

Umm Ma`bad (radhiAllahu anha)

Her name is 'Atikah bint Khalid al-Khuza'iyah. Umm Ma`bad is her nickname. Her name is connected to the greatest event in the history of Islam: the Hijrah (migration) from Makkah to Madinah.

She was a famous, chaste, strong and courageous woman. She had a camp in Qudayd. She used to sit down in the courtyard of her camp wrapped in her garment, giving food and drink to the travelers who passed by her.

Umm Ma`bad Witnesses a Miracle

The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and his Companions: Abu Bakr, 'Amir ibn Fuhayrah, a freed-slave of Abu Bakr and their guide, 'Abdullah ibn Urayqit - who was then a polytheist - took a rest at her camp.

The people were then suffering from a severe drought. The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and his Companions asked for some milk, meat or dates which they were ready to pay for. But unfortunately they did not get any of that for she said, "By Allah, if we had had anything we would not be lacking in showing hospitality."

The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) sighted a goat at the shaded side of the camp, kept away from other sheep by weakness. The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) asked Umm Ma'bad, "Does this goat have any milk?" Umm Ma 'bad answered, "She is too weak to have any." He then said, "Can you allow me to milk her?" The woman said, "if you see any milk in her, then you may milk her."

The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) then called for the goat and touched the udder with his hand and mentioned the name of Allah. The udder suddenly swelled and started flowing with milk. He then called for a vessel that whose content could be enough for the entire group and he abundantly squeezed milk into it. He gave Umm Ma'bad some of the milk and also gave to the group until every one was satiated. He was the one who drank last and he said, "The cup-bearer drinks last."

He milked the goat once more and the people drank slowly as opposed to their first drinking that was quick because they were then severely thirsty. He then milked the goat once more and left that for Umm Ma'bad. It has been mentioned by

Waqidi, the great Islamic historian, that the goat which the Prophet had milked with his noble hands lived for many years giving abundant milk.

He and his Companions mounted their camels and moved on. After their departure, Umm Ma'bad's husband, Aktham ibn Abi al-Jawn al-Khuza'i came herding an emaciated flock of sheep. When he saw the milk or its impact in the vessel he said, "Umm Ma 'bad, what is this? Where have you got the milk while there is no goat with milk here?" His wife answered, "A blessed man passed by us." She then told him the story in details.

Umm Ma`bad's Wonderful Description of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam)

With the word 'a blessed' used by Umm Ma'bad, we would like to have a short reflection. Umm Ma'bad uttered this word spontaneously and naturally. The word slipped from her mouth having been influenced emotionally with what she saw. Her husband, Abu Ma'bad who was amazed by the news his wife told him, said, "Describe him."

Umm Ma'bad then described him to her husband and the description was one of the best of all descriptions! She was delighted by what she saw of the Prophet's blessing and was overwhelmed. She observed every action of his in order to fully grasp the great picture in her imagination.

It was also remarkable that this woman, who was a Bedouin, illiterate and living in an dry and empty land, far from the people's society could have this kind of awareness and accuracy.

Umm Ma'bad told her husband, describing the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), "I saw a man who is clearly handsome and with a beautiful face. He is well-built. He is neither blemished by a big stomach nor did he have an unusually small head. The pupils of his eyes are very dark, the edges of his eyelids are long and the area around the pupils of his eyes is so white. His eyebrows are perfectly close. He has a very dark hair, a rather long neck and a thick beard. When he kept silent he is always contemplative and when he speaks eminence and splendor show in his words. His words are like sliding stringed pearls. He is a gifted speaker whose words are neither too few nor too much. He has the clearest words and the most audible voice when he speaks. When you look at him from afar, he is the most handsome of all people, and when you move closer to him he is the most pleasant of them. You will never be tired of looking at him. He is like a branch between two branches.

He is the most handsome of the three (she means: the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) Abu Bakr and Amir ibn Fuhayrah) and the most important of them. He has Companions who honor him. When he speaks they listen to his words and when he commands they hasten to carry out his order. They serve him and rally around him. He does not frown or nag."

Abu Ma`bad said, "By Allah, this is the Qurayshi man. If I see him I will follow him." In another narration he said, "I intend to follow him if I am able to." And this had actually happened. For, Umm Ma'bad and her husband headed for Madinah, embraced Islam, swore allegiance to him and kept his company until he passed away.

May Allah be pleased with Umm Ma`bad. Ameen