

# HADRAT SAUDAA (R.A)

## BINT-E-ZAMA 'A

After the death of Hadrat Khadija and Abu Talib, the life of the Prophet (SAW) had become disturbed. The wounds of separation from two most dear ones were ever green. The defence walls of the interior and the exterior had crumbled down. Neither society, nor home were any longer providing companionship. The Holy Prophet was left alone in a hostile atmosphere. In these days, Hadrat Khaula wife of Hadrat Othman b. Mazoon, visited the Holy Prophet (SAW) and found him dejected and depressed.

"O Prophet of God, I see you are quite withdrawn and sad after the death of Khadija", Hadrat Khaula asked.

"Yes it is like that", the Holy Prophet (SAW) said.

"Then, why do you not marry again? I can arrange for that", Hadrat Khaula said.

She indicated that Saudaa's hand can be asked. The Holy Prophet agreed. Then Hadrat Khaula passed this good news to Saudaa as well. She too agreed to the proposal and said, "Please enquire from my father about his views in the matter". Zama'a had no objection to the match. Eventually Hadrat Saudaa became the first woman to be married to the Holy Prophet after the demise of his first wife Hadrat Khadija. Like Hadrat Khadija, Hadrat Saudaa was also a widow as she had first married her cousin Sukran son of Amr. At the beginning of Islam, Hadrat Saudaa and Sukran used to live in Makkah.

As a result of announcement of his Prophethood the whole of Quraish and Meccans turned against him. All sorts of enmity against Hadrat Mohammad (SAW) and the Muslims became the order of the day. Muslims became an easy target for non-believers, because Muslims, economically, belonged to the lower strata of the society. Hadrat Saudaa although an ordinary woman, was intelligent and pious. She had a great love for the teachings of the Holy Prophet (SAW). **She knew that whole of Meccan Arab society call him 'the trustworthy and the truthful'**. Once she had the opportunity of listening to the sermon of the Holy Prophet. It had such a great impact on her that she immediately embraced Islam. But this change created much trouble, because Sukran, her husband was still a non-believer. Saudaa practiced Islam in secret and did not tell her husband about her change in faith. However, she never lost

an opportunity to convince Sukran of the truth of Islam. Little by little Sukran started showing sympathy towards Islam and eventually became a Muslim. It was a great success for Saudaa.

On learning about the conversion of Sukran and Saudaa the whole of Quraish tribe turned against them. They started an unending process of torture and social ex-communication against the couple. In the streets, they received indecent remarks, stones used to be thrown at them and their home was also assaulted by unruly elements. Once while the husband was reciting holy verses from Quran, an arrow came suddenly from outside and pierced the pages of the Holy Book. Since both were too weak to resist the mob outside their house, they felt miserably the pangs of humiliation and helplessness. Both of them presented themselves before the Holy Prophet (SAW) and told about the event. The Holy Prophet (SAW) consoled them and asked them to be patient. But the hostility from Makkans kept on increasing until it reached to such a peak that it was no longer bearable for the Muslims. Thus the Holy Prophet (SAW) ordered the Muslim men and women to migrate. The migration was ordered with a view to conserve the physical strength of the Muslims. As a result, eleven men and four women migrated to Abyssinia in self-defence. The Muslims and Makkans could no longer live together. Sukran and Saudaa were also among the emigrants. During their stay at Abyssinia, Sukran fell ill and died so Saudaa became a widow.

After some time, Makkan nobles, i.e. Hadrat Hamza and Hadrat Umar Farooq also embraced Islam. These new converts had a great influence on the Makkans. Hostility against Islam decreased to a considerable extent and a few of the Muslim emigrants in Abyssinia returned to Makkah. Hadrat Saudaa also returned and took up residence at her ancestral place in the company of her father Zama 'a. She spent only two years as a widow and on the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the announcement of the prophethood, she married the Holy Prophet. By this time, three years had passed since the death of Hadrat Khadija. Historians are of the consensus that at the time of her second marriage, Hadrat Saudaa was not less than fifty years old.

During her stay at Abyssinia, Hadrat Saudaa had got the indication that; her marriage was going to take place with the Holy Prophet (SAW). She had dream about it. She described what she saw in the dream, that the Holy Prophet Mohammad (SAW) visited her and placed his foot on her neck. Then she further dreams that she is lying on a bed resting with a pillow and the moon had landed down from the sky to her lap.

She told these dreams to her husband Sukran, who explained these dreams in the following words, "I will die soon and after my death you will marry the Holy Prophet". The holy couple of Hadrat Saudaa and the Holy Prophet (SAW) stayed for three years in Makkah after marriage, and then the great even of migration to Medina came.

As a result of this migration, Medina became the permanent abode of the Holy Prophet (SAW) for the rest of his life. At Medina, Hadrat Saudaa, and the Holy Prophet (SAW) were guests at the house of Hadrat Abu Ayub Ansari, and he remained host of the Holy Prophet till the Masjid-e-Nabvi (*The mosque built by the Holy Prophet (SAW)*) was constructed.

When the mosque was ready the holy couple shifted to a closet, specially constructed for them.

Money, physical beauty and youth are strong motivations for marrying a woman. Hadrat Saudaa did not have any of these qualities except that she was a fifty years old pious woman and, further more, had undergone great mental and physical tortures for remaining steadfast in Islam at the hands of hostile society. These sacrifices were duly appreciated by the Holy Prophet.

Apart from this, Hadrat Saudaa was decent, well behaved, pleasant, kind and a virtuous lady. These qualities had raised her social status above the common lot of women of Quraish. She had a small son and a very old father to look after and she was facing a hard life alone. These conditions made the Holy Prophet (SAW) wish for this marriage and the moment, he received the suggestion through Khaula, he agreed to it.

History traces, that there is not much chronological difference in the dates of (*Word used for showing respect for a pious person*) Hadrat Saudaa and Hadrat Ayesha's marriages, however, Hadrat Ayesha's marriage followed Hadrat Saudaa's marriage. These two wives of the Holy Prophet (SAW) were never jealous of each other. Hadrat Saudaa was too old and Hadrat Ayesha was too young to have these feelings. Both lived happily together with love, co-operation and understanding. Since Hadrat Ayesha was quite young in age, she knew very little about the household tasks and problems, and Hadrat Saudaa used to guide her in these matters.

Hadrat Saudaa was the tallest among the Holy Prophet's wives. She also had a heavy frame. Hadrat Ayesha is quoted to have said. "Whoever saw Saudaa even once would recognize her ever after". Perhaps it was due to her height and heavy build. There is a very interesting incident connected to her height. One evening she went outside the city dwellings to relieve herself. Naturally in these days, the modern sewerage facilities were not available, and people went outside the villages to relieve themselves. When she was coming back, she was seen by Hadrat Umar Farooq who was to become the second Caliph. He was quite critical about the free movement of the wives of the Holy Prophet. On seeing her, he said loudly, "Saudaa, I have seen you". Hadrat Saudaa was not happy about this and at home she complained to the Holy Prophet about Hadrat Umar's critical remark.

"O Prophet of Allah, can we not go outside the home even to relieve ourselves, which is a necessity", Hadrat Saudaa asked.

"Oh, no, Saudaa I don't hold the women back in their homes, while they need to go out for basic necessities", the Holy Prophet replied.

After some time, however, the Holy Prophet received the divine revelation about Hijab (*Orders of hiding one's self meant for woman*). On the revelation of the verses of Hijab from Allah, the Holy Prophet addressed his wives and said:

"Now after this order, don't go out of your homes".

In compliance of this injunction Hadrat Saudaa and Hadrat Zainab, the daughter of Jahash followed it very strictly and, after the death of the Holy Prophet, did not even go to Haj. The rest of the wives, however used to perform Haj. Hadrat Saudaa used to say:

"I performed Haj and Umra (*Visit of Kaaba with certain conditions throughout the year except Haj days is called Umra.*). Now I am sitting in my home alone isolated by the orders of Allah".

This act of obedience on part of Hadrat Saudaa shows, how truly she followed the orders of the Holy Prophet even after his death. On *Hajj at-ul-Wida (The last Haj performed by the Holy Prophet)* the Holy Prophet cared much about Hadrat Saudaa, and since she could not walk quickly because of her heavy physique the Holy Prophet allowed her to leave Muzdalfa (*To visit and stay here forms a part of the Haj*) early so that she was not troubled by the rush of the people.

Hadrat Ayesha praised Hadrat Saudaa in these words, "Saudaa was a bit short tempered. Apart from this, there is none else to whom I would have praised, respected and envied more than her". She further says:

"I have never seen a woman so devoid of jealousy as Saudaa".

No doubt, Hadrat Saudaa occasionally lost temper due to trivial matters; nevertheless she was endowed by God with good sense of humor. Many a times, she moved the Holy Prophet to laugh by her pleasant remarks and jokes. For instance, once she said to the Holy Prophet.

"Last night I offered my prayers as *Muqtadi (The one who follows in prayer)* and you remained so long in *Rukoo (The action of bending on knees while offering prayers)*, that I feared lest my nose started bleeding. And I kept holding my nose clasped for the intervening period".

On this simple remark, the Holy Prophet could not help smiling.

Hadrat Saudaa was very kind hearted woman and quite often she distributed her belongings whether in cash or kind in the poor. Hadrat Umar Farooq, once, during his reign as caliph, sent a bag of dirhams (*Coin of those days*) to Hadrat Saudaa. On this she asked, "Umar has perhaps sent dates for me?"

"No Madam, these are not dates but dirhams" the bearer replied.

"Oh, the dates would have a great use for me. They might have served as my food. For what do I need these dirhams"?, she exclaimed and distributed all dirhams among the poor and the needy.

Hadrat Saudaa did not bear any child after her marriage to the Holy Prophet. She had a son named Abdur Rehman as a result of her marriage with Sukran. Abdur Rehman was martyred in the battle of Jalola (*The battle was fought in Persia 16 Hijra*) during the reign of Hadrat Umar Farooq.

Hadrat Saudaa was never economically dependent on the Baitul-Mal (*Government Treasury*) and earned her living herself. She knew how to tan and mend the animal hides and earned her livelihood from this profession. She lived for ten years after the death of the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet and Hadrat Saudaa enjoyed a married life of thirteen years. Hadrat Abu Bakr, the first Caliph and Hadrat Umar Farooq, the second Caliph, always respected her during their Caliphate. Close to the martyrdom of Hadrat Umar Farooq, she fell victim to a prolonged illness. Ultimately she died in the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of Hijrah (*The calendar started after the migration of the Holy Prophet from Makkah to Medina*). She was buried in Medina, where she had lived since the migration from Makkah. May God rest her soul in peace.