5019 - Response to a request from a kaafir woman for a story of a great Muslim woman

the question

Hi. I am a 15 year old . I am doing a religion assignment on the role of women in Islam and I find the information in your website very helpful. I was just wondering, if you don't mind doing it, if you could send me some more information, maybe one particular woman's stories? I don't really know much about Islamic women, and I, like other non - Islamic women/girls, have the perception that an Islamic woman's life is a bit restricted. I hope that you can put me right on that matter.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

We thank you for your interest and your question. We will tell you the story of a great Muslim woman; we hope that you will find what you are looking for, and that this will be a light to guide you to the path of Truth.

Anas (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported:

Maalik ibn Anas said to his wife Um Sulaym who was the mother of Anas This man meaning the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is forbidding alcohol. So he left Madeenah and went to Shaam (Syria), where he died. (i.e., he fled from Madeenah when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came there, because he did not like the ban on alcohol, and he died as a kaafir or non-believer in Syria). Then Abu Talhah came and proposed marriage to Um Sulaym, and spoke to her about it. She said, O Abu Talhah, a man like you would not be turned down, but you are a non-believer, and I am a Muslim woman. It is not right for me to marry you. He said, This is the chance of a lifetime! She said, What chance? He said, The yellow and white (i.e., he was tempting her with a mahr or dowry of gold and silver). She said, I do not want any

yellow or white. I want you to become Muslim. If you become Muslim, that will be my mahr, and I will not ask you for anything else. He asked, Who could help me with that (i.e., to become Muslim)? She said, The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) will help you. So Abu Talhah went to look for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who was sitting with his Companions. When he [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)] saw him, he said, Abu Talhah is coming to you with the light of Islam shining on his forehead. (This was one of the miracles of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): he knew that Abu Talhah would become a Muslim even before he spoke). Abu Talhah told the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) about what Um Sulaym had said, and he married her on that basis. Thaabit (i.e., Thaabit al-Banaani, one of the people who narrated the story from Anas) said: We have never heard of any mahr greater than this, she accepted his Islam as her dowry.

So he married her, and she was a woman with nice eyes, rather small. She was with him until she bore him a son, who Abu Talhah loved very much. The child became very ill, and Abu Talhah was very upset and distressed by the childs sickness. Abu Talhah used to get up to pray the morning prayer, he would go to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and pray with him, and would stay with him for almost half the day. Then [Abu Talhah] would come to take a nap and eat, and when he had prayed Zuhr [mid-day prayer] he would get ready and leave, and would not come back until the time of the Isha [night-time] prayer. One evening, Abu Talhah went out to see the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) (according to another report: to go to the mosque), and the child died (during his absence). Um Sulaym said, No one is to tell Abu Talhah about his childs death until I have told him. She covered the child up as if he were sleeping, and left him in a corner of the house. Abu Talhah came back from visiting the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and brought some people from the mosque with him. He asked, How is my son? She said, O Abu Talhah, from the time he fell sick, he has never been as calm as he is now, and I hope that he is resting. (She spoke vaguely so as not to upset him; this was not a lie. She was referring to the calmness of death and the child finding relief from the pain of his sickness, but her husband took it to mean that the childs condition had improved). She brought the meal and they all ate dinner, then the people left. Then he went to bed and lay down,

and she got up and put on perfume and adorned herself, making herself more beautiful than she ever had before. (This was a sign of her patience and great faith in the will and decree of Allaah. She was seeking reward from Allaah and concealing her feelings, hoping that she would become pregnant that night to make up for the loss of her child). Then she came and lay down in the bed with him, and when he smelt the perfume, he did as men usually do with their wives (this is the narrators polite and circumspect manner of referring to what happened between them). At the end of the night, she said, O Abu Talhah, do you think that if some people lent something to some others, then they asked for it back, do they have the right not to give it back? He said, No. She said, Allaah, may He be glorified, lent your son to you, and now He has taken him back, so seek reward with Him and have patience. He became angry and said, You left me until I did what I did (i.e., had intercourse), then you tell me that my son has died! Then he said, Innaa Lillaahi wa innaa ilayhi raajioon (Truly, to Allaah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return the words uttered by Muslims when faced with news of death or calamity) and he praised Allaah. In the morning, he did ghusl (full ablution) then he went to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and prayed with him, and told him what had happened. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, May Allaah bless you for last night. She conceived a child (thus the Prophets prayer for them was answered).

Um Sulaym used to travel with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), leaving Madeenah when he left, and returning when he returned. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, When she gives birth, bring the child to me. He was on a journey, and Um Sulaym was with him. When the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came back from travelling, he would never enter Madeenah at night (so as not to disturb the people, and so that wives would have time to get ready to greet their husbands). They reached the outskirts of Madeenah, and her labour pains started. Abu Talhah stayed with her, and the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went on. Abu Talhah said, O Allaah, you know that I like to set out with your Messenger when he sets out, and come back with him when he comes back. I have been detained as You see. Um Sulaym said, O Abu Talhah, I do not feel the pains as much (this was one of her miracles; her labour pains ceased because she had asked Allaah to enable her to catch up with the Messenger

of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)). So they set off, and after they had reached Madeenah, her labour pains started again, and she gave birth to a boy. She told her son Anas, O Anas, I will not give him anything to eat until you take him in the morning to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and she sent some dates with him. (Because she wanted the first thing to enter the childs mouth to be food from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him); this was a sign of her great faith, because the womans natural instinct is to hasten to feed the baby as soon as he is born). The child cried all night long, and I [Anas, the narrator of this story] stayed up all night taking care of him. In the morning, I took him to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who was wearing his burdah (a kind of cloak) and marking the camels and sheep that had been given to him (the animals had been given in charity and he was marking them so that they would not get lost or mixed with other flocks or herds). When he saw him, he said to Anas, Has the daughter of Milhaan [i.e., Um Sulaym] given birth? He said, Yes. He said, I will be with you in a minute. He put down the tool in his hand (with which he had been marking the animals) and took the child, then he said, Do you have something for him? They said, Yes, dates. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) took some of the dates and chewed them, mixing them with his saliva (and the saliva of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was blessed by Allaah). Then he opened the childs mouth and gave him some of the dates, wiping them inside his mouth (this is called Tahneek and is one of the customs among Muslims when a baby is born). The infant began to smack his lips, sucking some of the sweetness of the dates and the saliva of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). Thus the first thing that entered that childs stomach was mixed with the saliva of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). He said, See how much the Ansaar (the Muslims who were living in Madeenah when the Prophet migrated there) love dates! I [Anas] said, O Messenger of Allaah, name him. He wiped his face and named him Abd-Allaah. There was no young man among the Ansaar who was better than him, and when he grew up he had a lot of sons, and was martyred in Persia (he died as a martyr when the Muslims conquered Persia; all of this happened as a result of the Prophets blessed duaa).

(The story was reported by Imaam al-Bukhaari, Muslim, Ahmad and al-Tayaalisi; this version was reported by al-Tayaalisi and others. Al-Allaamah al-Albaani collected all its isnaads in his book

Ahkaam al-Janaaiz, p. 20).

This is one story of one Muslim woman among the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). There are many other stories which show the effect Islam had on the hearts of Muslim women and how the religion of Allaah bore fruits of righteous deeds and good lives. In this there is enough to convince the seeker of truth of the right religion which he must follow. Read it again and think about it; maybe you will take the greatest step of your life. Peace be upon those who follow true guidance.