

**Mother of the believers Zaynab bint Jahash  
(may Allah be pleased with her)**

**Zaynab bint Jahash's (may Allah be pleased with her) Family**

*Mother:* Umayma bin Abdul Mutalib ibn Hashim

Zaynab bint Jahsh (may Allah be pleased with her) was born in the year 591, 31 years before the migration.<sup>1</sup>

As for his marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh (may Allah be pleased with her) this showed legislation for a number of issues. It was a legislation to demolish what was called equivalence (matching) between the man and the woman, in marrying a cousin (daughter of his paternal aunt) and who was from the leaders of the Quraish that was married to a former slave that had been freed. It showed the legislation for the destruction of what had become established amongst them in the period of ignorance, in that adopting a son is like one's own son, so one cannot marry his wife. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) married the wife of a man (Zayd) whom he had freed, after her divorce from him (Zayd) in order to destroy those customs. The account of the Messenger's marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh was that Zaynab bint Jahsh was a daughter of Umayma bint 'Abd al-Muttalib the paternal aunt of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). She was under his care and attention and because of this he used to know her before she had married Zayd and he had seen her from the time she was an infant crawling, until her childhood and through to her adolescent years.

She was not a stranger to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). He proposed to her on behalf of his freed slave Zayd but her brother 'Abd Allah bin Jahsh refused for his sister, being that she was from Quraish and a Hashimite in addition to being a daughter of the aunt of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to be the bride of a slave bought by Khadija (may Allah be pleased with her) and later freed by Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). He felt that this was a great shame for Zaynab (may Allah be pleased with her) as it used to be a great dishonor for the Arabs, as daughters of the nobility did not marry slaves even if they were given their freedom. But the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) wanted these customs which existed within people solely on the basis of tribalism to be erased and for them to comprehend that there is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, except in Taqwa (piety) and to understand.

Hence, nothing remained for 'Abd-Allah and Zaynab other than to submit to Allah's will, so they said: 'We approve Oh Messenger of Allah.' Zayd consummated his marriage with Zaynab after the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) had sent her the dowry. However, married life between Zayd and Zaynab was not good, in fact, from the start it was unsettled and resentful and continued to be unsettled and embittered. Zayd complained to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) on numerous occasions and explained to him about her bad treatment of him. He sought permission from the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) a number of times to divorce her. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) used to reply: "Hold on to your wife." Allah (The Exalted) revealed to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) that Zaynab will be one of his wives. This was distressing for the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) who feared that people will say that Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has married his son's wife and will censure him for that, since he had adopted Zayd as a son. Therefore, he did not want Zayd to divorce her, but Zayd urged the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to allow him to divorce her.

**Prophet's Proposal**

Ahmad, Muslim and an-Nasa'i have reported via Sulayman bin al-Mughira on the authority of Thabit that Anas said: "When the 'Iddah (divorce period) of Zaynab was over, Allah's Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said to Zayd to mention him to her. So I (Zayd) went to her and said: "O Zaynab rejoice! Allah's Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) sent me to propose to you on his behalf." She said: "I do not do anything until my Lord orders me." So she stood at her place of worship and Allah's Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) came to her without permission when the verses of the Qur'an (pertaining to her marriage) were revealed:

*“And O beloved! Remember when you did say to him whom Allah bestowed a favour and you had bestowed a favour, keep your wife with yourself and fear Allah and you had in your heart what you had in willed to disclose and you were afraid of people’s taunting remarks; and Allah has a greater right that you should fear Him. Then when Zaid had accomplished his purpose with her, We gave her in your marriage, so that there should be no hindrance upon the Muslims in respect of the wives of their adopted sons when they have accomplished their purpose with them. And Allah’s order is bound to be fulfilled.”<sup>ii</sup>*

If either she or Zayd had known then he would not have said to her ‘rejoice.’ When she said ‘...my Lord orders me’ i.e. she left the matter to Allah (the Exalted) to guide her in this marriage. The lesson of this marriage is so that there is no sin on the believers in marrying the wife of someone they had adopted.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was 58 and Zaynab bin Jahash was 35 years old.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) also contracted a marriage to calm down distressed feelings. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) married his first cousin, Zaynab, to his slave, Zayd ibn Haritha (may Allah be pleased with him) whom he had adopted as his son. It was indeed to break family and social barriers but the marriage did not prove a success and ended in divorce. When he saw that Zaynab (may Allah be pleased with her) was left alone, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) felt his responsibility in the matter. He also had to break another convention whereby an adopted son became a real son. This difficult problem was solved by marrying Zaynab (may Allah be pleased with her) to annul that pre-Islamic conception and propagate an Islamic law instead.

Zaynab (may Allah be pleased with her) has related 11 traditions from the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) from which two are in the Sahih collection of Imam Bukhari and Muslim. The rest are in other books of hadith.

When ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) came to know of Zaynab’s (may Allah be pleased with her) passing away, he ordered the following to be announced in all the streets of Madinah, “All people of Madinah should present themselves in the funeral prayer of their honoured mother.” He himself then performed the funeral prayer and she was thereafter buried in Jannatul-Baqi in Madinah. She passed away at the age of 53 in 21 AH.<sup>iii</sup>

---

<sup>i</sup> Azwaj-e-Mutahrat, P.77

<sup>ii</sup> Surah Ahzaab: Surah No: 33; Verse No: 37

<sup>iii</sup> Madarij, Vol. 2, Pg. 476-8

---