravely alongside the Prophet ﷺ, and particularly using the skill of archery. The companions and the Prophet ﷺ himself were picking up arrows and handing them to Saad (ra). That day, the Prophet ﷺ would say something to Saad (ra) that he would not say to anyone else:

ارْمِ فِدَاكَ أَبِي وَأُمِّي

"Throw (oh Saad), may my father and mother be sacrificed for you."

His Du'as were Answered

The Prophet ﷺ also made du'a that Allah responds to the du'as of Saad (ra) when he calls upon Him:

اللهم استجب لسعد إذا دعاك

People feared the du'as of Saad (ra) because they knew his du'as were answered. Later on, this would be important when he was done dhulm (injustice) to, and he made du'a against the one who lied about him.

At Fath Makkah

Saad (ra) fell sick at Fath Makkah and almost died. Saad was one of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ who was blessed with great wealth, and he was known for his generosity as much as his courage. Saad fell ill, and he feels he is about to die. The Prophet ﷺ came to visit him and Saad (ra) inquired: "O Messenger of Allah, I have wealth and only one daughter to inherit from this. Shall I give two-thirds away as charity?" "No," said the Prophet ﷺ. "How about half?" asked Saad, and the Prophet ﷺ still replied "No." "Then shall I give one-third?" "Yes," replied the Prophet ﷺ. "The third is enough. Indeed, to leave your heirs provided for is better than leaving them dependent and begging from others. If you spend anything seeking to gain the pleasure of Allah, you will be rewarded for it even if it is a morsel which you place in your wife's mouth." [Bukhari]

Through this incident, we learn about the designation of inheritance, we can't give more than one-third behind for charity (of course before death, we can give as much as we want).

Saad ibn Abi Waqqas (ra) also gained the dua'a of the Prophet ﷺ: "O Allah! Cure Sa'd. O Allah! Cure Sa'd. O Allah! Cure Sa'd." Allah (SWT) cured Saad, and not only did Saad live past Fath Makkah, but he would also be responsible for the largest swath of the world coming into Islam. That happened under the Persian empire; he would be responsible for leading the Muslim army against the Persian empire. He was actually the last to die from the ten promised Jannah.

Saad (ra) later led some of the most difficult battles, including the famous one of Qadisiyyah. He led the one in which the Persians brought elephants -- he was the one who came up with the strategy to strike the elephants in the eyes. Finally, he was able to conquer the palace of Kisra. At this point, you see two people who started their lives in very similar ways even though they were in different quarters of the world: Salman al-Farisi (ra) and Saad ibn Abi Waqqas (ra). Salman (ra) is sitting behind Saad (ra). Saad (ra) who was blackmailed by his mother, and Salman (ra) who was blackmailed by his father -- and Allah gifted them to conquer the palace of Kisra together.

Saad (ra) lived to see Islam spread. He was one of the people appointed to the shura to decide who would be the next khalifah after 'Umar (ra). He wanted no part in the glory, in the leadership, or fighting. He insisted on being productive and insisted on not getting involved in the fitnah. He narrated many of the ahadith in that regard, he narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Fighting a Muslim is kufr and defaming him is evil-doing." Another one that he narrated about the time of fitna that would be so difficult is: to sit in that time is better than to stand, to stand in that time is better than to walk, and to walk in that time is better than to run." This means that the less you do to get involved when you see fitnah break out, the better.

He wanted no part in the fitnah. We see that he worked to spread the message of Islam, all the way to China. One of his children came to him while Saad (ra) was shepherding sheep on the mountain away from the people, and just seeing him come, Saad (ra) said a'uthu billah from the evil of what he is bringing. His son wanted him to take a more assertive role in what was going on, and get glory, etc. He refused it all and narrates a beautiful hadith: "Rather, Allah loves His servant who is at-taqiy - pious (he leaves off sins), al-ghaniy - independent (he leaves off asking the people), and al-khafiy - obscure (not seen by the people)."

That is how he wanted to live at the end of his life; he didn't want to indulge in peoples' sins, praise, or wealth. He left all of that for what he knew was productive. He was the last of the ten promised Paradise to die. May Allah be pleased with him and them all. Ameen

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