

UNIT

C

CHAPTER

THREE

Islam before Kinship: The Story of Ummu Habeebah

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- 1 Understand that Quraysh broke The Treaty of Al-Hudaybiyah
- 2 Learn about Quraysh's attempts to salvage the Treaty including Abu Sufyan's visit to Madina.
- 3 Learn about and appreciate the story of Ummu Habeebah.
- 4 Gain insight into the visit of Abu Sufyan to Ummu Habeebah
- 5 Learn basic information about how a marriage contract is performed in Islam.

PEOPLE TO REMEMBER

Ummu Habeebah, Ramlah Bint Abi Sufyan أُمُّ حَبِيبَةَ ، رَمْلَةَ بِنْتُ أَبِي سُفْيَانَ

Abu Sufyan أَبُو سُفْيَانَ

She rushed to open the door as she heard some unfamiliar knocks. Ummu Habeebah, the wife of the Prophet, was surprised and burst into tears when she opened the door. She saw her father Abu Sufyan, the leader of the Quraysh.

Who was Ummu Habeebah?

She is Ramlah bint Abi Sufyan, the daughter of Abu Sufyan, who for some of his

life was one of the most notorious enemies of the Prophet ﷺ. He spent much of his immense wealth in opposing the Muslims. He led the Quraysh armies against the Muslims in all the early major battles, including the battles of Uhud and al-Khandaq.

Ummu Habeebah, may Allah be pleased with her, married Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in 1 AH. Although she did not come to live with him in Madina until 7 AH, when the Prophet was sixty years old and she was thirty-five.



The Quraysh Breaks Al-Hudaybiyah Treaty

As you learned last year, after the Battle of Al-Khandaq, the Prophet and fourteen hundred Muslims advanced to Makkah on a peaceful mission. They wanted to perform Umrah peacefully and to see their family and friends for the first time after six years of separation. The Quraysh people refused to allow them to perform Umrah or to enter the city of Makkah. Instead, they agreed to sign a peace treaty for a term of ten years. The treaty was signed in an area called Al-Hudaybiyah, north of Makkah. The treaty became known as Sulh-ul-Hudaybiyah, or the treaty of Al-Hudaybiyah.

One of the clauses of the Sulh-ul-Hudaybiyah was that any tribe or person was free to join either party or to make an alliance with it. The Khuza'ah tribe joined the Prophet's alliance; and Bani Bakr joined the Quraysh.

The Quraysh violated the Treaty by helping their allies Bani Bakr with arms and men to raid and kill members of Khuza'ah, allies

of the Prophet, and to loot their properties. Some leaders of Banu Bakr killed and hurt around twenty people from Khuza'ah to avenge old blood.

'Amr Ibn Salim, a leader of Khuza'ah rode to Madina to complain to the Prophet. He was accompanied by other men and voiced his complaint outside the Mosque where the Prophet was praying. He used the following words:

"O God! I come to Muhammad to remind
Of the bonds of love which us do bind,
O Prophet of God! Your help I claim,
Call the servants of God to this aim."
The Prophet heard his complaint and promised him help.

Meanwhile, the Quraysh realized their foolish mistake. They sent Abu Sufyan to Madina to ensure the Treaty and extend it. First he went to the house of his daughter Ummu Habeebah, wife of the Prophet.



The Story of Ummu Habeebah

Before we continue on the mission of Abu Sufyan in Madina, let's learn something about Ummu Habeebah whose full name was Ramlah bint Abi Sufyan. Ummu Habeebah and her first husband Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh, were among the first people to embrace Islam in Makkah. The couple went through tough times in Makkah when the idolators harassed and persecuted them. Even Ummu Habeebah's father, Abu Sufyan who was a leader in Makkah did not support them. They were among the early Muslims who emigrated to Abyssinia in order to be safe and free to practice Islam.

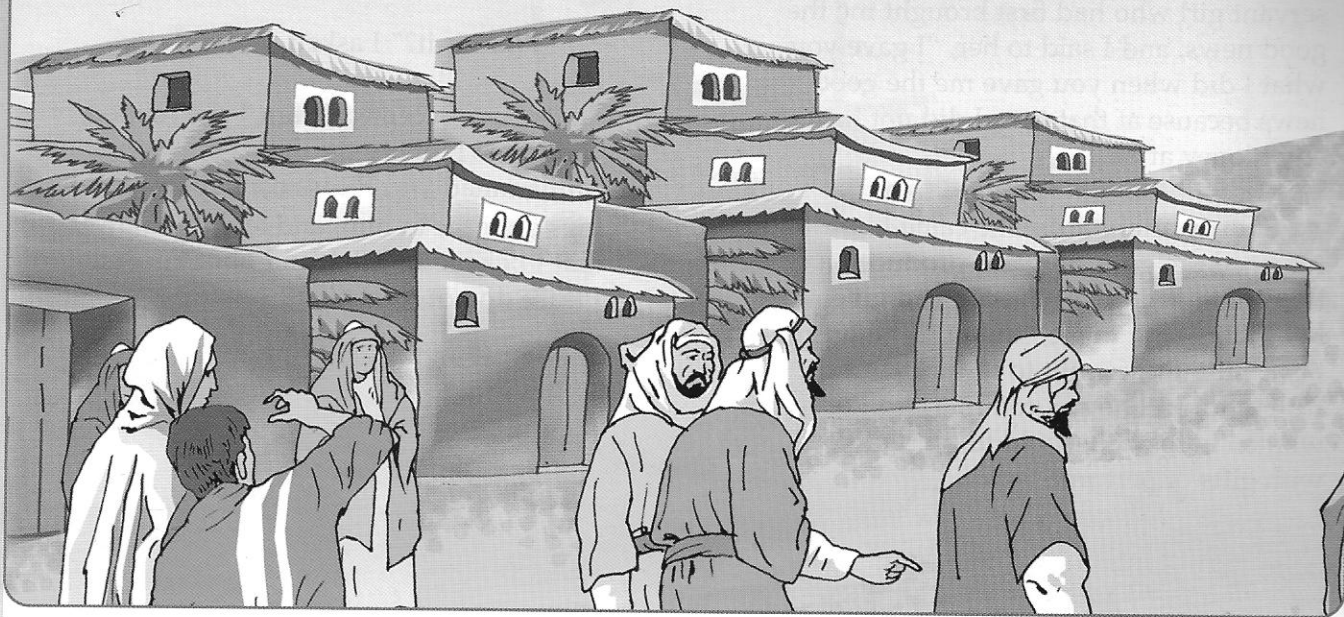
After their arrival in Abyssinia, Ubaydullah abandoned Islam and became a Christian. He tried to persuade his wife to become Christian but she refused. This put Ummu Habeebah in an awkward situation. Since a Muslim woman can only be married to a Muslim man, she became divorced from her husband. She could therefore no longer live with him and could not return to her

father who was still busy fighting the Muslims. So she remained with her daughter in Abyssinia, patiently waiting to see what Allah would choose for her.

A Pleasant Surprise:

One day, as Ummu Habeebah sat in her room, a maidservant knocked on her door. She said that King Negus had a message for her. The message was that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had asked for Ummu Habeebah's hand in marriage. She asked that the message be repeated three times as she could hardly believe her ears.

Naturally, Ummu Habeebah was overjoyed and immediately accepted. "Allah has given you good news! Allah has given you good news!" she said to herself. She pulled off what little jewelry she had and gave it to the smiling girl.



The Wedding

Soon after this, all the Muslim refugees in Abyssinia were summoned to the palace of King Negus. They were invited to witness the simple marriage ceremony of Prophet Muhammad and Ummu Habeebah. The Prophet himself was not present but his Wakeel, or representative for the marriage contract was King Negus while Ummu Habeebah's Wakeel was Khalid ibn Sa'id ibn al-As. King Negus had just embraced Islam, and when the marriage was finalized, he addressed the gathering with these words: "I praise Allah, the Holy, and I declare that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger and that He gave the good news to Jesus the son of Mary." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ requested me to conclude the marriage contract between him and Umm Habeebah, the daughter of Abu Sufyan. I agreed to do what he requested, and on his behalf I give her a dowry of four hundred gold dinars." The Negus handed over the amount to Khalid ibn Sa'id who stood up and said:

"All praise is due to Allah. I praise Him and I seek His help and forgiveness and I turn to Him in repentance. I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger whom He has sent with the deen of guidance and truth so that it may prevail over all other religions, however much those who reject dislike this. "I agreed to do what the Prophet ﷺ requested and acted as the Wakeel on behalf of Umm Habeebah, the daughter of Abu Sufyan. May Allah bless His Messenger and his wife. Congratulations to Umm Habeebah for the goodness which Allah has chosen for her."

Khalid took the dowry and handed it over to Ummu Habeebah. The Muslims who had witnessed the marriage contract were just about to leave, when the Negus said to them, "Sit down, for it is the practice of the Prophets to serve food at marriages." Joyfully everyone sat down again to eat and celebrate the happy occasion. Ummu Habeebah could hardly believe her good fortune, and she later described

how eager she was to share her happiness, saying: "When I received the money as my dowry, I sent fifty mithqals of gold to the servant girl who had first brought me the good news, and I said to her, "I gave you what I did when you gave me the good news because at that time I did not have any money at all."

Shortly afterwards, she came to me and returned the gold. She also produced a case that contained the necklace I had given to her and gave it to me, saying, "The Negus has instructed me not to take anything from you, and he has commanded the women in his household to present you with gifts of perfume."

"On the following day, she brought me ambergris, saffron and aloe vera oil and said, 'I have a favor to ask of you.'"

"What is it?" I asked.

"I have accepted Islam," she replied, "and now I follow the deen of Muhammad ﷺ. Please convey my greetings of peace to him, and let him know that I believe in Allah and His Prophet. Please do not forget."



A Point of Fiqh

Marriage contract in Islam is easy to perform. It requires the following:

1. The approval of the bride and the groom.
2. The approval of the bride's father or guardian (According to the majority of Imams).
3. The delivery of the Mahr, or dowry, or at least agreeing on it .
4. The presence of two witnesses.



Ummu Habeebah Joins the Prophet in Madina

Six years later, in 7 AH, when the emigrant Muslims in Abyssinia were finally able to return to Arabia, Ummu Habeebah came to Madina where Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, welcomed her warmly. Ummu Habeebah relates: "When I met the Prophet ﷺ, I told him all about the arrangements that had kindly been made for the marriage, and about my relationship with the girl. I told him that she had become a Muslim and conveyed her greetings of peace to him.

He was filled with joy at the news and said, 'Wa alayha as salam wa rahmatullaahi wa barakaatuh' - 'And on her be the peace and the mercy of Allah and His blessing.'

Islam Before Kinship

The strength of Ummu Habeebah's character can be measured by what happened shortly after her return to Madina. Her father, Abu Sufyan, came to Madina after the Quraysh had broken the Treaty of Al-Hudaybiyah. He wanted to repair the rela-

tionship with Prophet Muhammad and the Muslims. He first went to visit his daughter Ummu Habeebah رضي الله عنها, whom he had not seen for over seven years. He was hoping that she would help him convince the Prophet to forgive the Quraysh.

When Abu Sufyan was about to sit down on the Prophet's mattress, she quickly folded it up and put it away. "Am I too good for the bed, or it is the bed too good for me?" he asked. "How can the enemy of Islam sit on the bed of the Holy Prophet?" she replied.

Ummu Habeebah رضي الله عنها gave her father the cold shoulder because he was a fierce enemy of Islam and he had treated the Prophet badly in the past. Abu Sufyan tried many times in the past to kill Prophet Muhammad and destroy Madina. She loved her father and cared about him but she believed that her faith in Islam must come before kinship. Ramlah رضي الله عنها wanted to convey a strong message to her father hoping that it would lead him to sobering up from the drunkenness of idol worship. She just wanted him and her family to be guided to

Islam. Nevertheless, Abu Sufyan was deeply disappointed in what he felt was his daughter's disrespect toward him.

Abu Sufyan's Failed Mission

Abu Sufyan was also disappointed because the Prophet would not speak to him at all. He tried to get Abu Bakr to intercede for him but he refused. He then called upon Omar who made his views clear in this angry reply: "I, to intercede for you with the Prophet of God? By God, if I only found ants to fight you with I would do so".

Abu Sufyan then approached Ali and Fatimah, the Prophet's cousin and daughter, but they would not dare speak to the Prophet, nor did they wish to. Ali advised him to go to the mosque and on his own authority, ask the people to help renew the Treaty. All the people let him down. So he returned to Makkah empty-handed reporting his failed mission to the Quraysh.

Ummu Habeebah's Prayers answered

Ummu Habeebah had always prayed to Allah asking Him to guide her father and

family to Islam. And in less than a month after her father's visit, her prayers were answered. Abu Sufyan and his son Mu'awiyah, who became a khaleefah many years later, became Muslim at the time of the conquest of Makkah. When she received the news that her father and brother Mu'awiyah had embraced Islam, she prostrated to Allah out of thankfulness (Sujood-ush-Shukr). When that actually happened Ummu Habeebah رضي الله عنها was fully content and her relationships with her father and family members returned to normal.

Ummu Habeebah Passes Away

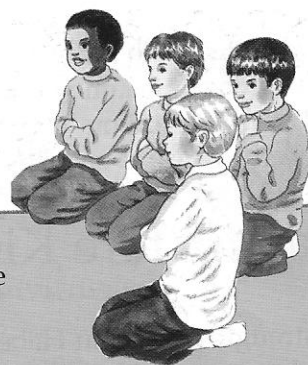
Ummu Habeebah spent four precious years with Prophet Muhammad ﷺ before he passed away. She also passed away in the year 44 AH. She was seventy-two years old.

Like all the wives of the Prophet ﷺ Ummu Habeebah spent much of her time remembering Allah and worshipping Him. She related that once the Prophet ﷺ said to her, "A house will be built in the Garden for anyone who, in the space of a day and a night, prays twelve voluntary rak'aat;" and she added, "I have never stopped doing this since I learned it from the Messenger of Allah."



FAITH IN ACTION

- ★ Always put your full trust in Allah and be patient
- ★ Always pray 12 voluntary raka'at every day.



CHAPTER REVIEW

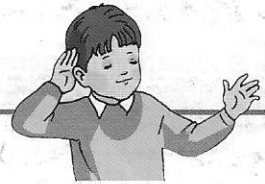
Projects and Activities

1. Create the family tree of Abu Sufyan, and figure out who Ummu Habeebah's mother was and her brothers and sisters.
2. Write an essay about what Abu Sufyan did after he became a Muslim.



Stretch Your Mind

1. Abu Sufyan was an enemy of Islam and his people broke the Treaty of Hudaibiyah. Why do you think Ummu Habeebah still received him into her house?
2. Why do you think the Prophet decided to marry Ummu Habeebah?
3. Why do you think it took Ummu Habeebah six years to join the Prophet in Madina?



Study Questions

- 1 Who was Ummu Habeebah? Who were her father, first husband, second husband and brother?
- 2 Describe how the marriage of Ummu Habeebah to the Prophet took place.
- 3 What did Ummu Habeebah do when she heard that her father and family accepted Islam?
- 4 What did Prophet Muhammad advise Ummu Habeebah to do in terms of worship?
- 5 Why did Ummu Habeebah refuse to let her father sit on the mattress of Rasoolullah?
- 6 When did Ummu Habeebah pass away? How old was she?
- 7 How did the Quraysh break the Treaty of Al-Hudaibiyah?
- 8 What did Abu Sufyan do in Madina? Whom did he meet with?
- 9 Why did Abu Sufyan come to Madina?
- 10 What did Omar say to Abu Sufyan?