

HADRAT UMM-E-SALMA

Umm-e-Salma hailed from the sub-tribe Bani-Makhzoom, an off-shoot of the larger tribe of the Quraish. Her original name was Hind but her surname Umm-e-Salma was more famous. Her first marriage took place with her cousin Abu Salma Abdul Asad. Abu Salma and Umm-e-Salma were among those people who embraced Islam in its very early days. They undertook two migrations for the sake of Islam, one to Abyssinia and the other to Madina. As is obvious, no body leaves his home until pushed by extreme circumstances. Muslims in those days were suffering from acute social excommunication at the hands of Makkans. This compelled Muslims to seek refuge in foreign lands. These migrations caused much hardship for poor Muslims. Hadrat Umm-e-Salma also underwent these tortures. In the later years of her life, whenever someone talked of the early days of Islam, she used to say proudly:

“I don’t know who else has undergone so much torture for Islam in the family of the Holy Prophet (SAW) as compared to the sacrifices by the house of Abu Salma”.

During the migration to Madina, Hadrat Umm-e-Salma suffered great misery. Her miseries were described by the historian Ibn-e-Atheer in the following words; Ibn-e-Atheer had quoted one of Hadrat Umm-e-Salma’s statements in the matter:

“On the orders of Allah and His Prophet, Abu Salma decided to migrate to Madina. At that time, he had only one camel. He mounted, me and my son on the camel and started walking beside us while holding the bridle of the camel. Soon the family of my parents learnt about our departure and gathered around us. They were angry on our intention of migration. They snatched away the bridle of the camel from Abu Salma and started forcing me to go along with them. In the meantime, the family of my husband’s parents also appeared on the scene and immediately captured my son Salma. My in-laws were insisting that if I insisted on going along with my husband then they would not release my son. Now I was held by my family, my son was with my in-laws and my husband was standing all alone. The whole of the family was torn apart. My husband and I were feeling quite miserable. But since the migration was ordered by the Prophet, my husband obeyed him and left for Medina. I was left behind alone. In those days, almost daily I came out of the city and wept for hours sitting on a rock gazing on the road leading to Madina. This went on for almost a year. Realizing my miserable condition, one of my relatives took pity on me. He called the heads of our family and pleaded:

“Why don’t you allow this miserable woman to go to her husband? She has been torn away from her husband and child”.

These words were spoken in such a manner that my parent's family took pity and allowed me to leave for Madina. On hearing about the decision of my family, my in-laws also sent my child back to me. I tied the pair of dorsers on my camel and started for Madina with my son. I was all alone till we reached Tan'eem. On that place we met Othman bin Talha, who asked about our intentions. He further asked that why we were traveling alone. I replied: "There is no body with me. I must go to Madina to join my husband." Othman bin Talha caught the bridle of my camel and started walking with us. And I swear that in whole of Arab, I haven't seen a fellow more gentle and righteous than him. Whenever we stopped for night stay, he went behind the tree and slept there. Every morning, he prepared the camel for journey and after my mounting on the camel, he traveled on foot. This practice of Othman lasted throughout the journey until we reached Madina. He handed me over to my husband and returned to Makkah.

The wounds of migration had not yet fully healed when the critical incident of the battle of Uhad came, Hadrat Abu Salma participated in the battle and was seriously wounded. He was confined to bed for almost a month. After his recovery he was again given an assignment by the Holy Prophet (SAW), He was sent to Qatan to wipe out hostilities there. He spent twenty-nine days in Qatan and was wounded again.

He came back to Madina in wounded condition. This time the injuries were fatal and he died that same year. Hadrat Umm-e-Salma came to see the Prophet to break the sad news of her husband's death. Later the Holy Prophet (SAW) went to Hadrat Umm-e-Salma's place along with his companions and offered the prayers, for the deceased. Hadrat Umm-e-Salma was understandable, because Abu Salma was a very loving and loyal husband. Everybody consoled her. The Holy Prophet (SAW) came forward and said:

"Have patience and pray to Allah that he may give a better substitute to you than Abu Salma".

After the completion of *Iddat* (*Iddat is a period of 130 days which a widow had to pass before any re-marriage, observing some restrictions*), the Holy Prophet (SAW) proposed to Hadrat Umm-e-Salma for re-marriage. The message was sent through Hadrat Umar. Hadrat Umm-e-Salma accepted the offer and she was then married to the Holy Prophet (SAW). Immediately after her marriage, she started the normal duties of married life. An incident has been reported which has a great lesson for the Muslim women of today. The incident related to her taking up the household job, the day she was brought to the Holy Prophet's house after marriage. Hadrat Zainab bint-e-Salma was brought into her Hujra (*Hujra was one room reserved for each wife of the Holy Prophet in his Mosque*). The house-hold material and articles were already available in the house. The very first night she picked some barley from the pitcher (*In those days, perhaps, people used to store their food i.e. wheat, barley, maize etc. in the pitchers*) and ground them. Then she mixed the flour with some fat and cooked the food. This food was served to the Holy Prophet on the first night of marriage.

Hadrat Umm-e-Salma was very intelligent and had keen insight. On the eve of Hudaibiya treaty (*This treaty was signed at Hudaibiya, a place near Makkah between Pagans of Makkah and the Muslims of Madina. It was signed when the Holy Prophet (SAW) along with his companions went to perform Umra but they were held back by Makkans. And the Holy Prophet (SAW) instead of fighting with them, signed a peace treaty*) Umm-e-Salma's advise to Prophet is quite famous for her worldly wisdom. This incident proved the Hadrat Umm-e-Sale was not only rich in beauty but also tactful in worldly affairs. According to a report mentioned in Bukhari (*A book compiled by Imam Bukhari of Bukhara, Turkistan, comprising of sayings and events of the Holy Prophet's life. It was compiled about a thousand years back*) the famous authentic collection of traditions.

"When-the Hudaibiya treaty was signed the Holy Prophet (SAW) asked his followers to offer their Qurbani (*Sacrificing of animals in the way of Allah*). But since the clauses of treaty were apparently against Muslims, the followers of the Holy Prophet (SAW) were feeling unhappy and dejected. The Holy Prophet (SAW) ordered thrice for Qurbani, but nobody moved. It was something unusual and unbecoming. The Holy Prophet (SAW) entered his tent and narrated the whole incident to Hadrat Umm-e-Salma. Hadrat Umm-e-Salma advised, "Don't ask anybody. Just go out and sacrifice your animal. Take off *Ihram (Ihram, specified dress for Hajj and Umrah, comprises of two sheets, one to be wrapped around waist and one is thrown on shoulders)* and get your hair trimmed". The Holy Prophet (SAW) acted upon Hadrat Umm-e-Salma's advice. When the Muslims saw the Holy Prophet (SAW) offering sacrifice, they also followed him. Thus an awkward situation was amicably handled. In later years, everybody appreciated the wisdom Hadrat Umm-e-Salma displayed while averting an unhappy situation after Hudaibiya treaty.

She spent whole of her life as a very pious lady and had little attraction towards worldly and materialistic things usually very dear to women. Once she was wearing a necklace. Some parts of this necklace were made of gold. The Holy Prophet (SAW) felt displeased about wearing a golden necklace. She immediately removed it and never wore it again.

She was very simple hearted lady. She spent most of her time in prayers. Every month, she used to fast for three days. Her deep attachment with prayers and recitation of the Holy Quran didn't mean that she did not pay due attention to her social obligations. She brought up her children carefully and with full attention. Although she did not bear any child to Holy Prophet (SAW), he accepted Hadrat Umm-e-Salma's children as his own. She always made it a point to follow her life in only such a manner which may please Allah and His Prophet (SAW). Once she asked: "O, Prophet, shall I be rewarded in hereafter as all my deeds in life are only for the pleasure of Allah and His Prophet".

"Yes", the Holy Prophet (SAW) replied, and that was quite enough to satisfy her. She had a generous nature and exhorted others to be generous towards poor and deserving Muslims. She never disappointed or rebuked anybody who asked for any

help. Once a few beggars came to her place and pleaded for alms and charity. A woman sitting in the company of Hadrat Umm-e-Salma admonished her companion and said: "Quran has forbidden us to repulse beggars".

Then she directed her maid-servant to give something to the beggars. She further directed that if there is nothing available at home, at least one dried date be given to each of them.

The virtues and good deeds of Hadrat Umm-e-Salma do still serve as beacon light in the darkness of life. She had no love for wealth or worldly things. She always preached spending even the last penny to please Allah. Once Hadrat Abdur Rehman bin Auf said: "Mother of the faithful, so much money and property has accumulated with me that I fear it may spoil me".

She said: "Son, spend it in the way of Allah on poor, needy and orphans. The Prophet had once said, there are many of my companions who will not see me again after this life" (*It meant, some companions of the Prophet will not go to Paradise, the permanent abode of the Holy Prophet (SAW)*).

That is why she never kept any valuables with her and spent it on the poor.

She was also endowed with the qualities of patience, endurance and serenity. She showed no haste in performing her daily chores. She always did her job at appropriate time. For example that Holy Prophet (SAW), on his death bed, whispered something in the ear of his daughter Hadrat Fatima. Hadrat Ayesha got perturbed and immediately enquired about it from Hadrat Fatima. Hadrat Fatima didn't reply. Contrary to it, Hadrat Umm-e-Salma waited with patience and asked about it sometimes after the death of the Holy Prophet (SAW).

Hadrat Umm-e-Salma stands next to Hadrat Ayesha in religious understanding and intellect. She had a great love for Hadith (*Hadith is a report of the Prophet's saying or his deed*) and had reported about 378 traditions. She had narrated the Hadith quoting herself, Hadrat Abu Salma, Hadrat Fatima and the Holy Prophet (SAW). She had such a crave for knowledge that one day, while she was combing her hair she heard the voice of the Holy Prophet (SAW) from the mosque addressing the Muslims as, "O, people." Hadrat Umm-e-Salma said to her maid, "Stop combing my hair, and tie them up." The maid said: "Why such a hurry, the Holy Prophet (SAW) has just started his address."

Hadrat Umm-e-Salma got up saying: "Are we not included in his address "O People," and heard intently full speech of the Holy Prophet.

The annalists and historians of Islamic history placed her quite high among the Muslim personalities. Mohammad bin Lubaid has said: "No doubt, all the wives of the Prophet had learnt a great many Ahadith by heart but no body excelled Hadrat Ayesha and Hadrat Umm-e-Salma".

Imam-ul-Harmain said, "Umm-e-Salma had a great insight in religious matters."

Throughout her life, whenever she felt that some wrong is being done, she warned without fail. It is reported that after the death of Holy Prophet (SAW), people changed the timings of prayers. Hadrat Umm-e-Salma did not hesitate in pointing it out, "The Holy Prophet offered the Zuhar (*Prayers are obligatory five times a day for a Muslim. Fajar before the sunrise. Zuhar in the early afternoon. Asar, in the deep afternoon, Maghrib, just after the sunset and 'Ishaa in the early hours of night before going to sleep*) prayers early and you people are offering Asar prayers early."

Similarly, on the incident of Eila (*The details of the incident have been described in the foot-note of Hadrat Ayesha's life sketch*) Hadrat Abu Bakr and Hadrat Umar visited their daughters (*Hadrat Hafsa was the daughter of Hadrat Umar and Hadrat Ayesha was the daughter of Hadrat Abu Bakr*) who were wives of the Holy Prophet (SAW); and both warned their daughters to be respectful and obedient to the Holy Prophet (SAW). The intention of Hadrat Abu Bakr and Hadrat Umar was to dispel any misunderstanding that had arisen. Hadrat Umar visited Hadrat Umm-e-Salma too and discussed the matter with her. Hadrat Umm-e-Salma felt offended and rebuked him in a stern voice, "Umar-Ibn-e-Khattab ! It is surprising that you interfere even in the family affairs of the Holy Prophet and his wives."

After the death of the Holy Prophet (SAW), she had kept the locks of the Holy Prophet's hair in safe custody as relics. The companions of the Holy Prophet (SAW) used to visit her to know the Sayings of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and learn various teachings of Qur'an and Sunnah.

She was a loyal and obedient wife. She had one slave named Safina. She awarded him freedom on a pre-condition that for the rest of the Prophet's life he would serve him. This shows her love with her husband.

She was an ardent and zealous student of Islamic jurisprudence. She took great interest in preaching Islam. She was ever-ready to guide the common people in religious matters. She was a true Muslim. She had a long life and died at the age of eighty four years. By that time Hadrat Husain had been martyred.

According to the tradition prevailing in those times, the ruler used to lead the funeral prayers as and where possible. Walid bin Utaba, the then Governor of Madina was supposed to lead the funeral prayers for Hadrat Umm-e-Salma but according to the will of Hadrat Umm-e-Salma, Hadrat Abu Huraira led the prayers. The reason for this choice was Hadrat Abu Huraira's great religious status as a scholar. Although by that time the Caliphate was reduced to monarchy, the decision of Hadrat Umm-e-Salma choosing Hadrat Abu Huraira to lead her funeral prayers shows that she was bold in expressing her views about the rulers of the day.

May Allah rest her soul in peace.