

THE **F1RST**S

A Lecture Series

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INSTITUTE FOR ISLAMIC RESEARCH

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Um Habiba - Part 2

Royalty Redefined

Like Um Salama, Um Habiba had a distinct commitment to and a strength in her faith, in spite of being in very difficult situations throughout her life. She was the daughter of Abu Sufyan, an arch rival of Prophet Mohammad and the Muslims, and becoming Muslim would mean she would lose her family and position in society. Her migration to Abyssinia with her first husband and then being alone with her daughter in a strange land after he left Islam could have been overwhelming challenges to her faith, but she remained firm.

A Long Awaited Marriage

After six years of waiting from the date of their marriage contract, Um Habiba finally began her life as one of Prophet Mohammad's wives. This was 7 years after Prophet Mohammad had migrated to Medina himself. She had been away from her family, her culture and everything she knew for 13 years. She was reunited with Um Salama, who had also migrated with her to Abyssinia and they had a special bond.

Unlike Um Salama, who had told Prophet Mohammad that she wasn't sure she could be in a polygamist marriage because she was a very jealous person, Um Habiba actually asked him to also marry her sister, Azza. Prophet Mohammad declined and stated that it would not be halal for him to do so. This shows that he only acted upon divine instruction and is proof of his prophethood. He didn't make commands but rather only followed the commands that Allah prescribed.

A Dedicated Wife

When the Meccans violated the Treaty of Hudaibiyya, they began to panic, and Abu Sufyan (her father) traveled to Medina to affirm the treaty again. He tried to talk to Prophet Mohammad, Abu Bakr, Omar, and even Fatima, but they all rejected to speak to him. He then went to his daughter, Um Habiba, who he hadn't seen for years, and he discovered that she was now married to Prophet Mohammad.

Thinking she would help him get to Prophet Mohammad and convince him to affirm the treaty, he went to Um Habiba's room. As soon as he approached he saw her hastily put away the mattress and sit on the floor instead of letting him sit on the mattress with her. He asked her if that means that he is too good for the mattress or if the mattress is too good for him. She replied that indeed the mattress that Prophet Mohammad sleeps on is too good for him to sit on, displaying her dedication to the Prophet. He then realized even she would not help him.

Conquest of Mecca

Prophet Mohammad and the Muslims opened Mecca and he gave amnesty to all, despite all they had done to them. At that point, Abu Sufyan accepted Islam, along with her brother, Muawya. Um Habiba made a very long prostration to give thanks for their conversion. When Prophet Mohammad heard her asking for a long life with him and her father and brother, he explained that it would be more beneficial for her to instead pray to Allah for entrance into Paradise and refuge from the fire, since no one's written fate will be extended or shortened.

It was difficult for the Muslims to accept the elites of Quraish as Muslims amongst them now, and naturally there was a layer of tension and resentment. However, Prophet Mohammad focused on the good of the community above his own ego and treated them with graciousness. Abu Sufyan asked him for 3 things ; marriage to Um Habiba (affirmation since they were already married), Muawya to be a scribe for him, and for him to lead the Muslim army against the non-believers. In good character as always, the Prophet Mohammad responded positively to people's requests and he granted him all 3 items. For him, the conquest of Mecca was not about his ego, but rather the conquering of the concept of idolatry.

Prophet Mohammad's leniency and forgiveness of former enemies of Islam was very wise and it helped the Muslim community at large. For the sake of the community and to fortify the strength of Islam, he accepted the repentance of Abu Sufyan and his wife, Hind, who had caused him great personal pain in ordering the death of his beloved uncle, Hamza. He kept a keen eye on the community, its growth and its betterment. He continued to honor the weak and the oppressed however, and never favored the powerful over them, remembering always that Allah states that you are only given victory by the way you treat your most weak and oppressed.

Abu Sufyan died in battle and Muawya played an important role in Islamic history.

A Life of Purpose

Um Habiba dedicated her life to her faith and to scholarship. She avoided politics and privilege. She was third in rank of female narrators with 65 hadiths, after Aysha and Um Salama. Zaynab, daughter of Um Salama was one of her students.

One of the most practiced hadith was narrated by her ; whoever prays 12 rakahs each day will have a home built for them in Paradise. This is comprised of 2 before Fajr, 4 before Duhr, 2 after Duhr, 2 after Maghrib, and 2 after Isha prayer. Everyone in the chain of narration of this hadith followed it immediately upon hearing it and isA she will get rewarded for each person that does this sunna, because of her narration of it.

She also accompanied Prophet Mohammad on the Hajj and narrated hadith about it.

She lived a long life and upon her death she asked to speak to both Aysha and Um Salama individually and asked for forgiveness from them for any shortcomings she may have had with her through the years. They both forgave her and extended peace to her and she passed away.

Lessons Learned

- It is important to act with a clear mind when dealing with people, for the sake of the overall good and not be blinded by ego or animosity
- As soon as we hear about a habit of Prophet Mohammad, we should implement it in our life immediately without hesitation. It is these practices that he was sent to teach us to attain a closer relationship with Allah
- It is important to remain humble and not use one's rank or privilege to attain more than others in this life because it is not a means to attain success in the next life.
- We should not take anything for granted, even as a wife of Prophet Mohammad, she still asked forgiveness from people before she passed away. To stay in good standing with Allah is to have good relations with people.

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