



Golden Stories of

SAYYIDA KHADIJAH رضي الله عنها

Mother of the Believers

Abdul Malik Mujahid



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GOLDEN STORIES OF
SAYYIDA KHADIJAH

(May Allah be pleased with her)

MOTHER OF THE BELIEVERS

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Translated by: Syed Ahmed Faisal Nahri (Canada)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ
مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ

The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are their (believers') mothers (as regards respect and marriage). (Al-Ahzāb)

Dedication

To all those wives who are dutiful to their husbands and seek to please God.

To all those conscientious daughters of Islam who are blessed with modesty.

To all those graceful sisters who symbolize nobility and bring pride to their brothers and parents.

To all those mothers who prioritize healthy upbringing of their children over everything else.

To all those who love and respect the House of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and seek to follow in their footsteps.

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Fatimah Bint Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

Hasan Ibn 'Ali

Husayn Ibn 'Ali

Muhsin Ibn 'Ali

Zaynab Bint 'Ali

Umm Kulthum Bint 'Ali

Foreword

It is no exaggeration to say that there is hardly any Muslim in the world who does not know Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), the first wife of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and the very first convert to his mission. Numerous women have made remarkable contributions to Islamic civilization, but Khadijah's role in the early stages of Islam is unparalleled. She was the one to whom Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) related his first experience of wahy. He expressed fear for his life, to which Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) replied, "Never, by God! Never will God disgrace you, for you honor ties of kinship, you look after people who need help, you host and assist travelers, and you support just causes."

Not only that, she then took him to her cousin Waraqah Ibn Nawfal so he could be reassured and relieved of his anxiety.

I can't help appreciating Khadijah's wisdom and perseverance whenever I read accounts of her contributions in the early days of Islam. For students of Islamic history, I have tried to bring together accounts of her role in the spread of Islam in the pages of this book.

Besides praiseworthy attributes, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) had the honor to be the first person to embrace Muhammad's call to Islam. Known as Tahirah even before Islam, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was the daughter of Khuwaylid, a wealthy merchant and leader of the community. She was a graceful and wise woman, who established herself as a successful trader. As a mother, she brought up her children in the best possible manner. Subsequently, when it was time to support Muhammad's mission, she did not hesitate to spend her wealth to support the cause of Islam. She could afford the luxuries of this world, but she joined her husband and other members of his clan in exile for three difficult years in Shi'b Abi Talib. Thus, Jibril informed Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) that God promised Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) a palace in paradise.

In fact, my love, respect and appreciation for her grew considerably while researching and writing this book.

I hope it serves as a torch of guidance for curious men and women who seek to learn from the lives of Muhammad's wives and others among his immediate followers. In the book, I have tried my best to exclude weak or fabricated reports concerning the life of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her). I would appreciate it if readers can point out any anomaly in reports or accounts in the work. While writing this book, I was advised by friends to discuss the lives of Khadijah's children and grandchildren too – and so I did.

We have tried to observe the highest standards in the production of this book, which is but a manifestation of our love and respect for the First Lady of Islam. It may well be the first high-quality publication of Khadijah's biography.

My colleagues at Dar-us-Salam's offices in Lahore and Riyadh, especially Qari Muhammad Iqbal 'Abdul 'Aziz and Prof. Muhammad Zulfiqar, have offered me the utmost assistance in the preparation of this book, for which I remain grateful. Shahzad Ahmad has done a remarkable job in designing the layout. I take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues who contributed to the preparation and publication of this book.

I must thank brother Syed Ahmed Faisal Nahri from Canada who translated this book from Urdu into English.

I pray to God that this book plays a part in the reform and revival of the Ummah. Amen.

'Abdul Malik Mujahid

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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Genealogy of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her)

The first wife of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) as Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) Bint Khuwaylid. She belonged to Banu Asad Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzza Ibn Qusay, a distinguished family of the Quraysh tribe. By genealogical standards of nobility, she enjoyed a high status in the society.

She was called Tahirah (The word tahirah in Arabic is a feminine adjective that literally means “pure”. It signifies a lady who is chaste, modest, and virtuous.) even in pre-Islamic days. Recognizing her nobility and social status, the Makkans also called her sayyidat nisa’ Quraysh, the highest among the ladies of Quraysh. (Abu al-Qasim ‘Ali Ibn al-Hasan Ibn ‘Asakir, Tarikh Dimashq, n.d, 66:14; Abu al-Qasim ‘Abd al-Rahman Ibn ‘Abdillah al-Suhayli, al-Rawd al-Unuf fi Sharh al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah, n.d, 1:327.) Following the advent of Islam, Qur’an called her Umm Almuaminin, or the Mother of Believers an expression that signified her status in the new Muslim community.

﴿الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّيْلَةِ وَالنَّجْمِ وَالْجِبَالِ وَالْحَمِيرِ وَالشَّجَرِ بِمَا يُكْفَرُونَ وَالشَّجَرِ الَّذِي فِيهِ يَصْعَدُ الْبَرْقُ ذَلِكُمْ فِي الْكُفْرِ سَوَاءٌ ﴿٦﴾

(Qur’an 33:6.)

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have said that she was afdal nisa’ ahl al-jannah, the most meritorious among the women who shall enter paradise. (Abu ‘Abdillah Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Hanb, al-Musna, n.d, 1:293.)

The lineage of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) meets that of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) at Qusay Ibn Kilab. Qusay is credited with establishing the authority of Quraysh in Makkah. Before Qusay, Quraysh did not have any share in the governance of Makkah and the custodianship of the Ka‘bah. (Ka‘bah is the building in Makkah that Muslims face in their daily prayers. It was built by Adam and subsequently restored by Ibrahim and Isma‘il as a center of monotheistic worship.)

Qusay's Return to Makkah

Qusay Ibn Kilab was originally named Zayd. His father died while he was still an infant. After the death of his father, his mother Fatimah Bint Sa'ad married Rabi'ah Ibn Harām of Banu 'Adhrah, who lived in the vicinity of as-Sham. (In a classical sense, al-Sham refers to expanse of land that is occupied by present-day Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Israel. Historically, it has also been used to refer specifically to Damascus.) Qusay and his mother accompanied Rabi'ah to as-Sham. When Qusay grew older, he once had an unpleasant encounter with a man from among Banu 'Adhrah, who insulted him by saying that he did not belong to Banu 'Adhrah. When Qusay returned to his mother, he inquired about his ancestry. She affirmed that Qusay was not one of Banu 'Adhrah, but that he belonged to a nobler family – Quraysh of Makkah. Qusay learned that his older brother Zahrah Ibn Kilab and other members of his clan lived in Makkah in the vicinity of Ka'bah. From then on, Qusay remained in search of an opportunity to travel to the Holy City. He finally accompanied a caravan to Makkah to join his brother and other members of the family. His diligence and hard work quickly earned him a good reputation in his extended family. At the time, Hulayl Ibn Habshiyah al-Khuza'i was the ruler of Makkah. Qusay proposed to Habba, the daughter of Hulayl. Since Hulayl was impressed by Qusay's bravery and intelligence, he agreed to marry his daughter to Qusay. Qusay and Habba had four sons:

(1) 'Abd alDar, whose descendants have the keys of the Ka'bah to this day, (2) 'Abd Manaf, who was the ancestor of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), (3) 'Abd al'Uzza, who was the ancestor of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with him), and (4) 'Abd Qusay. After Hulayl's death, Qusay became the custodian of Ka'bah. He is also credited with establishing Dar al-Nadwah, which served as a parliament at the time. (Abu 'Abdillah Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, n.d., 1:66-70.)



Sociopolitical Role of Banu Asad

Banu Asad, the descendants of Asad Ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza Ibn Qusay, were one of the nine families among Quraysh who were in charge of the sociopolitical affairs of Makkah. One of the portfolios in the government of the Holy City was consultancy, which Banu Asad held. Part of their responsibilities was administration of Dar al-Nadwah. When the Quraysh were faced with questions of social and political significance, they would turn to Banu Asad so that consensus could be reached on sensitive issues. (Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, n.d., 2:18; Jamal alDin Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-Malik Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, n.d., 1:125.) Yazid Ibn Zam'ah Ibn Aswad Ibn Muttalib Ibn Asad was the last to hold this portfolio. ('Izz al-Din Abu al-Hasan 'Ali Ibn Abi al-Karam Ibn al-Athir, *Asad al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat al-Sahabah*, n.d., 4:2-339.) In the same role, Zam'ah Ibn Aswad played an important part in bringing an end to the written agreement that effected the social boycott of Banu Hashim. Zam'ah is reported to have said to Abu

Jahl, "By God, you are wrong; we were not agreed to this document event at the time when it was written down." (Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah, 1:376.)

Interrelationship of the Families of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her)

Khadijah's grandfather, Asad ibn 'Abd al'Uzza had many children. The oldest son was Muttalib. The second son was Khuwaylid, Khadijah's father. The third son was Nawfal, whose son Waraqah converted to Christianity.

Waraqah Ibn Nawfal

Waraqah Ibn Nawfal could write – a rare skill in those times. He used to translate Injil (the Gospel) to Arabic. In old age, he gradually lost his eyesight. When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) experienced the first occasion of wahy, (The word wahy signified God's communication with a messenger. It is often represented in English as "revelation". However, the word revelation is also used to represent the Christian notion of the revelation of God in the person of Christ. Thus, revelation may not be used to represent the Arabic-Islamic term wahy.) Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) took him to Waraqah. Being familiar with earlier scriptures, Waraqah could see that God had appointed Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) as His Messenger. He comforted Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) who was disturbed by the first experience of wahy, and reassured him of his support through difficult times that he could predict for Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). (Abu 'Abdillah Muhammad Ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, al-Musnad al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar min Umur Rasul Allah Salla Allah 'alayhi wasallam wa Sunanihi wa Ayyamih, n.d., 3.)

Umm Habib

Umm Habib was the paternal auntie of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her). Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was related to Umm Habib through his mother's family, Banu Zahrah: she was the maternal grandmother of Muhammad's (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) mother, Aminah Bint Wahb. (Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, 1:59.)

Khuwaylid Ibn Asad

Khadijah's father, Khuwaylid was one of the tribal leaders. Khuwaylid's eldest son was Hazzam. Hakim, the son of Hazzam, was appointed administrator of Dar al-Nadwah. (Ibn al-Athir, Asad al-Ghabah, 2:44)

Another son of Khuwaylid, 'Awwam was married to Safiyah Bint 'Abd alMuttalib, the paternal auntie of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Zubayr, the son of 'Awwam and Safiyah, was one of the leading companions of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He was among the ten companions who were promised admission to paradise during their lives.

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) were related through Safiyah and 'Awwam even before they got married.

Later on, Zaynab, the daughter of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), became the daughter-in-law of Khadijah's sister Halah: Zaynab got married to Halah's son, Abu al'As Ibn Rabi'.

Khadijah's Birth and Her Parents

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was born fifteen years before the Year of the Elephant. (Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, 8:17.) Her family enjoyed a high status in the Makkani society. Khadijah's father, Khuwaylid was a well-established trader as well as a tribal leader.

Historians have noted that Sayf Ibn Dhi Yazan, an Arab, defeated the Abyssinians in Southern Arabia and established his government two years after the Year of the Elephant. The Arabs, including the Makkans, celebrated his victory over the Abyssinians. The Makkans sent a delegation to congratulate Sayf Ibn Dhi Yazan, and to establish diplomatic ties with him. Among the delegates were 'Abd al-Muttalib Ibn Hashim (Muhammad's (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) grandfather), Umayyah Ibn 'Abd Shams, and Khuwaylid Ibn Asad (Khadijah's father). The delegation visited Sayf Ibn Dhi Yazan at a palace named Ghamdan in Sana'a. (Jamal al-Din Abu al-Faraj 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn 'Ali Ibn al-Jawzi, al-Wafa bi Ta'rif Fada'il al-Mustafa, n.d., 1:77.)

Khadijah's father died before the battle of Fijar. (Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, al-Tarikh, 2:36.) In the battle of Fijar, Quraysh were allied with Kananah to fight Qays Ibn 'Aylan. The battle is so named because it was in violation of the Haram (Haram is the inviolable zone inclusive of and surrounding Ka'bah, where bloodshed is forbidden.) as well as the sacred months. (During the sacred months – Dhu al-Qa'dah, Dhu al-Hijjah, Muharram, and Rajab; bloodshed was considered forbidden since pre-Islamic times.) Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), who was 14 or 15 years old at the time, accompanied his uncles to this battle; he handed them arrows in the battlefield. (Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah, 1:186.)

Khadijah's mother was Fatimah Bint Zahidah. She also belonged to the tribe of Quraysh. The Arabs were very particular about genealogy. The lineage of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) can be traced back with certainty to Nazar Ibn Ma'ad Ibn 'Adnan. Interestingly, even the names of Khadijah's paternal grandmothers have been recorded as far back as 'Adnan. Not just that, the names of her maternal grandmothers have also been recorded as far back as six generations.



Old City of Sanaa Yemen

Marital Life of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) before Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was married twice before her marriage to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Her first husband was 'Atiq Ibn 'Abid Ibn 'Abdullah al-Makhzumi. Following his death, she got married to Abu Halah Ibn Zararah al-Tamimi. (Ibn al-Athir, *Asad al-Ghabah*, 5:260.) According to some biographers, she married Abu Halah first.

Abu Halah and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) had a son, Hind Ibn Abi Halah, which explains her alias "Umm Hind". Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had a share with Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) in the upbringing of Hind. Hind embraced Islam, and participated in the battles of Badr and Uhud. He died in 36AH in the Battle of Camel. (Abu al-Fida' Ismail Ibn 'Umar Ibn Khathir, *Jami' al-Masanid wa al-Sunan al-Hadi li Aqwam Sanan*, n.d., 12:303.)

Abu Halah had three other sons: Halah, Harith, and Tahir. All three of them embraced Islam. Harith Ibn Abi Halah died in the early days of Islam defending Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) when he was attacked by his opponents in Makkah. In fact, he was the first martyr of Islam. (Abu al-Fadl Ahmad Ibn 'Ali Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *al-Isabah fi Tamyiz al-Sahabah*, n.d., 1:696.) With 'Atiq Ibn 'Abid al-Makhzumi, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) had another daughter, who was known as Umm Muhammad. (Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat*, 8:15.)

Remarriage of widows and divorcees was very common those days. In fact, a widow or a divorcee would be married again soon after her 'iddah. ('Iddah is the period of time following the divorce of a woman or the death of her spouse, during which she may not remarry.) A number of tribal leaders and others proposed to her after the death of her second husband, but she did not entertain any of those proposals. (Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat*, 1:131.)

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) an Outstanding Woman

Historians have noted that Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was sublime in terms of lineage and nobility. She was flawless in behavior, compassionate and benevolent. God had further blessed her with material wealth. She was rightly called Tahirah.

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was born and raised in a society that was religiously perverted and morally corrupt. The society worshipped idols, and praised mundane poets and indecent entertainers. Her family was unaffected by the evils of the Makkian society. They did not take pride in burying their daughters alive.

Ibn Ishaq has recorded that Makkian ladies were once gathered around the Ka'bah during a festival. Hubal's idol was set up in the vicinity of Ka'bah along with numerous smaller idols. Pilgrims not only circumambulated the Ka'bah, but also prostrated before the idols and invoked them to fulfill their needs. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was also present on the occasion. The gathering of women, consisting of young, old, rich and poor, assumed the idols were divine and paid them respects. A Jewish man who witnessed the occasion and observed the women for some time, then spoke, "Respected ladies! A Messenger of God is due to arrive amongst you. Whoever of you finds the opportunity to marry him should do so."

The chitchat of the ladies was suspended for a moment. They were astonished by what the man had just said. They wondered who he was and what he meant. Then some of them said he was not one of the Makkians. They thought he had mocked them and insulted their deities. Some of them started yelling at him. Others picked up stones and pebbles and hurled at him. With the exception of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), every other woman participated in scorning the man. It is recorded that Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) chose not to speak in defense of the false deities and remained silent. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) did not sympathize with the idol worshippers, even before Islam.

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was not surprised by the predicted arrival of a Messenger. She had heard before that a Messenger was due to come from among the descendants of Isma'il (Ishmael). To her, the Jewish man made sense. Her cousin, Waraqah Ibn Nawfal also shared this view. Waraqah used to criticize the Makkians openly. He admonished the Makkians for departing from the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham), who had built the Ka'bah for the exclusive worship of the one and only God. He invited the Makkians to one God, and condemned the worship of Hubal and other idols in the Ka'bah.

Waraqah was surrounded by the anomalies of the Makkian society, yet adhered to the religion of Ibrahim. In keeping with the Abrahamic tradition, he abstained from alcohol and gambling. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) held him in high esteem and appreciated his views.

Waraqah partnered with another gentleman, Zayd Ibn 'Amr Ibn Nafil, who was also an adherent of the Abrahamic religion. He used to address the Makkians in the vicinity of Ka'bah inviting them to the path of their ancestor, the Messenger of God, Ibrahim. He also rescued girls whose fathers wanted to bury them alive. Whenever he learned that someone wanted to bury their daughter alive, he approached them and persuaded them not to do so; if the person remained adamant, he would adopt the girl, often by paying a sum of money. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 3828.) Waraqah and Zayd were partners in such philanthropic activities.

It is pertinent to mention at this point that Zayd Ibn 'Amr was the father of Sa'id Ibn Zayd, a leading companion of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and one of the ten who were promised admission to paradise during their lives. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have said about Zayd Ibn 'Amr that he would be worth an ummah when he is raised on the Day of Resurrection. Abu 'Abdillah Muhammad Ibn 'Abdillah al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik ala al-Sahihayn, n.d., 3:440.)

These accounts point to the fact that the stipulated arrival of a Messenger from the descendants of Isma'il was not unheard of among the noble families in Makkah.

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) in Trade

Historians and biographers have noted that Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) inherited a great deal of wealth from her father and other members of her family. In turn, she invested her wealth in trade.

At the time, Yemen and as-Sham were two important hubs of trade. Summers in as-Sham were moderate, so trade caravans from Arabia headed to Busra in summers. Busra is located about 140km from Damascus along the road to the present-day Jordan. Amman and Jerusalem are nearby. Because of pleasant climate, Busra attracted trade caravans from far and wide during summers. Quraysh would sell products of their own region, and would buy products of other regions, which they would sell at home, earning profits at both ends.

Winters in as-Sham were cold and snowy, but pleasant in Yemen, so the Makkan traders headed south in winters. It is these northbound and southbound business trips that Qur'an refers to when it says,

﴿لَا يَلْبَسُ قُرَيْشٌ إِلَىٰ نَفْسِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ﴾

“So that the Quraysh might remain secure – secure in their winter and summer journeys...” (Qur'an 106:1-2.)

Trade was one of the major occupations for the Arabs. The rich among them would lend their merchandise on mudarabah (The word mudarabah signifies a business contract in which one party brings capital and the other personal effort. Profits are shared by the two parties; the share of each party is determined by mutual agreement. Losses, if any, are borne by the owner of the capital; the entrepreneur may not be compensated for his labor though.) basis to others who would then engage in trade. The profits would be shared as per the terms of the contract. Women commonly engaged in such business. Historians have noted that Khadijah's business was on a fairly large scale. Being a woman, she did not accompany the trade caravans, but gave her goods to established traders on mudarabah basis. God had blessed her with success in business. Being a tactful businesswoman, she was always looking for competent and honest men in the field who could carry her goods to distant places and trade on her behalf.

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) as a Trader

At the beginning of his career, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was a shepherd. Later on, he engaged in trade like his uncles and other relatives. In his early 20s, he earned the reputation of an honest and a principled trader. A prospective guide for all mankind, he was a principle-centered individual from the beginning. Even before his claim to nubuwah, [Nubuwah means appointment of a man as nabi (see Glossary).] his sublime character earned him the titles of al-sadiq (the truthful) and al-Amin (the honest) among the Makkans. No wonder the business community valued him highly as a trader.

Ibn Sa'ad has beautifully outlined the personality of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) in his Tabaqat:

“As a young adult, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was distinctly humane and kind, the best in behavior, pleasant in meeting and talking to people, amicable and generous as a neighbor, an embodiment of patience and tolerance, truthful in speech, distant from vulgar and hurtful speech, unparalleled in dignity, humble to the highest degree, full of compassion and goodwill, one who kept his word, and dead honest. It was as if God had concentrated all good attributes in his personality. That was why his people called him al-Amin.” (Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, 1:121.)

Ibn Sa'ad has defined al-Amin as one who is not just trustworthy, but has all of the abovementioned attributes. Being gentle and not quarrelsome in business dealings is an extraordinary attribute, and Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had it the most.

When 'Abdullah Ibn Sa'ib arrived in Madinah and met Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), the latter asked him, “Do you know me?” 'Abdullah replied, “Why not! You were a fellow trader; you would not evade any [claims] and you would not quarrel [with anyone].” (Diya al-Din Abu 'Abdillah Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahid al-Maqdisi, al-Mustakhrij min al-Ahadith al-Mukhtarah mimma lam Yukhrijhu al-Bukhari wa Muslim fi Sahihayhima, n.d., 9:379.) Likewise, Qays Ibn Sa'ib al-Makhzumi is reported to have said, “He was my fellow trader in Pre-Islamic days, and he was the best. He would never quarrel or argue [in business].”

A study of the Makkan days of Muhammad's (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) life reveals that he was very upright in his dealings. He kept promises; if he gave someone his word, he would fulfill it by all means. The story of 'Abdullah Ibn Ubay al-Hamsa' provides a pertinent example. Once, 'Abdullah and Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) were discussing business. During conversation, 'Abdullah remembered some piece of work. He told Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to wait for him: he would be back soon. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) agreed. 'Abdullah went away but forgot to return. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) waited for him at the same place for three days. The third day, when 'Abdullah walked by the same place, he realized that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had been waiting for him all this time. When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) saw him, he only said, “'Abdullah, you put me in difficulty. I have been waiting here for three days.” [Sulayman Ibn al-Ash'at Abu Da'ud, al-Sunan, n.d., 4996. (This report is considered weak.)] So sublime was the character of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Understandably, the Makkans called him al-sadiq and al-Amin.

Businessmen like to expand their businesses. They need honest and hardworking people to work for them. Rare in every age and in every society, men of character are valued by fellow human beings. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was also looking for someone who was honest and truthful – one who could be relied upon in business. When she learned about the reputation enjoyed by Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), she got interested in partnership with him.

Muhammad's (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) Business Trip to As-Sham

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) approached Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to carry her goods to as-Sham, and offered to pay twice as much profit as she would pay to other traders. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) accepted the business proposal. It is reported that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) also consulted his uncle, Abu Talib, who was excited about the prospect. (Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, 1:129-130.)

Some historians, however, suggest that Abu Talib took the initiative by advising Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), "The Makkan caravan is about to leave for as-Sham, and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) will engage some men to carry her goods for trade. If you express your desire to carry her goods to as-Sham [and trade on her behalf], I believe she would prefer you to others because of your good nature and honesty in business. I hate to send you on such a long journey to as-Sham, but our circumstances have not left us with too many options." Thus, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) traveled to as-Sham with Khadijah's goods. (Ibid., 1:129; Abu Nu'aym Ahmad Ibn 'Abdillah al-Asbahani, Dala'il al-Nubuwah, n.d., 1:172.)

The Signs of Nubuwah

In his journey to Busra as-Sham, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was accompanied by Maysarah, Khadijah's slave whom she trusted to look after her business. (Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, 1:130.) Maysarah was to serve and assist Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) during the journey. He got an opportunity to observe Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) very closely. Travel with a person to know him well, it is said. Maysarah witnessed the exceptional character of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) firsthand. He noted that there was no contradiction in Muhammad's (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) words and his actions.



Along the way, Maysarah witnessed many extraordinary incidents. One of them was the occasion when Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) relaxed under the shadow of a tree near Busra. Nestor, a hermit, lived nearby. When he saw Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) under the tree, he said, "None other than Messengers of God have ever stayed under this tree." Then he asked Maysarah, "Does he have red streaks in his eyes?" Maysarah replied in the affirmative. The hermit then said, "Remember! He is a Messenger, the last Messenger!" (Al-Asbahani, Dala'il al-Nubuwah, 1:173.)

Maysarah also witnessed that two angels used to provide shade to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) in the scorching heat of the sun. One of the reports suggests that Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) herself witnessed this when Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Maysarah arrived in Makkah at noon.

On one occasion, it is reported that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had a dispute with a man in one of his business transactions. He asked Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to swear by Lat and 'Uzza. [Lat and 'Uzza were two of the three chief goddesses (the third being Manat) worshipped by the Arabs before Islam. The Arabs believed the three deities were daughters of God.] Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have replied,

“مَا حَلَفْتُ بِهِمَا قَطُّ، وَإِنِّي لَأَمْرٌ بِهِمَا فَأَعْرِضُ عَنْهُمَا”

“I have never sworn by them; even when I pass by them, I ignore them.”

The man said to Maysarah, “By God, this man is the Messenger of God. Our scholars have known his attributes from [our] scriptures.”

It is reported that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) earned twice as much profit as other traders on this trip. In view of Muhammad’s success on the business trip, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) paid her four times as much as other traders, even though she had originally offered to pay twice as much. (Ibn Sa’d, al-Tabaqat, 1:130.)

Upon returning from as-Sham

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) shared with her cousin, Waraqah Ibn Nawfal, Maysarah’s accounts of the journey. She told him about Nestor, and what he said when he saw Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) sitting under the tree. She also told him about angels providing shade to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) in the sun. In response, Waraqah said, “Khadijah [(May Allah be pleased with her)] if what you have said is true, then Muhammad [(Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)] would be the Messenger in this nation. I have known that a Messenger, who is due to come from among [the Arabs], is awaited. And it is time for his arrival.” (Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah, 1:191-192.)

A report attributed to Jabir, appearing in Musnad Bazar and Tabarani’s collection, informs us that one of Khadijah’s sisters also gave her goods to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and another man to trade on her behalf in as-Sham. When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and the other man returned, and submitted the accounts, it turned out that Khadijah’s sister owed the two gentlemen some money. The other trader often visited her to demand his sum of money. He urged Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to pursue the lady to make the payment, but Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was too shy to do so. Khadijah’s sister told Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) about this, and she was impressed by Muhammad’s (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) modesty. (Abu al-Qasim Sulayman Ibn Ahmad al-Tabarani, al-Mu’jam al-Kabir, n.d., 2:209.)



Khadijah's Proposal To Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

In view of Maysarah's accounts of the journey to as-Sham and Waraqah's confirmation of these accounts, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was convinced about the nobility of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), and she thought of marrying him. Three months after Muhammad's return from as-Sham, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) sent her friend Nafisah Bint Umayyah (She is also called Nafisah Bint Muniyah, because her mother was Muniyah Bint Jabir Ibn Wahb. See Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *al-Isabah*, 8:336.) to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) with a proposal for marriage. Most of the historical and biographical accounts confirm that Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) took the initiative to propose to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) through her friend Nafisah. At the time, it was not unusual in the Arab society for a woman to take the initiative in a marriage proposal.

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) live with his uncle Abu Talib, when Nafisah visited them. She greeted Abu Talib's wife. Looking at Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), she said a few sentences of praise for him, and asked what he thought of marriage. In response, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said that he did not have the resources to get married, and that he would get married when his resources allowed him to do so.

It was as if Nafisah had expected this reply. She said why not marry an affluent lady who is noble and respected as well. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) inquired which affluent lady would marry him despite his limited resources. At this point, Nafisah said, "Khadijah Bint Khuwaylid [(May Allah be pleased with her)]."

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was already related to Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her). The tribe of Quraysh was essentially one big family. The lineage of Banu Hashim and Banu Asad united at Qusay Ibn Kilab. Moreover, Muhammad's auntie, Safiyah Bint 'Abd al-Muttalib was married to Khadijah's brother, 'Awwam Ibn Khuwaylid. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) herself was well-known among the Makkans for her wisdom and nobility and beauty. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) expressed his approval of the idea. (Ibn sa'd, *al-Tabaqat*, 1:131.) From there, Nafisah proceeded further.

Biographers have noted that a proposal for marriage was conveyed to Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) from Muhammad's side as well. Khadijah's father, Khuwaylid Ibn Asad had died; but her uncle, 'Amr Ibn Asad was alive. He was excited to learn about the proposal. Subsequently, on the occasion of marriage, he served as Khadijah's wali. (In the Arabic –Islamic terminology, wali means one's legal guardian.) (Ibn sa'd, *al-Tabaqat*, 1:132.)

The Marriage of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) & Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her)

When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) informed his uncles about his intention to marry Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), they too approved of the idea and expressed their support. The members of Muhammad's family, Banu Hashim, happily proceeded to Khadijah's home for the ceremony. Muhammad's uncles Hamzah, 'Abbas, and Abu Talib are known to have attended the ceremony. From Khadijah's side, Waraqah Ibn Nawfal (cousin), 'Amr Ibn Asad (uncle), 'Amr Ibn Khuwaylid (brother), Hakim Ibn Hazzam (nephew), and some ladies of the family attended the ceremony. It is reported that Abu Bakr, Muhammad's friend, was also present on the occasion.

Abu Talib addressed the gathering on the occasion. He thanked God for placing him and his family among the descendants of Ibrahim, and for honoring them with the responsibility to oversee the affairs of the Ka'bah. He praised his nephew, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), mentioning some of his good attributes. He said his nephew was not wealthy, but that wealth was a passing affair. He then announced the mahr (Mahr is a groom's gift to his bride on the occasion of marriage.) for the marriage. Following Abu Talib, Waraqah Ibn Nawfal addressed the gathering. It is reported that Waraqah officiated at the marriage. He acknowledged the merit and nobility of Banu Hashim and declared Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) as husband and wife for the appointed mahr. (Ahmad Ibn Abi Ya'qub Ishaq Ibn al-Wadih al-Ya'qubi, al-Tarikh, n.d., 2:14.) Some reports suggest that twenty camels were offered as mahr. (Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah, 1:191.) Other reports suggest that the mahr was 500 Dirhams of the time.

Historians noted that a camel was slaughtered to treat the guests and needy members of the society. (al-Halabi, Ihsan al-'Uyun 1:227.) This hospitality was expected from the affluent Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her); and hospitality was second nature to the Arabs.

The author of Nisa' hawl al-Rasul writes that Halimah al-Sa'adiyah, the foster mother of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), also attended the ceremony. The newlyweds gave her forty goats. (Muhammad Burhan, Nisa' hawl al-Rasul, n.d., 1:165.)

At the time of marriage, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was 40 years old, and Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was 25 years old. The marriage took place about 25 years after the army of elephants attacked Makkah, and 15 years before Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was appointed by God as His Messenger. After marriage, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) moved to Khadijah's residence, where he continued to live until he migrated to Madinah. (Abu al-Walid Muhammad Ibn 'Abdillah al-Azraqi, Akhbar Makkah wama ja'a fiha min al-Athar, n.d., 2:199.) The two enjoyed each other's company for about 24 years until the death of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her). Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not marry other women during Khadijah's life.

A New Household in the Makkan Society

With this marriage, a distinguished household blessed with peace and tranquility had been established in Makkah. God had blessed the family with affluence, yet they remained concerned with the weak and the underprivileged members of the society. They helped the poor and the needy, the orphans and the widows, openly and in private. Equally, they took care of their relatives.

Khadijah's children from her previous husbands were also members of the household. One of them was Hind Bint 'Atiq, and the other was Hind Ibn Abi Halah. With respect to these two children, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was called Umm Hind. (Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, al-Isabah,

8:100.) These children enjoyed the guiding presence of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

The Offspring of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her)

Soon after marriage, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) were blessed with a son who was named al-Qasim. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) came to be known as Abu al-Qasim in Makkah. But Qasim died while he was young. According to historians, he had started walking. Not much has been recorded about him, but it is safe to assume that the loss of a son at a young age when a child is extremely adorable must have been challenging for Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her). Yet, this is what God had willed.

In the years following the death of Qasim, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) were blessed with four daughters and a son. The daughters were Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum, and Fatimah. The son was ‘Abdullah, also known as Tayyib and Tahir. A lady named Salma is known to have nursed all of Khadijah’s children. Every time Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) became a mother, she would arrange to have the children breastfed by Salma. (Ibid., 7:602.)

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) had a blessed household. With the arrival of Zaynab, an atmosphere of joy and happiness was restored at home. Her arrival was also accompanied by material prosperity of the family, with the result that they were better able to help the poor and the needy. People who came empty-handed returned fulfilled. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) spent her wealth as would please Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

Khadijah’s Unique Gift to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

Once, Hakim Ibn Hazzam, Khadijah’s nephew, was in Ta’if when slaves were being traded in the marketplace. He went around the market and inquired about buying a young boy named Zayd, who was distinct from the other slaves in appearance and behavior. He bought Zayd, took him to Makkah, and passed him on to Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her). Zayd grew up in Khadijah’s household. At the time of marriage, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) gave Zayd as a gift to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). (Ibn ‘Asakir, Tarikh Dimashq, 21:243.)

Zayd was a fine young man, and Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) treated him with affection. Zayd’s father, Harithah, had been searching for Zayd. One day, he finally knocked at Muhammad’s door. He was accompanied by his brother, Zayd’s uncle. When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) opened the door, Harithah explained to him that he was Zayd’s father and wanted to buy his son back. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) politely told him that he did not want any money, and that Zayd was free to go back with him if he so wished; but Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would not force him to accompany his father if he wanted to stay. Harithah was astonished by Muhammad’s kindness. Zayd was then asked whether he wanted to stay or return to his family. To everyone’s surprise, Zayd expressed his love and respect for Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and said he wanted to stay. He preferred Muhammad’s company to life with his own family. In a state of shock, Zayd’s father asked him how he could choose slavery over freedom. Zayd said he knew what he was doing, and maintained his decision. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was touched by Zayd’s affection for him. He took him to Ka’bah, and announced to people that he was no longer his slave, but a son – an adopted son – and that they would inherit from each other. (Ibid, 21: 244.)

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) married Zayd to Umm Ayman, who was Muhammad's foster mother, and originally a slave of Muhammad's father, 'Abdullah. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) held Umm Ayman in high regard. Zayd had heard him saying whoever wished to marry a woman who is going to paradise should marry Umm Ayman. She gave birth of Zayd's son, Usamah, whom we know as the youngest military commander in the Islamic history. Zayd Ibn Hārithah was among the first few people to accept Muhammad's invitation to Islam.



The Cave of Hira a New Journey

A Few years before Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was appointed by God as His Messenger, he started spending much of his time in the cave of Hira near Makkah. He used to carry food and drink with him, and stay in the cave for days on end. Sometimes, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) would also accompany him and find a place to sit near the cave.

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would contemplate in the cave. He would ponder the universe and its phenomena, and the unseen Creator behind them. He would feed the destitute who passed by. When his supplies ran out, he would return home, where Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) and the girls would welcome him. He would sort out pending affairs at home, take some food, and go back to the cave again. (Abu 'Abdillah Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Baqi al-Zurqani, Sharh 'ala al-Mawahib al-Ladunniyah bi al-Minah al-Muhammadiyah, n.d., 1:392.)

While Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) spent more and more time at the cave, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) looked after the children and raised them in the best possible way. In Makkan society, girls were married at a relatively young age. Girls would get engaged as they grew up; They would marry soon after reaching puberty. As Zaynab, the daughter of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), grew up, Khadijah's sister Halah expressed her desire to marry her son Abu al-'As to Zaynab. Ab al-'As Ibn Rabi' was one of the well-known Qurayshi traders in Makkah. (The life of Abu al-'As will be discussed in greater detail subsequently in our account of Zaynab's life.) Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) discussed the proposal with Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), and he approved of it.

Biographers have noted that Zaynab was born about ten years before Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was appointed Messenger of God. She was married shortly after his appointment as a Messenger. The marriage was reassuring for him because Abu al-'As was a handsome and upright human being, who belonged to a noble family. Moreover, the newlyweds rapidly developed a lot of affinity for each other. Abu al-'As embraced Islam much later but the couple nevertheless enjoyed a strong and stable relationship. That is why Abu al-'As did not marry any other woman during Zaynab's life – not even when Zaynab migrated to Madinah and the two were separated for several years before they remarried.

Two other daughters, Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum were married respectively to 'Utbah and 'Utaybah, the sons of Abu Lahab, who was one of the paternal uncles of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Being minors, however, the two girls continued to stay with their parents. (It was common among the Arabs to marry a boy and a girl when one or both of them were

still minors. In such cases, marriage would take effect only after each of the spouses reached puberty, approved of the marriage and the couple started living together.)



"Jabal-e-Noor" Hira Cave

Fatimah, the fourth daughter of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), was too young to get married at the time of Muhammad's appointment as the Messenger of God. Their son, 'Abdullah, also known as Tayyib and Tahir, was born after Muhammad was appointed Messenger, and died shortly thereafter.

It is evident that Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was doing well in managing the affairs at home. The environment at home was great. The children were being raised in the best possible way. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) even spent her wealth without hesitation to help Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) in every possible way. He enjoyed such peace of mind as was required to spend long hours in contemplation at the cave of Hira. He is believed to have spent about three years in seclusion. God was preparing him for a greater responsibility. Staying at Hira for days on end would not have been possible for Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) without the complete cooperation of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her).

Signs of Nubuwah

When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) turned forty, he began to experience things that may be viewed in retrospect as signs of nubuwah. The first of these was his dreams coming true. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would see something in a dream, and it would actually happen exactly as he dreamt it. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 6982.) This continued for about six months.

'A'ishah Bint Abi Bakr, one of the wives of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), is reported to have said that the process of wahy started for Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) with dreams that would come true. He was increasingly inclined to seclusion in the cave of Hira. He would spend days in contemplation before returning home. He carried food with him that lasted for a few days, after which he would return to Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), have some more food packed, and go back to Hira.

On one of those days, while he was in the cave, he received the message of God. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 6982. Of. Mahdi Rizqullah Ahmad, al-Airah al-Nabawiyah fi Daw' al-Masadir al-Asliyah, n.d., 224.) Similarly, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have said,

(إِنِّي لَأَعْرِفُ حَجْرًا بِمَكَّةَ كَانَ يُسَلِّمُ
عَلَيَّ قَبْلَ أَنْ أُبْعَثَ، إِنِّي لَأَعْرِفُهُ الْآنَ)

“I know a rock in Makkah that used to greet me before I was appointed Messenger of God; I still know the rock.” (Abu al-Hasan Ibn al-Hajjaj Muslim, al-Musnad al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar bi Naqal al-‘Adl ‘an al-‘Adl ila’ Rasul Allah salla’ Allah ‘alayhi wasallam, n.d., 2277.)

Another report says that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was approached by two angels while he was in one of the valleys of Makkah. One of the angels asked the other to weigh Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) against a man. When he was weighed against a man, he turned out heavier. He was weighed against an increasing number of men, until he was finally weighed against a thousand men of his ummah; he was still heavier. At this point, one of the angels said that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) will turn out heavier than all members of his ummah together.

Then one of the angels said to the other to cut open his trunk. The other angel laid Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) down, cut open his chest, and removed the portion of Satan – that looked like a piece of flesh soaked in blood – from his heart. The fellow angel then asked him to wash clean Muhammad’s thorax just as a utensil was washed. The angel washed his thorax, then procured peace and infused it into Muhammad’s heart. The fellow angel then asked him to stitch up his (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) chest, which he did. The two angels then sealed Muhammad’s chest between his shoulders, and left. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) felt he was consciously observing all of this with his own eyes. (Nur al-Din Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali Ibn Abi Bakr al-Haythami, Majam’ al-Zawa’id wa-Manba’ al-Fawa’id, n.d., 8:255.)

Khadijah’s Prediction of Muhammad’s Nubūwah

Still another report suggests that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) departed from home, then returned and told Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) that his chest had been cut open, thoroughly washed, then stitched back. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) responded with excitement, “By God, this is a great thing. Be happy! You are about to be appointed as a Messenger [of God].” (Abu Bakr Ahmad Ibn al-Bayhaqi, Dala’il al-Nubuwwah, n.d., 2:142.) Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said to Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), “I see light, and I also hear some sound. ‘Am I going mad?’ I keep thinking.” Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) replied, “O Ibn ‘Abdullah! That cannot be the case. God would not treat you like that.” Then she took him to Waraqah Ibn Nawfal, and described to him Muhammad’s experiences. Waraqah replied, “If this is true, then it seems like the same angel who used to descend on Musa (Moses). If he is appointed nabi (A nabi is someone appointed by God to inform fellow human beings about metaphysical reality and God’s behavioral expectations of them. In the English language, nabi is often represented as “prophet”. However, the word prophet carries with it a disproportionate emphasis on one’s ability to foretell the future; a prophet is even thought to have “magical” powers. Owing to such connotations, the word prophet may not accurately represent the Islamic concept of nabi.) in my life, I will support and help him in every possible and will believe in him.” (Muhammad Ibn ‘Ali al-Shawkani, al-Fath al-Rabbani, n.d., 20:207.)

The Beginning of Wahy

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had spent time in seclusion for a third year, when he was appointed Messenger of God. The angel Jibril (Gabriel) visited him in the cave of Hira with the first few ayat (sing. ayah) (An ayah is a sentence or part of a sentence in the Qur'an, a miracle, or any other sign of God. The word has different meanings on different occasions. The intended meaning of the word on a specific occasion is usually known from the context.) of the Qur'an. It was an extraordinary event in the life of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) that occurred on Monday, August 10, 610CE, the 21st night of Ramadan. (Safi al-Rahman Mubarakpuri, al-Rahiq al-Makhtum, n.d., 97.)

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was busy contemplating in the cave when Jibril visited him. He said to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), "Read!" Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) replied that he could not read. Jibril embraced Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and held him tightly in his arms, then let him loose and said again, "Read!" Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) replied again that he could not read. Jibril embraced Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) again and held him tightly for some time, then said for the third time, "Read!" Yet again, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) replied that he could not read. Jibril embraced Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) once again and held him tightly for some time, then said,



*"Read in the name of your Rabb, who created – [the one who] created man from a germ cell ('alaq).
Read – for your Rabb is the most bountiful one, who taught [man] by means of pen; He taught man
what he knew not." (Qur'an 96:1-5)*

This experience was extraordinary for Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He was embraced by the angel thrice and held so tightly that he felt exhausted. And the incident as a whole was intimidating. 'A'ishah reports that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) headed home shivering. On the way as he recited the ayat just revealed.

When he arrived home, he was received warmly by Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) as usual. He asked Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) to cover him with a blanket because he was still shivering. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) gave him a blanket. When he felt better, he expressed concern about what was happening. He narrated the whole incident and said that he was frightened and actually feared for his life.

(لَقَدْ خَشِيتُ عَلَى نَفْسِي)

"Laqad khashitu 'ala nafsi – I really feared for my life,"

he is reported to have said.

Khadijah's Wisdom on the Occasion

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) reassured Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) with beautiful words. "Never, by God!" she said,

(كَلَّا وَاللَّهِ! مَا يُخْزِيكَ اللَّهُ أَبَدًا)

“God will never disgrace you.”

She went on to remind Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) of his praiseworthy character and attributes. She reminded him that he was always truthful, that he brought people’s hearts together, that he helped the poor and the needy, assisted the weak, and treated the guests. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 3.)

Her words were full of wisdom. By reminding him of the good things he had done for years, she essentially said that a person with the kind of character could not be disgraced by God; if anything, God would honor such a person.

To further comfort him, she took him to her cousin Waraqah again who had grown old, and lost his eyesight. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) presented the matter to him, and he asked Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) what he had seen. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) described what he had experienced in the cave of Hira. Waraqah exclaimed with excitement, “It is the same angel who used to visit Musa. I wish I was stronger and lived until the time your people drive you out.” Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) asked with surprise, “Are they going to drive me out?” He said, “Yes! Whoever brought forth such a message as yours in the past faced hostility and hardships. If I live to witness the day when you will announce your nubuwah, I shall stand by you and fully support you.” (Ibid.) Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was present during this conversation; and knew she had to prepare for the trials and tribulations that were to follow.

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) is known to be the first woman to embrace Islam. Being the wife of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), she was deeply familiar with his character. She knew him in his everyday life. She was the first human being with whom he shared his experience of wahy in the cave of Hira. She consoled and helped relieve his distress, and was the first to affirm his nubuwah. His four daughters also embraced his call to Islam. (Muhammad Ibn Ishaq, Kitab al-Siyar wa al-Maghazi, n.d., 1:130.)

Muhammad's Call to One God

Muhammad's call to one God and dismissal of all other deities surprised the Makkans. He never worshipped the Makkan deities, offered them any sacrifices, swore in their names, or venerated them in any other way. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had openly condemned these deities and idols in the preceding forty years. His declaration that the deities, so revered by the Makkans, could neither benefit nor harm mankind was met with surprise and opposition. The Makkans had lost connection with the Abrahamic tradition; they did not appreciate that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was essentially inviting them to the religion of Ibrahim, their ancestor.

For some time, the Makkans tolerated Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). With the passage of time, they grew impatient and employed cheap tactics to undermine his mission. They started out by making fun of him. Some of them said he was a sorcerer. Others said he was a madman. Still others thought he was a poet. Gradually, they employed more malicious tactics to frustrate him. They started placing obstacles on his everyday routes, annoyed him in the streets and in the marketplace, and physically assaulted and tortured his followers.

Imagine how a woman of high social standing would feel if people started calling her husband a madman. Instead of getting upset, she supported her husband and affirmed her confidence in his mission at a time when everyone else questioned the veracity of his claim and his sanity. When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) returned home injured and bleeding, she would console him and nurse his wounds. She would wipe the dirt off his face, and wash his feet soaked in blood, and continue to reassure him,

(كَلَّا وَاللَّهِ! مَا يُخْزِيكَ اللَّهُ أَبَدًا)

"God will not disgrace you."

She would say one who has God's support need not fear anyone or anything. With such care and support, Muhammad's resolve would be rejuvenated and his confidence in his mission restored. He would resume his mission every morning with a fresh spirit. He would ignore the wicked among his people and continue with his task, just as Qur'an recommends.

﴿ فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴾

"Expound openly what you have been commanded, and leave alone those who assume divinity in things or beings other than God." (Qur'an 15:94.)

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) used to go around public places in Makkah to preach monotheism. He was regularly physically and verbally abused. On one occasion, when he was praying in the vicinity of Ka'bah, Abu Jahl and some of his friends brought the insides of a slaughtered camel and placed it on his back when he prostrated. 'Uqbah Ibn Abi Mu'ayt who carried out the malicious deed.

When someone informed Muhammad's family about this. Fatimah, who was only four or five years old at the time, came running from their home and removed the insides of the camel from her father's back.

This shows that as the message of tawhid (Tawhid is the Arabic word for monotheism; it is the belief that there is only Gof.) spread, the Makkans were becoming increasingly frustrated and malicious.

Another fierce opponent of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was Abu Lahab, his uncle. Abu Lahab's house was adjacent to the residence of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her). Abu Lahab's wife, Umm Jamil, used to collect thorny branches from the bush and spread them out on Muhammad's regular daily route.

Abu Lahab also threw rubbish on Muhammad's doorstep. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), her daughters, and the servants at home had to clear the doorway regularly; Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would gently complain to Abu Lahab that he was not being a good neighbor. (Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah, 2:416.)

Impressive role of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her)

Under these circumstances, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) and other members of the household played an impressive role in supporting Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was at his service all the time. She cooked and personally served him food.

It is reported that Jibril once visited Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) while Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) brought him food. Jibril told Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to greet Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) on behalf of God and Jibril, and to promise her a palace of pearls in paradise, where there would be no noise or hardship. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 3820.)

Referring to al-Suhayli, Ibn Kathir writes that Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was promised a palace of pearls in paradise because she preceded everyone else in responding to the call of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), and she was promised freedom from noise and hardship because she was never loud with Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and did not hurt him in any way.

Al-Bukhari has also reported, with reference to Musaddid and Yahya, that Ismail asked 'Abdullah Ibn Abi Awfi whether Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) promised Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) admission to paradise. He affirmed that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had promised Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) a palace of pearls in paradise where there would be no noise or hardship.

Similarly, 'A'ishah is reported to have said that she did not envy any other wives of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) more than Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), even though she had died before 'A'ishah got married to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). It was because he remembered Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) a lot. 'A'ishah further narrated that God had advised him to promise Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) a palace of pearls in paradise.

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) reportedly expressed her desire to marry Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) by saying,

(يَا ابْنَ عَمٍّ! إِنِّي قَدْ رَغِبْتُ فِيكَ لِقَرَابَتِكَ
مِنِّي وَ شَرَفِكَ فِي قَوْمِكَ وَأَمَانَتِكَ عِنْدَهُمْ
وَحُسْنِ خُلُقِكَ وَصِدْقِ حَدِيثِكَ)

“O cousin, I am interested in [marrying] you because of our relation by kinship, your high repute among the people, your honesty, good demeanor, and truthfulness.”

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was obviously impressed by his sublime character from the outset. Her initial impressions were subsequently confirmed by her experience of him on a daily basis. Thus, she was highly motivated to help him in every possible way.

Makkans’ Attempt to Disrupt Muhammad’s Peace at Home

When the Makkans realized that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was committed to spreading the Message, and increasing number of people were responding to his call, they plotted to disrupt the peace at his home so he would be deterred from carrying out his mission. Muhammad’s daughter, Zaynab was married to Abu al-‘As Ibn Rabi’. Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum were married to the sons of Abu Lahab, but their marital lives had not commenced because the girls were minors. The opponents of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) urged his sons-in-law to divorce his daughters and in return they could marry any Makkan women of their choice. Abu al-‘As, the husband of Zaynab, rejected the deal outright.

However, the sons of Abu Lahab were lured into divorcing Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum. This would have been a setback for Muhammad’s household. The Makkans wanted to teach him a lesson, so that he would give up his preaching.

The attempt to destroy Muhammad’s peace at home was foiled. Soon after the sons of Abu Lahab divorced Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum, ‘Uthman Ibn ‘Affan proposed to Ruqayyah.

‘Uthman was also to marry Umm Kulthum at a later time. God had destined disgrace for Abu Lahab and his sons. ‘Uthman, on the other hand, was among the blessed companions of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He was among the earliest converts to Islam. Abu Bakr had introduced Muhammad’s message of Islam to ‘Uthman, who responded quickly to Abu Bakr’s invitation, and joined the ranks of al-sabiqun al-awwalun the first few people who responded to Muhammad’s call to monotheism.

Brotherly feelings and affinity between Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and ‘Uthman had increased after he embraced Islam.

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) accepted ‘Uthman’s proposal to marry Ruqayyah. He was a wealthy Makkan known for his modesty and humble demeanor. Ruqayyah was also blessed with beauty and praiseworthy character. They have been praised as a beautiful couple. (Ibn ‘Asakir, Tarikh Dimashq, 20:41)

Abu Lahab and his sons thought they would hurt the mission of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) by divorcing his daughters. Muhammad’s mission was to continue. As for his daughters, God had better plans.

How Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) Raised Her Children

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) had children from her previous husbands, whom she brought up with a similar degree of concern as her daughters with Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Khadijah’s son, Hind Ibn Abi Halah was among those who embraced Islam. He migrated with Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and other Muslims to Madinah, and participated in the Battle of Badr. He was very eloquent. Listeners were mesmerized when he spoke. One day, Hasan Ibn ‘Ali asked Hind to describe what his grandfather [i.e. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)] looked like. In response, Hind used the most beautiful of words to describe the appearance of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). (Abu ‘Isa’ Muhammad Ibn ‘Isa’ al-Tirmidhi, al-Shama’il al-Muhammadiyah wa al-Khasa’il al-

Mustafawiyah, n.d., 8.) His description reveals his love and respect for Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and the depth of his observation and eloquence. It shows that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had a very strong bond with Hind Ibn Abi Halah, even though he was a stepson. It also shows that Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) did exceptionally well in raising her children.

Physical description, of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

As for his physical description, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was neither short nor noticeably tall. He wasn't brown-skinned; nor very white, but was instead white with some redness in his complexion. His hair was neither very curly nor flowing and he had a good-looking face.

His feet were large, and his shoulders were broad. He had a lot of hair on his forelocks. At various times, his hair came down to his earlobes, his shoulders and halfway down his ears. His fingers and toes were rough; his head was large; he was big-boned; and the soft hair that came down from his chest until his navel was long.

When he walked, he leaned forward with a purpose, as if he was walking down a slope. His mouth was large, and he had very little flesh around his ankles. Overall, looking at him was better than looking at the moon; in fact, his face has been described as resembling the moon. The seal of Prophethood was between his shoulders. It was the size and shape of a pigeon's egg. The seal of Prophethood was either a spot of some kind or, some have said, a cluster of hair between his shoulders.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would part his hair and dye it. His beard was thick, and he would allow it to grow; he would not trim it, and he ordered others to allow their beards to grow as well.

He would order people to anoint their eyes with a substance called Ithmid, which is a powder that consists of antimony sulphide. In a narration that is related in Ash-Shamail, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

«عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْإِثْمِيدِ عِنْدَ النَّوْمِ، فَإِنَّهُ يَجْلُو الْبَصَرَ وَيُنْبِتُ الشَّعْرَ»

“Use Ithmid before you go to sleep, for it clears one's vision and causes one's hair to grow.”

According to another narration, he said,

«إِنَّ خَيْرَ أَكْحَالِكُمُ الْإِثْمِيدُ، يَجْلُو الْبَصَرَ، وَيُنْبِتُ الشَّعْرَ»

“Verily, the best ointment you can use for your eyes is Ithmid: It clears one's visions and causes one's hair to grow.”

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had very few white hairs on his head and in his beard. When he dyed his hair, no white hair could be seen; and when he didn't dye his hair, some white hairs could be seen. He had approximately 20 white hairs, which, according to certain narrations, resulted from the terrifying events and stern warnings that are mentioned in various chapters of the Qur'an. According to one narration, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

«شَيْبَتِي هُوْدٌ وَأَخَوَاتُهَا»

“[Chapter] 'Hud' and its sisters (another group of chapters of the Qur'an) have caused my hair to turn white.”

In another wording of the same Hadith, he said,

«شَيَّبَتْنِي هُوْدٌ، وَالْوَاقِعَةُ، وَالْمُرْسَلَاتُ، وَعَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ، وَإِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ»

“These [chapters of the Qur’an] have caused my hair to turn white: ‘Hud,’ ‘Al-Waqi’ah,’ ‘Al-Mursalat,’ ‘‘Amma Yatasa-alun (chapter ‘An-Naba’), and ‘Idhashshamsu Kuwwirat (chapter ‘At-Takwir).”

When dyed, his hair was red.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) loved wearing a shirt with a Habirah, a kind of robe that was common in Yemen; he would also wear a turban and a lower garment, which would reach halfway down his calf. He loved wearing perfume, about which he said,

«طِيبُ الرَّجَالِ مَا ظَهَرَ رِيحُهُ وَخَفِيَ لَوْنُهُ،

وَطِيبُ النِّسَاءِ مَا ظَهَرَ لَوْنُهُ وَخَفِيَ رِيحُهُ»

“The perfume of men should be such that its smell is apparent while its color is hidden, and the perfume of women should be such that its color is apparent while its smell is hidden.”

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) loved cleanliness at all times, but on ‘Eid and whenever he would receive foreign delegates, he strove to look his best. He disliked the arrogant ways of kings, and so based on that knowledge, the Companions would not stand up in his presence. Cleanliness of the mouth was of particular concern to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him): He loved to clean his teeth and the inside of his mouth with Siwak (a cleaning stick for teeth). He liked to clean his teeth with a Siwak when he entered his home and when he woke up in the morning.

As for his night schedule, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would sleep during the first part of the night; then he would stand up, pray, and continue to pray for so long that his feet would swell up. Finally, at the end of the night, before Fajr Prayer, he would perform the Witr Prayer (an odd number of units to conclude one’s prayers during the night).

The Qur’an being very dear to his heart, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) loved to hear it being recited by someone else. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would visit the sick, attend funerals, and perform the Funeral Prayer for the dead. He was very modest, and if he disliked something, one could see the displeasure on his face.

[Mukhtasar Shamail At-Tirmidhi (188); Al-Albani ruled that this Hadith is authentic.]

The Birth of a Son

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) experienced good and bad times in her life just like other human beings. Following their four daughters, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) were blessed with a son, whom they named ‘Abdullah after his grandfather. He is also known as Tayyib and Tahir. The arrival of ‘Abdullah was a source of happiness for the family in otherwise difficult times. By this time, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had announced his nubuwah and was actively spreading the message of Islam. The Makkans, on the other hand, had put up fierce resistance to his mission.

The death of ‘Abdullah and the Response of the Makkans

‘Abdullah died while he was still very young. While it was a source of immense grief for Muhammad’s family, ‘Abdullah’s death gave the Makkans another reason to celebrate and insult Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). ‘As Ibn Wa’il, a fierce opponent of Islam, is recorded to have expressed relief over the death of Muhammad’s son; saying he had become abtar, (Al-Tabarani, al-Mu’jam al-Kabir, 4:179.) which is a derogatory term used in Arabic for someone who is not survived by any male offspring, and is therefore unlikely to be remembered.

Biographies of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) indicate that several others also had the audacity to call Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) abtar. Among them was Abu Lahab. He openly expressed relief over the death of ‘Abdullah, for he hoped that Muhammad’s mission would fade if he had no sons to carry his his message after his death.

God’s Response to the Makkans

Bereaved by the death of their son, and the Makkans’ response, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), were doubly challenged. Under these circumstances, Surat al-Kawthar – the 108th chapter of the Qur’an was revealed: (Ibn Ishaq, Kitab al-Siyar wa-al-Maghazi, 1:289.)



“To you have We granted [the Fount off] Abundance (al-kawthar). Hence, pray unto your Rabb, and sacrifice [unto Him]. Indeed, he who hates you is the one who will be cut off (abtar) [from future hope]”. (Qur’an 108:1-3.)

By revealing this surah, God consoled Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his family. They were reassured that he was the recipient of abundant good, and that his adversaries were the ones who would not be remembered and celebrated in history. Thus, those who insulted Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) for not having male offspring were killed in the Battle of Badr to be remembered in history only as villains. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his family, on the other hand, have been immortalized.

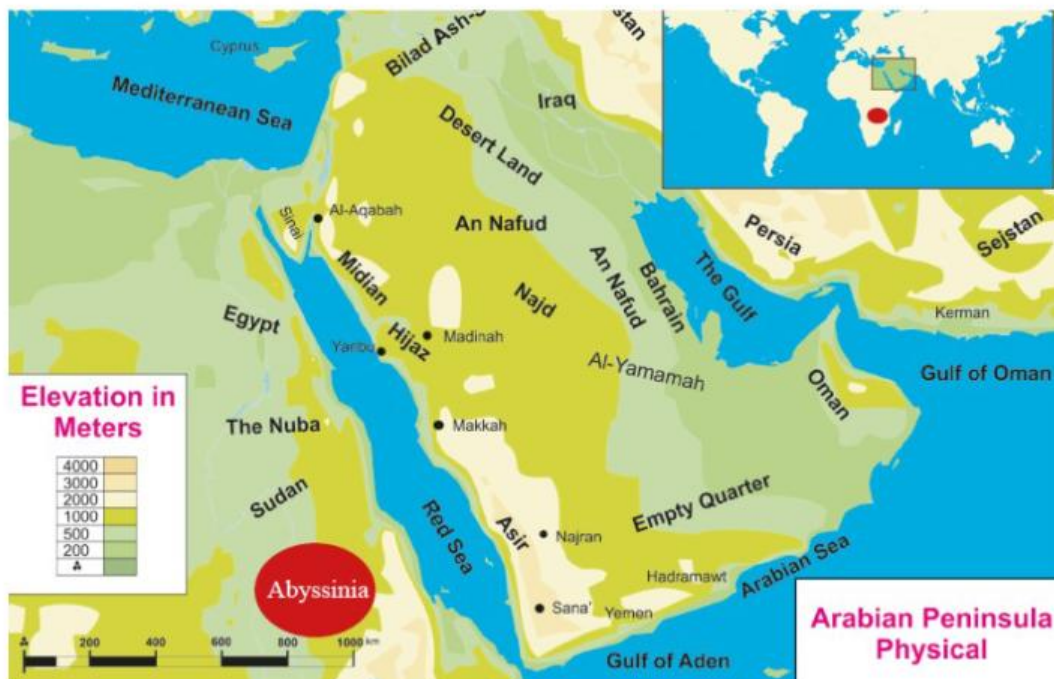
Destined to become a leading woman in the history of mankind, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was tried by the most adverse of circumstances, but remained remarkably patient and graceful in the face of all difficulties.

Ruqayyah’s Migration to Abyssinia

When things became very difficult for some members of the new Muslim community, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) advised them to migrate to Abyssinia. The Negus of Abyssinia at the time was known to be a just ruler who protected the subjects of his kingdom from all kinds of injustices. (Abu Bakr Ahmad Ibn al-Husayn al-Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-Kubra, n.d., 13:203.) Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) grieved when people left their homes and headed to Abyssinia.



Eventually, they had to bid farewell to their own daughter, Ruqayyah, and her husband, ‘Uthman Ibn ‘Affan. The couple was relieved of hardships upon arriving in Abyssinia in Rajab of the 5th year following the appointment of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) as a nabi. They were finally secure and free to practice their faith. Ruqayyah was quite young at the time. (Al-Bayhaqi, Dala’il al-Nubuwwah, 2:297.) Her departure from Makkah was another of Khadijah’s ordeals, which she bore patiently.



More of the Makkans’ Plots

Until the 7th year of Muhammad’s nubuwah, all the schemes of Quraysh had failed to prevent the spread of Islam. The more they opposed Islam, the more it spread. Hammzah Ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib and ‘Umar Ibn Khattab converted to Islam, which boosted the morale of the nascent Muslim community. A good number of Muslims lived in peace in Abyssinia. The Quraysh had sent a

delegation led by 'Amr Ibn 'As to extradite Muslims from Abyssinia, but the delegation returned without success.

The pagans plotted against Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) on a continuous basis. Their schemes failed, but they kept plotting. Khadjah (May Allah be pleased with her) witnessed and experienced all the challenges alongside Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

On one occasion, a delegation of Quraysh visited Abu Talib. With the delegates was 'Ammarah Ibn Walid, the brother of the well-known warrior, Khalid Ibn Walid, who embraced Islam. 'Ammarah was a handsome young man with a strong build. There was hardly anyone in Makkah who was as charming as 'Ammarah. The delegation offered 'Ammarah to Abu Talib in exchange for Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). They proposed that 'Ammarah would be like a son to Abu Talib, and the two would inherit from each other. The Quraysh wanted to kill Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) for challenging the religion of their forefathers.

Abu Talib was offended by the audacious demands of the Makkans. He dismissed the idea in strong words and asked the delegation to leave. Mut'im Ibn 'Uday, one of the delegates who was known to be a moderate, dared to plead with Abu Talib that the Quraysh had justifiable and reasonable demands, and that he was not being open to any suggestions. Abu Talib firmly dismissed his arguments and accused him instead for siding with the Quraysh in their schemes. (Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah, 1:266-267.)

Abu Talib's Foresight

Even though Abu Talib turned down the delegation's proposal, he could see imminent trouble ahead. He realized that the Quraysh had decided to kill Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Thus, he gathered the descendants of Hashim Ibn 'Abd Manaf and Muttualib Ibn 'Abd Manaf and persuaded them to help him protect Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Out of tribal loyalty, all Muslim and non-Muslim members of the two families agreed to protect him, with the exception of Abu Lahab. He disregarded what other members of the family thought, and chose to side with the adversaries of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). The agreement of Banu Hashim and Banu Muttalib to protect Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was a blow to the efforts of his opponents. (Ibid, 1:351.)

Social & Economic Boycott of Banu Hashim

The opponents of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) gathered again to discuss their future course of action. It was clear to them that killing him was no longer an option, because it would lead to a blood feud between the clans of Quraysh. They came up with a novel idea to pressurize Banu Hashim and Banu Muttalib who had pledged to protect Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). They prepared an agreement binding all the Makkans to boycott members of Banu Hashim and Banu Muttalib. None of the Makkans would maintain any sort of social or economic ties with the two families. Moreover, Banu Hashim's offer of peace was not to be entertained. The clauses of the agreement were written down and posted in the Ka'bah. (Al-Asbahani, Dala'il al-Nubuwwah, 1:272-273.) Abu Talib and other members of Banu Hashim and Banu Muttalib were forced to retreat to a valley in the vicinity of the cave of Hira outside Makkah. The valley is commonly known as Shi'b Abi Talib, even though some historians have called it Shi'b Bani Hashim. The piece of land was owned by Banu Hashim.

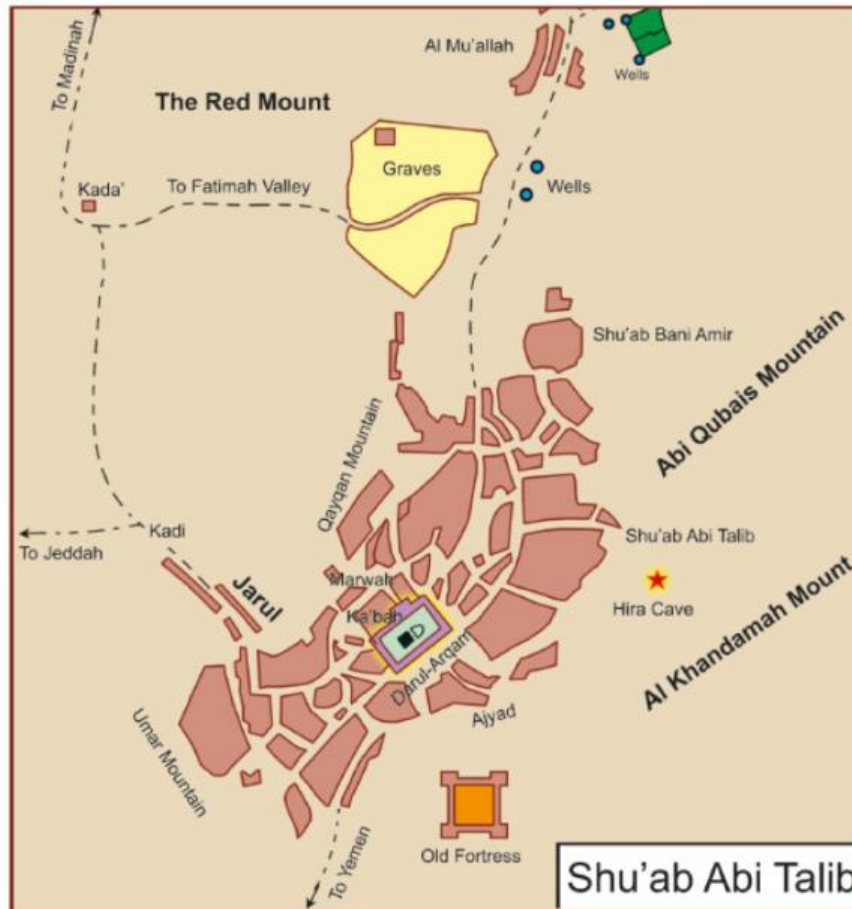
Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) in Shi'b Abi Talib

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) joined Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and other members of Banu Hashim and Banu Muttalib in exile. It was probably the most difficult phase in the life of a woman who had lived in affluence since her childhood. Her father was a rich trader, and so were her husbands prior to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).



She had inherited a lot of wealth from each of them. Her capital and volume of trade exceeded that of any other traders in Makkah. She would lend her goods for trade on mudarabah basis to several traders at the same time. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), sayyidat nisa' Quraysh – the chief Qurayshi woman - was forced to leave the comfort of her home to accompany and support her husband for a period of three long years.

Even though her close relatives had not embraced Islam by this time, some of them were very sensible people. Among them was Khadijah's nephew, Hakim Ibn Hazzam Ibn Khuwaylid. Despite the boycott, he used to send food to Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) in Shi'b Abi Talib. The valley did not have any food supplies of its own. The pagans of Makkah were indifferent even to the children of Banu Hashim who were crying because of hunger. (Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, 1:209.) The hand of Baghid Ibn 'Amir, who wrote down the document enforcing the boycott, was palsied as a result of Muhammad's invocation to God. The wise and the compassionate among Quraysh used to warn them of the consequences of this boycott referring to Baghid's suffering. (Abu al-Mundhir Hisham Ibn Muhammad Ibn al-Sa'ib al-Kalbi, Jamharat Ansab al-Arab, n.d., 60)



An Instance of Abu Jahl's Resistance to Hakim Ibn Hazzam's Supply to Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her)

Hakim Ibn Hazzam was one of the influential personalities in Makkah. Once he sent his slave to deliver some wheat to Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) in the valley outside Makkah. Abu Jahl learned about this and went out to seize the slave. When he intercepted the slave, he shouted at him and threatened to humiliate him if he carried any grain to Banu Hashim.

By chance, Abu al-Bakhtari Ibn Hisham, another tribal leader, passed by. Abu Jahl said to him, "This slave of Hakim Ibn Hazzam is carrying grain to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), and I shall not let him." Abu al-Bakhtari replied, "Abu al-Hakam! Hakim Ibn Hazzam possessed some of his auntie Khadijah's wheat, which she would have asked him to deliver. It is okay. Let him go!" (Amr Ibn Hisham was originally called Abu al-Hakam in Makkah, but the Muslims started calling him Abu Jahl because of his hostility towards Islam.) Abu Jahl remained adamant that he would not let the slave deliver grain to the exiled Makkans in Shi'b Abi Talib. Abu al-Bakhtari reiterated, "Let him go. A person wants to return what he owed to his starving aunt, but

your hardheartedness would not allow this!” Abu Jahl was enraged by this. The two exchanged harsh words, then attacked each other physically. Abu al-Bakhtari pulled down Abu Jahl’s camel, knocked him off his saddle and hit him in the head with a camel bone. Abu Jahl started bleeding, but Abu al-Bakhtari continued to beat and berate him.

Abu Jahl could neither protect himself from Abu al-Bakhtari nor stop Hakim’s slave from delivering grain to Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her). What was more embarrassing for him was that Hamzah Ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib witnessed this episode from the hilly Shi’b Abi Talib. (Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah, 1:354.)

Imagine the patience and perseverance of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) at a time when she was 65 years old. She starved along with Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and other members of his family. Her husband faced death threats. Things had worsened so much that Abu Talib would get Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to sleep in someone else’s bed every night after others had gone to sleep, so that the Makkans could not harm him in the dark. (Ibn Ishaq, Kitab al-Siyar wa-al-Maghazi, 1:202.)

The Death of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her)

The boycott lasted for about three years. However, Abu Talib and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), the two strongest supporters of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) died soon after returning to Makkah from Shi'b Abi Talib. According to Ibn Kathir, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) died three days after Abu Talib. Other historians have reported differently. It is however certain that the two died within a few days of each other. It is recorded that Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) died during Ramadan of the 10th year of Muhammad's nubuwah. According to some reports, the daily prayers had not been ordained by this time. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was buried at a place called Hujun. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) personally descended into the grave to bury her. (Ahmad Ibn Yahya al-Baladhuri, *Jumal min Ansab al-Ashraf*, n.d., 1:273 and 2:35.) Khadijah's nephew, Hakim Ibn Hazzam also participated in the burial.

Abu Talib had supported and protected Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) outside, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) comforted him at home. Both loved and cared for Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) more than anyone else alive at the time.

The Year of Grief

The year Abu Talib and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) died is remembered in history as the Year of Grief. The death of the two grieved Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) enormously. These were the two who had supported him in difficult times. He was now more vulnerable to the schemes of the Makkans. The Makkans intensified their opposition to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) in the days and months that followed. (Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat*, 1:211.)

Khadijah's Merit

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was blessed to have the company of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) for about 25 years. She supported him through difficult times in every possible way, including spending her wealth. He is known to have acknowledged and praised Khadijah's support repeatedly. 'A'ishah reported that she was once irritated by Muhammad's continued praise for Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), so she complained, asking why he continued to remember an old lady who was not so beautiful, when God had replaced her with a more beautiful young woman. (Ibid, 3821.) He replied that none of his wives was on a par with Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), for she attested to his nubuwah at a time when everyone else doubted him, spent her wealth to support him when no-one else was willing to do so, and mothered his children which no other wives did. (Ibid Hanbal, al-Musnad, 6:118.)

Some biographers have mentioned that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was angered by what 'A'ishah had said. When 'A'ishah realized that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not like what she said, she promised him that she would only remember Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) with good words. (Al-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, 23:14)

Another of 'A'ishah's reports gives further insight into Muhammad's affinity for Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her). Khadijah's sister, Halah, once knocked at Muhammad's door and sought permission to enter. Halah was not only Khadijah's sister, but also the mother-in-law of his daughter, Zaynab. The way she spoke from the door reminded Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her). He welcomed Halah with excitement. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 3821.)

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) also honored Khadijah's friends. It was out of his love for Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) that, long after her death, whenever he slaughtered an animal, he continued to send meat to her friends.

Among the captives from the Battle of Badr was Abu al-'As, Muhammad's son-in-law. To ransom Abu al-'As, Zaynab sent the necklace that Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) had given her on the occasion of her wedding. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had tears in his eyes when he saw the necklace and remembered Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her). He pleaded with his companions to release Abu al-'As and return the necklace. The companions agreed. Abu al-'As was not only Khadijah's son-in-law, but also her nephew. (Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah, 2:653.)

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was 25 when he married Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) and they spent another 25 years together. During this time, he did not marry any other woman. (Muslim, al-Sahih, 2436.) No other wife of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had this privilege. From her side, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) took care of Muhammad's likes and dislikes.

Once, in a moment of envy, 'A'ishah complained that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) remembered and praised Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) "as if she was the only woman in the world". In response, he recounted praiseworthy attributes of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) and the fact that she was the only wife with whom he had children. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Among men, many attained a status of perfection; but among women, only three attained to such status: Asiyah (the wife of Pharaoh), Maryam (the mother of 'Isa (Jesus), and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) Bint Khuwaylid." As for 'A'ishah, he said that her status with respect to other women is like tharid with respect to other foods. (Muslim, al-Sahih, 2431.)

Attributes Shared by the Highest Women of Islam

Asiyah, Maryam, and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) protected and supported a nabi in the best possible way.

Asiyah raised Musa in her palace and subsequently attested to his claim of nubuwah.

Maryam gave birth to and brought up 'Isa in the best manner. Subsequently, when 'Isa grew older and announced nubuwah, she attested to his claim and supported him.

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) took the initiative to propose to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). After they got married, she offered financial and moral support. When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was appointed nabi in the cave of Hira, she comforted him and confirmed his nubuwah.

Musa, 'Isa, and Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) are the most significant Messengers in the Abrahamic tradition. Because of their support for these Messengers in the most challenging of circumstances, Asiyah, Maryam, and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) are considered to have achieved the highest standard in Islamic.

Khadijah's Daughters

As previously noted, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) had six children with Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Their sons al-Qasim and 'Abdullah died at a very young age, while their four daughters survived into adulthood, married, and had children.

In the following pages, we shall discuss the biographies of the daughters and grandchildren of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her).

Zaynab Bint Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

Zaynab was the eldest daughter of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). She was born 10 years before the appointment of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) as nabi. She was raised in the best of households. What could have been a better household than that of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) and Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)? Every member of this household embodied the best of human attributes.

Zaynab was adored by her parents, particularly after the death of her elder brother al-Qasim when she became the recipient of all of her parents' attention. She was raised with utmost love and care.

When Zaynab was 10 years old, her aunt Halah Bint Khuwaylid proposed that she marry her son Abu al-'As. It was usual at the time for a girl to be proposed and marry as soon as she reached puberty.

Zaynab's Marriage to Abu al-'As

Abu al-'As Ibn Rabi', Khadijah's nephew, was a modest young man. His was the first proposal to Zaynab. On the paternal side, Abu al-'As and Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had a common ancestor 'Abd Manaf. He was Abu al-'As Ibn Rabi' Ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza Ibn 'Abd Shams Ibn 'Abd Manaf Ibn Qusay.

On the maternal side, the lineage of Abu al-'As joined that of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Zaynab at Qusay Ibn Kilab. He was Abu al-'As Ibn Halah Bint Khuwaylid Ibn Asad Ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza Ibn Qusay Ibn Kilab. Abu al-'As was regarded in Makkah as a very honest and trustworthy person. (Burhan, Nisa' hawl al-Rasul, 130.)

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was also aware of the character and reputation of her nephew. Apart from consulting Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) did not have any hesitation in accepting the proposal of Abu al-'As. Abu al-'As was a well-to-do trader among the Quraysh.

Zaynab and Abu al-'As soon got married. On the occasion of their marriage, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) gave her daughter, among other things, a necklace of Yemeni carnelian as a token of love. It was probably Khadijah's own necklace. Zaynab took good care of her mother's gift. (Ibn al-Athir, Asad al-Ghabah, 5:23.)

Abu al-'As and Zaynab enjoyed good marital life. The two loved each other very much. Once when Abu al-'As returned home from a business trip, he found out that his father-in-law had announced nubuwah and much had changed in Makkah. (Burhan, Nisa' hawl al-Rasul, 130.) Zaynab, along with her mother and sisters, had responded to the call of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

Al-Zurqani notes that Muhammad's daughters are often not mentioned among the first few converts to Islam, even though the girls were impressed by their father's character even before he announced nubuwah. 'A'ishah is reported to have said, "When God honored his nabi [Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)] with nubuwah, Khadijah [(May Allah be pleased with her)] and his daughters [immediately] responded [to his call]." (Al-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, 22:427.)

When Zaynab revealed to Abu al-'As that she had embraced Islam, he quietly left home. Zaynab had been very hopeful that her husband, being a very sensible human being, would embrace the message of Islam. She tried to persuade him, but tribalism and tradition came in the way. Abu al-'As said to Zaynab that he did not doubt the veracity of Muhammad's claim, but he feared that people would think he abandoned the religion of his forefathers for his wife. (Burhan, Nisa' hawl al-Rasul, 130.) Nevertheless, he did embrace Islam years later.

Strong Affinity Between Zaynab and Abu al-‘As

Abu al-‘As and Zaynab had an amazing chemistry. The strength of their relationship came to light when the Quraysh pressurized Abu al-‘As to divorce Muhammad’s daughter.

When Quraysh realized that none of their schemes was able to deter Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) from spreading his message, they thought of disrupting his peace at home. To this end, they tried to lure his sons-in-law to divorce his daughters hoping that this would force him to abandon his mission. At the time, Zaynab was married to Abu al-‘As; and Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum were committed to the sons of Abu Lahab, but their marriages had not been consummated because they were still minors. The Quraysh told the sons-in-law of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) that they could marry any Makkan women of their choice if they divorced his daughters.

Abu Lahab’s sons readily agreed to divorce Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum respectively, but Abu al-As firmly rejected the idea. He said he could not possibly abandon his loyal wife for any Qurayshi woman. (Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah*, 2:652.)

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was touched by Abu al-‘As’s response to the Makkans. He remembered and mentioned it later when ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib, the husband of Fatimah, wanted to marry Abu Jahl’s daughter. After Fatimah revealed ‘Ali’s intention to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), he said in one of his sermons: “I married my daughter to Abu al-‘As Ibn Rabi’. He meted out praiseworthy treatment to us. He was truthful and one who kept his word. Indeed Fatimah is [like] a part of my body; I cannot bear her suffering. By God! The daughters of God’s Messenger and His enemy cannot be with the same man.” (Abu Abdillah Muhammad Ibn Majah, *al-Sunan*, n.d., 1999.) When ‘Ali heard what Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had said, he dropped the idea of marrying Abu Jahl’s daughter.

Zaynab’s Offspring

Zaynab gave birth to a daughter who was named Umamah. It is not difficult to imagine how much Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) and Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would have loved their granddaughter. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have loved her a lot. Once he even led prayers while holding Umamah in one of his arms. Muslim has recorded Abu Qatadah’s report that he saw Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) leading the prayers while Umamah rode on his shoulders. When he bowed down or prostrated, he would sit her on the floor, and pick her up again after he stood up. (Muslim, *al-Sahih*, 543.)

Zaynab gave birth to a son as well, who was named ‘Ali. Biographers of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) have noted that ‘Ali died in young age. Some say that he lived into adulthood. When Makkah was conquered, ‘Ali rode along with Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He is believed to have died in the battlefield of Yarmuk. (Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, *al-Isabah*, 4:469.)

Zaynab’s Concern for Her Father’s Well-Being

Harith Ibn Harith al-Ghamidi reported that he once went to Makkah with his father. There he saw a crowd of people surrounding a man, whom they called nabi, meaning one who proclaimed a new religion. The man was Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He was inviting people to oneness of God, and they denied his claims. They seemed determined to harm him. The gathering continued until noon, at which time people began to disperse. A young woman came onto the scene. It appeared it was an emergency because she had not even covered herself properly. She carried a cup of water and a kerchief for Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He

drank from the cup, and wiped his face and hands with the piece of cloth, then addressed the young woman,

‘يَا بِنْتِ! حَمْرِي عَلَيْكَ نَحْرُكَ وَلَا تَخَافِي عَلَيَّ أَبِيكَ’

“My child! Cover your chest with your mantle, and don’t worry about your father.”

Upon enquiring, Harith learned that she was Zaynab, the daughter of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). (Al-Tabarani, al-Mu’jam al-Kabir, 3:268.)

Zaynab’s Loneliness Until After the Battle of Badr

As life in Makkah was increasingly difficult for the new Muslim community, some of them first migrated to Abyssinia, and subsequently also in large numbers to Madinah. Finally, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) also migrated to Madinah with al-Siddiq Abu Bakr.

With the migration of Muslims to Madinah, Zaynab was left alone in Makkah. Her mother Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) had died few years earlier, and her sisters had also migrated to Madinah. Her only source of solace was her children Umamah and Ali. Her husband Abu al-‘As loved her very much, but he was not a Muslim yet. She wished she could be closer to her father and sisters.



Graveyard of Badr

In Ramadan 2AH, Abu Sufyan sent an army of a thousand men to attack Muslims in Madinah when he heard that Muslims wanted to raid a trade caravan of the Makkans. Abu al-‘As also joined the military expedition. It is not difficult to imagine how Zaynab would have felt on the occasion: on one side was her loving husband, and on the other side her father and other Muslims. The Muslim army faced the Makkans at Badr. To their surprise, the Makkans were defeated in the Battle of Badr. Seventy of their men, including some prominent tribal leaders, were killed, and another seventy or so were made prisoners of war. Among the captives was Abu al-‘As Ibn Rabi’, Zaynab’s husband. He was captured by ‘Abdullah Ibn Jubayr.

The captives were brought to Madinah. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) instructed his companions,

‘اِسْتَوْصُوا بِالْاَسْرَى خَيْرًا’

“Treat the captives well”

Which they did. They consumed dates, but offered bread to their captives. Date palms were abundant in Madinah, so dates were cheap. On the other hand, grains such as wheat and barley were expensive, because they were not produced in significant quantities in Madinah and had to be imported. Yet the companions of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) took his instruction very seriously and demonstrated a great deal of altruism. Abu al-'As witnessed firsthand the high degree of morality exercised by Muslims. He was impressed by Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his mission.

Abu al-'As had known Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) before his appointment as nabi. His hesitation in acknowledging Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) as the Messenger of God and his participation in the Battle of Badr was nothing but the result of tribal chauvinism.

Ransom of the Captives of Badr

It was customary in those times to kill prisoners of war. Thus, 'Umar Ibn Khattab thought that the captives of Badr should be killed. But Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) decided to accept ransom for the release of the captives. There was some hope that the released captives might at some point embrace Islam. Moreover, accepting a ransom for the release of the captives was expected to materially strengthen the young Muslim state in Madinah. Between one thousand and three thousand dirhams was accepted of each captive.

When the Makkans learned about the opportunity to pay to get the prisoners released, they acted fast. People hurriedly arranged to raise the money to get their family members freed.

Although Abu al-'As was rich, he did not have the money to pay for his ransom on this occasion. He sent a message to his wife Zaynab to arrange for the payment. Zaynab tried to raise the money to pay for her husband's release. But the amount she raised was not enough, so she decided to offer the necklace that Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) had given her on the occasion of marriage, to get Abu al-'As released. This necklace was most likely Khadijah's own necklace, which she gave to Zaynab. The Makkans headed with the payments to Madinah. Among them was the emissary of Zaynab.

When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) saw the necklace sent by Zaynab, memories of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) came flooding into his mind, and he could not resist weeping. He pleaded to his companions,

إِنْ رَأَيْتُمْ أَنْ تُطَلِّقُوا لَهَا أَسِيرَهَا وَتَرُدُّوا عَلَيْهَا الَّذِي لَهَا،

"if you deem it right, release [Zaynab's] prisoner, and return her necklace [as well]."

Muhammad's companions readily agreed to the proposal of their beloved, the Messenger of God. However, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) got Abu al-'As to promise that he would send Zaynab to Madinah after he returned to Makkah. (Abu Daud, al-Sunan, 2692.)

Abu al-'As returned to Makkah, and kept his word. He immediately told Zaynab to prepare to leave for Madinah. Even though Abu al-'As had agreed to send Zaynab, the Makkans were expected to resist the migration of Zaynab to Madinah owing to their defeat in the Battle of Badr. In view of the risk to Zaynab's life, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) sent Zayd Ibn Harithah along with an ansari (An ansari is one of the ansar – the people of Madinah, who embraced Islam, invited Makkans Muslims to migrate to Madinah, and subsequently helped them through their difficulties.) to Batn Ya'jaj, a place near Makkah, where Zaynab was going to join them. (Ibid.)

Zaynab's Departure from Makkah

Zaynab began to prepare for departure from Meakkah. Hind, Abu Sufyan's wife, offered to help her with her preparations, but she did not take up the offer. (Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah, 2:654.) Only a month had elapsed since the Battle of Badr, and the Makkans were still in a state of shock because of the heavy casualties they suffered in the battle. Their poets were mourning the dead and invoking tribal loyalties to avenge the deaths. Under these circumstances, it was impossible for a Muslim from Madinah to enter Makkah, just as it was difficult for a Makkan Muslim to leave the city unharmed. This is why Zayd Ibn Harithah and the ansari were instructed by Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to wait for Zaynab at Batn Ya'jaj, which was about 13km from Makkah.

When Zaynab was ready to leave, Abu al-'As asked his brother Kananah Ibn Rabi' to accompany her to Batn Ya'jaj where Zayd awaited for her. It was customary then for women of noble families to travel in a howdah on the back of a camel, which would distinguish them from ordinary women and possibly prevent attacks from bandits. Kananah helped Zaynab to mount the camel and sit in the howdah. Zaynab's daughter Umamah accompanied her. Kananah took his bow and arrows and rode another camel as they headed to Batn Ya'jaj. It was noon and many Makkah were indoors because of the scorching heat. Kananah and Abu al-'As may have picked this time to elude the attentions of the Makkans.

Habbar Ibn Aswad Attacks Zaynab

The caravan of two camels was in Dhi Tuwa outside Makkah when it was confronted by a group of Makkan hooligans led by Habbar Ibn Aswad. They circled around Zaynab's camel and Habbar attacked the camel with a spear. The camel bucked and Zaynab fell to the ground. Zaynab, who was pregnant at the time, had a miscarriage as a result of the fall.

Kananah nocked an arrow and warned the hooligans that he was ready to shoot if any of them tried to harm Zaynab. Habbar and other men were deterred. Meanwhile, Abu Sufyan arrived at the scene. He calmed Kananah and advised him not to shoot. He tackled the situation by persuading Kananah that Zaynab could leave Makkah after a few days when people had calmed down. He said that the Makkans did not mean to harm the daughter of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). But her departure in broad daylight would be perceived as an insult to the Makkans who had recently suffered casualties at the hands of Muslims at Badr. People would think of Quraysh as defeated cowards who could not even stop women leaving Makkah. It would be a disgrace for the Makkans. Thus, Abu Sufyan urged Kananah to return home with Zaynab, and to take her from the city a few days later during the night. Kananah was prudent, so he agreed to return. (Ibid, 2:653-655.)

Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan and daughter of 'Utbah Ibn Rabi'ah, was upset by Habbar's mistreatment of Zaynab. Even though she was an influential enemy of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), she condemned Habbar and his fellows. She called them cowards who could not stand up to the enemy in the battlefield, but harassed a woman wanting to meet her father. In a piece of poetry, she told them:

أَفِي السَّلْمِ أَعْيَارُ جَفَاءٍ وَغِلْظَةٌ
وَفِي الْحَرْبِ أَشْبَاهُ النِّسَاءِ الْعَوَارِكِ

"They were like wild donkeys who were rough in times of peace, but like menstruating women in times of war. (Ibid, 2:656.)

Departing for the second time

A few days later, when public discussion of the incident subsided, Zaynab and Kananah embarked on their journey again. This time they chose to leave Makkah in the middle of the night. They met Zayd and the ansari in Batn Ya'jaj, Kananah returned to Makkah, and Zaynab continued her journey to Madinah with Zayd and the ansari. The risky and painful trip came to an end with Zaynab's arrival in Madinah, where she was received warmly by Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and other members of the family. (Ibid, 2:655.)

Zaynab in Madinah

Zaynab had parted ways with her husband, but she now had the company of her father and sisters, along with Umamah and 'Ali. Umamah was very dear to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). We have previously mentioned how Umamah would sometimes accompany her grandfather while he led prayers. Umamah received her grandfather's love for a significant length of time. But historians disagree over the time 'Ali Ibn Abi al-'As spent with his grandfather.

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was grieved by the mistreatment of Zaynab at the hands of Habbar and his men. He instructed his companions to kill Habbar whenever and wherever they found him. Abu Hurayrah reported that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) sent some men on a campaign to find certain men and burn them in a fire. However, when the men came to see Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) before departing, he said, "I had told you to burn certain men in fire, but none other than God is authorized to chastise [someone] by means of fire; so if you find them, just kill them." (Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Sahih al-Jami' al-Saghir wa-Ziyadatuh, n.d., 1:234.)



Abu al-'As Could Not Forget Zaynab

Abu al-'As could not forget Zaynab long after he sent her to Madinah. Once, on his way to al-Sham, he passed by Madinah, and remembered Zaynab in a piece of poetry:

ذَكَرْتُ زَيْنَبَ لَمَّا دَرَكْتُ أَرَمًا
فَقُلْتُ: سَقِيَا لِشَخْصٍ يَسْكُنُ الْحَرَمَا
بِنْتُ الْأَمِينِ جَزَاهَا اللَّهُ صَالِحَةً
وَكُلُّ بَعْلِ سَيْئِنِي عَلَى مَا عَلِمَا

*“As I crossed Arma, I remembered Zaynab,
The inhabitant of the Haram wished to ask her for water,
the daughter of the Amin – may God bless her,
She was a good woman,
A husband praises what he knows [of his wife’s qualities].”*

Abu al-‘As carried with him the merchandise of the Makkans, which they had lent him on a mudarabah basis. He earned large profits from trade in al-Sham. The route to and from al-Sham passed by Madinah. The Makkans and the Muslims of Madinah were in a state of war and the treaty of Hdaybiyah had not been signed yet. On his way back from al-Sham, Abu al-‘As came across Muslim troops led by Zayd Ibn Harithah, who were heading to ‘Ays. Abu al-‘As escaped, and his goods were seized by the Muslim troops.

Abu al-‘As at Zaynab’s Doorstep

After escaping from the scene, Abu al-‘As headed straight to Zaynab’s residence. He knocked at her door late at night. The father of Zaynab’s children sought refuge for the night, which Zaynab agreed to offer.

The next morning, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) led the prayer at his mosque. It was usual at the time for women to attend the mosque; they lined up behind the rows of men. After Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) finished the congregational prayer, Zaynab stood up and announced,

(أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! إِنِّي قَدْ أَجَرْتُ أَبَا الْعَاصِ بْنِ الرَّبِيعِ)

“O people! I have extended protection to Abu al-‘As Ibn Rabi’.”

When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) heard this, he inquired from men around him, “Did you also hear what I heard?” The worshippers replied in the affirmative. He then said, “By the One who has power over my life, I did not know this. I have learned about it just now as you have. [However,] even an ordinary Muslim has the right to extend protection [to someone].” Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) then went to Zaynab’s house to find out more. When he got there, he said to Zaynab, “Treat your guest well, but exercise caution in mixing [with him].” (Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah, 2:658.) The advice of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) may be viewed in relation to Zaynab’s conjugal relationship with Abu al-‘As in the past.

Zaynab pleaded with Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to return the belongings of Abu al-‘As and the merchandise carried by him. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) could have simply ordered his companions to do this, and no-one would have refused, but he came to them and said,

**(إِنَّ هَذَا الرَّجُلَ مِنَّا حَيْثُ قَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ، وَقَدْ أَصَبْتُمْ لَهُ مَالًا فَإِنْ تَحْسِنُوا وَتَرُدُّوْا عَلَيْهِ
الَّذِي لَهُ فَإِنَّا نَحِبُّ ذَلِكَ وَإِنْ أَبَيْتُمْ فَهُوَ فِيَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَفَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَنْتُمْ أَحَقُّ بِهِ)**

“This man, you have known, is related to us. You have apprehended some of his possessions. If you show kindness and return to him what he possessed, that is more likeable to us. Yet if you are unwilling to do so, it is booty that God has granted you, and you have a right to it.”

People were so considerate of Muhammad’s desire that they returned everything they had taken from Abu al-‘As, even a drawstring. (Ibid, 2:659.) Abu al-‘As, who was already impressed by Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), was greatly affected by this favor. His heart was filled with belief in Muhammad’s mission, but it was not yet time to reveal his faith. He hugged his children and headed to Makkah.

Abu al-As’s Conversion to Islam

Abu al-‘As returned to Makkah, handed over the merchandise to the rightful owners, collected payments from some, and made payments to others. Then he asked the Makkans if he owed anyone anything. When people affirmed that he did not owe anyone anything and that he was an honest man who kept his word and did not violate others’ rights, he announced,

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ،

“I testify that there is no deity other than God, and that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger.”

He went on to say, “I have been aware of the merits of Islam for quite some time. I wanted to embrace Islam, but I feared that you might think I converted in order to usurp [some of] your capital [that you entrusted me with]. Now that I have made all such payments as were due unto you, I am heading to Madinah to embrace the faith of my father-in-law.” (Ibid, 2:660.)

Abu al-‘As did necessary preparation for travel, then left Makkah. Arriving in Madinah, he visited Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and swore allegiance to Islam. The people of Madinah rejoiced when they learned about this. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) married Zaynab to Abu al-‘As again. (Ibid.) It is unclear whether the marriage was solemnized anew or the earlier contract of marriage was deemed valid.

The Death of Zaynab Bint Muhammad

Zaynab was happy at reuniting with her husband and other members of her family, but she was not in the best of health. She never recovered completely from the illness she had contracted when Habbar attacked her camel in Makkah. That is why some biographers have called her a martyr.

Zaynab came to Madinah in 2AH, and after spending five years and few months with her father and siblings, she died in 8AH. Her death has been recorded in Hadith (A hadith is a report attributed to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him); it is a record of what he did, said, or otherwise approved of.) collections.

When Zaynab died, according to Umm ‘Atiyah, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) came to the women who were engaged in bathing Zaynab’s body, and asked them to wash her body 3 to 5 times or even more. He also advised them to mix jujube leaves with water the first few times, and camphor in the end. He further told them to call him before wrapping the body in burial cloths. When the women had bathed Zaynab’s body, they called him. He gave his mantle to them and asked them to wrap it around Zaynab’s body. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 1254.) Umm Ayman and two of the wives of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), Sawdah and Umm Salamah, were involved in preparing Zaynab’s body for burial.

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) personally led his daughter's funeral prayer, and descended into the grave to bury her with his own hands. (Ibn al-Athir, *Asad al-Ghabah*, 5:299.)

Umamah Bint Abi al-‘As

Umamah was the older of the two children of Abu al-‘As and Zaynab. She was privileged to have been raised by some of the best human beings in the history of humankind. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) adored his granddaughter. Abu Qatadah has reported that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) sometimes led the prayers while Umamah rode on his shoulders. When he bowed down or prostrated, he would seat her on the floor, and pick her up again after he had completed prostrations. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 516; Muslim, al-Sahih, 543.)

Once Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) received a necklace of carnelian as a gift. He said he would give it to the member of his family whom he loved most. The women present on the occasion thought he would give it to ‘A’ishah, the daughter of Abu Bakr; but he called Umamah and adorned her with the necklace. (Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, al-Isabah, 8:25.)

Similarly, the Negus of Abyssinia sent Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) a ring with a precious stone. He called Umamah, and honored her with the ring. (Ibid.)

Umamah received much love and attention from her grandfather. She bore the loss of her mother in 8AH, and her father died in 12AH. Before he died, Abu al-‘As willed Zubayr Ibn ‘Awwam, his close relative, to be Umamah’s guardian following his death.

Umamah’s Marriages

Soon after the death of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), Fatimah also died. According to some reports, she had encouraged her husband ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib to marry Umamah after her death. Thus, Umamah was married to ‘Ali.

Umamah and ‘Ali enjoyed a healthy marital relationship. They were blessed with a son, who was named Muhammad, who later came to be known as Muhammad al-Awsat – Muhammad the Medial. (Al-Baladhuri, Jumal min Ansab al-Ashraf, 1:177.)

Some historians have suggested that Umamah did not have any offspring.

Following the assassination of ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Umamah married to Mughirah Ibn Nawfal. With Mughirah, Umamah had another son Yahya, and because known as Umm Yahya. Umamah – may God be pleased with her – died while she was married to Mughirah. (Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, al-Isabah, 8:26.)

‘Ali Ibn Abi al-‘As

‘Ali was the son of Zaynab and Abu al-‘As and younger brother of Umamah. He was the grandson of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her). Halah Bint Khuwaylid was his paternal grandmother. He was nursed by a woman from the tribe of Banu Ghadirah. Like Umamah, ‘Ali also received much love from his grandfather, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

Once Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) visited Zaynab, he hugged little ‘Ali, and said he had a greater right to ‘Ali than anyone else related to the child. He reportedly said when a Muslim and a non-Muslim shared something, the Muslim has a greater right to it. This may be viewed in relation to the fact that Abu al-‘As had not embraced Islam yet.

It is reported that ‘Ali was riding along with Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) the day Makkah was conquered. He was still a youth when he died during the lifetime of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). (Ibn al-Athir, Asad al-Ghabah, 3:306.)

Ruqayyah Bint Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

Ruqayyah was born in Makkah three years after Zaynab was born and seven years before Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was appointed nabi.

Adjacent to the residence of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) and Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was Abu Lahab's house. Abu Lahab's actual name was 'Abd al-'Uzza. Before Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) claimed nubuwah, Abu Lahab loved his nephew very much. He was handsome and wealthy. His sons were 'Utbah, and 'Utaybah. One day, some elders of Banu Hashim took Abu Talib to visit Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). They referred to Zaynab's marriage to Abu al-'As on the maternal side. They admitted Abu al-'As was a gentleman, but emphasized that the paternal side, no less in "nobility" than the maternal family of the children, also had a right to make proposals. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired what they proposed. They replied they wanted his other two daughters – Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum – to be married on the paternal side. Specifically, Abu Lahab proposed to marry his sons 'Utbah and 'Utaybah to Muhammad's daughters.

In response, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said he valued his relationship with Abu Lahab and other members of the extended family, but he needed time to think about the proposal. He consulted Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) on this matter. She was hesitant to accept the proposal, because she knew Umm Jamil, the wife of Abu Lahab, who was going to be the mother-in-law of Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum if the proposal was accepted. Umm Jamil, whose actual name was Arwa, was the sister of Abu Sufyan and the daughter of Harb Ibn Umayyah. She was known to be foul-tongued, ill-tempered, and mischievous. She was the one named hammalat al-hatab – the carrier of firewood [In his commentary on the Qur'an 111:4, Asad notes that hammalat al-hatab is "a well-known idiomatic expression denoting one who surreptitiously carries evil tales and slander from one person to another 'so as to kindle the flames of hatred between them'". See Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an*, 2nd ed. (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2011), 1173, Note 3.] – in the Qur'an. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was concerned how her daughters would fare with this notorious woman, known to Makkans for her rudeness. But considering that their first daughter had been married on the maternal side of the family, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) agreed to marry Ruqayyah to 'Utbah and Umm Kulthum to 'Utaybah. However, their marriages were not immediately consummated, and the two girls lived with their parents even at the time when Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) announced nubuwah. (Ibn al-Athir, *Asad al-Ghabah*, 5:387.)

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was appointed Messenger of God when he was forty. Historians have noted that the four daughters (including Ruqayyah) were the first, along with Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), to respond to his call to Islam. (Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat*, 8:36.)

Abu Lahab's Reaction to Muhammad's Newly found Mission

Abu Lahab was fiercely opposed to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) from the outset. Most of Banu Hashim were rather late in accepting Islam, yet they supported and protected Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) out of tribal loyalty and as a matter of custom. They even accompanied Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to Shi'b Abi Talib, when he was boycotted by the Makkans. But the case of Abu Lahab was different. He would not miss any opportunity to hurt Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

Abu Lahab regularly attacked him with foul language, but Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) responded with silence. According to tribal Arab custom, a paternal uncle was just like one's own father, especially if the biological father of a person had died. If Abu Lahab had the

decency to follow the custom of his time, he would at least have protected Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), if not respond to his call.

On one occasion, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) received God's instruction,

﴿وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ﴾

*And warn your tribe [O Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)] of near kindred.
(Qur'an 26:214.)*

Thus, he invited members of his clan, Banu Hashim. About 45 members of the extended family, including Abu Lahab accepted the invitation and visited him. He viciously attacked Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his mission, but Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not retaliate. (Al-Baladhuri, Jumal min Ansab al-Ashraf, 1:134.)

When he called a meeting of the members of his clan on another occasion, this meeting was also sabotaged by Abu Lahab, who spoke ill of Muhammad's invitation and the gathering. Abu Talib, however, was encouraging. He said on the occasion that he would support Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) as long as he was alive. (Al-Salihi, Subul al-Huda wa-al-Rashad, 2:323.)

When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was sure of Abu Talib's support, he called the Quraysh from Mount Safa for an emergency meeting. When the Makkans gathered, he told them about his appointment as the Messenger of God, and invited them to believe in the Oneness of God and the Day of Judgment. Abu Lahab was among those present. He was irritated, and swore at Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He asked why Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had troubled them with an announcement he considered unimportant. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 4770 and 4971.)

God's Response to Abu Lahab's Audacity

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not respond to Abu Lahab at any point, but God spoke up,

﴿تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ﴾

"The power of Abu Lahab will perish, and he will perish. ..." (Qur'an 111:1)

Thus, the 111th chapter of Qur'an, Surat al-Lahab was revealed.

The revelation of the surah further added to the frustration and fury of Abu Lahab and his wife Umm Jamil. Carrying rocks in her hands, she went around to find Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), who was sitting with Abu Bakr in the vicinity of the Ka'bah. Umm Jamil came to them, but God willed that she could not see Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). She asked Abu Bakr where he was. "I have learned that he speaks ill of me," she said. "By God, if I find him, I shall hurl these rocks in his face." She said she was a poetess, and went on to recite a new piece of poetry:

مُذَمَّمًا غَضَبِنَا وَأَمْرَهُ أَتَيْنَا وَدِينَهُ قَالَيْنَا

*"We have disobeyed the blameworthy; we reject his affair; and we leave his religion with disdain."
(Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah, 1:356.)*

This is the kind of enmity Abu Lahab and Umm Jamil had towards Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

‘Abd al-Salam Kaylani has responded to Umm Jamil’s piece in the following words:

مُحَمَّدًا أَطَعْنَا وَأَمْرَهُ قَبَلْنَا وَدِينَهُ رَضِينَا وَنَفْسَهُ فَدَيْنَا

“We have obeyed the praiseworthy; we accept his mission; we embrace his religion; and we shall sacrifice our lives to protect him.”

Abu Lahab’s Sons Divorce Muhammad’s Daughters

Abu Lahab called each of his two sons separately and said,

رَأْسِي مِنْ رَأْسِكَ حَرَامٌ إِنْ لَمْ تُطَلِّقْ ابْنَتَهُ

“I shall not see your face again unless you divorce Muhammad’s daughter”. (Al-Halabi, Insan al-Uyun, 1:468.)

Elsewhere it is reported that Abu Lahab said to his sons that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had spoken ill of him and his wife, and had tried to disgrace them. He angrily told his son ‘Utbah to divorce her.

‘Utbah said he would go to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and say something very offensive about his God. So he went to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), swore at him, and divorced his daughter. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was so disturbed by what ‘Utbah did that he prayed to God,

(اللَّهُمَّ! سَلِّطْ عَلَيْهِ كَلْبًا مِنْ كِلَابِكَ)

“O Allah, appoint one of your hounds on him.” (Ibid.)

Some time later, ‘Utbah travelled to as-Sham with a trade caravan. The caravan stopped for the night nearby Zarqa. A lion circled them. ‘Utbah freaked out when he saw the lion. He said the lion was going to devour him, because Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had cursed him.

He said Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) could kill him even though he was in as-Sham and Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was in Makkah. To calm him down, people got him to sleep in the middle of the group. Yet the lion came at night, spotted ‘Utbah, and killed him. (Ibn ‘Asakir, Tarikh Dimashq, 38:302; al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, 2:539.)

Zarqa is located near Amman, the capital of present-day Jordan. It was a center of trade in 6th and 7th century Arabia. Biographers have differed over whether it was ‘Utbah or ‘Utaybah who was devoured by a lion. In his al-Rahiq al-Makhtum, Mubarakpuri says it was ‘Utaybah who misbehaved and was cursed by Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

God’s Wisdom Outdid the Makkans’ Plots

Biographers of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) have noted that the Makkans thought of disrupting his peace at home when nothing else seemed to work. As a desperate measure, they thought of getting his daughters divorced. They approached Abu al-‘As and urged him to divorce

Zaynab; in return, he could marry any Makkani woman of his choice. Abu al-'As firmly rejected the idea. When the same offer was made to the sons of Abu Lahab, they readily agreed to divorce Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum. (Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah, 2:652.)

Abu Lahab, Umm Jamil, and other Makkans hoped and wished that the divorce of Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum would cause trouble at Muhammad's home. But God's unlimited wisdom had other plans for his family. The Makkans' hopes and wishes were dashed; God blessed Ruqayyah with 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan, who was better than Abu Lahab's son as a husband and a human being. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was also happy about the marriage, and regularly blessed the couple with prayers and good wishes.

Ruqayyah's Marriage to 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan

'Uthman was a handsome yet modest human being. He was one of the Banu Umayyah, and was persuaded by Abu Bakr to embrace Islam. 'Uthman was a wealthy trader and among the most eligible bachelors in Makkah. He proposed to marry Ruqayyah after she was divorced by Abu Lahab's son. The proposal was accepted, and he married her. According to a report of al-Tabarani, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was instructed by God to marry his daughter to 'Uthman. 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas reported that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "God has intimated me by way of wahy that I should marry my beloved (i.e. Ruqayyah) to 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan." (Abu al-Qasim Sulayman Ibn Ahmad al-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Awsat, n.,d 4:17)

The Makkans did not attend the marriage ceremony. Instead, they began to plot against 'Uthman. But their schemes were all unsuccessful.

Strong Affinity between Husband and Wife

'Uthman and Ruqayyah made a beautiful couple. Their private and public life was commendable. The couple soon became well-known in Makkah. People began to describe the two as the best couple mankind had ever known. (Al-Baladhuri, Jumal min Ansab al-Ashraf, 89.) They had an amazing chemistry not least because Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) had raised her daughters as very good human beings.

Migration to Abyssinia

With the passage of time, life in Makkah became increasingly difficult for Muslims. The Makkans who had rejected Muhammad's message continued to oppose and persecute those who accepted his mission. At one point, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had to urge some of the most vulnerable members of the nascent Muslim community to migrate to Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia). The Negus who ruled Abyssinia at the time was known to be a just king. It is reported that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) described the kingdom of Abyssinia as a land of truth. (Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah, 1:322.)

Like as-Sham, Abyssinia was also a trade destination for the Makkans. They enjoyed the food and the moderate climate in Abyssinia, in addition to the lucrative trade. After receiving instruction from Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), a small caravan headed to Abyssinia in Rajab of the 5th year of Muhammad's nubuwah.

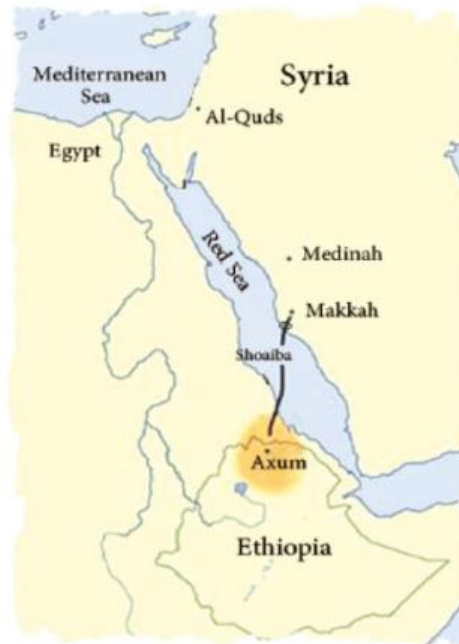
The First Family after Ibrahim and Lut to Migrate in the Path of God

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) reportedly praised his daughter and son-in-law as the first household to migrate for the sake of God after their ancestor Ibrahim and his nephew Lut. (Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, al-Isabah, 8:139.)

(إِنَّهُمَا أَوَّلُ بَيْتٍ هَاجَرَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بَعْدَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَلُوطِ)

The small group was led by 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan. It consisted of 12 men and 4 or 5 women, one of whom was Ruqayyah, the daughter of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Umm Salamah, who later married Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), was also one of the migrants. At the time of migration to Abyssinia, she was accompanied by her husband Abu Salamah. (Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah, 1:323.)

The caravan left Makkah in the darkness of the night to evade the attention of the Makkans. Ruqayyah wept as she bid farewell to her parents, thinking they might never meet again.



The Makkans Chase the Caravan

Fortunately, the group found two boats that were about to depart when they arrived at the port of Shu'aybah. They were charged reasonable fares for their onward journey to the Abyssinian port.



After the group departed, a woman came to Makkah and told the Makkans that she had seen 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan and Ruqayyah heading to the port of Shu'aybah. The Makkans were upset when they learned about the attempted migration. They sent men to chase 'Uthman and Ruqayyah, but the two, along with others, had left the port of Shu'aybah long before the Makkans got there.

Return from Abyssinia and Continuing Problems

In Abyssinia, the migrant Muslim community felt relieved. They enjoyed religious freedom. Ruqayyah was happy with her husband, but thought about her parents all the time. The migrants were keen on receiving news from Makkah. Only three months after their arrival in Abyssinia, a rumor spread that the Makkans had converted to Islam en masse. The migrants were happy to hear the news and headed back to Makkah only to discover that they were misinformed. (Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah, 1:364.)

The Sad News of Khadijah's Demise

Upon returning from Abyssinia, Ruqayyah found out that her loving mother had died. Ruqayyah could only bear the loss patiently.

The Makkans' treatment of the Muslims had worsened. Among other things, Abu Talib's death had emboldened the Makkans who no longer hesitated in attacking and persecuting members of the Muslim community. The Muslims then prepared to migrate to Abyssinia a second time. Historians have noted that Ruqayyah and 'Uthman were among those who migrated a second time. (Abu al-Fida' Isma'il Ibn 'Umar Ibn Kathir, al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah, n.d, 743.)

Migration for a Third Time

Ruqayyah and 'Uthman are believed to have returned to Makkah a few years later. With the increasing hostility of the Makkans, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was finally permitted by God to migrate to Madinah. Members of the Makkan Muslim community began to migrate individually or in small groups. Ruqayyah and 'Uthman left their home for a third time to migrate to Madinah.

Upon arriving in Madinah, the couple was hosted by Aws Ibn Thabit, brother of the Islamic poet Hasan Ibn Thabit. (Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Abu Shuhbah, al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah 'ala Daw' al-Qur'an wa al-Sunnah, n.d, 469.)

Some time later, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) also arrived in Madinah along with Abu Bakr. The Muslims were finally relieved of the persecution meted out by the Makkans. In Madinah, they were free to practice their religion and worship God as they wished.



Forced migrations, particularly of whole communities, are full of challenges. Yet the teachings of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) were so dear to his early followers that they sacrificed their homes, property and businesses when they migrated to Madinah. This was with the sole intention of practicing and preaching their religion and earning the pleasure of God and His Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

The Birth of a Son in Ruqayyah's Household

After bearing so many difficulties in the path of God, Ruqayyah and 'Uthman were blessed with a son, whom they named 'Abdullah. (Ibn Kathir, al-Sirah, 743.) Ruqayyah was thereafter called Umm 'Abdullah according to the Arab custom. Ruqayyah and 'Uthman did not have any offspring after 'Abdullah.

Ruqayyah's Illness and the Battle of Badr

Shortly before the Battle of Badr, Ruqayyah contracted smallpox. She was offered all kinds of treatment that were available at the time, but her condition continued to worsen. (Ahmad Khalil Jumu'ah, Nisa' Ahl al-Bayt, n.d, 491.) The decision to face the Makkans at Badr was announced. The Muslim community, including 'Uthman, began to prepare for the battle. Meanwhile, Ruqayyah's condition deteriorated. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) advised 'Uthman to stay in Madinah to look after Ruqayyah. 'Uthman faced a dilemma – to look after his wife, or to participate in the battle. 'Uthman expressed his concern about not receiving God's rewards for taking part in the battle. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) reassured him that he would be rewarded like the other participants and would even receive a share of the booty. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 3130.)

Ruqayyah's Demise

As instructed by Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), 'Uthman stayed with his wife in Madinah. When the Muslims won the Battle of Badr, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) sent Zayd Ibn Harithah to deliver the good news to Madinah. When Zayd arrived, Ruqayyah, then only 21, was being buried. (Ibn Kathir, al-Sirah, 743.)

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) at Ruqayyah's Grave

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was grieved by the news of his daughter's death. People witnessed tears in his eyes. He visited Ruqayyah's grave when he returned to Madinah, invoked God's forgiveness and mercy for her, and said, "'Uthman Ibn Ma'zun has already gone unto God, and you are also joining him!" (Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, 8:37.) 'Uthman Ibn Ma'zun was Muhammad's foster brother. He was the first to die after migrating to Madinah. (Abu 'Umar Yusuf Ibn 'Abdillah Ibn Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Barr al-Qurtubi, al-Isti'ab fi Ma'rifat al-Ashab, n.d, 1:324.)

The Death of Ruqayyah's Son

'Abdullah was 6 years old when a cock stuck its beak into one of his eyes. His face gradually swelled up, and his condition deteriorated as the infection spread. The illness ultimately led to his death in Jumada al-Ula of 4AH. His grandfather Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) led the funeral prayers and his father 'Uthman buried him. (Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, 8:37.)

Umm Kulthum Bint Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

Six years before the appointment of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) as Messenger of God, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) had given birth to another daughter, whom he called Umm Kulthum. In the Arabic language, Kulthum means one who has a full, round face. Thereafter, she continued to be known by this name.

Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum were born soon one after the other. The two sisters were very intimate. Before they reached puberty, members of Banu Hashim clan approached Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and proposed to have them marry Abu Lahab's sons. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) accepted the proposal after some hesitation. Ruqayyah was married to 'Utbah, and Umm Kulthum to 'Utaybah. However, the marriages were not immediately consummated, most likely because the girls were minors at the time. Moreover, God had decided to protect them from the unscrupulous household of Abu Lahab. Umm Jamil, the girls' mother-in-law, was known to be a rash and misbehaving person. She was notoriously sharp-tongued.

In the preceding account of Ruqayyah, we discussed how Abu Lahab, Umm Jamil, and possibly other Makkans got the two girls divorced.

Umm Kulthum embraced Islam along with her mother. She remained under the tutelage of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) for a long time. Her older sisters, Zaynab and Ruqayyah, lived with their husbands. Ruqayyah even migrated to Abyssinia twice. The younger sister, Fatimah, stayed at home with Umm Kulthum. The two younger sisters found abundant opportunities to serve their parents, particularly when Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his extended family stayed in Shi'b Abi Talib. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), who had grown old, was cared for by her two younger daughters. Moreover, during their stay in Shi'b Abi Talib, the two girls had a lack of material resources but learned to patiently bear with difficulties in the path of God.

By the time the boycott of Banu Hashim ended, Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) had grown very weak. Shortly thereafter, she died in Ramadan of the 10th year of Muhammad's nubuwah. She was buried in the cemetery of Hujun in Makkah. Umm Kulthum lost her mother while she was still young.



Site of the Battle of Badr

When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) migrated to Madinah, Umm Kulthum, Fatimah, and Sawdah (their stepmother) stayed in Makkah. After arriving in Madinah, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) sent Zayd Ibn Harithah and Abu Rafi' to bring them to Madinah. Thus, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Abu Bakr were joined by their immediate families in Madinah. (Jamal al-Din Abu al-Fadl Muhammad Ibn Mukarram Ibn Manzur, Mukhtasar Tarikh Dimashq Li Ibn 'Asakir, n.d, 1:202)

Before their arrival in Madinah, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) made arrangements for their residence.

Ruqayyah, the older daughter of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), died shortly after the battle of Badr in 2AH. All members of the family, including 'Uthman, were immensely grieved by the death of Ruqayyah.

'Uthman was a loyal husband for Ruqayyah and a loving son-in-law for Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). 'Uthman and Ruqayyah enjoyed an enviable married life. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was very pleased with his son-in-law. 'Uthman was a noble man of highest character. He was wealthy, yet generous. He had the honor to have experienced three migrations for the sake of God. 'Uthman was about to be honored like no one else in the universe.

Marriage of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Hafsa Bint 'Umar

The victory celebration after Badr was accompanied by grief over the death of Ruqayyah. Around the same time, the husband of Hafsa, the son-in-law of 'Umar Ibn Khattab, also died.

Hafsa was still quite young. In accordance with the Arab custom and expectations of religion, 'Umar Ibn Khattab was seriously interested in Hafsa's remarriage. He took the initiative to approach 'Uthman, who had lost his wife, and proposed that he marry to Hafsa. 'Uthman did not respond to the proposal. It was probably because he had learned that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) intended to marry Hafsa. 'Umar was surprised and somewhat angered by 'Uthman's silence. He went to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and complained that he proposed the marriage of his daughter to 'Uthman, but he did not respond to the proposal.

In response, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) proposed to marry Hafsa. He went on to propose the marriage of his own daughter Umm Kulthum to 'Uthman. (Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, 4:49.) In this way, two women found husbands, 'Umar found a better son-in-law than 'Uthman, and 'Uthman found a better father-in-law than 'Umar – a wonderful arrangement indeed.

Al-Bukhari has recorded a report attributed to 'Umar himself, in which he said his daughter Hafsa was married to Khunays Ibn Hadhafah al-Sahmi. She was widowed when Khunays died in Madinah. He urged 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan to marry his daughter. 'Uthman said he would think about it. After waiting for several days, 'Umar again asked his friend, but 'Uthman said he was not interested in marrying. 'Umar then approached Abu Bakr and suggested that he marry Hafsa. Abu Bakr did not respond. 'Umar was grieved by Abu Bakr's attitude more than he was grieved by 'Uthman's silence. However, some time later, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) proposed to Hafsa, and they were married.

Later on, Abu Bakr asked 'Umar if he was unhappy about his response. 'Umar said he was. He then explained that he was aware of Muhammad's intention to marry Hafsa. He kept quiet because he did not want to reveal Muhammad's intentions. He then reassured 'Umar that he would have married Hafsa if Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had not done so. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 5122.)

Umm Kulthum's Marriage as per God's Instruction

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have said that he married Umm Kulthum to 'Uthman upon receiving wahy. Similarly, he is reported to have said to 'Uthman that Jibril conveyed to him God's instruction that Umm Kulthum be married to 'Uthman, and the same mahr be fixed as for Ruqayyah, and that 'Uthman have a relationship with Umm Kulthum similar to his relationship with Ruqayyah. (Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik.) A Similar report is recorded with reference to Abu Hurayrah as well. (Al-Salihi, Subul al-Huada wa al-Rashid, 11:36.) This is believed to have occurred in Rabi' al-Awwal 3AH.

Details of Umm Kulthum's Marriage to 'Uthman

Referring to Umm Kulthum's marriage to 'Uthman, 'A'ishah reportedly said that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) advised Umm Ayman to prepare his daughter and take her to 'Uthman's home and to play a duff [A Duff was a musical instrument similar to a drum, common in Arabia at the time of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).] for Umm Kulthum. Three days after Umm Kulthum's marriage to 'Uthman, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) visited his daughter to find out how she found her husband. (Jalal al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Abi Bakr al-Suyuti, Jami' al-Ahadith, n.d, 40:165; 'Ala' al-Din 'Ali Ibn Husam al-Din al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Kanz al-'Ummal fi Sunan al-Aqwal wa al-Af'al, n.d, 13:48.)

The marriage was consummated in Jumada al-Ukhra 3AH.

Umm Kulthum's Death

In Sha'ban 9AH, Umm Kulthum died after being ill for some time. (Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, 8:38.) Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) led the funeral prayers for his daughter. He was immensely grieved, and sat next to his daughter's grave for a long time.

Anas reported that he saw Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) sitting by Umm Kulthum's grave. He had tears in his eyes as he asked, "Is there anyone among you who has not slept with his wife tonight?" Abu Talhah identified himself as one. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) then asked him to descend into the grave to help him bury Umm Kulthum. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 1342.)

Layla Bint Qanif al-Thaqafiyah was one of the women involved in bathing Umm Kulthum's body. She reported how Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) supplied them with some of the burial cloths. He first gave them a sheet, then a top, a mantle, and finally a larger sheet. She was subsequently wrapped in another piece of cloth.

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) stood by the door while Umm Kulthum was bathed, and supplied some cloths as needed. (Abu Da'ud, al-Sunan, 3157.)

'Ali Ibn Abi Talib Fadl Ibn 'Abbas, and Usamah Ibn Zayd are also believed to have assisted in the burial of Umm Kulthum. (Al-Salihi, Subul al-Huda wa al-Rashad, 11:37.) Asma' Bint 'Umays and Safiyah Bint 'Abd al-Muttalib, on the other hand, are believed to have bathed Umm Kulthum. (Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, 8:38.)

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) Consoles 'Uthman

'Uthman was immensely grieved by the death of his wife. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) witnessed 'Uthman's sorrow. To console him, he reportedly said,

(زَوَّجُوا عُثْمَانَ لَوْ كَانَتْ عِنْدِي ثَالِثَةٌ لَزَوَّجْتُهٗ،
وَمَا زَوَّجْتُهُ إِلَّا بِوَحْيٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ)

"[Make arrangements to] marry 'Uthman; if I had a third daughter [who was unmarried], I would have married her to 'Uthman; and I did not marry him [to my daughters] except with God's [approval in] wahy." [Al-Tabarani, al-Mu'jamal Kabir, 17:184; al-Haythami, Majma' al-Zawa'id wa Manba' al-Fawa'id, 9:83. (The report is deemed weak.)]

'Uthman may well be the only person in human history to have had the honor of marrying two daughters of a Messenger one after the other. He is thus called Dhu al-Nurayn – the one with two lights.

Fatimah Bint Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

Fatimah az-Zahra' was the youngest and most beloved of Muhammad's daughters. She was born in Makkah one or two years before God appointed Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) as His Messenger. Some historians and biographers have also suggested that she was born in the same year the Ka'bah was rebuilt. This was five years before Muhammad's appointment as Messenger, when he was 35. She has been called

سَيِّدَةُ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ

sayyidat nisa' al-'alamin (the highest among the women of all times and places),

كَرِيمَةُ الطَّرْفَيْنِ، أُمُّ الْحَسَنِ، سَيِّدَةُ نِسَاءِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ،
الْبَتُولُ، الرَّاضِيَّةُ، الْمَرْضِيَّةُ، الْمِيمُونَةُ، الزَّكِيَّةُ

karimat al-tarfayn (noble from both sides), umm al-Hasanayn (the mother of Hasan and Husayn), sayyidat nisa' ahl al-jannah (the highest among the women who shall enter paradise), al-batul (the Virgin), al-radiyah (one content with God's will), al-mardiyah (one pleasing to God), al-maymunah (the blessed one), al-zakiyah (the unblemished), and numerous other names that signify her merit and praiseworthy attributes. Fatimah had the highest standards of etiquette and the best of behavior. She was distinguished by her knowledge, wisdom, and understanding.

She spent her childhood with her parents and sisters. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is known to have loved her a lot. She closely resembled her father in appearance, and was named Fatimah by him. (Al-Salihi, Subul al-Huda wa al-Rashad, 11:37.)

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with him) raised her with utmost love and affection, and instilled in her bravery, righteousness, and consciousness of God. She was no more than 5 years old when Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) experienced wahy for the first time. She embraced her father's mission on the same day as her mother and sisters.

Fatimah's Courage in the First Few Days of Islam

During the first thirteen years of nubuwah, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) invited the Makkans to accept the Oneness of God. Muslims faced a lot of opposition and persecution during this difficult phase in Islam. Yet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) persevered with his mission. Fatimah witnessed all the difficulties faced by her father and other members of the religious community as she grew up. Known to be brave and courageous since childhood, she did whatever she could to support her father's mission.

One day Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was busy with his prayers in the vicinity of the Ka'bah. Abu Jahl and his friends sat nearby. A sinful idea crossed Abu Jahl's mind, and he asked his friends to bring the insides of a camel and put this on Muhammad's back when he prostrated. 'Uqbah Ibn Abi Mu'ayt had the audacity to play the cheap prank. He brought the insides of a slaughtered camel, and threw this on Muhammad's back while he prostrated. For much of the day, a good number of Makkans would have been present in the vicinity of Ka'bah for business or other purposes. The shameful act must have been witnessed by quite a few people. Abu Jahl and his friends hoped Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would be considerably soiled extensively while struggling with the burden on his back, but he did not attempt to relieve himself of the filthy burden and remained in prostration. Some slaves and other free but weak followers of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) (like 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud) were present at

the scene, but they could not help him, for they feared Abu Jahl. The mischief-makers laughed and screamed.

Fatimah, a young girl at the time, learned that her father was in trouble. She came running to his rescue. With her little hands, she pushed the filth from Muhammad's back and castigated Abu Jahl and his friends. After Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was relieved, he invoked God's wrath on the Quraysh, and named 'Amr Ibn Hisham (Abu Jahl), 'Utbah Ibn Rabi'ah, Shaybah Ibn Rabi'ah, al-Walid Ibn 'Utbah, Umayyah Ibn Khalaf, 'Uqbah Ibn Abi Mu'ayt, and 'Umarah Ibn al-Walid in particular.

The mischief-makers no longer laughed. They realized the Ka'bah was a place where prayers were answered, and they could be damned if the invocations of the most honest and trustworthy among the Makkans worked. And it did happen: Abu Jahl and all of his friends were killed during the Battle of Badr and their bodies thrown into a polluted well. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 520.) Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) spoke to the dead men and shamed them for rejecting and vehemently opposing the truth.

Fatimah's action on this occasion speaks volumes of her courage. After all, she was raised by the courageous Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her).

Fatimah's Role in the Dissemination of Islam

As a young girl, Fatimah witnessed how her father was accused of being a sorcerer, a madman and a poet. She also witnessed how the Makkans opposed and persecuted her father and his followers. Yet this only encouraged her to support her father and confront his foes. Along with her mother and sisters, she consoled her father. She comforted him when he returned home after preaching to hostile Makkans. Thus, she not only learned to deal with hardships and opposition, but also contributed to her father's struggle.

Fatimah in Shi'b Abi Talib

Fatimah accompanied her parents in exile. It was not for days or months, but for three whole years of hardship. Banu Hashim were boycotted by other Makkan clans. They were forced to retreat into a valley where they starved for days. Fatimah endured the difficult phase with patience and steadfastness. She could be viewed as a princess, being the beloved daughter of the spiritual leader of humankind. God could have made all kinds of luxuries available to her, but God elected a life characterized by difficulty and limitation of resources for Fatimah and her family. She spent most of her time in remembering of God and comforting her parents.

Difficulties after the Boycott Ended

Soon after returning from Shi'b Abi Talib, Fatimah experienced some of the most difficult moments in her life. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), her mother, died soon after the Makkan boycott of Banu Hashim ended. Fatimah was still very young when she lost the loving presence of her mother. Yet she and other members of the family were content with God's choices for their lives.

Some time after the death of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) married Sawdah. She was a mature woman, which was one reason why he married her – so that young Umm Kulthum and Fatimah could enjoy the supporting presence of a mature step-mother. Sawdah was affectionate to the two girls, who learned much from her.

Fatimah's Defence of Her Father

When the Makkans began scheming to kill Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) God protected and transported him safely to Madinah. God's continued support for Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) strengthened Fatimah's belief that He was pleased with Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his followers and would not forsake them.

Ibn Hanbal has recorded, with reference to Fatimah that a group of Makkans once plotted to kill Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). They wanted a mob to take Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) by surprise and lynch him. Fatimah, who was a child at the time, overheard the scheme, and brought it to her father's attention. He was so certain of the success of his mission that he told Fatimah not to worry and that God would ensure the plotting men would be killed. He then headed to the Ka'bah, where this group of Makkans were sitting. Hurling a fistful of sand, he invoked God's wrath on them. All these men were killed during the Battle of Badr. (Ibn Hanbal, al-Musnad, 1:303)

Migration to Madinah

A few days after Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) migrated to Madinah, Fatimah left Makkah with her sister Umm Kulthum and step-mother Sawdah. The family of Abu Bakr, Umm Ayman, and Usamah Ibn Zayd also accompanied them on this journey. ('Abd al-Rahman 'Abd al-Hamid al-Barr, al-Hijrah al-Nabawiyah al-Mubarakah: Dirasah Tahliliyah Muwath'haqah, n.d, 128.) Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) organized accommodation for his family before they arrived in Madinah.

Fatimah was in Madinah when the Battle of Badr took place in 2AH. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his followers won the battle, but Fatimah lost her sister Ruqayyah around the same time. Fatimah would have experienced mixed feelings on the occasion just like other family members.

Marriage to 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib

To be related to the Messenger of God may be viewed as an honor. Thus, Abu Bakr and 'Umar separately proposed to marry Fatimah. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) politely declined both of them, and said he was waiting for God's decree in Fatimah's case.

Abu Bakr and 'Umar then urged 'Ali to propose to Fatimah. 'Ali doubted that his proposal could be accepted considering that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had declined Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Yet the two encouraged 'Ali to propose marriage to Fatimah. After 'Ali proposed it is believed that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not respond for some time. (Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, 8:19.)

According to some reports, however, the ansar (The word ansar refers to the people of Madinah, who embraced Islam, invited Makkan Muslims to migrate to Madinah, and subsequently helped them through their difficulties.) encouraged 'Ali to propose to marry Fatimah. Once 'Ali was persuaded, he approached Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and expressed his desire to marry Fatimah. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) welcomed the idea, but did not clearly express his approval. The ansar waited to hear what Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said to 'Ali. After the meeting ended, the ansar curiously asked 'Ali what Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) thought of the idea. When he told them what had happened, they congratulated him, for they thought Muhammad's response was tacit approval. (Al-Salihi, Subul al-Huda wa al-Rashad, 11:40; Ibn Sa'd al-Tabaqat, 8:21.)

Fatimah was also consulted regarding 'Ali's proposal. While the matter was considered by Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and discussed among his family members, God informed Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) of His approval of the idea. Thus, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) reportedly told Anas to invite Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn 'Awf, and other companions to a meeting. When they arrived, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said to them that Jibril had conveyed to him God's approval of 'Ali's proposal to marry Fatimah. (Al-Sayyidah Fatimah az-Zahra', n.d, 1:194; Zaynab Bint 'Ali Fawwaz, al-Durr al-Manthur fi Tabaqat Rabbat al-Khudur, n.d, 1:493.)

According to Ibn Hajr, when 'Ali proposed to marry Fatimah, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) asked him what he could offer as mahr. 'Ali replied he had nothing to offer. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) then asked him about armor that he had given him earlier. 'Ali said he still had the armor. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) suggested that he could offer the armor to Fatimah as mahr. (Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, al-Isaah, 8:264; Abu Da'ud, al-Sunan, 2125.) The armor is reported to have been sold for 400 or 480 Dirhams, which 'Ali gave to Fatimah as mahr.

Some biographers have noted that 'Uthman purchased the armor from 'Ali and gave it back as a gift later. (Al-Halabi, Insan al-'Uyun, 4:69.) That is not surprising since 'Uthman is known for his generosity.

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) delivered a speech on the occasion of the marriage and then asked 'Ali if he agreed to marry Fatimah with a payment of 400 mithqal units of silver (worth approximately 280 Dirhams of the time) as mahr. 'Ali replied in the affirmative. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) then prayed that the couple and their offspring be receive God's blessings.

The guests were then served with honey drink and dates. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) advised the couple to spend some of the mahr on furniture and perfume. (Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, 8:21-22.)

Historians have differed over when the marriage took place. Most of them suggest though that the marriage took place after the Battle of Badr, and was consummated another 4 to 6 months later. It was 'Ali's first marriage and the only one for Fatimah during her lifetime.

Fatimah's Dowry

Fatimah was the sweetheart of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), the Last Messenger of God. It would only seem fitting if Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) dowered her like a princess. At the time of her marriage, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) seemed to be gaining power and influence. A Muslim polity had been established in Madinah. Muslims had defeated the Makkans at Badr. The Arab tribes began to recognize the new political power. People were increasingly responsive to Muhammad's mission. Muslims could see good times ahead. Yet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) observed austerity in his daughter's marriage.

Notwithstanding the abundance following the Battle of Badr, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) furnished a very basic dowry for his daughter.

According to various reports, Fatimah may have carried with her only a few items including a mattress made of Egyptian cloth and woolen filling, a simple bed, a pillow made of leather and filled with the bark of date palms, one or two earthenware pots, a water bag, a bowl, a quern, a prayer mat, two sheets, and two silver armlets. (Ibid, 8:25; Ibn Majah, al-Sunan, 1119; Ibn Hanbal, al-Musnad, 1:92, 104, 107, and 108.)

The Wedding

Asmm' Bint 'Umays reported that they did not find anything other than a floor mat, a pillow, and a water bottle to send along with Fatimah at the time of her wedding. After Fatimah reached 'Ali's residence, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) sent her a message to wait for him before starting her new life. Subsequently, when he arrived to see Fatimah, he asked, "Is my brother ('Ali) at home?" Umm Ayman, who was the mother of Usamah Ibn Zayd, a God-fearing mature Abyssinian woman, asked Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) how 'Ali could be his brother and son-in-law at the same time. He called 'Ali his brother, for he identified him as his brother on the occasion of Mu'akhat (brothering) in the first few days after migration to Madinah; he said to Umm Ayman that it could sometimes happen. Then Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) asked for a bowl of water, and invoked God's blessings on Fatimah and the new household. He then called Fatimah, who barely managed to walk up to her father possibly because she was shy. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) sprinkled the water on her, and said, "My daughter, I have married you to the best man in my family." While he spoke to Fatimah, he was taken aback when he noticed someone behind the curtain, and asked, "Who is it?" The lady replied, "O Messenger of God, I am Asma' Bint 'Umays." Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) asked, "Have you come to Fatimah for my pleasure?" She replied, "O Messenger of God, it is desirable for a newly-wed girl to be accompanied by a familiar woman, who could help her out as needed." Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) wished her God's blessings. Asma' cherished helping Fatimah on this occasion. (Al-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, 24:137.)

'Ali is reported to have said, "When I got married to Fatimah, we had no bedding other than the skin of a ram. At night, we slept on it, and during the day, we used it to transport animal feed. We did not have a servant either." (Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, 8:22.)


Fatimah's New Residence

'Ali lived with Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) before his marriage. When he married Fatimah, there was a need for a separate residence. 'Ali found a home far from his in-laws. But Fatimah wanted to live close to her father's residence, so she could visit him often.

Harithah Ibn Nu'man, one of the ansar, owned several houses in Madinah, some of them near the Messenger's mosque. Honoring Muhammad's requests on various occasions, he had offered a number of his houses for public use. Fatimah suggested Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) ask Harithah if he could vacate one of his houses near to the Messenger's mosque.

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was reluctant to ask Harithah for such a favor considering that he had made a number of his houses available for public use on prior occasions. In view of his hesitation, Fatimah did not pursue the matter further.

Harithah somehow learned about 'Ali's was looking for a home close to his in-laws. He went to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) out of love and respect, and said,



(هَذِهِ مَنَازِلِي وَهِيَ أَسْقَبُ بُيُوتِ بَنِي النَّجَّارِ بِكَ، وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا وَمَالِي لِلَّهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ. وَاللَّهُ! يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! الَّذِي تَأْخُذُ مِنِّي أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنَ الَّذِي تَدْعُ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: صَدَقْتَ وَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ)

“O Messenger of God, some of my houses are nearer to yours than any other houses of Banu Najjar. Indeed, myself and all my wealth are for God and His Messenger. By God, what you take of my wealth would be dearer to me than what you leave.”

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was pleased with Harithah’s warmth and affection. He prayed for him, and accepted his offer. (Ibid, 8:166.)

Participation in the Battle of Uhud



Soon after Fatimah’s marriage, the Battle of Uhud took place. About 14 women accompanied the Makkans to the battlefield to support and cheer them.

From an Islamic point of view, participation of women on a battlefield is not desirable; women can participate if there is a need. Towards the end of the day, there were rumors in Madinah that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had been killed. Some Muslim women rushed to the battlefield. The battle was over by the time they got there.

Anas reportedly said that he saw ‘A’ishah Bint Abi Bakr and Umm Salim (his mother). Their garments were tucked up and their ankles exposed, while they carried water bags on their backs and offered water to the wounded. Among the women was Fatimah. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 2880.)



Mujahideen offered prayers at this place during the Battle of Uhud

Similarly, Sahl Ibn Sa'd is reported to have said, "I know who cleaned the wound of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), who poured water, and what was used to treat the wound in the Battle of Uhud." He then described that Fatimah washed the wound sustained by Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) while 'Ali poured water using a shield. When Fatimah noticed that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) continued to bleed while water was poured, she heated a piece of floor mat and stuck it to the wound, which helped control the bleeding. (Ibid, 4075.)

This is how Fatimah played her part on the battlefield by offering first aid to her father.

Fatimah's Married Life with 'Ali

'Ali had a lot of love and respect for Fatimah. Similarly, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) used to advise Fatimah to be respectful and cooperative with 'Ali. All couples have their share of distasteful moments; what is important is how they resolve their issues.

On one such occasion, 'Ali left home after an argument with Fatimah and lay down in the courtyard of the mosque. When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) learned about this, he went to see his daughter. There he found out that 'Ali was in the mosque. He then headed to the mosque to see him. Sand particles had stuck to part of his bare back while he was lying down. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) gently dusted off the sand particles from his back, and said, "Come on, Abu Turab." Abu Turab means father of soil. 'Ali quickly responded. He was pleased to see Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He forgot about the argument, but remembered the beautiful nickname Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) gave him on this occasion, so much so that this became one of his best known epithets. (Muslim, al-Sahih, 2409.)

Fatimah's Offspring

In 3AH, about a year after Fatimah got married to 'Ali, she gave birth to a son. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was very excited by the arrival of a grandson. He went to her residence, cuddled the baby, fed him the first feed, and named him Hasan. On the seventh day following his birth, Hasan's head was shaved, and an amount of silver weighing the same as the shaved hair was donated. (Abu 'Isa Muhammad Ibn 'Isa al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami' al-Kabir, n.d, 1519.)

Fatimah gave birth to another son Husayn Ibn 'Ali in Sha'ban 4AH. Other than Hasan and Husayn, Fatimah gave birth to a son named Muhsin and two daughters named Zaynab and Umm Kulthum respectively. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) loved his grandchildren. Some of their merits will be discussed in the following pages.

How Fatimah was Brought Up?

Fatimah was Muhammad's darling. Yet he is known to have urged all members of his family including Fatimah to make their own arrangements for salvation on the Day of Judgment, and not hope to benefit from their association with him.

He often urged 'Ali and Fatimah to do tahajjud prayers. (Tahajjud prayers are voluntary prayers offered late at night, usually requiring a person to wake up from sleep.) On one occasion, while he was visiting Fatimah and 'Ali, he asked them, "Do you not offer tahajjud prayers?" 'Ali responded that God was in control of their lives, and He would wake them up [for tahajjud] when He wished. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was grieved to hear this. On his way home, he kept tapping his thigh and recited,

﴿وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا﴾

"And man is contentious above all else." (Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Ahmad Ibn Shu'ayb al-Nasa'i, al-Sunan al-Sughra, n.d, 1613.)

It is noteworthy how Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), despite all his love, used to tell his daughters and other members of family to do good deeds, seek taqwa, (Taqwa may be roughly described as consciousness of God; it is a state of mind characterized by love and respect for God and fear of His displeasure, which results in humility and caution in one's approach.) and strive for salvation. At a gathering of his extended family, he once said,

(يَا مَعْشَرَ قُرَيْشٍ! اِشْتَرُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ لَا أُغْنِي عَنْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا يَا بَنِي عَبْدِ مَنَافٍ! لَا أُغْنِي عَنْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا، يَا عَبَّاسُ بْنَ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ! لَا أُغْنِي عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا، وَيَا صَفِيَّةُ عَمَّةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ! لَا أُغْنِي عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا، وَيَا فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتَ مُحَمَّدٍ! سَلِينِي مَا شِئْتِ مِنْ مَالِي، لَا أُغْنِي عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا)

"O people of Quraysh! Secure yourselves, for I shall not avail you anything before God; O children of 'Abd Manaf, I shall not avail you anything before God; O 'Abbas Ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, I shall not avail you anything before God; O Safiyah, auntie of the Messenger of God, I shall not avail you anything before God; O Fatimah, daughter of Muhammad, ask me for whatever of my wealth you want, but I shall not avail you anything before God." (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 4771.)

Fatimah was raised by the Messenger of God (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to aspire to serve the Almighty. She was taught to endure poverty rather than seek wealth.

Thawban, a slave of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) whom he freed, reported that the Messenger of God (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) once visited his daughter at her residence. Thawban accompanied him. Fatimah wore a bracelet of gold when Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) entered her home. She explained that 'Ali had brought her the bracelet. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said to her,

(يَا فَاطِمَةُ! أَيَسْرُكَ أَنْ يَقُولَ النَّاسُ: ابْنَةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (ﷺ) وَفِي يَدِهَا سِلْسِلَةٌ مِنْ نَارٍ؟ ثُمَّ خَرَجَ وَلَمْ يَقْعُدْ. فَعَمَدَتْ فَاطِمَةُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا بِالسَّلْسِلَةِ إِلَى السُّوقِ فَبَاعَتْهَا، فَاشْتَرَتْ بِهَا غُلَامًا فَأَعْتَقَتْهُ، فَبَلَغَ ذَلِكَ النَّبِيَّ (ﷺ) فَقَالَ: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي نَجَّى فَاطِمَةَ مِنَ النَّارِ)

"Would you like people saying that the daughter of God's Messenger has a chain of fire in her hand?" He did not sit; he left immediately. Fatimah headed to the marketplace to sell the bracelet.

She traded the gold bracelet for a slave boy, whom she immediately freed. When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) learned about it, he said, "Praise is due unto God who saved Fatimah from fire." (Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, 3:154.)

A Better Gift than a Servant

Fatimah lived a simple life after her marriage and was generally happy and satisfied. She did all household chores, grinding wheat, making bread, and cooking food. She did not have any servant to assist her with laundry and housekeeping. When her hands grew sore from grinding the mill, she described her difficulty to 'Ali.

One day, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) received some slaves. Fatimah visited him to request a slave, but he was not at home. She told 'A'ishah about her problems and the purpose of her visit. When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) returned home, 'A'ishah told him about Fatimah's visit.

'Ali reported that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) visited them late at night when they had gone to bed. When 'Ali realized he was there, he got up to welcome him. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) urged him to remain in bed. Without any formalities, he sat down between 'Ali and Fatimah, so that 'Ali could feel the cool of his lower limbs on his chest. He then said,

"Why don't I give you two a gift that is better for you than a slave?"

He continued,

"When you lie down in your bed to sleep, say 'subhan Allah' 33 times, 'alhamd lillah' 33 times, and 'Allah akbar' 33 times; that is far better for you than a slave." (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 3705.)

Despite his love for Fatimah, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not give her a servant. He preferred strength and simplicity for his daughter and son-in-law, who were going to be role models for humanity for all time.

It would not have been wrong to give her a servant, but he wanted her and his son-in-law to think more of God's pleasure than the acquisition of worldly possessions.

Abiding by God's Commandments

Let us also remember the case of Fatimah, a member of the Banu Makhzum clan, who committed theft, with the matter brought before Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Banu Makhzum was a sub-tribe of the Quraysh to which Abu Jahl, Khalid Ibn Walid, and Umm Salamah (one of Muhammad's wives) belonged. Members of Fatimah's family sought to find someone who would intercede for her, so she would not be punished. They persuaded Usamah Ibn Zayd, who was very dear to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), to plead for lenience in her case. When Usamah talked to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) about Fatimah's case, the latter responded, "Do you intercede in [a matter that relates to] Hudud Allah? (Hudud are God's commandments concerning punishment of crimes.) By God, if Fatimah Bint Muhammad had committed theft, I would have amputated her hand too." (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 3475.) Such is the seriousness of Messengers in fulfilling God's expectations.

Fatimah in the Farewell Pilgrimage

Umm Hani Bint Abi Talib, 'Ali's sister, reported that Fatimah witnessed the conquest of Makkah. She most likely also participated in the farewell pilgrimage.

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) sent ‘Ali to fetch camels for sacrifice from Najran, while Fatimah accompanied her father to Makkah. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) instructed her to do ‘Umrah [‘Umrah is the minor Islamic pilgrimage; it is not compulsory; unlike Hajj (the major pilgrimage), ‘Umrah may be done any time during the year.] when she arrived in Makkah, then end her state of ihram. [Ihram is a sacred state (characterized by a specific code, and behavioral expectations and restrictions) that a Muslim must observe during Hajj or ‘Umrah.] She did so which implies that she performed Hajj tamattu’. (Hajj tamattu’ is the case when a pilgrim proceeds to Makkah with the intention of ‘Umrah, does ‘Umrah upon arriving in Makkah, then ends the state of ihram; the pilgrim subsequently reenters the state of ihram when it is time for Hajj.) Thus, Fatimah was not in a state of ihram when ‘Ali arrived in Makkah with sacrificial camels, which surprised him. He inquired how she could end the state of ihram before Hajj. (Hajj is the major Islamic pilgrimage; it is compulsory for those who can afford it; unlike ‘Umrah, Hajj may be done only during specific days of the twelfth months of the Islamic – Hijri calendar.) Fatimah explained to him what Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had told her to do. (Ibn Hanbal, al-Musnad, 3:320.)



Fatimah’s Merit

Fatimah, one of the most meritorious of Muslim women, was unparalleled in many respects. ‘A’ishah reportedly said she had never known anyone more truthful than Fatimah among the followers of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). (Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, 3:166.) ‘A’ishah is further reported to have said that she had not known anyone who bore a greater similarity to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) in terms of habits, etiquette, and speech than Fatimah. She followed Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) in all respects. When she visited him, he would stand up and kiss her on the forehead. (Abu Hatim Muhammad Ibn Hibban, al-Sahih, n.d, 21:377; Abu ‘Abdillah Muhammad Ibn Isma’il al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, n.d., ??.)

It is amazing how ‘A’ishah, the second wife of Muhammad, reports about Fatimah. The two must have enjoyed a cordial relationship unlike the popular stereotype that stepmothers and stepdaughters do not get along.

Muhammad’s Love for Fatimah

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) reportedly said,

(فَاطِمَةُ بَضْعَةٌ مِنِّي فَمَنْ أَغْضَبَهَا فَقَدْ أَغْضَبَنِي)

“Fatimah is part of me; whoever displeases her has earned my displeasure.” (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 3714.)

Alternatively, he may have said,

(فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ بَضْعَةٌ مِنِّي يُرِينِي مَا أَرَابَهَا وَيُؤْذِنِي مَا آذَاهَا)

“She is part of me, so what bothers her bothers me, and what hurts her hurts me as well.” (Ibid, 5230.)

Fatimah, Leader of the Women of Paradise

Fatimah lived near to her father’s residence, and visited him quite often. A few days before Muhammad’s death, she visited him when he was with ‘A’ishah. He welcomed his darling daughter. She sat next to him. At some point, he whispered something to her and she began to sob. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) then whispered something to her again, and she was delighted. ‘A’ishah witnessed this. She was puzzled by Fatimah sobbing and smiling at the same time. She asked her what Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said. Fatimah said she would not reveal her father’s secret.

After a few days, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) passed away. Fatimah and ‘A’ishah were together one day when the latter asked the former what made her cry and laugh at the same time on the particular day. Fatimah was now willing to share with ‘A’ishah what Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said to her. So she told her that first he first said he was going to die soon, which grieved her. He then told her that she would be the first in the family to join him and that she would be the leader of the women of paradise, and this pleased her. (Ibid., 6286.)

‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbas’s report confirms ‘A’ishah’s account. He reported that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) identified four women as the highest among the women of paradise – Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) Bint Khuwaylid, Fatimah Bint Muhammad, Asiyah (the wife of Pharoah), and Maryam Bint ‘Imran (the mother of ‘Isa). (Ibn Hanbal, al-Musnad, 1:293.)

‘A’ishah is moreover reported to have said to a senior Muslim of the second generation that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) loved Fatimah the most among women and Abu Bakr the most among men. (Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, 3:157.)

Fatimah’s Demise

Fatimah was 29 years old when Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) died. She was immensely grieved by the loss of her father. As he had predicted, Fatimah died soon – 6 months, to be precise – after him. (Ibn Sa’d, al-Tabaqat, 8:28.)

Before Fatimah died, she often expressed concern about her privacy during her funeral services. She did not want men to see her wrapped in the burial cloths. She reportedly talked to Asma’ Bint ‘Umays about this. Asma’ was the wife of Ja’far Ibn Abi Talib, ‘Ali’s brother. She was close to Fatimah. When she shared her concern with Asma’, the latter told the former that the Abyssinians covered a dead woman’s body in the funeral procession with a frame of palm fronds and a sheet spread over it. Fatimah liked the idea. She immediately got some palm fronds, made a frame out of them, and spread a sheet on top – essentially preparing for her own funeral while she was still alive. (Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, 3:163; Ibn Sa’d, al-Tabaqat, 8:28.)

Fatimah expressed her desire to be buried at night for the sake of privacy. She also said she wanted to be bathed by Asma’ and her husband ‘Ali after she died. When she died in Ramadan 11AH, Asma’, ‘Ali, and Umm Rafi’ Salma bathed her body as per her instructions. (Ibn Kathir, al-Sirah, 8:267.)

It is unclear who led the funeral prayers for Fatimah. Any one of 'Abbas Ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, and Abu Bakr may have led the prayers.

Hasan Ibn ‘Ali

The first son of Fatimah and ‘Ali was born in Madinah on 15th Ramadan 3AH (1st April 625CE). His birth was a source of pleasure for Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) as well as other members of the community. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) called adhan (Adhan is the call to daily Islamic prayers.) in the baby’s ear, and gave him his first feed – a date that he himself chewed first. (Abu Bakr Ahmad Ibn al-Husayn al-Bayhaqi, Shu’ab al-Iman, n.d., 6:390; Abu Da’ud, al-Sunan, 5105.)

‘Ali named the baby Harb, but Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) changed his name to Hasan. (Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, 3:180.) On the seventh day following his birth, an ‘aqiqah (‘Aqiqah is the custom of sacrificing an animal to treat family, friends, and the needy on the occasion of childbirth.) party was thrown, Hasan’s head was shaved, and an amount of silver weighing as much as the shaved hair was donated. (Al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami’, 1519.)

Hasan was the sweetheart of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He enjoyed the company of his grandfather and parents in the first few years of life.

Hasan’s Resemblance to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

Hasan is believed to have closely resembled Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Once when he was in Fatimah’s lap she said, “Look at him! He does not resemble his father (‘Ali) as much as he resembles the Messenger of God (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).” (Abu al-Fida’ Isma’il Ibn ‘Umar Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, n.d., 8:35.)

Abu Bakr said something similar after the death of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). One day, Abu Bakr came out of the Messenger’s mosque after leading the late afternoon prayer. ‘Ali accompanied him. The two saw Hasan playing with other kids. Abu Bakr lifted him up on his shoulders, and said, “Look at him! This boy resembles the Messenger of God so much, but not his father.” ‘Ali smiled at this. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 3542.)

Hasan was the recipient of Muhammad’s love and attention. ‘A’ishah reported that he once fanned out his mantle to cover ‘Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husayn, then said, “O Allah, they are my family! Rid them of harm and render them pure.” (Muslim, al-Sahih, 2424.)

Hasan and Husayn: Leaders of the Youth in Paradise

Abu Sa’id al-Khudri, ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar, and Hudhayfah Ibn Yaman have reported that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

(الْحَسَنُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ سَيِّدَا شَبَابِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ، وَأَبُوهُمَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُمَا)

“Hasan and Husayn are the chief youths among the people of paradise, and their father is even better.” (Ibn Majah, al-Sunan, 118.)

Likewise, ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbas reported that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was once carrying Hasan on his shoulders when someone said, “Young man, the one you are riding is great!” Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, “The rider is great too.” (Al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami’, 3784.)

Beloved Grandson of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)

It is evident from biographical accounts that Hasan was very dear to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). On one occasion, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was prostrating when young Hasan climbed on his back. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) remained in that position until Hasan climbed down by himself.

It is also reported that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

(إِنَّهُ رِيْحَانَتِي مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّ ابْنِي هَذَا سَيِّدٌ
وَعَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يُصْلِحَ بِهِ بَيْنَ فِئَتَيْنِ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ)

“He is [like] fragrance for me in this world. This son of mine is a leader [of the community]. It is likely that God will cause two factions of Muslims to reconcile because of him.” (Ibn Hanbal, al-Musnad, 5:51.)

In another report, it is narrated that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was once delivering the Friday sermon when he saw young Hasan and Husayn wobbling towards him. He came down from the pulpit, picked up the two children, then returned to the pulpit, and said, “God is indeed right when He says,

﴿أَنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ﴾

‘Verily your worldly goods and your children are a trial;’ (Qur’an 64:15)

I could not resist when I saw them coming with an unsteady gait [that a child has].” (Al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami’, 3774.)

Usamah Ibn Zayd was another darling of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He reported that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would seat him on one of his thighs and Hasan on the other. He would then say, “O Allah, love the two, for I love them.” (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 3735 and 6003.)

Likewise, Abu Hurayrah reported that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) came across a group of believers. Hasan and Husayn accompanied him – one of them in one arm and the other in the other arm. He kissed them in turn. One of the men said, “O Messenger of God, you truly love them.” Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) replied, “Whoever loved them loved me, and whoever hated them hated me.” (Ibn Hanbal, al-Musnad, 2:440.)

Hasan was fortunate to have been taught by Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) used to visit Fatimah often. Whenever he visited her, he would ask where Hasan was. When he saw him, he would hug and kiss him, and invoke God’s blessings on him. (Ibid., 2:532.)

Biographers and historians of the early Islamic community have noted numerous instances when Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed for Hasan and/or taught him something.

Thus, Hasan himself reported that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) taught him the invocation (qunūt) for witr [Witr prayers are the prayers characterized by odd number of

raka'at (pl. of raka'ah – a prescribed set of invocations in prescribed positions) offered between the 'isha' (night) prayers and the fajr (dawn) prayers.] prayers. (Abu Da'ud, al-Sunan, 1427.)

(اللَّهُمَّ! اهْدِنِي فِيمَنْ هَدَيْتَ وَعَافِنِي فِيمَنْ عَافَيْتَ.....)

Hasan in the Eyes of His Father

History has known many sons who respected their fathers. Hasan was distinct in that his father respected him too. One day, his father 'Ali wanted to hear him speak to an audience, but Hasan said he was shy to speak in his father's presence. 'Ali got up and found a place to sit where Hasan could not see him. Hasan began to address the audience and delivered an awesome speech. 'Ali was impressed with his son's speech. When the two met, 'Ali said to Hasan,

﴿ ذُرِّيَّةٌ بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴾

"They were offspring one of the other; and God hears and knows everything." (Qur'an 3:34)

By referring to this ayah, 'Ali expressed satisfaction over his son's progress. (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, 8:38.)

Hasan in the Pages of History

Hasan was only 7 or 8 years old when Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) passed away. Within another six months, his mother Fatimah also died.

He was still very young when Abu Bakr led the community. Abu Bakr instructed the community to honor the Muhammad's family. His attitude towards Hasan is moreover known from reports attributed to him.

During his time, 'Umar also treated the House of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) well. 'Umar's time marked the beginning of affluence for the Muslim community. The spoils of military campaigns enriched the Muslim state. 'Umar made use of the revenues to strengthen the state treasury and fixed regular stipends for Muslim subjects of the state. Stipends were highest for the warriors of Badr. Even though Hasan and Husayn were not even born at the time of the Battle of Badr, they were given the same stipend as those who fought in Badr, that is, five thousand Dirhams annually. (Ibid.) It was the same amount as that fixed for 'Umar himself and 'Ali. The register in which stipends were listed began with the name of Muhammad's uncle 'Abbas Ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, followed by 'Ali and Hasan. Such was 'Umar's treatment of the House of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

Hasan was a youth in 'Uthman's time. He too treated Hasan as well as all other members of Muhammad's household with utmost respect and love. It was during 'Uthman's time that Hasan participated in a battle for the first time. Historians note that he participated in the campaign to Tabaristan that was led by Sa'id Ibn 'As in 30AH. (Ibid.)

The assassination of 'Uthman is a dark chapter in the history of Islam. When his house was besieged by the rebels, 'Ali appointed Hasan and Husayn to guard 'Uthman's residence. (Ibid.) They bravely protected 'Uthman and were injured while resisting the rebels. The rebels could not break into 'Uthman's house from the door that was guarded by Hasan and Husayn. So they jumped over a wall and killed 'Uthman while he was reciting the Qur'an.

'Ali took charge of the Muslim's affairs after 'Uthman was assassinated. 'Ali's time as caliph was marked by several tragic events. Misgivings between different parties among Muslims resulted in a tripartite civil war during which a large number of Muslims were killed. Unity among Muslims was dealt a major blow. Hasan fought shoulder to shoulder with his father in the battles of Camel and Siffin. Being hesitant to fight fellow Muslims, his participation was minimal though.

Hasan Sworn in as Caliph

In Ramadan 40AH, 'Ali was assassinated by 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Muljam, one of the khawarij. (Khawarij is the name given to a faction within the early Muslim community that revolted against and assassinated 'Uthman for perceived iniquities on his part, and subsequently revolted against and assassinated 'Ali for attempting to reconcile with Mu'awiyah.) After 'Ali's assassination, Hasan was sworn in as caliph. His caliphate was not universally recognized however. Only four months after he was sworn in as caliph, he took supporters from Iraq to fight Mu'awiyah, who enjoyed support in as-Sham. The two sides faced each other somewhere between Tigris and Euphrates. It is believed that the city of Baghdad was later established at the same site.

Since Hasan was a peace-loving kind-hearted person, who realized that the two sides would surrender until they were completely destroyed and that in-fighting was invariably harmful to the community, he readily accepted the other party's peace offer. The details of this peace deal are available in historical works and Hadith.

Bukhari, for example, has dedicated a section to this peace deal in the Book of Reconciliation (Kitab al-Sulh) of his voluminous collection of Hadith.

He reports that the huge army of Hasan marched towards the forces of Mu'awiyah. 'Amr Ibn al-'As, who was a commander in Mu'awiyah's army, expressed concern to Mu'awiyah that the hosts accompanying Hasan would not turn their backs until they killed the opponents. Mu'awiyah responded by expressing concern over the number of women who would be widowed and children who would be orphaned if the two sides fought. Thus, he sent 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Samrah and 'Abdullah Ibn 'Amir with a proposal for peace to Hasan. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 2704.)

The two sides sat down to decide the terms of the treaty. Following are some of the terms of the peace deal:

That everyone shall be guaranteed security of life.

That no Iraqi will be detained out of enmity.

That the tax collected from Ahwaz will be reserved for Hasan; who will be paid two hundred thousand Dirhams annually.

That Banu Hashim will be given priority over Banu Umayyah in stipends and assistance.

Mu'awiyah abided by these terms. The wisdom on the part of the leadership from both sides bore fruit in the form of unity among Muslims and political stability. (Shams al-Din Abu 'Abdillah Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'*, n.d., 3:264; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, 7:617.) By playing a wise role in reconciling with Mu'awiyah, Hasan lived up to Muhammad's prediction that his grandson was going to facilitate reconciliation between two parties among Muslims. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 2704.) Fellow Muslims were very happy with Hasan's wisdom, and they held him in high esteem. The year was declared as 'am al-jama'ah – the year of reconciliation and unity among Muslims. (Fath al-Bari, n.d., 13:80.)

Hasan's Routine

Hasan's days and nights were spent in remembrance of God. He was known to help people in times of difficulty. Mu'awiyah once inquired from a resident of Madinah about Hasan's routine. The person told him that he stayed in the mosque remembering God after fajr (dawn) prayers until it was sunrise, at which time he would offer shuruq (sunrise) prayers. He would then be surrounded by tribal elders for some time. Afterwards he would visit the wives of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Sometimes, he would also take them gifts. After visiting them, Hasan would return home. (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, 8:38.)

The State of Hasan's Taqwa and Humility

Once Hasan saw a person who expressed excessive love and praise for the family of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). He admonished him for his excess, and advised him to love the House of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) for the sake of God – to love them when they obeyed God, and to detest them when they disobeyed God. This person replied, "Why should you worry? After all you are the offspring of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his family!" Hasan replied, "If association with Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) were to avail anything in the absence of obedience to God, it would have benefited our ancestors and other family members of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) who persisted in disbelief. By God, I fear God may punish the disobedient among us twice as much, for we are the offspring of the Messenger. Likewise, I hope God would doubly reward those among us who obeyed Him. Fear God with respect to us, and say of us only that which is true. This is good for you as well as pleasing for us." (Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabaqat, 5:319 – 320.)

Hasan's Wisdom

Abu Hisham al-Qannad was a trader, who bought goods in as-Sham and sold them in Madinah. He reported that Hasan used to argue a lot with him concerning the prices of the merchandise. He bought things after much bargaining, but then gave them away to people for free. Abu Hisham found it very surprising – if Hasan so desperately wanted to save money as he bargained, why would he give away purchased goods to others? He expressed his astonishment to Hasan, who memorably replied, "A believer should not be gullible." (Abu Bakr Ahmad Ibn 'Ali al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Madinat al-Salam "Baghdad", n.d., 1405.)

How wise and concerned Hasan was! Nowadays, we see rulers making reckless payments of public money to cheats, but not spending enough to improve the conditions of their subjects. The grandson of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), on the other hand, exercised caution in making payments to wealthy traders, but spent generously out of his own pocket to alleviate the problems faced by the poor and the needy.

Hasan's Generosity

Hasan was extremely generous. After all, he was raised under the tutelage of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), who was very generous himself. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) never feared penury while spending on others. This part of Hasan's character has been recorded widely in works of history and biographies.

Muhammad Ibn Sirin, for example, notes that Hasan once gave one hundred thousand Dirhams to someone in one go. On another occasion, he heard someone praying to God for ten thousand Dirhams. Hasan went straight to his home, and asked his servant to deliver ten thousand Dirhams to this person.

On yet another occasion, he was passing by an orchard when he saw a Black slave holding a piece of bread with which he fed himself and a dog at the same time. Hasan asked him why he did that. The

slave said he could not eat alone and leave the dog hungry. Hasan asked him who his master was and who owned the orchard. The slave named Aban Ibn 'Uthman as his master. Hasan told him to stay there until he returned. After a while, Hasan came back and told the man that he had acquired him and the orchard from his master. The slave then asked Hasan what he could do for him. Hasan replied, "I set you free for the sake of God, and this orchard is yours too." The slave, now free, was so delighted that he said, "For the sake of God in whose name you have given me this orchard as a gift, I reserve it for the needy." (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, 8:39.)

On at least three occasions in Hasan's life, he divided his wealth into two equal halves and donated one half. Mu'awiyah once sent him one hundred thousand Dirhams, which he immediately distributed among the people who accompanied him on that occasion. Each of them got ten thousand Dirhams. On a different occasion, Hasan learned that Usamah Ibn Zayd was ill. He went to visit him and found out that he was very sad. Upon inquiry, Usamah revealed that he owed someone sixty thousand Dirhams, and was not able to repay the loan. Hasan told Usamah that he would pay off the loan for him. Usamah was delighted to hear this. ('Ali Muhammad al-Sallabi, Sirat Amir al-Mu'minin al-Hasan Ibn 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, n.d., 297.)

Sayings of Hasan

Numerous pearls of wisdom have been attributed to Hasan. He said ten things were indicators of a man's sublime character: (1) being truthful under all circumstances, (2) persisting on the battlefield, (3) assisting one who [is in need and] asks for help, (4) treating people in a good manner, (5) reciprocating good treatment offered by others, (6) connecting with near and dear ones, (7) treating neighbors well, (8) recognizing what is due to someone, (9) being hospitable, and (10) modesty, which he thought was the highest of these attributes. (Al-Bayhaqi, Shu'ab al-Iman, 10:162.) Hasan thought that bad behavior was the worst of a man's problems.

Hasan's Prudence and Wit

Hasan was known for his intelligence and quick wit. One day, he dressed and combed his hair after taking a bath, and went out. On the way, he came across a Jew in tatters, irritated by the heat of the sun. He said to Hasan that his grandfather (the Messenger) said,

(الدُّنْيَا سِجْنُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَجَنَّةُ الْكَافِرِ)

"This world is a prison for a believer and paradise for an unbeliever."

He then went on to express his concern that this did not seem to be the case: Hasan wore good dresses, and enjoyed ease and abundance as if this world was a paradise for him; on the other hand, he (the Jewish person) was poor and desperate as if this world was a hell.

Hasan quickly replied that the world was indeed a prison for a believer considering that so many more of God's favors awaited him in paradise of the afterlife; and it was indeed paradise for an unbeliever considering that so much more of God's wrath awaited him in hellfire of the afterlife. (Muhammad Rashid Rida, al-Hasan wa al-Husayn, n.d., 32 – 33.)

Husayn Ibn ‘Ali

The second son of Fatimah and ‘Ali was born in Madinah on the 3rd day of Sha‘ban 4AH. He was one year younger than his elder brother Hasan. ‘Ali wanted to name him Harb, but Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) named him Husayn. (Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, 3:180.) Like Hasan’s arrival, the birth of Husayn was a source of pleasure and an occasion of celebration for the entire family. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said adhan to the baby, and gave him a date – that he chewed first – as the first feed. (Al-Bayhaqi, Shu‘ab al-Iman, 6:390; Abu Da‘ud, al-Sunan, 5105.) On the seventh day following the birth of Husayn, the baby’s head was shaved, an amount of silver equal to its weight was given in charity, and an aqiqah party was held.

Like Hasan, Husayn is also reported to have closely resembled Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). (Al-Dhahabi, Siyar A‘lam al-Nubala’, 3:250.)

The Upbringing of the Hasanayn

The two boys were a source of comfort to their grandfather, the Messenger of God (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Besides Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), there were a lot of other people in Madinah who loved them dearly, including their aunts and the wives of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). In addition to other kin, the migrant and the native members of the Muslim community in Madinah were very fond of them.

Hasan and Husayn were fortunate to have been trained and nurtured by the Messenger of God (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) himself. They were never fed by other than permissible means. Once, there was a pile of dates that had been donated as charity at Muhammad’s mosque. The young Hasan and Husayn started to play with the dates, and one of them put a date in his mouth. When the Messenger of God (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) saw this, he immediately removed the date from his mouth, telling him that it was not permissible for the family of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to consume charity. (Al-Bukhari, al-Sahih, 1485 and 1491.) This incident demonstrates the superior training that the esteemed Hasanayn received.

Their household valued courtesy and love for the poor and the destitute. Even though they were great people, they were not the least bit arrogant; their mother was the great lady Fatimah who trained them in such a manner that they developed very balanced personalities.

Husayn once passed by a group of indigent people who were sitting on the ground eating. When they saw the grandson of the Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), they humbly invited him to join them. Husayn dismounted from his carriage, squatted on the ground with them, and said, “Allah does not like those who are arrogant.” When they finished eating, he said to them, “I just accepted your invitation; would you now accept my invitation?” They felt it an honor, and replied in one voice, “Yes, we accept your invitation.” Husayn brought them along to his place, and memorably said to his wife Rubab, “Bring me all [our] savings,” and he then distributed this among the group. (Ibn ‘Asakir, Tarikh Dimashq, 14:181.)

How could a Muslim not adore these great personalities? Understandably, Husayn and all other members of the House of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) have held a high status in the eyes of Muslims. There is no doubt that this household made countless sacrifices for Islam. They were the first to embrace Muhammad’s mission, and subsequently suffered extreme atrocities for the sake of Islam. The Rightly-guided Caliphs were eminently respectful and accommodating towards the family of the Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and those who were the earliest to embrace Islam.

Priorities in ‘Umar’s Court

During the time when ‘Umar was caliph, Suhayl Ibn ‘Amr stood at ‘Umar’s door along with newly converted chiefs of Quraysh, waiting to be admitted to meet him. In the meanwhile, Suhayb al-Rumi, Bilal Ibn Rabah, and other former slaves who had participated in the Battle of Badr also dropped by to meet ‘Umar. When ‘Umar came out, he ushered in Bilal and his companions to meet him.

The leaders of Quraysh were enraged that a bunch of former slaves were able to get an immediate meeting while the chiefs had to wait. While they were discussing this with each another, Suhayl Ibn ‘Amr, who was wise and eloquent, addressed them,

“O [my] people! By God, I have noticed anger and resentment on your faces; but you should only be angry and upset with yourselves, not with ‘Umar Ibn Khattab. When [our] nation received the call to truth, you received it too; these defenseless people immediately responded to the call, while you deferred, and are today behind them. You should be sorry more for missing out on the blessing of iman (Iman is the Qur’anic word for belief in Allah, angels, revealed books, messengers, and the Day of Judgment; it is often represented in English language as “faith”. However, the Qur’anic – Arabic notion of iman is different from the Christian – English concept of faith in many ways. Thus, faith may not be used to represent iman.) that enables these poor people to leave you behind, than for not being able to go in this door before them.”

He went on to say,

“O people! You are aware of what advantage these poor people have over you that enabled them to go ahead of you. By God, it is only possible for you to come close to their degree of excellence if you commit strongly to jihad (Jihad generally means struggle in the path of God; the word may also refer specifically to fighting a war to uphold justice.) in the way of Allah, and hope that Allah blesses you with martyrdom [so that you, too, may deserve high regard].”

Suhayl Ibn ‘Amr then brushed his clothes and walked away. (Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr al-Qurtubi, al-Isti’ab fi Ma’rifat al-Ashab, 2:221.)

‘Umar favored Bilal and poor people like him over the leaders of the Quraysh because of their early association with Islam. It was because the real standard of esteem in Islam is the degree to which one is obedient to Allah – worldly pomp and show, and wealth are not the bases of respect and nobility.

‘Umar’s Love for the Hasanayn

‘Umar would treat Hasanayn with great love, affection and respect. When he allocated stipends for those who had participated in the Battle of Badr, he also assigned a stipend of five thousand Dirhams each for Hasan and Husayn, even though they were not even born at the time of that battle. (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, 8:38.)

‘Umar once said to Husayn,

“Why don’t you come pay me a visit sometime, son?”

Thus, Husayn went to see him one day. He reports that ‘Umar was busy talking to Mu’awiyah regarding some important matters when he visited him. ‘Umar’s own son, ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar, was waiting because he had not been granted permission to meet him yet. Husayn narrates that he thought that if ‘Abdullah did not get permission, how could he be given permission? So he returned home. When he met ‘Umar some time later, the latter asked why the former did not come to visit him. Husayn replied,

"I came [to visit you], but you were busy with Mu'awiyah at the time. When I saw your son 'Abdullah waiting at the door, I decided to return."

When 'Umar heard this, he said,

"You deserve to meet me more than my son 'Abdullah does."

He then put his hand on his head and said,

"The crown of honor that we wear is a blessing from Allah, and a blessing due to the Messenger's family." (Ibn 'Asakir, Tarikh Dimashq, 14:174.)

Such was the amount of love that the Rightly-guided Caliphs reserved for the House of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Members of the Messenger's family are worthy of respect and love, for the Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) himself advised, "I remind you [to fear] God as regards the rights of my family members." (Muslim, al-Sahih, 2408.)

A Word of Caution

Muslims should however refrain from committing excesses in this regard. Subscribers to the Oneness of God cannot deify members of Muhammad's family. It is similarly not befitting that the grandsons of the Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) are glorified above the Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) himself. Excessive reverence is as bad as disrespect for the House of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), for both are undue extremes.

The status of the grandchildren of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and other members of his family is moreover not in need of unauthentic fables. Unauthentic accounts hardly add to the respect and love that is bestowed on them by authentic accounts. After all, Hasan and Husayn, and their mother, are the respective leaders of the youth and the women in paradise.

Muhsin Ibn 'Ali

Three or four years after Fatimah got married to 'Ali, she gave birth to her third son, who may have been named Harb by 'Ali, but Muhsin by Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Muhsin died early in childhood. He is rarely discussed in historical and biographical works. (Ibn al-Athir, *Asad al-Ghabah*, 4:54.)

Zaynab Bint ‘Ali

Fatimah gave birth to a baby girl, who was named Zaynab, in 5AH. Like her brothers, Zaynab received much love and attention from Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Even though she was pampered by her mother and grandfather, she was brought up as a brave and truthful young woman. Her life experiences helped her grow in maturity. She lost her mother and grandfather when she was still very young.

After Fatimah’s death, Umamah Bint Abi al-‘As, Muhammad’s granddaughter and Zaynab’s daughter, was married to ‘Ali. Umamah Bint Abi al-‘As and Zaynab Bint ‘Ali got along very well.

Zaynab’s Marriage

‘Ali married his daughter Zaynab to his nephew ‘Abdullah Ibn Ja’far. After she got married, she gave birth to four sons – ‘Ali, ‘Awn, ‘Abbas, Muhammad – and a daughter who was named Umm Kulthum after her aunt.

Zaynab’s Day-to-Day Life

Zaynab was an intelligent and wise woman. She was highly observant of the compulsory prayers and fasting. She regularly offered tahajjud prayers at night, and did not miss them even when the tragedy of Karbala’ occurred. God blessed her with many praiseworthy attributes. She was remarkably generous and marvelously eloquent. She accompanied her brother Husayn to the battlefield of Karbala’, where she witnessed the tragedy firsthand, but bore it patiently.

Umm Kulthum Bint ‘Ali

In 6AH, Fatimah gave birth to another baby girl, who was named Umm Kulthum. The sweetheart of ‘Ali and sister of the Hasanayn received much love from Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), her grandfather. She witnessed the loss of her mother when she was very young, which left her extremely sad.

However, after the death of Fatimah, ‘Ali married Umamah Bint Abi al-‘As. Umamah’s addition to the family was a good development. She took good care of young Zaynab and Umm Kulthum, and brought life back to the household.

Umm Kulthum’s Marriage with ‘Umar

Umm Kulthum was 11 years old, when ‘Umar Ibn Khattab proposed to marry her. ‘Ali replied that he thought he would marry his daughters to his nephews, the sons of Ja’far Ibn Abi Talib. ‘Umar nonetheless insisted on his proposal and expressed his desire to be related to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his family in still another way; he said he had heard the Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) saying that all kinds of relationships shall cease to exist on the Day of Judgment except those with Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). ‘Ali agreed to marry Umm Kulthum to ‘Umar. ‘Umar paid forty thousand Dirhams as mahr to Umm Kulthum.

After marriage, ‘Umar invited the migrant members of Muslim community. Fellow Muslims congratulated him and inquired whom he had married. He replied that he had married Umm Kulthum, the daughter of ‘Ali; and went on to narrate to them what he had heard from the Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) – that all relationships will cease to exist on the Day of Judgment except those with Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). (Al-Albani, Sahih, al-Jami’, 4564: al-Hakim, al-Mustadrik, 3:153.)

Umm Kulthum’s Relationship with ‘Umar

Umm Kulthum and ‘Umar got along well. One day, when ‘Umar called Umm Kulthum, he found that she was weeping. She told him that the Jew Ka’b Ibn Ahbar (Ka’b Ibn Ahbar is believed to have embraced Islam during the caliphate of ‘Umar.) said ‘Umar was at one of the gates of hellfire. ‘Umar said to her that it was alright if that was what God willed, but that he hoped to be better off.

‘Umar summoned Ka’b and asked him what he had said about him. Ka’b swore by God and said, “By the One in whose hand is my life, we see you at one of the gates of hellfire, and you try to protect them from hellfire; after you, a lot more people will be admitted to hellfire.” (Ibn Sa’d, al-Tabaqat, 3:332.)

Umm Kulthum’s Offspring

Some time after her marriage, Umm Kulthum gave birth to a son who was named Zayd, and a daughter who was named Ruqayyah.

Umm Kulthum’s Marriages After ‘Umar

After the assassination of ‘Umar Ibn Khattab, ‘Ali married Umm Kulthum to her cousin ‘Awn Ibn Ja’far. After ‘Awn died, she got married to his brother Muhammad Ibn Ja’far. After Muhammad died, she married ‘Abdullah Ibn Ja’far. She died while she was married to ‘Abdullah. (Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, al-Isabah, 8:293.)

The Demise of Umm Kulthum Bint ‘Ali

One night, Umm Kulthum’s son Zayd was trying to broker a peace deal among the Banu ‘Adi. He was attacked in the dark by someone who was not happy with what he was trying to achieve. Zayd could not survive the injuries and died. When his mother Umm Kulthum learned about his demise, she could not bear the news and died after falling unconsciousness for a short while.

Umm Kulthum’s Funeral Services

Upon Hasan’s request, ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar led the funeral prayers for Zayd Ibn ‘Umar and Umm Kulthum Bint ‘Ali, both of whom were buried at the same time. May God be pleased with them! (Ibid.)

