

KHADIJA DAUGHTER — OF — KHUWAYLID

KHADIJA^(sa)

DAUGHTER OF KHUWAYLID



In the year 595, Muhammed son of Abdullah, Prophet of Islam, was old enough to go with trade caravans in the company of other kinsmen from the populous Quraish tribe. But the financial position of his uncle, Abu Talib, who raised him after the death of his father, had become very weak because of the expenses of *rifada* and *siqaya*, the housing and feeding of pilgrims of the holy "House of God" which Abraham and Ishmael had rebuilt following damage caused by torrential rain. It was no longer possible for Abu Talib to equip his nephew Muhammed with merchandise on his own. He, therefore, advised him to act as agent for a noble lady, Khadija bint (daughter of) Khuwaylid, who was the wealthiest person in Quraish. Her genealogy joins with that of the Prophet at Qusayy. She was Khadija daughter of Khuwaylid ibn Asad ibn `Abdul-`Ozza ibn Qusayy. She, hence, was a distant cousin of Muhammed.

The reputation which Muhammed enjoyed for his honesty and integrity led Khadija to willingly entrust her mercantile goods to him for sale in Syria. She sent him word through his friend Khazimah ibn Hakim, a relative of hers, offering him twice the commission she used to pay her agents to trade on her behalf. Muhammed, with the consent of his uncle Abu Talib, accepted her offer.

Most references consulted for this book make a casual mention of Khadija. This probably reflects a male chauvinistic attitude which does a great deal of injustice to this great lady, the mother of the faithful whose wealth contributed so much to the dissemination of Islam. It is not out of place at all that we should learn a little bit more about this great lady.

If you wish to research the life of this great lady, the best references are: al-Sayyuti's *Tarikh al Khulafa*, Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani's *Aghani*, Ibn Hisham's *Seera*, Muhammed ibn Ishaq's *Seerat Rasool-Allāh*, and *Tarikh al-rusul wal muluk* by Abu Ja`far Muhammed ibn Jarir al-Tabari (839-923 A.D.). Of all these books, only al-Tabari's *Tarikh* is being translated (by more than one translator and in several volumes) into English.

One publisher of Tabari's English *Tarikh* is the press of the State University of New York (SUNY).

Islam did not rise except through Ali's sword and Khadija's wealth, a saying goes. Khadija al-Kubra daughter of Khuwaylid ibn (son of) Asad ibn `Abdul-`Ozza ibn Qusayy belonged to the clan of Banu Hashim of the tribe of Banu Asad. According to some historians, Quraysh's real name was Fahr, and he was son of Malik son of Madar son of Kananah son of Khuzaimah son of Mudrikah son of Ilyas son of Mazar son of Nazar son of Ma`ad son of Adnan son of Isma`eel (Ishamel) son of Ibrahim (Abraham) son of Sam son of Noah, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon the prophets from among his ancestors. According to a number of sources, Khadija was born in 565 A.D. and died in 620 A.D. at the age of 55, but some historians say that she died ten years later. Khadija's mother, who, according to some sources, died around 575 A.D., was Fatima daughter of Za'ida ibn al-Asam of Banu `Amir ibn Ghalib, also a distant relative of Prophet Muhammed. Khadija's father, who died around 585 A.D., belonged to the `Abd al-`Ozza clan of the tribe of Quraysh and, like many other Qurayshis, was a merchant, a successful businessman whose vast wealth and business talents were inherited by Khadija and whom the latter succeeded in faring with the family's vast wealth. It is said that when Quraysh's trade caravans gathered to embark upon their lengthy and arduous journey either to Syria during the summer or to Yemen during the winter, Khadija's caravan equalled the caravans of all other traders of Quraysh put together.

Although the society in which Khadija was born was terribly male chauvinistic, Khadija earned two titles: *Ameerat-Quraysh*, Princess of Quraysh, and *al-Tahira*, the Pure One, due to her impeccable personality and virtuous character, not to mention her honorable descent. She used to feed and clothe the poor, assist her relatives financially, and even provide for the marriage of those of her kin who could not otherwise have had means to marry.

3-Story house of Khadija where she and the Prophet of Islam lived and where their daughter, Fatima, was born,

before its demolition by the Saudi government in 1413 A.H./1993 A.D.

Dome over the grave of Khadija at the Bagee' Cemetery before the rulers of Saudi Arabia demolished it.

By 585 A.D., Khadija was left an orphan. Despite that, and after having married twice__and twice lost her husband to the ravaging wars with which Arabia was afflicted__, she had no mind to marry a third time though she was sought for marriage by many honorable and highly respected men of the Arabian peninsula throughout which she was quite famous due to her business dealings. She simply hated the thought of being widowed for a third time. Her first husband was Abu (father of) Halah Hind ibn Zarah who belonged to Banu `Adiyy, and the second was Ateeq ibn `Aith. Both men belonged to Banu Makhzoom. By her first husband, she gave birth to a son who was named after his father Hind and who came to be one of the greatest *sahabis* of the Prophet. He participated in both battles of Badr and Uhud, and he is also famous for describing the Prophet's physique; he was martyred during the Battle of the Camel in which he fought on the side of Imām Ali ibn Abu Talib, although some historians say that he died in Basra. All biography accounts describe Hind as an outspoken orator, a man of righteousness and generosity, and one who took extreme caution while quoting the Messenger of Allāh. Besides him, Khadija gave birth by Abu Halah to two other sons: al-Tahir, and, of course, Halah, who is not very well known to historians despite the fact that his father is nicknamed after him.

Who were Khadija's children by her second husband? This is another controversy that revolves round the other daughters or step-daughters of the Prophet besides Fatima. These daughters, chronologically arranged, are: Zainab, Ruqayya, and Umm Kulthoom. Some historians say that these were Khadija's daughters by her second husband, whereas others insist they were her daughters by Muhammed. The first view is held by Sayyid Safdar Husayn in his book *The Early History of Islam* wherein he bases his conclusion on the contents of al-Sayyuti's famous work *Tarikh al-khulafa wal muluk* (history of the

caliphs and the kings). Here is a brief account of Khadija's daughters:

Zainab, their oldest, was born before the prophetic mission and was married to Abul-`As ibn al-Rabee`. She had accepted Islam before her husband did and participated in the migration from Mecca to Medina. She died early in 8 A.H./629 A.D. and was buried in Jannatul Bagee` where her grave can still be seen defying the passage of time. Ruqayya and Umm Kulthoom married two of Abu Lahab's sons. Abu Lahab, one of the Prophet's uncles, stubbornly and openly rejected his nephew's preaching; therefore, he was condemned in the Meccan Chapter 111 of the Holy Qur`ān, a chapter named after him. Having come to know about such a condemnation, he became furious and said to his sons, "There shall be no kinship between you and me unless you part with these daughters of Muhammed, whereupon they divorced them instantly. Ruqayya married the third caliph `Othman ibn `Affan and migrated with him to Ethiopia in 615 A.D., five years after the inception of the prophetic mission, accompanied by no more than nine others. That was the first of two such migrations. After coming back home, she died in Medina in 2 A.H./623 A.D. and was buried at Jannatul Bagee`. `Othman then married her sister Umm Kulthoom in Rabi` al-Awwal of the next (third) Hijri year. Umm Kulthoom lived with her husband for about six years before dying in 9 A.H./630 A.D., leaving no children.

One particular quality in Khadija was quite interesting, probably more so than any of her other qualities mentioned above: she, unlike her people, never believed in nor worshipped idols. There was a very small number of Christians and Jews in Mecca, and a fairly large number of Jews in Medina. What brought those Jews to Mecca and Medina? Some of them had migrated from Najran, Yemen, after being massacred by a fanatical Christian governor ruling on behalf of the Ethiopian Negus. The date of the massacre is 523 A.D., and its details are outside the scope of this book. Others had come from Greater Syria (including Jerusalem, Palestine) either escaping the persecution of the Romans or driven by curiosity and the desire to meet a new prophet of God whose advent was predicted in

their books. The Holy Qur'ān tells us that Jewish scriptures make a reference to Prophet Muhammed, and here are proofs testifying to this fact not from the Holy Qur'ān but from the Jews themselves:

`Abdullah ibn Salam, a Jewish rabbi who later on accepted Islam when the Prophet was in Medina, was asked once by `Omar ibn al-Khattab, Do you have any reference to Muhammed in your books? Yes, by Allāh, said `Abdullah, we can identify him by the description whereby Allāh described him if we see him among you just as one of us identifies his son once he sees him in the company of other children. According to the reference titled *Dala'il al-Nubuwwah*, Hassan ibn Thabit, the renown poet, is quoted by a chain of narrators saying, By Allāh! I was a young child of 7 or 8, yet I could very well understand whatever I heard. One day I heard a Jew on the summit of a hill shouting as loudly as he could for other Jews to go to him. `Woe unto you,' said they, `what is the matter with you?!' He said, `The star that signals the birth of Ahmed the prophet did, indeed, appear last night!' ²

Imām al-Hasan, the oldest son of Imām Ali ibn Abu Talib, is quoted in a lengthy statement saying,

A group of Jews came to the Messenger of Allāh. The most knowledgeable person among them asked him about certain things, and he, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny, answered them for him. He, therefore, accepted Islam then took out a white sheet of *riqq* (papyrus) wherein he recorded the statements of the Prophet and said to him, AO Messenger of Allāh! I swear by the One Who sent you a Prophet in truth that I have not copied this except from tablets which Allāh, the most Exalted and the most Sublime, had dictated to Moses son of Amram (`Imran). I have also read in the Torah so many of your merits that I even doubted them. For forty years, I have been wiping out any reference to you in the Torah, yet whenever I wiped it out, I saw it fixed again therein. I have read in the Torah that nobody can answer these questions (which I have just asked you) except you, and during

¹al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 15, p. 180.

²Ibid., pp. 180-181. Also see Faraj al-Mahmoom, p. 29.

the time wherein you answer them, Gabriel would be on your right, Michael on your left, and your wasi in front of you. The Messenger of Allāh said, AYou have surely said the truth. Here is Gabriel on my right and Michael on my left and my wasi Ali ibn Abu Talib in front of me. The Jew believed and proved that his conviction was sound. ³

Waraqah ibn Nawfal, one of Khadija's cousins, had embraced Christianity and was a pious priest who believed in the Unity of the Almighty, just as early Christians did, that is, before the concept of the Trinity crept into the Christian faith, widening the theological differences among the believers in Christ. He reportedly had translated the Bible from Hebrew into Arabic. His likes could be counted on the fingers of one hand during those days in the entire populous metropolis of Mecca, or Becca, or Ummul-Qura (the mother town), a major commercial center at the crossroads of trade caravans linking Arabia with India, Persia, China, and Byzantium, a city that had its own Red Sea port at Shu`ayba. Most importantly, Mecca houses the Ka`ba, the cubic House of God which has always been sought for pilgrimage and which used to be circled by naked polytheist pilgrims who kept their idols, numbering 360 small and big, male and female, inside it and on its roof-top. Among those idols was one for Abraham and another for Ishmael, each carrying divine arrows in his hands. Hubal, a huge idol in the shape of a man, was given as a gift by the Moabites of Syria to the tribesmen of Khuza`ah, and it was Mecca's chief idol. Two other idols of significance were those of the Lat, a grey granite image which was the deity of Thaqif in nearby Taif, and the `Ozza, also a block of granite about twenty feet high. These were regarded as the wives of the Almighty... Each tribe had its own idol, and the wealthy bought and kept a number of idols at home. The institute of pilgrimage was already there; it simply was not being observed properly, and so was the belief in Allāh Whom the Arabs regarded as their Supreme deity. Besides Paganism, other religions in Arabia included star worship and fetishism.

The Jews of Medina had migrated from Palestine and Yemen and settled there waiting for the coming of a new Prophet from the seed of Abraham in whom they said they intended to believe and to be the foremost in following, something which unfortunately did not materialize; on the contrary, they joined ranks with the Pagans to fight the spread of Islam as the reader will come to know later in this book. Only a handful of them embraced Islam, including one man who was a neighbour of Muhammed; he lived in the same alley in Mecca where Khadija's house stood; his wife, also Jewish, used to collect dry thorny bushes from the desert just to throw them in the Prophet's way.

Since Khadija did not travel with her trade caravans, she had always had to rely on someone else to act as her agent to trade on her behalf and to receive an agreed upon commission in return. In 595 A.D., Khadija needed an agent to trade in her merchandise going to Syria, and it was then that a number of agents whom she knew before and trusted, as well as some of her own relatives, particularly Abu Talib, suggested to her to employ her distant cousin Muhammed ibn `Abdullah who, by then, had earned the honoring titles of *al-Sādiq*, the truthful, and *al-Amin*, the trustworthy. Muhammed did not have any practical business experience, but he had twice accompanied his uncle Abu Talib on his trade trips and keenly observed how he traded, bartered, bought and sold and conducted business; after all, the people of Quraysh were famous for their involvement in trade more than in any other profession. It was not uncommon to hire an agent who did not have a prior experience; so, Khadija decided to give Muhammed a chance. He was only 25 years old. Khadija sent Muhammed word through Khazimah ibn Hakim, one of her relatives, offering him twice as

³al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 15, p. 181. This text also exists in Vol. 2, p. 9 of *Al-Khisal*.

much commission as she usually offered her agents to trade on her behalf. She also gave him one of her servants, Maysarah, who was young, brilliant, and talented, to assist him

and be his bookkeeper. She also trusted Maysarah's account regarding her new employee's conduct, an account which was most glaring, indeed one which encouraged her to abandon her insistence never to marry again.

Before embarking upon his first trip as a businessman representing Khadija, Muhammed met with his uncles for last minute briefings and consultations, then he set out on the desert road passing through Wadi al-Qura, Midian, and Diyar Thamud, places with which he was familiar because of having been there at the age of twelve in the company of his uncle Abu Talib. He continued the lengthy journey till he reached Busra (or Bostra) on the highway to Damascus after about a month. It was there that he had met Buhayrah the monk when he was a child. Buhayrah had died and was succeeded in the monastery by Nestor. Busra, the city, was then the capital of Hawran, one of the southeastern portions of the province of Damascus situated north of the Balqa'. To scholars of classic literature, Hawran is known by its Greek name Auranitis, and it is described in detail by Yaqut al-Hamawi, Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani, and others. Arab trade caravans used to go there quite often and even beyond it to Damascus and Gaza, and few made it all the way to the Mediterranean shores to unload their precious cargoes of Chinese paper and silk textiles bound for Europe.

What items did Muhammed carry with him to Busra, and what items did he buy from there? Meccans were not known to be skilled craftsmen, nor did they excel in any profession besides trade, but young Muhammed might have carried with him a cargo of hides, raisins, perfumes, dried dates, light weight woven items, probably silver bars, and most likely some herbs. He bought what he was instructed by his employer to buy: these items may have included manufactured goods, clothes, a few luxury items to sell to wealthy Meccans, and maybe some household goods. Gold and silver currency accepted in Mecca included Roman, Persian, and Indian coins, for Arabs during those times, including those who were much more sophisticated than the ones among whom Muhammed grew up such as the Arabs of the southern part of Arabia

(Yemen, Hadramout, etc.), did not have a currency of their own; so, barter was more common than cash. The first Arab Islamic currency, by the way, was struck in Damascus by the Umayyad ruler `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (697-698 A.D.) in 78 A.H./697 A.D., 36 years after the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty (661-750).

The time Muhammed stayed in Busra was no more than a couple of months during which he met many Christians and Jews and noticed the theological differences among the major Christian sects that led to the disassociation of the Copts, the Syrian (Chaldean) Nestorian, and the Armenian Christians from the main churches of Antioch (Antakiya), Rome, and Egyptian Alexandria. Such dissensions and differences of theological viewpoints provided Muhammed with plenty of food for thought; he contemplated upon them a great deal.

⁴One of the off-spring of Prophet Muhammed, Abu Muhammed Imām Hasan al-`Askari was the son of Imām `Ali al-Naqi and the father of the Awaited Imām, the Mahdi, peace and blessings of the Almighty be upon all of them. He was born in Medina on Rabi` II 10, 232 A.H./December 4, 846 A.D. and was martyred in Samarra, Iraq, on Rabi` I 8, 260 A.H./January 1, 874 A.D. poisoned by the `Abbasid ruler al-Mu`tamid. If the reader wishes to learn more about him and about the other Infallible Fourteen, I strongly recommend the book titled Biographies of Leaders of Islam by his eminence Sayyed `Ali Naqi Naqwi which I edited. It is available from Imām Hussain Foundation,

There is another testimonial to the cloud that shaded young Muhammed; it comes from the holy and pure offspring of Muhammed. Imām al-Hasan al-`Askari has narrated saying that he once asked his father (Imām) Ali ibn Muhammed, peace be upon them, about the miracles performed by the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny, in Medina and Mecca. Here is what Imām al-`Askari said to his son:

O son! As for the cloud (that used to shade the Prophet), when the Messenger of Allāh travelled to Syria to trade on behalf of Khadija daughter of Khuwaylid, and the distance from Mecca to Jerusalem was one month on foot, they used to suffer from the extreme heat of the sun in those open plains. The wind would blow at them and would pour on them sands and dust. During those times, Allāh Almighty used to send a cloud to His Messenger in order to shade him. It would stop whenever he stopped and resume whenever he did. If he advanced, it would advance, and if he lagged behind, it would do the same. If he went to the right, it, too, would go to the right, and if he went to the left, it would go there, too. It used to protect him from the heat of the sun from above. The wind that used to stir the sands and the dust would do so in the faces of the Quraishites and their camels, but when it came close to Muhammed, it would become calm and quiet, and it would not carry neither sands nor dust. Instead, an easy and cool breeze would blow on him, so much so that Quraish used to say, Muhammed's company is better than a tent! They used to seek refuge with him and try to earn his friendship. Comfort was theirs whenever they were near him even when the cloud was actually intended only for him. When strangers intermingled with their (the Quraishites) caravans, the cloud would distance itself from them. They would then inquire, AWhom is this cloud serving?! Whoever it serves is surely honored and revered. The cloud would then address those in the caravan saying, Look at the cloud, and you will see that it is written on it: `There is no god except Allāh, Muhammed is the Messenger of Allāh; I support him through Ali, the master of wasis, and distinguished him through his Progeny who are loyal to him, and to Ali, and to their friends, who are the enemies of his opponents. All this would be readable and comprehensible to those who knew and were skilled in reading and writing as well as to those who did not.⁵

While in Syria, a monk named Nestor observed some signs of Prophethood about Muhammed, so he asked Maysarah, AIs there a glow, a slight redness, around his eyes that never parts with him? Nestor asked Maysarah. When the latter answered in the affirmative, Nestor said, AHe most surely is the very last

Prophet; congratulations to whoever believes in him. And Nestor very much desired to see Muhammed. The rest of the story is narrated by `Abbas, Muhammed's uncle, who quotes `Abdul-Muttalib quoting Abu Talib saying,

We once took Muhammed on a (business) trip to Syria. When we were in the marketplace, a high priest named Nestor came and sat in front of him, looking at him without saying anything. He kept doing so for three consecutive days. He then could no longer do so without going to him and coming behind him, as if he was requesting him for something. I said to him, O monk! Do you want anything from him? AYes, Nestor said, AI do want something from him. What is his name? AMuhammed son of `Abdullah, said I. By Allāh, his face changed colour, then he said, Could you please ask him to agree to uncover his back so that I may look at it? Muhammed drew his garment from his back, and when Nestor saw the mark of Prophethood on it, he kept kissing him and crying. Then he said, O man! Hurry and take this child back to the place where he was born, for if you only know how many his enemies in our land are, you will not even think much of the reason because of which you came here. Nestor kept looking after him every day, carrying food for him. When we departed from Syria, Nestor brought Muhammed a shirt and said to him,

P.O. Box 25-114, Beirut, Lebanon.

⁵al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 17, pp. 307-311. The pages following these ones narrate numerous other miracles of the Prophet.

Could you please wear this shirt so that you may remember me thereby? But Muhammed did not accept it, and I noticed how he did not like the idea, so I took the shirt myself so that his feelings would not be hurt and said to him, I shall wear it. Then I hurried and took Muhammed back to Mecca. By Allāh, not a single woman or man, young or old, stayed without eagerly welcoming him back with the exception of Abu Jahl, may Allāh curse him, for he then had drunk so much wine that he was completely drunk.⁶

Here is another testimonial to that incident:

Bakr ibn `Abdullah al-Ashja`i quotes his forefathers saying that in the same year when the Messenger of Allāh went to Syria, `Abd Manat ibn Kinanah, Nawfal ibn Mu`awiyah ibn `Orwah ibn Sakhr ibn Nu`man ibn `Adiyy also went out as businessmen. When Abu al-Muwayhib, the monk, met them, he asked them, AWho are you? Merchants from the people of the sanctuary, from Quraish. From which (clan of) Quraish are you? He asked them again. They answered his question, whereupon he asked them, AIs there anyone else from Quraish in your company? They said, AYes, a young man from Banu Hashim named Muhammed. Abu al-Muwayhib then said, He, by Allāh, is the one I am seeking! They said to him, By Allāh, there is none among the Quraishites more obscure than him, and they refer to him only as the orphan of Quraish. He is hired by one of our women named Khadija; so, what do you want with him? He kept moving his head as he said, He is the one! He is the one! Then he requested them to take him to meet Muhammed. We left him (trading) at Bostra's market. Just as they were talking thus, the Messenger of Allāh came. The monk immediately said, AThis is the one! He spent an hour in a dialogue talking to him, then he kissed his forehead and took out something from his pocket which we could not tell what it was. He kept asking Muhammed to take it from him as a gift, and Muhammed kept refusing. Once he left him, he said to us, Do you accept my advice? This, by Allāh, is the last Prophet! By Allāh, he will soon invite people to testify that: *La ilaha illa Allāh, Muhammadun Rasool-Allāh*; so, when he does so, you should follow him. Then he asked us, Does his uncle Abu Talib have a son named Ali? We answered him by saying, No. AHe must have either been born, or he will be born this year . He will be the first to believe in him. We know him, and we have a description of him as the wasi just as we have Muhammed described as the Prophet. He shall be the master and the scholars of the Arabs among whom he will be like Thul-Qarnain. He will be the most prominent among all creation on the Day of Judgment next only to the prophets. Angels call him the victorious hero; wherever he goes, victory shall go with

him. By Allāh, he is more known in the heavens than the shining sun.

One of Muhammed's observations when he was in that Syrian city was the historical fact that a feud was brewing between the Persian and Roman empires, each vying for hegemony over Arabia's fertile crescent. Indeed, such an observation was quite accurate, for after only a few years, a war broke out between the then mightiest nations on earth that ended with the Romans losing it, as the Holy Qur'ān tells us in Chapter 30 (The Romans), which was revealed in 7 A.H./615-16 A.D., only a few months after the fall of Jerusalem to the Persians, just to win in a successive one. Only four years prior to that date, the Persians had scored a sweeping victory over the Christians, spreading their control over Aleppo, Antioch, and even Damascus. Muhammed was concerned about either of these two empires extending its control over the land inhabited by Muhammed's fiercely independent Pagan people. The loss of Jerusalem, birthplace of Christ Jesus son of Mary, was a heavy blow to the prestige of

⁶al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 15, pp. 193-198.

⁷Actually, `Ali was born in 600 A.D., five years later.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 202-204.

Christianity. Most Persians were then following Zoroastrianism, a creed introduced in the 6th century before Christ by Zoroaster (628-551 B.C.), also known as Zarathustra, whose adherents are described as worshippers of the Apyre, the holy fire. Persia, hence, meant the land of the worshippers of the pyre, the sacred fire. Modern day Iran used to be known as Aryana, land of the Aryan nations and tribes. Not only Iranians, but also Kurds, and even Germans, prided in being Aryans, (Caucasian) Nordics or speakers of an Indo-European dialect. Some Persians had converted to Christianity as we know from Salman al-Farisi who was one such adherent till he fell in captivity, sold in Mecca and freed to be one of the most renown and cherished sahabis and narrators of hadīth in Islamic history, so much so that the Prophet of Islam said, Salman is one of us, we Ahl al-Bayt (People of the Household of Prophethood).

The war referred to above was between the then Byzantine (Eastern Roman) emperor Heraclius (575 - 641 A.D.) and the Persian king Khusrau (Khosrow) Parwiz (Parviz) or Chosroes II (d. 628 A.D.). It was one of many wars in which those mighty nations were embroiled and which continued for many centuries. Yet the hands of Divine Providence were already busy paving the path for Islam: the collision between both empires paved the way for the ultimate destruction of the ancient Persian empire and in Islam setting root in that important part of the world. Moreover, Muhammed's (and, naturally, Khadija's) offspring came to marry ladies who were born and raised at Persian as well as Roman palaces. Imām Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib, Muhammed's grandson and our Third Holy Imām, married the daughter of the last Persian emperor Jazdagird (Yazdegerd) III son of Shahryar and grandson of this same Khusrau II. Jazdagerd ruled Persia from 632-651 A.D. and lost the Battle of Qadisiyyah to the Muslim forces in 636, thus ending the rule of the Sassanians. Having been defeated, he fled for Media in northwestern Iran, homeland of Persian Mede tribesmen, and from there to Merv, an ancient Central Asian city near modern day Mary in Turkmenistan (until very recently one of the republics of the Soviet Union), where he was killed by a miller.

The profits Khadija reaped from that trip were twice as much as she had anticipated. Maysarah was more fascinated by Muhammed than by anything related to the trip. Muhammed, on the other hand, brought back his impressions about what he had seen and heard, impressions which he related to his employer. You see, those trade caravans were the only links contemporary Arabs had with their outside world: they brought them the news of what was going on beyond their drought-ridden and famine-stricken desert and sand dunes.

Waraqah ibn Nawfal, like Buhayrah (or Buhayrah), the monk who had met and spoken to Muhammed when Muhammed was a lad, adhered to the Nestorian Christian sect. He heard the accounts about the personality and conduct of young Muhammed from both his cousin Khadija and her servant

Maysarah, an account which caused him to meditate for a good while and think about what he had heard. Raising his head, he said to Khadija, ASuch manners are fit only for the messengers of God. Who knows? Maybe this young man is destined to be one of them. This statement was confirmed a few years later, and Waraqah was the very first man who recognized Muhammed as the Messenger of Allāh immediately after Muhammed received the first revelation at Hira cave.

The trip's measure of success encouraged Khadija to employ Muhammed again on the winter trip to southern Arabia, i.e. Yemen, the land that introduced the coffee beans to the rest of the world, the land where the renown Marib irrigation dam was engineered, the land of Saba and the renown Balqees, the Arabian Queen of Sheba (Saba) of Himyar, who married prophet Solomon (Sulayman the wise, peace be upon him), in 975 B.C. (after the completion of the construction of the famous Solomon's Temple), the land of natives skilled in gold, silver and other metal handicrafts, not to mention their ingenuity in the textile industry and domestic furniture... , and it may even be the land that gave Arabic its first written script which, as some believe, was modelled after written Amheric, then the official language in Ethiopia and its colonies. Yemen, at that time, was being ruled by an Ethiopian regent. This time Khadija offered Muhammed three times the usual commission. Unfortunately, historians do not tell us much about this second trip except that it was equally profitable to both employer and employee. Some historians do not mention this trip at all.

Khadija was by then convinced that she had finally found a man who was worthy of her, so much so that she initiated the marriage proposal herself. Muhammed sat to detail all the business transactions in which he became involved on her behalf, but the wealthy and beautiful lady of Quraysh was thinking more about her distant cousin than about those transactions. She simply fell in love with Muhammed just as the daughter of the Arabian prophet Shu`ayb had fallen in love with then fugitive prophet Moses. Muhammed was of medium stature, inclined to slimness, with a large head, broad shoulders and the rest of his body perfectly proportioned. His

hair and beard were thick and black, not altogether straight but slightly curled. His hair reached midway between the lobes of his ears and shoulders, and his beard was of a length to match. He had a noble breadth of forehead and the ovals of his large eyes were wide, with exceptionally long lashes and extensive brows, slightly arched but not joined. His eyes were said to have been black, but other accounts say that they were brown, or light brown. His nose was aquiline and his mouth was finely shaped. Although he let his beard grow, he never allowed the hair of his mustache to protrude over his upper lip. His skin was white but tanned by the sun. And there was a light on his face, a glow, the same light that had shone from his father, but it was more, much more powerful, and it was especially apparent on his broad forehead and in his eyes which were remarkably luminous.

By the time he was gone, Khadija sought the advice of a friend of hers named Nufaysa daughter of Umayyah. The latter offered to approach him on her behalf and, if possible, arrange a marriage between them. Nufaysa came to Muhammed and asked him why he had not married yet. Al have no means to marry, he answered. But if you were given the means, she said, and if you were bidden to an alliance where there is beauty and wealth and nobility and abundance, would you not then consent? Who is she?! he excitedly inquired. Khadija, said Nufaysa. And how could such a marriage be mine?! he asked. Leave that to me! was her answer. For my part, he said, I am willing.

¹This temple was built by Solomon (Prophet Sulayman) to express his gratitude for what the Almighty had granted him. Solomon had in advance obtained his Lord's permission to erect it. A glimpse of its grandeur is described in the Holy Qur'ān in 27:44: It was said to her (to Balqees, the Queen of Sheba): Enter the palace; but when she saw it, she deemed it to be a great expanse of water, that is, its marble floors shone like glass, reflecting her image as water does. This temple was later ordered by Solomon to be demolished in its entirety, and the claim of the Jews that the al-Aqsa mosque is built on its very foundations is false. The Jews plot to demolish the al-Aqsa

mosque in order to rebuild Solomon's Temple. The Jews intend to do so at the right time, when they realize that the Muslims of the world, because of the weakness and hypocrisy of most of their rulers, are too weak to stand between them and the achievement of their most vile goals, and when the Christian West will be ready, more so than now, to help them achieve their objectives. The West has been supporting the Jews against the Muslims, and there will never be any reversal to this trend... *We belong to Allāh, and to Him shall we return...*

Nufaysa returned with these glad tidings to Khadija who then sent word to Muhammed asking him to come to her. When he came, she said to him:

O son of my uncle! I love you for your kinship with me, and for that you are ever in the center, not being a partisan among the people for this or for that. And I love you for your trustworthiness, and for the beauty of your character and the truth of your speech.

Then she offered herself in marriage to him, and they agreed that he should speak to his uncles and she would speak to her uncle `Amr son of Asad, since her father had died. It was Hamzah, despite being relatively young, whom the Hashemites delegated to represent them on this marriage occasion, since he was most closely related to them through the clan of Asad; his sister Safiyya had just married Khadija's brother `Awwam.

It was Abu Talib, Muhammed's uncle, who delivered the marriage sermon saying,

All praise is due to Allāh Who has made us the progeny of Ibrahim (Abraham), the seed of Isma`eel (Ishmael), the descendants of Ma`ad, the substance of Mudar, and Who made us the custodians of His House and the servants of its sacred precincts, making for us a House sought for pilgrimage and a shrine of security, and He also gave us authority over the people. This nephew of mine Muhammed cannot be compared with any other man: if you compare his wealth with that of others, you will not find him a man of wealth, for wealth is a

vanishing shadow and a fickle thing. Muhammed is a man whose lineage you all know, and he has sought Khadija daughter of Khuwaylid for marriage, offering her such-and-such of the dower of my own wealth.

Nawfal then stood up and said,

All praise is due to Allāh Who has made us just as you have mentioned and preferred us over those whom you have indicated, for we, indeed, are the masters of Arabs and their leaders, and you all are worthy of this (bond of marriage). The tribe (Quraysh) does not deny any of your merits, nor does anyone else dispute your lofty status and prestige. And we, furthermore, wish to be joined to your rope; so, bear witness to my words, O people of Quraysh! I have given Khadija daughter of Khuwaylid in marriage to Muhammed ibn `Abdullah for the dower of four hundred dinars.

Then Nawfal paused, whereupon Abu Talib said to him, "I wished her uncle had joined you (in making a statement)." Hearing that, Khadija's uncle stood up and said, "Bear witness, O men of Quraysh, that I have given Khadija daughter of Khuwaylid in marriage to Muhammed ibn `Abdullah."

All this took place in the same year: 595 A.D. These details and more are recorded in Ibn Hisham's *Seera*. After his marriage, Muhammed moved from his uncle's house to live with his wife in her house which stood at the smiths market, an alley branching out of metropolitan Mecca's long main bazar, behind the mas`a, the place where the pilgrims perform the seven circles during the *hajj* or cobra. In that house Fatima was born and the revelation descended upon the Messenger of Allāh many times. This house, as well as the one in which the Prophet of Islam was born (which stood approximately 50 meters northwards), were both demolished by the ignorant and fanatical Wahhabi rulers of Saudi Arabia in 1413 A.H./1993 A.D. and turned into public bathrooms... The grave sites of many family members and companions of the Prophet had already been demolished by the same Wahhabis in 1343 A.H./1924 A.D. against the wish and despite the denunciation of the

adherents of all other Muslim sects and schools of thought world-wide.

The marriage was a very happy one, and it produced a lady who was one of the four perfect women in all the history of mankind: Fatima daughter of Muhammed. Before her, Qasim and `Abdullah were born, but they both died at infancy.

By the time Khadija got married, she was quite a wealthy lady, so wealthy that she felt no need to keep trading and increasing her wealth; instead, she decided to retire and enjoy a comfortable life with her husband who, on his part, preferred an ascetic life to that of money making.

The Messenger of Allāh had no desire to accumulate wealth; that was not the purpose for which he, peace and blessings of Allāh upon him and his progeny, was created. He was created to be the savior of mankind from the darkness of ignorance, idol worship, polytheism, misery, poverty, injustice, oppression, and immorality. He very much loved to meditate, though his meditation deepened his grief at seeing his society sunk so low in immorality, lawlessness, and the absence of any sort of protection for those who were weak and oppressed. Khadija's period of happiness lasted no more than 15 years after which her husband started his mission to invite people to the Oneness of God, to equality between men and women, and to an end to the evils of the day.

Though she was even wealthier than other rich people, unlike them, she always thought about helping the poor and sharing their sorrow and difficulties, and solving their problems.

For this reason, Khadijah (Khadijah Bint Khuwaylid, Bibi Khadija, Hazrat Khadija) ordered her servants to never close the doors of her house to any poor person and to always have ready at hand the things the poor needed. She commanded her servants to inform her whenever a poor person wanted to talk to her or wanted something from her during the day or night. She could not bear the thought that a poor leaves her house in sorrow, not having received something from her.

So the deprived and poor knew the way to Khadijeh's house and called that house, "The house of hope and security." More than any other, the orphans sought refuge in her house, because Khadijeh (Khadijah Bint Khuwaylid, Bibi Khadija, Hazrat Khadija) sympathized with them a lot and she would care for them in a motherly way. So they called her "Ummul Yatama", meaning, "Mother of the Orphans". Having talked about Khadijeh's (S.A.) house, the following lines will help you gain a conception of her house.

The house where lived Khadijeh (S.A.) and from where she performed all the benevolent tasks for the poor, was one of the nicest in Makkah. It had two floors, each one of which was decorated by a small balcony. The northern section of the house so faced the Holy Kaaba (House of Allah) that the latter could be seen from its small windows. In addition to this, the visitors to Allah's house could be seen too. The windows of the other three sides faced three of Makkah's roads and every passenger entering Makkah could be seen from those windows. There was a green dome at the top of the building, which made it look a hundred times more beautiful. The interior of the house was divided into two sections, one of which Khadijeh (S.A.) kept for private usage and where no one was allowed without her permission.

Khadijeh (Khadijah Bint Khuwaylid, Bibi Khadija, Hazrat Khadija) chose the northern section of the house, which faced the Holy Kaaba as her living quarters, and from there she stood in front of the house of Allah and prayed to Him everyday.

The other section of Khadijeh's (S.A.) house was for the guests. Special servants entertained the guests, looking after their needs. Everybody was satisfied when they left Khadijeh's house. This is why all the people living in the region would call Khadijeh's house, "the house of generosity and kindness". In hard times, people would go and come back, hands full and happy. We can say that the section of Khadijeh's house open to

the public was home to many homeless, the poor, refugees, orphans and the oppressed. If anyone was looking for shelter, people would send him to Khadijeh's house.

A famous writer described Khadijeh's house as follows:
Every orphan who didn't have anyone to depend on,
Every father who couldn't get food for his children,
Every woman who was homeless,
Everybody who suffered and became shelter less,
All of them knew the way to Khadijeh's (S.A.) house and went there.

They took refuge in her kindness and wealth.
The sore hearts of those people were treated with her favour and grace.

This was why Khadijeh's house was always full of people. Whole day and night, there were coming and going activities there. Khadijeh (S.A.) would come to that section accessible to the public a few hours everyday. She would sit with her poor and homeless guests, talk and listen to their distress and difficulties. She would caress the children and wipe the tears of the mothers. Then she would call her private servant and he would bring some bags of money. Khadijeh (S.A.) would then distribute the money amongst the people. Kind Khadijeh (S.A.) would always sit with the orphans at dinner and eat with them. She would herself feed the delicious food to them. She would place her hands around their faces, caress and kiss them, saying: "My dear children! Don't feel like orphans. (I am your mother). I will support and love you like my own child."

Khadijeh's (S.A.) support and protection was not only for the orphans who didn't have any parents, but also for those who had parents. During those days, known as Al-Jahiliya (The age of Ignorance), some fathers who were narrow-minded and foolish would bury their own daughters alive, for different foolish reasons. They were proud of this ugly and indecent act. On every opportunity, they would boast about what they had done. However, they never thought about the day of Judgement and that Allah will judge them:

"When the female (infant) who was buried alive will be asked for what sin was she killed." (Noble Qur'an, 81:8-9)

During those days, this ugly and indecent act was common amongst some Arab tribes. They would kill their innocent daughters because of poverty and believed that having a daughter is something to be ashamed of. They would cowardly bury their daughters alive. Then glowed the light of Islam forbidding such a practice. Allah says in Noble Qur'an:

"And do not kill your children for fear of poverty; We give them sustenance and yourselves (too); surely to kill them is a great sin." (Noble Qur'an, 17:31)

As a result, when some mothers gave birth to a girl, their husbands would get angry at them. They either had to give their daughter to their cruel husband, who was free to do whatever he wanted to do to the innocent baby, or send the baby to Khadijah's (S.A.) house from where it could be supported and saved from being buried alive. Now we are going to tell you one of those stories.

One night, when darkness covered the region of the Hejaz / Hijaz (Arabian Peninsula), the wealthy, who had no conscience, were sleeping in their comfortable beds, putting their arrogant heads on their comfortable pillows. They were sleeping comfortably and never bothered about anyone or anything else as they had everything in the world. Also money was always at their disposal and they could do whatever they wished, even irrational. They thought that as long as the earth exists, they would have power.

O Khadija, among all the people of the world, you have attained a sublime position, the most honorable position. You have been granted the honor of being wife to Prophet Muhammad (saw), the great man whose peer has not been born by any woman in the whole world. All

praiseworthy virtues and majestic qualities plus modesty are to be found in him and will be so forever.

On the same night, the poor and helpless people were sleeping in their dirty houses or beside the walls of some rich person's house in the city or in Khadijeh's (S.A.) house and they would try to forget all about their sorrow and misery, at least for that night.

During this dark night, the stars and moon were hiding behind the dark clouds. Not willing to see the prejudice and inequality amongst the human beings, they had stopped shining. On that night, everybody was asleep except Khadijeh (S.A.) and her special servant and...

Khadijeh (S.A.) was thinking in her private room. She was swimming in the sea of dreams and had surrounded herself with the turbulent waves of her thoughts. Then suddenly someone knocked at her door. Khadijeh (S.A.), still dreaming, lifted her head and asked: "Who is it?" Someone answered: "It is me, my lady, Maysara." Khadijeh (S.A.) replied: "Come in! I am awake. I can't sleep tonight." The door opened and Khadijeh's special servant, Maysara, rushed into the room, all confused. Maysara said: "As Salaamu Alaikum, my lady, I am sorry if I am bothering you." Khadijeh (S.A.) replied: "Wa Alaikum Salaam. What is wrong, Maysara? I see that you are worried. Has something happened or...?" Maysara answered: "No, no! Don't worry. You yourself said that we should tell you whenever an indigent, helpless or an oppressed person wanted to see you."

Khadijeh (S.A.) said: "Yes, yes. I myself said that. Now what has happened and who wants to see me and why?" Maysara answered: "My lady, a young woman carrying a heavy sack has come to the house. She was shaking and crying and her hair was untidy. She begged me to bring her to you. It seems that she came here because she is afraid and depressed." Khadijeh (S.A.) answered; "Very well. There is no problem. Tell her to

come in. I myself told you to call me anytime, day or night if any helpless or homeless person wanted to see me. Don't let that person leave this house in sadness or with empty hands".Maysara went to call the young woman to take her to Khadijeh's room.

Khadijeh (S.A.) started thinking about that young woman and she told herself: "Oh Allah! What has happened to this poor woman in the middle of the night? What kind of problem has she faced that has caused her to leave her house alone at this time and to come to my house? Who is this helpless woman? Where does she come from? And why did she come here? Maybe she is a mother who came here with her sick child so that we can provide food and medicine for it.

"Maybe she is a slave who has come here because of her unjust master. Or maybe she is a chaste woman whose house the street ruffians entered by force to kill her husband or take her innocent child. Maybe none of these, but maybe her cruel husband wanted to take her innocent daughter away from her and bury the girl alive under the cold dust of the desert. Maybe for this reason, she took the baby and brought her here seeking refuge in my house.."

Many thoughts occupied the chaste mind of Khadijeh (S.A.) when suddenly the door opened. A young woman, whose head and face were covered with a veil, entered, crying. Tears had completely wet her red and dusty cheeks. Her arms and legs were shaking out of sorrow and she could only say: "As Salaamu Alaikum." She then sat down on the floor and tried to kiss Khadijeh's feet, but the latter stopped her and hugged her and kissed her face like a kind mother. Khadijeh (S.A.) asked her: 'my daughter! What has happened? Why are you so upset? Be sure that whatever I can do I will do for you. Tell me, my daughter. Tell me what has happened."

The young woman moved away from Khadijeh's embrace and opened the heavy sack and placed it in front of Khadijeh (S.A.). She removed a beautiful baby from it, which was like the

blossom of spring and hugged it. After the young woman gave the baby many long and warm kisses while still in tears, she placed the baby in front of Khadijah (S.A.) and said:

"Oh Lady of Quraish! Oh kind Khadijah (S.A.) I beg you, please have mercy upon my baby and me. Look how beautiful it is and what beautiful black eyebrows it has. For the sake of Allah look how it looks at me with its sweet eyes. See what a beautiful smile it has. It seems that the baby understands what I say because it looks at me this way. The baby knows that I want to take it away from myself and give it to somebody else." Then the young woman looked at the sky and said: "Oh Almighty Allah! Save us from this insecure and ignorant situation and from dirty deeds. Send us a savior who can stop this savage situation and the cruel killings. What did this innocent baby do that makes its father want to bury it alive with no fear? What did I do wrong that I must give up my baby? The woman prayed to Allah and then started crying even more. The baby, afraid of her mother's cries started crying also.

Khadijah (S.A.), who was quiet until this time, took the woman's lovely baby and hugged it and sympathetically said to the young woman: "My daughter! Don't worry. I will keep and protect your baby like my own daughter, I know how you feel now and why you are so upset. I am a mother and I know the heartache of mothers. I will raise her and whenever you want, you can come here and see your baby." The young woman said: "What if my husband comes and wants to take her from you? He is an obstinate person. When I was pregnant, he told me: 'If it is a boy, he is mine. If it is a girl, it belongs to the grave.' He repeated this sentence everyday to bother me." Today when I felt the pains of delivery, I took refuge in the desert so I could deliver the baby. There, this beautiful girl was born. I didn't return to the house because I knew if I took it to the house, it would have meant the grave for it; as a result, I came to your house because I knew that my daughter would be protected here.

Oh kind Khadijeh (S.A.)! We, the women of this region, know you very well. We know that you protect the orphans better than their parents, but I am still afraid that my angry husband may come here and get the baby from you."He may even hurt me and kill me for having given the baby to you. But it doesn't matter. Let him kill me but my daughter will be alive."The young woman uttered these words and fell down at Khadijeh's (S.A.) feet and started crying very hard. Khadijeh (S.A.) picked her up and placed her hand on the dusty hair of the young woman and very kindly said: "My daughter! I told you not to worry about your baby. I will raise her like my own baby and I will never give her to your husband. He can't do anything here. If he comes here, I will hide her. Be sure that your baby is in a secure place. Now get up and rest a little bit. You don't feel well. You have come a long way. Leave everything to Allah because Allah is closer and kinder to a person than anyone else."

After the young woman heard the kind words of Khadijeh (S.A.), she went to a corner of the room and fell into a deep sleep. The great Khadijeh (S.A.), whose pure spirit was shaken by the recent incidents thought very hard about the things that the young woman had told her. Then she asked herself: What is this misfortune that is over coming the Arab fathers, that causes them to become so cruel and conscienceless as to bury their innocent babies alive with their own hands under tons of black soil? Do they fear poverty or feel ashamed?

The Lady of Quraish (Khadijah Bint Khuwaylid, Bibi Khadija, Hazrat Khadija) kept thinking about this unfortunate situation and deliberated as to how long this practice would continue. Having pondered deeply, she started to pray and commune with Allah. She said:"Oh Allah! I swear by your Prophets and the people who are close to You. I beg You to send the Saviour that Jesus and the other Messengers have promised for these unfortunate and ignorant people so that this ugly, and unfortunate situation comes to an end. Only then would innocent mothers be able to hold their unprotected and innocent babies in their arms."

After prayer, she went to sleep. She dream't that the sun was rising from the sky and turned several times around the house of Allah. It then moved towards her house, where its huge brightness dazzled her eyes. She woke up and realized that the day of Islam was near.

Chapter 1

HAZRAT KHADIJAH (A.S): THE MOST BELOVED WIFE OF THE HOLY PROPHET OF ISLAM (S.A.W.)

Introduction:

If you wish to research the life of this great lady, and if you do not have al-Majlisi's voluminous [110 Vol.] encyclopedia titled Bihar al-Anwar, the best references are: al-Sayyuti's Tarikh al Khulafa, Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani's Aghani, Ibn Hisham's Seera, Muhammad ibn Ishaq's Seerat Rasool-Allah, and Tarikh al-rusul wal muluk by Abu Ja`far Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (839-923 A.D.). Of all these books, only al-Tabari's Tarikh is being translated (by more than one translator and in several volumes) into English. One publisher of Tabari's Tarikh is the press of the State University of New York (SUNY). This article has utilized a number of Arabic and English references, and it is written especially for those who appreciate history, our great teacher, be they Muslims or non-Muslims, and who aspire to learn from it.

"Islam did not rise except through Ali's sword and Khadija's wealth," a saying goes. Khadija al-Kubra daughter of Khuwaylid ibn (son of) Asad ibn Abdul-`Uzza ibn Qusayy belonged to the clan of Banu Hashim of the tribe of Banu Asad. She was a distant cousin of her husband the Messenger of Allah Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Abdul-Muttalib ibn Hashim ibn Abd Manaf ibn Qusayy, Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny. Qusayy, then, is the ancestor of all clans belonging to Quraysh. According to some historians, Quraysh's real name was Fahr, and he was son of Malik son of Madar son

of Kananah son of Khuzaimah son of Mudrikah son of Ilyas son of Mazar son of Nazar son of Ma`ad son of Adnan son of Isma`eel (Ishmael) son of Ibrahim (Abraham) son of Sam son of Noah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon the prophets from among his ancestors.

Her Birth

According to a number of sources, Khadija was born in 565 A.D. and died on 29th Rajab three year before the Hijra (migration of the Holy Prophet and his followers from Mecca to Medina) at the age of 58. Khadija's mother, who died around 575 A.D., was Fatima daughter of Za'ida ibn al-Asam of Banu `Amir ibn Luayy ibn Ghalib, also a distant relative of Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.). Khadija's father, who died around 585 A.D., belonged to the Abd al-`Uzza clan of the tribe of Quraysh and, like many other Qurayshis, was a merchant, a successful businessman whose vast wealth and business talents were inherited by Khadija and whom the latter succeeded in faring with the family's vast wealth.

Ameerat-Quraysh

It is said that when Quraysh's trade caravans gathered to embark upon their lengthy and arduous journey either to Syria during the summer or to Yemen during the winter, Khadija's caravan equalled the caravans of all other traders of Quraysh put together. Although the society in which Khadija was born was a terribly male chauvinistic one, Khadija earned two titles: Ameerat-Quraysh, Princess of Quraysh, and al-Tahira, the Pure One, due to her impeccable personality and virtuous character, not to mention her honorable descent. She used to feed and clothe the poor, assist her relatives financially, and even provide for the marriage of those of her kin who could not otherwise have had means to marry.

One particular quality in Khadija was quite interesting, probably more so than any of her other qualities mentioned above: she, unlike her people, never believed in nor worshipped idols. There was a very small number of Christians and Jews in

Mecca, and a fairly large number of Jews in Medina. Waraqah ibn Nawfal, one of Khadija's cousins, had embraced Christianity and was a pious monk who believed in the Unity of the Almighty, just as all early Christians did, that is, before the concept of the Trinity crept into the Christian faith, widening the theological differences among the believers in Christ (A.S.). He reportedly had translated the Bible from Hebrew into Arabic. His likes could be counted on the fingers of one hand during those days in the entire populous metropolis of Mecca, or Becca, or Ummul-Qura (the mother town), a major commercial center at the crossroads of trade caravans linking Arabia with India, Persia, China, and Byzantium, a city that had its own Red Sea port at Shu`ayba. Most importantly, Mecca housed the Ka`ba, the cubic "House of God" which has always been sought for pilgrimage and which used to be circled by naked polytheist "pilgrims" who kept their idols, numbering 360 small and big, male and female, inside it and on its roof-top. Among those idols was one for Abraham and another for Ishmael, each carrying divine arrows in his hands. Hubal, a huge idol in the shape of a man, was given as a gift by the Moabites of Syria to the tribesmen of Khuza`ah, and it was Mecca's chief idol. Two other idols of significance were those of the Lat, a grey granite image which was the deity of Thaqif in nearby Taif, and the Uzza, also a block of granite about twenty feet long. These were regarded as the wives of the Almighty...

Each tribe had its own idol, and the wealthy bought and kept a number of idols at home. The institute of pilgrimage was already there; it simply was not being observed properly, and so was the belief in Allah Whom the Arabs regarded as their Supreme deity. Besides Paganism, other "religions" in Arabia included star worship and fetishism.

The Richest Person in Arabia

Since Khadija did not travel with her trade caravans, she had always had to rely on someone else to act as her agent to trade on her behalf and to receive an agreed upon commission in return. In 595 A.D., Khadija needed an agent to trade in her merchandise going to Syria, and it was then that a number of agents whom she knew before and trusted, as well as some of

her own relatives, particularly Abu Talib, suggested to her to employ her distant cousin Muhammad ibn Abdullah (S.A.W.) who, by then, had earned the honoring titles of al-Sadiq, the truthful, and al-Amin, the trustworthy. Muhammad (S.A.W.) did not have any practical business experience, but he had twice accompanied his uncle Abu Talib on his trade trips and keenly observed how he traded, bartered, bought and sold and conducted business; after all, the people of Quraysh were famous for their involvement in trade more than in any other profession. It was not uncommon to hire an agent who did not have a prior experience; so, Khadija decided to give Muhammad (S.A.W.) a chance. He was only 25 years old. Khadija sent Muhammad (S.A.W.) word through Khazimah ibn Hakim, one of her relatives, offering him twice as much commission as she usually offered her agents to trade on her behalf. She also gave him one of her servants, Maysarah, who was young, brilliant, and talented, to assist him and be his bookkeeper.

Before embarking upon his first trip as a businessman representing Khadija, Muhammad (S.A.W.) met with his uncles for last minute briefings and consultations, then he set out on the desert road passing through Wadi al-Qura, Midian, and Diyar Thamud, places with which he was familiar because of having been there at the age of twelve in the company of his uncle Abu Talib. He continued the lengthy journey till he reached Busra (or Bostra) on the highway to the ancient city of Damascus after about a month. It was then the capital of Hawran, one of the southeastern portions of the province of Damascus situated north of the Balqa'. To scholars of classic literature, Hawran is known by its Greek name Auranitis, and it is described in detail by Yaqut al-Hamawi, Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani, and others. Arab trade caravans used to go there quite often and even beyond it to Damascus and Gaza, and few made it all the way to Mediterranean shores to unload their precious cargoes of Chinese paper and silk textiles bound for Europe.

What items did Muhammad (S.A.W.) carry with him to Busra, and what items did he buy from there? Meccans were not known to be skilled craftsmen, nor did they excel in any profession besides trade, but young Muhammad (pbuh) might have

carried with him a cargo of hides, raisins, perfumes, dried dates, light weight woven items, probably silver bars, and most likely some herbs. He bought what he was instructed by his employer to buy: these items may have included manufactured goods, clothes, a few luxury items to sell to wealthy Meccans, and maybe some household goods. Gold and silver currency accepted in Mecca included Roman, Persian, and Indian coins, for Arabs during those times, including those who were much more sophisticated than the ones among whom Muhammad (S.A.W.) grew up such as the Arabs of the southern part of Arabia (Yemen, Hadramout, etc.), did not have a currency of their own; so, barter was more common than cash. The first Arab Islamic currency, by the way, was struck in 78 A.H., 36 years after the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty (661-750) at the advice and help of Imam Muhammad Baqir(A.S.).The young Muhammad(S.A.W.) was seen once by Nestor the monk sitting in the shade of a tree as caravans entered the outskirts of Busra, not far from the monk's small monastery. "Who is the man beneath that tree?" inquired Nestor of Maysarah. "A man of Quraysh," Maysarah answered, adding, "of the people [the Hashemites] who have guardianship of the Sanctuary." "None other than a Prophet is sitting beneath that tree," said Nestor who had observed some of the signs indicative of Prophethood: two angels (or, according to other reports, two small clouds) were shading Muhammad (S.A.W.) from the oppressive heat of the sun. "Is there a glow, a slight redness, around his eyes that never parts with him?" Nestor asked Maysarah. When the latter answered in the affirmative, Nestor said, "He most surely is the very last Prophet; congratulations to whoever believes in him."

The profits Khadija reaped from that trip were twice as much as she had anticipated. Maysarah was more fascinated by Muhammad (S..A.W. than by anything related to the trip. Muhammad (S.A.W.), on the other hand, brought back his impressions about what he had seen and heard, impressions which he related to his mistress. You see, those trade caravans were the only links contemporary Arabs had with their outside world: they brought them the news of what was going on

beyond their drought-ridden and famine-stricken desert and sand dunes.

Waraqah ibn Nawfal, like Bahirah, the monk, adhered to the Nestorian Christian sect. He heard the accounts about the personality and conduct of young Muhammad (S.A.W.) from both his cousin Khadija and her servant Maysarah, an account which caused him to meditate for a good while and think about what he had heard. Raising his head, he said to Khadija, "Such manners are fit only for the messengers of God. Who knows? Maybe this young man is destined to be one of them." This statement was confirmed a few years later, and Waraqah was the very first man who identified Muhammad (S.A.W.) as the Messenger of Allah immediately after Muhammad (S.A.W.) received the first revelation at Hira cave.

The trip's measure of success encouraged Khadija to employ Muhammad (S.A.W.) again on the winter trip to southern Arabia, i.e. Yemen, the land that introduced the coffee beans to the rest of the world, the land where the renown Ma'rib irrigation dam was engineered, the land of Saba' and the renown Balqees, the Arabian Queen of Sheba (Saba') of Himyar, who married King Solomon (Sulayman the wise, peace be upon him), in 975 B.C., the land of natives skilled in gold, silver and other metal handicrafts, not to mention their ingenuity in the textile industry and domestic furniture... , and it may even be the land that gave Arabic its first written script which, as some believe, was modelled after written Amheric, then the official language in Ethiopia and its colonies. Yemen, at that time, was being ruled by an Ethiopian regent. This time Khadija offered Muhammad (S.A.W.) three times the usual commission. Unfortunately, historians do not tell us much about this second trip except that it was equally profitable to both employer and employee. Some historians do not mention this trip at all.

Hadrat Khadija's marriage with the Holy Prophet of Islam(S.A.W.)Khadija was by then convinced that she had finally found a man who was worthy of her, so much so that she initiated the marriage proposal herself. Muhammad (S.A.W.) sat to detail all the business transactions in which he became

involved on her behalf, but the wealthy and beautiful lady of Quraysh was thinking more about her distant cousin than about those transactions. She simply fell in love with Muhammad (S.A.W.) just as the daughter of the Arabian prophet Shu`ayb had fallen in love with then prophet Moses (A.S.). Muhammad (S.A.W..) was of medium stature, inclined to slimness, with a large head, broad shoulders and the rest of his body perfectly proportioned. His hair and beard were thick and black, not altogether straight but slightly curled. His hair reached midway between the lobes of his ears and shoulders, and his beard was of a length to match. He had a noble breadth of forehead and the ovals of his large eyes were wide, with exceptionally long lashes and extensive brows, slightly arched but not joined. His eyes were said to have been black, but other accounts say they were brown, or light brown. His nose was aquiline and his mouth was finely shaped. Although he let his beard grow, he never allowed the hair of his moustache to protrude over his upper lip. His skin was white but tanned by the sun. And there was a light on his face, a glow, the same light that had shone from his father, but it was more, much more powerful, and it was especially apparent on his broad forehead and in his eyes which were remarkably luminous.

By the time he was gone, Khadija sought the advice of a friend of hers named Nufaysa daughter of Umayyah. The latter offered to approach him on her behalf and, if possible, arrange a marriage between them. Nufaysa came to Muhammad (S.A.W.) and asked him why he had not married yet. "I have no means to marry," he answered. "But if you were given the means," she said, "and if you were bidden to an alliance where there is beauty and wealth and nobility and abundance, would you not then consent?" "Who is she?!" he excitedly inquired. "Khadija," said Nufaysa. "And how could such a marriage be mine?!" he asked. "Leave that to me!" was her answer. "For my part," he said, "I am willing." Nufaysa returned with these glad tidings to Khadija who then sent word to Muhammad (S.A.W.) asking him to come to her. When he came, she said to him:

O son of my uncle! I love you for your kinship with me, and for that you are ever in the center, not being a partisan among the people for this or for that. And I love you for your trustworthiness, and for the beauty of your character and the truth of your speech. Then she offered herself in marriage to him, and they agreed that he should speak to his uncles and she would speak to her uncle `Amr son of Asad, since her father had died. It was Hamzah, despite being relatively young, whom the Hashemites delegated to represent them on this marriage occasion, since he was most closely related to them through the clan of Asad; his sister Safiyya had just married Khadija's brother `Awwam.

It was Abu Talib, Muhammad's uncle, who delivered the marriage sermon saying,

All praise is due to Allah Who has made us the progeny of Ibrahim (Abraham), the seed of Isma`eel (Ishmael), the descendants of Ma`ad, the substance of Mudar, and Who made us the custodians of His House and the servants of its sacred precincts, making for us a House sought for pilgrimage and a shrine of security, and He also gave us authority over the people. This nephew of mine Muhammad (S.A.W.) cannot be compared with any other man: if you compare his wealth with that of others, you will not find him a man of wealth, for wealth is a vanishing shadow and a fickle thing. Muhammad (S.A.W.) is a man whose lineage you all know, and he has sought Khadija daughter of Khuwaylid for marriage, offering her such-and-such of the dower of my own wealth.

Nawfal then stood and said,

All praise is due to Allah Who has made us just as you have mentioned and preferred us over those whom you have indicated, for we, indeed, are the masters of Arabs and their leaders, and you all are worthy of this (bond of marriage). The tribe (Quraysh) does not deny any of your merits, nor does anyone else dispute your lofty status and prestige. And we, furthermore, wish to be joined to your rope; so, bear witness to my words, O people of Quraysh! I have given Khadija daughter of

Khuwaylid in marriage to Muhammad(S.A.W.) ibn Abdullah for the dower of four hundred dinars.

Then Nawfal paused, whereupon Abu Talib said to him, "I wished her uncle had joined you (in making this statement)." Hearing that, Khadija's uncle stood and said, "Bear witness, O men of Quraysh, that I have given Khadija daughter of Khuwaylid in marriage to Muhammad(S.A.W.) ibn Abdullah."

These details and more are recorded in Ibn Hisham's Seera. After his marriage, Muhammad (S..A.W.) moved from his uncle's house to live with his wife in her house which stood at the smiths' market, an alley branching out of metropolitan Mecca's long main bazaar, behind the mas`a, the place where the pilgrims perform the seven circles during the hajj or `umra. In that house Fatima (A.S.) was born and the revelation descended upon the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) many times. This house, as well as the one in which the Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.) was born (which stood approximately 50 meters northwards), were both demolished by the ignorant and fanatical Wahhabi rulers of Saudi Arabia last year (1413 A.H./1993 A.D.) and turned into public bathrooms. The grave sites of many family members and companions of the Holy Prophet (S.A..W.) were all demolished by the same Wahhabis in 1343 A.H./1924 A.D. against the wish and despite the denunciation of the adherents of all other Muslim sects and schools of thought worldwide.

The marriage was a very happy one, and it produced a lady who was one of the four perfect women in all the history of mankind: Fatima daughter of Muhammad (S.A.W.). Before her, Qasim and Abdullah were born, but they both died at infancy.

By the time Khadija got married, she was quite a wealthy lady, so wealthy that she felt no need to keep trading and increasing her wealth; instead, she decided to retire and enjoy a comfortable life with her husband who, on his part, preferred an ascetic life to that of money making. The Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) had no desire to accumulate wealth; that was not the purpose for which he, peace and blessings of Allah upon him

and his progeny, was created. He was created to be savior of mankind from the darkness of ignorance, idol worship, polytheism, misery, poverty, injustice, oppression, and immorality.

Hadrat Khadijah(A.S.) the First Muslim Woman:

He very much loved to meditate, though his meditation deepened his grief at seeing his society sunk so low in immorality, lawlessness, and the absence of any sort of protection for those who were weak and oppressed. Khadija's period of happiness lasted no more than 15 years after which her husband, now the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.), started his mission to invite people to the Oneness of God, to equality between men and women, and to an end to the evils of the day. Muhammad (S.A.W.) was forty years old when the first verses of the Holy Qur'an were revealed to him. They were the first verses of Surat al-Alaq (chapter 96), and they were revealed during the night of 27th Rajab 13 years before the Hijra, at the cave of Hira in Jabal al-Noor (the mountain of light), his favorite place for isolation and meditation, a place which is now visited by many pilgrims.

Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) went back home deeply impressed by the sight of arch-angel Gabriel and by the depth of meaning implied in those beautiful words: In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful Proclaim (or read)! In the Name of your Lord and Cherisher who created (everything). (He) created man of a (mere) clot of congealed blood. Proclaim! And your Lord is the Most Bountiful Who taught (the use of) the pen, Who taught man that which he knew not... (Holy Qur'an, 96:1-5)

He felt feverish, so he asked to be wrapped and, once he felt better, he narrated what he had seen and heard to his faithful and supportive wife. "By Allah," Khadija said, "Allah shall never subject you to any indignity... , for you always maintain your ties with those of your kin, and you are always generous in giving; you are diligent, and you seek what others regard as unattainable; you cool the eyes of your guest, and you lend your support to those who seek justice and redress. Stay firm, O cousin, for by Allah I know that He will not deal with you

except most beautifully, and I testify that you are the awaited Prophet in this nation, and your time, if Allah wills, has come."

After a short while, Khadija told her husband about the prediction of the Syrian monk Buhayra regarding Muhammad's Prophethood, and about her dialogue with both her servant Maysarah, who had informed her of what Bahirah (or Buhayrah) had said, and with her cousin Waraqah ibn Nawfal. She then accompanied her husband to Waraqah's house to narrate the whole incident. "Let me hear it in your own words," Nawfal said to Muhammad (S.A.W.), adding, "O noble master!" Having heard the Prophet's words, Nawfal took his time to select his words very carefully; he said, "By Allah, this is the prediction which had been conveyed to Moses (as) and with which the Children of Israel are familiar! [Moses] had said: `O how I wish I could be present when Muhammad (S.A.W.) is delegated with Prophethood to support his mission and to assist him!'"

It was only natural for Khadija to receive her share of the harassment meted to him by none other than those who, not long ago, used to call him al-Sadiq, al-Amin. Yahya ibn `Afeef is quoted saying that he once came, during the period of jahiliyya (before the advent of Islam), to Mecca to be hosted by al-Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib, one of the Prophet's uncles mentioned above. "When the sun started rising," says he, "I saw a man who came out of a place not far from us, faced the Ka`ba and started performing his prayers. He hardly started before being joined by a young boy who stood on his right side, then by a woman who stood behind them. When he bowed down, the young boy and the woman bowed, and when he stood up straight, they, too, did likewise. When he prostrated, they, too, prostrated." Then he expressed his amazement at that, saying to al-Abbas: "This is quite strange, O Abbas!" "Is it, really?" retorted al-Abbas. "Do you know who he is?" al-Abbas asked his guest who answered in the negative. "He is Muhammad ibn Abdullah, my nephew. Do you know who the young boy is?" asked he again. "No, indeed," answered the guest. "He is Ali son of Abu Talib. Do you know who the woman is?" The answer came again in the negative, to which al-Abbas said, "She is Khadija daughter of Khuwaylid, my nephew's wife." This incident is

included in the books of both Imam Ahmad and al-Tirmithi, each detailing it in his own Sahih. And she bore patiently in the face of persecution to which her revered husband and his small band of believers were exposed at the hands of the polytheists and aristocrats of Quraysh, sacrificing her vast wealth to promote Islam, seeking Allah's Pleasure. Among Khadija's merits was her being one of the four most perfect of all women of mankind, the other three being: Fatima daughter of Muhammad (S.A.W.), Maryam bint `Umran (Mary daughter of Amram), mother of Christ (A.S.) and niece of prophet Zakariyya and Ishba (Elizabeth), and `Asiya daughter of Muza-him, wife of Pharaoh. Prophet Zakariyya, as the reader knows, was the father of Yahya (John the Baptist), the latter being only a few months older than prophet Jesus (A.S.).

The Most Beloved Wife of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.)

The Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.) used to talk about Khadija quite often after her demise, so much so that his youngest wife, `Ayesha daughter of Abu Bakr, felt extremely jealous and said to him, "... But she was only an old woman with red eyes, and Allah has compensated you with a better and younger wife (meaning herself)." This caused him (S.A.W.) to be very indignant, and he said, "No, indeed; He has not compensated me with someone better than her. She believed in me when all others disbelieved; she held me truthful when others called me a liar; she sheltered me when others abandoned me; she comforted me when others shunned me; and Allah granted me children by her while depriving me of children by other women."

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Abu Hatim, al-Dulabi, al-Tabari, and many others, all quote `Ayesha saying: "One day, the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) mentioned Khadija affectionately, so I was carried away by jealousy and said about her what I should not have said. It was then that his face changed color in a way I never saw it change except when he (S.A.W.) was receiving revelation, so I realized what I had done and felt overwhelmed by regret to the extent that I could not help uttering these words: `O Lord! If You remove the anger of Your Messenger right now, I pledge not to ever speak ill of her as long as I live.' Having seen that, he forgave me and narrated to me some of

her merits." Both Muslim and Bukhari indicate in their respective Sahih books that among Khadija's merits was the fact that the Lord of Dignity ordered Jibraeel (Gabriel), peace be upon him, to convey His regards to her. Gabriel said to Muhammad (S.A.W.): "O Muhammad! Khadija is bringing you a bowl of food; when she comes to you, tell her that her Lord greets her, and convey my greeting, too, to her." When he (S.A.W.) did so, she said: "Allah is the Peace, and He is the source of all peace, and upon Gabriel be peace." Khadija died of an attack of fever on 29th day of the month of Rajab, ten years after the start of the Prophetic mission (in the year 619 A.D.), 25 years after her marriage with Muhammad (S.A.W.), and she was buried at Hajun in the outskirts of Mecca. The Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) dug her grave and buried her... Funeral prayers (salat al janaza) had not yet been mandated in Islam. It is reported that by the time she died, her entire wealth had already been spent to promote Islam; she left not a single gold dinar nor a single silver dirham, nor anything more or less...

O soul that are at rest! Return to your Lord,
well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him),
so enter among My servants, and enter into My garden.
(Holy Qur'an, 89:27-30)

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IN THE AGE OF INFORMATION

IGNORANCE IS A CHOICE

*"Wisdom is the lost property of the Believer,
let him claim it wherever he finds it"*

Imam Ali (as)