

Zayd ibn Harithah

He is Zayd ibn Harithah, one of the most beloved companions of the Prophet (pbuh) and the only companion to have been mentioned in the Quran by his name (Surah A-Ahzab 33:37). Allah swt chose many of the companions to come to Makkah for one or other reasons, to be among the followers of His Messenger (pbuh) and this man here, has an equally interesting story of how he came to be known as the beloved of the Prophet (pbuh.)

Zayd was the son of Harithah and Sudah, who were Arabs but not from Makkah. His parents belonged to different clans. His mother belonged to Bani Man and once while she was visiting her family with her son, their tribe was attacked by an enemy tribe. Consequently, Zayd was taken as a captive and sold as a slave in the markets of Ukaadh.

The person who bought him was Hakim ibn Huzaam, nephew of the lady Khadija (ra). When his aunt called upon him on his arrival to Makkah, he presented Zayd to her as a gift. This was before the arrival of Islam, and even before her marriage to the Prophet (pbuh.)

After a few months, or years as per some scholarly opinion, Khadijah (ra) got married to the Prophet (pbuh) and as a gift presented him, this young boy as a slave. The Prophet (pbuh) took this young boy and treated him like family instead of a slave. The two of them never parted ways since that day.

Meanwhile, his father Harithah was, ever since his abduction, on a lookout for him. Once it so happened, that some people from his tribe had come to Makkah for the annual pilgrimage. They happened to recognize Zayd and when they reached back home, they told Harithah about his being in Makkah. Without losing a second, Harithah set out to Makkah with his brother, some say his other son, Allahu Alam.

Upon his arrival to Makkah, they both went to see Muhammad (pbuh) and requested him to set their son free for a reasonable ransom. Muhammad (pbuh) responded by saying that he would leave the matter to Zayd. If Zayd wanted to go with his father, he was free to go without any ransom. However if he wanted to stay with him, then his father must allow him to do so.

Harithah was jubilant at this offer from the Prophet (pbuh). When Zayd was called and asked whether he recognized the men before him, he replied, "Yes, he is my father and my uncle." After that he was told about the offer of his leaving with his father and being set free. To this he responded, "I would never leave you (Muhammad (pbuh)) for anything in this world".

Hearing his son's response, Harithah was both surprised as well as shocked to know that his son preferred to stay a slave and not go as a free man with him to his own tribe.

It was then, that the Prophet (pbuh) took Zayd by hand to Kaabah and announced that he had adopted Zayd as his son. That from now on he was to be Zayd ibn Muhammad, and he would inherit from me and I would inherit from him.

His father, pleased that his son was in the household of an honorable family of the Quraish, that he was now a free man and no longer a slave, returned home a happy man.

Zayd was short and dark skinned, a shy kind of a boy who remained in the service of the Prophet (pbuh) till the end of his life. The Prophet (pbuh) treated him like his own son. When the Divine revelation came to the Prophet (pbuh), he was among the first ones to accept it.

The Prophet (pbuh) married him to his cousin Zainab bint Jash. This marriage however did not last. And even after repeated attempts of reconciliation, it ended up in divorce. After their divorce, the Prophet (pbuh) was instructed by Allah swt to marry Zainab. This was one of the breakthroughs in the Arabic culture where adopted sons were treated like their own sons and in this matter, a revelation came down, which abrogated the previous customs of adoption in pagan Arab.

...Nor has He made your adopted sons your real sons. That is but your saying with your mouths. But Allah says the truth, and He guides to the (Right) Way.

Call them (adopted sons) by (the names of) their fathers, that is more just with Allah. (Al-Ahzab 33:4-5)

Zayd was from then on known by his real name as Zayd ibn Harithah.

This beloved of the Prophet (pbuh) stood by the Prophet's side through all thick and thin. He was the one to accompany him (pbuh) to Taief. He was the one who fought many battles and in each battle was chosen by the Prophet (pbuh) as the commander of his army. Aisha (ra) said, "The Prophet never sent Zayd on an expedition but as a commander".

It was in the battle of Muthah that this brave heart, with a kind soul, the beloved of RasulAllah (pbuh) was martyred in 8 A.H with a smile on his lips. He is believed to be buried in present day Jordan.