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Hazrat Asma bint Yazeed Al-Sakan(R.A) ... An analytical study of her Life and Works

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ABSTRACT

Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) held an eminent position among other Sahabiya (the female companions of the Holy prophet (ﷺ)) who took pledge of assurance. She belonged to Abdul-Al-Ashhal, a sub family of the tribe of Oss and was bestowed with great power of speech and she used it beautifully for the sake of right and Justice and to raise the name of Allah. This beauty was so forceful that she had no second. She was the only woman whose power of speech was praised in public by the great prophet Hazrat Muhammad (ﷺ). Hazrat Asma bint Yazeed possessed great wisdom and sense. She also held an important position in understanding religion. She was a wise lady with great qualities of oratory, intelligence and rationality. She had leading power among the women of her tribe. She had narrated eighty one sayings of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) which she learnt directly from the Holy Messenger (ﷺ). In this article it is explained how the Hadiths narrated by Hazrat Asma (R.A) have helped the women in the important field of life. It also highlights the contribution of Hazrat Asma for Islam as well as for the Muslim Women in different angles. Her services are remarkable for the Muslim Woman and provide a guide line towards understanding of Islam.

Speaking power is a great blessing of Allah. Allah has mentioned it in the Quran and denoted it with His virtue of mercy.

(الرَّحْمَنُ . عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ . خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ . عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ)¹

“The Beneficent has made known (taught) the Quran. He has created man. He has taught him self-expression.”

Allah has preferred this blessing to other blessings and He has warned man on his conscious and unconscious thankless behaviour. The power of self-expression is used wrongly by man who is bestowed by the most Sacred. The same power of speech when it is used for the cause of Allah and for justice becomes Jihad(struggle for the cause of Allah) . Hazrat Asma bint e Yazid bin Al-sakan (رضى الله عنها) was bestowed with great power of speech and she used it beautifully for the sake of right and Justice and to raise the name of Allah. She was the only woman, whose power of speech was praised in public by the great prophet Hazrat Muhammad (ﷺ), by the words:

(هل سعتن بمقالة امرأة قط احسن في مسائلتها من امر دينها من هذه)²

“Have you ever listed such an eloquent speech by a woman regarding religion?”

Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) held an eminent position among other sahabiat (the female companions of the Holy prophet (ﷺ) who took pledge of assurance.³ She belonged to Abdul-Al-Ash’hal, a sub family of the tribe of Oss.⁴ Her family pedigree is “Asma bint yazeed bin Al-Sakin bin Rafay bin amry Al-Qys bin Zaid bin Abdul-Ashhal.⁵ The honor that Allah has given to her family and the high distinctive place that she had in the court of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is enviable. The great companion of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), Hazrat Saad bin Moaz (رضى الله عنها) also belonged to that honorable family,⁶ the family who was always ready to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the prophet (ﷺ) who is the elucidator of Islam. The decision of punishment made by Saad (رضى الله عنها) against Bano Quraiza is self-same to the decision of Allah about them.⁷ Hazrat Saad (رضى الله عنها) was the cousin of Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها).⁸ Ibne Hajar Asqani⁹ and Ibne Al-Aseer¹⁰ has mentioned that Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) binte Yazeed is a relative of Moaz bin Jabal (رضى الله عنها). According to Ibn Abdul Barr, Moaz bin Jabal was her aunt’s son¹¹ and Hajar Asqani says he was her cousin¹² but it is not true because Moaz (رضى الله عنها) belonged to Bani-Salma and on the other hand Hazrat Asma belonged to Bani-Abdul Ash’hal. The word Moaz is common in two names in Moaz bin Jabal and Saad bin Moaz, so this commonality may have created this misunderstanding. Ibn Saad¹³ has written that the name of Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) was “*Fukaiha*” but she got fame with

the name of Asma.¹⁴ She has two surnames 'Ume Salma'¹⁵ and 'Ume Amir Alsh'halia'¹⁶ (رضى الله عنها). The mother of the believers, *Ume Salma* was famous with her surname that is why *Hazrat Asma* was called *Ume Salma* Al-ansaria. Some *ahadith* have been narrated by her by this surname.¹⁷ Her mother's name is *Ume Saad bint Khuzym bin Masood bin Qala bin Hareesh bin Abdul Al-ash'hal*.¹⁸ The trustworthy prophet (ﷺ), whenever visited the colony of Abdul-Ash'hal, said,

((ماذا في هذه البيوت من الخير؟ هذه خير دور الانصارية))¹⁹

Hazrat Asma bint Yazeed possessed great wisdom and sense. She also held an important position in understanding religion.²⁰ She was a wise lady with great qualities of oratory, intelligence and rationality;²¹ she had leading power among the women of her tribe.²² She worked as a leader of women on several occasions. Three events have been mentioned in history and *ahadith* in this regard. Once, women were dishearted due to their illegibility of participating in some basic prayers. In fact, they facilitate for men to be able to participate in those prayers. So the question aroused whether they are worthy to get equal reward to men or not. A delegation of women reached the court of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and Hazrat Asma was leading them. Male companions were also present there. With the permission of the Holy Messenger, she presented the matter. She said:

“O The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ)! I am here as the representative of women. Allah has sent you as the messenger for men and women. We have surrendered and we believe you to the depth of heart. We the womenfolk remain enclosed in homes. We care for the rest of men and fulfill their desire and nourish children. You are the folk of men, you offer the Juma prayer, offer obligatory prayers five times, perform Hajj (pilgrimage of Baitullah) and the superior of all prayers is Jihad (fight for the cause of Allah). When a man goes for Jihad or for some other endeavor, a woman protects his wealth and patronizes his off-spring, so is the womenfolk able to be equal in reward and status near Allah?”²³

When the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) listened this presentation of Hazrat Asma, he (ﷺ) addressed his companions and asked;

(هل سعتن ببقالة امرأة قط احسن في مسائلتها من امر دينها من هذه)²⁴

“Have you ever listened such an eloquent speech by a woman about her religion? Sahabah replied,

(يا رسول الله ﷺ، ما ظننا ان امرأة تهتدى الى مثل هذا)²⁵

“O the prophet of Allah we never thought even a woman can be so fluent and lucid in her speech and can draw a boundary line between the prayers of men and women?”

It is different way of presenting things. After that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) addressed Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) and said:

(افهى ايتها الامراة .واعلى من خلفك من النساء ان حسن تبعل البراة

لزوجهما واتباعها موافقتة وطلبها مرضاته يعد ذلك كله)²⁶

“O woman! Understand it and deliver to other women who are with you that if a woman cares for the will and happiness of her husband and obey his delight and her most important concern is the will of her husband then she can be equal in reward to men.”

On the occasion of swearing allegiance to the Prophet (ﷺ), Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) was representing the womenfolk. When the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) took their oath²⁷ that women will not assign partner with Allah, nor commit theft, nor kill their off-spring , nor blame others for uncommitted deeds and nor will they disobey Allah in other matters of Islam. Then Hazrat Asma came forward and offered her hand to pledge on the hand of the prophet (ﷺ), as it was the way of pledging allegiance. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) denied her hand and said:

(انى لست اصافح النساء)²⁸

“I do not shake hand with women”. After it, it became a rule for the followers of Islam that a Muslim man and a woman are not allowed to shake hand.

Another incident of that occasion is that an aunt of Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) was wearing rings and bangles of gold in her hands, Hazrat Muhammad (ﷺ) “Do you pay zakat (the compulsory charity in Islam) of this ornament?”

She said “No”. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) “Do you like that Allah make you wear the rings and bangles of fire for the compensation of this?” On that time Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) guided her and asked her to wear off that jewelry. When Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) asked about it, the Messenger of Allah recommended her the silver ornaments.²⁹ It is possible that she might not have been able to pay zakat of gold. Hazrat Asma was given the title of Khatibatun-

nisa (women orator) due to her natural command over speech and her aesthetic taste. She used to visit the religious gatherings, so she also participated in religious gatherings and meetings, called by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) to warn against the trial of Dajal.³⁰ After that meeting, Hazrat Asma went to the mothers of the believers; they were excited to take refuge of Allah against the trial of Dajal, the downcast. When the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) came home, He (ﷺ) consoled the womenfolk and at that time, it was Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) who was representing the women, including the mothers of believers. Hazrat Asma expressed her anxiety so, ‘O the Prophet of Allah, it is the condition of our appetite that when our maid sits to knead flour we feel hungry and we become restless with hunger until she bakes bread. Then what would be the condition of hunger when there will be famine of Dajal?’ The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said that, “the remembrance of Allah will save you from hunger.”³¹ Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) considered herself privileged by serving the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). She served the Messenger of Allah in different ways e.g.³²

Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) knows the art of beautifying a bridal. So she prepared Hazrat Aysha (رضى الله عنها) as a bride³³ and when the bride appeared on the scene, the Holy prophet (ﷺ), the groom, was also called and they seated together. It shows that bride and groom can sit beside each other and other women can have a glance of groom if there is no chance of temptation. No doubt, this incident occurred before the injunctions of veiling. Anyhow, Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) was lucky enough to taste the remaining milk drunk by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). She narrates when Hazrat Ayesha drank from the remaining milk of Hazrat Muhammad (ﷺ), from the same glass. The Messenger of Allah addressed Hazrat Ayesha and said, “Ayesha! Also share it with your friends.”

Then Hazrat Asma requested the Messenger of Allah to redrink from the glass and he (ﷺ) did so in respect of her request. Hazrat Ume Amir (Asma R.A) kept the bowl on her knee. She was moving it to know the exact place where from the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) placed his lips to drink³⁴. This shows that Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) was one who had a close respectful relation with the Messenger of Allah. Her love for the Prophet leads to the love of his (ﷺ) family so she had a close relation to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). She used to visit them. Once Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) was sitting in the company of other women, the

Holy Prophet (ﷺ) passed nearby and said ‘salam’ (Islamic greeting).³⁵

Once the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) visited the mosque of Bani Abdul-Ash’hal. Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) cooked meat and bread for him (ﷺ). The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) invited his companions to the meal also. Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) narrates that there were almost 40 Sahabah who joined meal and that small quantity of food sufficed them all.³⁶ Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) is the eye-witness of that miracle. She also carried a jug of water for them and the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) drank from it. Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) saved that jug and preserved it as a relic. Her family used to drink from it and made other patients to drink from it as a token of recovery.³⁷ This shows the delirious love of Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) for the Messenger of Islam (ﷺ).

Hazrat Umm E Salma Ansaria (رضى الله عنها) used to hold the rope of the camel of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). When Surah-Maida was revealed to the messenger of Allah, he was riding his she-camel and Hazrat Asma was holding the rope of it. She says that there was too much burden of revealing that she became afraid that the joints of the hands and foot of she-camel might get fractured.³⁸ Hazrat Asma Ash’halia was very brave, as she was confident in expressing her ideas, opinion, and thought. She was bestowed with the wealth of courage, fearlessness and valour.

She took part in many wars to serve Islam, under the guidance of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). But her real bravery came to be known in the battle of Yarmuk. Some Christian soldiers entered the tents of the Muslim women. Hazrat Asma (رضى الله عنها) with the help of other women pulled up the hooks of the tents and attacked them. Hazrat Asma alone killed nine Roman soldiers with one hook.³⁹ It shows that the Muslim women participated in the Jihad even after the injunction of veiling. It also shows that women should also be trained for defense fighting.

The bravery was hereditary to Hazrat Asma. Her uncle Zaid or Zayyad participated in the war of Uhad. Ibn-Aseer has written Yazeed bin Al-salkan (father of hazrat Asma), that he was martyred along with his son Amir (رضى الله عنها) in the battle of Uhad.⁴⁰ But according to the historical record of Qazi Sulman Mansoor Puri, Hazrat Amir bin Yazeed was martyred in the battle of Badar.⁴¹ Ibn Al-aseer writes that Zayyad or Zaid bin Al-sakan or his son Amir fell wounded. When the enemy ran away the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was informed, he

said “Bring him to me”. So he breathed his last in the feet of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).⁴²

In the book, “Ibn al-Athir, Ali ibn Muhammad, Usud Ul-Ghaba,”, Hazrat Asma bint Yazeed Al-sakan and Hazrat Asma bint Yazeed Al-sha’halia, have been mentioned as two different ladies.⁴³ The author of Usud Ul Ghaba, Ibn al-Athir, Ali ibn Muhammad, has written regarding Abu Nuaim that Ibn-Manda has counted them as two different ladies but Abu Naeem himself takes these two names for one woman.⁴⁴ No doubt, Ibn-Aseer has translated it as two different names conceptually; he related two names for one woman, Asma (رضى الله عنها). Imam Ahmad also counted two names for one lady. From this discussion we come to know that Ibn Manda or any other who counted two names for Khatibatun Nisa and Bin Al-Sakan, as for two different ladies is wrong. In fact, these two names denote one woman. Hazrat Asma bint Yazid bin Al Sakan had great learning memory and she was a scholarly woman. She spent her abilities in learning and transmission of the sayings of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). She was an early Muslim; She embraced Islam after her migration to Madina.⁴⁵ We have no evidence of her embracing Islam before her migration but she was one who pledged allegiance in the first of all among the Ansari Sahabiat.

She has narrated eighty-one sayings of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) which she learnt directly from the Holy Messenger (ﷺ). The persons who narrated hadith of Asma (رضى الله عنها) are Sahar bin Hasham, her lord Muhajir bin Abi Muslim, her nephew Muhammad bin Amar, Ishaq bin Rashid and Mujahid.⁴⁶ We have no evidence of her off-spring but we can guess from her surname that she might have two children Amir and Salma. There is evidence of her husband but her divorce is mentioned in Ahadith.⁴⁷ Her date of death is also not written but in the book “As,habiyat-Hol-Arasool” 30th hijri is mentioned as her date of death.⁴⁸ Her presence in the court of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) caused benefits for the Muslim Ummah, regarding her narration of the sayings of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

Followings are teachings, the muslim get from the Life of Hazrat Asma for Islam:

1. Muslim Men and women cannot shake hand with each other.
2. Men and women can exchange Islamic greeting salam, if there is no fear of temptation.
3. Women can express their ideas and can demand their rights.
4. Women can select one of them as their representative.

5. Women can discuss their problems before responsible and able leaders.
6. It is an admirable trait in Islam to provide woman training of jihad (fight for the cause of Allah) for self-defense and for the cause of their religion.
7. Women can participate in jihad.
8. Women can participate in public meetings but they should care for the demands of modesty in Islam.
9. It is admired by Islam that a woman should deliver speech before female gathering.
10. Women can consult men for solution of their problems if there is no fear of temptation and they can learn from men as their teachers abiding by the rules of Islam.
11. A bridal should be beautified and she can wear special bridal dress.
12. Bridal and groom can sit beside each other and other women can have a glance of the groom, if there is no allurements for evil.

Important points from the sayings of the Holy prophet (ﷺ) narrated by Hazrat Asma;

1. There is no standing on ceremony in appetite. If someone denies meal despite his need then he will lie.
2. A lie is illegal but three types of liars are given exception, one who lies to reconcile between people, second, a husband who lies to reconcile with his wife, third, one who lies as a strategy of war.
3. To be sorrowful in the time of calamity or death is allowed in Islam, as the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was sad on the death of hazrat Saad bin Moaz (رضى الله عنه).
4. Continuous fasting is prohibited in Islam.
5. Islam is easy to follow that is why continuous fasting is not allowed.
6. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is the best reciter and explainer of the Holy Quran.
7. Backbiters are the worst people.
8. When the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) departed from this world, his arms were mortgaged with a Jew.
9. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) used to order for preaching and publicizing Islam.
10. Some students may be abler than their teachers.
11. The greatest name of Allah Almighty is Al-Hay, Al-Qayuom.
12. Join the company of those, whose sight reminds Allah.

13. Aqiqa for the new born baby is Sunnah. Two goats for the baby boy and one goat for baby-girl.
14. Rejecting the blessings of Allah means to be thankless to Him.
15. Women should not be ungrateful to their husbands, it invites punishment of Allah.
16. Men and women can exchange Islamic greeting salam, if there is no fear of temptation.
17. The transgression of dajjal is the greatest of all transgressions till the Day of Judgment.
18. While taking the pledge of allegiance, the leader will not shake hand whether the woman is Muslim or non-Muslim.
19. Infanticide -slaying of offspring is a crime.
20. The Holy prophet (ﷺ) preferred the ornaments of silver over gold.
21. Paying Zakat purifies wealth otherwise it calls upon a painful doom.
22. All types of preparation for jihad (struggle for the cause of Allah) is reward able.
23. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) loved Abu-Zar Ghaffari (رضى الله عنها).
24. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was bestowed with miracles.
25. The objects used by the holy Prophet (ﷺ) in his life are a source of blessing and sahabah used them as relic.
26. A husband and a wife should not expose the secrets of each other.
27. When a person lies again and again, he is written as a habitual liar near Allah.
28. When Hazrat Ibrahim (A.s) (son of the Holy prophet (ﷺ) died, the Messenger (ﷺ) was gloomy.
29. Umul- kitab (Surah Fatiha) should be recited in funeral prayer.
30. The Holy Prophet did not offer the funeral prayer (Namaz Janaza) of a Muslim until the loan on his behalf had been paid.
31. If a person builds a mosque in this world, consequently he will be allotted a home in paradise.
32. A person can sleep in mosque if needed.
33. Teachers must develop their thought and the basis is knowledge.

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- 8- Shaheen Abdul Saboor, Al-sahabiyat Haol Al-Rasool volum no 1, page 208
- 9- Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī or *Ibn Ḥajar* (, full name: *Shihāb al-Dīn Abu 'l-Faḍl Aḥmad b. Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī b. Muḥammad b Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī*) (18 February 1372 – 2 February 1449 [852 A.H.]), was a medieval Sunni Muslim scholar of Islam "whose life work constitutes the final summation of the science of hadith. represents the entire realm of the Sunni world in the field of Hadith, also known as Shaykh al Islam. He authored about fifty works on hadith, history, biography, tafsir, poetry, and Shafi'ite jurisprudence, the most valued of which being his commentary of the Sahih of Bukhari, titled *Fath al-Bari*. (Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb, Muqaddima)
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23- Ibid.

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25- Ibid.

26- Ibid.

27- In Qura'n, ALLAH said about the oath from muslim women:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يَبَايَعْنَكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ
بِبَهْتَسٍ يُفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِينَكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايَعْنَهُنَّ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهُ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

(Al-Mumtahina 60: 12) when Muhammad Rasool ALLAH migrate to Madina Muawwarah, He took oath (Bai't in Arabic) from new muslim Men and women. In Hadith of Umm E Atiyya Al_ Ansaria RA, He took oath from women not to mourn over the deaths. Reasons for this oathas follow:

A) Mourning is prohibited in Islam.

B) ther was a tradition of mourning among women.

Moreover they did it because of their humble hearts. That is why a proper oath was taken from them to refrain them from mourning.

The tradition of mourning of each other's family members was commen among the women of Madinah Munawwarah. As hazrat Umm E atiyya Al- Ansaria says that she went to Holy Prophet SAW and told him that her friend mourned over the death of her brother and she had to pay back in the same way at least once according to the tradition. The Holy Prophet SAW then allowed her to do it only once. (Muslim B. Hajjaj , Al-Sahi, Book of Al Janaiz, Chapter Al-Tashdeed fi Nniyaha, hadith 2165)

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32- Ibid.

33- Ibid.

34- Ibn Hanbal, Ahmad, Imam, Masnad Ahmad, Hadith Asma Bint Yazid,Hadith 27660, Page 480.

- 35- Tirmadi, Muhammad Bin Esa, Imam, Al Jami, Book of Al est'zan, Chapter saying salam to women, Hadith 2697 .
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- 41- Salman Mansoor, Muhammad Suleman Qadi, Bad Al-Badoor, Page 102.
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- 47- Abu-Dawood, Salman B. Ash'as, Imam, Al-Sunan, Book of Divorce, Hadith no. 2281.
- 48- Shaheen Abdul Saboor, Al-sahabiyat Haol Al-Rasool volum no 1, page 210.