

Ruqayyah (radhiAllahu anha) The Lady of Two Migrations

The blessed daughter of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam)

Ruqayyah (radhiallahu anha) was born after her sister Zaynab. She was also a source of happiness for her noble parents. Soon afterwards, Umm Kulthum was born, and both of them grew together as if they were twins. Their closeness to one another greatly increased especially since their eldest sister, Zaynab had married and moved away. They then became ever more closed and more attached to each other. It is as if both of them had been destined for the same fate from the beginning to the end.

Almost all the books of Islamic history agree on the fact that the two noble sisters - Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum - shared almost everything in common.

Marriage of Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum (radhiallahu anhuma)

After Zaynab had been married to Abul-Aas ibn Rabi and Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum neared marriage age, Abu Talib, Prophet's uncle came to him seeking the hands of the two girls in marriage to sons of his brother, 'Abdul-'Uzza ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib, otherwise known as Abu Lahab.

Abu Talib said, "We came to ask for the hands of our daughters, Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum in marriage. We hope that you will not make their marriage difficult to your cousins, 'Utbah and 'Utaybah sons of 'Abdul-'Uzza." The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) responded, "Uncle, can you please give me some time so that I can talk to my daughters?" The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) proposed the matter to his family, his wife and her daughters, the concerned ones.

Khadijah remained silent for sometime, pondering. She knew Umm Jameel - the wife of Abu Lahab and the mother of 'Utbah and 'Utaybah very well. She knew that she was hardhearted and brutal. She knew that she was sharp-tongued, arrogant and utterly reckless. Therefore, she was concerned about the girls and she would not like to surrender them to this heated atmosphere that was filled with bitterness, hatred and evil conduct.

But she feared that if she expressed her opinion, she would annoy her husband and make him think that she wanted to break ties of kinship that was between him and his family. So she remained silent. The two girls also kept silent and did not utter a word in reply. The decision was made.

The marriage contract took place in an atmosphere mixed with anxiety. The affectionate father invoked blessing on his daughters and left them in the care of Allah.

The Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) receives Prophethood

In Makkah, a light gleamed that illuminated the city and removed its darkness. That was when Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wa salam) was commissioned a Prophet and a Messenger of light and guidance. Khadijah remembered her daughters, Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum and what their fate was likely going to be at the hand of the wicked Umm Jameel and her husband.

The Quraysh met and conspired on how to deal with Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). One of them said: "You have saved Muhammad from his distress. Send his daughters back to him and keep him busy with them!"

Abu Lahab agreed and cancelled his sons' marriage to the Prophet's daughters. He told his two sons: "I am going to reject you unless you have divorced Muhammad's daughters!"

The two young ladies were forced to return to their father's house with great distress and sorrow. Abu Lahab and his wife, the wood-carrier, did not stop at bothering of the Muslims and harming them; they also extremely hurt the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam).

Times of Hardship and Persecution

Abu Lahab would always attack the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) at every gathering and on the road. He would abuse and insult him without having the least feeling of family relations. This is because; Allah had removed all senses of goodness and righteousness from his heart and from the heart of his vicious wife, who used collect harmful thorns and throw them on the Messenger's way in order to demonstrate how evil-hearted and immoral she was.

"The time of sleep is over, O' Khadijah!" The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) announced to his loving and sincere wife. The vicious attack against him and his Companions had been intensified, especially against the weak ones.

In fact, the two young ladies felt a complete change in the house. Their house was now surrounded with cruelty from all angles. It had become the main target of persecution, torment and mocking. Smile of happiness had disappeared from its air. These two ladies endured the situation with their parents, doing so as an act of worship for Allah. They bore it with perseverance, in the cause of Allah, pains, hardship and sacrifice. And they were elevated by Allah Ta`ala throughout these trials and hardships.

Ruqayyah Gets Married to Uthman (radhiallahu anhu)

The Quraysh were utterly disappointed! The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) did not grieve because of his daughters that were sent back to him for Allah soon compensated him with a husband who was better than the first two husbands. He compensated him with a righteous, dignified, gracious, highborn, abundantly rich and amiable husband who was very bashful. The person was Uthman ibn Affan (radhiallahu anhu).

Uthman was one of the most gracious of all Quraysh youths in terms of lineage, status and wealth. When the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) gave his daughter, Ruqayyah to Uthman in marriage, they were very happy and contented.

The First Migration: The Land of Abyssinia

When the Quraysh's persecution of the Muslims became more severe, the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) permitted his Companions to migrate to Abyssinia in order to escape with their religion so that they would not be tempted. He told them:

"If only you could go to Abyssinia, for there is a king there who does not allow that anyone should be wronged in his presence. And it is the land of truth. If only you could go there until Allah provide a way out for you."

Uthman migrated in the company of his weeping, afraid and agonized wife, Ruqayyah. She hugged her father, mother and sisters almost choking with sorrow and distress. Uthman was also extremely sad.

His persevering and believing wife looked at him and told him reassuringly, "Allah is indeed with us and with those we are leaving behind in the this blessed land of Makkah."

The emigrants then departed Makkah from Jeddah sea coast. It was from there that they boarded a ship to Abyssinia. They disembarked at the shore and they moved in one group to the inland until they arrived at the palace of king Negus. They informed him of their migration to his land and their experience of persecution in Makkah.

The distant between Makkah and Abyssinia was not short! There are, between the two lands, dry sand, scorching sun, deep sea and deserts and jungles. In addition to its farness, the road was also intractable and full of hardships. This had made some emigrants fall ill and some of them almost perished, all in the cause of Allah.

Quraysh on the Trail of the Muslims!

When the Quraysh knew of the Muslims' place of refuge and stay, they sent after them a delegation to disrupt their stay and try to force the Muslims to come back to Arabia. They also presented "gifts" to the Najjashi in order to persuade him to send the Muslims back, but the Najjashi was a wise and intelligent ruler and was not lured in by their petty bribes and complaints.

He gave the Muslims shelter in his land and refused to comply with the request of the idol-worshippers. The Quraysh failed in their mission of forcing the Muslims to come back and went back to Makkah empty-handed. The Muslims continued to enjoy security and peace at their place of migration.

Uthman and Ruqayyah's return

The emigrants spent days, months and years of their life yearning to go back to their homeland, despite the security, peace and freedom that they enjoyed. When they heard that Hamza and Umar (radhiallahu anahuma) had accepted Islam, they were very happy. Some of them quickly returned to Makkah hoping to see the Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa salam) and their missed families they had left for a long time.

Others chose to stay until the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa salam) would permit them to come back home. This latter group was led by Ja`far ibn Abi Talib. Uthman and Ruqayyah were among those who decided to return. Hardly had they set their feet on the soil of the homeland and saw the houses where they spent their youth that their eyes were filled with tears.

However, the returning refugees were stunned by the increase in the Quraysh's heartless persecution of the Muslims. So they were greatly disappointed.

The saddest of these returnees was Ruqayyah. For, when she entered her father's house and kissed her sisters, Umm Kulthum and Fatimah, she anxiously asked of their great mother. Her sisters remained silent and did not respond to her question. Their tears served as the most vivid answer. Their mother, Khadijah was dead!!!

Ruqayyah cried very much in memory of her dear mother, and then she put her faith in Allah and accepted His decision.

Uthman and Ruqayyah - from Abyssinia to Madinah

Uthman and Ruqayyah (radhiallahu anhuma) did not stay long in Makkah. The Muslims migrated to Madinah and the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa salam) himself followed them soon afterwards.

Two years before migration to Madeenah, Ruqayyah gave birth to her only child for 'Uthman, 'Abdullah. The boy used to fill the life of his parents with happiness and friendliness. He was, in fact, a consolation for them for all the hardship they had suffered in days past. But the believer is always put to trial.

Their new baby Abdullah ibn Uthman got an eye infection which became very severe. This eventually caused the death of the child and a few days later Ruqayyah was also struck with extreme sadness and soon fell a victim of fever.

Her loving and affectionate husband stayed by the side of his wife nursing her and invoking Allah to alleviate her suffering and make recover from her illness. While he was nursing his sick wife, an announcer called on the emigrants and the helpers to come out and take part in helping the Muslims in battle.

He decided to go and respond to the call of Allah and His Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa salam). But the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa salam) commanded him to remain near his sick wife to care for her.

The departure

The struggle between life and death was fierce. Eventually, Ruqayyah passed away.

The Messenger of Allah (radhiallahu anha) entered Uthman's house having been shocked by the news of his daughter's death. He moved closer to her and sadly bid farewell to her. Fatimah also stood at her sister's deathbed crying. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) comforted her and compassionately wiped her tears off with his noble garment. It was then that the sobbing of the women who were present became louder. Umar (radhiallahu anhu) wanted to stop them but the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa salam) held his hand and told him:

"Whatever tears shed by the eyes and however much the heart grieves, that is from Allah. It is actions of the hands and words uttered by the tongue that come from Satan."

The farewell

The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) who was the bereaved father, performed funeral prayers on his daughter and followed the funeral procession to the Baqee' until she was buried. Thereafter, he returned home and to his masjid carrying on with his struggle and delivering the message.

May Allah be pleased with Ruqayyah, the Prophet's daughter, the lady of two migrations and the wife of the great Uthman ibn Affan! May He reward her for her faith, struggle, tribulations, and her perseverance with the best and the fullest reward.