I could not disclose the secret of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Had the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) not proposed to her, I would have accepted (to marry) her

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that ‘Umar, when his daughter Hafsah became a widow, said: "I met ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (may Allah be pleased with him) and offered Hafsah for marriage to him. I said: 'If you wish, I shall give you Hafsah bint ‘Umar in marriage.' ‘Uthmān said: 'I shall think over the matter.' I waited for a few days and then ‘Uthmān met me and said: 'It occurred to me that I should not marry at present.' Then I met Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) and said to him: 'If you wish, I shall marry Hafsah bint ‘Umar to you.' Abu Bakr remained silent and did not give me any reply! I was more upset with him than with ‘Uthmān. A few days later, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) asked for her hand in marriage and I married her to him. Thereafter, I met Abu Bakr who said: 'Perhaps you were angry with me when you offered Hafsah to me and I said nothing in reply?' I said: 'Yes, that is so.' He said: 'Nothing stopped me from responding to your offer except that I knew that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) had mentioned her, and I could not disclose the secret of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Had the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) not proposed to her, I would have accepted (to marry) her.'"

[Authentic hadith] [Narrated by Bukhari]

In this Hadīth, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) quotes from his father, ‘Umar, his account of what he did when his daughter Hafsah became a widow after the death of her husband Khunays ibn Hudhāfah As-Sahmi. Khunays was the brother of ‘Abdullāh ibn Hudhāfah, and he was one of the Prophet's Companions. He died in Madīnah as a result of an injury that he sustained in the battle of Uhud. He was one of the first people to embrace Islam, and he made Hijrah to Abyssinia. ‘Umar said: "I met with ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (i.e. after the death of his wife Ruqayyah, daughter of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him), and I offered Hafsah to him in marriage." This indicates the permissibility of offering a person’s daughter in marriage to a righteous man of good character and religion, and that there is no shame in doing so. Al-Bukhāri (may Allah have mercy upon him) entitled a chapter in his Sahīh: Permissiblity of offering one's daughter or sister in marriage to a righteous man. ‘Umar said to ‘Uthmān: "If you wish, I shall give you Hafsah, daughter of ‘Umar, in marriage." He used a conditional clause because it gives the addressee freedom of choice, and this is a good manner of speech that encourages the

addressee to accept. ‘Umar was also keen on attributing his daughter to himself as if adding: "and you know ‘Umar's status and his good companionship." ‘Uthmān's reply was that he would think about it; i.e. he would consider whether he should marry then or delay it. ‘Umar then said that he waited a few days and then saw ‘Uthmān, who told him that he had decided not to marry 'at present'. He said 'at present' so that his answer would not be misunderstood to mean that he had chosen to remain celibate and never get married, which is forbidden in Islam. ‘Umar then met Abu Bakr As-Siddīq (may Allah be pleased with him) and said to him: "If you wish, I shall marry Hafsah, daughter of ‘Umar, to you." Abu Bakr was silent, but it was for a very specific reason. His silence made ‘Umar angry, more so than when ‘Uthmān refused his daughter since at least ‘Uthmān gave him a reply while Abu Bakr did not say a word. A few days later, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) proposed to marry Hafsah, and ‘Umar accepted and married her off to him. After the marriage had taken place, with the reason for Abu Bakr's silence no longer existing, Abu Bakr offered his apology to ‘Umar to remove any hard feelings between them. He said: "'Perhaps you were angry with me when you offered Hafsah to me and I said nothing in reply?" He used the word 'perhaps' because, knowing ‘Umar's good character, he should not be angry with him for that, but it is also possible that he was angry as a natural reaction. ‘Umar replied truthfully, saying that he was indeed angry at his silence. Abu Bakr told him that nothing had prevented him from responding except that he had heard the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) mentioning her; i.e. expressing his desire to marry her. It is possible that the Prophet mentioned his desire to marry Hafsah in the presence of Abu Bakr alone, so Abu Bakr considered this to be a secret that must not be disclosed. That is the reason why he said: "and I could not disclose the secret of the Messenger of Allah," i.e. share with anyone else what he told me in confidence. He added that if the Prophet had refrained from marrying her, he would have accepted her, because it is forbidden to propose to a woman whom the Prophet had expressed his desire to marry. This Hadīth teaches Muslims the obligation to keep the secret keenly and not to say what might lead to disclosing any part of it.

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