

MARVELOUS MAIDENS

IN ISLAMIC HISTORY

INSPIRATIONAL INCIDENTS AND INVALUABLE LESSONS FROM THE LIVES OF GREAT MUSLIM WOMEN

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BISMILLAHIR RAHMAANIR RAHEEM

Foreward

All praises are due solely to Allah (ﷻ), by whose grace and mercy all good deeds are completed. May Allah (ﷻ)'s special and choicest salawaat and salaam be upon our beloved master and teacher Nabi Muhammed (ﷺ), whose life is the greatest example worthy of being followed and who conveyed to us the greatest message of Hidaayah—the Qur'an.

Women have played an undeniably unique role in the history of Islam. They have always worked as silent servants of Islam, holding a significant position in spiritually uplifting and creating an Islamic awareness in every Muslim society. A society whose women have turned rotten is bound for destruction. Likewise a society whose women possess qualities of Imaan, piety, Allah-consciousness, belief in the Aakhirah and good character are surely on the road to success and prosperity, and should look forward to progress and a bright future. The contribution of women to a sound and stable society is far greater than that of the men. It is such women who inculcate admirable qualities in the hearts of their sons and daughters, and sow the seeds to a bright future for every community. For this reason, Islam has always given great importance to the religious education of women, and has stressed the importance of tarbiyah (spiritual development) for females.

Incidents of the people of the past contains great lesson for one and all, and its study is a beautiful method of reforming oneself. The great women who will be discussed in this book are all ideal role-models, who every Muslim woman should endeavour to imitate and follow in their footsteps.

This book will Insha-Allah prove beneficial and inspirational to all young girls and womenfolk who study it. It was originally written with the desire that its simplistic subject matter be taught as a beginner to girls studying Din in **girls madrasahs** or through **short Islamic**

courses, for **ta'leem** in the home by mothers and fathers for their daughters, and to **be read by young girls and women** who wish to educate themselves on an Islamic way of life. The catalyst to preparing this book was a friend, Moulana Ebrahim of Delmas who brought to our attention that most institutes for females unfortunately use books which are written by people of unsound beliefs or contain information which is not reliable.

The short condensed incidents mentioned in this book and their lessons have been mostly quoted verbatim from the following books:

- 1) Heavenly Ornaments by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (translated by Maulana Mahomed Mahomed)
- 2) Stories of the Sahaabah by Shaykhul-Hadith Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya (published by Ta'limi Board KZN)

Since Allah has granted great acceptance and has placed great effect in the above two books, I have taken almost all information from them. I have followed the sequence of Heavenly Ornaments throughout.

Just a few incidents and additions have been added from the following:

- 1) Women of Paradise by Maulana Moosa Kajee
- 2) Who are the Women of the Quran?
- 3) Presents of Paradise

May Allah ﷻ accept the book and make it a means of guidance for the entire mankind and jinn till the Day of Judgement. Aameen

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BISMILLAHIR RAHMAANIR RAHEEM

Hawwa رضي الله عنها

She is the wife of Adam ﷺ and the mother of all mankind. Allah, with His absolute power, created her from the left rib of Adam. Thereafter, He got her married to him and made them stay in heaven. There was a tree in heaven from which they were prohibited to eat. Shaytandeluded her into eating it mistakenly. Upon this, Allah commanded them to leave heaven and go to the world. When she came to this world, she cried abundantly on account of her mistake. Allah forgave her and made her stay with Adam, from whom she had separated prior to this. Thereafter, numerous children were born to them.

Lesson: Dear sister! See how Hawwa admitted her mistake and repented. Some women try to defend their actions and do not admit their mistakes. There are many other women who continue sinning throughout their lives without even worrying about giving them up - this is more so when it comes to making gheebah (backbiting)and holding on to baseless customs. Dear sister! Abandon this habit. If you err or commit any sin, give it up immediately and repent.

Sarah رضي الله عنها

She is the wife of Ibrahim ﷺ and the mother of Ishaq ﷺ. Her speaking to the angels and the angels informing her that she is a source of Allah's mercy and blessings on all families is mentioned in the Quran.

A story concerning her piety and acceptance of her du'as has been mentioned in a Hadith. When Ibrahim ﷺ migrated towards Syria, she also accompanied him. On the way they approached the village of an oppressive king. Someone went and informed him that a very beautiful woman has come to your state. He sent for Ibrahim ﷺ and asked him: "Who is the woman that is accompanying you?" He replied: "My sister in Dîn." He did not say that she is his wife because if he did so, the king would have killed him. When he returned to Sarah, he said to her:

"Do not deny what I said (to the king) because you are my sister in Dîn." Thereafter, the king had her captured and brought to him. When she realized that he had evil intentions, she made wudhu, offered her salaah, and made du'a to Allah saying: "O Allah! If I have believed in your Nabi (i.e. Ibrahim ﷺ) and have always protected my respect and honour, then do not allow this kaafir to gain control over me." The result of this du'a was that the moment he tried to touch her, he was overpowered (by Allah), he choked and began striking the ground with his feet (in agony). He said to her: Pray to Allah for me and I will do you no harm." She thought to herself that if he dies, people will say that she killed him. She therefore made a du'a and he immediately recovered. He tried to touch her again, but she made another du'a (and he was overpowered once again). He repeated his promise, but broke it once more. She therefore made another du'a. In short, this incident took place three times. Eventually he shouted to his servants asking them: "What is this calamity that you have brought to me. Take her away and let her go." Haajar ﷺ who was from the Qibtî tribe was also wrongfully enslaved by him. Allah had protected her honour as well. He handed her over to Sarah for her service. They both went back to Ibrahim ﷺ with respect and honour.

Lesson: Dear sister! Look what a great thing piety is and how Allah safeguards such people. We also learn that salaah removes calamities and du'as are accepted. If one experiences any problems and difficulties, one should immediately occupy oneself in optional salaah and du'as.

Haajar رضي الله عنها

The oppressive king who was mentioned in the above story had enslaved Haajar. This king handed her over to Sarah who in turn handed her over to Ibrahim ﷺ. Ismail ﷺ was born to her. Ismail ﷺ was still being breast-fed when Allah wished to inhabit Makkah with his progeny. At that time, Makkah was not inhabited nor was the Ka'bah built. Allah ordered Ibrahim ﷺ to take Ismail and his mother, Haajar, to Makkah and to leave them there. Allah will safeguard them.

Acting on the order of Allah, Ibrahim took them and left them at that deserted place which is today known as Makkah. He also left behind a water-skin and a bag of dates. When he left them and began departing, Haajar rushed behind him and asked him: "Are you leaving us alone and going away?" To this, he did not give any reply. She then asked: "Has Allah commanded you to do this?" He replied: "Yes." She said: "(If He has commanded) there is nothing to worry about. He will take care of us."

She went back to where she was sitting. She began eating the dates, drinking the water, and breastfeeding Ismail. When the water was exhausted, she began worrying over her child who began crying and became angry out of thirst. The mother could not bear seeing her child in such a state. She climbed Mt. Safa and looked all around her in the hope of spotting some water somewhere. However, she could not see any water. She therefore climbed down and went towards the mountain Marwah. In the open field between Safa and Marwah there was a small stretch of land which was slightly lower. As long as she was on the flat open field, she could see Ismail. The moment she had to traverse the lower stretch of land, he was out of her range. She therefore ran swiftly across this lower stretch of land and came to the flat open field. Eventually she reached Marwah, climbed it and looked all around her for water. However, she could not spot any water. Out of helplessness she climbed down and ran towards Safa again. In this way she ran seven times between Safa and Marwah and whenever she reached the lower stretch of land, she crossed it very swiftly. Allah liked this action of hers very much and therefore prescribed it for those who go on Hajj. That is, they have to run seven times between these two mountains and also run swiftly once they reach the lower stretch of land. This lower stretch of land has now been flattened.

When she was on Marwah during her last round, she heard a voice. She turned in the direction of the sound and heard it again. However, she could not see anyone. She therefore shouted and said: "I have heard a sound. If anyone can help me, please do so." Immediately thereafter, an angel appeared at the place where the well of zamzam is presently found. The angel struck the ground and water began gushing forth from there. She surrounded the water from all round with sand,

filled the water skin, drank some water herself, and gave some to the child as well. The angel then said: "Do not fear anything. The house of Allah (i.e. the Ka'bah) is here. This child will help his father in constructing this house and many people will come and inhabit this place."

Within a few days, everything came to life. A caravan was passing by. When the people saw the water, they stopped over and settled down over there. Ismail (عليه السلام) got married. Acting under the command of Allah, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) also arrived. The father and son got together and built the Ka'bah. The spring of zamzam had also subsided. After some time, a well was built from which the zamzam water used to be drawn out.

Lesson: Look at the total trust that Haajar (عليها السلام) had in Allah. When she learnt that her being left behind alone in this deserted place was the order of Allah, she became assured that nothing will happen to her. Look at all the things with which she was blessed on account of her trust in Allah.

Dear sister! You should also have trust in Allah just like this. Insha Allah, all your tasks and wishes will be fulfilled. Look at her great status that she was actually running in search of water but Allah liked this act of hers to such an extent that He prescribed it as an act of 'ibaadah for those performing the Hajj. His relationship with His accepted servants is of a different level. Dear sister! Try and fulfil the commands of Allah so that you are also accepted by Him. If you do this, even your worldly matters will be considered to be Dînî.

The second wife of Ismail رضي الله عنها

Prior to building the Ka'bah, Ibrahim (عليه السلام) had come to Makkah on two occasions. However, on both occasions he did not find Ismail (عليه السلام) at home. Neither was he (Ibrahim (عليه السلام)) commanded to stay over in Makkah for very long (whereby he could have met his son). When he came to Makkah on the first of such occasions, the wife of Ismail (عليه السلام) was at home. He asked her how she was managing. She replied: "I am in great difficulty." He replied: "When your husband returns, convey

my salaam to him and tell him to change his door-frame." When Ismail (عليه السلام) returned home and learnt everything, he replied: "That was my father and the door-frame that he was referring to is actually you. He wants me to leave you." He therefore divorced her and married another woman.

When Ibrahim (عليه السلام) came a second time, he met the second wife of his son. She welcomed him and was very hospitable to him. He also asked her how she was managing. She replied: "Thanks to Allah, I am experiencing a lot of comfort." He made du'a for her and said to her: "When your husband returns home, convey my salaam to him and tell him to maintain his door-frame." When Ismail (عليه السلام) returned home, he was informed of what transpired. He remarked: "That was my father. He asked me to keep you with me."

Lesson: See the consequences of being ungrateful. One Nabi became displeased with her, while the other Nabi divorced her. The fruit of gratitude and patience was that one Nabi made du'a for her and she was blessed with the opportunity of staying in the company of another Nabi. Dear sister! Don't ever be ungrateful. You must exercise patience and express gratitude irrespective of the situation in which you are.

The daughter of Namrud رضي الله عنها

Namrud is the oppressive king who threw Ibrahim (عليه السلام) into the fire. His daughter, Ru'dah, was watching the scene from above. She noticed that the fire was having no effect on Ibrahim (عليه السلام). She shouted and asked him the reason for this. Ibrahim (عليه السلام) replied: "Allah has saved me from this calamity through the blessing of imaan." She replied: "If you permit me, I will also come into the fire." He replied: "Recite Laa ilaaha illAllahu Ibrahim khalilullah (translation: There is none worthy of worship except Allah and Ibrahim is the close friend of Allah). She recited this kalimah and immediately dived into the fire. The fire had no effect on her as well. She then came out of the fire and went and rebuked and censured her father. He subjected her to great difficulties but she remained steadfast on her imaan.

Lesson: Glory be to Allah! How courageous she was that she did not abandon her imaan even when in difficulty! Dear sister! You should also be strong-willed at the time of difficulties and do not act contrary to the Dîn even if it equals a hair's breadth.

The wife of Ayyub رضي الله عنها

Her name is Layyah or Rahmah. When Ayyub (عليه السلام) fell ill and his entire body was engulfed with sickness, everyone stayed aloof from him. No one came near him. However, his wife faithfully continued serving him and bore all the difficulties in tending to him and seeing to his needs. Since he had lost all of his wealth and possessions, she had to now work as a domestic servant, in order to see to their household expenses and fulfill their basic needs of food and drink. One day, she was delayed in coming to him. Out of anger, Ayyub (عليه السلام) took an oath that when he recovers he will give her 100 strikes with a stick. When he recovered, he knew that he had to fulfill his oath. Out of His mercy, Allah ordered him to take a broom which has 100 bristles and to strike her once gently. (In this way he will fulfill his oath).

Lesson: See how patient she was that despite her husband's critical condition she remained in his service. From the oath which he took when he was ill, we can deduce that his temperament had become a bit sensitive. However, she used to overlook this as well. On account of her service and patience Allah saved her from those 100 strikes. From this we can deduce that she was very much liked by Allah in that He lightened this punishment for her.

This law does not apply any longer. If anyone takes such an oath, by his striking with a broom the oath will not be fulfilled. Instead, the person will have to break this oath and pay compensation (kaffarah). Dear sister! Be obedient to your husbands and endure their sensitive temperaments, you will also be beloved in the sight of Allah.

Layya - the aunt of Yusuf رضي الله عنها

It is mentioned in the Quran that when Yusuf (عليه السلام) became the king of Egypt and there was a drought, all his brothers came to him asking for

food. (At that time they did not know that he was in fact their brother whom they had thrown into the well). He then revealed his true identity to them and gave them his shirt asking them to pass it over their father Ya'qub's (عليه السلام) eyes. He also told them to return with everyone. As a result of passing his shirt over his father's eyes, his eyesight returned to him. They then left their country and went to Egypt to meet Yusuf (عليه السلام). When they came to him, Yusuf (عليه السلام) seated his father and his aunt onto his royal throne. He did this out of respect for them. It was at that time that the two of them and all his brothers fell into prostration before Yusuf (عليه السلام). In those days, such a prostration in place of salaam was permissible. This is no longer permissible.

As for the Quran mentioning this woman to be his mother - the actual fact is that his mother had passed away and Ya'qub (عليه السلام) had married this woman. Other scholars have stated that this incident is in regard to his mother whose name was Raahîl. When they prostrated to him, Yusuf (عليه السلام) remarked: "This is the realization of my childhood dream." He had seen a dream wherein the sun, the moon and 11 stars were prostrating to him.

Lesson: How pious this woman must have been for a Nabi to pay his respects to her.

The mother of Musa عليه السلام

Her name is Yukhaand. When the priests had informed Fir'aun that a boy will be born from among the Banu Isrâ'il and will fight against his kingdom, Fir'aun issued an order whereby he instructed that all boys who are born to the tribe of Banu Isrâ'il should be killed. Thousands of such boys were killed. Musa (عليه السلام) was born in this volatile situation. Allah informed his mother by way of inspiration that she should continue breast-feeding him and that when she fears over his life, she should place him in a box and set him afloat in the river. And when We decide, We will send him back to you. Eventually, this is what she did and Allah also fulfilled all His promises.

Lesson: Dear sister! Look at the high level of trust and conviction that she had in Allah and how the blessings of this trust manifested themselves.

The sister of Musa عليه السلام

Her name was Kulthum. When Musa's ﷺ mother placed him in the river, she said to her daughter to keep a watch on him to see the outcome of this. The box floated down the river and landed at the palace of Fir'aun. When it was taken out of the river, they saw a beautiful child in it. Fir'aun wanted to kill this child. However, his wife who was a pious woman and who believed in Allah, saved the child's life. The husband (Fir'aun) and wife decided to adopt the child for themselves. They needed a wet-nurse who would breast-feed Musa ﷺ. However, he refused to drink the milk of all the wet-nurses who offered their services. Everyone was at a loss as to what could be done. It was at this time that Musa's ﷺ sister went there and said: "I will show you a wet-nurse who is very good and kind. Her milk is also very good." Eventually, she directed them to Musa's ﷺ mother. His mother was called, and he was handed over to her. Allah's promise of returning him to her was thereby fulfilled. Some narrations state that she will also be the wife of Rasulullah ﷺ in Jannah.

Lesson: Look at how intelligent she was: she found him and risked her life in obedience to her mother without the enemy coming to know about it. Dear sister! Obedience to one's parents, intelligence and prudence are great virtues.

The wife of Musa عليه السلام

Her name is Safura. She is the eldest daughter of Shu'ayb ﷺ. When a kaafir was unintentionally killed by Musa ﷺ in Egypt, Fir'aun learnt of this. He therefore informed his ministers that Musa ﷺ should be killed. When Musa ﷺ heard about this plan, he escaped secretly to Madyan. When he reached the boundary of this city, he noticed many shepherds drawing water from a well and giving it to their flock to drink. He also noticed two women sitting aloof from all the shepherds. (Later, the elder of the two was his wife and the other was his sister-in-law). Upon seeing this, he asked them the reason for their not being able to give water to their flock. They replied: "We have no male at home. We therefore have to fulfill this task on our own. Because we

are women, we are waiting for all these men to go away. Once they all leave, we draw out the water for our flock." He felt sorry for them, drew the water all by himself and gave it to the sheep. When they went home, they related the entire incident to their old father. He sent his elder daughter to go and call this noble person. She came to Musa ﷺ with full modesty and shyness and informed him that her father is calling him. He accompanied her and went and met Shu'ayb ﷺ. The latter consoled him and informed him that he wished to give one of his daughters to him in marriage. However, the condition is that he will have to tend to his sheep for eight or ten years. Musa ﷺ accepted the offer and married the elder sister. After the completion of ten years, he returned home (to Egypt) with her. Because of the cold during the course of their journey, they needed some fire. He spotted a fire on the Mt. Tur so he went towards it. When he reached there, he saw the nur of Allah. It was at this place that he received Nubuwwah.

Lesson: Look at how hard she worked in order to fulfill her domestic tasks and serve her old father. And when she had to speak to a stranger, how modestly and nervously she spoke. Dear sister! You should also abstain from seeking comfort and abstain from laziness with regard to domestic tasks and duties. Do not consider these tasks to be below your dignity. It is obvious that your status is not higher than that of the Nabis' daughters. Furthermore, consider modesty and bashfulness to be necessary at all times.

Aasiyah رضي الله عنها

She is the wife of Fir'aun, the king of Egypt who had claimed to be god. Look at the power of Allah that the husband was a shaytan while the wife was so pious that the Quran praises her and our Rasul ﷺ has spoken about her in the following terms: "There are many men who have reached stages of excellence. However, from among the women, no one reached a stage of excellence except Maryam and Aasiyah." It was Aasiyah who had saved the life of Musa from the tyrant, Fir'aun.

As mentioned in the story of Musa's ﷺ sister's story, it was already written in her (Aasiyah's) favour that she will bring imaan on Musa ﷺ. She had a natural love for him since his infancy. When Musa ﷺ

received Nubuwwah, Fir'aun did not bring imaan on him. However, she brought imaan on him. When Fir'aun heard about this, he became extremely harsh to her and imposed many punishments on her. However, she did not relinquish her imaan and left the world in this state. It is mentioned in the narrations that she will be the wife of Rasulullah ﷺ in Jannah.

Lesson: Look at how firm she was on her imaan. Despite her kaafir husband imposing severe difficulties on her, she did not succumb to him. Today, when one experiences minor difficulties, one begins uttering words of kufr. Dear sister! imaan is a very great gift. Irrespective of the nature of difficulty, never ever do anything contrary to the Dîn. If the husband does anything irreligious, don't ever support or join him. In those days, marriage with a kaafir husband was valid. However, the rule in our Shari'ah is that if the husband is a kaafir, the marriage is not valid. And if he becomes a kaafir after marriage, the marriage will be annulled.

The maid of Fir'aun's daughter رضي الله عنها

It is mentioned in the book Raudatus Safa that Fir'aun's daughter had a maid who was under her command and who used to comb her hair, etc. She had believed in Musa عليه السلام. However, she did not expose her imaan out of fear for Fir'aun. Once while she was combing her (Fir'aun's daughter's) hair, the comb fell from her hand. When she bent down to pick it up, she recited Bismillah. The daughter asked her: "What was it that you recited just now? Whose name is that?" She replied: "It is the name of the one who created your father and also gave him a kingdom." She became astonished and remarked: "Is there anyone greater than my father!" Saying this, she ran out to her father and related the entire incident to her. Fir'aun became extremely angry, called for the maid, and threatened her. However, she unhesitatingly said: "Do whatever you wish, I will not leave my imaan." Nails were fastened to her hands and feet and thereafter hot ash and embers were placed on her. When this had no effect on her, a child who was in her lap was taken and thrown into the fire. While the child was in the fire, it said: "Mother! Be patient and don't ever leave your imaan." She

remained steadfast on her imaan until she was also thrown into that fire. In Surah al-Buruj, mention is made of a trench. In that story a similar incident took place between a mother and her child.

Lesson: Look at how firm she remained on her imaan. Dear sister! imaan is a very great bounty. Do not allow any shortcoming or defect in your imaan and Dîn on account of your desires, any motive or any difficulty. Don't ever do anything contrary to the commands of Allah and His Rasul ﷺ.

An old woman in the army of Musa عليه السلام

When Fir'aun began persecuting the Banu Isra'il in Egypt, compelling them into labour, beating them and oppressing them, Allah commanded Musa عليه السلام to leave Egypt together with the Banu Isra'il on that very night so that they may be saved from the oppression of Fir'aun. Consequently, Musa عليه السلام left with the Banu Isra'il. When they reached the Nile river, they forgot the road. No one could recognize the road. He became surprised and shouted out: "Whoever is acquainted with this area should please come forward and show us the way." Upon this an old woman came forward and said: "When Yusuf was about to leave this world, he made a bequest to his brothers and nephews that if at any time you have to leave Egypt, you must carry my coffin, in which my body will be, together with you to wherever you are going. As long as you do not take the coffin, you will not find your way." Musa عليه السلام asked the whereabouts of the coffin. No one knew the place except for that very same old woman. When he asked her, she replied: "I will not show you the place until you guarantee me one thing." He asked: "What is that? She replied: "You must guarantee me that I will die on imaan and that I will be wherever you are in jannah." Musa عليه السلام raised his hands and said: "O Allah! That which she is asking me for is not in my power." Upon this he was ordered: "You give the guarantee, I will fulfill it." He therefore gave her the guarantee and she showed him the place where the coffin could be found buried in the centre of the river. The moment the coffin was removed, they found the road.

Lesson: Look at how pious this old woman was in that she did not ask for any of the treasures of the world. Instead, she successfully organized the hereafter for herself. Dear sister! You also abandon your lust and desire for this world. You will receive (of this world) whatever has been written for you. Instead, put your Dîn in order.

The sister of Haysûr رضي الله عنها

In the story of Musa and Khidr (alayhimas salaam) it is mentioned that the latter killed a young boy in fulfillment of Allah's command. Musa عليه السلام became alarmed and asked: "What did this innocent child do that you had to kill him?" Khidr عليه السلام replied: "When this child would have grown, he would have been a kaafir. His parents were Muslims. There was the possibility of their also going astray out of love for him. It was therefore felt that it would be good if he was killed. In place of this boy, Allah will give a daughter to these parents who will be pure from all evil and will be of more benefit to her parents." It is written in other books that this is exactly what happened. This girl married a Nabi and from her progeny 70 Nabîs were born. The name of the boy is Haysur and this girl is his sister.

Lesson: When Allah praises a woman by saying that she is pure from all evil and of great benefit to her parents, how great such a woman must be! What a beloved and noble feat it is to be pure from all evil and to provide comfort and peace to one's parents! The result of this is that such a person is praised by Allah. Dear sister! Strive hard in acquiring these qualities.

Bilqees رضي الله عنها

She was the queen of Saba. An bird by the name of Hudhud informed Sulayman عليه السلام that he came across a queen who worships the sun. Sulayman عليه السلام wrote a letter and asked Hudhud to hand it over to her. The following was written in the letter: "Accept Islam and come to me." She consulted her ministers and governors and eventually made the following decision: "I will send many rare gifts to him. If he accepts them, I will conclude that he is a worldly king. If he does not

accept them, I will conclude that he is a Nabi." When these gifts were given to Sulayman عليه السلام, he returned them and sent a message that if you do not become Muslims, I will come with my army to fight you. When she received this message, she was convinced that he is a Nabi. She left her city with the intention of becoming a Muslim.

After she departed, Sulayman عليه السلام had her valuable royal throne brought to him in a miraculous way. He called for it so that Bilqees will see the miracle. He removed the pearls and other gems that were on it and had them embedded in another way (different from the way they had been originally embedded). When Bilqees reached his place, he decided to test her intelligence. He therefore asked her: "Isn't this your throne?" She looked at it carefully and said: "It looks like it. It seems that its appearance has changed slightly." From her answer he deduced that she is very intelligent.

Thereafter, Sulayman عليه السلام wanted to show her that his kingdom that was given by Allah is far better than her worldly kingdom. In order to demonstrate this to her, he ordered a pond to be filled with water and that a crystal clear glass be placed on top of it in such a way that it cannot be seen. He then went and sat at such a place that if anyone wished to go to him, that pond will be in the way and he will therefore have to walk through the pond. Bilqees was then summoned to him. When Bilqees reached the pond, she did not notice the glass and felt that she will have to walk through the pond. She began lifting her pants (so that it will not get wet when she walks through the pond). Sulayman عليه السلام immediately informed her that it has been laid with glass and that she should merely walk on it.

When Bilqees saw the miracle of her throne (being brought here) and this great piece of architecture (i.e. the glass on top of the pond), and that he has royal possessions far better than hers, she immediately recited the kalimah and became a Muslim. She realized that Sulayman عليه السلام has no need for her material possessions, and only desired guidance for her and her people. Some scholars have written that Sulayman عليه السلام married her soon thereafter. Others have written that she married the king of Yemen. Allah knows best.

Lesson: Look at how selfless she was that despite being a queen and very rich, the moment she learnt the truth of Dîn, she immediately accepted it. She did not display any pride in accepting it nor did she hold on to the beliefs and customs of her forefathers. Dear sister! You should also adopt this attitude. When you hear anything of the Dîn, do not consider it to be a blemish or something to be ashamed of. Nor should you hold on to the customs of your family. None of this will help you. Only your Dîn will help you.

A slave-woman from the Banu Isra'il رضي الله عنها

It is mentioned in a Hadith that a woman from the Banu Isra'il was breast-feeding her child when a richly adorned caravan passed by. This woman made a du'a: "O Allah! Make my child (rich) just like this." Upon hearing this, the child left her breast and said: "O Allah! Do not make me like this." Thereafter the child continued drinking her milk. After a little while a group of people passed by taking a slave-woman with them in a disgraceful and oppressive manner. Upon seeing this spectacle, the mother made the following du'a: "O Allah! Do not make my child like this." Again the child left her breast and said: "O Allah! Make me just like this." The mother asked: "What is this you are saying?" He replied: "The person who was at the head of the caravan was a tyrant. The slave-woman was being accused of being a thief and being immoral when in fact she is pure from all these accusations."

Lesson: The meaning of this is that people value the person at the head of the caravan while in Allah's sight he has no value. This slave-woman has no value in the eyes of the people while in Allah's sight she has great value. One should therefore try to acquire the value of Allah irrespective of what people may think. If a person is of no value in Allah's sight, what benefit is there in acquiring the value and respect of the people? Look! It was the miracle of that slave-woman that a breast-fed child began speaking in order to attest to her purity and chastity. Dear sister! It is the habit of some women to despise and look down upon poor people. On the slightest doubt, they take out faults with them and accuse them of stealing. This is an evil practice. It is possible that such poor people are better than you in the sight of Allah.

A pious and intelligent woman from the Banu Isra'il رضي الله عنها

Muhammad ibn Ka'b relates that there was a great 'aalim and 'aabid in the Banu Isra'il. He loved his wife very much. Co-incidentally, she passed away. This person was so grieved by this that he locked his door and abstained from meeting and conversing with people. A woman from the Banu Isra'il heard about this so she went to him. She informed those who were guarding the entrance to his house that she wants to ask him a mas'alah (law of Shari'ah) and that it can only be asked directly to him. Saying this, she sat down stubbornly by the door. The person was informed of this and eventually permitted her to enter. She said: "I want to ask you a mas'alah." He replied: "Go ahead." She said: "I have a neighbour from whom I borrowed some jewellery. I am wearing it for quite some time now. Thereafter she sent a person asking for her jewellery. The question I want to ask you is that do I have to give it back to her?" The 'aalim replied: "Yes, you have to give it back to her." The woman replied: "That jewellery was with me for a very long time. How can I give it?" The 'aalim replied: "In such a case, you should give it even more happily because it was out of her kindness that she allowed you to use it for such a long time." When he said this, the woman replied: "May Allah have mercy on you? Why, then, are you so sad? Allah had loaned you something and when He wished, He took it back. (Because) it belongs to Him." Upon hearing this, the 'aalim realized his mistake and benefited tremendously from this conversation.

Lesson: Look at how this woman put some sense into this man who was a great 'aalim. Dear sister! You should also bear this in mind when you have to encounter any difficulty or calamity. You should also explain this to others.

The mother of Maryam رضي الله عنها

Her name is Hannah. Her husband's name is 'Imraan who is the father of Maryam. When she fell pregnant, she took a vow that when she gives birth to the child she will keep him free for the service of the masjid. That is, she will not allow him to get involved in any worldly

activity. She was under the impression that she will give birth to a boy because only a boy can be of service to the masjid. At that time, vows of this nature were permissible. When the time of delivery of the child came, she gave birth to a girl. Out of sadness she said: "O Allah! I have given birth to a girl." She was informed that this girl will be better than boys and that Allah has accepted her. She kept the name of this child Maryam and made a du'a to Allah that He should protect her and her progeny from shaytan. Rasulullah ﷺ said that shaytan torments every child that is born. However, he was unable to torment Maryam and 'Isa 'alayhimas salaam.

Lesson: Look at the blessing of her pure intention in that Allah blessed her with a pious child and accepted her du'a as well. We learn that Allah favoured her greatly. Dear sister! This is the blessing of pure intentions. Keep your intentions pure all the time. If you do any good act, do it for Allah alone. In this way, you will also be valued by Allah.

Maryam رضي الله عنها

The story of her birth has been mentioned above. After she was born, her mother took her to Baytul Maqdis in fulfillment of her vow. When she reached the masjid, she informed the pious servants over there to take her because she had vowed this child for the masjid. Because she was from a pious family, all the pious persons who were based in the masjid wanted to rear her and bring her up. Zakariyya was also amongst them. He was the uncle of Maryam. He therefore had a greater right of taking care of her. But because all the others were clamouring to take care of her, they all agreed upon a certain system to determine who will take care of her. Eventually, the lot fell in the name of Zakariyya ﷺ. He took her and began looking after her. She began growing very quickly - much faster than other children of her age and very soon she appeared to be a grown up. From a young age she was very pious. Allah has referred to her as a walî in the Quran. It has also mentioned that she used to miraculously receive different types of fruit when it was not even the season to receive such fruit. Zakariyya ﷺ used to ask her: "From where are you receiving all this

fruit?" She used to reply: "From Allah." In short, her entire life was something to marvel about. When she became mature, solely through the power of Allah, she fell pregnant without any man touching her. It was from this pregnancy that 'Isa ﷺ was born. On seeing that she gave birth without a man, the Jews began accusing her of adultery. In order to prove them wrong, Allah gave 'Isa ﷺ the power to speak while he was still a baby. He spoke of such great things that all those who possessed a just and open mind agreed that this is an example of Allah's power; that he was in fact born without a father and that his mother was pure and innocent. Rasulullah ﷺ has mentioned her piety by saying that from among the women, no one reached a stage of excellence except Maryam and Aasiyah. We had quoted this Hadith in full when mentioning the life of Aasiyah. She will also be the wife of Rasulullah ﷺ in Jannah.

Lesson: Her mother had devoted her to Allah. She became very pious. She remained obedient to Allah to the extent that she became a walî. The blessing of this was that Allah saved her from the accusations of people. Dear sister! Continue obeying Allah and you will be protected from all calamities. Pay more attention to the Dînî affairs of your children and do not make them slaves of this world.

Note: The above incidents concerned the women of the previous ummahs. We will now mention the lives of the women of this ummah. We will begin by mentioning the wives and daughters of Rasulullah ﷺ.

Khadijah رضي الله عنها

She is the first wife of Rasulullah ﷺ. Even before Islam, she was popularly called Taahirah (Clean and pure). Prior to marrying Rasulullah ﷺ, she had married two other persons by the name of Aatiq ibn Aa'iz and Abu Haalah Tamimi. At the time of her marriage to Rasulullah ﷺ, she was 40 years old and Nabi ﷺ was twenty-five. She gave birth to all his children, except a son Ibrahim. Great feats have been attributed to her. Once Rasulullah ﷺ informed her that Jibra'il ﷺ has conveyed the salaams of Allah to her and gave the glad tidings that she will be granted a palace of pearl in Jannah in which there will be neither arguments nor burdens. Rasulullah ﷺ also said that the

following four women are the best in the world: Maryam, Aasiyah (the wife of Fir'aun), Khadijah, and Fatimah.

Whenever Rasulullah ﷺ used to encounter any difficulties from the kuffar, he used to come and inform Khadijah ؓ. She used to console him in such a way that all his worries used to go away. She was a pillar of strength for Nabi ﷺ when he was boycotted, assaulted and unjustly criticized for calling people to Islam.

She passed away in Ramadhan of the 10th year of the Nubuwwah at the age of sixty-five. Nabi ﷺ laid her in the grave with his own hands. Till then, there was no janaazah salaah. After her demise he used to think about her so much that when he used to slaughter a sheep, he would also send some of its meat to her friends. Once A'ishah ؓ was overtaken with envy when Nabi ﷺ praised her. She said to him, "Was she not an old woman, whereas Allah has granted you a better replacement?" He said, "No. Allah did not grant me a better replacement. She believed in me when people disbelieved. She accepted me as true when people called me a liar. She assisted me with wealth when people deprived me. Allah granted me offspring from her while He deprived me of offspring from others."

Lesson: The high level of value and appreciation that Allah and His Rasul ﷺ had for her was because of her imaan and her obedience. Dear sister! You should also endeavor in this direction. We also learn from this that it is considered to be a noble characteristic for the wife to console her husband when he is under emotional stress. Some women completely change the temperament of their husbands by putting them under great emotional stress. They do this by making demands on them or by nagging them all the time. Give up this habit.

Saudah رضي الله عنها

She is also the wife of Rasulullah ﷺ. The name of her first husband was Sukraan ibn 'Amr. The couple embraced Islam and shifted to Abyssinia. Sukraan ؓ died in Abyssinia. Saudah ؓ, now a widow, returned to Makkah Mukarramah. Nabi ﷺ, on the death of Khadijah

ؓ (in Shawwal of the same year), married Saudah ؓ. She had given her day which he used to spend with her to 'A'ishah ؓ. 'A'ishah ؓ says: "I never desired to be like any woman except Saudah. Whenever I used to see her, I desired to be like her."

Lesson: Look at her magnanimity that she gave her turn to her co-wife. These days, a woman unnecessarily fights with the co-wife and is jealous of her. Look at the justice of 'A'ishah that she praises her co-wife. Today, they intentionally look for faults in the co-wife. Dear sister! You should also adopt magnanimity and justice of this nature.

A'ishah رضي الله عنها

She is a very beloved wife of Rasulullah ﷺ. He married her while she was still a virgin. Once a Sahabi asked Rasulullah ﷺ: "Whom do you like the most?" He replied: "'A'ishah." This Sahabi then asked: "And from among the men?" He replied: "Her father." That is, 'Abu Bakr ؓ. It is because of her special qualities and especially because of her great understanding, brilliant memory and deep knowledge which caused her to become the favorite of Rasulullah ﷺ. Nabi ﷺ said to her, "You are indeed my wife in this world and in the hereafter." Many other virtues have been mentioned in her favour.

A'ishah ؓ was married to Nabi ﷺ in Shawwal of the 10th year of Nubuwwah. She was born in the 4th year of Nubuwwah and was married when she was six, but was actually sent by her parents to live with Nabi ﷺ, after his shifting to Madinah Munawwarah, when she was nine. She was eighteen at the time of the death of Nabi ﷺ. She died on the night of Tuesday, the 17th Ramadhaan, 57 A.H., at the age of sixty-six. She desired at the time of her death that she might be buried along with other Ummahaat-ul-Momineen, in the public graveyard, though she could be buried by the side of Nabi's ﷺ grave, which was in her house. She was the only wife of Nabi ﷺ who had not been married previously. All the remaining wives had either been widowed or divorced, some quite a few times, before they became Ummahaat-ul-Momineen.

To be married in Shawwal was considered a bad omen among the Arab women. A'ishah ؓ says: "I was married and sent to live with Nabi ﷺ in Shawwal. Which of Nabi's ﷺ wives has been more blessed with his love and Allah's other favours than me?"

On the death of Khadijah ؓ, Khaulah bint Hakim ؓ came to Nabi ﷺ and said: "O, Nabi of Allah! Don't you like to marry again?"

Nabi ﷺ: "Whom can I marry?"

Khaulah ؓ: "I know one virgin and one widow."

Nabi ﷺ: "Name them."

Khaulah ؓ: "The virgin is A'ishah, the daughter of your bosom friend Abu Bakr and the widow is Saudah bint Zam'ah."

Nabi ﷺ: "All right! You may make the proposal."

Khaulah ؓ then went to A'ishah's ؓ mother Ummu-Rooman ؓ and said to her: "I have come with good news for your family."

Ummu Rooman ؓ: "What is that?"

Khaulah ؓ: "Nabi ﷺ has sent me to seek A'ishah's ؓ hand in marriage for him"

Ummu Rooman ؓ: "But A'ishah is like his niece. How can she be married to him? Let me talk to her father."

Abu Bakr ؓ was not at home at that time. When he came, the proposal was placed before him, and he expressed the same difficulty. Khaulah ؓ returned to Nabi ﷺ and informed him of their difficulty. Nabi ﷺ said: "Abu Bakr is my best friend and brother-in-Islam, but this does not stop my marrying his daughter."

Khaulah ؓ went and informed Abu Bakr ؓ accordingly. Abu Bakr was extremely happy to call Nabi ﷺ to his home and perform A'ishah's ؓ Nikah with him. A few months later, when Nabi ﷺ had emigrated to Madinah Munawwarah, Abu Bakr ؓ said to Nabi ﷺ: "Why don't you have your wife A'ishah ؓ living with you?" He ﷺ said: "I have to make some preparations, etc., before I do that." Abu Bakr ؓ presented him with some money, with which necessary things were arranged. A'ishah ؓ then started living with Nabi ﷺ from Shawwal of 1 or 2 A.H.

She was so learned that great Sahabah used to ask her questions pertaining to Islam when they faced any confusion. Zuhri ؓ said, "If the knowledge of all the other wives of Nabi ﷺ and of all the women in the world were to be combined, the knowledge of A'ishah ؓ would surpass them. Abu Musa Ash'ari ؓ said that whenever, we, the companions of Nabi ﷺ had a difference regarding any Deeni matter, then we would refer to A'ishah ؓ, where we always received clarification. After the passing away of Rasulullah ﷺ, she passed her life teaching and imparting knowledge to the people.

Lesson: Look at her: despite her being a woman, great 'Ulama used to refer to her when they wanted to know any law of Shari'ah. Today, let alone not having any knowledge, women do not even have the desire to ask the 'Ulama any questions nor do they have the desire to read any Islamic books. Dear sister! Acquire knowledge of the Dîn with full endeavour and zeal.

A'ishah's ؓ spending in the Path of Allah: Once A'ishah ؓ received a gift of two bags containing one hundred thousand (100,000) Dirhams. She started giving out these among the poor, till by the evening not a single dirham was left with her. She was fasting that day. Her maid servant brought her a loaf of bread and a little olive oil for Iftaar, and said "I wish we had kept one dirham for ourselves to get some meat for Iftaar." A'ishah ؓ said; "Do not be sorry now. If you had told me at that time, I would have perhaps spared one dirham."

There are many stories of this nature reported about A'ishah ؓ. Once she was fasting and had nothing for her Iftaarexcept one piece of bread. A poor man came and begged for some food. She asked her maid to give him that piece of bread. The maid said: "If I give him the piece of bread, there will be nothing left for your Iftaar". She said: "Never mind. Let him have the piece."

Urwah says: "I once saw A'ishah ؓ spending seventy thousand (70 000) dirhams in charity, while she herself, was wearing a dress with patches."

Lesson: Gifts of this nature were often received by A`ishah ؓ from Amir Mu`awiyah ؓ, Abdullah ibn Zubair ؓ and others, as that was the time of ease and plenty for the Muslims as country after country fell into their hands. In spite of this wealth, A`ishah ؓ led a life of poverty. Look! She gives 100 000 dirhams to the poor, but she does not remember to get some meat for her own Iftaar.

In our own situation today, such stories seem to be impossible but to the people who had understood the Sahaabah's ؓ frame of mind, hundreds of such incidents are quite possible.

**A`ishah's ؓ fear of Allah:** A`ishah ؓ said, "By Allah! I wish that I were a tree. By Allah! I wish that I were sand. By Allah! I wish that Allah had not created me at all." Another narration states when Abdullaah ibn Abbaas ؓ came to A`ishah ؓ before her death, he praised her saying, "Glad tidings for you, O wife of Rasulullah ﷺ. Rasulullah ﷺ never married a virgin besides you and your innocence was proclaimed from the heavens. It was then that Abdullaah ibn Zubayr ؓ entered from the opposite side. A`ishah ؓ said to him, "Abdullaah ibn Umar ؓ is heaping praises on me when I do not wish to hear anyone praise me today. I only wish that I had been completely forgotten." (Ibn Sa'd vol. 8 page 74)

The incident of Ifk: A`ishah ؓ says, "Whenever Rasulullah ﷺ embarked on an expedition, he would draw lots between his wives and whoever's name was drawn would accompany him. When the Banul-Mustaliq expedition was to take place, Rasulullah ﷺ again drew lots as he usually did. This time my name emerged as the one to accompany him. Rasulullah ﷺ therefore took me along. During those times women ate just enough to sustain themselves. The flab on their bodies was therefore less and they were lighter in weight. For this reason I would sit in my carriage (which was closed on all sides according to the dictates of hijab to ensure a woman's privacy) when it was loaded on my camel. The men who fastened the carriage to the camel for me would lift the carriage from the bottom, lift me up and place the

carriage on to the camel. They would then secure it with ropes, take the camel by the head and lead it along.

After the journey was done, Rasulullah ﷺ left (for Madinah) and we were close to Madinah when we set up camp and spent part of the night there. When the announcer announced that it was time to depart, everyone got ready to move. Wearing a necklace of mine that was decorated with onyx from the Yemeni tribe of Dhifaar, I went (out of the camp) to relieve myself. When I had completed, the necklace had slipped from my neck without me knowing it. It was only after returning to my carriage that I felt my neck and could not find it. The people had already started leaving when I returned to the place I had been. There I looked for it until I eventually found it. The men who usually tied my carriage had by then already tied it to the camel. Thinking that I was inside, they did what they always did and took the carriage away. Without even once suspecting (that I was not inside), they picked up the carriage and loaded it on to the camel. They then took the camel by the head and led it away. When I eventually returned to the camp, there was not a soul in sight. Everyone had left. I then spread out my shawl at the place where I had been and lay down. I knew that once my absence was detected, people would return to where I was (to search for me).

By Allah! I was still lying there when Safwaan ibn Mu`attal Sulami ؓ passed by. He had fallen behind the expedition for some reason and had not spent the night in the camp. Seeing my silhouette, he came closer until he stopped by me. He had seen me before we were instructed to don the Hijaab and when he saw that it was I who was lying there, he exclaimed in astonishment, 'Innaa Lillaahi wa Innaa Ilayhi Raaji'oon! The wife of Rasulullah ﷺ!' I properly wrapped myself up in my clothing (covered my face in the jilbaab) when he said, 'May Allah have mercy on you. How did you get left behind?' I did not speak a word to him. He brought his camel next to me and said, 'Mount the camel and stay behind me.' I mounted the camel and he led it quickly along by its head, in search of the rest. By Allah! Neither did we catch up with the others until the morning, nor did they notice my absence. The army had set up camp and were resting when

Safwaan ؓ was seen leading me on the camel. It was then that the slanderers said what they did (about me being an adulteress), causing much tumult amongst the army. I swear by Allah that I was then still in the dark concerning what was happening.

After we had returned to Madinah, no news had still reached me (about the slander) when I happened to fall terribly ill. In the meanwhile, the news had reached Rasulallah ﷺ and my parents, none of whom breathed a word to me. All that I noticed was a lack in the affection that Rasulallah ﷺ usually showed towards me. Whereas he would express tremendous love and affection towards me whenever I fell ill, he did not do so this time. This greatly disappointed me. When he came to me as my mother was nursing me, he asked, 'How are you feeling?' That was all he said. I eventually grew upset with his apparent indifference and asked, 'O Rasulallah ﷺ! Permit me to move to my mother's place for she has been nursing me all along. When Rasulallah ﷺ indicated that it was not a problem, I moved to my mother's. I was then still completely in the dark about what had been happening until I had started to recover from my illness after twenty odd days.

We Arabs were not accustomed to building toilets inside our houses like the non-Arabs do. We disliked this and regarded it as something deplorable. We used to go outside Madinah (to relieve ourselves) and every night we women would go there (together). I had gone out to relieve myself one day in the company of Ummu Mistah who was the daughter of Abu Ruhm ibn Abdul Muttalib. By Allah! We were still walking when she tripped over her shawl and exclaimed, 'May Mistah be destroyed!' 'By Allah!' I reproved, 'What a terrible thing to say about a man from amongst the Muhaajireen who has participated in the Battle of Badr!' She then asked, 'Has the news not yet reached you, O daughter of Abu Bakr?' 'What news?' I enquired. She then informed me about what the slanderers were saying. 'Has all this really been happening?' I asked in disbelief. 'Yes,' she replied, 'I swear by Allah that it certainly has.' By Allah! (After hearing all of this) I was unable to even relieve myself properly and returned. I then wept continuously until I actually thought that my liver would burst.

I said to my mother, 'May Allah forgive you! The people have been saying what they have said and you didn't even mention a word to me!' my mother responded by saying, 'Take it easy, dear daughter! When a beautiful woman has a husband who loves her greatly and has co-wives as well, it does happen that the wives and other people pick on her.'

Unknown to me, Rasulallah ﷺ had already delivered a sermon to the people. After praising Allah, he said, 'O people! What is the matter with some of you who cause me hurt with regards to my family by saying things that are not true? I swear by Allah that I see only good in my wives. They are also making allegations about a man (Safwaan ibn Mu'attal ؓ) about whom I also swear that I know only as a good man. He never enters any of my rooms without me with him.' Most of the slander was publicised by (the Munaafiq) Abdullaah ibn Ubay ibn Salool along with some men from the Khazraj tribe. Also involved were Mistah ؓ and Hamna bint Jahsh ؓ. Hamna bint Jahsh ؓ was involved because her sister Zaynab bint Jahsh ؓ was a wife of Rasulallah ﷺ and from all the other wives of Rasulallah ﷺ, she was the only one who was any competition to me. Since Allah protected Zaynab ؓ because of her piety, she had only good words to say (and did not slander me). On the other hand, Hamna ؓ passed around plenty of slander to spite me for the sake of her sister. In this manner, she defamed only herself.

After Rasulallah ﷺ had delivered the sermon, Usayd ibn Hudhayr ؓ (of the Aws tribe) said, 'O Rasulallah! Had the slanderers been from the Aws tribe, we would have dealt with them on your behalf. However, if they are from our brothers of the Khazraj tribe, we shall do as you command. By Allah! They ought to be executed!' It was then that Sa'd ibn Ubaadah ؓ stood up. Although he was always regarded as a good man, he retorted by saying (to Usayd ؓ), 'By Allah! You are lying! They shall not be executed! I swear by Allah that you say this only because you know that they are from the Khazraj. You would never have said it had you known that they were

from your tribe!’ Usayd ibn Hudhayr ؓ replied, ‘By Allah! It is you who are lying! You must be a hypocrite since you are defending the hypocrites!’ The Sahaabah ؓ (belonging to the Aws and the Khazraj tribes) stood up to confront each other until a fight almost erupted between the two tribes.

Rasulullah ﷺ descended from the pulpit and came to me. After some revelation had stopped coming to him, he called for Ali ibn Abi Taalib ؓ and Usaama ibn Zaid ؓ to consult with them about separating from his wife (myself). Usaama ؓ had only good to say and added, ‘O Rasulullah! We only know your family to be good. The news is a blatant lie.’ On the other hand, Ali ؓ only said, ‘O Rasulullah! Women are plenty and you are able to get others in their place. Ask the slave girl (Bareerah ؓ) for she will give you the truth.’ When Rasulullah ﷺ summoned Bareerah ؓ, Ali ؓ rapped her quite harshly and said, ‘Be truthful to Rasulullah!’ Bareerah ؓ said, ‘By Allah! I know of nothing but good in A’ishah. I can find no fault in her besides the fact that after I have kneaded the dough and instructed her to look after it, she falls asleep and along comes the goat to eat it up.’”

Continuing the story, A’ishah ؓ says further, “Rasulullah ﷺ then came to me when I was staying with my parents. A woman from the Ansaar was with me at the time and she wept with me as I wept. Rasulullah ﷺ sat down and after praising Allah, he said, ‘O A’ishah! The talk of people has already reached your ears. Do fear Allah. If you have come close to what the people are saying, repent to Allah for He accepts the repentance of His servants.’ By Allah! As soon as Rasulullah ﷺ said this, my tears immediately stopped and I could not even feel them. I waited for my parents to reply to Rasulullah ﷺ, but they said nothing. By Allah! I never regarded myself so distinguished that verses of the Qur’an should be revealed about me (to clear my name), which would be recited (forever) and read in salaah. However, all I wished for was that Rasulullah ﷺ should see a dream in which Allah would deny the allegations on my behalf, for Allah knew that I was innocent. (All that I expected was that) Allah would inform

(Rasulullah ﷺ) accordingly. In no way did I regard myself worthy of having verses of the Qur’an revealed about me.

Nevertheless, when I noticed that my parents were not going to say anything (in my defence), I said to them, ‘Are you two not going to reply to Rasulullah?’ ‘By Allah!’ they replied, ‘We do not know what to say.’ By Allah! I do not know of any family that had so much difficulty come upon them as had come to the family of Abu Bakr ؓ during that period. When my parents said nothing, tears welled in my eyes and I burst out crying. I then snapped, ‘By Allah! I shall never repent to Allah for what they say I did! By Allah! Should I admit to what they say when Allah knows well that I am innocent of it, I shall only be admitting to something I have never done. On the other hand, if I deny it, they will never believe me.’ I then searched for the name of Ya’qub ؑ but could not remember it. Nonetheless, I said that I would say exactly what the father of Yusuf ؑ said:

فَصَبِرْ جَمِيلًا وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ

However, I shall exercise patience without any complaint, and I shall seek Allah’s assistance against what you have devised.’ (Surah Yusuf v.18)

Rasulullah ﷺ was still sitting where he was when (revelation started descending on him and) he started swooning as he did when revelation descended. A shawl was placed over Rasulullah ﷺ and a leather pillow was placed beneath his head. By Allah! When I saw this happen, I neither felt any fear nor was I worried in the least because I knew that I was innocent and that Allah would never be unjust towards me. Not so for my parents. I swear by the Being Who controls the life of A’ishah that as long as the condition did not leave Rasulullah ﷺ, I thought that the two of them would die out of fear that Allah would prove the slander of the people to be true. Rasulullah ﷺ sat up after the condition had passed and although it was a cold day, beads of perspiration decorated his face like pearls. As he wiped the perspiration from his face, he said, ‘Good news, O A’ishah! Allah has confirmed your innocence.’ ‘All praise be to Allah!’ I exclaimed.

Rasulullah ﷺ then went out to the people and delivered a sermon. He recited to them the verses of the Qur'an that Allah had revealed in this regard and instructed that Mistah ibn Uthaatha ؓ, Hassaan ibn Thaabit ؓ and Hamna bint Jahsh ؓ be lashed according to the prescribed penalty because of the part they played in spreading the accusation of immoral behaviour. (Bukhaari, Muslim)

Another detailed narration quoted that A'ishah ؓ added, “(After the verses of my innocence were revealed) My mother said to me, ‘Stand up and go to Rasulullah (to thank him).’ I said, ‘I swear by Allah that I shall not go to him and shall thank none besides Allah for it was Allah Who confirmed my innocence.’ Allah revealed ten verses beginning with:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ ...

It was indeed a (hypocritical) group from you that brought (initiated) the slander... (Surah Nur v. 11)

(My father) Abu Bakr ؓ used to support Mistah ؓ because he was related to us and because he was very poor. However, after the verses attesting to my innocence were revealed, Abu Bakr ؓ said, ‘I swear by Allah that I shall never support him because of what he said about A'ishah!’ It was then that Allah ﷻ revealed the verse:

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

The high ranking and wealthy ones among you (like Abu Bakr ؓ) should not take an oath not to spend on their relatives, the poor and on those who migrate in Allah's path. (Instead of bearing a grudge against these people,) They should (rather) forgive and pardon. Do you not like Allah to forgive you? (Just as you would like Allah to forgive you for your shortcomings, you should also forgive the shortcomings of others. Be like) Allah (Who) is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surah Nur v. 22)

(Upon revelation of this verse,) Abu Bakr ؓ said, ‘By Allah! Of course I would like Allah to forgive me.’ He then continued giving

Mistah ؓ the allowance he had been giving him and said, ‘I swear by Allah that I shall never stop giving it to him ever.’” (Ahmad)

Lessons: 1) A Muslim woman should cover her face when she comes into contact with strange men, irrespective of whether they are righteous or not.

2) This teaches us that strange men and women should not freely engage in conversation, even at times of difficulty such as the above incident. One can only be amazed at those Muslim men and women who flirtatiously interact in public and on social network in today's times.

3) The truth always prevails.

4) We learn from this incident the evil of backbiting and carrying tales, listening to gossip and rumours and propagating it. Rasulullah ﷺ said: “One who believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent.” Nowadays, using modern technology like the cellphone etc. People forward and broadcast unverified information to thousands of people without any investigation of its authenticity. This is regarded as a form of lying according to the Hadith.

5) It is a major sin to accuse a person of having an affair without evidence. One who accuses a woman (or man) of adultery without presenting 4 witnesses will be regarded as a liar and punished with 80 lashes.

6) The dictates of Imaan requires that a person who hears of any such accusation should immediately declare it as a lie, until it is established by Islamic evidence.

7) A Muslim should forgive and overlook the wrongs of others. One should behave cordially even to those who cause one harm or behave cruelly towards one.

Hafsah رضي الله عنها

She is the wife of Rasulullah ﷺ and the daughter of 'Umar ؓ. She was born in Makkah Mukarramah five years before Nubuwwah. She was first married to Khunais ibn Huzaafah ؓ, who was one of the very early Muslims. He first emigrated to Abyssinia and then to Madinah Munawwarah. He participated in the battle of Badr, and was seriously

wounded in Badr (or in Uhud) and died of the wound in the year 1 or 2 A.H. Hafsaah ؓ had also moved to Madinah Munawwarah with her husband. When her husband died, Umar ؓ went to Abu Bakr ؓ and said: "I want to give Hafsaah in marriage to you." Abu Bakr kept quiet and said nothing. Meanwhile Ruqayyah ؓ, the daughter of Nabi ؐ and the wife of Uthmaan ؓ passed away. Umar ؓ went to Uthmaan and offered Hafsaah's ؓ hand to him. He refused by saying, "I don't have the need to marry presently." Umar ؓ complained of this to Nabi ؐ. Nabi ؐ said: "Can I tell you of a husband for Hafsaah better than 'Uthmaan, and of a wife for 'Uthmaan better than Hafsaah." He then took Hafsaah ؓ as his next wife, and gave his own daughter Ummu Kulsum ؓ in marriage to Uthmaan ؓ. Abu Bakr ؓ later said to Umar ؓ: "When you offered Hafsaah's hand to me, I kept quiet as Nabi ؐ had informed me of his intention of marrying her. I could neither accept your offer nor reveal Nabi's ؐ secret to you. I, therefore, kept quiet. If Nabi ؐ had changed his mind, I would have gladly married her." Umar ؓ said: "Abu Bakr's silence over the offer was in fact more shocking to me than Uthmaan's refusal."

On one occasion, Rasulullah ؐ had issued one divorce to her, as he was displeased with her for some reason. Thereafter, upon the instruction of Jibra'il he revoked this divorce. Jibra'il had spoken in her favour in the following way: "You should revoke the divorce which you issued to her because she fasts abundantly, engages in a lot of 'ibaadah at night, and she will be your wife in jannah." She had made a bequest to her brother 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar to give a certain amount of her wealth in charity. She had also made a plot of land waqf for Allah Ta'ala. She had also made a bequest in this regard. She passed away in Jumaadal-Ula, 45 A.H., at the age of 63.

Lesson: Look at the barakah of piety that Allah Ta'ala defended her and sent Jibra'il to speak on her behalf in order to have her divorce revoked. Look at her generosity - how she made arrangements for charity in the name of Allah and also made a plot of land waqf for Allah Ta'ala. Dear sister! Adopt piety and remove love and greed for wealth from the heart.

Zaynab bint Khuzaymah رضي الله عنها

She was the next wife of Rasulullah ؐ. Her first husband was 'Abdullah ibn Jahsh. Nabi ؐ married her in Ramadhaan 3 A.H. She lived with Nabi ؐ for eight months only, as she passed away in Rabi-ul-Akhir, 4 A.H. Zaynab ؓ and Khadijah ؓ are the only two wives of Nabi ؐ who passed away during his lifetime. All the other wives lived on after him and passed away later. She was so generous that she became known as "Ummul-Masaakeen-the mother of the poor".

Lesson: Look at what a great thing it is to be in the service of the poor.

Ummu Salamah رضي الله عنها

She is also the wife of Rasulullah ؐ. She was born 9 years before Nubuwwah. She was the last of the wives of Nabi ؐ to pass away. It was in 59 or 62 A.H. She was 84 at the time of her death.

Ummul-Momineen, Ummu Salamah ؓ was first married to Abu Salamah ؓ. The husband and wife were very close to each other. Once Ummu Salamah ؓ said to her husband: "I have heard that if a husband does not marry another woman during the life or after the death of his wife, and also if the wife does not remarry after the death of her husband, when entered into Jannat, the couple is allowed to live there as husband and wife. Give me your word that you will not marry after my death, and I too promise that I will not marry again if you happen to die before me."

Abu Salamah ؓ said: "Will you do as I say?"

She replied: "Of course."

He said: "I want you to take a husband after my death."

He then prayed, saying, "O, Allah! Let Ummu Salamah be married after my death to a husband better than me. May he not give her any trouble at all."

In the beginning, the couple emigrated to Abyssinia. After their return, they then emigrated to Madinah Munawwarah. Ummu Salamah

ﷺ says: "When my husband made up his mind to emigrate to Madinah Munawwarah, he loaded the camel with the luggage. He then made sure that I and our son Salamah ride the camel. He led the camel out of the town, holding the string in his hand. The people of my father's family (Banu Mughirah) saw us leaving. They came and snatched the string from Abu Salamah's hand saying, 'You can go wherever you like but we cannot allow our girl to go and die with you.' Then by force they took me and my son back to their clan. When the people of my husband's clan, Banu Abdul Asad, learnt this, they came to Banu Mughirah and began to fight with them saying, 'You can keep your girl if you like, but you have no say over the child who belongs to our clan. Why should we allow him to stay in your family, when you have not allowed your girl to go with her husband?' They forcibly took the boy away. Abu Salamah had already gone to Madinah Munawwarah. All the members of my family were thus separated from each other. Daily, I would go out in the desert and cry there from morning till night. I lived in this condition for one full year, separated from my husband and my son. One day, one of my cousins, taking pity on me, said to the people of the family, 'You have separated this poor woman from her husband and son. Why don't you have mercy on her and let her go?' 'Due to the caring efforts of this cousin of mine, the people of Banu Mughirah agreed to let me go and join my husband. Banu Abdul Asad also gave my son to me. I got a camel ready and with my son in my lap, I sat on its back and set off for Madinah Munawwarah all alone. I had hardly gone four miles, when Uthmaan-ibn-Talhah met me at Tan'eem. He asked me, 'Where are you going?' I replied, 'To my husband in Madinah Munawwarah.' He said, 'Are you going alone?' I said, 'Yes, nobody besides Allah is with me.' He took the rope of my camel and began to lead. By Allah, I had never come across a person more righteous than Uthmaan ؓ. When I had to get down, he would make the camel sit and himself go behind a bush and when I had to climb up he would bring the camel and make it sit close to me. He would then hold the rope and lead the animal. Thus, we reached Quba (a suburb of Madinah Munawwarah). He informed us that Abu Salamah was staying there. He then made us over to my husband and then returned all the way back to Makkah Mukarramah. By Allah, no

one else could bear the hardships that I suffered during that single year."

Lesson: Look at Ummu Salamah's ﷺ faith and trust in Allah . She set out on a long and dangerous journey all alone. See how Allah sent his help to her. No doubt Allah can send anybody to offer help to those who place their trust in Him, for the hearts of all people are in his control. As a rule, a female is not allowed to travel alone on a long journey, except in the event of compulsory migration for the sake of Allah.

A great Dua: She says: "I had heard from Nabi ﷺ that if a person struck with a tragedy should recite this prayer, 'O, Allah! Reward me for this tragedy and give me something better than what I have lost,' then Allah would accept his prayer. I had been reciting this prayer since the death of Abu Salamah, but I could not imagine a husband better than him, until Allah fixed my marriage with Nabi ﷺ."

Lesson: Even though she could not understand how her dua would be answered, she continued making the dua, knowing that the words of Rasulullah ﷺ are always true. We too should have conviction in the promises and teachings of Rasulullah ﷺ.

Treatment of the poor: A woman relates an incident and says: "Once I was in the company of Ummu Salamah. After a little while, many poor persons came to her. There were men and women among them. They all stood there (demanding something). So I said to them: 'Go away from here.' Upon this, Ummu Salamah said: 'We have not been commanded this. O girl! Give each of them something even if it means giving them one dry date.'"

Lesson: She did not become annoyed by the demands of the poor persons. Today, women produce feeble excuses and some of them go to the extent of cursing and abusing beggars. Dear sister! Don't ever do this.

She is also the wife of Rasulallah ﷺ and she was also his cousin. Rasulallah ﷺ had adopted a Sahabi by the name of Zayd ؓ. Initially, it was permissible to adopt a son. When he became mature, Rasulallah ﷺ decided to get him married. So he sent a proposal to her brother on behalf of Zayd ؓ. This brother and sister (i.e. Zaynab) did not consider Zayd to be equal to them in status and lineage. They were therefore hesitant in the beginning. However, Allah Ta'ala revealed a verse wherein He mentions that once the Nabi decides on something, a Muslim should not make any excuses. They therefore accepted the proposal and the marriage was performed. However, the husband and wife could not live together in an amicable manner. The situation reached a stage whereby Zayd decided to divorce her. He came to consult Rasulallah ﷺ but he stopped him and tried to make him understand. However, Rasulallah ﷺ gauged that these two will be unable to live together and that they were definitely heading for a divorce. He began thinking to himself that right from the beginning, the brother and sister were not happy about entering into this marriage, but they accepted after I told them to do so. If the divorce takes place, the brother's and sister's burden will be lessened but they will be broken-hearted. What could he do in order to console them? Eventually he came to the conclusion that if he marries her, she will be greatly consoled and relieved. Apart from this, he could find no solution. At the same time, he also realized that the disbelievers will begin accusing him of marrying his son's wife. Although an adopted son does not become one's real son, who can stop people from thinking and speaking in this way? More so when the disbelievers will begin making a mountain out of a mole-hill. He was still thinking and pondering over all this when Zayd ؓ divorced her. On the expiry of her 'iddah, Rasulallah ﷺ was inclined towards proposing to her. Eventually, he sent his proposal. She replied that she will ask her Creator and that she is not going to make up her own mind in this regard. If He sanctions it, He will make the way easy. Upon saying this, she performed her ablution and offered salaah. After the salaah, she made a fervent du'â to Allah. Allah revealed a verse to Rasulallah ﷺ mentioning that He has made your nikah with her. He then went to

her and recited the verse to her. Zaynab ؓ used to mention this to her co-wives by saying: "Your nikah was sanctioned by your parents while my nikah was sanctioned by Allah Ta'ala." This nikah took place in 5 AH when she was 35 years old.

The first orders concerning hijab were revealed during her nikah. She was very generous. She used to practice handicrafts and give in charity from the income that she received from these handicrafts. Once, all the wives got together and asked Rasulallah ﷺ: "Who will join you first after your demise?" He replied: "The one whose hands are the longest." This is an Arabic mode of expression to show generosity. However, this did not cross the minds of his wives. They were under the impression that it referred to actual length. They therefore took a stick and began measuring their hands. Saudah's ؓ hands turned out to be the longest. However, the first to leave this world after him was Zaynab bint Jahsh ؓ. It was only then that they all realized that it referred to generosity. In short, her generosity was also appreciated by Allah and His Rasul ﷺ. She passed away in 20 A.H. 'Umar ؓ led the Janazah Salaah. She was fifty at the time of her death.

'A'ishah ؓ says: "I have not come across any woman better than Zaynab. She was perfect in her Dîn, feared Allah a lot, very honest in her speech, very kind and cordial to her relatives, very charitable, and she used to work very hard with her handicrafts so that she could give more in charity." Speaking about her, Rasulallah ﷺ said: "She was very humble-hearted and used to beseech Allah abundantly."

There was always some rivalry between A'ishah ؓ and Zaynab ؓ. In spite of all this, when Nabi ﷺ asked Zaynab's ؓ view about A'ishah ؓ in the matter of the slander against A'ishah ؓ, she said: "I can only find good in A'ishah."

Barzah narrates: "Umar ؓ decided to pay a yearly allowance to the Ummahaat-ul-Mominin (wives of Nabi ﷺ) from the Baitul Maal. He sent me with 12 000 dirhams to Zaynab ؓ as her share. She thought that the 12 000 was for all of the wives, and said to me, 'Umar should have asked somebody else to distribute this money.' I said, 'It is the yearly share for you alone.' She asked me to throw it in the corner of a

room and cover it with a piece of cloth. Then she mentioned the names of some poor people, widows and her relatives, and asked me to give one handful to each of them. After I had distributed the money according to her wishes, some money was still left under the cloth. I asked her to have something for myself. She said, 'You take the rest.' I counted the money. It was eighty four dirhams. Then she lifted her hands in prayer and said, 'O, Allah! keep this money away from me, for it brings temptation.' She died before the allowance for the next year could be paid to her. When Umar ؓ came to know of what she had done with the money, he sent her another 1000 dirhams for her personal needs, but even those she spent very quickly. During the last portion of her life, the Muslims were winning territory after territory, and wealth was pouring into Madinah Munawwarah, yet she left no money or other wealth after her, except the house where she lived. She was called Ma'wal-Masaakeen (shelter of the poor), due to her generous spending in charity."

A woman narrates: "Once Zaynab ؓ and I were dyeing our clothes with red dye. Nabi ﷺ came in, but went out again when he saw us dyeing our clothes. Zaynab ؓ felt that Nabi ﷺ had perhaps not liked our clothes being dyed in that colour. She immediately washed all the dyed clothes till their colour was gone. When Nabi ﷺ came again and saw what had been done, he entered."

Lesson: Dear sister! You have read about the greatness of generosity, the benefits of handicrafts and referring to Allah for all your needs. Don't ever consider it disgraceful to do any work with your own hands. Do not look down upon any craft or occupation (provided it is acceptable in the Sharī'ah).

Look at her honesty and character. If she wished, she could have harmed the status of her rival and lowered her, in the eyes of their common husband, who loved A'ishah ؓ. On the other hand, she praised her in very strong words.

Everybody knows the love women have for money and colours. But look at these ladies, who gave away the money received by them in charity and got rid of any colour which caused Nabi ﷺ to be unhappy.

She is also the wife of Rasulullah ﷺ. Ummul Mominin Ummu Habibah ؓ was first married before to Ubaidullah ibn Jahsh. When the kuffaar of Makkah began oppressing the Muslims profusely, and the latter were not ordered to go to Madīnah as yet, many Muslims went to Abyssinia. The king of Abyssinia who was known as Najāshi was a Christian. However, after the arrival of Muslims, he became a Muslim. Ummu Habībah ؓ and her husband were also among the Muslims who had come to Abyssinia. One night, in a dream, she saw her husband in the most ugly and horrible form. The next day she came to know that he had turned Christian. She, however, remained a Muslim and was therefore separated from him. Her husband remained a Christian and died there. While she was still passing her days in Abyssinia as a widow, Nabi ﷺ sent his offer to marry her through king Najaashi, who sent a person to her informing her that he is sending a proposal to her on behalf of Rasulullah ﷺ. She accepted the proposal. Najaashi also sent some gifts for her, which comprised of two silver bracelets and a few rings. This marriage took place in 7 A.H.

During the period of peace between the Muslims and the idol worshippers of Makkah Mukarramah, her father Abu Sufyan (who was not yet a muslim) once came to Madinah Munawwarah for talks about strengthening the peace treaty. He went to see Ummu Habibah ؓ. As he was about to sit on the bedding in her room, she removed it from under him. He was surprised over her behaviour and said: "Was the bedding unfit for me or I unfit for the bedding?" She replied: "This bedding is for the pure and dear Nabi ﷺ, while you are an idolater and therefore unclean. How can I allow you to sit on this bedding?" Abu Sufyan was full of sorrow and said, "Since you left us, you have learned bad manners."

Once she came to know from Nabi ﷺ about the virtues of twelve rak'ats of Salaatud-Dhuha (in the mid-morning). Since that time, she kept offering this Salaah regularly.

Her father Abu Sufyan later accepted Islam. On the third day after his death, she sent for some perfume and used it saying: "I neither need nor like the perfume. I have heard Nabi ﷺ saying, 'A woman is not allowed to mourn the death of any person (except her husband's) for more than three days. (The mourning period in the case of a husband's death is four months and ten days). I am using the perfume simply to show that I am not mourning the death of my father any longer."

When she was about to die, she sent for A'ishah ؓ and said: "We have been rivals in sharing the love of Nabiﷺ, it is just possible that we might have hurt each other. I forgive you. Please forgive me too." A'ishah ؓ said: "I forgive you by all means. May Allah forgive you too." She replied: "O, A'ishah, you have made me very happy. May Allah also keep you happy." She also sent for Ummu Salamah ؓ and asked her forgiveness. She most probably passed away in 44 A.H.

Lesson: How pious she must have been for her to leave her home solely to protect and safeguard her Dîn. In return for this effort of hers, Allah gave her great comfort and honour in that she married Rasulallah ﷺ and the king made all the necessary arrangements. Dear sister! When the situation requires you to choose Dîn, do not give preference to worldly comfort, name and fame, wealth or your house and family. Everything should be sacrificed for Dîn. The great respect and love that she had for Nabi ﷺ, would not allow her to let an unclean mushrik, even though he was her own father, to sit on Nabi's ﷺ bedding. The strain between two rival wives is natural and common. Ummu Habibah ؓ wanted to be forgiven by people before she appeared before Allah.

Juwayriyah رضي الله عنها

She is also the wife of Rasulallah ﷺ. She was the daughter of Harith, the chief of Banu-Mustaliq and was married to Musafi ibn Safwan. She was brought as a prisoner after a war with the kuffaar in a battle popularly known as Banil-Mustaliq. She had fallen in the share of a Sahabi by the name of Thâbit ibn Qays or his cousin. She said to her

master: "I will give you a certain amount of money and you must free me." He agreed to release her for 360 dirhams, so she went to Rasulallah ﷺ and asked him to help her with some money. She said: "O, Nabi of Allah! I am the daughter of Harith, who is the chief of the tribe; you know what difficulty has come to me. The ransom demanded by Thabit is too much for me. I have come to seek your help in the matter." Rasulallah ﷺ felt sorry for her after seeing her piety and poverty. He said to her: "If you agree, I will pay for your entire freedom and take you into my marriage." She readily accepted this offer and the nikah took place. When the people heard about this marriage, especially all the prisoners that belonged to her tribe who were under the Muslims, then most of these Muslims freed these slaves saying that now that they have a relationship with Rasulallah ﷺ because of this marriage, it is disrespectful to keep them as slaves. These slaves belonged to about one hundred families from her tribe. 'A'ishah ؓ is reported to have said: "We do not know of any woman who has been of so much benefit to her tribe (or family)." She was 20 at the time of her marriage with Nabi ﷺ. She passed away in Rabi-ul-Awwal, 50 A.H., in Madinah Munawwarah at the age of 65.

Lesson: Piety is a great virtue. Despite her being a slave-girl, she was able to enter into the marriage of Rasulallah ﷺ. Dear sister! There isn't anyone more honourable than Rasulallah ﷺ. If he did not consider it to be a blemish to marry a slave-girl, do not consider it to be disgraceful or undignified if anyone marries a person of a lower social standing because of some reason or brings someone from a foreign place;. This is an evil sickness and also a sin. Look at how the Sahabah ؓ honoured her in that they did not even allow themselves to disgrace her relatives and fellow tribes-men. How ignorant we are today in that we do not honour such a woman irrespective of how pious and religious-minded she may be. As for honouring her family, there is no hope whatsoever in this regard.

Maymunah رضي الله عنها

She is also the wife of Rasulallah ﷺ. Maymunah ؓ was the daughter of Harith ibn Hazan. Her original name was Barrah, but she was later

renamed Maymunah by Nabi ﷺ. She was the last woman married by Nabi ﷺ. A great scholar of Hadîth relates that her nikah with Rasulallah ﷺ took place in the following manner: She came to him and said: "I am gifting my life to you." In other words, I am prepared to enter into a marriage with you without even any mahr. He accepted this. Marrying in this manner (i.e. without any mahr) was permissible only for Rasulallah ﷺ. A great mufassir relates that the verse which mentions a marriage of this nature was first revealed for this woman.

She was first married to Abu Rahm ibn Abdul Uzza. According to some reports, she was married twice before she became Ummul Mominin. She had been widowed when Nabi ﷺ married her at Sarif, a place lying on his journey to Makkah Mukarramah for 'Umrah in Zul Qa'dah 7 A.H. He had intended to start living with her when in Makkah Mukarramah after performing 'Umrah, but because the Quraysh did not allow him to enter Makkah Mukarramah, he called her over to him in the same place on his return journey.

Many years later she passed away and was buried exactly at the same place in 51 A.H. when she was 81 years old. This is a strange coincidence that at a certain place during one journey she is married, at the same place on the return journey she starts living with Nabi ﷺ, and at the very same place during another journey she dies and is buried there.

A`ishah ؓ says: "Maymunah was the most pious, and the most mindful of her family relations, among Nabi's ﷺ wives."

Yazid ibn Asam says: "She was seen either engaged in Salaah or in household work. When she was doing neither, she was busy making Miswaak."

Lesson: Look at how much love she had for the Dîn that she considered serving Rasulallah ﷺ as an act of 'ibaadah and was therefore prepared to forfeit her right to receive any mahr. This she did at a time when women used to receive the mahr in cash, i.e. without any delay. It was unlike today where the mahr is delayed until "qiyaamah" or death. Dear sister! Consider Dîn to be the actual thing of value. Do not have too much love for the world to the extent that

you waste your time thinking about it all the time. Twenty fours of the day are spent immersed in these thoughts: If one attains one's objective one is overjoyed irrespective of whether one receives a reward in doing so or a sin. If one does not obtain it, one is filled with sorrow, begins to complain, becomes jealous of those who possess it, and thereafter begins to have evil intentions.

Safiyyah رضي الله عنها

She is also the wife of Rasulallah ﷺ. She was the daughter of Huyay, who was from the progeny of Harun ؓ, the brother of Musa ؓ. She was first married to Kinanah ibn Abil Huqaiq at the time of Khaibar. A battle took place between the Muslims and the Jews at a place called Khaibar. Kinanah was killed in the battle and she was captured by the Muslims.

Dihya Kalbi ؓ requested for a maid and Nabi ﷺ gave her to him. At this, the other Sahaabah approached Nabi ﷺ and said: "O, Nabi of Allah! Banu Nazhir and Banu Quraizhah (the Jewish tribes who previously lived in Madinah Munawwarah) will feel offended to see the daughter of a Jewish chief working as a maid. We therefore suggest that she may be taken as your own wife." Nabi ﷺ paid a reasonable sum of money to Dihya ؓ as ransom, and said to Safiyyah ؓ: "You are now free; if you like, you can go back to your tribe or if you wish you can be my wife." She said: "I wanted to be with you while I was a Jew. How can I leave you now, when I am a Muslim?"

This is probably a reference to the fact that she once saw in her dream a portion of the moon falling into her lap. When she mentioned her dream to Kinanah, he slapped her face so hard that he left a mark on her eye. He said: "You want to become the wife of the King of Madinah Munawwarah!" Her father is also reported to have treated her similarly when she related the same or similar dream to him. She again saw, in her dream, the sun lying on her breast. When she mentioned this to her husband, He said: "You seem to be wishing to become the Queen of Madinah."

She says: "I was seventeen when I was married to Nabi ﷺ. She came to live with Nabi ﷺ when he was on his way back from Khaybar. Next morning, he said to the Sahaabah: "Let everybody bring whatever he has got to eat." They brought their own dates, cheese, butter, etc. A long leather cloth was spread and all sat around it to share the food amongst them. This was the Walimah for the marriage.

She possessed many forbearing and intelligent qualities. Her forbearance can be gauged from an incident: her slave-girl concocted two lies and informed 'Umar ؓ of them. One of these lies was that she (Safiyyah) still has a special attachment for Saturday. This day is a very sacred day of the week for the Jews. In other words, despite her accepting Islam, traces of her previous religion were still found in her. If this has to be looked at from another angle, she is not a complete Muslim. The second lie was that she gives and takes a lot from the Jews. When 'Umar ؓ went and asked her about this, she replied: "The first thing that she said is absolutely false. Ever since I accepted Islam and Allah has blessed me with Friday, my heart has become totally detached from Saturday. The second thing which she said is true. The reason for this is that they (the Jews) are my relatives and it is not against the Shari'ah for one to maintain good relations with one's relatives." She then asked the slave-girl: "Who asked you to concoct lies?" She replied: "Satan." Upon this, she replied: "You can go now, I have freed you." She passed away in Ramadhaan, 50 A.H., when she was about 60 years old.

Lesson: Dear sister! This is what is known as forbearance. You should also overlook and forgive your domestics and your maids if they make any mistake. Taking revenge or compensation from them on trivial matters is a sign of lack of courage. Look at how honest Safiyyah ؓ was. She clearly spelt out the quality that was found in her and did not try to cover it up. It is the habit of some people that they do not like to admit anything. They try to save themselves from any accusation by disguising and concealing anything that they may have done. It is also an evil practice to concoct stories.

She was the eldest daughter of Nabi ﷺ and was born in the fifth year of his first marriage to Khadijah ؓ. At that time Nabi ﷺ was thirty years old. She grew up and thereafter accepted Islam. She was married to her cousin Abul-'Aas ibn Rabi'. She was not able to go with Nabi ﷺ for Hijrah (migration). Her husband fought in Badr for the Quraysh and was captured by the Muslims.

When the Quraysh were paying ransom for the release of their prisoners, Zaynab ؓ gave as ransom, for her husband, the necklace she had received in dowry from her mother Khadijah ؓ. When Nabi ﷺ saw the necklace, the memories of Khadijah ؓ came to his mind and tears filled up his eyes. After consulting with Sahaabah, he returned the necklace to Zaynab ؓ and released her husband without ransom on the condition that he would send Zaynab ؓ to Madinah Munawwarah when he returned to Makkah Mukarramah.

Two men were sent to stay outside Makkah Mukarramah and bring Zaynab ؓ safely to Madinah Munawwarah, when she was made over to them. Her husband asked his brother Kinanah to take Zaynab ؓ outside Makkah Mukarramah and make her over to the Muslim escort. As Zaynab ؓ and Kinanah were moving out of the town on camels, the Quraysh sent a group to stop them. Her own cousin Habbar ibn Aswad flung a spear at her, which caused her to fall off from the camel onto a rock and wounded her. At that time she was expecting but she lost her child. Kinanah started shooting arrows towards the trouble-makers. Abu Sufyan said to Kinanah: "We cannot bear the daughter of Muhammad leaving Makkah Mukarramah so openly. Let her go back and we will send her secretly after a few days." Kinanah agreed. Zaynab ؓ was sent off after a few days. She suffered from this wound for a long time, till she died because of it in 8 A.H. Nabi ﷺ said at the time of her death: "She was my best daughter, for she has suffered greatly because of me."

Since she had accepted Islam and her husband refused to do so, she migrated to Madinah and she severed relations with him. A few years later, her husband also followed her to Madinah and accepted Islam. Rasulullah ﷺ performed their nikah again.

Nabi ﷺ buried her with his own hands. As he went into the grave to lay her down, he looked very sad but when he came out of the grave, he was quite calm. On the being asked by the Sahaabah, he said: "In view of the weakness of Zaynab, I prayed to Allah to remove from her the tortures of the grave, and this prayer has been answered by Allah."

She had a son Ali, and a daughter Umaamah. Ali passed away during the lifetime of Nabi ﷺ. This same Ali was the person who sat with Nabi ﷺ on the camel's back at the time of his victorious entry into Makkah Mukarramah. We often read in the Hadith about a little girl riding on the back of Nabi ﷺ as he bowed down in Salaah; this was Umaamah, Zaynab's ﷺ daughter. She lived long after the death of Nabi ﷺ. Ali married Umaamah ﷺ on the death of Fatimah ﷺ his first wife. It is said that Fatimah ﷺ at the time of her death had said that Ali should marry Umaamah ﷺ. She had no children from Ali ﷺ. After Ali's death, she was married to Mughirah ibn Naufal ﷺ, from whom she had one son named Yahya.

Lesson: Look at her courage and her piety that she was prepared to leave her birth-place and her husband for the sake of Dîn. Furthermore, she bore the difficulties imposed upon her by the disbelievers to the extent that she passed away. Yet she remained steadfast on Dîn. Dear sister! You should be prepared to leave everything for the sake of Dîn. If you experience any difficulties, endure them. If your husband leaves the Dîn, do not side with him.

Just imagine, even the daughter of a Nabi who sacrificed her life for Islam needed the Dua of Nabi ﷺ for protection from the difficulties in the grave. What about us people who are drowned in sins? It is necessary that we should always seek protection from the difficulties of the grave. Nabi ﷺ would often seek protection in Allah from the horrors of the grave. This was to teach his followers. (O, Allah!

protect us from the horrors of the grave by your special Favour, Grace and Bounty). Aameen

Ruqayyah رضي الله عنها

She is the second daughter of Rasulullah ﷺ. She was born three years after the birth of Zaynab ﷺ, when Nabi ﷺ was 33 years old. Her first marriage was with 'Utbah, the son of the kaafir Abû Lahab. Abû Lahab has been mentioned in the Quran in Surah al-Lahab (the 111th sûrah of the Quran). The father and son did not accept Islam and the former therefore ordered his son to leave her. Upon this, Rasulullah ﷺ performed her nikah with 'Uthmaan ﷺ. They both migrated to Abyssinia, and were the first full family to migrate in the path of Allah after Ibrahim ﷺ and Sarah ﷺ. When the Sahaabah started shifting over to Madinah Munawwarah, they also moved over to Madinah, and reached there before Nabi ﷺ arrived. When Rasulullah ﷺ prepared to leave for the battle of Badr, she was sick at that time. Because of this, he asked 'Uthmaan ﷺ to remain behind and tend to her and informed him that he will receive the same reward as those engaged in jihâd and that he will also receive a share of the booty. She passed away on the very day the Muslims vanquished the disbelievers and returned to Madinah. A son was born to Ruqayyah ﷺ in Abyssinia. He was named Abdullah and lived after his mother but passed away in 4 A.H. when he was six years old.

Lesson: Look at her greatness that tending to her was considered to be equal to waging jihad against the disbelievers. This eminence of hers was on account of her piety. Dear sister! Always try to strengthen your Dîn. Do not allow yourselves to commit any sin as this is a cause of weakness in the Dîn.

Ummu Kulthûm رضي الله عنها

She is the third daughter of Rasulullah ﷺ. Her first marriage was with 'Utbah who was also a son of Abu Lahab. Before she could even go and live with this husband, Rasulullah ﷺ received Nubuwwah. The father and son had not accepted Islam and the former ordered his son

to leave her as well. After divorcing her, 'Utaybah came to Nabi ﷺ and said the rudest words to him. Nabi ﷺ cursed him by praying: "O, Allah! Order one of your dogs to punish him." Abu Talib, who had also not accepted Islam, was shocked at the curse and said to Utaybah; "You have no escape now." Once 'Utaybah and Abu Lahab went with a group of people to Syria. Abu Lahab, in spite of his disbelief and hatred, said to the people: "I am afraid of Muhammad's curse. Everybody should take care of my son." They happened to camp at a place where there were many lions. The people had piled up all their luggage and 'Utaybah was made to sleep on top of the pile, while the rest of the people slept around the pile. A lion came at night; and smelt all the people sleeping around the pile. The lion then jumped over the people and reached 'Utaybah. He screamed, but the lion had bitten off his head from his body.

When her sister, Ruqayyah, passed away, she married 'Uthmaan. When Ruqayyah had passed away, co-incidentally, Hafsa had also become a widow. 'Umar ؓ (the father of Hafsa) wanted to get her married to 'Uthmaan ؓ. However, the latter did not show any interest. When Rasulullah ﷺ heard of this, he said to 'Umar ؓ: "I will show you a husband for Hafsa who is better than 'Uthmaan, and for 'Uthmaan a wife that is better than Hafsa." Based on this, Rasulullah ﷺ married Hafsa, and got 'Uthmaan married to 'Ummu Kulthum. Nabi ﷺ said: "I have given Ummu Kulsum in marriage to Uthmaan by Allah's command."

She passed away in Shabaa, 9 A.H. without having any children. After her death, Nabi ﷺ is reported to have remarked: "Even if I had one hundred daughters, I would have given all of them in marriage to 'Uthmaan one after the other, if each one had died."

Lesson: It is very necessary that we avoid being rude to the people dear to Allah. Nabi ﷺ has reported Allah as saying: "He who insults my friends I declare war upon him."

She is the youngest of all the sisters but the highest in status and the most beloved to Rasulullah ﷺ. He has referred to her as 'the piece of his flesh' and 'the leader of all women'. He has also stated that if anything causes her sorrow, it causes him sorrow as well.

She was born in the 1st year of Nubuwwah, when Rasulullah ﷺ was 41. It is said that the name Fatimah (literally meaning safe from fire) was revealed by Allah. She was married to Ali ؓ in 2 A.H. She began to live with him seven and a half months later. She was about fifteen and Ali ؓ was twenty one at the time of their marriage.

Of all the daughters, she was the most beloved to Nabi ﷺ. Whenever he went out on a journey, she was the last one he would go to meet and when he returned home, she was the first one he would go to meet.

When he ﷺ fell ill, he whispered into her ear and informed her of the approach of his death. Upon hearing this, she began to cry. He again whispered into her ear and informed her that she should not grieve because she will be the first to join him and she will be the leader of all women in jannah. Upon hearing this, she began smiling. Although all his wives begged her to tell them what he had told her, she did not do so until after his demise. She passed away six months later.

One day, she said to her maid: "I want to take a bath. Arrange some water for me." She took a bath and changed her clothes. She then asked her bed to be placed in the middle of the room. She laid herself down on the bedding, with her face towards the Qiblah, with her right hand under her right cheek, she said: "I am now going to die." The next moment she was gone.

Nabi's ﷺ family continued and shall Insha-Allah continue through her children. She had three sons and three daughters. Hasan ؓ and Husain ؓ and Muhassan ؓ were her three sons. Muhassan ؓ passed away in childhood. Ruqayyah, her first daughter, also passed away in childhood. Her second daughter was Ummu Kulsum ؓ, who was first married to Umar ؓ and thereafter to the three sons of Jafar ؓ. Her third daughter was

Lesson One: The reason for Rasulullah ﷺ loving her the most and being specially attached to her is that she was the most pious, the most patient and the most grateful. Dear sister! Adopt Dîn, patience and gratefulness. You will also become beloved by Allah and His Rasul ﷺ.

Lesson Two: Dear sister! There is one more point which you have to ponder over. You have read about Rasulullah's ﷺ eleven wives and four daughters. You must have realized for yourselves that out of the eleven wives, apart from 'A'ishah ؓ, all the others had been married previously. From his daughters, apart from Zaynab and Fatimah ؓ, the other two were married prior to marrying 'Uthmaan ؓ. No woman in the world is equal to these twelve women (the ten wives and two daughters who had been married previously) in honour and status. If entering into a second marriage was blameworthy or a blemish, would these women have ever done something that is considered to be a blemish? It is extremely sad that some ignorant people consider a second marriage to be a blemish. If one begins to consider something that occurred in the family of Rasulullah ﷺ to be a blemish or to be immoral, how can one still have imaan? What type of Muslims are they that they find fault with the lifestyle of Rasulullah ﷺ and consider the lifestyle of the kuffaar to be honourable? We are saying this because keeping a widow at home without allowing her to get married again is actually the custom of the non-Muslims.

We have something else to add to this. There is a big difference between you and the widows of the past. They may have been ignorant, but they used to take great precautions in safeguarding their honour and chastity. They used to suppress their nafs and did not allow it to fall into sin. As for today, the widows surpass married women in trying to beautify themselves. It is for this reason that many incidents are beginning to occur which are not suitable to be mentioned. In these times, it is most certainly not permissible to refuse widows from getting married. This is because neither the women have any shame and bashfulness of the past, the men do not have any sense of honour, nor do the widows know how to live a life of widowhood and to undertake the necessary means for their food and clothing. Now the time is such that one should not even forgetfully think of refusing a

widow from getting married. May Allah give us understanding and success.

Fatimah's (radhiAllahu anha) Tasbih: Ali ؓ once said to one of his pupils: "Shall I tell you the story of Fatimah ؓ, the dearest and the most beloved daughter of Nabi ﷺ?" When the pupil replied "Yes", he said: "Fatimah ؓ used to the grind the grain herself, which caused sores on her hands. She carried water for the house in a leather bag, which left a mark on her chest. She cleaned the house herself, which made her clothes dirty. Once, when some war captives were brought to Madinah Munawwarah, I said to her, 'Go to Nabi ﷺ and request him for a helper to help you in your house work.' She went to him but found many people around him. As she was very shy, she could not be brave enough to ask Nabi ﷺ in front of other people. Next day Nabi ﷺ came to our house and said, 'Fatimah! What made you come to me yesterday?' She felt shy and kept quiet. I said, 'O, Nabi of Allah! Fatimah has sores on both her hands and marks on her chest, because of grinding grain and carrying water. She is always busy in cleaning the house causing her clothes to remain dirty. I told her about the slaves and advised her to go to you and make a request for a servant.' It has also been reported that Fatimah ؓ did made a request saying, 'Ali and I only own one bedding, which is a goatskin. We use it at night to sleep on and we use it during the day to feed the camel.' Nabi ﷺ said, 'Fatimah! Be patient. Nabi Musa and his wife owned only one bedding for ten years, which was the cloak of Musa ؑ. Fear Allah, be pious and keep doing your service to Allah and attend to your household jobs. When you go to bed, recite SubhaanAllah 33 times, Alhamdulillah 33 times and Allahu Akbar 34 times. You will find this better than a helper.' Fatimah ؓ replied, 'I am happy with what Allah and His Nabi ﷺ would be pleased with.'

Lesson: Look! This is the life of the dear daughter of the King of both the worlds. In rich families of our time, the ladies think it below their position to do house work. They need help in each and everything, even in their bathroom! What a difference!

In this Hadith, the above Zikr should be read before sleeping. In other Ahaadith, Nabi ﷺ is reported to have advised Fatimah ؓ to recite after every Salaah, SubhanAllah 33 times, Alhamdulillah 33 times, Allahu Akbar 33 times and Laa ilaaha illAllaho wahdahu, laa sharika lahu, lahulmulku wa lahulhamdu, wahuwa ala kulli shayin Qadir, once.

Fatimah's ؓ preference to the Hereafter: Suwayd ibn Ghafalah ؓ narrates that when Ali ؓ was suffering extreme hunger one day, he suggested to (his wife) Fatimah ؓ to approach (her father) Rasulullah ﷺ for some food. When she went to Rasulullah ﷺ, Ummu Ayman ؓ happened to be there. Hearing Fatimah ؓ knock on the door, Rasulullah ﷺ said, "That is the knock of Fatimah. She has come at a time that we are not accustomed to having her come to us." "O Rasulullah!" Fatimah ؓ said, "The food of the angels is to recite 'Laa Ilaaha IllAllah', 'SubhaanAllah' and 'Al Hamdu Lillaah'. What is our food?" Rasulullah ﷺ replied, "I swear by the Being Who has sent me with the truth! For the last thirty days, no fire (to cook) has been lit in the house of the family of Muhammad. However, a few goats have come to us. If you please, I shall have five given to you. Alternatively, if you so please, I shall teach you five words (of supplication) that Jibra'eel ؑ has taught me." Fatimah ؓ immediately said, "Do rather teach me the five words that Jibra'eel ؑ has taught you." Rasulullah ﷺ then told her to say the following words:

يَا أَوَّلَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَيَا آخِرَ الْآخِرِينَ وَيَا ذَا الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينِ وَيَا رَاجِمَ الْمَسَاكِينِ وَيَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

Fatimah ؓ then left and when she came back to Ali ؓ, he asked, "What happened?" She replied, "While I left you to get something of benefit in this world, I returned with something of benefit in the Akhirah." "This is the best of all your days," Ali ؓ remarked. (Abus-Shaikh, as quoted in Kanzul-Ummaal)

Lesson: An intelligent woman will always give preference to the life of the hereafter over this temporary life.

What is the best thing for a woman: Once Rasulullah ﷺ asked the Sahaabah ؓ, "What is the best thing for a woman?" They remained

silent. Ali ؓ says, "When I went home I asked Fatimah ؓ about this. She said, "[The best thing for a woman] is that she sees no man, and no man sees her." Ali ؓ says, "I mentioned that to Rasulullah ﷺ who said, "Fatimah is but a part of me." (Bazzaar, Hilyatul Awliyaa)

Lesson: Make an effort to inculcate the above quality and you will be from the best of women.

Note: After mentioning the lives of the women of the previous nations, we mentioned the lives of Rasulullah's ﷺ 11 wives and 4 daughters - totaling 15 women. We will now mention the lives of women who were present during the lifetime of Rasulullah ﷺ and with some of whom he had special relations.

Halimah Sa'diyyah رضي الله عنها

This woman breast-fed Rasulullah ﷺ. When he waged a jihad against the city of Ta'if, she came to him together with her husband and son. He treated her with great respect, laid down his shawl and made her sit on it. All of them accepted Islam.

Lesson: Despite her having a special relationship with Rasulullah ﷺ she knew that this would not give her salvation in any way if she did not believe. She therefore accepted Islam. Dear sister! You should not be under the assumption that you are from the progeny of a certain pious man or that a certain son or grandson of yours is an 'aalim or a haafiz and that they will grant you salvation. Remember that if you have Dîn in yourself, these persons can ask Allah for something on your behalf. But if you do not have any Dîn, they will be of no help to you.

Ummu Ayman رضي الله عنها

She was of Abyssinian origin. She cared for Nabi ﷺ when he was young and specifically after his mother passed away. Nabi ﷺ inherited her from his father, as she was his bondswoman, and freed her when he married Khadijah. She had seen Rasulullah ﷺ through all the stages of his life and shared in his joys and sorrows. Nabi ﷺ used to refer to

her as his mother. Nabi ﷺ once announced, “Whoever would be pleased to marry a woman from the inhabitants of Jannah should marry Umm Ayman.” So Zaid ibn Haaritha married her, and Usamah ibn Zaid was born from this union.

Rasulullah ﷺ used to go and visit her occasionally. Once he went to visit her and she offered him something to drink. Rasulullah ﷺ refused either because he did not feel like drinking anything at that time or because he was fasting. Because of the fact that she had brought up Rasulullah ﷺ she insisted that he drinks it. Rasulullah ﷺ used to say that after my real mother, she is my mother. After his demise, Abu Bakr and ‘Umar ؓ also used to visit her occasionally. Upon seeing them she used to think of Rasulullah ﷺ and begin to cry. They would also begin crying.

When Ummu Ayman ؓ migrated to Madinah, she reached a place called Munsarif by the evening, which was just before Rowhaa. She had been fasting that day and was extremely thirsty, but had no water. When the thirst became unbearable, a bucket of water suspended from a white rope was lowered down to her from the sky. She took hold of it and drank to her fill. Thereafter, she would always say, "I never felt thirsty after that incident. In fact, I would even go out during midday on extremely hot days while fasting, but would not get thirsty after that drink. Fasting during very hot days therefore never made me thirsty." (Tabaqaat Ibn Sa'd)

Lesson: What an honour it was to have Rasulullah ﷺ and these two great Sahabah visiting her. Her greatness is on account of her serving Rasulullah ﷺ and being perfect in her Dîn. Dear sister! Serving Rasulullah ﷺ means that you must serve his Dîn, direct women towards good deeds, teach them the Dîn, teach your children piety, and you yourself should remain steadfast on Dîn. Insha-Allah, you will also receive a part of greatness.

Allah blessed her with a miraculous bucket of water because of her strong Imaan and her sacrifice for Allah’s Din. You too build strong Imaan on Allah and sacrifice for His Din. You will see how His help comes to you.

She is a Sahabiyah of Rasulullah ﷺ, the wife of Abu Talha ؓ, and the mother of Anas ؓ, who was the attendant of Rasulullah ﷺ. She is also an aunt of his. One of her brothers who was a Sahabi, was martyred while participating in a battle with Rasulullah ﷺ. On account of all this, he used to have a lot of time for her. He used to visit her occasionally. He is also reported to have heard her footsteps in jannah.

After the death of her first husband, she remained a widow for some time to devote herself to the proper upbringing of her son. She was then married to Abu Talhah and had a son named Abu Umair from him. Nabi ﷺ used to go to her house and play with the child.

One day, Abu Umair was ill and Abu Talha ؓ was fasting. While Abu Talhah was out on his job, the child passed away. Look at her patience: when night approached, she thought to herself that if she were to inform her husband about his death, he will be distressed the entire night and will abstain from eating as well. She decided to remain silent about it. She washed and covered the dead body and laid it on the cot. She then took a bath and changed her clothes and beautified herself. When her husband came home and asked about the child’s health, she replied that he is at peace. This was not a lie because what can be more peaceful for a Muslim than returning to his original place of abode? However, the husband did not grasp this. She presented the meal to him which he partook of. Thereafter, he desired her and she did not even present any excuses. The couple shared the bed for the night.

When they got up in the morning, they had the following conversation: She asked her husband: "If anyone loans you anything and thereafter asks for it, does the person who borrowed it have any right to refuse?" He replied: "No. He must give it back. He has no right to keep it." So she said: "Exercise patience over the (death of the) child. Abu Umair was loaned to us by Allah. He has taken him back." He became angry and asked her why she did not inform him prior to all this. The following morning he went and narrated the entire incident to

Rasulullah ﷺ. He made du'a for them, "Allah is likely to bless your sharing the bed with your wife last night." Through the power of Allah, she fell pregnant on that very night. One of the Sahabah says: "I lived to see the effect of Nabi's j Dua. As a result of his union with his wife on that night, Abu Talhah had a son named Abdullah. This Abdullah had nine sons, all of whom were Qaris (experts in recitation of the Qur'an)."

Lesson: It needs much courage and patience to do what Ummu Sulaim ؓ did at the death of her son. She did not like her husband to know about the death of the child while he was fasting and while he needed food and rest.

Dear sister! Learn patience from her and learn the lesson of providing comfort to the husband from her. The example of asking back a loaned item which she mentioned is a beautiful and appropriate example. If a person can comprehend this example, he will not become impatient (and despondent) at any time. Through the barakah of her patience, Allah Ta'ala granted her a child soon thereafter in whose progeny many 'Ulama were born.

Ummu Haraam رضي الله عنها

She is also a Sahabiyah and the sister of Ummu Sulaym ؓ, whose story has just been mentioned above. She is also an aunt of Rasulullah ﷺ. He used to visit her as well. Once he went to her house, had a meal and fell asleep. He then woke up smiling. She asked him the reason for his smiling. He replied: "I had a dream and saw people of my ummah going on jihad on a ship. Their possessions and clothing appeared to be that of the rich and the royalty." She said: "O Rasulullah! Make du'a that I am also from among them." He made du'a for her and fell asleep again. He woke up smiling for a second time, related the same dream, and that he saw more of the same type of people. She said: "O Rasulullah! Make du'a that I am also from among them." He replied: "You are already included in the first group of people." It so happened, that her husband, 'Ubaadah, went out for jihad on a ship and she also accompanied him. Once they landed, she began climbing onto an

animal. This animal became hysterical and she fell down, broke her neck and passed away.

Lesson: Look at the spirit of Ummu Haraam ؓ. She wanted to join both the armies. As she was meant to die during the first journey, Nabi ﷺ did not pray for her to take part in the second one. Rasulullah's ﷺ du'a was accepted because as long as the person does not return home, that journey is considered to be a jihad. And once a person passes away while embarking on a journey for jihad, he receives the reward of a martyr irrespective of how he dies. Look at how pious she was that she did not even worry about her life in order to attain reward. She asked him to make a du'a so that she is blessed with this. Dear sister! You should also bear this in mind. If you experience any difficulty in fulfilling Dîni duties, do not become agitated or excited. Eventually, it is **you** who will be rewarded.

Sumayya رضي الله عنها

Sumayyah ؓ is the mother of Ammaar ؓ. Just like her son Ammar ؓ and her husband Yaasir ؓ, she patiently bore the different hardships in the cause of Islam. In the hot sun, she was made to lie on hot stones. She was made to wear steel armour and stand in the hot sun which heated the armour and she would be burnt. When Nabi ﷺ passed by, he would encourage her to be patient and promised her Jannah. She would not weaken in her love and devotion to Islam in spite of all these problems. One day, Sumayyah ؓ was standing when Abu Jahl passed that way. He said all sorts of dirty words at her and then put his spear through the most private part of her body. She died because of the wound. She is the first to be martyred (give her life) for the cause of Islam.

Lesson: Patience, steadfastness and sacrifice of these ladies are really enviable. For a person blessed with the true spirit of Islam, no hardship is too difficult. We hear about hundreds of persons dying for one cause or the other. It is only dying for the cause of Allah that brings everlasting happiness and comfort in the life hereafter. Persons losing

their lives for worldly gains really lose twice, i.e. in this world as well as in the hereafter.

The mother of Abu Zarr Ghifaari رضي الله عنهما

Abu Zarr Ghifaari is a Sahabi. When the news of Rasulullah's ﷺ Nubuwwah spread, he left his hometown and came to Makkah in order to establish the truth. After observing the situation in Makkah, he became a Muslim. When he returned home, his mother heard his entire story. She replied: "I have no objection to your Dîn. I am also becoming a Muslim."

Lesson: This is what is known as purity in nature and temperament. Once she heard the truth, she did not worry about the religion of her forefathers. Dear sister! Even when you hear anything about the Shari'ah, do not try to contradict it by substantiating your family customs and rituals. You should readily accept the matter of Dîn and act accordingly.

The mother of Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنهما

Abu Hurayrah is a Sahabi. He used to explain the Dîn to his mother so that she may accept Islam. One day, she uttered something against the Dîn which disturbed him greatly. He went crying to Rasulullah ﷺ and said to him: "O Rasulullah! Make du'a on behalf of my mother that Allah blesses her with imaan." He therefore made the following du'a: "O Allah! Guide the mother of Abu Hurayrah." He returned home happily but found the door to the house locked. He heard the dripping of water as if someone was having a bath. When his mother heard the sound of his approach, she asked him to wait. After completing her bath, she opened the door and recited the kalimah.

He was so overjoyed that he began crying out of happiness. In this very state, he rushed to Rasulullah ﷺ and related the entire incident to him. Upon hearing this, he expressed his gratitude to Allah Ta'ala. Abu Hurayrah then said: "O Rasulullah! Make du'a that we, mother and son, have love for the Muslims and that the Muslims have love for us as well." He made this du'a as well.

Lesson: Look at the great benefit of having pious children. Dear sister! Teach your children the knowledge of Dîn. In doing so, your Dîn will also be safeguarded.

Asma bint 'Umayy رضي الله عنها

She is a Sahabiyah. When the kuffaar of Makkah persecuted the Muslims, many of them migrated to Abyssinia. She was also among them. Later, when Rasulullah ﷺ migrated to Madinah, all those who were in Abyssinia also joined him. She also went to Madinah. Rasulullah gave her the glad tidings by informing her that because she undertook two hijrahs, she will be greatly rewarded.

Lesson: Look at how she changed from one who had a home to a homeless person, and this was done solely for the Dîn. Dear sister! If you have to bear any burdens for the sake of Dîn, do not display any laziness.

The mother of Hudhayfah رضي الله عنهما

Hudhayfah is a Sahabi. He says: "Once my mother asked me: 'How many days have passed since you visited Rasulullah ﷺ?' I told her the number of days. Upon hearing this she began rebuking me. So I told her: 'I am going this very moment and I will offer the maghrib salaah with him. Thereafter, I will ask him to make du'a for salvation on your behalf and my behalf.' I went to him, offered the maghrib and thereafter the 'isha salaahs with him. After the 'isha salaah he began leaving, so I followed him. Upon hearing a sound behind him, he asked: 'Is that Hudhayfah?' I replied: 'Yes.' He asked: 'What do you want? May Allah forgive you and your mother.'"

Lesson: Look at what a good mother she was that she even asks her children whether they visited Rasulullah ﷺ or not. Dear sister! You should also emphasize on your children to go and visit pious persons, learn matters of the Dîn from them, and acquire the barakah of good company.

Fatimah bint Khattâb رضي الله عنها

She is the sister of ‘Umar ؓ. She had accepted Islam before her brother. Her husband, Sa’id ibn Zayd, had also become a Muslim. ‘Umar ؓ had not become a Muslim as yet. Both of them were keeping their Islam a secret out of fear for him. Once, ‘Umar heard her reciting the Quran. Upon hearing this, he became very angry with both of them. Let alone his brother-in-law who was a man, even his sister informed him clearly and unhesitatingly that they had become Muslims and were indeed reciting the Quran. If he wished, he could hit them or leave them (it will not change their minds in any way). ‘Umar replied: "Let me see the Quran as well." The moment he saw it and heard it, the light of imaan entered his heart, he went straight to Rasulullah ﷺ and became a Muslim.

Lesson: Dear sister! You should also be firm in matters of the Dîn and the Shari’ah. Do not say anything against the Shari’ah in exchange for monetary gain nor follow customs that are contrary to the Shari’ah merely to please your family. If anything is contrary to the Shari’ah, do not even go near it.

An Ansaari woman رضي الله عنها

Ibn Is’haq narrates that the husband, father and brother of an Ansaari woman were all martyred in the battle of ‘Uhud, in which they had participated with Rasulullah ﷺ. When she was informed about this, she replied: "First tell me, how is Rasulullah?" They replied that he is well and alive. She replied: "If he is safe and sound, there is nothing to be sorrowful about."

Lesson: Glory be to Allah! What great love she had for Rasulullah ﷺ! Dear sister! If you wish to have love for him, follow his Shari’ah in totality. In this way, you will develop a love for him, and on account of this love, you will receive a stage near him.

Ummul-Fadl Lubabah bint Harith رضي الله عنها

She is the aunt of Rasulullah ﷺ, the wife of ‘Abbas ؓ, and the mother of ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas ؓ. It is mentioned in the Quran that if Muslims are living among the kuffaar and they are unable to render the ‘ibaadah of Allah, they should leave that place and settle down in a safer area. If they do not do this, they will be committing a major sin. However, women and children who do not know the way nor do they have anyone to accompany them, or are unable to undertake the journey are excluded from this rule. ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas ؓ says: "My mother was from among such persons who were unable to undertake the journey. She was a woman and I was a child."

Lesson: Look at the beauty of her intention. In her heart, she did not wish to live among the kuffaar. However, she was forced to do so. Allah therefore had mercy on her and saved her from sinning. Dear sister! You should also make a firm intention in your heart that you will act according to the Dîn. Thereafter, there will be hope of you being forgiven in those matters in which you have no alternative. The person who does not make an intention to act according to the Dîn cannot save himself from sinning.

Hind bint ‘Utbah رضي الله عنها

She is the mother of Mu’awiyah ؓ, who in turn is the brother-in-law of Rasulullah ﷺ. Once she addressed Rasulullah ﷺ and said to him: "Prior to becoming a Muslim, I did not desire anyone being disgraced more than you. Now that I have become a Muslim, I do not desire honour for anyone more than you." He replied: "I am also in the same condition."

Lesson: One of the things we learn about her is that she was honest. The other thing that we learn is that she loved Rasulullah ﷺ and he also loved her. Dear sister! You should also speak the truth. Love Rasulullah ﷺ and carry out acts which will cause him to love you as well.

She is the aunt of Rasulullah ﷺ. She was his only paternal aunt who accepted Islam. When his uncle, Hamzah ؓ was martyred in Uhud, he said: "I am thinking of the suffering of Safiyyah, or else I would have not buried Hamzah. I would have left him for the wild animals to eat of him and on the day of judgement he will arise from their stomachs."

In the battle of Khandaq (Trench), Nabi ﷺ had collected all the Muslim women in a fortress and had ordered Hassaan ibn Thabit ؓ to look after them. The Jews, who were always on the lookout for such opportunities for doing mischief, surrounded the place and sent one of their men to find out if there were any men in the fort with the ladies. Safiyyah ؓ happened to see the Jew approaching the fort.

She said to Hassaan ؓ: "There is a Jew coming to spy on us. You go out and kill him." Hassaan ؓ did not have the courage to do the job. Safiyyah ؓ got hold of a tent peg and went outside the fortress and smashed the head of the Jew and killed him on the spot. She came back and said to Hassaan ؓ: "The man is dead. I did not remove the clothes and weapons from his body for reasons of shame and modesty. Now you go and remove everything from his body. Also bring his head after cutting it off from the body." Hassaan was not ready to do that even. She herself went again and brought his head, and threw it over the wall amongst the Jews. When they saw this, they said: "We were wondering how Muhammad could keep the womenfolk alone in this fort. Surely, there are men inside to guard the ladies,"

Lesson: Dear sister! Rasulullah ﷺ took her into consideration on account of her piety. You also become pious so that you can be eligible for the pleasure of Rasulullah ﷺ.

Safiyyah ؓ passed away in 20 A.H. at the age of seventy three. The war of the Trench was fought in 5 A.H. Therefore, in the war of the Trench, she was 58 years old. These days, a lady of that age is hardly able to do her household work. But look how Saffiyyah ؓ goes and kills a Jew all alone.

She is a Sahabiyah. She used to feel very sorry for Rasulullah ﷺ. Once there was no food in his house. When he could not bear the hunger any longer, he went to her house. Her husband was gone out to bring drinking water. She was very hospitable to him. In the meantime, her husband also arrived. He was extremely pleased to have Rasulullah ﷺ as his guest and made the arrangements for a meal for him.

Lesson: If Rasulullah ﷺ was not satisfied with her sincerity and devotion, he would have returned after seeing that her husband is not at home. He knew that she was a very good woman. For Rasulullah ﷺ to be pleased with someone and to consider the person to be a good person is not something insignificant (instead, it is a great virtue in that person's favour). Dear sister! When Rasulullah ﷺ went to her house, he was a guest at that time. You should also be pleased when guests come to your house. Do not display any niggardliness or meanness.

She is the sister-in-law of Rasulullah ﷺ and the sister of 'A'ishah ؓ. When Rasulullah ﷺ was migrating to Madinah, he had a bag of food. However, he did not have anything to tie this bag with. She immediately tore a piece of cloth from her girdle which was used to tie the bag and the remainder of the cloth was used as her girdle. Nabi ﷺ promised her, "Allah will grant you two girdles (belts) in Jannah as a replacement."

When Abu Bakr ؓ shifted to Madinah Munawwarah with Nabi ﷺ, he took with him all his money, thinking that Nabi ﷺ might need it. It was about 6 000 dirhams. After he had left, his father Abu Quhafah who was blind and who had not yet accepted Islam) came to sympathize with his granddaughters. Asma ؓ says: "Our grandfather came to us and said, 'Your father has shocked you with his shifting to Madinah Munawwarah, and seems to have put you to a lot of hardship by taking all his money with him.' I said, 'No grandfather, do not worry. He has

left a lot of money for us.' I collected some small stones and put them in the place where my father used to keep his money; I covered it with a cloth. I then took my grandfather to that place and placed his hand over the cloth. He thought that it was really full of dirhams. He said: 'It is good that he has left something for you to live on.' By Allah, my father had not left a single dirham for us; I played this trick just to ease my grandfather.

Asma ؓ loved to spend in the path of Allah. In the beginning, she used to spend carefully with measure and weight. Once Nabi ﷺ said to her: "O, Asma, do not hoard and give by measure; spend in the path of Allah freely." After this, she started spending most generously.

Asma ؓ would advise her house maids: "Don't wait for any extra supplies before spending in the path of Allah (Our requirements go on increasing and the chances of having something extra will become more and more distant and the time for spending in the path of Allah will never come. Remember that you will not lose by spending in charity."

When Mundhir ibn Zubayr ؓ arrived from Iraq, (his mother) Asma bint Abu Bakr ؓ had already become blind. He sent for her delicate and exquisite garments made in Marw and Quw and when she felt it, she exclaimed, "Alas! Send this clothing back to him." Mundhir ؓ felt hurt about it and said, "Dear mother! The garments are not transparent." She replied, "Even though they are not transparent, they are revealing." When he then bought for her common garments made in Marw and Quw, she accepted them saying, "It is these types of garments that you should give me to wear." (Ibn Sa'd)

Lesson: 1) This type of love is found in a pious person who is prepared to tear something that she needs and give it away. Dear sister! This is what love for the Dîn demands. That is, in order to safeguard the Dîn, the person does not worry about losing anything.

2) Look at this brave Muslim girl. Actually speaking, the girls needed more comfort than their grandfather. Normally, they should have complained of their condition to their grandfather to win his sympathy,

as there was nobody else in Makkah Mukarramah to grant them any sympathy or help. Allah had given such understanding to the Muslim men and women of those days that everything they did was really wonderful and worthy of following. Abu Bakr ؓ was a rich businessman in the beginning, but he always spent generously in the path of Allah. At the time of Tabuk, he contributed all that he owned. Nabi ﷺ once said: "Nobody's wealth has benefited me so much as that of Abu Bakr. I have rewarded everybody for the good done to me, except Abu Bakr. He shall be rewarded by Allah Himself."

3) Although these people were poor and lived hand to mouth, yet they were free in spending and generous at heart. The Muslims today complain of their poverty, but there will be hardly any group of people among them who are so poor and needy as the Sahabah used to be. We have already read how they had to go without food for several days together and how some of them had to keep stones tied on their bellies to ease their pangs of hunger.

4) Look at her caution despite her old age with regards to wearing clothing which reveals one's figure. We too should try to dress modestly.

Ummu Rumaan رضي الله عنها

She is the mother-in-law of Rasulullah ﷺ and the mother of 'A'ishah ؓ. Nabi ﷺ said about her, "Whoever wishes to look at a woman from the hoorul ein (damsels) of Jannah should look at Ummu Rumaan." A munafiq (hypocrite) had accused 'A'ishah ؓ of committing adultery. Some naive Muslims had also joined this person. Rasulullah ﷺ remained silent over the entire matter. Allah revealed a few verses of the Quran absolving her and mentioning her chastity. Rasulullah ﷺ recited these verses to his house folk. At that time, Ummu Rumaan ordered 'A'ishah ؓ to get up and express her gratitude to Rasulullah ﷺ. Although she was greatly grieved over her daughter prior to this, was it possible that she utters even a word of complaint concerning Rasulullah ﷺ?

Lesson: Such forbearance and restraint on the part of a woman is extremely surprising because on occasions like this they generally blurt out something wrong. For example, she could have said: "How unfortunate that my daughter has been accused without any valid reason, more so now that her chastity has been established." At such a time, in most cases, one becomes very angry and annoyed and rebukes the person for having doubts on such a pure and chaste woman. At times of grief and wrangling, do not side with your daughter nor fight with her in-laws.

Another woman has also been mentioned in this entire incident. Her son, due to ignorance and naivety, also joined those who accused ‘A’ishah رضي الله عنها. This woman reprimanded her son and sided with ‘A’ishah. Her name is Ummu Mistah. This is what you call standing for the truth. That she did not side with her son - she sided with the truth and even reprimanded her son.

Khansa رضي الله عنها

Khansa رضي الله عنها was a famous poetess. She accepted Islam in Madinah Munawwarah, along with some other members of her family. Ibnul-Athir writes: "The learned have agreed that the best woman poet in Arabic was Khansa رضي الله عنها. No woman in history has ever written such Arabic poetry as Khansa رضي الله عنها."

During the time of Umar رضي الله عنه in 16 A.H., the famous battle of Qadisiyyah was fought between the Muslims and the Persians. Khansa رضي الله عنها, along with her four sons, took part in this battle.

On the eve of the battle, she encouraged all her four sons, saying: "O, my sons! You embraced Islam and emigrated of your own free will. By Allah! Beside whom there is no God; you all are the sons of the same father, just as you are the sons of the same mother. I never deceived your father, nor disgraced your maternal uncle. I never allowed a mark to come on your high birth nor spoiled your family background. You know what rewards Allah has promised for those who fight against the disbelievers in His path. You must remember

that the everlasting life of the Hereafter is far better than the temporary life of this world. Allah has said in the Qur’aan-e-Kareem: ‘O you, who have Imaan! Exercise sabr, compete in patience, continue doing good deeds and fear Allah (so that you may be successful. (S3: V200)’ When you get up tomorrow morning, be prepared to give off your best in the battle. Go ahead into the enemy lines, seeking help from Allah. When you see the fighting becoming severe, go right into the centre and face the enemy chiefs. Inshallah! You will get your home in Jannat with honour and success."

The next day, when the battle was in full swing, all four sons advanced towards the enemy lines. One by one, they attacked the enemy, reciting the words of their mother in verses and fought till all of them were martyred. When the mother got the news, she said: "Alhamdulillah! Glory to Allah who has honoured me with their martyrdom. I hope that Allah will unite me with them under the shade of His Mercy."

Lesson: Here is a mother of that time. She encouraged her sons to jump into the thick of battle and when all the sons are killed one after the other, she glorifies Allah (and thanks Him).

Asma bint Yazid Ansaari رضي الله عنها

Asma bint Yazid Ansaari رضي الله عنها came to Nabi ﷺ and said: "O Nabi of Allah! You are more beloved to me than my parents. The Muslim women have sent me as their spokesperson to talk to you on their behalf. Verily you are the Nabi of Allah for both men and women. We remain most of the time within the four walls of our houses. We are held back to our duties of fulfilling the desires of men, bearing children for them and looking after their homes. Despite all this, men beat us in getting rewards for actions which we are unable to perform. They go and say their daily Salaah and weekly Jumu'ah in the masjid, visit the sick, attend the funerals, perform Hajj after Hajj and, above all, fight in the way of Allah. When they go for Hajj or Jihad, we look after their belongings, bring up their children and weave cloth for them. Do we not share their rewards with them?"

Nabi ﷺ said to the Sahabah sitting around him: "Did you ever hear a woman asking a better question?" The Sahabah replied: "O, Nabi of Allah! We never thought that a woman could ever ask such a question."

Then Nabi ﷺ said to Asma ؓ, "Listen carefully and then go and tell the ladies who have sent you that when a woman is kind to her husband, seeks his happiness and carries out the household duties to his satisfaction, then she also gets the same reward as the men for all their services to Allah." Asma ؓ returned very happily after getting this reply to her question.

Lesson: Obedience and good behavior towards the husbands is very valuable for the women, provided they know its worth.

The Sahabah once said to Nabi ﷺ: "In foreign countries, people bow down before their kings and Chiefs. You deserve much more respect so allow us to bow to you." Nabi ﷺ said, "No. If it were allowed to bow down (make sajdah) before anybody besides Allah, then I would ask the women to bow down before their husbands." He then said, "By him who has my life in His hand, a woman cannot do what she owes to Allah until she has done what she owes to her husband."

It is reported in a Hadith that once a camel made sajdah before Nabi ﷺ. The Sahabah on seeing this, said: "When this animal makes sajdah before you, why should we not have this honour too?" He ﷺ replied: "Never! If I could ask somebody to make sajdah before anybody besides Allah, I would ask the wives to make sajdah before their husbands."

The following is reported to have been said by Nabi ﷺ in this connection:

"A woman whose husband is pleased with her at the time of her death goes straight into Jannah."

"A woman who is displeased with her husband and she stays away from him in anger for the night, is cursed by the Mala'ikah (angels)."

"The Salaah of two persons hardly rises above their heads in its journey to the skies. These two persons are a run-away slave and a disobedient wife."

Ummu Hakim ؓ was the wife of Ikramah ibn Abi Jahl. She participated in Uhud on the enemy side. She accepted Islam when Makkah Mukarramah was conquered. She loved her husband very much. He would not become Muslim because of his father, who was the worst enemy of Islam. After the capturing of Makkah Mukarramah, her husband fled to Yemen. She secured pardon for him from Nabi ﷺ and went to Yemen and convinced her husband to return to his home. She told him: "You can be safe from the sword of Muhammad ﷺ only when you put yourself in his lap."

She returned with him to Madinah Munawwarah, where Ikramah ؓ embraced Islam and the couple began to live together happily. They both participated in the Syrian war during the rule of Abu Bakr ؓ. Ikramah ؓ was killed in a battle. She was then married to another Mujahid, Khalid ibn Sa'eed ؓ. Her husband wanted to meet her at a place called Marja-us-Safr. She said: "We have the enemy on all sides. We shall meet after they are conquered." He said: "I am sure I shall not survive this battle." They then shared the bed for the first time in a tent at that place. The next day, Khalid ibn Sa'eed ؓ was arranging for the Walimah when the enemy attacked with full force and he was killed in the battle. Ummu Hakim ؓ packed up her tent and other luggage and thereafter fought the enemy with a tent-peg in her hand, till she had killed seven of them.

Lesson: In times of war, not to speak of a woman, no man would like to get married under such conditions. Look at her marriage in the battle-field and her fight with the enemy. Instead of mourning the loss of her husband, on the day of his death she rushes onto the battle-field and kills seven of the enemy soldiers single-handed. Is this not enough to show the wonderful strength of Imaan in the women of that time?

Rubayyi-bint-Mu'awwiz ؓ was a woman of the Ansaar. She had accepted Islam before Nabi ﷺ emigrated to Madinah Munawwarah. She was married when Nabi ﷺ was living in Madinah Munawwarah. He blessed her marriage with his presence. He heard some girls singing a heroic poem about the battle of Badr at her place. One of them sang a verse, which meant: "We have among us Nabi, who knows what is to happen tomorrow." He stopped her from saying such things, because nobody except Allah knows what is going to happen in future.

It was Rubayyi's ؓ father, Mu'awwiz ؓ, who was one of those who killed Abu Jahl in Badr. Abu Jahl, as we know, was one of the big chiefs of Quraysh and the worst enemy of Islam.

There was a woman named Asma who used to sell perfumes to the ladies. She once came to Rubayyi ؓ to sell perfume. When Rubayyi ؓ was introduced to her as the daughter of Mu'awwiz ؓ, Asma remarked: "So you are the daughter of him who killed his chief." Rubayyi's ؓ sense of honour could not bear a wretched person like Abu Jahl to be mentioned as the chief of her father. She therefore, replied angrily, "No. I am the daughter of one who killed his slave." Asma did not like this title for Abu Jahl and said with anger: "It is haraam for me to sell perfume to you." Rubayyi ؓ replied in a similar manner, "It is haraam for me to buy perfume from you. I have never found stink in any perfume except yours." Rubayyi ؓ says: "I had used the last words simply to annoy her."

Lesson: Look at her sensitiveness and feeling for Islam. She could not tolerate an enemy of Islam being mentioned as a chief. We hear from the lips of Muslims most flowery and hounourable descriptions being used for evil women and the open enemies of Islam. When they are corrected, they call it narrow-mindedness. Nabi ﷺ said: "Don't call a Munaafiq a chief. You displease Allah when you take him as a chief."

Humayd ibn Hilaal narrates that a man from the Banu Tufaawa tribe often passed by them and would narrate Ahadith to their tribe. He once narrated, "I arrived in Madinah with one of our caravans. After selling our wares, I told myself that I should meet with Rasulullah ﷺ and inform the others at home about him. When I came to him, Rasulullah ﷺ pointed out a house to me and said, 'A woman who lived in that house went out on an expedition with the army and left behind twelve goats and her needle with which she used to knit. However, she lost one of her goats and her needle. She then prayed, 'O my Rabb! You have undertaken to protect those who go out in Your path in every way. I have however lost one of my goats and my needle. I ask You in Your name for my goat and my needle.' Rasulullah ﷺ then described to me the determined manner in which she prayed to Allah. By the next morning she had her goat and another just like it as well as her needle with another needle just like it. There she comes. There she is. You may ask her if you like.' 'No,' I replied, 'I believe what you say.'" (Musnad Ahmad)

Lesson: Look at how this woman made du'a to Allah with determination and conviction. We too should learn to make du'a in this manner for all our needs. Allah will surely accept if our du'a is made from the heart and with complete conviction.

Fatimah bint Abi Hubaysh رضي الله عنها

Hamnah bint Abi Jahsh رضي الله عنها

Zaynab - the wife of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنها

It is mentioned in the Hadith that these three women came to Rasulullah ﷺ to ask him regarding certain laws of Shari'ah. We have therefore mentioned them together. Furthermore, their circumstances are quite similar. The first woman came to ask about istihadah. The second woman is the sister-in-law of Rasulullah ﷺ and the sister of Zaynab bint Jahsh ؓ. She had also asked him the ruling concerning istihadah. The third woman had asked him a mas'alah (law)

concerning charity. She is the wife of ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud ؓ, a great Sahabi.

Lesson: Dear sister! This is what is known as desire for the Dîn. If you do not know any matter pertaining to Islam, you should make it a duty to ask a pious ‘aalim. If you are shy to ask a particular question, pose the question to the ‘aalim's wife and she will convey it to her husband.

An obedient wife رضي الله عنها

A man left home and ordered his wife not to leave her house in his absence. Her father lived on the bottom floor and she lived above. Her father became ill. She sent a message to Nabi ﷺ informing him of her father's sickness and seeking permission to go against her husband's command and take care of her father. Nabi ﷺ responded, ‘Obey your husband.’ Thereafter, her father passed away so she sent a message to Nabi ﷺ seeking permission to attend his Janaazah. Rasulullâh ﷺ again responded, ‘Obey your husband.’ She acted accordingly and did not leave her home. Nabi ﷺ then sent her a message saying, ‘Allah has forgiven your father due to you obeying your husband’. (Tabrani in Awsat)

Lesson: Observe how pleased Allah had become with the sacrifice of this woman just because she had obeyed her husband. As a reward for her forgoing her own desire in the obedience of her husband, Allah forgave her father. Dear sister! You too can earn the pleasure and mercy of Allah by obeying your husband and not being defiant to his wishes.

A generous women رضي الله عنها

A'ishah ؓ narrated: A destitute woman once came to me carrying her two daughters. I gave her three dates. So she gave each of them a date and raised the third date to her mouth to eat it. But her daughters requested her to give it to them. So she broke it into two and gave half to each of them. I mentioned her action to Nabi who was amazed by

her action and said, “Allah has made Jannah compulsory for her due to that, or He has freed her from Jahannam because of that. (Muslim)

Lesson: By being merciful to others and giving preference to others over oneself, one will earn the mercy of Allah and thereby enter Jannah. Being kind and merciful to one's children is a great form of worship, never consider it to be insignificant.

Note: After mentioning the stories of Rasulullâh's ﷺ wives and daughters, we mentioned the lives of some women who were present in his time. There are many other women, whose lives have been mentioned in different books. We have not mentioned them out of fear that this book will get too lengthy. We will now mention those women who came after Rasulullâh ﷺ.

The daughter-in-law of Umar رضي الله عنه

Aslam said, “When I was accompanying Umar ibnul Khattab ؓ on his patrol of Madinah at night, he felt tired, so he leant against a wall. It was the middle of the night, and (we heard) a woman say to her daughter, "O my daughter, get up and mix that milk with some water." The girl said, "O Mother, did you not hear the decree of Amirul-Mu'minin (leader of the believers) today?"

The mother said, "What was that?"

The girl said, "He ordered someone to announce in a loud voice that milk should not be mixed with water."

The mother said, "Get up and mix the milk with water; you are in a place where `Umar cannot see you."

The girl told her mother, "**I cannot obey Him (Allah) in public and disobey Him in private.**"

Umar heard this, and told me, "O Aslam, go to that place and see who that girl is, and to whom she was speaking, and whether she has a husband." So I went to that place, and I saw that she was unmarried, the other woman was her mother, and neither of them had a husband.

I came to Umar and told him what I had found out. He called his sons together, and said to them: "Do any of you need a wife, so I can

arrange the marriage for you? If I had the desire to get married, I would have been the first one to marry this young woman."

Abdullah said, "I have a wife." `Abdur Rahman said, "I have a wife." Aasim said, "I do not have a wife, so let me marry her." So Umar arranged for her to be married to Aasim. She gave him a daughter, who grew up to be the mother of Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz. (Sifat al-Safwah, Wafiyat al-A'yan, Ibn al-Jawzi in Ahkam al-Nisa)

Lesson: Fear Allah and obey Him even in privacy, as He is always watching you.

The wife of Qaadhi Shurayh

Qaadhi Shurayh was appointed by Umar ؓ as the chief judge of Kufah. One day, he advised his friend, Sha'bi, "You should marry a woman from the tribe of Banu Tamim because their women are exceptional." "How is that?" asked Sha'bi. Qaadhi Shurayh then related his personal life experience:

One day, while returning from a funeral, I passed by a tent where I noticed an old woman with a very beautiful young girl. I requested a drink, although I was not thirsty. The woman asked, "Would you like a drink of water, milk or nabidh (a type of drink prepared from grapes)?" I replied, "Whatever is easiest for you." To this, the elderly woman instructed, "Bring him some milk as he appears to be a stranger in our locality." After drinking the milk, I addressed the woman, "Who is this young girl?" She answered, "She is my daughter and her name is Zainab bint Hudair of the tribe of Banu Tamim." "Is she single or married?" I asked. "She is single," was the reply. "Will you marry her to me?" I asked. "Yes, if you are compatible. She has an uncle to whom you should make your request," she explained.

I returned home to take my afternoon nap, but I could not sleep as my mind was preoccupied with the thought of the woman and her daughter. I performed Zuhr and proceeded to visit a few of my colleagues. We performed Asr and then left to meet the young girl's

uncle. He welcomed us and asked the reason for my visit. I replied, "I have come to ask for the hand of your niece, Zainab." He replied, "Yes, she too is in favour of the marriage." He then performed the nikaah and we returned.

At home, doubts entered my mind and I thought to myself, "What have I done by marrying a woman of the tribe of Banu Tamim? They are known for their hard-heartedness and uncouth nature." I thought of divorcing her immediately, but decided not to follow up my first foolish decision with a second. The rational thing I should do was to welcome her as my wife. If I liked her, I would praise Allah ﷻ, otherwise I would divorce her.

After some time, a number of women from her tribe brought her to me. As she entered my home, I said to her, "When a bride arrives at the home of her husband, it is a sunnah for her and her husband to perform two raka'ats of salaah and ask Allah ﷻ for barakah in their marriage." I proceeded to perform wudhu and she did likewise. I then performed two raka'ats of salaah and she prayed behind me. After we had completed, I moved towards her, but she advised, "Please wait a moment. All praise be to Allah ﷻ. I praise Him and seek His assistance. Blessings and salutations be upon Nabi ﷺ and his family. There were many women in your own tribe whom you could have married and there were many men in my tribe whom I could have married, but when Allah ﷻ decides upon a matter, it certainly comes to be. I am now in your care, so do as Allah ﷻ has commanded,

فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ

"Retain her with honour or release her with kindness." (Surah Baqarah, verse 231)

We are strangers to each other. I do not know your nature and temperament. Therefore, I would appreciate it if you would inform me of your likes and dislikes so that I could behave accordingly. With these words I end and I seek Allah's ﷻ forgiveness for us and all the Muslims."

O Sha'bi, I had no choice but to reply to her in the form of a sermon, like she had done, "All praise be to Allah ﷻ. I praise Him and seek His assistance. Blessings and salutations be upon Nabiﷺ and his family. You have said many things. If you abide by them, it will be my good fortune, but if you ignore them, it will serve as evidence against you. I love such and such things and I dislike such and such things. Spread the good you see in me and conceal the evil."

She then enquired, "What would you prefer with regard to my relatives visiting me?" I replied, "I am a judge and I do not want my in-laws to dictate things to me, neither would I like them to be estranged from me." She later sent a message to her family, saying that they should not visit her for the next year.

She further enquired, "Which of your neighbours would you like to enter your home and which ones would you dislike?" I advised, "So and so are pious and so and so are bad company."

We began our married life in this manner and I enjoyed every new day more than the previous day. After one year had passed, I returned from the court one day, and noticed an old woman advising my wife. I asked, "Who is this, Zainab?" She replied, "This is my mother." We greeted and I welcomed her to our home. Her mother then asked me, "What do you think of your wife?" I replied, "She is the best wife a man could ever have. You have certainly taught her very good manners and brought her up well. May Allah ﷻ reward your efforts." She replied, "You will not find a woman of worse manners other than in two cases: when she enjoys the favours of her husband and when she gives birth to a child. If anything of your wife displeases you, reprimand her. There is nothing worse for men to have in their homes, than rebellious wives." I assured her that her daughter was extremely well-mannered and trained. She then enquired, "Would you like your in-laws to visit you?" I replied, "Yes, they may do so."

My wife's mother would visit us every year and advise me in a similar manner. I lived with my wife for twenty years and was displeased with her only once. Then too, I was at fault to a certain extent. This is what transpired. I performed my two raka'ats before the Fajr salaah and noticed a scorpion in our home. I attempted to kill it, but only

managed to confine it beneath a vessel. I quickly left for salaah with the instruction that she should not touch the vessel. Instead, she hastened towards it and moved it. The scorpion escaped and stung her. When I arrived home, I read the Mu'awwadhatin and rubbed her finger.

I had a neighbour who would beat his wife and this inspired me to compile some verses of poetry:

I have seen men beating their wives; May my hand be paralyzed the day it strikes Zainab; How can I strike the one who has done no wrong? What justice am I displaying by beating one who has not sinned? Zainab is the sun and other women are stars; when the sun rises, not a single star can be seen! (Taariikh Dimishq, Al-Mustatraf Fi Kulli Fannim Mustazraf)

Lesson: When a woman has qualities such as these, and seeks to please her husband, she will become most beloved to him and he will never imagine being harsh with her, on condition he is inclined towards piety. Inculcate these qualities in your lives too and strive to please your husband in all permissible matters.

Hafsah bint Sireen رَحِمَهَا اللهُ

She was the eldest sister of the renowned Tabi'ee and scholar, Muhammad ibn Sireen. Her father was the freed slave of the illustrious Sahabi Anas ibn Maalik ﷺ. Sireen married a pious woman by the name of Safiyyah, who was the freed slave of Abu Bakr ﷺ. Eighteen Sahabah who had participated in the battle of Badr attended their marriage ceremony. Heading these eighteen Sahabah was Ubayy ibn Ka'b ﷺ. Allah blessed them both with a daughter, who they named Hafsah. She received and was provided with the best nutrition: the spiritual nutrition of the Qur'an and Sunnah. She married Abdur-Rahman and bore him a son by the name of Huzail, who later became a senior scholar of his time. Her brother Muhammad ibn Sireen was also a great scholar and her sister Kareemah bint Sireen was also a great aabidah (worshipper).

The knowledge of Hafsa (rahimahAllah) was such that Iyas ibn Mu'aawiyah said: 'I did not meet anyone whom I regard as superior (in knowledge) over Hafsa.' He was asked: 'What about Hasan Basri and Muhammad ibn Sireen?' He said: 'As for me, I do not prefer anyone over her. She learnt the Qur'an by heart when she was twelve years old.'

Not only had she memorized the Qur'an by the age of twelve, but she possessed deep knowledge pertaining to the Qira'at (various methods of recitation of the Qur'an). Hishaam narrates that when Ibn Sireen (her brother) would find something difficult and ambiguous regarding the Qira'at, he would say, "Go and ask Hafsa how to recite."

Ahadeeth narrated by her from Anas ibn Maalik and other Sahabah can be found in Saheeh Bukhari and all the other authentic compilations of Hadith.

Aasim said: 'We used to enter in the presence of Hafsa bint Sireen (in her old age) and she would adjust her jilbaab (outer garment which does not only cover the face like the Niqaab, but covers the entire body) like this and would cover her face with it. So we said to her, "May Allah have mercy on you! Allah says: 'And as for women past child-bearing age who do not expect to marry, it is no sin on them if they discard their (outer) clothing in such a Way as to not to display their adornment...' (Surah Noor v.60) And this aayah is (referring to) the Jilbaab.'" Aasim continued: 'Then Hafsa said to us: "What comes after that (i.e. what is mentioned next in the same verse)?" We said: '...but to adopt chastity (i.e. not to discard their outer clothing) is better for them. And Allāh is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.' (Surah Noor v.60) So Hafsa said: "This part of the aayah affirms (makes ithbaat of) the Jilbaab.'"

Mahdi ibn Maymoon said: "Hafsa bint Sireen passed 30 years without leaving her prayer mat, except to take a nap or to answer the call of nature (li qadhaa'il haajah)." (This was probably after her husband had passed away.)

Her heart was soft, and her eyes flowed with tears of hope and fear of her Rabb. Hishaam ibn Hassaan mentions that Hafsa (rahimahAllah) purchased a maid slave-girl. She was asked, "How do you find your master (i.e. Hafsa)?" She said, "She is a righteous woman, except that she has (i.e. must have) committed a huge sin, because she cries all night and performs salaah."

Abdul Kareem ibn Mu'aawiyah said: "It was mentioned to me regarding Hafsa that she would read half of the Qur'an every night and would fast during the day and would not fast only on the two Eids and the days of Tashreeq (the three days after the day of sacrifice, i.e. the 11th, 12th, 13th of Zul Hijjah)."

Hishaam said: "Hafsa bint Sireen would light her lamp for a part of the night and she would then stand on her prayer mat (musallaa). Sometimes the light would burn out, but a (miraculous) shining light would brighten her house for her until the morning." Hishaam said: Umm Sulaym, the daughter of Sireen, narrated to me: "Many a time, there was a light for Hafsa bint Sireen seen in her house."

She passed away in 101 AH at the age of 70 and a group of the leading Taabi'een attended her funeral prayer in Basrah, Iraq. Leading them was Hasan Basri and her brother Muhammad ibn Sireen.

Lessons: 1) This is noteworthy for us, my dear sisters. A woman who is **past** the age of covering, yet she has so much modesty and bashfulness. So, how much more shy should young Muslim girls and women be?! The deceiving shaytan promises us the opposite! He whispers to us that, "You are still young. When you become older, you can begin to cover..."

2) Likewise, look at her humility. In spite of worshipping Allah so much, she would still cry before Him at night, realizing that our worship can never do justice to the rights that we owe to Allah.

3) It was due to her great ilm (knowledge of Din) and her ibaadah that Allah blessed her with light even when the lamp would be extinguished. Allah miraculously looks after those who are obedient to Him.

The female teachers of Hafiz Ibn Asaakir

He is a great scholar of Hadith. Out of all the teachers from whom he acquired this knowledge of Hadith, more than 80 of them were females.

Lesson: How sad it is that a time has come when women do not even attain the status of being students in acquiring the knowledge of the Dîn. Today, the majority of women are ignorant regarding the matters of Dîn. For the sake of Allah, try to erase this black spot (from our society). Endeavour to acquire knowledge. If there is any ‘aalim in your house, try and learn Arabic as well because complete enjoyment in knowledge is in this (learning Arabic). It is easier for you than boys since the responsibility of earning (a livelihood) is not upon you. You should occupy yourself in this (acquiring knowledge) with confidence. As for sewing and other related crafts, you can learn those in a few weeks. Why should you waste your entire life in that?

The aunt of Ibnul-Jauzi رحمها الله

This person is a very great ‘aalim. When he was young, his aunt used to take him to the great places of learning. All the things that he heard while he was young were such that by the time he reached ten years of age, he began delivering lectures like an ‘aalim.

Lesson: Look at the concern that she had in order to impart Dîni knowledge to her children. She must have been very old at that time and yet she herself used to take him. The minimum that you can do is that as long as your child does not acquire Dîni knowledge, do not sink him into western education. Stop him from bad company and warn him against it. Stress upon him the importance of going to madrasah. Today the situation is such that mothers do not even have any desire to educate their children. If they have any desire, it is for western education with the hope that their children will become a tax-collector or an officer, etc. even if he goes to hell and takes his parents with. Remember, that the most important thing is Dîni knowledge. If a child does not have that, he does not have anything.

Fatimah bint Muhammad ibn Ahmad رحمها الله

This great Faqeehah (female-scholar of Islamic Jurisprudence) of her time was very knowledgeable of Hanafî Fiqh (Jurisprudence). She was the daughter of the great scholar Muhammad Samarqandi. He had written a book by the name of ‘Tuhfatul Fuqaha’ which she studied under her father and memorized.

Her father had married her to Ala’ud Deen Kaasaani, who wrote a commentary on ‘Tuhfatul Fuqaha’ entitled ‘Badai’us Sanaai’. When he showed it to his teacher (the father of Fatimah), he was delighted with it and accepted it as a mahr (dowry) for his daughter, although he had refused offers of marriage for her from some of the kings of Byzantium.

Before her marriage, Fatimah used to issue fataawa (religious edicts and verdicts) along with her father, and the fataawa would be signed by herself and her father. After she married, the fataawa would appear with her signature, along with that of her father and her husband. Her knowledge was such that it exceeded that of her husband, who would consult her for her opinions, especially when he erred in passing a fatwa. Because she was a Mufti and the daughter of his teacher, her husband would greatly honour her and revere her. She herself was a famous teacher who would deliver lessons and impart her knowledge to the women in Halab. She had also authored a few books in Fiqh and Hadith.

She was very generous. She possessed two precious bangles. One Ramadhaan, she graciously sold her bangles and used the money she received to prepare iftaar for the Fuqahaa and Ulama for the entire month in a Masdrasah in Halab. She therefore initiated this generous and rewarding practice which continued for many decades (and possibly many centuries) thereafter, an action which surely earned for her rewards even after her death.

Her knowledge had created within her a natural sense of shame, purity and chastity. Nurud-Deen Zangi, the pious and just king of that time

once sent a messenger to her on his behalf with a personal message from the king. When the messenger reached her door, he sought permission to enter and to speak to her. She refused him permission and remained concealed in her house. She sent a message to the king, "Don't you know that it is not permissible for this servant to look at me (and be with me in the privacy of my home). What difference is there between a servant and any other man when it pertains to the law of the impermissibility of looking at a strange woman." The servant was compelled to return without delivering the king's message. The king realized his mistake and now sent a woman to her on his behalf with the same message. Thereafter, whenever the king needed to send any message to her or enquire regarding any mas'alah (matter of the Shari'ah), he would always send a female as his messenger.

Lesson: 1) The women of former times were also great scholars of Islam. You too should strive to acquire the knowledge of Din and impart it to others.

2) Pious husbands should be chosen for prospective brides.

3) Spend your jewellery and wealth in the path of Allah. Giving Sadaqah, especially of jewellery, is a great means of saving women from the fire of Jahannam, as was stated by Rasulullah ﷺ in a sermon he delivered to the women on the day of Eid.

2) Look how conscious the pious women of former times were concerning issues of Hijaab and how they would not compromise its limits, even with slaves and government officials. This is a great lesson for us today, in an era when many sisters give very little importance to completely covering themselves and segregating themselves from male servants.

The sister of Qadhî Zaadah Rumi رحمها الله

He was a great 'aalim. After acquiring knowledge from the 'Ulama of Rum, he had a desire to go abroad in order to further his studies. He began making preparations for the journey secretly. His sister came to know about his plans so she took out a considerable amount of her jewellery and concealed it with her brother's goods and did not inform him about it.

Lesson: How great this woman was. She had no desire for name and fame. All she wanted was that knowledge should exist. Dear sister! There is great reward in helping to ensure that knowledge exists. Help the different madaaris in whatever way you can.

Mu'aazah 'Adawiyyah رحمها الله

She had a strange condition. At the approach of day, she used to say: "Perhaps this is the day in which I will die", and she used to abstain from sleeping till the evening so that at the time of death she will not be unmindful of the remembrance of Allah. At the approach of night, she used to abstain from sleeping as well. When she felt sleepy, she used to run around the house and say to herself: "The time to sleep is still to come." Meaning that once I die, I will be able to sleep right until qiyaamah. She used to offer 600 rak'ats of nafl salaah in a day. She never ever raised her eyes to the skies. Ever since her husband passed away, she never lied down on her bed. She met 'A'ishah رضي الله عنها and heard Ahadith from her.

Lesson: Dear sister! This is what you call love and remembrance of Allah. Open your eyes (and take heed)!

Rabi'ah 'Adawiyyah رحمها الله

She would perform salaah for the entire night. She used to cry profusely. When she used to hear about hell, she used to faint. When anyone offered her anything, she used to refuse it and say: "I do not want the world." She used to keep her kafan with her all the time. Her place of prostration used to get wet with her tears. At the time of her death, she asked her female servant to use her woolen cloth in which she used to perform Tahajjud as her shroud. Her servant did so. Shortly thereafter, the servant saw her in a dream wearing beautiful clothes. She asked what had happened to the woolen shroud, and requested for advice. Rabi'ah replied, "It has been folded and kept with my goods deeds. Make as much zikr as you can. You will become worthy of envy in the grave." All her extraordinary and

astonishing ways are quite well known. She is also known as Rabi'ah Basriyyah.

Lesson: Dear sister! You should also develop some fear of Allah and remembrance of death, after all she was also a woman (so it's not impossible for you to do the same).

Maajidah Qurashiyyah رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ

She used to say: "When I take a step, I think that death is going to be next." She used to say: "It is very strange - the people of the world have been informed of the departure (to the hereafter) but they are so unmindful as if they have not even heard about this departure and that they will live here forever." She also used to say: "No bounty of jannah and no pleasure of Allah can be attained without any effort."

Lesson: Dear sister! How beneficial these advices are. Let them sink into your hearts and practice on them.

The wife of Rabaah Qaysi رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ

She used to spend the entire night in 'ibaadah. When one eighth of the night used to pass, she used to say to her husband: "Wake up." If he did not wake up, she would awaken him after some time. Eventually, towards the latter part of the night she used to say: "O Rabaah! Wake up. The night is passing by and you are still sleeping." At times she used to pick up a blade of grass and say: "I swear by Allah, in my eyes this world is more valueless than this blade of grass." After offering her salaah, she used to adorn herself with beautiful clothes and ask her husband if he had any desire. If he replied in the negative, she used to take out the clothes and occupy herself in nafl salaah till the following morning.

Lesson: Dear sister! Have you seen how she used to engage in the 'ibaadah of Allah and at the same time fulfill the rights of her husband and even urge him towards Dîn. You should try and put all these things into practice.

Fatimah Nayshapuri رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ

She had memorized the Qur'an and was an expert at Tafsir. When she would explain the meanings of the Qur'an, the listeners would be amazed. She was blessed with a very high level of Ma'rifah (recognition) of Allah. She would spend her entire nights in Tahajjud. She would never eat to her fill and would eat simple foods. There was a very pious 'aalim by the name of Zun Nun Misri. He says "I have never seen a greater person than a woman I had met in Makkah. Her name is Fatimah Nayshapuri. She would explain the meanings of the Qur'an. I was amazed with her knowledge and piety. She is one of the friends of Allah and she is my teacher." Baayazid Bustaami said, "I have only seen one man and one woman who reached perfection in my entire life. The woman was Fatimah Nayshapuri. I found her to be knowledgeable about every matter and every state (which one passes through in the path towards the love of Allah) which I informed her of, possessing such knowledge which was based on personal experience and eye witness (rather than mere theory)." She used to say: "The person who does not remember Allah goes and falls into every type of sin, and blurts out anything and everything that comes on his tongue. As for the person who remembers Allah all the time, he becomes dumb to vain talks and begins to have shame and respect for Allah. She passed away in the year 223 A. H. in Makkah while going for 'Umrah.

Lesson: Look at the great advice that she has given. If one acts on this, one will be saved from all sins.

Rayi'ah or Rabi'ah Shaamiyah bint Ismâ'il رَحْمَتُهَا اللهُ

She used to spend the entire night in 'ibaadah and fast all the time. She used to say: "When I hear the 'adhaan, I think of the angel who will call out on the day of qiyaamah. When I look at the heat (hot weather), I think of the heat of qiyaamah." Her husband was also a very pious personality by the name of Ibn Abil Hiwari. She used to say to him: "I love you just as one loves one's brother." What she meant was that her nafs did not have any desire. She used to say: "When a person

occupies himself in the ‘ibaadah of Allah, then He makes the person aware of his faults and shortcomings. Once a person becomes aware of his shortcomings, he has no time to look at the faults and shortcomings of others." She used to say: "I can see the jinns moving around, and I can also see the hurs."

Lesson: Dear sister! This is what you call ‘ibaadah. See what a good cure she showed for the treatment of this sickness which you have, i.e. looking and searching for the faults of others. Look at your own faults and you will never see anyone else’s faults. We learn that she also used to get kashf (glimpses into other realms in which one sees that which other cannot). This is a favour of Allah which He bestows to certain pious friends of His. One can only be blessed with this favour by total obedience to the commands of the Shari’ah.

Amatul Jalil رَحِمَهَا اللهُ

She was a great ‘aabidah and zaahidah. Once, several pious persons were discussing the characteristics of a wali. Eventually they all decided to go and ask Amatul Jalil. When they posed this question to her, she replied: "No minute of a wali passes without his being occupied with anything other than that which is connected to Allah. If anyone shows him something else to do (and he does it), he is an imposter."

Lesson: How great she must have been for other male sufis to go and ask her such questions. What a good means of recognition she showed them! Dear sister! You should also have an urge for this. Give preference to the remembrance of Allah over all your other pre-occupations.

‘Ubaydah bint Kilab رَحِمَهَا اللهُ

Some sufis consider her to be greater in status than Rabi'ah Basriyyah. Once she heard a person saying: "A person can only be a complete muttaqi when he considers going to Allah the most beloved of all things." Upon hearing this, she fainted.

Lesson: What a great desire and yearning she had to go to Allah that the moment His name was mentioned, she fainted. Today the situation is such that a person does not even like to hear about death. The only reason for this is that love for the world has entered the heart and the person does not even feel like going. Remove this from the heart, only then will you have a desire to go to Allah.

‘Afeerah ‘Aabidah رَحِمَهَا اللهُ

One day, many pious persons went to her and asked her to make du’a for them. She replied: "I am such a great sinner that if a person becomes dumb on account of sinning, I will not be able to speak," (that is, I will become dumb). However, it is sunnah to make du’a, therefore I will make du’a." Thereafter she made du’a for all of them.

Lesson: Despite her being a great ‘aabidah and zaahidah, she humbled herself and considered herself to be a sinner. Today the situation is such that a person reads a few tasbihs and considers herself to be a saint. Allah does not like haughtiness. You should therefore consider yourself to be low and think to yourself that thousands of shortcomings continue to be filled into you. When you make any ‘ibaadah, think of these things as well and you will not consider yourself to be great anymore.

Sha‘wanah رَحِمَهَا اللهُ

She used to cry profusely and say: "I want to cry to such an extent that I have no tears left. Thereafter, I must cry blood to such an extent that I have no blood left in my body." Her servant says: "Ever since I set eyes on her, I benefited to such an extent that I never had any desire for the world nor did I look down upon any Muslim." Fudhail ibn ‘Iyaadh is a very great and well known saint. He used to go to her and ask her for du’as. After her death, a family member of hers saw in a dream that people had assembled at her entrance of Jannah. When she enquired why they had assembled, they said, "A lady is coming to Jannah. They have decorated it for her sake. They have come here to welcome her. She is a dark slave girl by the name of Sha‘wanah."

Meanwhile, I saw her coming towards us, riding on a she-camel which was flying in the air. I called her and said, "My sister, you know we are family. Make du'a to Allah that he gives me your companionship in Jannah." She smiled and said, "The time has not yet come for you to join me. But take a few words of advice from me: make Aakhirah you constant worry and take it to your heart; let your love for Allah overpower all your passions and desires; and be so prepared for death that you do not bother about when it will arrive."

Lesson: 1) Being able to cry out of Allah's love or His fear is a very valuable gift. If you are unable to cry, at least adopt the expression of a crying person and Allah will have mercy on such humbleness.

2) Look at the great benefit in sitting in the company of the pious - as mentioned by her servant. You should also seek pious company and keep away from evil persons.

3) Practice on her words of advice and you too will reach such high positions.

A'ishah bint Imraan Manubi رَحِمَهَا اللهُ

She had completed hifdh of Qur'an by her father. Thereafter, she turned her full attention towards Ibaadah and cut herself off from all worldly pleasures. She had completed 1520 khatms of Qur'an in her life. She loved to spend on the poor and help those who were in difficulty. She never kept any of her expenses back for her own needs. She used to say, "If one coin remains in my pocket till the night which I had not yet given in Sadaqah, my entire night's Ibaadah will be deficient." She passed away in 665 A.H. while reciting the verse 'Verily, Allah is with those who adopt Taqwa and those who continuously do good'.

Lesson: As you live your life, so shall you pass away. Since she would recite Qur'an punctually, she passed away while reciting Qur'an. You too should endeavour to recite the Qur'an daily as much as you can.

Manfusah bint Zayd Abil-Fawaaris رَحِمَهَا اللهُ

Whenever any child of hers used to pass away, she used to take the child into her lap and say: "Your going away before me is better than your staying after me." What she meant was that by the child passing away before her, he will be able to intercede on her behalf and he himself will gain salvation. If he lived after her, it is possible that he may commit thousands of sins and Allah knows best whether he will be eligible to intercede or not. She also used to say: "My patience is better than restlessness. Although there is remorse over your separation from me, there is more happiness over the reward."

Lesson: Dear sister! If you console yourself in this way when anyone passes away, 'Insha-Allah, it will be sufficient for you.

Maymunah Sauda' رَحِمَهَا اللهُ

A sufi by the name of 'Abdul Waahid ibn Zayd says: "I made the following du'a: 'O Allah! Show me the person who is going to be my companion in jannah.' I was given a reply that my companion will be an Abyssinian named Maymunah Sauda'. I asked: 'Where is she?' I was given a reply that she is in Kufah and belongs to a certain tribe. So I went there and inquired about her. The people replied that she is mad and that she tends to the sheep. I went into the jungle and saw her offering salaah while the sheep and wolves were on one side. When she completed her salaah, she turned to me and said: 'O 'Abdul Waahid! Go! The time to meet is in jannah (and not now).' I was very surprised that she knew my name? She replied: 'Don't you know that when the souls have already met over there (referring to the 'aalam-e-arwâh-realm of the souls)), they become attached to each other and recognize each other?' I asked her for some advice and she said, 'He who is granted wealth and still wants to increase it (and is not content), Allah deprives him of the enjoyment of du'a to Allah and, instead of becoming beloved to Allah, he is distanced from Him.' I asked her: 'I see all the sheep and wolves together in one place. How did this happen?' She replied: 'Go and mind your own business. I have put my relationship with Allah in order, and He made the relationship between

the sheep and wolves in order (both of them are living in harmony without the wolves attacking the sheep)."

Lesson: This woman was given the power of kashf and karaamah as well. All this barakah was on account of total obedience to Allah. Dear sister! Prepare yourselves for the obedience of Allah.

Rayhanah Majnunah رَحْمَتُهَا اللَّهُ

A guest at the house of Rayhanah narrates: Before the expiry of half the night she woke up and said: 'The lover goes to his beloved, and the heart is filled with such joy that it seems that it would burst any moment. When half the night passed, she said: "One should not attach one's heart to such things which if you set your eyes on them, you perceive a difference (i.e. a decrease) in your remembrance of Allah. At night, one should strive very hard in 'ibaadah, only then can one become His friend.' When the entire night passed, she screamed and said: 'Oh! It has been destroyed!' I asked her: 'What happened?' She replied: 'The night is gone in which one can concentrate fully in Allah.'"

Lesson: Look at how she valued the night. The person who experiences the sweetness of 'ibaadah, will value the night greatly. Dear sister! You should also set aside a certain portion of the night for your 'ibaadah. Look at how well she explained the harm of directing your attention towards anything that distracts you from the remembrance of Allah. You too should not worry too much about money, possessions, clothes, jewellery, children, properties, utensils, houses, etc.

Tuhfah رَحْمَتُهَا اللَّهُ

Sirri Saqti says: "Once I went to a clinic. I saw a young girl tied in chains. She was crying and reciting love poems. I asked the guard about her. He informed me that she is mad. Upon hearing this, she cried out even louder and said: 'I am not mad, I am an 'aashiq (lover).' I asked her: 'Whose lover are you?' She replied: 'I love the one who has given us all these bounties and who is present with us all the time.'

That is, Allah. In the meantime her master came and asked: 'Where is Tuhfah?' The guard replied: 'She is inside and Sirri is with her.' He entered and showed me great respect. I said to him: 'This girl is worthy of more respect than me. Why have you reduced her to such a state?' He replied: 'All my wealth has been spent on her. I purchased her for 20 000 dirhams thinking that I will be able to sell her at a big profit. But she does not eat anything, does not drink anything; the only thing that she does is cry all day.' I said to him: 'Sell her to me.' He replied: 'You are a poor person, how will you pay for her?' I went home and made an earnest du'a to Allah. After a little while, a person knocked on my door. When I opened the door, I saw a person standing there with many purses of money in his hand. I asked him: 'Who are you?' He replied: 'I am 'Ahmad ibn al-Muthanna. In a dream I was ordered to come and give you this money.' The following morning I went to the clinic. Co-incidentally, I saw the master crying. I told him not to be sad because I have brought the money. Even if he asks for double the amount, I will give it to him. He replied: 'Even if I get the entire world I will not sell her. I am freeing her for the sake of Allah.' I asked him: 'What's this all about?' He replied: 'I saw in a dream that Allah is displeased with me. You be a witness that I have left all my wealth in the path of Allah.' When I turned, I saw 'Ahmad ibn al-Muthanna crying as well. I asked him: 'What's the matter with you?' He replied: 'I am also giving all my wealth as charity in the path of Allah.' I said: 'Glory be to Allah! It is the barakah of Tuhfah that these persons have been guided.' Tuhfah got up crying from there and went out. We followed her but after a little while lost track of her. We all went towards Makkah. 'Ahmad al-Muthanna passed away on the way. The master and I reached Makkah. While making tawaaf, I heard a fearful sound. I went near the person and asked: 'Who are you?' The person replied: 'Glory be to Allah! Have you forgotten? I am Tuhfah.' I asked her: 'What happened to you?' She replied: 'I have attached my heart to Him and separated it from others.' I said to her: 'Ahmad ibn al-Muthanna has passed away.' She replied: 'He has received high stages.' I said to her: 'Your master is also with me.' She said something silently and when I looked carefully, I saw that she was dead. When the master saw this condition of hers, he fell down powerless. When I shook him,

I saw that he was also dead. I enshrouded both of them and buried them."

Lesson: Glory be to Allah! How intense her love for Allah was! Dear sister! You should also have this desire. Hajî Imdadullâh Muhajir Makki has written this incident in his book Tuhfatul 'Ushaaq in greater detail.

Juwayriyah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ

She was the slave-girl of a king. He freed her. Upon seeing the great 'ibaadah of the sufi 'Abu 'Abdullah Turabi, she married him and used to engage in 'ibaadah as well. Once she saw beautiful tents in her dream. She asked for who these were. A reply came that they are for those who recite the Quran in tahajjud. After seeing this dream, she abandoned sleeping at night. She used to awaken her husband and tell him that the caravan is moving on.

Lesson: Dear sister! You should engage in 'ibaadah yourself and urge your husband as well.

The daughter of Shah Shuja' Kirmanî رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ

This pious servant of Allah abandoned his kingship and adopted sufism. He had a daughter. Another ruler proposed to her but the father refused. Upon seeing a poor, pious young man offering salaah in a beautiful manner, he got her married to him. When she left her parents' home and came to her husband's home she saw a piece of dry bread which was hidden in a water-pot. Upon seeing this, she asked: "What is this?" The boy replied: "This is the left-over of last night. I have left it so that I may open my fast with it." Upon hearing this, she turned to go. The boy said: "I knew from the very outset that a king's daughter will not be happy with my poverty." She replied: "The king's daughter is not displeased with your poverty, instead, she is displeased that you do not have any trust in Allah. I am surprised at my father who told me that you are a virtuous young man. How can a person who does not place his trust in Allah be virtuous and pious?" This boy began apologizing. She said: "I don't want to hear any apologies. Either I

remain in this house or this bread remains here." The boy immediately gave this bread in charity and she remained with him.

Lesson: Dear sister! This girl was also a woman. You should also learn some patience and reduce your desire for wealth and possessions.

The slave-girl of 'Abu 'Aamir Wa'iz رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ

He says: "I saw a slave-girl being sold at a very cheap price. She was pale in colour and her stomach and back were almost joined (describing how thin and skinny she was). Her hair had become stuck together due to the dirt that was on it. I felt sorry for her and purchased her. I said to her: 'Go to the market and purchase some goods for Ramadhan.' She replied: 'All thanks is due to Allah that the entire year is equal in my eyes.' She used to fast during the day and engage in 'ibaadah at night. When Eid approached, I intended purchasing something for her. She said: 'Your temperament is such that you are very attached to the world.' She then commenced offering salaah, reciting Qur'an with great love. She recited a verse which made mention of hell. Upon reading this verse, she gave a cry and passed away."

Lesson: This is what you call fear of Allah. Be that as it may, it is beyond us to adopt such fear. However, the minimum you can do is that you should abstain from sins irrespective of whether they be connected with the limbs, with the heart or with the tongue.

A Patient Woman of recent times

Prof. Khalid Al-Jubeir, a consulting cardiovascular surgeon, narrated: Once I operated on a two and a half year old child. It was Tuesday, and on Wednesday the child was in good health. On Thursday at 11:15 am – and I'll never forget the time because of the shock I experienced – one of the nurses informed me that the heart and breathing of the child had stopped. I hurried to the child and performed cardiac massage for 45 minutes and during that entire time the heart would not work.

Then, Allah ﷻ decreed for the heart to resume function and we thanked HIM. I went to inform the child's family about his condition. As you know, it is very difficult to inform the patient's family about his condition when it's bad. This is one of the most difficult situations a doctor is subjected to but it is necessary. So I looked for the child's father whom I couldn't find. Then I found his mother. I told her that the child's cardiac arrest was due to bleeding in his throat; we don't know the cause of this bleeding and fear that his brain is dead. So how do you think she responded? Did she cry? Did she blame me? No, nothing of the sort. Instead, she said "Alhamdulillah" (All Praise is due to Allah ﷻ) and left me.

After 10 days, the child started moving. We thanked Allah ﷻ and were happy that his brain condition was reasonable. After 12 days, the heart stopped again because of the same bleeding. We performed another cardiac massage for 45 minutes but this time his heart didn't respond. I told his mother that there was no hope. So she said: "Alhamdulillah. O Allah, if there is good in his recovery, then cure him, O my Lord."

With the grace of Allah ﷻ, his heart started functioning again. He suffered six similar cardiac arrests till a trachea specialist was able to stop the bleeding and the heart started working properly. Now, three and a half months had passed and the child was recovering but did not move. Then just as he started moving, he was afflicted with a very large and strange pus-filled abscess in his head, the likes of which I had never seen. I informed his mother of the serious development. She said "Alhamdulillah" and left me.

We immediately turned him over to the surgical unit that deals with the brain and nervous system and they took over his treatment. Three weeks later, the boy recovered from this abscess but was still not moving. Two weeks pass and he suffers from a strange blood poisoning and his temperature reaches 41.2°C (106°F). I again informed his mother of the serious development and she said with patience and certainty: "Alhamdulillah. O Allah ﷻ, if there is good in his recovery, then cure him."

After seeing his mother who was with her child at Bed#5, I went to see another child at Bed#6. I found that child's mother crying and screaming, "Doctor! Doctor! Do something! The boy's temperature reached 37.6°C (99.68°F)! He's going to die! He's going to die!" I said with surprise, "Look at the mother of that child in Bed#5. Her child's fever is over 41°C (106°F), yet she is patient and praises Allah ﷻ." So she replied: "That woman isn't conscious and has no senses". At that point, I remembered the great Hadith of Rasulullah ﷺ, "Blessed are the strangers." Just two words... but indeed two words that shake a nation! In 23 years of hospital service, I have never seen the likes of this patient sister.

We continued to care for him. Now, six and a half months have passed and the boy finally came out of the recovery unit – not talking, not seeing, not hearing, not moving, not smiling, and with an open chest in which you can see his beating heart. The mother changed the dressing regularly and remained patient and hopeful. Do you know what happened after that? Before I inform you, what do you think are the prospects of a child who has passed through all these dangers, agonies, and diseases? And what do you expect this patient mother to do whose child is at the brink of the grave and who is unable to do anything except supplicate and beseech Allah ﷻ? Do you know what happened two and a half months later? The boy was completely cured by the mercy of Allah ﷻ and as a reward for this pious mother. He now races his mother with his feet as if nothing happened and he became sound and healthy as he was before.

The story doesn't end here. This is not what moved me and brought tears to my eyes. What filled my eyes with tears is what follows:

One and a half years after the child left the hospital, one of the brothers from the Operations Unit informed me that a man, his wife and two children wanted to see me. I asked who they were and he replied that he didn't know them. So I went to see them, and I found the parents of the same child whom I operated upon. He was now five years old and like a flower in good health – as if nothing happened to him. With them also was a four-month old new-born. I welcomed

them kindly and then jokingly asked the father whether the new-born was the 13th or 14th child. He looked at me with an astonishing smile as if he pitied me. He then said, “This is the second child, and the child upon whom you operated is our first born, bestowed upon us after 17 years of infertility. And after being granted that child, he was afflicted with the conditions that you’ve seen.”

At hearing this, I couldn’t control myself and my eyes filled with tears. I then involuntarily grabbed the man by the arm, and pulling him to my room, asked him about his wife: “Who is this wife of yours who after 17 years of infertility has this much patience with all the fatal conditions that afflict her first born?! Her heart cannot be barren! It must be fertile with Imaan!” Do you know what he said? Listen carefully my dear brothers and sisters.

He said, “I was married to this woman for 19 years and for all these years she has never missed the [late] night prayers except due to an authorized excuse. I have never witnessed her backbiting, gossiping, or lying. Whenever I leave home or return, she opens the door, supplicates for me, and receives me hospitably. And in everything she does, she demonstrates the utmost love, care, courtesy, and compassion.” The man completed by saying, “Indeed, doctor, because of all the noble manners and affection with which she treats me, I’m shy to lift up my eyes and look at her. So I said to him: “And the likes of her truly deserve that from you.”

Lesson: Be patient over the difficulties which afflict you and do not inculcate the habit of complaining over ever small difficulty. We also see from the above that a woman who obeys Allah wins the love of her husband and his admiration.

Stories of Evil Women

The story of ‘Unuq

This woman lived in the era of Adam عليه السلام. She is the first person to commit adultery and thereby disgrace herself. Allah punished her in this world by sending huge snakes as big as elephants, huge scorpions

as big as camels and huge vultures as big as donkeys from the unseen. They all came and ate her up together.

Lesson: Look at the consequence of this evil deed. No one should think that it is not possible to be punished in this way anymore. Remember that it is only because of Rasulullah ﷺ that we are not punished so severely in this world. However, we will get all the punishments in the hereafter. When there is no doubt about the approach of the hereafter, how is it possible for us to be so neglectful? Furthermore, no one should be under the misconception that one is disgraced only because of adultery. In fact, Rasulullah ﷺ is reported to have said that the eyes, the ears, the tongue, the hands, the feet and the heart also commit adultery. If a woman peeps at a strange man, the bride-groom or the marriage procession (in which there are men), this will be considered to be the sinning of the eyes. If, without any compelling reason, she freely converses with him, this will be considered to be sinning of the tongue. If she listens to a male's voice in order to satisfy her nafs or listens to him singing songs, this will be the sinning of the ears. If she touches a person with whom she was supposed to be observing hijab, or places her hand on his shoulder or head, this will be the sinning of the hands. If she walks in order to go and meet such a person or she walks in front of him so that he may see her, this will be the sinning of the feet. If she thinks about him or tries to remember him all the time, this will be the sinning of the heart. The consequences and sin of adultery will therefore also apply in these cases. One should fear the power and anger of Allah and safeguard oneself from all these evils.

The story of Wa‘ilah

She is the wife of Nuh عليه السلام. However, she did not accept imaan. When the flood commenced and water began gushing out of the ground, Nuh عليه السلام asked the believers to board his ship. He went to his wife and son and asked them to accept imaan and thereby board the ship. However, they did not accept imaan, nor did they board the ship. In fact, they did not even believe that the flood was approaching and mocked at Nuh

عليه السلام for holding such a belief. When the flood came, both of them drowned.

Lesson: Mention of this woman has also been made in the Quran in the same way that despite her being the wife of an accepted servant of Allah (i.e. Nuh عليه السلام), but because she did not tread the path of Dîn, her being his wife did not help her in any way and she was sent to jahannam. Dear sister! Understand this well and do not depend on the piety of your husband, father, brother or son. As long as your Dîn and imaan are not in order, the piety of any of your relatives will be of no avail.

The wife of Lut عليه السلام

She was also a kaafir and she used to help the kuffaar in their evil ways. When the time approached for Allah to send His punishment on the kuffaar, He sent angels to inform Lut عليه السلام. They said to him: "Leave your residence the following morning because the punishment of Allah is about to descend on this village. Take the believers with you and leave this village on this very night. No one should look back at this village." Acting on the orders of Allah, Lut عليه السلام left his village. This woman also joined them in order to save her life. When the time came for the punishment of this village, Allah caused stones to rain down on them and there was a great uproar. All the believers lowered their heads out of fear and continued on their way. No one looked around. However, this woman, who had relatives among the kuffaar and whose way of life was just like their's, looked around to see what is happening to those people. The moment she turned around, a stone pelted her and she fell down dead.

Lesson: The story of this woman has been related in the Quran in a similar manner to that of Nuh's عليه السلام wife (whom we have mentioned previously). That is, despite her being the wife of a Nabi, this did not help her in any way because she herself was not on the path of Dîn. Dear sister! Understand this well. It is only **your** imaan and **your** Dîn that will be of any benefit to you. Some women spoil their Dîn on account of their relatives by maintaining close contact with their irreligious relatives. Look at this woman! On account of her love for

her relatives she was destroyed and she lost her life and imaan as well. Had she accepted imaan and abstained from looking back, she would have been saved from all calamities. Remember, you should not maintain any close contact with those who do not follow Allah and His Rasûl ﷺ.

The story of Saduf

She was a kaafir woman in the time of Saalih عليه السلام. Her ways and habits were not good. There was another woman whose ways and habits were similar to her's. She had many goats and other dairy animals in her house. It was the miracle of Saalih عليه السلام that through the power of Allah, he took out a camel from a rock. A major portion of the water of that village was obtained from a particular well. All the animals were given water from this well. Ever since the camel was created, acting upon the orders of Allah, the town people specified turns for drawing water in such a way that one day all the animals will receive water, and the following day this camel alone will receive water from this well. The reason for this system was that this camel was very powerful and used to consume a lot of water. If it had to drink on one day, there would be nothing left for the other animals. All the kuffaar did not like this system of distribution. These two women whom we have mentioned above complained to another two men who were of similar character by saying: "We have the most number of animals but they have to remain without water for one full day. You try and sort out this problem and we will be pleased with you and obey you in whatever you say." These two scoundrels rounded up a few friends of theirs, concealed themselves on the path of the camel and awaited its arrival. This camel was on its way to drink water. When it came in line with these scoundrels, they pounced onto it with their swords. They chopped off its legs, causing it to fall to the ground. Once it fell down, they killed it with their swords. The moment this happened, the punishment of Allah descended on these people. On the first day, all their faces turned yellow, on the second day they turned red, and on the third day they turned black. On the fourth day there was a gigantic earthquake and fire began raining down from the skies. Thereafter, Jibra'il uttered a piercing scream whereby all their hearts burst open,

they all died and their bodies were reduced to ashes on account of the fire.

Lesson: Look! Because of the evil nature of two women, this calamity descended on every one. These two women planned this whole conspiracy because of their love for wealth. Dear sister! Remove the love of wealth and possessions from your hearts. May Allah save you because we don't know from where the evil consequences of this (love) will cause a calamity. As far as possible, you should have hatred for such evil women in your hearts. If you have to converse with them or meet them, do not adopt a soft attitude towards them. If you do so, there is a fear of you also being afflicted if any calamity descends upon them. If you display displeasure and hatred towards them, you will save yourself from sin and the punishment of Allah.

The story of Arbil

This woman was the wife of an idol-worshipping king during the time of Ilyas ؑ. She herself was an oppressive and merciless woman. She had killed many Nabis. She had a neighbour who was a pious person. He had an orchard on which he was dependent for his living. This orchard was very beautiful and all the people used to speak in praise of it. This woman was very jealous of this and was always planning to appropriate it and kill this pious person. Coincidentally, her husband went on a journey and left her behind. It was his habit of leaving her in charge of the affairs of the kingdom. When he embarked on this journey, he handed over the affairs of the kingdom to her. After he left, she rounded up a few persons and instructed them to falsely testify in court that this pious person had spoken against the king. It was the rule of the king that if anyone spoke against him and was proven guilty, he would be killed. This woman had this pious person arrested and brought to court. She said to him: "I have heard that you have spoken against the king." He denied this allegation. She called for those persons whom she had trained before-hand to testify against him. They came and testified that he had spoken against the king. This woman therefore had this innocent person killed and seized his orchard. When the king returned from his journey, Allah revealed to

Ilyas ؑ that he should go to the king and inform him that an innocent Muslim has been killed and his orchard has been seized. If the king and his wife repent and return the orchard to the person's inheritors, well and good. If not, Allah will destroy them. When Ilyas ؑ went and informed the king, he became very angry and instead of repenting, he became an enemy of Ilyas ؑ. Eventually, Ilyas ؑ left that place after Allah ordered him to do so. A few days later, the king's son fell ill and passed away. Before he could overcome this grief, another king invaded his kingdom, captured it, and killed him and all the other kuffaar.

Lesson: Look at the consequences of this. Dear sister! It is an act of oppression to commit the following acts: to intend to take away something that belongs to someone else, to say something to someone wrongfully, to hit or harm someone wrongfully, to cause harm to someone by taunting him, or to make ghibah of a person. You have read the consequences of all this. You should therefore safeguard yourself from all this.

The story of Na'ilah

There was a tribe by the name of Jurhum which had settled down in Makkah when Ismail ؑ was still a child. A woman by the name of Na'ilah belonged to this tribe. She had the audacity of committing adultery inside the Ka'bah. Allah's punishment descended on her and the man who committed this evil act and they both turned into stone. The name of this man was Isaaf. The people carried them to Safa and Marwah and placed one of them on Safa and the other on Marwah. They did this so that the people will look at them and fear the punishment of Allah. They remained there for a long time. Eventually, a time came when ignorant persons began worshipping these two statues out of stupidity. It is for this reason that when Rasulullah ﷺ came, he had them removed and destroyed.

Lesson: May Allah save us from His anger. This is the consequence of disobeying Him. If a person is saved in this world, how will he save himself in the hereafter? We learn from this that it is more serious to commit a sin in a holy place. In the same way, it is more serious to

commit a sin at a sacred time. Some people do not even give up sinning in Ramadhan and other holy months and days. The result of this is that the punishment is greater irrespective of whether it is ghibah, oppression, spending money in prohibited things, etc.

The story of the wife of Bal'am Ba'ura

He was a very pious and abstinent person who lived in Syria. When the Muslims who belonged to the tribe of Musa عليه السلام joined Yusha عليه السلام in order to free Baytul Maqdis from the hands of the kuffaar, the people of that place went to Bal'am and asked him to make a du'a against the Muslims so that they may be defeated. However, he refused and said: "It is extremely evil for a person to make du'a against a Nabi and his followers. I will never do it." The people then went to his wife with a lot of wealth and gold and told her to contrive a plan to influence her husband in making the du'a. Because of her greed for all that wealth, she went to her husband and seduced him in such a way that he agreed to make the du'a. The moment he decided to make the du'a, he became bereft of his imaan and his tongue drooped up to his chest. When the Muslims gained victory, Bal'am Bâ'ura was also killed.

Lesson: Look at what an evil thing greed is. For the sake of wealth and gold this woman destroyed her Dîn and her husband as well in that he lost his imaan and his life. Dear sister! Even today, women who are overwhelmed by greed ask their husbands to receive bribes and are extremely proud to say that they have a lot of jewellery and a lot of money without even thinking for a moment that both husband and wife are preparing themselves for hell.

The story of the woman who killed Yahya عليه السلام

There was a king who had a wife that had been married previously. This woman had a daughter from her previous marriage. When this woman became old, she felt that her husband (the king) will most probably become attracted to another woman. She therefore decided to get this daughter of hers married to her husband. She even got her daughter to agree to this liaison. This daughter also began making

plans to attract the king towards her with various strategies. He also became attracted towards her. When Yahya عليه السلام heard about this, he tried to stop the king from this. However, all three of them became his enemies and had him captured, brought before them, and be-headed. After this, the king decided to commit the prohibited act with this step-daughter of his. Yahya's severed head began speaking and said: "O you fool, she is not halaal for you!" But this wicked king paid no heed. Upon this, the blood from the head of Yahya عليه السلام began to boil and overflow and did not subside. The 'Ulama of that time said that as long as the blood of his killer is not made to flow (i.e. as long as they are not killed), this blood will not subside. There was a king of another neighbouring land. When he heard about this, he invaded this place and killed all the killers of Yahya عليه السلام and 70 000 other kuffaar. Only then did the flowing of that blood subside.

Lesson: May Allah save us from satanic acts. Can you see the consequences of following one's nafs: a Nabi is killed, a sinful act is committed, even then the nafs was not satisfied, soon thereafter they were punished for this tyranny and all those people who had remained silent and did not express their displeasure at the actions of the king were all punished. We learn from this that following one's nafs, oppressing someone, and not expressing one's displeasure at seeing actions that are contrary to the Shari'ah are actions that are extremely serious. One should safeguard oneself from all this. When the nafs prompts you to do something contrary to the Shari'ah, don't ever obey it and don't ever abandon the Shari'ah. Don't oppress anyone in any way irrespective of whether it is by causing him psychological harm, disgracing him or causing him financial harm - all this is considered to be oppression. If a person does anything contrary to the Shari'ah, hate his action in your heart. If he cannot harm you in any way, show your dislike outwardly as well. By your liking such a person and maintaining contact with him, there is a fear that you will also be afflicted when he is punished.

The story of Shamsun's Wife

When 'Isa ﷺ was raised to the heavens, this Shamsun was a very pious and abstinent person. Allah had blessed him with a lot of power. There was a kaafir king who was his enemy. He sent a message to Shamsun's wife informing her that if she can capture Shamsun and bring him to him, he will take her into his marriage. When Shamsun fell asleep, this wretched woman fastened his hands and feet and handed him over to the kuffaar. They took him to the king. The king made an announcement that Shamsun will be suspended on a cross and whoever wishes to see him may do so. Thousands of people gathered to watch this spectacle. It was at this time that Shamsun made a du'a, the king's palace collapsed onto him, and he died. All the people rushed to remove the king's body from underneath the rubble. In the meantime, Shamsun freed himself and reached safely home. Upon reaching home, he divorced his wife.

Lesson: Greed had completely overpowered this woman to the extent that she was even disloyal to such a good and pious husband. Despite this, she did not get what she desired for and even lost this good husband. This is how one is always punished for evil deeds. One should protect oneself from greed.

The story of the woman who accused Jurayj

In the time between the era of 'Isa ﷺ and Rasulullah ﷺ, there was a pious person by the name of Jurayj. He occupied himself in the ibaadah of Allah at a young age. He distanced himself from society and built a house for his 'ibaadah in a jungle. Once he was busy offering nafl salaah when his mother came and called for him. Because he was occupied in his salaah, he could not reply to her call. However, his mother did not know that he was busy in salaah. She therefore became angry and said: "O Allah! Make it such that he sees the face of a prostitute." Since parents have a great right over the children, the ruling is that when they call for you while you are engaged in nafl salaah and they do not know that you are busy in this nafl salaah, you should break your salaah and answer their call. However, Jurayj did

not know this rule and therefore did not reply. In this way, he displayed a shortcoming in fulfilling the right of his mother. And it was for this reason that she cursed him. On account of this, a few jealous persons went to a prostitute and asked her to disgrace Jurayj in some way or the other. She fell pregnant on account of an illicit relationship with someone and alleged that Jurayj is the father of the child. The people went to his house and completely destroyed it. They harassed Jurayj and informed him that this woman claims that you are the father of this child. Jurayj addressed this small breast-fed child by saying: "Who is your father?" This small child (who had not yet reached the age where he could speak) spoke and gave the name of a certain shepherd. Upon hearing this, all the people became staunch adherents of Jurayj. They began embracing him and told him that they will rebuild his house with gold. He replied: "No, make it with mud, just as it was previously." Eventually, they made him a house as it had been previously.

Lesson: Look at how that woman was disgraced by accusing a pious person and how Allah humiliated her. Don't ever accuse an innocent person. Some women have the habit of accusing another woman of adultery or stealing on the slightest suspicion. These are all sinful acts. We also learn that it is not good to curse the children all the time because we do not know when it will be accepted. Thereafter, the children are put into difficulty and on seeing this, the parents are also distressed. We also learn that parents have great rights over their children. These days, many people are neglectful in this regard. Dear sister! Don't ever be neglectful in this regard, nor should you display any shortcoming in this regard.

A merciless woman from the Banu Isra'il

It is mentioned in Bukhari that Rasulullah ﷺ mentioned a story from the Banu Isra'il. There was a woman who had caught a cat and kept it enclosed without feeding it, giving it anything to drink, or leaving it open so that it could catch rats and thereby fend for itself. This cat soon died out of extreme hunger. Allah admitted her into jahannam. It is mentioned in another narration that Rasulullah ﷺ saw this cat

walking on this woman's chest and scratching her with its nails and claws.

Lesson: You have read the consequences of mercilessness. Do not be merciless irrespective of whether it be a human or an animal. However, if a dog or cat troubles you a lot, it will be permissible to strike it. But it is a great sin to tease it. Some hard-hearted persons domesticate parrots, mynahs, and other animals - they engage such animals and do not even worry about their food and drink. Furthermore, they have no concern over their need to be in the sun or in the shade, nor do they even worry about freeing them. The consequence of teasing an animal in this manner is also disastrous in this world. Such persons are prone to various difficulties and have no peace of mind. As for punishment in the hereafter, you have already read what happened to this woman. Dear sister! Safeguard yourself from mercilessness.

An immoral woman from the previous Ummahs

It has been narrated that there was a pious and abstinent person in the previous ummahs. An immoral woman desired him, so she sent her slave-girl to him with the following message: "I have engaged in a major financial transaction with someone. I need a witness for this purpose. There is a great reward in becoming a witness for the pleasure of Allah. Please come and make yourself a witness." This person was a simple-minded person. He therefore went to her house. The moment he entered her house, the slave-girl locked all the doors. When he went further, he saw that immoral woman sitting down with a bottle of alcohol at her side and a small boy next to her. When she saw him she said: "I did not call you to be a witness but to break your piety. Either engage in sexual intercourse with me, drink this alcohol or kill this boy." This poor pious servant was at a total loss, not knowing what to do in order to save his life. After pondering over the matter, he came to the conclusion that drinking the alcohol is the lightest of all the sins. The moment he drank the alcohol, he lost his senses and thereby committed the other two sins as well.

Lesson: Sins have a special relationship in the sense that once a person commits one sin, it leads him to other sins as well. It is for this reason that one should abstain from all sins irrespective of whether they be minor or major. If not, the doors of all other sins are opened. It has been noticed that a woman wishes to marry her children according to the norms and customs of that place or her family thinking that although it is contrary to the Shari'ah, it is not such a serious thing. She also has the money which she had estimated that it would cost her to have this wedding. After thinking over all these matters, she commenced with the preparations. Upon embarking on the preparations, she encounters so many complications, that many major sins are also committed. At times, the expenses go beyond the actual estimation and she has to take loans on interest. At times, she may mix her money with that of her orphan children and spend it without differentiating between the two. It is haraam for her to spend their wealth. That very haraam wealth is used to feed her guests. Look at how one sin led to another. In the same way, all other sins lead to many other sins.

A deceitful woman from the Banû Isrâ'îl

Musaؑ filled a well with water and made such a du'a that the water had such an effect that if an immoral woman had to drink that water, her face would turn black in colour and she would die immediately. The effect of this water remained even after the demise of Musaؑ. Once, a person suspected his wife of adultery. This suspicion of his was true. When the husband began talking about this and mentioned it to the judges of that time, they gave a ruling that she should drink the water from that well and summoned for her. She had another sister who looked very much like her. It was extremely difficult to distinguish the two. This woman deluded her sister into going on her behalf. She went and drank the water in the presence of everyone. Since she was pure, nothing happened to her and all the people were surprised. When she went home and met her impure sister, the moment her breath touched her, her entire face turned black. She died there and then, and everyone came to know of her treachery.

Lesson: Treachery and concealing something does not last for long. Allah definitely disgraces the person. Dear sister! You should keep your heart pure in your speech and dealings, and your tongue (speech) true.

The story of Ummu Jamil

She is the wife of the kaafir Abu Lahab. She is mentioned in the Quran in Sûrah al-Masad (chapter 111). She bore so much of hatred towards Rasulullah ﷺ that she used to go into the jungle, bring thorny twigs and throw them at night on the path which Rasulullah ﷺ would take so that they may prick his feet. Once she was walking with the bundle of twigs on her head with the rope of the bundle under her chin so that the bundle does not open up. All of a sudden, the bundle fell backwards and the rope that was under her chin slipped to her throat. It strangled her and she died.

Lesson: May Allah save us. The consequences of hatred and malice towards the Dîn and pious people are terrible in this world and in the hereafter as well. Some women are in the habit of rejecting the masaa'il that are taught by the 'Ulama. They mock at those who act on these masaa'il. This specifically happens when they act upon the masaa'il that are connected to weddings and funerals or advices in this regard. They do not like this advice and feel insulted. This is also regarded as bearing hatred towards the Dîn. You have already read the consequences of this in this world and in the hereafter. Repent from such actions and abstain from them in the future.

The story of Labid's (a Jew) daughters

They all agreed to practice black magic in order to kill Rasulullah ﷺ. He was saved from being killed but the effect of this was that his memory became weak - not in Dînî matters but with regard to eating, drinking, sitting, walking, etc. Thereafter, Allah revealed Surah al-Falaq (chapter 113) and Sûrah an-Naas (chapter 114). Through the barakah of these two surahs, the effect of this black magic disappeared completely.

Lesson: The enmity of these people towards Dîn debased them to the extent that they even planned to kill Rasulullah ﷺ. Don't ever bear any hatred towards the Dîn and the pious.

Recite the last three Surahs of the Qur'an thrice each morning and evening, you will be protected and saved by Allah from black magic and jealousy.

The story of Qataamah

There is a heretical group which is known as the Kharijites. Kharijites claim to be Muslims but many of their beliefs are contrary to the Dîn. This group sprung up during the caliphate of 'Ali ؑ. He fought many battles against these Kharijites. They were his great enemies. Once, three members of this group got together in Makkah. At that time, 'Ali ؑ was living in Kufah. They made a plan to kill him and two other Sahabah. One person by the name of 'Abdur Rahman ibn Muljim volunteered to kill 'Ali ؑ. He went to Kufah for this purpose. On reaching there, he met this wretched woman. After seeing her, he proposed to her. She replied: "If you can pay me my dowry, I will accept." He asked: "What do you want as dowry?" She replied: "You will have to kill 'Ali." This woman was a Kharijite. Her father, brother, uncle and husband were killed by 'Ali ؑ in battle. They were all Kharijites as well. It was for this reason that she had made this request. This person accepted her request, went to the masjid before the fajr salaah, and concealed himself behind the door. When 'Ali ؑ entered the masjid, this person came out, struck him with his sword and escaped. 'Ali ؑ passed away on account of this wound. Later, this person was caught and killed.

Lesson: If this woman had any love for her Dîn, she would not have had any animosity towards 'Ali ؑ on account of the irreligiousness of her relatives. However, she herself was irreligious and therefore committed this crime. Dear sister! Create love for the Dîn in your hearts. If not, major sins will be committed out of irreligiousness.

The story of a stingy woman

A woman whose hand was paralysed entered upon A`ishah ؓ. She said, “O Mother of the Believers, I went to sleep yesterday and my hand was healthy and I woke up and it was paralysed.” A`ishah ؓ said, “How did that happen?”

She replied, “I had wealthy parents and my father used to pay zakah, host guests and give to beggars and he did not see any good except that he would do it. As for my mother, she was stingy and did nothing good with my father’s wealth. Then my father died and my mother died only two months after him. So I saw my father in a dream last night and he was wearing two yellow garments and in front of him was a flowing river. I said, “Father, what is this?” He said, “Whoever does good in this life will see it, this is what Allah has given me.” I asked him, “What has happened to my mother?” He asked, “Your mother died?” I said, “Yes.” He said, “She has been turned away from me, so look for her on your left (in Jahannam).”

So I turned to my left and I saw my mother standing naked, covering her lower half with a rag and in her hand was a piece of fat. She was calling out, “Oh my sadness, oh my thirst.” When she became tired, she would rub the fat with her hand and then lick it, while in front of her was a flowing river. I said, “Mother, why are you crying out of thirst and there is a flowing river in front of you?” She said, “I am not allowed to drink from it.” I said, “Can I give you some of the water?” She said, “I wish you would do that.” So I filled my hand with water and let her drink. When she swallowed it, I heard a voice on my right saying, “Whoever has given this woman water, may their hand be paralysed” and they repeated it twice. Then I awoke and my hand was paralysed and I am not able to do anything with it.”

A`ishah ؓ asked: ‘Did you recognise the rag she was wearing?’ I said, “Yes, O Mother of the Believers, it was exactly the same one I saw her wearing, for I had never seen my mother give anything as charity, except that one day my father slaughtered a bull. So a beggar came to ask for some, so my mother gave him a bone that had some fat

on it. And I saw one day that a beggar asked her for charity, so she gave him that exact rag.”

A`ishah ؓ exclaimed, “Allah is the Most Great! Allah has told the truth and Rasulullah ﷺ has delivered the message.” She then recited: *“So whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it (in the Hereafter). And whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it” (Surah Zilzal, verses 7-8)* (Majmuah Rasaail Ibn Rajab, vol.2 pg.430)

Lesson: This is the result of being miserly and not spending one’s wealth in the path of Allah. Spend your wealth in the path of Allah and you will one day benefit greatly from it. Do not hoard it nor waste it in futile obsessions, for it will not benefit you in the least bit.

We will now mention the stories of women who were evil in the beginning but reformed their ways later in life.

The story of Zulaykha

She was first married to the governor of Egypt. The governor had purchased Yusuf ؑ and handed him over to her, asking her to rear him as she would her own child. She began having evil thoughts but Allah saved Yusuf ؑ. Thereafter, the governor felt it would be better to imprison Yusuf ؑ. Later, when the king of Egypt released him, the latter sent a message to the king asking him to ask the woman about him. When the king asked her, she replied that Yusuf was innocent and that it was she who was at fault. Eventually, when Yusuf ؑ became the king and the governor had died by then, he married Zulaykha. Two daughters by the name of Ifra’im and Mîsha’im were born to them.

Lesson: Look at what a great quality honesty is that when she had falsely accused Yusuf ؑ, her difficulties and problems continued to increase daily. When she spoke the truth, Allah cut off all her difficulties and opened the doors for her success in the following way: her husband passed away, Yusuf ؑ became the king, and he married her. Dear sister! Always speak the truth. If you make a mistake or

commit a wrong, repent immediately. Do not be persistent in the mistake and do not be proud to admit your fault.

The story of a woman who was deluded by Qarun

In the time of Musaؑ there was a very rich and miserly person by the name of Qarun. When Musaؑ asked him to pay his zakaat, he became angry and displayed animosity towards him. This wretched man went to the extent of trying to taint the honour of Musaؑ. He got hold of an immoral woman, gave her a lot of money and jewellery and deluded her into accusing Musaؑ of committing adultery with her. She agreed to this plan. Once Musaؑ was delivering a lecture and explained that one is punished in a certain way for a certain sin. Qarun stood up from his place and shouted: "If you commit such a sin, what will happen?" Musaؑ replied: "I will receive the same punishment." Upon this he said: "A certain woman accuses you of the same thing." This woman was also present. Musaؑ addressed her saying that she should take an oath and speak the truth. She began fearing Allah and said: "O Nabi of Allah! You are pure and innocent. He had given me so much of money and jewellery and prompted me to accuse you. I repent and become a Muslim now." Musaؑ became very angry at him and made a du'a to Allah against Qarun. Qarun was devoured by the earth together with his wealth and was dispatched to jahannam.

Lesson: When Allah guides a person towards taubah and adopting the straight path, the means to fulfill this are provided there and then. The fear of Allah is the root of guidance and repentance. Dear sister! Develop this in your hearts and everything will be made easy for you.

The story of a woman who admitted her sin

A woman came to Rasulullah ﷺ and said that she was deluded by shaytan into committing adultery. The ruling of the Shari'ah in this regard is that if a husband or wife commit adultery, he or she should be stoned to death. This woman knew this ruling and also understood that although she will lose her life by admitting to this sin, her fear of the punishment of the hereafter prompted her to come to Rasulullah ﷺ.

She related the entire incident to him so that he may mete out the punishment and thereby purify herself. Another ruling of the Shari'ah is that if someone admits to committing a sin, the person should be deferred. Based on this, Rasulullah ﷺ deferred this woman. However, she was so courageous that she came again and again admitting her sin and asking him to mete out the punishment. This woman was pregnant at that time so she was given a respite until the child is born and weaned. Once the child was weaned, she presented herself to Rasulullah ﷺ out of her own accord so that he may mete out the punishment. At this stage, the punishment of stoning till death was meted out to her. When she died, someone uttered a few bad words about her. Rasulullah ﷺ replied: "Do not utter any evil about her. Her taubah is so great in the sight of Allah that if it were to be distributed among 70 people it would have been sufficient for their salvation. What can be greater than the fact that she gave her life for the sake of Allah Ta'ala."

Lesson: The fear of Allah is a very great bounty. Allahu Akbar! What a great burden this woman bore. May Allah also give us the good fortune of abandoning sins and making taubah. Now there are no standard bearers of the Shari'ah. One should repent over the sins that are committed against Allah. We also learn from this story that we should not look down upon someone who has made taubah, nor should we criticize the person. This is a major sin.

The story of a woman who repented for stealing

'A'ishah ؓ narrates that Rasulullah ﷺ had chopped off the hand of a woman who had stolen something. Thereafter, this woman used to come to my house. Whenever she wished to say anything to Rasulullah ﷺ, she used to say it to me and I used to pass over her message to him. In other words, she had made a good taubah from the bottom of her heart.

Lesson: Look at how clean-hearted she was that despite bearing such a great difficulty from the Shari'ah and Rasulullah ﷺ, she did not bear any grudge towards him. This is how imaan and taubah should be - that one should not have any ill feeling on account of the ruling of the

Shari'ah. When one is afflicted by a calamity on account of a punishment from the Shari'ah, one should not complain to Allah. Instead, one should remember one's fault and be ashamed of it.

Whenever one wishes to enquire regarding a matter of Shari'ah from a learned person, always ask the women folk of his family to convey the message and try to not speak directly to him.

The story of Saja'

After the demise of Rasulullah ﷺ she concocted the madness of claiming prophethood. Many dim-witted persons joined her. There were many encounters which took place with her. Eventually she was unable to fight the Muslim armies any longer. She became a Muslim and repented.

Lesson: Glory be to Allah! What a great thing taubah is. There isn't any sin that is greater than claiming prophethood. But when she repented and accepted Islam, this sin was also forgiven. Dear sister! Do not delay in repenting. We also learn that it is a great evil to consider yourself to be great. It was the desire to become a leader over many people that prompted her to claim prophethood. May Allah save us from this. It is best for one to consider oneself to be the lowest.

Two Inspirational Incidents of great women: The Sweet Taste Of Imaan¹

When imaan with its pristine purity penetrates the deep channels of the heart, it creates a solid bond with Allah ﷻ, and pleasing Him becomes the ultimate goal of life on earth in such a manner that no force or authority can deter such a solid and sound relationship. So when this submission is complete, the Divine Force gets into action and causes the unimaginable to happen. Such was the case of this Russian sister who embraced Islam and received the real taste of the sweetness of imaan. The following is a breathtaking account of her embracing Islam and what ensued, as related by Shaykh Ibrāhīm Al-Fāris. We should ask ourselves, "If she can do it, why not I?"

¹ Courtesy: Al Majlis Magazine, Kenya which was republished in the An-Nasihah

The Shaykh says

This story, my revered brothers, is about a Russian woman – *a Russian woman!* I am not talking about any woman from here or there, or anyone from the Islamic world. This woman travelled with a group of woman to a neighbouring Gulf state to import foreign goods. They were accompanied by a Russian national. They were to purchase personal electrical equipment and appliances and to bring them into Russia on the pretext that they are for personal use so as to be exempted from excessive custom duty and only pay a minimal duty. The Russian business man would pay for the goods which were in the possession of the women and sell them at much higher prices. The ladies were to receive a small portion of the profit. Such a thing is common and done abundantly due to the low cost of goods in the Gulf States.

When they had reached the desired destination, the Russian man presented to the young women a plan, which was completely different from the one they had agreed upon. He said, 'We came here to obtain a great amount of monetary gain which this country is distinguished for. What is your opinion to pursue more wealth?' He readily requested them to trade their bodies in return for wealth. 'So whoever is prepared for the deal should announce it quickly.' Soon he was able to convince a large number of the young women to agree to his plan. Naturally the ladies were convinced, and why not? There was no īmānī force to restrain them, nor decent morality to stop them. One woman, however, felt that it was not possible for her to indulge in such a deed.

The man laughed and said, 'In this country you will be finished. You do not possess anything except what you are wearing now.' She deliberated over the situation and quickly shaped a plan in her mind. She snatched her passport and ran from the house into the street. She had nothing with her except what she was wearing and her passport. Out in the streets she went wandering about aimlessly. The Russian man called out to her saying, 'If the road closes upon you and the going becomes difficult, you can come to me and this is my address...', but the woman had already gone.

The person relating this story says, "I was walking along the street with my mother and sisters when suddenly this woman on the street hurriedly came running towards our direction and said, "I am from Russia, and such a thing has happened to me", and started to relate the entire story, "All I need from you is accommodation for a short period of time in which I can ponder over

my situation with my family in my country.” At the end of our discussion, we decided to accept her request and took her home with us. She started to communicate with her family, but with no response, as the communication lines in her country were not in order. Nonetheless, she continued all the time trying to contact her family.

“Of course, my sisters started to treat her as a sister and presented Islam to her, but she disliked and disregarded it. She was unwilling to even discuss Islam. This was because she came from an orthodox family which dislikes Islam and the Muslims. One day, I went to the da’wah library and sought assistance from the manager of the library.

The librarian resumes with the story: This man took some books and went away. After a period of time, he again came to me, but this time, he was accompanied by four women; three of them had themselves covered with some sort of hijāb, i.e. only their faces and hands were open, and the fourth one was only partially covered; both her hair and face were uncovered. The man said: ‘This lady is a Russian.’ He related the entire story and said, ‘I came to you last week and requested some books and now I require other books and cassettes. I have proposed to her to accept Islam and she has started to show some interest. I have promised her that I will marry her if she became a Muslim.’

The librarian continued, “I gave him another lot of books. He took them and came back after some days and said that she has agreed to become a Muslim and wants to announce her Islam. When she had declared her Islam, I told the man that there is a group of women who are teaching the Qur’ān and are well known for their high standard of teaching.

The librarian, continuing the story said, “After a period of time, the man came and said, ‘I have married her and I am now satisfied and very happy. All praise and gratitude to Allah.’ The thing that aroused my interest most was this woman had covered herself fully, not like his sisters and his mother. Strange! She adhered to complete hijāb.

‘I inquired from him politely how that happened, and he related to me an astonishing incident. He said, “In the market, my wife inquired about a woman who had covered herself completely. She asked me, ‘Why has she covered herself in such a manner? I am sure this woman has some defect which she wants to conceal.’ The man said, ‘I, defending the Islamic sense of honour, said to her. ‘No, this woman has adorned the hijāb which Allāh ﷻ

has ordered for His slaves and the one prescribed by His Rasūl ﷺ.’ Then after reflecting for some time, she told me, ‘When I enter any shopping complex, the gazes of the owners of these shopping complexes remain fixed on my face. I should cover this face of mine. It should be reserved for my husband only. Therefore, I won’t go out of this market except after I have covered myself fully’. She insisted that I purchase a full hijāb for her. She started wearing it at once.”

The librarian says that he then met this man only after about five or six months. After greeting him, I asked him, ‘Where have you been?!’ He said, “Some circumstances kept me away.” He continued by saying, “After I had married this woman, her passport had to be renewed from her country of origin. We, therefore, had to travel to Russia.

We purchased two seats and boarded the plane, with my wife in her complete hijāb. I said to her, ‘O Slave of Allāh! We will have problems now.’ She said, ‘O Khalid! Now you want me to obey these immoral infidels, who will lead the way to hell when they die, for what they are and what they do, and disobey Allāh ﷻ?! I cannot do that!!’ These were her actual words!

“We boarded the plane and the people began mocking at her in Russian. He continued saying, “I didn’t understand a word the people were saying, but my wife sometimes smiled and at times laughed and translated what they were saying. ‘This one is saying, ‘Look at her! She looks like such and such’, and this one commented, ‘.....’, and this one is making fun.’ Whenever she translated what they were saying, it was like an arrow piercing my heart without being removed. She said, ‘No. Do not become upset. This is an insignificant thing compared to what the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ underwent!’

When we landed, she said, ‘We will not put up at my families residence. My family is distinguished for their staunchness and fanaticism towards their religion. We will rent a room and stay there and complete all the procedures, thereafter we will visit my family’. The next day we went to the passport office. My wife presented a black and white photograph of herself in her hijāb revealing her face only. We were sent from officer to officer. Each one demanded that she present a colour photograph of herself exposing her face, hair and neck. Every officer said, ‘It is not possible for me to give a passport except with this specification.’ Finally we were told that we had to travel to Moscow and speak to the chief immigration officer. My wife turned towards me and said, ‘O Khalid, we must travel to Moscow.’ ‘O lawful daughter, O

so and so', I pleaded , trying to convince her.' *"Allāh does not overburden any soul except with what it can manage."* *"Fear Allāh to the degree that you can manage."* And right now you are not forced by anybody. The passport will only be seen by a few people, then you can hide it in your house until it expires, and its duration is six to seven years.' She said, 'No. it is not possible for me to expose myself after knowing the religion of Allāh ﷻ, the Almighty. If you do not want to travel to Moscow, then I will travel alone as the matter is very important.' Eventually I relented and agreed to accompany her.

We arrived at the office of the principal officer at the Immigration office of Moscow. He saw the passport and the photograph and said, 'What proves to me that you are the one in this photograph?' He wanted her to uncover her face. She said, 'Ask one of your female officers or your secretary to come and verify, but you cannot do it.' He became annoyed and took the passport together with the photo and locked them in his drawer and said, 'You won't have a new passport or the old one, unless you bring photographs with the required specification.' We tried to convince him; but without any success. I also tried to convince my wife with a verse from the Qur'ān. "Nobody is overburdened except with what he can manage", but she replied by saying, 'O Khalid, I learnt at the house teaching the Holy Qur'ān, *"Whoever fears Allāh, He will make for him a way out and will provide him from where he does not expect."* As we were discussing, the Principal Immigration Officer chased us from his office.

We performed our ishā' ṣalāh that evening and had our supper. I prepared to go to bed and she said, 'O Khalid, you are going to sleep? With this trying situation, will you sleep? We are in a situation that needs us to resort to Allāh ﷻ for help. Come on and beg to Allāh ﷻ. I stood up and prayed whatever Allāh ﷻ enabled me to pray, and went to sleep. But as for her, she continued praying. I opened my eyes, I could see her either in *rukū'*, or in *sajdah*, or in *qiyām*, or making *duā'* and crying, until the time of Fajr. "Waking me up at Fajr time, we performed our Fajr ṣalāh. She then said, 'Let us go to the Immigration Office.' I asked her perplexed, 'On what grounds? Where are the photos? We have no photos?' She said, 'Let us go and try. Do not lose hope of Allāh's ﷻ mercy and do not despair of Allāh's ﷻ benevolence.'

When we stepped into the Immigration Office, at once, one of the officers, called out her name, 'Mrs. So and so,' and she replied, 'Yes?' He said to her, 'Take your old passport and fill in the application forms for a new passport

with required specifications, but pay the fee first.' We were overjoyed. By Allāh, if he would have told us to pay all the money we had, we would have given it to him. We took the passport, paid the fee, and returned to our room.

My wife looked at me and said, "Did I not I tell you that Allāh will make a way out." These words struck my heart and made an immense impact on my īmān.

We now decided to visit her family. 'When we reached the place and knocked at the door, a gigantic-sized youngster, her brother, opened the door. When he saw his sister, he was happy, but also perplexed. His sister was also happy to see him; but then his curiosity knew no bounds. The face was of his sister, but the dress was not. Black – covering everything apart from her face! She entered the house smiling and hugged her brother. I entered after her and sat in the living-room. The house was of a low-class family house and very simple. One could see signs of poverty in it. I sat alone as she entered into the inner rooms of the house. I could hear them talking, men and women, in the Russian language, without understanding a word, nor knowing what was going on in there. Suddenly their voices raised and the tones changed and the screaming increased. I sensed that there was something wrong, but I was unable to get the real picture as I didn't understand the language. After a short while, three young men came with an old man to where I was sitting. I thought that they were now ready to welcome their son-in-law, but the welcome turned out to be slaps and blows. When I saw myself between these inhuman people I knew I could be killed there. I hurriedly opened the door as fast as I could, and ran out with them in hot pursuit. I was able to shake them off my trail. "I examined myself and saw signs of blows on my forehead, cheeks and nose. My mouth was bleeding and my clothes were torn. I said to myself. 'I am now safe but what is the situation with my wife?' I forgot about myself and started thinking about her. I pictured her in my mind thinking, 'Is she at this time facing the same slaps, blows and situation that I had already faced? I'm sure she will give in. I'm sure she will leave me. I'm sure she will renounce Islam.' I stayed in my room until dawn. I changed my clothes and went out to try to gather some information. I watched their house from a distance, trying to figure out what was going on in there, but the door was closed. Hours and hours went by as I kept watching, going and coming back. I repeated the same thing on the second day and then on the third day I lost hope and thought that my wife was dead. She's murdered. But, if she is dead, then at least there should have been some movements in the house, and visits of condolence from relatives, but I

saw nothing. On the fourth day, after these people had gone to their jobs, the door opened, and my wife's face appeared, looking right and left. Never had I seen in my life a more pleasant scene than what I was witnessing now, despite the fact that her face I was seeing was red – covered with blood! I hurriedly went close and stared at her. I was astonished and confused. I felt sick. Her colour had changed to red. There was blood on her face, on her arms, on her thighs and on her legs. Only a small piece of cloth covered her. Her feet and hands were chained and locked together behind her back. I looked at her and started crying uncontrollably. She said to me, 'O Khalid, listen! First be assured about me, that I am still a Muslim. Whatever I am going through now, is nothing compared to what the Ṣahābah ﷺ and Tābi'īn encountered, together with the Ambiyā' and Messengers before them. Secondly, I request you, Khalid, not to interfere between me and my family. Thirdly, wait for me in the room until, *Inshā Allāh*, I come there, but increase your du'ās and prayers at night. Perform ṣalāh."

I went back to my room and remained there. After three days, I heard a knock. I asked myself, 'Who is that? Who could be at the door?' Suddenly I heard a sound of a voice very familiar. I had never heard a sound so sweet, so pleasant and more beautiful than this. It was the voice of my wife, saying, 'Open the door, I'm so and so.' I opened the door and my world lit up. She said to me, come, let us leave now.' 'Now?! I inquired, quite surprised. 'Yes', she said. We got into a taxi. I asked her in Russian, 'The airport?' She replied, "No! No! We are not going to the airport. We are going to such and such village." "Why? Don't we want to run away?" I asked her. She replied, "No, if my family come to know about my escape, they will try to trace us to the airport. But let us go to a village, then from there to another village, then to the third, fourth, fifth, and then to a town with an international airport."

We eventually booked our tickets and hired a room until our departure. I looked at my wife, trying to see if any part of her body had been spared of bleeding – none. On our journey to the airport, I had asked her to relate all that had happened. Unfolding the entire incident, she commenced by saying, "When I entered the house and sat down together with my family, they started asking me about my dress and the man who accompanied me. I told them I had embraced Islam and had married this Muslim man." They exclaimed, "This cannot be possible." I said to them, "First let me narrate the entire story to you," and told them everything; about the Russian man, and how he wanted to lead me to indecency and sell my dignity. They said, "Listen. If you would have taken up with immorality and sold your dignity, it

would have been better for us than you being a Muslim! [*Just look how bigoted these people were!*] You are not getting out of this house unless you become an orthodox communist or a stiff corpse!" At that very moment, they took hold of me and tied me up, and then came for you and beat you up. I was listening when they were beating you while I was tied. Then after you had ran away, my brothers chained me up, and began whipping me. I was subjected to agonizing strokes from evening up to bedtime. In the mornings my brothers and father were at their jobs and my mother remained in the house. I was left with nobody apart from my fifteen year old sister. She used to amuse me. This amusement was the only solace and break I had. Sometimes I remained unconscious. They used to strike me until I became unconscious and slept. Their only demand was that I renounce Islam, and I refused.

It reached a point that during my sister's joking spells, my sister started asking me, "Why are you leaving your religion and the religion of your fore-fathers?" I started to convince her and explain to her. She began to understand and started feeling convinced, and also became impressed. The picture became clear to her and the fallacy, in which they were living in, became apparent. She at once said, "The truth is with you. This is the right religion. This is the religion I should follow." She then said to me, "Listen, my sister, I am going to assist you." I said to her, "If you want to help me then let me meet my husband."

She continued, "My sister started looking from the upper windows and saw you walking. She said to me, 'I'm seeing a man with such and such characteristics', and started to describe you. I said to her, 'That is my husband. If you see him, open the door for him so that I can talk to him.' True to her words, she opened the door and I came out and spoke to you. But now there was a problem; I was chained up with two chains, then there was a third chain, which was fastened to one of the pillars, so that I could move about to a limited range. The keys of this chain were with my sister."

Continuing, she said, "The day after I asked you to remain in your room until I came there, I was able to fully convince my sister. She embraced Islam, and resolved to make a sacrifice greater than mine. She was determined to help me to run away from the house, but the keys of the other two chains were with my brother, and he was very strict about them. On that very day, my sister came up with a plan; she prepared a very strong beer for my folks and organized a drinking party. So they all drank and drank until they became

totally intoxicated and slipped into a deep slumber. She then took out the keys from her brother's pocket and unlocked the chains, and I came to you in the late hours of the night."

I asked her, "And what about your sister?" She replied, "I advised my sister not to announce her Islam, but to keep it secret and worship in secrecy, until we can plan something for her."

We travelled on our scheduled flight and returned back to the country. I took my wife to the hospital and she was admitted for some days for the treatment of the wounds sustained due to the beatings."

When the sweetness of Imaan enters the heart

Colonel Ameerud-Deen ﷺ, a great inviter towards Islam, narrated the following:

In the animal kingdom of America, where man marries a man and a woman marries a woman, where a man and woman live under the common law without being married, where nudist colonies are common, in such an animal kingdom, a dancing girl and her husband embraced Islam. They used to dance in the discos, where there are wine glasses, dim lights and little tables at which American girls with skimpy bikinis and little brassieres are seated. Many Muslims from all over the world go to these nightclubs, drinking and gambling.

It was decided by mashwarah that I should take a Jama'ah (group of inviters to Allah) to one such nightclub. When we rang the bell, a woman came out, wearing a small little brassiere and a little bikini, and said, "Yes, gentlemen, what can I do for you?" When I saw her approaching, I was shaking from head to foot. I didn't know what to do. Since it was decided by Mashwarah to go, we went. I said, "You see, we want to speak to the owner of this hotel." His name was Ahmad, a Palestinian Arab. She said, "All right, I'll bring him just now." She got hold of him like a little chicken in her right hand and said, "Ahmad darling, your friends want to see you." I tell you, I pray to Allah that none of our friends ever witness such a scene. Ahmad said to us, seeing us with turbans, big beards and long kurtas (Qamees), "Brothers, why have you come here?" We said, "We have come because you have advertised the nightclub called 'Khaybar Pass', so we have come to see this. We are also human beings; we want to see what's inside this nightclub." He exclaimed, "What! You want to go inside!" I said, "Yes, my darling

brother. We are speaking in plain English. We want to go inside." He said, "All right, come in."

Anyhow, we went inside. Inside, we saw small tables and little red lights. The rest of the place was in darkness. You could hear the tinkling of the wine glasses and the Jazz music playing. I tell you, brothers, may we never see such a scene again. All our (Muslim) friends were seated with the beautiful American girls in their lap and wine glasses in their right hands. Anyhow, we got them together. (In Syria, I had marched for 1000 miles on foot in 1962 (24 years ago), from Damascus to Halab and from there further. It was there that I learnt Qur'an and Hadith, how to read the Qur'an and the Arabic language from an Arab tutor.) I gathered those people and spoke to them in the Arabic language for one hour. They are all Arabs. I cried bitterly and they all cried. Fourteen fellows came outside, and went for four months cash from there (for the purpose of Da'wah and Tabligh). That was the changing point in their lives. Those fourteen fellows became the leaders for Tabligh and Da'wah in Central America. After they returned, they brought many Arabs into Deen.²

² Colonel Ameerud-Deen added, "After they returned, they brought many Arabs into Deen. In that area, I performed 150 nikaahs in one month. People who were roaming about with American girls and committing adultery made Tawbah (repented to Allah). They brought those American girls with them, who then embraced Islam. I then performed their nikaahs. Two or three of those girls who had married those Arabs are now settled in Makkah. Those girls are now creating a grave disturbance in Makkah. The born-Muslim girls are afraid of them when they see them, because they wear the full burqa'ah including the veil and are very particular of covering themselves. They catch hold of the Arab girls and say, "What is this? You belong to the city of Makkah and you are a leader of the Muslims. What are you doing, going out like a European?" This is the magic of Tabligh; whenever anybody will follow the rules of Tabligh, they will create a stir in the whole family and that one person will be responsible to bring many, many people into the fold of true and correct Islam." We were coming back to America. This was the first year in America wherein Jama'ats moved about. It was 1971. In that one year, 200 people embraced Islam on my hands. May Allah excuse me. I am not boasting. This is just to show the effects of Tabligh and Da'wah. In fact, 3600 people accepted Islam at my hands during my ten years stay in America. Many of them are Aalims, many are Haafiz-e-Qur'an or their children are Haafiz-e-Qur'an. One is teaching in the University of Madina and another is at the University of Jeddah. One had been martyred in the path of Allah. That is all due to Tabligh and Da'wah. So, after spending four months in Jama'at, four of the five women who had come out went back with their husbands,

donning the burqa'ah and niqaab, etc. which was unknown in America. One woman and her husband remained. They came with us. We landed in New York. We were seventeen people. Everybody was wearing the turban without exception. Everybody had his long kurta (qamees) upto the middle of the shin-bone, the Sunnah of Muhammad ﷺ. All had big beards. Most of the Americans wear the lungi (izaar), not even pants. They had miswaaks in their top pockets and had tasbihs in their hands. When the emigration officers saw this, they looked with amazement at these seventeen people. Every one of them stood more than 6 feet tall, except Abdur-Rahman who was a short little chap. (He was martyred in 1979 in Makkah and gone straight into Jannah Insha-Allah.) They entered the passport numbers into the computer, but nothing came up. They were now thinking what they should do. Were these ruffians? They had never seen Muslims in that dress before. They asked, "Who is the leader?" I said, "I." They asked, "Who are you people?" I said, "We are Muslims, followers of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ." One of them said, "We have seen people from Pakistan, India and all countries of the world, but we have never seen this dress and these big beards and these turbans. What nonsense is this?" I said, "Look, we are American and Canadian citizens. Mark your language! Speak in civil and parliamentary language, and do not exceed your bounds! We are not afraid of you!" Yes, you have to be strict with these fellows. So he said, "All right." Then he called Maryam and Abdur-Rahman, who had both embraced Islam on my hands. He told Maryam, "You need to lift your veil. We want to see your face and compare it with your passport." She said, "What! What! I am a Muslim. I am a follower of Muhammad ﷺ. I have just been for four months. While sitting in a gathering of ta'leem (where Ahaadith are read out to the participants), I read that Ummu Salamah and Maymoonah (two of the honourable wives of Rasulullah ﷺ) would not come in front of a blind man. In fact, Rasulullah ﷺ told them to go into hijab (go behind the curtain). Ummu-Salamah (radhiAllahu anha) said, "He is blind, o Rasulullah. He cannot see us." Rasulullah ﷺ said, "But you both are not blind (i.e. you can see him)." I am a follower of that Muhammad ﷺ if you want to know. I cannot lift my veil even if I am shot dead." Then he looked at me. I said, "Do not look at me! You send for your women police!" He said, "This has never happened in America." I said, "If you want Muslim women to cross your borders, then you better get your women police! Don't argue with me!" So they said, "Ok." Then they brought a women police-officer. I was standing behind that corridor with the rods and bars, while Maryam and her husband were told to go to the other side. I took out my Tasbih and, in a veery feeble voice, I said, "Abdur-Rahman! Tell your wife to do the zikr of Allah." Abdur-Rahman shouted at the top of his voice, "Maryam, do the zikr of Allah! In front of Allah, America, Russia, China and the whole world put together is not even equal to the wing of a mosquito." Maryam and Abdur-Rahman were escorted away by the police and taken inside. Since Maryam had become a good Muslim and started to wear the veil, she never spoke directly to me. If she wanted to ask anything, she would tell her husband to ask me. So Abdur-Rahman later told me that when she went inside, the police-woman asked her to lift her veil.

With them came one dancer, an Afro-American girl by the name of Jean, and her husband. He was a drummer and she used to dance. She used to wear a small bikini and a small brassiere. She said, "I also, with my husband, want to embrace Islam." I said, "Maa shaa-Allah. You are very lucky." She asked, "What am I to do?" I said, "Four things; anybody who does these four things, his Imaan will increase and he will see Jannah and Jahannam in front of his eyes." She said, "What are the four things?" I said, "a) Ibaadah – pray to Allah (salaah), fast in the month of Ramadhaan, pay the poor-tax (zakaah) if Allah gives you the wealth and perform pilgrimage (Hajj) once in your lifetime. This is a small little book. We are only a few (Muslim) people in America. This is a vast country which stretches 3500 miles from East to West and 2500 miles from North to South." Those were the beginning days, when you had to perform your prayers on ice at many times. Jama'ats (groups of people travelling with the purpose of reviving Islam) were kicked out of Masjids, taken to courts and beaten up. I told her, "You take this book. You and your husband should study it. This is my telephone number. If you have any difficulty, phone me. I will try my best to reply to you. In the city in which you stay, there are a lot of Muslims. You can even ask them.

b) The second thing to do is to invite your family (give them da'wah). Through the invitation (da'wah), the aspects that you will invite towards will enter into your heart. Your ears are nearest to your tongue. When you talk with your tongue, it will first enter your ears and your heart. It will then enter the hearts of the people you are addressing. This is the system of Allah. Do

She lifted her veil and showed her photo. The police-woman was satisfied. At once, she dropped her veil over her face. The police-woman said, "I can understand that you hide your face from men. But I cannot understand why you are hiding your face from a woman." Maryam said, "You are not a woman. I apologize, but you are not a woman. You are dressed to kill. You are wearing a small frock. You have got make-up and lip-stick on. Your hair is going up like a mountain in the air. And you are not doing this for your husband, but to distract the gazes of other men. So your heart is not very clean. In fact, it has become black. If I do not hide myself from you, your blackness will rub off onto my heart and I will then return to my old condition, back to how I was before going in the path of Allah." You understand, my dear friends, this is the effects of Tabligh and Da'wah in America. Rasulullah ﷺ trained his Ummah on these lines. No one can ever equal the dust of the shoes of the Sahaabah. But we will try to copy them instead of copying the Western world. Then we will do Hijrah in the real sense of the word; from our customs, our way of life, our ways of eating, our dress and our ways of living into the pattern of life of Muhammad ibn Abdullah ﷺ, step by step. And then we will get Hidaayah (guidance). Allah states: 'And if you obey him, you will be rightly guided.'

this! Give this invitation with strength and don't be afraid of anyone. Allah will help you.

c) The third thing you must do is to make ta'leem of Fadhaail (the virtues of the various Islamic practices). This is a book in English called 'Teachings of Islam' (Faza'ilul A'maal). The author is Moulana Muhammad Zakariyya (who was still alive at that time). You can also find this in your city. It doesn't cost much money.

d) Stand up in the late hours of the night for prayer (Tahajjud). Read the Qur'an in the night in this prayer and cry to Allah (in dua at the end of this salaah)." They said, "But we don't know how to read the Qur'an." I said, "It doesn't matter. Stand up facing the Ka'bah and say, 'O Allah, O Allah, O Allah, we are new entrants into Islam. We want You to give us guidance.' If you cry to Allah in the night, one day will come when you will be an example for the whole of America." She asked, "That's all?" I said, "That's all. Assalaamu alaikum."

I also said, "Remember one thing. Allah does not take this work from anybody who does not change according to his invitation. When you give the invitation, you yourself must change. This dress of yours must come off and you must wear the full dress. What is the full dress? You must wear sleeves till your wrists, your neck must be closed and you should tie a scarf. If Allah gives you the courage, you should wear the full burqa'ah (body covering) with the veil (niqaab) in front of your face, because the order of Allah is 'enter into Islam in totality and do not follow in the footsteps of Shaytaan' (Surah Baqarah v.208). Do you understand?" She said, "Yes, I understand." They then went away.

After three months, one night at 2:30 am, at the time of Tahajjud, this girl phoned me. In America, the nights are very long in winter; Tahajjud time remains till 6:30 am and the sun rises at 8:30 in some areas. She said, "It is a question of life and death." I said, "In the darkness of the night, you are calling from another country. It must be costing you a lot of money. Why didn't you write a letter, I would have replied?" She said, "Don't talk of money! If all the wealth we had accumulated during the period of our ignorance of Islam was spent to understand one mas'ala (law of the Shari'ah) that will save us from the pangs of Hellfire, it is a very cheap business."

Then she said, "When we did those four things for three or four months, the love for Paradise and the hatred for Hellfire entered into our hearts. We thought 'what should we do about our families'. They are going directly

towards Hellfire by drinking, womanising, doing whatever they like and following their desires. We therefore decided to have a family meeting. The men of our families would be in one house, and the women would be in one house, because there are no mixed parties in Islam." She had embraced Islam just three months ago, but understood that there are no mixed parties in Islam. She continued, "I was going in the bus. After promising you that day, I never wore that European dress again. I began wearing the cloak with full sleeves and pants and tied my hair with a scarf. I wore the full burqa'ah (body covering) with the veil in the front. I was going in the bus. The bus started to move fast, so I held onto the railing. My sleeve slipped four inches, and this much of flesh was exposed." She started to cry, at 2:30 am. She said, "Tell me, Colonel Sahib! Tell me! Will this flesh burn in Hellfire." What answer could I give, my dear brothers. I said, "My dear sister, I can assure you that it will not burn in Hellfire. Your thought is enough to save you from Hellfire and take you to Paradise." She insisted, "But tell me what I should do in the future?" I said, "Put elastic on the end of your sleeve so that it will not open in the future." I realized that she was flying high in the sky (of Imaan) while I was still stuck to the earth. This is the result of Tabligh and Da'wah.³

THE PEARL AND THE FLOWER

One day, a brilliantly beautiful and fragrant flower with attractive colors met a pearl that lives far in the bottom of the sea and has none of the characteristics. Both got acquainted with each other.

The flower said": Our family is large; roses and daisies are members of the family. And there are many other species that are various and countless, each has a distinctive scent, appearance, etc" Suddenly, a tinge of distress appeared on the flower.

"Nothing accounts for sorrow in your talk; so why are you depressed?" the pearl asked.

"Human beings deal with us carelessly; they slight us. They don't grow us for our sake but to get pleasure from our fragrance and beautiful appearance. They throw us on the street or in the garbage can after we are dispossessed of the most valuable properties; brilliance and fragrance." The flower sighed.

And then the flower said to the pearl." Speak to me about your life! How do you live? How do you feel it? You are buried in the bottom of the sea."

The pearl answered: "Although I have none of your distinctive colors and sweet scents, humans think I am precious. They do the impossible to procure me. They go on long journeys; dive deep in the seas searching for me. You might be astounded to know that the further I lay, the more beautiful and brilliant I become. That's what upraises my value in their sight. I live in a thick shell isolated in the dark seas. However, I am happy and proud to be in a safe zone far from mischievous hands and still the humans consider me highly valuable."

Do you know what the flower and the pearl symbolize? The flower is the unveiled woman (who shows her charms) and the pearl is the veiled woman (who conceals her beauties).

³ This incident was transcribed from two lectures which Colonel Ameerud-Deen had delivered in South Africa in 1986, with slight editing.