



Sayyidah Zainab Thaqafiyyah (radhiyallahu ‘anha), also known by the name ‘Raitah’, was the respected wife of the renowned Sahaabi, Sayyiduna ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ood (radhiyallahu ‘anhu).

Sayyiduna ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ood (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) had dedicated his time to remaining in the blessed company of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) to serve him and acquire the knowledge of Deen from him. Through this effort, Allah Ta‘ala blessed him to become one of the leading Sahaabah (radhiyallahu ‘anhum) in the field of the knowledge of Deen.

Sayyiduna ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ood (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) did not possess abundant wealth, and he had sacrificed earning a living to acquire the knowledge of Deen from Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam). As for his wife, Sayyidah Zainab (radhiyallahu ‘anha), she not only accepted his decision happily, but even tried her best to assist him in his noble endeavour! She would thus see to the needs of the household – which included the orphaned children of her brother and sister – by making things and selling them (from home) in order to earn an income.

One day, Sayyidah Zainab (radhiyallahu ‘anha) heard Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) address the women saying, “Give charity, even if it be through selling your jewellery!” When she heard this, Sayyidah Zainab (radhiyallahu ‘anha) mentioned to Sayyiduna ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ood (radhiyallahu ‘anhu), “By spending on the household, I am unable to give money in charity!” Sayyiduna ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ood (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) answered, “If spending on your household is not rewarding for you, I would not be happy for you to spend on us.”

Sayyidah Zainab (radhiyallahu ‘anha) thus went to Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) and addressed her concern to him saying, “I am a woman who makes things and sells (from home). Neither my husband, nor my children nor I possess wealth. Due to spending on my family, I am unable to give money in charity. Will I receive reward of charity for spending on them?” Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) replied, “So long as you spend on them, you will receive the

reward of charity, so continue spending on them.”

In another narration, Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) said that she would receive a double reward; one reward for maintaining family ties (through spending on family) and a separate reward for charity.

(Saheeh Bukhaari #1466, Fat-hul Baari vol. 3, pg. 419 and Usdul Ghaabah vol. 5, pgs. 291 & 302)

Lessons:

1. When a woman assists her husband and children in their Deeni endeavours, then even though she may be comfortable in her home while they are out doing Deeni work, she has a full share in their efforts and thus shares in their rewards as well. Hence, Sayyidah Zainab (radhiyallahu ‘anha) was not only running a ‘home industry’, she was running a full-blown factory that was generating rewards in the Aakhirah on an industrial scale.

2. When giving charity, a person should first try to find recipients from his own family, as he will earn a double reward through giving to relatives. When giving family, he does not have to embarrass them by telling them that it is charity. Instead, he may give it to them in the guise of a gift. However, although charity starts at home, it does not end there. If a person has any surplus money to give in charity, he should give to other recipients and spend in other avenues as well.

3. Although they did not have abundant wealth, Sayyidah Zainab (radhiyallahu ‘anha) had taken in her brother’s and sister’s orphaned children and was raising them, looking after them and spending on them from her own money. This is the spirit advocated by Islam – the spirit of love, compassion, sympathy, generosity and care for one and all.

4. Despite the good deeds that she was already performing, Sayyidah Zainab (radhiyallahu ‘anha) was not complacent. Rather, she wanted to increase her good deeds by giving charity as well, even though she did not possess abundant wealth.