

## **Umm Kulthum (radhiAllahu anha) The Confined of the Valley**

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

Umm Kulthum (radhiallahu anha) was a woman of the most excellent and commendable qualities. And on top of all that she had one other quality: she was Muhammad's (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) daughter! She had a piece of his light. We shall see these qualities while we go through the events of her life.

### **Hardships and Sufferings**

Though Umm Kulthum (radhiallahu anha) did not migrate to Abyssinia and face the pain of being away from homeland and family, she had suffered what was greater than that migration and exile. For, she and her fellow Muslims, and the members of Banu Hashim clan were confined to the valley of Abu Talib where they suffered indescribable hunger, starvation and isolation for three years. During this period, they suffered the cruelest treatment that any human can imagine.

The oppressive leaders of Quraysh had made a pact to isolate the Muslims and members of Banu Hashim clan. To affirm this malicious pact, they hanged its copy on the interior wall of the Ka`bah. And it remained so until Allah provided the besieged people with relief and a way out.

### **The Third of the Daughters**

The Quraysh, in their gatherings, used to say, "Muhammad has only daughters." They used to say this to mock at the Prophet and put him down. And they said this in total ignorance of Allah's great divine wisdom.

The Pre-Islamic Arabs were an unjust and barbaric people who buried female babies alive because of fear of poverty and shame, and out of stupidity. They did not know that just as boys were granted to parents from Allah Ta`ala, girls were also a gift from Allah Ta`ala. If girls were not a gift from Allah, then the Prophet of Allah would have never been blessed with four daughters.

The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) had a new baby daughter. She was named Umm Kulthum. She had a gradual but steady grow and she became an excellent companion for her sister Ruqayyah. As we have mentioned earlier, they were like a set of twins. They were married to Abu Lahab's sons; they were then returned to their father after he had been chosen to be Prophet. And that was better for them. For, both of them escaped from a horrible life with the "carrier of thorns". As for Ruqayyah, she was soon

married to the noble and virtuous Uthman ibn Affan (radhiAllahu anhu) with whom she migrated to Abyssinia.

### **Caretaker of the Prophet's household**

Umm Kulthum (radhiAllahu anha) remained with her younger sister, Fatimah in their father's house in Makkah. She was assisting her mother, Khadijah in taking care of the household responsibilities and easing the pressure of the Quraysh's persecution on her father with love and compassion.

Therefore, Umm Kulthum lived with her father throughout the hardest times of persecution, the harshest conditions in the cause of calling people to Islam and the cruelest days of struggle.

The Quraysh became so severe in their persecution that they gathered together and decided to cut-off all ties with the Muslims and members of Banu Hashim clan - the Prophet's immediate clan. This boycott - in that time - was of the harshest forms of punishing someone. To show how serious they were on this decision, the Quraysh wrote a document in this regard and hanged it on the inside wall of the Ka'bah.

The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) was then forced out, along with his family and followers and the Banu Hashim to the valley of Abu Talib in one of the outskirts of Makkah.

There, they lived in the most difficult form of boycott. They suffered the pangs of hunger so much so that some of them ate tree leaves.

Sa`d bin Abi Waqqas says, "We used to take leather, soak it in water and then when it would get soft, we would then eat it out of hunger. We did not have anything else."

They remained in this harsh situation for about three years. Sometimes, food was secretly taken to them, especially by some Makkans who had relatives among them.

One day, Abu Jahl noticed that Hakeem ibn Hizam ibn Khuwaylid was walking secretly, carrying wheat to his aunt, Khadijah while a boy was accompanying him. Abu Jahl caught him and shouted, "Are you carrying food to Banu Hashim?! By Allah! I will not allow you and your food to leave here until I expose you in Makkah!"

Hisham ibn 'Amr ibn Rabi`ah al-Amiri was one of the Makkans, pained by the injustice and torment from which the Muslims were suffering. He would come with a camel loaded with food every night and release him at the entrance of the valley and strike him in the side. The camel would then enter into the valley and the Banu Hashim would receive him as if it was a blessing that Allah sent to them from the heaven.

### **Responsibilities and hard work**

The choking atmosphere had a very bad effect on many Muslims physically, psychologically and socially.

One example of this evil effect was Khadijah's illness. Umm Kulthum's role became apparent here, for she took care of her mother with all the experience, love and compassion that she had. In addition to this hard task, she was also responsible for taking care of her younger sister, Fatimah. Umm Kulthum spent three years of her youthful life in struggle, patience and perseverance. Therefore, she suitably deserved the title: 'The Confined of the Valley'.

Moreover, had Khadijah recovered from her illness, the matter would have been easier for Umm Kulthum and her patience would have been adequately compensated for. But the loving and affectionate mother could no longer bear the illness. She died soon after the end of the boycott.

The sorrow of Umm Kulthum increased and she was weakened by distress. Also, she was burdened with the responsibilities of the great household of the noble Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). Then, it is not a surprise that she died in the prime of her youth.

A careful review of the life of Umm Kulthum would show us that she had had the bitterest experience and trial: Her parents were living in sadness and pain; her sister, Zaynab and her husband were in Makkah and she could do nothing to help them; her childhood and life companion, Ruqayyah was away in a foreign land; her mother, Khadijah - mother of the faithful- was in a struggle with death in a severe illness; and the little Fatimah needed care and support! Throughout these periods, Umm Kulthum shouldered some of the greatest responsibilities. Yet, she was patient hoping to get her reward from Allah. She eased the sufferings, pains and sorrows of her father and she consoled her mother with these soothing words: "Everything will be alright, mother!"

### **End of boycott and death of Khadijah**

Abu Talib came to the valley and gave his nephew the good news that the boycott had been ended and the document taken down. He also informed him that Quraysh elders had decided to stand on the side of Banu Hashim and bring an end to the boycott.

The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) was very happy to hear this and he conveyed the good news to members of his household and the Muslims. And they all returned to Makkah, with their faith and certainty in Allah greatly reinforced. Their trial had increased them in closeness to Allah, and their bitter tribulation refined them and strengthened their resolve.

The boycott had weakened the noble lady, Khadijah. She lay down on her bed in Makkah expecting the day that she would meet Allah. It did not take long before she breathed her last and died. Her daughters, Zaynab, Umm Kulthum and Fatimah stood round her having a final look at their mother's bright and beautiful face. That was on the 10th day of Ramadhan, in the tenth year of her husband's being chosen as a Prophet.

The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) buried her with his own noble hands at her grave at a place in Makkah. He then returned home sad. He hugged his daughters, Umm Kulthum and Fatimah, consoled them and tried to lighten their pains and agony.

The responsibility of Umm Kulthum increased. She was now the main mistress of the Prophet's noble household. And she played the role excellently. She had to. For; she is the daughter of the leader of all the women of mankind, Khadijah bint Khuwaylid.

### **Migration to Madinah**

The Muslims migrated to the blessed city of Madinah Munawwarah and the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) migrated after them. His journey was the greatest journey known in the history of Islam and made in the cause of Allah and in supporting the truth. However, Umm Kulthum and Fatimah remained in Makkah for their safety.

When the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) arrived at Madinah, he sent his boy, Zayd ibn Harithah (radhiallahu anha) to Makkah to bring his daughters. They first went to bid farewell to their mother's grave and headed for Madinah.

### **Marriage**

Two years that were full of great events passed after the migration. During these two years, Umm Kulthum witnessed the return of her father victorious from the battle of Badr. She also witnessed the death of her sister and best friend Ruqayyah.

At the onset of the third year, her heart was still clouded with sorrow. But she would notice Uthman come to her father to receive condolence, advice and support over the death of his

precious wife, Ruqayyah. She would also notice how the tears that rolled down his cheeks expressed his distress and grief.

The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) then addressed Uthman, "I am giving you Umm Kulthum - Ruqayyah's sister in marriage. If I had ten daughters, I would have married them to you."

She lived with Uthman (radhiallahu anha) for six years and she saw how the glory of Islam reached its highest. She witnessed her father becoming victorious, and her husband as a favored Companion and a selfless warrior who fought with his life and wealth.

### **For every term is a Decree**

When the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) had accomplished the conquest of Makkah in the year 8 A.H., Umm Kulthum yearned to visit the grave of her beloved mother, Khadijah. She discussed the matter with her husband and father, and both agreed. But she could not fulfill that desire, for she died in the month of Sha'ban 9 A.H.

The Messenger of Allah buried her beside the remains of her beloved sister, Ruqayyah (radhiallahu anha). The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) stood beside the grave of his two daughters, with his eyes filled with tears and his heart burdened with successive sorrows.

May Allah be pleased with Umm Kulthum the Prophet's daughter and the Confined Lady of the Valley! May He let her reside in the abode of His righteous and pious servants!