

THE **F1RST**S

A Lecture Series

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Asma Bint Abi Bakr

The Possessor of Two Waist Belts

Her story is one of courage that we can all learn from. She was the daughter of Abu Bakr and Kutayla bint Abd al Uzza. She had one brother, Abdullah. She also had half-sisters and half-brothers. Her mother was divorced from Abu Bakr after he became a Muslim, and she never accepted Islam.

She was among the first 15 to accept Islam at the age of 11. She would often come to Dar ul Arqam to learn about Islam and spent much time with Khadija and learned from her. She married Zubayr Ibn al-Awam in Mecca, became pregnant, and prepared for Hijra soon afterward.

Belts in Heaven

Asma was tasked with taking food to her father and Prophet Muhammad ﷺ during the Hijra. Her brother Abdullah was tasked with keeping track of what people were planning in Mecca. She used two belts to carry the food to them discreetly. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ smiled when he saw how she was bringing them their food supply and told her, “Indeed Allah has given you in exchange for this, two belts in Paradise.”

Abu Jahl discovered that Asma knew the location of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and he confronted her with getting the information from her. She was alone and very pregnant but still refused to respond to his inquiry. Abu Jahl slapped her violently on her face, but she still refused to tell him of his whereabouts. She was fearless and very committed to her faith and the Prophet ﷺ.

Abu Kuhafa, her grandfather (father of Abu Bakr), who had not accepted Islam yet, told her that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had caused her so much trouble, discomfort, and deprivation and caused her to be without her father, but she replied that he had left her much and had given her so much that it is priceless.

Life in Medina

A Life of Poverty

Asma finally made it to Medina and gave birth to 8 children, five boys and three girls. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ came to her when she had Abdullah, and he carried him, mixed

his saliva with him and made dua for him. Abdullah would live to become one of the best leaders of the ummah.

When her non-Muslim mother came to visit her in Medina, she asked Prophet Muhammad ﷺ how she should greet her, and he told her to treat her with kindness and respect. Asma lived in poverty; her entire life was a struggle. Zubayr had nothing when he married her, just a camel and a horse. Zubayr was a dedicated warrior, and the Prophet ﷺ gifted Zubayr, a piece of land, to benefit from. That is all they had.

Abu Bakr sent her a female maid to help her since her life was so difficult, and Asma was very relieved to help.

She learned from Prophet Muhammad ﷺ that even though she and her husband did not have much, to give and to give without accounting. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ once told her, "do not count or Allah will count when He gives to you."

Her legacy looms as Abdullah's mother, who was a great Caliph and martyr who governed from Mecca and Urwa, who was a great scholar and narrated many hadith via Aisha (his aunt). Aisha loved her nephew so much that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ told her to take on the nickname of Umm Abdullah since she did not have any of her children.

Living Through Tragedy

At 100 years old, as the army of Hajaj was threatening Mecca, Abdullah asked her whether he should surrender or not. She told him to keep his dignity and that "a dignified strike with a sword is more beloved than the humiliating lash of a whip." She told him if he were to become a martyr, "I would feel sad for you if you were killed in falsehood. All praise is for the One that created you as one that He loves and that I love." She asked him to come close so she could hug and smell him, and they embraced for a long time, as they both knew it would be their farewell. He asked her to continue to make dua for him, and as he walked away, he saw and heard her as she made dua for him. He was killed and mutilated by the Kaaba by Hajaj and was crucified.

Asma went to see her son's body, even though she knew that his soul was no longer inside the body. She demanded that his body be brought down and given a proper burial. She marched in to speak to Hajaj without permission. She challenged him in his face and humiliated him. She told him that because he took away Abdullah's life in this world, Abdallah will take away Hajaj's afterlife.

After a lifetime of worship, she died soon after the death of Abdullah.

A Legacy of Teaching & Worship

- Numerous hadiths are narrated through her. She was not shy to ask questions that others would.
- She made hajj several times and taught the umma the Fiqh of Hajj (rulings of the Pilgrimage).
- She maintained her dignity and nobility.
- She was the mother of great men who contributed to the Muslim umma.
- She never took advantage of her status or the wealth of the umma. She lived a very simple and very humble life without complaining.
- Courage can be displayed not only by warriors but by "everyday people" doing "everyday things."

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