

# HADRAT SAFIA BINT-E- HAYE (R.A)

During the pre-Islamic days, Safia meant, a portion of the booty captured as a result of war and earmarked for the chief or the king. Hadrat Safia entered the Holy Prophet's family as a result of the battle at Khyber, so she was given this name. Her real name was Zainab. She was a Jew by birth and her ancestral chain linked her with the Prophet Hadrat Haroon. She belonged to a very respectable family. In whole of Arab peninsula, her family was respected as the descendants of the Prophet Hadrat Haroon. Her mother was from Banu-Quraiza tribe and her father hailed from Banu-Nadeer tribe. These two tribes were among the most respected Jewish tribes of Arabia.

She was first married to a famous poet Salam bin Muskam but his marriage did not last long and ended in a divorce. Her second marriage took place with a tribal chief and poet Kinaana. Kinaana was the chief of Alqamoos castle situated in Khyber area. As a result of battle at Khyber, Muslims conquered all the area and the castle Alqamoos fell too. Kinaana was killed in the castle Alqamoos fell too. Kinaana was killed in the castle and his family including Safia was captured.

The battle of Khyber proved decisive for the Jews eliminating them as a major social, military or political power. They lost almost all their important chiefs in this battle. This battle deprived the Jews of the power and position to conspire against Muslims, much less to wage war against them.

Safia lost her brothers, father and husband in this battle, so amongst the prisoners of war she was the most miserable. At the end of the battle the booty and prisoners were presented before the chief of the victorious army i.e. the Holy Prophet Mohammad (SAW). Hadrat Bilal (*Hadrat Bilal was one of the first ten persons, who had embraced Islam. He was a Negro but a great lover of the Prophet. All the Muslims loved him because of his love for the Holy Prophet. All the Muslims loved him because of his love for the Holy Prophet (SAW) and his seniority in embracing Islam.*) Brought Safia and her sister through the battle-field, the dead bodies of her relatives were scattered all over the ground. Among the dead were those, who had given her protection in the childhood and others who were her kith and kin. Safia crossed the battle field with heavy heart and with a sense of torture but controlled her grief. But her

sister could not control herself. She started wailing loudly. At last these two women reached before the Holy Prophet (SAW). Safia took a corner and sat silently while her sister kept on wailing loudly cursing herself and others. The Holy Prophet (SAW) said:

“Take her away, Bilal, you are very callous. You brought these women through a course where their relatives were lying dead” .

At the time of distribution of spoils of war and the captives of war, Wahya Kalbi requested,

“I need a maid servant.”

The Holy Prophet (SAW) allowed him to go for a choice. Wahya Kalbi selected him to go for a choice. Wahya Kalbi selected Safia. Safia was higher in social status than Wahya, so the companions of the Holy Prophet (SAW) commented:

“Banu Nadeer and Banu Quraiza are amongst the most respected Jewish tribes of Arabia and she is a descendent of these two tribes. Further she is the daughter of a chief of Banu-Nadeer and wife of a chief of Banu Quraiza.”

After a bit of a hesitation, one of the companions said,

“Because of her family status, honour and respect. It will be befitting if she is taken as the Holy Prophet’s maid.”

Following the advice of his companions, the Holy Prophet (SAW) gave a substitute maid servant to Wahya Kalbi and instead of taking Safia as his maid servant, he released her and said:

“You are free to return to your family or if you agree, you can marry me.”

The Holy Prophet’s marriage with Hadrat Juwairia who hailed from the tribe Banu Mustaliq had created a good impression on Banu Mustaliq and most of this tribe had embraced Islam. Hadrat Juwairia’s marriage had served for the extension of Islam. The same is true of Umm-e-Habiba’s marriage. As a result of Hadrat Umm-e-Habiba’s marriage, the arch enemy of Islam, Abu Sufyan softened his attitude towards Islam because Umm-e-Habiba was his daughter. On the same analogy, the companions of Holy Prophet (SAW) thought that Safia’s marriage with the Prophet can diffuse the onslaught of Jewish hostility against the Muslims Prophet went a step further and not only released Safia but also allowed her to go back to her home although he could have kept her as his bondsmaid being prisoner of war.

The death of father, brother and her husband had made Safia quite lonely and instead of going back to her clan, she preferred to stay with the Holy Prophet (SAW) and consented for the marriage. After obtaining her consent, the Holy Prophet (SAW) married her at Khyber. It was 7<sup>th</sup> year of Hijrah. Soon, the army

of Muslims started for Madina and the marriage feast was thrown to Sahbaa (*A place near Khyber on way to Madina*). The army of Muslims left for Madina after a night stop at Sahbaa, and the Holy Prophet (SAW) mounted Hadrat Safia on his camel and wrapped her with his *Abaa* (*A cloth or sheet usually worn by Arab men as a shelter against rough water*). This indicated that Safia is now his wife and the mother of the faithful.

A natural result of this marriage was that the Jews thenceafter never participated in any battle against the Muslims.

When the Holy Prophet (SAW) reached Madina, Hadrat Safia was taken to the house of Hadrat Harith bin No 'man. Hadrat Harith was an ardent follower of the Holy Prophet. He was quite prosperous and always spent his money to seek the pleasure of the Holy Prophet (SAW). In this very house, Hadrat Ayesha, Hadrat Zainab bint-e-Jahash and Juwairia came to see her. Many other women also visited to see her because she was very beautiful. After meeting her, Hadrat Ayesha left for her home. The Holy Prophet (SAW) followed Hadrat Ayesha and asked, "How did you find her?" "Oh! She is a Jew" Hadrat Ayesha replied.

"Don't say that, she is a Muslim now, and quite respectable". The Holy Prophet (SAW) said.

It is said that coming events cast their shadows before and often it happens that somebody predicts about a certain event and it comes true. Such incidents, when attributed to pious people are taken as some supernatural instinct or divine indication. Hadrat Safia had a few marks on her face. Once the Holy Prophet (SAW) asked her about these marks and she said.

"When I was a child, I dreamt that moon has fallen into my lap from the sky. I narrated the dream to my father who got angry and slapped me on my face and said, "Do you expect to become Queen of Arabia". The marks on my face are the marks of my father's slap".

But the prediction came true and Hadrat Safia was honored as the wife of the Holy Prophet (SAW), who was the lord of lords.

Hadrat Safia was very kind and tolerant by nature. She had a great control over her nerves. The fact can be substantiated from the event when she was taken to the Holy Prophet across the battle field at Khyber. She saw the dead bodies of her near relatives but did not weep. She was outspoken, truthful and social. She always ignored the rough remarks of other wives of the Holy Prophet (SAW). She never teased anybody intentionally. Sometimes the other wives of the Holy Prophet (SAW) behaved harshly with her but she never retorted. She had embraced Islam with all sincerity, so the comments of others for her being an ex-Jew always tortured her. Once Hadrat Ayesha and Hadrat Hafsa called her a 'Jew' and she kept quiet. On the arrival of the Holy Prophet (SAW), she

mentioned those remarks before him. He said, "If they claim to be from the family of the Prophet then why didn't you say that I am far superior because I am the daughter of Haroon, niece of Moses and wife of Mohammad".

Likewise, after the death of the Holy Prophet (SAW) during the reign of Hadrat Umar, a bondmaid of Hadrat Safia made a complaint to Hadrat Umar against Hadrat Safia and said, "She still likes Jewish traditions and pays respect to Saturday (*The Jews pay respect to this day of the week as Yaumus Sabt and attach religious importance it*). She also has social relations with Jews".

Hadrat Umar enquired about the fact from Hadrat Safia. Hadrat Safia replied, "Allah gave me Friday (*It bears special significance for the Muslims as a day for mass congregational prayers every week*) instead of Saturday. So Saturday is no good for me. As far as social relations with Jews are concerned, I can't be blamed for it, since they are my relatives".

After this reply, Hadrat Safia called the bonds maid and asked who had instigated her for such a complaint. The bondmaid replied, "I was under the spell of Devil".

On this Hadrat Safia said, "May Allah take pity on you. I set you free from now on".

Hadrat Safia had a great love for the Holy Prophet (SAW). While the Holy Prophet (SAW) was lying on his death bed, every one of his wives visited him. Hadrat Safia prayed while standing in front of his bed 'May Allah relieve you of your pains and torture. I wish I could take your sickness'. All the wives looked at each other with surprise. The Holy Prophet (SAW) declared, "By God, she is saying the truth, she really means it".

The Holy Prophet (SAW) too had a great love for Hadrat Safia, because she was very courteous in social dealings especially in her behavior with her in-laws. The Holy Prophet (SAW) used to care much for her. Once during a long journey while all his wives were traveling with him, Hadrat Safia's camel became sick and was no more in a position to undertake the journey. Hadrat Safia started weeping and felt helpless. Soon the Holy Prophet (SAW) learnt about it and came to her rescue. He wiped her tears with his hands and consoled her. But Hadrat Safia kept on weeping. The Holy Prophet (SAW) broke the journey and announced a night stay at the spot. In the evening, the Holy Prophet (SAW) asked Hadrat Zainab bint-e-Jahash.

"Zainab, why don't you give your camel to Safia".

"Should I give my camel to that Jewess"? Hadrat Zainab exclaimed.

Although Hadrat Zainab was very generous at heart but perhaps jealousy forced her to say that. This sentence made the Prophet so angry that he severed

talking terms with Hadrat Zainab. It continued for about three months until Hadrat Ayesha asked for Hadrat Zainab's pardon and Holy Prophet (SAW) agreed. Hadrat Zainab had reported about these days in the following words:--  
"While the Holy Prophet (SAW) was angry with me, I was very uneasy and sorry on my fault and had promised myself that I shall never utter such words in future".

Hadrat Safia had a bountiful nature. She owned a house which she gave away in charity. When Hadrat Safia came to Madina after her marriage, Hadrat Fatima, daughter of the Holy Prophet (SAW) visited her and Hadrat Safia gave away her ear pendants (ornament), she also presented gifts to all her co-wives of the Holy Prophet (SAW).

Hadrat Safia was a perfect wife and cared for even the trivial likes and dislikes of the Holy Prophet (SAW). Hadrat Ayesha has reported,

"One day, the Holy Prophet (SAW) was displeased with Hadrat Safia due to some reason. Safia was so perturbed that she requested me to help her. She said that she will gift her turn of the visit of the Holy Prophet (SAW) to make the Holy Prophet (SAW) resume relations with her.

Hadrat Ayesha consented and wore a shawl scented with saffron and sat close by the Holy Prophet (SAW) the Holy Prophet (SAW) said,  
"Ayesha, It is not your turn today".  
Hadrat Ayesha said,

"This is Allah's blessing. He may confer it on any body". And then she narrated the whole story, and the Prophet was no longer angry with Hadrat Safia.

Hadrat Safia was very intelligent. She had acquired the religious knowledge of the new faith of Islam. People referred to her their multifarious problems and difficulties and Hadrat Safia always solved their problems and gave them proper guidance. Saheera bint-e-Jaffar came back to Madina from Hajj and found many a women from Koofa (*A city situated in Iraq*) sitting with Hadrat Safia asking for the solution of their various religious problems. She was dealing with these women according to the guidelines set by the Holy Prophet (SAW) for interpretation of faith in its different aspects.

This is a very strange coincidence, that all the wives of the Holy Prophet (SAW) had some incident of historic importance to their credit. These incidents had significance for posterity. Two incidents are quite famous which occurred in Hadrat Safia's married life. The first incident was reported by Hadrat Safia herself.

Once she visited the Holy Prophet (SAW) while he was observing *Aitikaaf* (*This is a spiritual exercise which extends from three to ten days at the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. During Aitikaaf one alienates himself from the rest*

*of the society and stays in the mosque praying and reciting the Holy Qur'an. He breaks Aitikaaf on sighting the moon of Eid at the end of the month of Ramadan. The person observing Aitikaaf can't leave the premises of the mosque during that period*) in his mosque. The Holy Prophet (SAW) came to the outer door of the mosque to see her off. Two Muslims were passing. They offered Salam (*Assalam-o-Alaikum is a prayer from one Muslim to the other wishing for his welfare and safety*) to the Holy Prophet (SAW) and went away. The Holy Prophet (SAW) called them back and said:  
"Look here this is my wife".

"Praise be to Allah. O Prophet of God, Can we doubt about you?" The passersby said.

"Yes. I wanted to remove any doubt or misunderstanding in this respect because Satan (*Devil--Evil spirit*) is running in the blood of every human being. He might create doubts in any body's mind", The Holy Prophet (SAW) replied. This shows the weakness of human mind and its susceptibility to doubt. This further shows to the Muslims, how to behave in their lives.

At another instance the Holy Prophet (SAW) was making a journey with Hadrat Safia on a camel. Suddenly the camel faltered, and the Holy Prophet (SAW) and Hadrat Safia fell on the ground. Hadrat Abu Talha rushed to help the Holy Prophet (SAW). The Holy Prophet (SAW) said, "First take care of the woman". This incident shows that the Holy Prophet (SAW) had a great respect and regard for the women.

Hadrat Safia was a very sympathetic woman. In 35<sup>th</sup> year of Hijra, during the caliphate of Hadrat Othman, there was some uprising against Hadrat Othman. His residence was besieged by the rebels. Hadrat Safia couldn't bear it. She took a bondsman with her and headed towards Hadrat Othman's house while riding on a mule. She wanted to help Hadrat Othman. A rebel named Ushtar came near and after recognizing that the bondsman belonged to Hadrat Safia, started beating the mule. Hadrat Safia said:  
"Don't disgrace me. I am going back".

And later she sent food, water and other necessities to Hadrat Othman through Hadrat Hasan bin Ali.

Hadrat Safia was a very beautiful woman. She also was a very successful housewife. Hadrat Ayesha said,  
"I have never seen a better cook than Safia,"

Hadrat Safia had narrated a few traditions too. She died in 50 A.H. She was then sixty years old. She was buried in Jannat-ul-Baqi'. She left one hundred thousand Dirhams as her material inheritance. She left a will which inter alia carried that one-third of her material belongings be given to her nephew.

Because her nephew was a Jew, the common folk started objecting to it and were rather hesitant to comply with her will. Hadrat Ayesha intervened and said:

“O, People, be fearful of Allah’s wrath and comply with the will of Safia.”  
Consequently her will was carried out.

Although Hadrat Safia had hardly spent three or four years of married life with the Holy Prophet (SAW) but during this short period, she imbibed the true spirit of Islam to such an extent that after the death of the Holy Prophet (SAW) she served the Muslim women and the people in general as a guiding force and spent rest of her life preaching Islamic teachings. May Allah rest her soul in peace.