



(Sayyidah Asmaa bintu Abi Bakr [radhiyallahu ‘anhuma] – Part Four)

Sayyidah Asmaa (radhiyallahu ‘anha) was married to Sayyiduna Zubair bin ‘Awwaam (radhiyallahu ‘anhu). He was the cousin of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) and was also one of the ‘Asharah Mubash-sharah (the ten Sahaabah [radhiyallahu ‘anhum] given the glad tidings of Jannah in one gathering by Rasulullah [sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam]).

Sayyidah Asmaa (radhiyallahu ‘anha) mentioned the following, describing the life she led with Sayyiduna Zubair (radhiyallahu ‘anhu):

“Sayyiduna Zubair (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) married me, and he did not possess wealth, a slave or anything else. All that he possessed was a camel and a horse. I would feed his horse, fetch water and stitch his leather bucket. I was also responsible for the bread, though I was not able to bake well. However, my Ansaar neighbours would (help me and) bake for me, and they were indeed true neighbours.

“Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) had allotted a portion of land to Sayyiduna Zubair (radhiyallahu ‘anhu). I would go to the farm to fetch the seeds of the dates (which I would crush and feed to the camel). I would carry them home on my head, walking a distance of two-thirds of a farsakh (approximately 3.5 km).”

Sayyidah Asmaa (radhiyallahu ‘anha) then mentions that on one occasion, while she was walking with the date seeds, she happened to encounter Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) who was accompanied by a group of the Ansaar. On seeing her walking with the date seeds, Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) immediately felt pity for her condition. He thus made his

conveyance stop and offered to let her ride on the animal.

At this time, the laws of purdah, niqaab and hijaab had not yet been revealed. However, on account of her high level of hayaa, Sayyidah Asmaa (radhiyallahu ‘anha) felt uncomfortable in the presence of the men. She also felt that her husband, Sayyiduna Zubair (radhiyallahu ‘anhu), would be unhappy for her to do this on account of him possessing a high level of ghairah (possessiveness). Hence, she declined and continued to walk.

Later on, when she mentioned what had transpired to her husband, Sayyiduna Zubair (radhiyallahu ‘anhu), he told her, “By Allah! The pain I feel on seeing you carrying the seeds is more difficult for me to bear than the possessiveness I would have felt if you had taken the lift on the animal.” (*Saheeh Bukhaari #5224 and Fat-hul Baari*)

Sayyidah Asmaa (radhiyallahu ‘anha) and Sayyiduna Zubair (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) were both extremely pious. However, Sayyiduna Zubair (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) was firm and stern in nature, and this became difficult for Sayyidah Asmaa (radhiyallahu ‘anha).

Hence, it is reported that on one occasion, she spoke to her beloved father, Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anhu), and complained of her husband’s sternness. After listening to her difficulty, he advised her to be patient and persevere. He addressed her as a loving father, with compassion and sympathy, saying, “O my beloved daughter! Remain patient and persevere, for when a woman is blessed with a pious husband, and he passes away before her, and she does not remarry after him, then they will be reunited in Jannah!” (*Tabaqaat Ibni Sa’d vol. 8, pg. 251*)

In this manner, Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) reminded her that her husband was a pious man, and hence, if she remained patient, she would be with him in Jannah. Unfortunately, though they had tried their best to make the marriage work, it did not last due to the lack of compatibility.

Lessons:

1. As the wife and woman of the home, when there was no slave or servant available, then Sayyidah Asmaa (radhiyallahu ‘anha) did not regard it below her dignity to attend to all the domestic responsibilities herself. She did not make demands of her husband and add to his burden, but rather did her best to assist him. Hence, she even fulfilled the physically demanding tasks such as carrying the water and date seeds, together with preparing the meals, while her husband was attending to his share of the responsibilities. This was not unique to her, but rather, the other women of the Ansaar were also preparing the bread for their homes. Likewise, when we read of Sayyidah Faatimah (radhiyallahu ‘anha), then we find that she too would personally attend to the domestic chores such as sweeping, grinding the flour, etc.

2. Sayyidah Asmaa (radhiyallahu ‘anha) faced different challenges in her married life, but she always remained patient and persevered. Furthermore, even in the midst of the difficulty of carrying the date seeds, she did not forget her hayaa. Hence, the discomfort of being in the presence of the men was more than the discomfort of carrying the date seeds. Likewise, even at this time, she was concerned about pleasing her husband. Hence, another reason for her declining to take the lift was that she felt that he may not be pleased.

3. Sayyidah Asmaa (radhiyallahu ‘anha) praised her neighbours of the Ansaar and spoke highly of them. The reason is that they would help her and assist her. They perhaps saw that she was struggling to bake the bread, and hence they would bake the bread for her. This is the spirit promoted by Islam – the spirit of helping and assisting people in their hour of need, without any expectation of recognition or recompense.

4. Islam teaches us that we should always try to join people, not separate them. We should try to mend relationships, not break them. Hence, while divorce is permissible, it should be the last resort, after all efforts of reconciliation have failed. Thus, when Sayyidah Asmaa (radhiyallahu ‘anha) complained to her father, Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu ‘anha), he advised her to be patient and look at the goodness and virtue of her husband.