

THE **F1RST**S

A Lecture Series

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Sawda Bint Zama'a

The Prophet's Joy

After the grief of losing Khadijah (ra), she brought joy and comfort to our beloved Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم with her unique spirit of generosity and selflessness. She was the first woman he صلى الله عليه وسلم married after his marriage to Khadija. She preferred a life of obscurity and even the story of her death is unknown.

Her father was Zama'a ibn Kais , from the same tribe of Khadija's mother (ra), and her mother was a cousin of Abdul Muttalib. Because she was from a powerful family, she was protected from persecution. She had a strong physical presence; tall and heavy set. She was about five years older than Prophet Mohammad صلى الله عليه وسلم.

She was married to Sakran ibn Amr, who was the brother of Suhail ibn Amr, the chief negotiator of Quraish against the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. She had five children before embracing Islam. She had two brothers that she called to Islam, Malik ibn Zama'a (one of the first Muslims) and Abd ibn Zama'a. Abd strongly opposed Islam in the beginning but eventually embraced it. Sakran was one of the first Muslims along with his 2 brothers, Hatib and Saleet. They all made the hijra to Abyssinia.

Two Dreams

In Abyssinia, Sawda and Sakran had 1 son after embracing Islam, Abd el Rahman, who grew to be a great warrior and became a martyr while battling the Persians. Sawda had two dreams, one that Prophet Mohammad صلى الله عليه وسلم came to here and knelt next to her. Sakran told her that meant that he would die soon and that the Prophet Mohammad صلى الله عليه وسلم would marry her. The other dream was the moon descending down and landing in her home, next to her. Again, Sakran saw that his death was soon and that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would be her husband. Sakran died in Abyssinia and she was left alone. Her father was blind and she became a single mother of an infant and her other five children. The rest of her family had disowned her. She returned to Mecca and was safe from persecution because of her family status.

Sadness turns to Joy

Prophet Mohammad صلى الله عليه وسلم was 50 years old at the time, had two daughters living with him, Fatima and Um Kulthoom . It was ten years after revelation. He had lost the first love of his life and strongest supporter, Khadija and his dear uncle Abu Talib, within days. He صلى الله عليه وسلم had just come back from Taif, where he endured much hardship and rejection. Prophet

Muhammad ﷺ was in grief and intense sadness for months. He never married during Khadija's lifetime, even though that was the norm in society at the time.

Khawla bint Hakeem (ra) was a matchmaker in the community. She wanted to find him a wife to assist him with his daughters and be with him. She saw the sadness that changed him intensely after the loss of Khadija. He told her that no one could ever take her place. She insisted and told him that she had two choices for him, one was an elder widow and the other was young, Sawda and Aisha, daughter of Abu Bakr. Aisha was not yet of age for marriage, Sawda had the qualities of being loving, humorous, was one of the first to believe in the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and was known to bring joy wherever she went. At this time of his life, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ needed her happy qualities. She was easy going and not a complicated person who made problems.

Sawda wasn't looked at as a candidate for marriage and the proposal came as a shock to her. Khawla delivered the proposal from Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and Sawda agreed right away. She then asked her father and he accepted. She dedicated herself to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Her brother, Abd ibn Zama'a publicly strongly protested the marriage, which he would regret later when he accepted Islam.

For three years she was the only wife of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The proposal for Aisha was accepted but was pending her coming of age. When he ﷺ made the hijra to Medina, and during Israa & Miraj, Sawda was his only wife.

Related Rulings

She migrated to Medina with Fatima, Um Kulthoom, Um Ayman, Osama ibn Zayd and Zayd ibn Haritha. She settled with Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in Medina.

The ruling for the elderly and women to leave Muzdallifa early began with Sawda because it was difficult for her. She couldn't make Hajj again.

When Sohail ibn Amr (former brother in law of Sawda) was captured during the Battle of Badr, he was treated well with the others and they would remember that treatment when they accepted Islam.

The verses referring to hijab in Al Ahzab were connected to Zawda, to distinguish her as the wife of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Role Model & Advocate

Aisha became of age and married Prophet Mohammad ﷺ three years later. She looked to Sawda as an older sister and role model and Sawda nurtured her and loved her. She always played the role of bringing the Prophet ﷺ joy and calmness into his life. She was a great cook. After her generosity of spirit and laughter, she is known for her charity. Aisha said Sawda was the most generous of people. She gave away everything she had, anytime she received gifts, she didn't even look at them but would immediately give them away.

She didn't confront anyone and lived quietly until she became elderly and wasn't able to do much. She walked with a slow pace and told the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ that she was no longer interested in intimacy. He agreed to relieve her of her marital responsibilities and she gave her nights to Aisha. She was keen to keep her status as his wife in the Hereafter however.

She was in peace with everyone around her and was very private. She died sometime between 644 and 674, a 30 year span because she was so private and out of the public eye.

She narrated only five hadith. Her generosity continued even after her death ; when she died she asked for her room to be merged with the room of Aisha so she could have more space.

Everyone remembered her for her loving spirit. Ibn Abbas fell into sujud upon hearing of her death. Her funeral was not grand, it was simple as she was.

Her desire to be with the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ in Jannat al Firdose will be granted isA.

Lessons Learned

- Prophet Mohammad ﷺ grieved for his first wife Khadija and did not re-marry until the idea was brought to him. His second wife Sawda was also older than him, like Khadija was and was previously married. These facts negates many defamatory statements about the Prophet ﷺ
- The quality of bringing joy into people's lives is of tremendous value
- Many people who remain out of the public eye play important roles in the lives of others, who are more well known. This does not minimize their contribution and legacy however.

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