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The Life of:

حَفْصَةُ بِنْتُ سِيرِينَ

HAFSAH BINT SEEREN

Iyaas ibn Mu'awiyah said:



‘...As for me I do not prefer anyone over her. She learnt the Qur’aan by heart when she was twelve years old.’

(Al Mizzi, Tahdheeb al-Kamaal, xxxv. 152.)

Introduction

Over a number of years, while listening to talks, reading books and articles, time after time again I came across the name 'Hafsah bint Seereen'. This continued to be the case until recently. I quickly scribbled down her name on my sticky-pad with the intention of doing some thorough research about the life of such a great, yet to many in the west, unknown personality. And so, I began writing this book with the hope of raising ignorance from myself, and hopefully others. Little did I know, I was to stumble upon a treasure from the treasures awaiting in the books of our pious predecessors.

It was as though I was sitting for a long time in darkness when all of a sudden I was blessed to see spectacular scenery, the beauty and awe of which left an indelible and lasting impression on me. This is because, although there are many role-models from among the righteous men of this Ummah, it is truly inspirational to have come across such an inspirational role model from among the righteous women of this Ummah. What amazed me the most was her extensive '*ibaadah* (worship).

I pray Allah, the Most Glorious and Able, bestows upon all of us the ability to worship Him with sincerity, conviction and with a strong will and drive. Aameen!

The Freed Slave of Anas, Sireen

Her agnomen (*kunyah*) was Umm Hudhayl, which means 'The Mother of Hudhayl' and her proper name was Hafsah, the daughter of Sireen. She was the sister of the renowned Successor (*Tabi'ee*) and scholar, Muhammad ibn Sireen.

To understand the amazing upbringing Hafsah (rahimaha Allah) was given it is important to note that her father was the freed slave of the illustrious Companion: Anas ibn Maalik (radhiAllahu 'anhu). Anas ibn Maalik was the son of the righteous Sahaabiyyah of Madinah, the Ansaariyyah: Ghumaisah bint Milhaa, also known as Umm Sulaim, the wife of Abu Talhah.

In the following hadeeth, we learn how the mother of Anas ibn Maalik gifted him at a very young age to the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam), so that he would serve the Noble Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) and also learn from him about religious matters. Indeed, what a clever mother Umm Sulaim was! She understood that by her child serving the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) in no way would this bring about in him an inferiority complex, nor would this belittle his rank and standing in society. Rather, as Islamic history testifies, Anas (radhiAllahu `anhu) would receive an unparalleled upbringing, due to which he possessed a refined and lofty character and was blessed in this life and will be in the next, due to a special supplication the Noble Messenger (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) made for him. All of this is due to the acute intelligence of his mother in sacrificing her child's days of play and fun, in order for him to sit under the shade of the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam).

From this, dear Sisters, we should learn the great benefit of allowing children to sit and benefit from the company of scholars and the righteous and how this can truly impact their characters and morals. Have we forgotten the mother of Imaam Maalik of Madinah, 'Aaliyah bint Shareek ibn 'Abdur Rahman al-Azdiyyah She sent Imaam Maalik to Rabee'ah ibn Abee Abdir-Rahmaan, also known as 'Rabee'ah Ar-Ra'ee' (which means: 'Rabee'ah, the subjectively opinionated') due to his strong sense of subjective opinion, jurisdictional ruling and reasoning. Before sending Imaam Maalik to him, she tied his turban around his head, and presented him with his very first rule to apply when sitting with scholars and the people of knowledge. She said:

أي بني : اجلس مع ربيعة ، وخذ من أدبه ووقاره وخشوعه قبل أن تأخذ من علمه .

"O my son! Sit with Rabee'ah and take from his manners, dignified bearing and humility, before you take from his knowledge."(Ibn Farhoon has mentioned this in Ad-Deebaaj al Madhab 1/20)

Truly! The reward for such mothers lies with their Lord the Most High.

In fact the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said regarding the mother of Anas ibn Maalik: "I entered Paradise and heard the noise of steps. I said: 'Who is it?' They said:

'She is Ghumaisah, daughter of Milhan, the mother of Anas b. Malik.'(Saheeh Muslim, Book 031, Number 6011)

She would use her headdress in order to prepare her child for the noble task of serving the Prophet (sallallahu a'lyhi wa sallam). A task which undoubtedly became a source of honor for her in this life and the next. Anas (radhiAllahu a'nhu) said: 'My mother Umm Anas came to Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him). And she prepared my lower garment out of the half of her headdress and (with the other half) she covered my upper body and said: *"Allah's Messenger, here is my son Unais (Unais is used for the diminutive and the diminutive here is being used out of love); I have brought him to you for serving you. Invoke blessings of Allah upon him."* Thereupon he (the Holy Prophet) said: "O Allah, make an increase in his wealth, and progeny."

Anas said:

By Allah, my fortune is huge and my children, and grand-children are now more than one hundred.' (Saheeh Muslim, Book 031, Number 6063)

Many years later, this illustrious Companion purchased a slave from the Companion of the Prophet (sallallahu a'lyhi wa sallam), Khalid ibnu Waleed (radhiAllahu 'anhu). This slave had been captured in one of the deserts of Iraq, and his name was Seereen. Overtime he freed himself and his family by paying Anas ibn Maalik a certain amount of wealth, yet truly he could never pay back Anas ibn Maalik for the great beneficial knowledge he and his family gained from him. For, the concept of slavery in Islaam was and is very different from the concept of slavery as practiced in non-Muslim lands, especially America. In Islaam,

slaves are treated well and are able to purchase their freedom. They are treated as humans who have rights, rather than sub-humans stripped of their dignity and self-respect. They were educated in religious matters and were given freedom to practice their faith. On the other hand slavery still exists in America, in its cruelest form. A closer look at the 13th amendment will show as falsehood the oft-propagated myth of the abolishment of American slavery. ((AMENDMENT XIII: Passed by Congress January 31, 1865, ratified December 6, 1865.

Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, **except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted**, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.))

In contrast, let us look at the following statements and wise words of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu a'lyhi wa sallam):

Abu Mas'ud al-Ansari reported: "When I was beating my servant, I heard a voice behind me (saying): 'Abu Mas'ud, bear in mind Allah has more dominance over you than you have upon him.' I turned and (found him) to be Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him). I said: 'Allah's Messenger, **I set him free for the sake of Allah.**' Thereupon he said: '**Had you not done that, (the gates of) Hell would have opened for you, or the fire would have burnt you.**'" (Translation of Sahih Muslim, The Book of Oaths (Kitab Al-Aiman), Book 015, Number 4088)

If a Muslim beats his slave or slaps him on the face, then he must set him free:

"Zadhan reported that Ibn Umar called his slave and he found the marks (of beating) upon his back. He said to him: 'I have caused you pain.' He said: 'No.' But he (Ibn Umar) said: 'You are free.' He then took hold of something from the earth and said: 'There is no reward for me even to the weight equal to it. I heard Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying:

"He who beats a slave without cognizable offence of his or slaps him, then expiation for it is that he should set him free." " (Translation of Sahih Muslim, The Book of Oaths (Kitab Al-Aiman), Book 015, Number 4079)

The above statements of our beloved Prophet (peace be upon him) are clear and decisive. If a Muslim beats his slave, then the gates of hell will open for him. Muslims must not mistreat their slaves, because slaves in Islam are like brothers:

Narrated Al-Ma'rur: At Ar-Rabadha I met Abu Dhar who was wearing a cloak, and his slave, too, was wearing a similar one. I asked about the reason for it. He replied, "I abused a person by calling his mother with bad names." The Prophet said to me, 'O Abu Dhar! Did you abuse him by calling his mother with bad names You still have some characteristics of ignorance. **Your slaves are your brothers** and Allah has put them under your command. So whoever has a brother under his command should feed him of what he eats and dress him of what he wears. Do not ask them (slaves) to do things beyond their capacity (power) and if you do so, then help them.'" (Translation of Sahih Bukhari, Belief, Volume 1, Book 2, Number 29)

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: "When the slave of anyone amongst you prepares food for him and he serves him after having sat close to (and undergoing the hardship of) heat and smoke, **he should make him (the slave) sit along with him and make him eat (along with him), and if the food seems to run short, then he should spare some portion for him (from his own share)** - (another narrator) Dawud said:" i. e. a morsel or two". 4097. " (Translation of Sahih Muslim, The Book of Oaths (Kitab Al-Aiman), Book 015, Number 4096)

Narrated AbuDharr: "The Prophet (peace_be_upon_him) said: Feed those of your slaves who please you from what you eat and clothe them with what you clothe yourselves, but sell those who do not please you and **do not punish Allah's creatures.** (Translation of Sunan Abu Dawud, General Behavior" (Kitab Al-Adab, Book 41, Number 5142)

The Noble Quran not only allows slaves to request their freedom from their Muslim masters but also orders the Muslim masters to pay their slaves money to help them stand on their two feet and to be able to face life with a good jump start.

Let us look at Noble Verse 24:33: "Let those who find not the wherewithal for marriage keep themselves chaste, until God gives them means out of His grace. And if any of your slaves ask for a deed in writing (to enable them to earn their freedom for a certain sum), give them such a deed if ye know any good in them: yea, give them something yourselves out of the means which God has given to you. ..." In this Noble Verse, we see that if a slave requests his freedom from his Muslim master, then his master not only must help him earn his freedom if there is good in the Slave, but also pay him money so the slave can have a good start in his free life.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Give food to the hungry, pay a visit to the sick and **release (set free) the one in captivity (by paying his ransom).**"(Translation of Sahih Bukhari, Food, Meals, Volume 7, Book 65, Number 286)

"The law of slavery in the legal sense of the term is now obsolete. While it had any meaning, Islam made the slave's lot as easy as possible. A slave, male or female, could ask for conditional manumission by a written deed fixing the amount required for manumission and allowing the slave meanwhile to earn money by lawful means and perhaps marry and bring up a family. Such a deed was not to be refused if the request was genuine and the slave had character. Not only that, but the master is directed to help with money out of his own resources in order to enable the slave to earn his or her own liberty." (The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an. Foot note #2991, page 875.)

Therefore, although Muhammad Seereen and Hafsah bint Seereen are referred to as the 'freed-slaves of Anas', we will come to see how this did not stop them from being empowered by means of knowledge, so much so that those who were of more dignified social bearing would flock to them for knowledge and religious guidance. Such respect for scholars who may have been slaves/freed slaves does not only apply to the family of Seereen, but also applies to many other scholars of Islaam, as history testifies.

A Blessed Marriage with Blessed Offspring

Seereen married a pious woman by the name of Safiyyah, who was the freed slave of Abu Bakr (radhiallahu `anhu). Eighteen Sahaabah, who had participated in the battle of Badr, attended their marriage ceremony. Heading these eighteen Sahaabah was Ubayy ibn Ka'b, the great Companion who had collected the Qur'aan into book form and who had witnessed Badr, Uhud and the Pledge of A'qabah

The fruit of this marriage was pure in that Allah (a'zza wa jall) blessed them both with a daughter, who they named Hafsah, in 31AH during the Caliphate of Uthmaan (radhiallahu `anhu). She received and was provided with the best nutrition: the spiritual nutrition of the Qur'aan and Sunnah. (At-Tabaqaat (8/193), Tahdheeb Asmaa' wal Lughaat (1/83) and Al Ma'rifah wa at-Taareekh (3/27).) She had many brothers and sisters, including half-brothers and sisters, all of who became trustworthy narrator (*ruwaat thuqaat*) of the narrations of the Noble Messenger (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam). (Please refer to: Tahdheeb Al-Asmaa' wal-Lughaat (1/83).)

Her brother Muhammad ibn Seereen was also a great scholar and her sister Kareemah bint Seereen was also an a'abidah (worshipper). Mahdee ibnu Maymoon said regarding her sister:

"Kareemah bint Seereen, the sister of Hafsah bint Sireen, stayed for fifteen years without leaving her prayer mat except to fulfil a need/the call of nature (*li qadhaa' haajah*)."(Sifah As-Safwah, Dhikr Al Mustafiyaat min A'abidaat al Basrah, Vol 2, Page 710)

A Woman of Rare Knowledge

The knowledge of Hafsah (rahimahaAllah) was such that Iyaas ibn Mu'awiyah said: '*I did not meet anyone whom I can prefer over Hafsah.*' He was asked: 'What about Hasan al Basri and Muhammad ibn Sireen?' He said: '*As for me I do not prefer anyone over her. She learnt the Qur'aan by heart when she was twelve years old.*' (Al Mizzi, Tahdheeb al-Kamaal, xxxv. 152.)

He said this even though the brother of Hafsah (rahimahaAllah) had met thirty Companions of the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) (Siyar, vol 4, page 606) and even though A'wf al-A'rabi said: "Ibn Seereen had good knowledge (*hasanul i'lm*) in Law of Decent and Distribution (*al-Faraaidh*), Jurisdiction (*al-Qadaa'*) and Estimation (*Al Hisaab*)."(Siyar, vol 4, page 609)

And Hishaam ibnu Hassaan said: "I saw Al-Hasan (Hasan al Basri), and (Muhammad) ibnu Seereen, and I did not see anyone that I thought was cleverer than Hafsah." (Sifah As-Safwah, Dhikr Al Mustafiyaat min A'abidaat al Basrah, Vol 2, Page 709)

Not only had she memorized the Qur'aan by the age of twelve but she had deep knowledge pertaining to the recitation of the Qur'aan. Hishaam narrates that when Ibn Sireen (her

brother) would find something difficult and ambiguous (*ashkala 'alayhi*) regarding the *Qiraa'ah* (recitation), he would say, "Go and ask Hafsah how to recite." (Sifah As-Safwah, Dhikr Al Mustafiyaat min A'abidaat al Basrah)

She was both a great *muhaddithah* (scholar of hadeeth) and *faqeehah* (jurist). She had learnt many ahaadeeth from the great Companion Anas ibnu Maalik. (Ibn Hibbaan, K. al-Thiqaat, iv. 194.) This is why ahaadeeth narrated by her from Anas ibnu Maalik can be found in Saheeh al Bukhari, for example, 'Aasim narrates from her from Anas that the Prophet said:

'Plague is martyrdom for every Muslim.' (Al Bukhari, Saheeh, Tibb, baab: maa yudhkaru fi al-ta'oon.)



All six books of hadeeth mention her name as well as the books of Sunan and Masaaneed. One of the famous ahaadeeth she has narrated is the famous hadeeth regarding the washing of the dead, which she narrated from Umm A'tiyyah al Ansaariyyah. All the chains for this hadeeth go through Hafsah bint Sireen.

Akram Nadwi, in his book 'Al-Muhaddithat' wrote:

'Though born a slave, Hafsah bint Sireen made the best of the opportunity presented to her and became one of the most important scholars of her time. Some considered her superior to Hasan al Basri.' (Akram Nadwi, Al Muhaddithat, pg 101.)

An Epitome of Shyness and Modesty

Travelling on the path of the Names and Characteristics of Allah (a'zza wa jall) is a journey never to be forgotten. One of the most striking realities of the Names of Allah (subhaanahu wa ta'ala), is that Allah, the Most High, loves for His creation to manifest aspects of the meanings of His Names.

For example,

Allah (subhaanahu wa ta'ala) is Al-'Aleem (the Most Knowing) and loves the scholars.



Allah (a'zza wa jall) is Just and loves justice.

And Allah (a'zza wa jall) is Modest and loves those who are modest.

The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, "Certainly Allah (a'zza wa jall) is Al-Hayeey (The Most Modest), As-Sitteer (the Concealer, the Veiler), He loves al-Hayaa' (modesty) and as-Sitr (veiling, covering), so when one of you bathes (has a *ghusl*) then let him cover (himself)." (Narrated in Abu Daawood and an-

الحَيِّي

Nisaai)

This exemplary characteristic of *hayaa'* (modesty) was imbibed within the character of the Noble Prophets of Allah (a'zza wa jall). Today, when the believing woman, laden with outer-garment and lowered gaze, feels like a stranger in society, it is this prophetic quality which adds to her uniqueness, worth and righteousness. This safety measure protects her from being stung by disbelief and unrighteousness, so that she can walk within the valleys and roads of this life with ease, comfort, honour and respect. From a far distance people will realise, this is a Muslimah, a woman proud to surrender to her Lord.

My dear Sisters, the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam), our role-model and guide, was of the most shy and modest of people. So much so that Abu Sa'eed al Kudhri, his Companion (may Allah be pleased with him), stated: "The Prophet was more shy than a virgin in her separate room..." (Saheeh al Bukhaari) Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) mentioned regarding the Prophet Moses, "(The Prophet) Moses was a shy person and used to cover his body completely because of his extensive shyness..." (Saheeh al Bukhaari)

Today, when lack of modesty is resulting in the most horrendous of crimes, diseases and illnesses, let us, the Muslim women of this nation, revive, in an unprecedented fashion, even *within* the West, the true concept of modesty. Let us remember that even though our Noble Messenger (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) was a man, he nevertheless imbibed within his character modesty, far-above and loftier than that of even women of deep faith and attachment to their Lord.

Indeed, love is a feeling that translates into action. And who is more truthful than our Lord, the Most Glorious, when He said, **{Say (O Muhammad to mankind): "If you (really) love Allâh, then follow me, Allâh will love you and forgive you of your sins. And Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."}** (Surah Aale 'Imraan, chapter 3, verse 31)

My dear Sisters, let's strive to bring about *hayaat* (life) to *hayaa'* (modesty); for, as the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) eloquently expressed, "...modesty is a branch of faith." (Saheeh al Bukhaari) That is why a requisite of our *eemaan* (faith) is *hayaa'* (modesty).

Let us keep in mind that both the terms *hayaat* (life) and *hayaa'* (modesty) originate from the same root letters and hence, are intricately related, because goodness brings about only goodness. The Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said,

"Al-Hayaa' brings about nothing but *khayr* (good)." (Saheeh al Bukhaari and Saheeh al Muslim)

The Shyness of Hafsah, the Modest

Today, when the police and media provide guidelines on how to protect and safeguard ourselves from an impending threat, we listen and read with attentive ears and fixed gazes.

When passing by a notice in our local neighbourhood or close district, announcing and notifying the murder or attack of a person, we automatically rush to employ *as many* safety measures as we can to protect ourselves and our families. If we are informed of the tricks and scams of the tricksters and scammers, we straight away decide, with firmness and resolve (and a kind of fear in the heart) that we will safeguard ourselves ...

Read Allah's notice:

{And say to the faithful women to lower their gaze, and to guard their private parts, and not to display their adornment except what is apparent of it, and to extend their head-coverings (*khumur*) to cover their bosoms, and not to display their adornment except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husband's fathers, or their sons, or their husband's sons, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their womenfolk, or what their right hands rule (slaves), or the followers from the men who do not feel sexual desire, or the small children to whom the nakedness of women is not apparent, and not to strike their feet (on the ground) so as to make known what they hide of their adornments. And turn in repentance to Allah together, O you the faithful, in order that you are successful.} (Surah an-Noor, chapter 24, verse 31)

Alas! If only we would pay heed to the words of our Lord, the Most Knowing, the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing, when He informs us, the Muslim women, of the safety measures we must employ, for the safety of our own lives, and more importantly, our own souls. If only, we would rush to notify our sisters and daughters of the prescription the Almighty has prescribed, so that they may be known as free, chaste Muslim women, far from indecency, immorality and nudity. In this way their homes and private domains will be protected from the evil of anyone who even dares to point fingers their way.

{O Prophet! Say to your wives and your daughters and the women of the faithful to draw their *jalaabeeb* close around them; that is better that they will be recognized and not annoyed. And God is ever Forgiving, Gentle.} (Surah al-Ahzab, chapter 33, verse 59).

Let's rush to obey the command of our Lord, just as did the female Companions of the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam). When this verse was revealed, 'Aa'ishah, the Mother of the Faithful, said, "May Allah have mercy on the early immigrant women. When the verse **{That they should draw their veils over their bosoms}** was revealed, they tore their thick outer garments and made veils from them." (Aboo Daawood, Book 32, Hadeeth # 4091)

For those sisters who already cover, employ being even more vigilant and modest in your dealings with the opposite sex, even if there is no fear of *fitnah* (trial and temptation). For, Hafsah bint Seereen is our role model, and what a role model she indeed is!

A'asim said: 'We used to enter upon Hafsah bint Seereen and she would put her *jilbaab* (outer garment) like this and would cover her face with it. So we said to her,

"May Allah have mercy on you (*Rahimaki Allah*)! Allah (a'zza wa jall) says: **{And as for women past child-bearing who do not expect wed-lock, it is no sin on them if they discard**

their (outer) clothing in such a Way as not to show their adornment... [An-Noor [24]: 60]

And it (is referring to) the Jilbaab.”

He [A’asim] continued: ‘Then she [Hafsah] said to us:

“What comes after that (i.e. what is mentioned next in the same verse)?”

We said:

{...but to refrain (i.e. not to discard their outer clothing) is better for them. And Allâh is All-Hearer, All-Knower.} [An-Noor [24]: 60]

So she (Hafsah) said:

“It is the affirmation (ithbaat) of the Jilbaab.” (Sifah As-Safwah, Dhikr Al Mustafiyaat min A’abidaat al Basrah)

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 shaytaan promises us the opposite! He whispers to us that, “You are still young, when you become older you can begin to cover...” He may even sing to you the old song,

Abhi to mein jawaan hoon...

(I am still as yet young...)

Allah (a'zza wa jall) says:

{Shaytaan (Satan) threatens you with poverty and orders you to commit Fahshâ (evil deeds, illegal sexual intercourse, sins etc.); whereas Allâh promises you Forgiveness from Himself and Bounty, and Allâh is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower.} (Suratul Baqarah, chapter 2, verse 268)

Keep strong dear sisters, for Allah (a'zza wa jall), who created satan, knows his weaknesses and plots. O Believers! Allah (a'zza wa jall) informs us:

{... ever feeble indeed is the plot of Shaytaan (Satan).} (An-Nisaa’, chapter 4, verse 76)

My dear Sister, seek help in the protection and help of your Lord, in the morning and evening remember Him, and turn to Him with prayers and formulae of remembrances.

A Request For Support

For those sisters who do not wear the Niqaab, and who may even find it strange, bizarre and extreme, I request you to research more into the evidences for the Niqaab, and not to speak without knowledge. For, emotion is not evidence, although, yes, evidence is connected to emotion.

Today, when the Niqaab has become an icon of target and vilification, due to the vicious onslaught of the media, you have a chance to support those sisters who do wear the Niqaab,

even if you have chosen not to do so yourself, by removing any ignorance about it on your part and then others.

We must ponder over the above incident which occurred with Hafsah bint Seereen. For, she was a woman who was a student and companion of the female Companions of the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam). She was a woman who was not one of the Mothers of the Believers, a woman who had passed the age of covering, yet one who *still* donned the Niqaab. This shows us that the Niqaab was not stringently *only* worn by the Mothers of the Believers. Rather, it was also worn by the women who took them as role-models and leaders towards the paradise.

For example, when the Sahaabiyyah (Umm Khaalid) was searching for her son (who had died in the battlefield), some of the Companions of the Prophet said to her:



“You have come here asking for your son while veiling your face?” She said: "If I am afflicted

with the loss of my son, I shall not suffer the loss of my modesty.” (Saheeh al Bukhaari, Volume 1, Book 2, Number 8) This hadeeth is narrated in the most authentic book of hadeeth on the face of this world. And in it we see a Sahaabiyyah, who was not one of the Mothers of the Believers, attributing modesty to the covering of the face.

Furthermore, the brother of Hafsah bint Seereen, Muhammad ibn Seereen, who was also from the leading successors, asked ‘Ubaydah as-Salmaanee, who was from the older taabi’een (successors), about Allah’s statement: **{to cast their Jalabeeb over themselves}**, so he covered his face and (only exposed his left eye).” This is further supported by the hadeeth of Safiyyah bint Shaiba, the Sahaabiyyah, also related in Saheeh al Bukhaari, when she said, “Aa’ishah used to say, ‘When (the verse) **{They should draw their veils over their necks and bosoms}** was revealed, (the ladies) cut their waist sheets at the edges and covered their faces with the cut pieces.” (Saheeh al Bukhaari, Volume 6, Book 60, Hadeeth # 282)

I end this section with,

Hafsah bint Seereen, wore the Niqaab even when old,

Something many believers today disdain and scold,

Yes, people today are so outright bold!

Denying the Niqaab with unresearched ideas manifold.

The Mothers of the Faithful covered their face,

*Therefore the Niqaab does have a base,
In the canons of our deen,
That is why wore it Hafsah bint Seereen,
Following in their footsteps, she was so keen,
As, first and foremost, it was worn by the Ummahaatul Mu'mineen.*

*A sign of modesty,
An emblem of morality.
Stand with the Niqaabis in solidarity!
For, with your Lord lies your loyalty.*

*My dear Sisters let's return,
To speaking with knowledge, after we research and learn.
Let's oppose satan who in hatred burns,
Against the women who to their Lord turn,
And to Him alone they turn, beseech and yearn,
For surely towards Him is the creations' final return.*

*I end with a request, that even if you do not cover your face,
To educate with beautiful mannerism those who haste,
In arguing against and speaking about the Niqaab with distaste.
So that Allah may forgive you on that day,
When only the chosen and sincere will have a say.*

The Importance of Youth

As time passes by, each second in it is similar to a leaf, flying away from the tree of our life. Today these seconds loyally cling to us; tomorrow they may stand against us. Blown away by destiny, their outcome we will surely see in the hereafter. That will be The Day (*al-Yowm*) when people will be drowning in sweat, running away from the most beloved to them. Few indeed will be those under the cool shade of the magnificent Throne of Allah, witnessing a day unlike any other.

Those who defied the passions and illicit desires of youth, and instead channelled their energy into worship, obedience and surrender to their Lord, will be from among the seven chosen groups. For, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *“There are seven whom Allah will shade in His Shade on the Day when there is no shade except His Shade...”* He then mentioned one of them as being *“...a youth who grew up in the worship of Allah.”*

Wisdom can't be purchased, and seldom can it truly be acquired. It is a gift bestowed by the All-Wise, the Creator of Wisdom and the Creator of the Intellect. The effect of wisdom is to add colour to the speech and character of those who possess it, just as the lofty sky is so beautifully covered at times by the spectrum of the rainbow.

Many of the books containing the Prophetic Narrations of the Messenger of Allah shine forth this wondrous light of wisdom, as he was gifted with concise speech. One such narration is, *'Take benefit of five before five: your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your free time before you are preoccupied, and your life before your death.'* (al-Haakim & others)

The pious followed this advice of the Prophet, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. They walked the difficult terrain of youth, pushing away the strong winds of distraction and play by replacing them with the joy of proximity to the Lord of the Magnificent Throne. They knew that the people of paradise will never age, that they were just like travellers in this world, and their ride to the next life was soon to come. That is why they wholeheartedly sacrificed their youth in pursuit of their Lord's Pleasure and Forgiveness.

Hafsah (may Allah be pleased with her), having experienced the great joy attained by worshipping Allah sincerely, knew the importance of youth in striving to worship Allah. Isn't it true that it is in youth that praying, fasting and long arduous acts of worship are lighter than in old age, when even small amounts of strain feel hard on the body? Thus she advised the youth,

“O youth (Ya Ma'shar ash-Shabaab)! Take from yourselves while you are young, for certainly I do not see (real) action except in youth.” (Sifah As-Safwah, Dhikr Al Mustafiyat min A'abidaat al Basrah)

Sadness grips the heart thinking about how the devil has keenly knitted over the hearts of many of us procrastination in worshipping Allah, and not giving our *'ibaadah* our utmost while we are still young. Many leave action for tomorrow, when few will even see

tomorrow. Look around you at the bed-ridden, elderly people, whose bones are beginning to give up, whose bodies ache with pain and fatigue due to illness and old-age. Then recall the promises you have made yourself for tomorrow's 'ibaadah instead of today's. Then be honest with yourself. And with Allah is the source of guidance.

Ah! If only we would take benefit from our youth and our health before our sickness. For, my dear sister, think: who has seen tomorrow?

*Yes! - Today - is the time to work and toil,
Before you will be dead and lie under muddy soil.
Today, prostrate and commemorate,
O Muslimah! The Praises of your Lord celebrate.
During the day and at night wake up to pray,
Before your tongue will be silenced, and then you'll have no say.
Even if it means fasting long hot days,
Your Lord will keep you strong and open many ways.
He will draw you close,
I pray that regarding you to the angels He will boast.
Old age brings with it many difficulties,
Look at what it does to even celebrities!
Pains will begin to surely grow,
Making it hard to even prostrate and bow.
Sleep will overcome and exhaustion you won't be able to shun,
But what if you die early like some...
Wake up and Realise!
Now's the time to work, not to dream and fantasize.*

Imaam Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali:

"And whoever is mindful of Allah (and keeps to His boundaries) in his youth during his years of strength, then Allah will preserve him in his old age when his strength weakens.

And He will allow him to enjoy and benefit from his sense of hearing, sight, capabilities, strength and mind/intellect.

One particular scholar had passed the age of 100 and still continued to benefit from his strength of body and mind. One day, he took a great leap and jumped up high, and the people rebuked him for that. So he said:

“We preserved these limbs of ours from sin when we were younger, so Allah has preserved them for us in our old age.” (Jami’ ‘Ulum wal-Hikam)

A Devoted Worshipper

Today, when few indeed are those who devoutly and wholeheartedly worship Allah, Hafsah (may Allah be pleased with her) stands out like a shining star to be followed in her worship of Allah. Mahdi ibn Maymoon said:

“Hafsah bint Seereen stayed thirty years without leaving her prayer place, unless for sleep or to answer the call of nature.” (Siyar A’laam an-Nubalaa’)

Hishaam said that:

“Hafsah used to enter her Masjid, then pray in it Adh-Dhuhr, Al-‘Asr , Al-Maghrib , Al-‘Ishaa’ and As-Subh (i.e. Fajr). Then she would stay in it (the Masjid) until the day rose. She would then bow (perform *rukoo’*), then leave (the Masjid). At that time she would make wudhoo’ and sleep until the Prayer (Salah) became due. She would then (once again) return to her Masjid and do the same continuously.” (Sifah As-Safwah, Dhikr Al Mustafiyaat min A’abidaat al Basrah)

Her heart was soft, and her eyes flowed tears of hope and fear of her Lord. Hishaam ibnu Hassaan mentions that Hafsah (rahimahallah) purchased a *jaariyah* (maid, slave-girl). She was asked, “How do you find your master (i.e. Hafsah)?” 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 prays.” (Sifah As-Safwah, Dhikr Al Mustafiyaat min A’abidaat al Basrah, Vol 2, Page 709)

She was preparing to meet her Lord so much so that she had prepared her own shroud! Hishaam narrated from Hafsah that, “She had a shroud (*kafn*) prepared, so when she performed Hajj and wore the Ihraam, she wore it. And she would, when it was the last ten (nights) of Ramadhaan, stand some of the night while wearing it.”

A Saai'mah (One who regularly Fasts)

Anyone who reads the following mentioned rewards for fasting with contemplation and the desire to gain Allah's happiness and reward will find that their heart will ignite a desire to fast long days in the path of Allah. Allah (a'zza wa jall) says, **{For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, ... for men and women who fast (and restrain themselves)... for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward}**. [Noble Quran 33:35]

Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: "Every (good) deed of the son of Adam would be multiplied, a good deed receiving a tenfold to seven hundredfold reward. Allah, the Exalted and Majestic, has said: 'With the exception of fasting, for it is done for Me and I will give a reward for it, for one abandons his passion and food for My sake.' There are two occasions of joy for one who fasts, joy when he breaks it, and joy when he meets his Lord, and the breath (of an observer of fast) is sweeter to Allah than the fragrance of musk." [Muslim]

Indeed fasting is a protection from the hellfire. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Allah says, "Fasting is a shield with which one may protect oneself from the Fire."' [Sahih al-Jami, 4/114] He (peace be upon him) also said: "Every servant of Allah who observes fast for a day in the way of Allah, Allah would remove, because of this day, his face farther from the Fire (of Hell) to the extent of seventy years' distance." [Muslim]

Fasting will also intercede for the believer. The Messenger of Allah, upon whom be peace, said: "The fast and the Quran are two intercessors for the servant of Allah on the Day of Resurrection. The fast will say: 'O Lord, I prevented him from his food and desires during the day. Let me intercede for him.' The Quran will say: 'I prevented him from sleeping at night. Let me intercede for him.' And their intercession will be accepted." [Ahmad]

In fact, there is a special reward in paradise for those who fast! Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: "In Paradise there is a gate which is called *Rayyan* through which only the observers of fast would enter on the Day of Resurrection. None else would enter along with them. It would be proclaimed: "Where are the observers of fast that they should be admitted into it?" And when the last of them would enter, it would be closed and no one would enter it." [Muslim]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also emphasized the importance that fasting has on entering Paradise. Abu Umamah reported: "I came to the Messenger of Allah and said: 'Order me to do a deed that will allow me to enter Paradise.' He said: 'Stick to fasting, as there is no equivalent to it.' Then I came to him again and he said: 'Stick to fasting.'" [Ahmad, an-Nasa'i, and al-Hakim]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "In Paradise there are dwellings whose inside can be seen from the outside, and the outside can be seen from the inside. Allah has prepared them for those who feed the hungry, and speak softly and gently, fast continuously and pray at night whilst the people are asleep." [Sahih al-Jami']

Dear Sisters! Do you have a wish that you wish would be fulfilled? Then rejoice! The Du'aa (Supplication) of the fasting person is not rejected. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "There are three prayers that are not rejected: the prayer of a father for

his child, the prayer of the fasting person and the prayer of the traveller." [Muslim and Bukhari]

Hafsah, may Allah be pleased with her, was a Saa'imah – a woman who regularly fasted. Abdul Kareem ibnu Mu'aawiyah said: "It was mentioned to me regarding Hafsah that she would read half of the Qur'aan every night and would fast during the day and would break her fast (i.e. wouldn't fast) the two E'ids and the days of *Tashreeq* (the three days next after the day of sacrifice, i.e. following the 10th of Dhul Hijjah)." (Sifah As-Safwah, Dhikr Al Mustafiyaat min A'abidaat al Basrah, Vol 2, Page 709)

Let's try and follow her example, for maybe, just maybe, this may be one of our keys to the Paradise of Delight.

A Great Test for a Great Mother

Having read much about this great and exemplary role model, Hafsah bint Seereen, you must have a sort of angelic impression of her. Without a doubt, she was an incredible woman but she was a human. Therefore tests came her way as they come our way, she suffered as we suffer in this world, she experienced some pain as we experience pain – although our way of dealing with problems may vary incredibly to hers.

Hishaam ibnu Hassaan said:

'Hudhayl, the son of Hafsah, used to gather firewood during the summer, then he would peel it and take the stalks and split them. She (Hafsah) said:

"I used to find chilliness (*kuntu ajidu qirrah*) (i.e. used to feel cold), so when winter came he (Hudhayl) would come with a stove and would then place it behind me while I was on my prayer-mat (*musallaa*). He would then sit and ignite the fuel by using that peeled firewood. Its (the fire's) smoke would not harm and it would keep me warm. We would remain like that for as long as Allah willed...

And when I would intend to turn towards him, and say: 'O my son! Return to your family', I would remember what he intended, so I would leave him.

When he died, Allah granted (*yarzuq*) him patience as much as He (Allah) wanted to provide (this is because before his death he was suffering from a virus). But I would find within myself an agony (*gussah* could also mean 'that which causes choking, a lump in the throat, mortal distress') that would not go away.

Then that night while I was reciting Surah an-Nahl and I came to this verse:

{And purchase not a small gain at the cost of Allâh's Covenant. Verily! What is with Allâh is better for you if you did but know. Whatever is with you, will be exhausted, and whatever is with Allâh (of good deeds) will remain. And those who are patient, We will certainly pay them a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do}. [An-Nahl [16]: 95-96]

Then I repeated it and then Allah took away what I was feeling.” (Sifah As-Safwah, Dhikr Al Mustafiyaat min A’abidaat al Basrah, Vol 2, Pages 708-710)

Miracles (Karaamaat)

Hishaam said:

“Hafsah bint Seereen would light her lamp a part of the night then she would stand on her prayer mat (*musallaa*). Oftentimes the light would extinguish, but her house would be lit for her until the morning.” (Sifah As-Safwah, Dhikr Al Mustafiyaat min A’abidaat al Basrah, Vol 2, Pages 708-710)

Hishaam said: Umm Sulaym, the daughter of Seereen, narrated to me:

“Many a time there was a light for Hafsah bint Seereen in her house.” Sifah As-Safwah, Dhikr Al Mustafiyaat min A’abidaat al Basrah, Vol 2, Pages 708-710)

A Blessed Funeral

She died in 101AH and a group of the leading Successors (*Taabi’oon*) attended her funeral prayer in Basrah, Iraaq. Leading them was Al-Hasan Al Basri and her brother Muhammad ibnu Seereen. (Tahdheeb At-Tahdheeb (10/12) and (6/536), Al Ma’rifah wat-Taareekh (1/58))

She died at the age of 90 years old. (Sifah As-Safwah, Dhikr Al Mustafiyaat min A’abidaat al Basrah)

May Allah (the Mighty, the Glorious) grant us the Tawfeeq to follow in her footsteps and may Allah (the Glorious, the Mighty) forgive our sins and elevate our ranks. *Aameen*.