



On one occasion, an argument transpired between Sayyiduna Rabee'ah Aslami (radhiyallahu 'anhu) and Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu). During the course of the argument, Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu) happened to utter something, against Sayyiduna Rabee'ah (radhiyallahu 'anhu), which he regretted immediately thereafter.

Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu) instantly said to him, "O Rabee'ah! Say those words back to me in retaliation!" However, Sayyiduna Rabee'ah (radhiyallahu 'anhu) refused to do so. Hearing his refusal, Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu) said, "You must say those words to me, or else I will refer the matter to Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam)!" Even then, Sayyiduna Rabee'ah refused to repeat the words and retaliate against Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu).

Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu) then departed, proceeding to Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), with Sayyiduna Rabee'ah (radhiyallahu 'anhu) following behind.

In the interim, some members of the Aslam clan (the family of Sayyiduna Rabee'ah [radhiyallahu 'anhu]), having observed what had transpired, came to him and said, "May Allah Ta'ala have mercy on Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu)! Why is he complaining to Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) about you, whereas he is the one who uttered the statement against you?"

Sayyiduna Rabee'ah (radhiyallahu 'anhu) replied, "Do you know who he is? He is Abu Bakr Siddeeq (radhiyallahu 'anhu)! He is second of the two (the one whom the Quraan Majeed has referred to as being the companion of Rasulullah [sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam] in the cave during the journey of hijrah)! He is the senior and elder of all the Muslims! Beware that he should not turn around and catch sight of you trying to assist me against him, as this may anger him. Then, he will go to Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), and Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) will become angry on account of his anger, then Allah Ta'ala will become displeased due to their displeasure, and then Rabee'ah will be destroyed!"

His family asked him, “What do you want us to do?” He instructed, “Go back (and do not interfere in this matter).”

When Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) and Sayyiduna Rabee‘ah (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) arrived in the presence of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam), Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) informed him of what had transpired, exactly as it had transpired.

After hearing the incident from Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anhu), Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) raised his blessed head and said, “O Rabee‘ah! What transpired between you and Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anhu)?” Sayyiduna Rabee‘ah (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) replied by informing Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) of what had transpired, including the statement uttered by Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anhu), his desire for Sayyiduna Rabee‘ah (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) to retaliate, and his refusal to do so.

Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) then said to Sayyiduna Rabee‘ah (radhiyallahu ‘anhu), “Yes, do not retaliate! However, say to Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anhu), ‘May Allah forgive you, O Abu Bakr!’”

Hence, Sayyiduna Rabee‘ah (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) turned to Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) and said, “May Allah forgive you, O Abu Bakr!” Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) then departed while he was weeping.

(Musnad Ahmad #16577)

Lessons:

1. As soon as Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) uttered the statement which Sayyiduna Rabee‘ah (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) disliked, he realized that he had erred, and his instant concern was to rectify his error. This is the reason why he insisted that Sayyiduna Rabee‘ah (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) retaliate. However, when Sayyiduna Rabee‘ah (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) refused to retaliate, then having no other recourse, Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) referred the matter to Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) – even though it was his error – as he could not rest until his error was rectified. Hence, as soon as we err or make a mistake, we should immediately repent, seek forgiveness and try to make amends, and should not rest until we do so.

2. Sayyiduna Rabee'ah (radhiyallahu 'anhu) understood that Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu) was not an ordinary person – he was the greatest of all the Sahaabah (radhiyallahu 'anhum). Hence, even when Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu) uttered the words which he disliked, he ensured that he still afforded him respect and honour, on account of his lofty, esteemed position. Furthermore, he explained that due to the special relationship which Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu) had with Allah Ta'ala and Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), angering him would draw the anger of Allah Ta'ala and Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). We should thus ensure that we always show respect to our parents, the 'Ulama, the seniors and elders in our communities, etc.

3. Despite Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu 'anhu) explaining what had transpired to Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) exactly as it had transpired, Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) still asked Sayyiduna Rabee'ah (radhiyallahu 'anhu) to explain his version of the incident. Hence, we understand that it is important to allow both parties to speak before arriving at a conclusion.