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Article

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If you wish to research the life of this great lady, and if you do not have al-Majlisi's 111-volume encyclopedia titled *Bihar al-Anwar*, the best references are: al-Sayyuti's *Tarikh al Khulafa*, Abul-Faraj al- Isfahni'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 Khadijah's wealth," a saying goes. Khadijah 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 with him and his progeny. Qusayy, then, is the ancestor of all clans belonging to Quraish. According to some historians, Quraish'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 Allah with the prophets from among his ancestors.

According to a number of sources, Khadijah was born in 565 A.D. and died in 620, at the age of 55, but some historians say that she dies ten years later. Khadijah's mother, who died around 575 A.D., was Fatima daughter of Za'ida ibn al-Asam of Banu `Amir ibn Lu'ayy ibn Ghalib, also a distant relative of Prophet Muhammad (ص). Khadijah's father, who died around 585 A.D., belonged to the Abd al-`Uzza clan of the tribe of Quraish. Like many other Quraishis, he was a merchant, a successful businessman whose vast wealth and business talents were inherited by Khadijah and whom the latter succeeded in faring with the family's vast wealth. It is said that when Quraish's trade caravans gathered to embark upon their lengthy and arduous journey either to Syria during the summer or to Yemen during the winter, Khadijah's caravan equaled the caravans of all other traders of Quraish put together.

Old and very rare photo showing Khadijah's 3-story house where the Prophet (ص) lived and Fatima (ع) born prior to its demolition in 1413 A.H./1992 A.D. by the Saudi government in order to expand the Sacred Haram housing the Ka'ba

Although the society in which Khadijah was born was terribly male chauvinistic, Khadijah earned two

titles: *Ameerat Quraish*, Princess of Quraish, and *at-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.

By 585 A.D., Khadijah 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", namely Hind ibn Zar'ah, who belonged to Banu `Adiyy, and the second was Ateeq ibn `Aa'ith. 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* (companions of the Holy 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 Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), 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 Allah (ص). Besides him, Khadijah gave birth by Abu Halah to two other sons: at-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 Khadijah's children by her second husband? This is another controversy that revolves around the other daughters or step-daughters of the Prophet (ص) besides Fatima (ع). These daughters, chronologically arranged, are: Zainab, Ruqayya, and Ummu Kulthoom. Some historians say that these were Khadijah's daughters by her second husband, whereas others insist they were her daughters by Muhammad (ص). The first view is held by Sayyid Safdar Husayn in his book *The Early History of Islam* in which he bases his conclusion on the contents of al-Sayyuti's famous work *Tarikh al-Khulafa wal Muluk* (history of the caliphs and kings; do not confuse it with Tabari's Tarikh; both books bear the same title, and this is not uncommon at all). We hope some of our Muslim sisters who read this text will be tempted to research this subject. Here is a brief account of Khadijah'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, and she participated in the migration from Mecca to Medina. She died early in 8 A.H. (630 A.D.) and was buried in Jannatul Baqee` where her grave can still be seen defying the passage of time. Ruqayya and Ummu Kulthoom married two of Abu Lahab's sons. Abu Lahab, one of the Prophet's eleven uncles, stubbornly and openly rejected his nephew's preaching; therefore, he was condemned in the Mecci Chapter 111 of the Holy Qur'an, a chapter named after him.

Having come to know about such 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, `Uthman 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. (624 A.D.) and was buried at Jannatul Baqee`.

`Uthman then married her sister, Ummu Kulthoom, in Rabi` al-Awwal of the next (third) Hijri year (September of 624 A.D.). Ummu Kulthoom lived with her husband for about six years before dying in 9 A.H. (630 A.D.), leaving no children. Some Muslims tell a different story, claiming that although Khadijah was much older than the Prophet (ص), she was still a virgin..., and surely Allah knows. These Muslims are reminded that the Prophet married only one single virgin wife: Lady ‘Aisha daughter of first caliph Abu Bakr. All other wives were previously married. What is wrong with that? Prophet Sulayman (Solomon) married a widow, too, and so did many other prophets and messengers of Allah.

One particular quality in Khadijah was quite interesting, probably more so than any of her other qualities mentioned above: She, unlike her people, never believed in nor worshipped idols. A very small number of Christians and Jews lived in Mecca at the time and a fairly large number of Jews lived in Medina in fortified communities, small and large, the largest being Khaybar. Waraqah ibn Nawfal, one of Khadijah's cousins (some say he was her uncle), 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 (ع).

Let us digress here for a moment and try to trace history back to the time when the Trinity became "officially" a tenet of the Christian faith. You see, the only Christian Gospel accepted by Muslims as accurate, authentic and saved from distortion is that of St. Barnabas, a Cypriot companion of St. Paul (originally Saul), which was not canonized by the Council of Nicaea of 325 A.D. where the Trinity was incorporated into the Christian beliefs for the very first time. Remember, this happened in the fourth century after Christ!

For almost four hundred years, not many people among the Christians had even heard of the Trinity. That Council of Nicaea, which was actually boycotted by many Christian churches around the world, was called for by the Byzantine emperor Constantine I (288 – 337 A.D.), or Constantine the Great, who built the now Turkish city Constantinople in 330 A.D. to dedicate it to Jesus' mother, Virgin Mary. Constantine's objective behind holding the Nicaea Conference was to settle the disputes among various Christian sects about what constituted Christianity and what did not, but the said Conference created more problems than it solved. It was boycotted by a number of Christian sects that did not endorse its resolutions.

Now let us go back to Waraqah ibn Nawfal. This scholar 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 which contributed to trade and business in it.

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 female deity of the tribe of Thaqif in nearby Taif, and the Uzza, also a female deity carved out of 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 or chief deity. Besides Paganism, other "religions" in Arabia included star worship and fetishism.

The Jews of Medina had migrated from Palestine and settled there waiting for the coming of a new Prophet from the seed of Abraham (ع) 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. Only a handful of them embraced Islam, including one man who was a neighbor of Muhammad (ص); he lived in the same alley in Mecca where Khadijah'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 Khadijah 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., Khadijah 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 (ص). By then, young Muhammad (ص) had already earned the honoring titles of as-Sadiq, the truthful, and al-Amin, the trustworthy.

Muhammad (ص) 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 Quraish 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, Khadijah decided to give Muhammad (ص) a chance. He was only 25 years old.

Khadijah sent Muhammad (ص) 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. 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 on his first trip as a businessman representing Khadijah, Muhammad (ص) 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, father of his cousin and later son-in-law Ali (ع). He continued the lengthy journey till he reached Busra (or Bostra) on the highway to the ancient city of Damascus after about one 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 the Mediterranean shores to unload their precious cargoes of Chinese paper and silk textiles bound for Europe.

What items did Muhammad (ص) 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 (ص) 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 currencies 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 (ص) 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 Muhammad (ص) 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 Muhammad (ص) with plenty of food for thought; he contemplated upon them a great deal. He 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 Quraish," Maysarah answered, adding, "of the people [the Hashemites] who have guardianship of the Sanctuary (the Ka'ba)." "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 (ص) 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."

One of Muhammad'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'an 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. Muhammad (ص) was concerned about either of these two empires extending its control over the land inhabited by Muhammad's fiercely independent Pagan people.

The loss of Jerusalem, birthplace of Christ, Jesus son of Mary (ع), was a heavy blow to the prestige of 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 "pyre," 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 *hadith* in Islamic history, so much so that the Prophet of Islam (ص) 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, Muhammad's (and, naturally, Khadijah's) offspring came to marry ladies who were born and raised at Persian as well as Roman palaces. Imam Husain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), Muhammad's grandson and our Third Holy Imam, 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 Qadisiyya to the Muslim forces in 636, thus ending the 427–year rule of the Sassanians which extended from 224 A.D. to 651 A.D. 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 slain emperor left two daughters who, during their attempt to escape, following the murder of their father, were caught and sold as slaves.

One of them, Shah–Zenan, ended up marrying our Third Holy Imam Husain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع), whereas her sister married the renown scholar and acclaimed *muhaddith* (traditionist) Muhammad son of the first Muslim caliph Abu Bakr. Shah–Zenan was awarded a royal treatment and was given a new name in her own Persian mother tongue: Shahr Banu, which means "mistress of the ladies of the city." The marriage between her and Imam Husain (ع) produced our Fourth Holy Imam (Zainul–Abidin, or al–Sajjad) Ali ibn al–Husain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (ع).

The profits Khadijah reaped from that trip were twice as much as she had anticipated. Maysarah was more fascinated by Muhammad (ص) than by anything related to the trip. Muhammad (ص), 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 Bahirah, the monk who had seen and spoken to Muhammad (ص) when Muhammad (ص) was a lad, adhered to the Nestorian Christian sect. He heard the accounts about the personality and conduct of young Muhammad (ص) from both his cousin Khadijah 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 Khadijah, "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 (ص) as the Messenger of Allah immediately after Muhammad (ص) had received the first revelation at Hira cave.

The trip's measure of success encouraged Khadijah to employ Muhammad (ص) 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 with him), in 975 B.C. (after the completion of the construction of the famous Solomon's Temple[1]), 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 modeled 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 Khadijah offered Muhammad (ص) 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.

Khadijah 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 (ص) sat to detail all the business transactions in which he became involved on her behalf, but the wealthy and beautiful lady of Quraish was thinking more about her distant cousin than about those transactions.

She simply fell in love with Muhammad (ص) just as the daughter of the Arabian prophet Shu`ayb had fallen in love with then fugitive prophet Moses (ع) as we are told in 28:25–26 of the Holy Qur'an (in Surat al-Qasas). Muhammad (ص) 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, Khadijah 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 (ص) 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, wealth, nobility and abundance, would you not then consent?!" "Who is she?!" he excitedly inquired. "Khadijah," 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 Khadijah who then sent word to Muhammad (ص) 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 Khadijah'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 (ص), 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 (ص) is a man whose lineage you all know, and he has sought Khadijah 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 (Quraish) 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 Quraish! I have given Khadijah daughter of Khuwaylid in marriage to Muhammad 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, Khadijah's uncle stood and said, "Bear witness, O men of Quraish, that I have given Khadijah daughter of Khuwaylid in marriage to Muhammad ibn Abdullah."

These details and more are recorded in Ibn Hisham's *Seera*. After his marriage, Muhammad (ص) 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 (ع) was born and the revelation descended upon the Messenger of Allah (ص) many times. This house, as well as the one in which the Prophet of Islam (ص) 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.... The grave sites of many family members and companions of the Holy Prophet (ص) 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 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 Muhammad (ص). Before her, Qasim and Abdullah were born, but they both died at infancy.
By the time Khadijah 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 (ص) had no desire to accumulate wealth; that was not the purpose for which he, peace and blessings of Allah with 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.

Khadijah's period of happiness lasted no more than 15 years after which her husband, now the Messenger of Allah (ص), 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 (ص) 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 month of Ramadan 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. Muhammad (ص) went back home heavy-hearted, profoundly perplexed, 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...*** **(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," Khadijah 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, Khadijah told her husband about the prediction of the Syrian monk Buhayra regarding Muhammed'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 (ص), 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 (ع) and with which the Children of Israel are familiar! [Moses] had said: `O how I wish I could be present when Muhammad (ص) is delegated with Prophethood to support his mission and to assist him!'"

Dome over Khadijah's grave before it was demolished by the Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia

It was only natural for Khadijah to receive her share of the harassment meted to him by none other than those who, not long ago, used to call him as-Sadiq, al-Amin. Khadijah did not hesitate to embrace Islam at all, knowing that her husband could not have put forth any false claim.

Yahya ibn `Afeef is quoted as saying that he once came, during the *jahiliyya* (the period preceding 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 Muhammadibn 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 Khadijah 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* book. 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 Quraish, sacrificing her vast wealth to promote Islam, seeking Allah's Pleasure.

Among Khadijah's merits was her being one of the four most perfect of all women of mankind, the other three being: Fatima (ع) daughter of Muhammad (ص), Maryam bint `Umran (Mary daughter of Amram), mother of Christ (ع) and niece of prophet Zakariyya (Zacharias) and Ishba (Elizabeth), and `Asiya daughter of Muzahim, 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 (ع).

The Prophet of Islam (ص) used to talk about Khadijah quite often after her demise, so much so that his youngest wife, Ayisha 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 (ص) to be very indignant, so 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 Ayisha as saying: "One day, the Messenger of Allah (ص) mentioned Khadijah 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 (ص) 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 Khadijah's merits was the fact that the Lord of Dignity ordered Jibraeel (Gabriel), peace with him, to convey His regards to her. Gabriel said to Muhammad (ص): "O Muhammed! Khadijah 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 (ص) did so, she said: "O Allah! You are the Peace, and is the source of all peace, to you peace returns, Praised and Exalted are You, O One with the Greatness and Honor, and may with Gabriel be peace."

> اللهم أنت السلام و منك السلام و اليك يرجع السلام، تباركت و تعاليت يا ذا الجلال و الاكرام، و على جبرائيل السلام

Lord! You are the peace; from you is the peace, and to you returns the peace; Praised and Exalted are You, O One with all the Greatness and Honors

Khadijah died of an attack of fever on the tenth or eleventh day of the month of Ramadan, ten years after the start of the Prophetic mission (in the year 619 A.D.), 24 years after her marriage with Muhammad (ص), and she was buried at Hajun in the outskirts of Mecca. The Messenger of Allah (ص) 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...

> يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً، فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي

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. **(Qur'an, 89:27-30)**

(This paper about Khadijah al-Kubra, may the Almighty reward her on behalf of the Muslim *umma* from the first generations to the last, was written and widely circulated by myself, author of this book, on May 12, 1994, when I was living in Falls Church, Virginia, U.S.A. You are free to circulate it or post it on your Internet's web site so you may earn rewards from the Almighty Who loves scholars and scholarship and those who promote knowledge about His Prophets and Messengers, peace and blessings with them all.)

1. This 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'an in 27:44 thus: "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 were clear and reflective 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 Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem is built on its very foundations is false and a big lie. The Jews plot to demolish the Aqsa mosque in order to rebuild Solomon's Temple on its foundations. 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 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 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 are Allah's, and to Him shall we return...

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