

THE WIVES OF THE PROPHET



We often hear the expression Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn (Mothers of the Believers) and may understand that it refers to the wives of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as Allah ﷻ awarded them this title in the Qur'an:

The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are their (the believers') mothers. [Ahzāb: 6]

They were his wives in this world and will be his wives in the Hereafter as well. They excelled in both religious and social life, and many received the glad tidings that their final destination would be Jannah. But who exactly were the "Mothers of the Believers"? Hereunder, we will endeavour to shed a little light on the lives of each of these illustrious personalities.

SAYYIDAH KHADĪJAH BINT KHUWAYLID

Sayyidah Khadījah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا was highly regarded in society with noble ancestry and amazing qualities. The Prophet ﷺ married her when he was 25 years old. She was the first person to believe in the Prophet ﷺ and assisted him in his mission. The Prophet ﷺ affirmed that she is the most virtuous of all women of the world. The Prophet ﷺ did not take any other wife during her lifetime. Thus, for 25 years she remained the only wife of the Prophet ﷺ. All the Prophet's ﷺ children were from her except Ibrāhīm رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. She passed away three years before the Hijrah. Allah sent greetings to her and gave her the glad tidings of a palace in Jannah, where she will hear no noise nor experience any fatigue. Sayyidunā 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, "I heard the Prophet ﷺ saying, 'The best of women [of the previous nations] was Maryam and the best of women [of this nation] is Khadījah.'" [Bukhārī]

SAYYIDAH SAWDAH BINT ZAM'AH

She embraced Islam early on and along with her husband migrated to Abyssinia, where her husband passed away. She is the first woman to marry the Prophet ﷺ after Sayyidah Khadījah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, which was before the Hijrah while still in Makkah. She desired deeply to remain in the wedlock of the Prophet ﷺ and sacrificed her day with the Prophet ﷺ out of love for him and to please him, so as to remain his wife in Jannah. She passed away during the final years of Sayyidunā 'Umar's رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ Khilāfah. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا said, "I have not seen a woman whose temperament I would like to resemble more than Sawdah." [Muslim]

SAYYIDAH 'Ā'ISHAH BINT ABĪ BAKR

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا has a unique honour of having been married only to the Prophet ﷺ, his other wives all being widows, and Sayyidah Zaynab bint Jahsh

divorced by her previous husband. Her exoneration from the false accusations against her was announced by Allah from the Heavens. She was the most beloved of the Prophet's ﷺ wives to him after Sayyidah Khadījah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا. Wahī descended upon the Prophet ﷺ while he lay beside her, which did not occur with any other wife. She is also renowned for being the most knowledgeable of all the women and many senior Sahābah would benefit from her knowledge. The Prophet ﷺ desired to spend the last days of his illness in her house and he passed away in her home, while in her lap, on her day. Allah caused her saliva to be mixed with that of the Prophet's ﷺ during his final moment in this world and his first in the Hereafter. [Bukhārī]

SAYYIDAH HAFSAH BINT 'UMAR

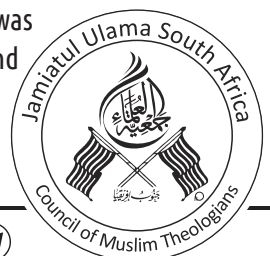
The Prophet ﷺ married her in the 3rd year after hijrah after her husband Khunays ibn Hudhāfah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ passed away from the injuries he sustained in the Battle of Uhud. She fasted often and would perform salāh diligently; hence, she was known as Sawwāmah Qawwāmah (One who fasts and performs salāh abundantly). Qays ibn Zayd reports that the Prophet ﷺ gave Hafsa a single divorce, but Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام came to the Prophet ﷺ and entreated, "Take Hafsa back as she fasts often and performs salāh abundantly, and she will be your wife in Jannah." Thus, the Prophet ﷺ revoked it. [Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr]

SAYYIDAH ZAYNAB BINT KHUZAYMAH

She was known as Umm al-Masākīn (Mother of the destitute) on account of her charity towards them. Her husband, 'Abd Allāh ibn Jahsh رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, was martyred in the Battle of Uhud and the Prophet ﷺ married her thereafter. However, she only remained with the Prophet ﷺ for two or three months thereafter and passed away in the 4th year after hijrah. The Prophet ﷺ performed the funeral prayer upon her after her demise. This is exclusive to her from all the Prophet's ﷺ later wives, as no other passed away during his lifetime except Sayyidah Khadījah and Sayyidah Zaynab bint Khuzaymah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا. The prayers of the Prophet ﷺ are an undeniable mercy upon the believers.

SAYYIDAH UMM SALAMAH BINT ABĪ UMAYYAH

She emigrated to both Abyssinia and Madīnah, and the Prophet ﷺ married her in 4 AH after her husband, Abū Salamah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ passed away. She was extremely beautiful with the noblest of lineages. The Prophet ﷺ married her and supplicated for her, giving her glad tidings that she will be in Jannah. [Tirmidhī] She was a very astute and wise lady, who was devoted to the welfare of the destitute and needy. After Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, she narrates the greatest number of ahādīth.



SAYYIDAH ZAYNAB BINT JAHSH

Her father was the leader of the Banū 'Abd al-Shams. She was from amongst the first group of Sahābah who emigrated. Her mother was Umaymah bint 'Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hāshim, who was the paternal aunt of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Sayyidah Zaynab was first married to the Prophet's adopted son, Sayyidunā Zayd ibn al-Hārithah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, but this marriage did not last. Soon thereafter, Allah ﷻ announced her marriage to the Prophet ﷺ in the Glorious Qur'ān, to end the prevalent cultural taboo of marrying the wife of one's adopted son. She was thus justly proud of having the exceptional honour of her nikāh taking place through divine decree above the seven heavens. This took place in 5 AH. The Prophet ﷺ informed his wives in his lifetime that the one with the longest arms among them would be the first to join him in the next life, referring to the most generous of them. Sayyidah Zaynab رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا was the first of the Prophet's ﷺ wives to depart from this world after his demise. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا once said when recounting her virtues, "I have never seen a woman more superior in dīn, more Allah fearing, more truthful, more conscious of maintaining family relations, more generous, having a greater sense of self-sacrifice in practical life, and a charitable disposition that draws one closer to Allah than Zaynab." [Muslim]

SAYYIDAH JUWAYRIYAH BINT AL-HĀRITH

Her name was originally Barrah, which the Prophet ﷺ then changed to Juwayriyah. She was taken captive in the Battle of Banū al-Mustaliq, also known as the Battle of al-Muraysi', in the fifth or sixth year after Hijrah. She was given to Thābit ibn Qays رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as part of his share in the spoils of war. He then made an agreement of Kitābah [where a master makes a deal with his/her slave to pay a certain amount in exchange for his/her freedom]. The Prophet ﷺ assisted her in fulfilling this agreement and married her thereafter. On account of her marriage to the Prophet ﷺ, the Muslims set free a hundred of her family members who had been taken as captives. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا said, "I have not seen a woman who was a greater source of blessing for her people than Juwayriyyah." [Musnad Ahmad] She performed abundant worship and remembered Allah excessively. She passed away in 50 AH.

SAYYIDAH UMM HABĪBAH BINT ABĪ SUFYĀN

Sayyidah Umm Habībah Ramlah bint Abī Sufyān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا accepted Islam with her husband, 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Jahsh al-Asadī. They both migrated to Abyssinia, where she gave birth to a daughter named Habibah. When her husband passed away, the Prophet ﷺ proposed to marry her. Al-Najashī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ performed her nikāh to the Prophet ﷺ in Abyssinia and gave her 4 000 silver coins as dowry on his behalf, before sending her to Madīnah. She is the closest of the Prophet's ﷺ wives to him in kinship. She was so conscious of fulfilling

the rights of others that even before her demise she sought pardon from all her co-wives for any harm she might have caused them. She passed away in 44 AH during the Khilāfah of her brother, Mu'āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

SAYYIDAH SAFIYYAH BINT HUYAYY

Prior to embracing Islam, Sayyidah Safiyyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا was first married to Salām ibn Mishkam and after him to Kinānah ibn Abī al-Huqayq, who was killed in the Battle of Khaybar. She was taken captive and given to Dihyah al-Kalbī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as his share from the spoils of war. He made an agreement of kitābah with her, which was paid by the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ then freed her and married her. Her lineage links up with Lāwī, the son of Allah's Prophet Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, and then later on again with the Prophet of Allah, Hārūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. The Prophet ﷺ comforted her with the words, "Certainly you are the daughter of a Prophet, your uncle is a Prophet, and you are married to a Prophet." The Prophet ﷺ praised her truthfulness when she said to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in his final sickness, "Verily by the oath of Allah, O Prophet of Allah, I wish for myself to be in your place and for you to be in mine (i.e. in good health)." [Musannaf 'Abd al-Razzāq]

SAYYIDAH MAYMŪNAH BINT AL-HĀRITH

Sayyidah Maymūnah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا was first married to Mas'ūd ibn 'Amr ibn 'Umayr al-Thaqafī during the days of ignorance, who separated from her. She then married Abū Raham ibn 'Abd al-'Uzzā but he passed away shortly thereafter. Sayyidunā 'Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ—who was her guardian—then married her to the Prophet ﷺ. She was the last woman whom the Messenger of Allah ﷺ married. The Prophet ﷺ married her after Umrat al-Qadā' at Sarif (outside Makkah) and she later passed away at this very spot in 51 AH. It is reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "The sisters who are (all) believers are: Maymūnah- the wife of the Prophet ﷺ, her sister Umm al-Fadl bint al-Hārith [wife of 'Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ], her sister Asmā' bint al-Hārith [wife of Hamzah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ], and Asmā' bint 'Umayy [wife of Ja'far رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ]; they are all uterine sisters." [Hākim] Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا praised her, "She was the most Allah-fearing from us and the best maintainer of family ties." [Al-Isābah]

We have presented a small sketch of the noble traits of the Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn, which we will hold onto as a generous provision to keep us afloat amidst the tides of derision raised against them. It is incumbent upon our daughters and wives to learn about them, propagate it, and adorn themselves with those same virtues. This will make them of those who have the best of character and exemplary strength. Verily Allah informed them, "O wives of the Prophet, you are not like ordinary women." And in the verse that follows, "Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O Ahl al-Bayt, and to purify you with extensive purification." [Al-Ahzāb: 32-33]



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