

Upbringing in Iran

Hazrat Salman Farsi was born in city of Kazrun, Iran and he grew up in the town of Isfahan in Persia, in the village of Jayyan. His name at the time was Ruzbeh, a Persian name.

His father was the Dihqan (chief) of the village, and so he was the richest person there. His father loved him, more than he loved any other and as time went by, his love for Hazrat Salman became increasingly strong and overpowering. He began to fear that something might happen to his son, or that he might lose him and so he kept him at home, a virtual prisoner, in the same way that young girls were kept.

Hazrat Salman became devoted to the Magian religion, so much so that he became the custodian of the fire which they worshipped. His duty was to ensure that the flames of the fire did not go out for a single hour, day or night.

Hazrat Salman's father had a huge estate, which yielded an abundant supply of crops, and he looked after the estate and gathered harvest.

One day, as he went about his duties as Dihqan of the village, he said to Hazrat Salman, "My son, as you can see, I am too busy to go to the estate now. Go and look after matters there for me today."

On the way to the estate, Hazrat Salman passed a Christian church and heard voices raised in prayer, which attracted his attention. He did not know anything about the followers of any other religion, as his father had always kept him in the house away from other people.

Interest in Christianity

When he heard the voices of the Christians, he entered the church to see what they were doing. He was impressed by their manner of praying and felt drawn to their religion.

He said, "This religion is better than ours. I shall not leave them until the sun sets."

He did not go to his father's estate that day. At night, he returned home and his father asked where he had been. Hazrat Salman answered by telling him about his experience with the Christians and how impressive their religion was to him.

His father was dismayed and said, 'My son, there is nothing good in that religion. Your religion and the religion of your forefathers is better.' Hazrat Salman then insisted, "No, their religion is better than ours."

At this point, his father became worried that Hazrat Salman would leave their religion and so he kept Hazrat Salman locked up in the house and shackled his feet.

However, Hazrat Salman managed to send a message to the Christians, asking them to inform him of any caravans going to Syria. Before long, they informed him with the news he had been waiting for. He broke free of the shackles and escaped to join the caravan to Syria.

When he reached Syria, he asked enquired as to who the leading person was in the Christian religion and he was directed to the bishop of the church. He went up to him and said, 'I would like to become a Christian and attach myself to your service, learn from you and pray with you.'

The bishop agreed and Hazrat Salman entered the church in his service. However, Hazrat Salman soon found out that the bishop was corrupt. He would order his followers to donate money in charity while delaying his promise of blessings to them. When they entrusted the bishop with something to spend in the way of Allah, he would use it for himself and not give anything to the poor or needy. In this way, he amassed a vast quantity of gold.

The day came when the bishop died and the Christians gathered to bury him. At this moment, Hazrat Salman told them of his corrupt practices and, at their request, showed them where the bishop had kept their donations. When they saw the large jars filled with gold and silver they said, 'By God, we shall not bury him.'

They then nailed him on a cross and stoned him. Hazrat Salman stayed on at the church, in the service of the person who replaced the former bishop. The new bishop was an ascetic who longed for the Hereafter and engaged in worship, day and night. Hazrat Salman was devoted to him and spent much of the time in his company.

After the new bishop died, Hazrat Salman attached himself to various Christian religious figures, in Mosul, Nisibis and elsewhere. The last one told him that there was no longer any left on the earth that were following the correct path. He also told him that the time had arrived for the advent of a Prophet in the land of Arabia, who would have a reputation for strict honesty, one who would accept a gift but would never consume charity (sadaqah) for himself.

Journey to Madinah

A group of Arab leaders from the Kalb tribe passed through Ammuriyah. Hazrat Salman asked to travel with them to the land of the Arabs, in exchange for whatever money he had. They agreed to take him along.

However, when they reached Wadi al-Qura (a place between Syria and Madinah Sharif), the Arabs broke their agreement and made him a slave, and sold Hazrat Salman to a Jew. Hazrat Salman worked as a servant for him but the Jew eventually sold him to a nephew of his, belonging to the tribe of Banu Qurayzah. This nephew took Hazrat Salman with him to Madinah Sharif (at the time known as Yathrib), which the Christian at Ammuriyah had described as the city of palm groves.

At that time, the Holy Prophet was inviting the people of Makkah to Islam but Hazrat Salman did not know of this because of the harsh duties slavery imposed upon him.

When the Prophet reached Madinah Sharif after his Hijrah from Makkah, Hazrat Salman was on top of a palm tree doing some work. Hazrat Salman's master was sitting under the tree.

A nephew of Hazrat Salman's master came up and said, 'May God declare war on the Aws and the Khazraj (the two main Arab tribes of Madinah). By God, they are now gathering at Quba to meet a man who has just arrived from Makkah and claims to be Prophet.'

Hazrat Salman began to feel light-headed upon hearing these words and he began to shiver so violently that he had to climb down, in fear that he may fall. He quickly swung down from the tree and spoke to his master's nephew. 'What did you say? Repeat the news for me.' Hazrat Salman's master grew angry at this breach of protocol and dealt him a terrible blow. 'What does this matter to you? Go back to what you were doing!' he shouted.

Hazrat Salman meets the Beloved Prophet

That evening, Hazrat Salman decided he would go and meet the Holy Prophet. He took some dates that he had gathered and went to the place where the Prophet had alighted.

He met him and said, 'I have heard that you are a righteous man and that you have companions with you who are strangers and are in need. Here is something from me as sadaqah. I see that you are more deserving of it than others are.'

The Holy Prophet then ordered his Companions to eat, but he himself refrained.

Hazrat Salman gathered some more dates and when the Holy Prophet left Quba for Madinah Sharif, Hazrat Salman went to him and said, 'I noticed that you did not eat of the sadaqah I gave. This however is a gift for you.'

Of this gift, both he and his companions ate. The strict honesty of the Holy Prophet was one of the characteristics that led Hazrat Salman to believe in him and accept Islam.

Hazrat Salman was released from slavery by the Holy Prophet, who paid his Jewish master an agreed price, and planted an agreed number of date palms to secure Hazrat Salman's emancipation.

After accepting Islam, Hazrat Salman would answer thus, when asked whose son he was: 'I am Salman, the son of Islam from the children of Adam.'

Battle of the Trench

Hazrat Salman was the one whose excellent suggestion it was to dig the moat in the Battle of the Trench.

Some sources gather him with the Muhajirun (immigrants from Makkah). However, other sources narrate that during the Battle of the Trench, one of the Muhajirun stated "Salman is one of us Muhajireen", and this was challenged by the Muslims of Madinah known as the Ansar.

A lively argument began between the two groups, each of them claiming that Hazrat Salman belonged to their group, and not to the other group. Rasulallah then arrived on the scene, and listened to the argument. He was amused by the claims but he soon put an end to their argument by saying, "Salman is neither Muhajir nor Ansar. He is one of us. He is one of the People of the House, Ahle Bait."

Hazrat Abu Bakr's Reign

Hazrat Salman pledged allegiance to Hazrat Abu Bakr along with Hazrat Ali, who pledged allegiance after a period of six months after Rasulallah's passing away.

Translation of the Holy Qur'an

He translated part of the Qur'an into Persian, thus becoming the first person to interpret the Holy Book into a foreign language.

The Passing Away of Hazrat Salman Farsi

Hazrat Salman the Persian passed away during the reign of the third Khalifa of Islam, Hazrat Usman Ghani.

There is some debate regarding his age at the time of death.

He is buried in Ctesiphon, present-day Iraq. Though that city fell into abandon, there is still a town there named after him, called Salman Pak.