

THE **F1RST**S

A Lecture Series

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Baraka Bint Thalaba

Um Ayman

She was the only person that was with the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ from birth till death.

Setting : Scene 1 - Mecca

- Born about 13 years before Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, around 557
- Was a slave from Abyssinia
- During the time of Jahiliya (Ignorance), she was purchased in the market, by Abdullah Ibn Abdul Muttalib (father of the Prophet ﷺ)
- The only slave brought into the household and lived with Abdullah Ibn Abdul Muttalib and Amina bint Wahab (mother of the Prophet ﷺ)
- Soon after marriage, Abdullah set out on a trade journey to Syria in the summer, before he & Amina knew she was pregnant
- Amina told Baraka about a dream she had that she saw a light coming from her stomach, lighting up the hills and the valleys of Mecca, all the way to Syria. Baraka interpreted the dream to mean that she is carrying a blessed child with good news.
- Amina sent Baraka out to find out if Abdullah's caravan had returned from the journey. Time after time, she came back with no news for Amina. The last time she went, she was told that everyone from that caravan had returned except Abdullah.
- She was the person who had to tell Amina that her husband had passed away, while she was still pregnant. She consoled her and stayed by her side throughout her entire pregnancy.
- She was the only person in the room while Amina was giving birth to Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, and was the first person to hold him, before handing him to his mother.
- She cleaned him and told Amina that there was a light around him.
- Later, she was one of the 3 women who nursed him. Amina and Halima did also. Halima nursed him later on when he was sent out to the open desert, as was the ritual at the time.
- Only she, Amina and the Prophet lived in the household.

Setting : Scene 2 - Loss of Amina

Support for Prophet Mohammad During Sadness

- There are different accounts of how Amina died.
- The Prophet was 6 years old at the time of his mother's death
- Baraka was 19 years old at the time of Amina's death
- When Amina realized that her sickness was getting worse, she whispered to Baraka to take care of the Prophet ﷺ and to treat him like her own son.
- Only Baraka and the Prophet ﷺ were present when Amina died
- Baraka consoled Prophet Mohammad ﷺ at this time
- They both went to live with his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib

Setting : Scene 3 - Loss of Abdul Muttalib

- Abdul Muttalib died 3 years later, when the Prophet ﷺ was 9 years old.
- Baraka continued to live with and cared for the Prophet ﷺ until adulthood

Support for Prophet Mohammad as a Messenger

- The Prophet ﷺ had inherited her but had freed her as an adult.
- He introduced her to Khadija, as he often referred to her, "she is my mother after my mother"
- Baraka had never gotten married because she was always focused on taking care of the Prophet ﷺ instead. After the Prophet ﷺ and Khadija married, they both encouraged her to get married as well. She refused at first saying to the Prophet ﷺ, "no, never, I'm staying with you". He replied "you have donated your youth, now it's time to have your own life.
- She finally agreed to get married but said about the Prophet ﷺ " I have never left him and he will never leave me".
- Khadija introduced her to her husband, Obaid ibn Zayd, from the Khazraj tribe in Yathrib (Medina). They were married before Islam.
- Baraka gave birth to Ayman, who would later die as a shaheed (martyr).
- Her husband, Obaid died before Islam.
- Baraka and Ayman moved in with the Prophet and Khadija when she was widowed.

- When the Prophet ﷺ received the revelation the first time, he went first to Khadija, then to Baraka
- Baraka was the second woman to believe in him (after Khadija) and she did so immediately
- The Prophet ﷺ told the sahaba that whoever wants to marry a woman from Paradise, should marry Umm Ayman
 - Even though she was from unknown lineage, not wealthy, from Abyssinia, old and a widow, this shows how the Prophet ﷺ elevated her status, regardless and only saw her character
- Zayd ibn Haritha, who was not previously married and 20 years younger immediately volunteered to marry her after hearing what the Prophet ﷺ said.
 - He was also from Abyssinia, bought in the same market, and freed by the Prophet ﷺ
 - They both had unique stories and came into the Prophet's ﷺ life in a similar way.
 - Prophet Mohammad loved him as if he were his own son
 - Later, the Prophet ﷺ appointed him to be the Commander of the Muslim army after he passed away.
 - He would eventually die as a shaheed (martyr)
- Regardless of her old age, she was able to give birth to her second son, Usamah ibn Zayd, who would eventually be martyred.

The Journey to Medina

- When Hijra time came, she joined it, even though it was difficult at her age, which was now over 70 years old
- She was extremely thirsty, almost dying of dehydration, but she told a story that when the sun set, she saw a bucket coming down from the heavens at her head and there was a rope that was holding it and she said ,”wallahi I could not see the top of that rope”. She said she took the bucket and drank from it, and some was left in it after she satisfied her thirst, so she dumped it over her head and body. She said she never experienced thirst after that incident, even when she was fasting or doing tawaf on very hot days.

○ The Second Reference to Her Place in Paradise

- When the Prophet ﷺ saw her upon her arrival in Medina, with her swollen feet and dusty fingers, he said to her “ya Ummi (Oh my Mother), indeed for you is a place in al - Jannah”
- She witnessed every battle of the Prophet ﷺ and she used to follow him and watch him intently. Anas(r) says that she would go around the battlefield and she would keep her eyes on the Prophet ﷺ like a mother.
- At the end of battles, she cared for the injured, sometimes using her own clothing as bandaging
- During the Battle of Uhud, as others fled, she grabbed a sword and swung it around the Prophet ﷺ to protect and defend him
- Her entire life was dedicated to taking care of him. When the Prophet ﷺ saw her he would say “ This is the entirety of what’s left of my family.” He called her mother, “Ya Ummi”. He introduced her as “Ummi ba’d Ummi”, my mother after my mother. She is the only one that was with him his entire life.
- The Prophet ﷺ visited her every day. When he asked her “O my mother, how are you”, she replied, “As long as Islam is good, I am good”, showing him her dedication to his cause. She never complained.
- She was very motherly towards him always, making sure he ate well, and was known to be the one who could make him laugh more than anyone else. Her Abyssinian accent when speaking Arabic was behind many of the humorous moments they shared

○ Again Consoling the Prophet at a Time of Loss

- Ibn Abbas (r) narrates when a Prophet’s ﷺ child died in his arms and Umm Ayman saw him crying, she wept as well. He asked her why she was crying, and she said “O Rasulullah, I’m crying because you’re crying”. He said he wasn’t weeping out of displeasure or questioning of Allah, but out of mercy and compassion.

Setting : Scene 4 - After the Prophet

صلى الله عليه وسلم

- Her entire life was based around being a caretaker of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم so it's a miracle that she did not die as well after he died.
- She went completely silent and wouldn't talk to anyone
- She watched the funeral from far as the person who was there before anyone knew about him, now with over 100,000 people burying him
- She lived to be about 100 years of age
- Bukhari narrates that after the death of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, Abu Bakr and Umar visited her (this shows her elevated status). During one of these visits, she started to cry, they assumed she was crying because she missed the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. However, when asked, she said, "I know that what Allah has given to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is better than what he had here, but I'm crying because the revelation has ceased to come from the Heavens". They all cried together at that thought
- She lived during the Khilafa of Abu Bakr and Umar, outliving both
- She died about 20 days after the assassination of Umar
- She was buried in the Baqi' graveyard right next to the masjid of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. Ibn Assakir narrates that when they buried her, they made sure that they buried her directly aligned to the grave of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, adjacent to him, facing the qibla.

Lessons Learned

1. Her place in history for being with the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم during his entire lifetime is unquestionable
2. The character of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم of fairness and equality for honoring her regardless of her ethnicity, tribe, family status, skin color, gender
3. Her love for the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and Islam was greater than any other hardship in her life and she never complained. Her commitment to Islam made her life purposeful.
4. Learn and live by her quote, " I am good as long as Islam is good"

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