

Khadijah

The Prophet's Most Beloved Wife

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Abstract:

The following essay is a short biography of Khadijah (p.b.u.h.) – the great and honorable wife of the holy prophet Muhammad – and her merits; amongst her merits, the following can be outlined here: being the first Muslim lady to embrace Islam, having in all difficulties of Be'sat and after it, her fondness and esteem toward Ali (p.b.u.h.) and accepting his leadership after the holy Prophet

Keyword:

Khadijah

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*Kh*adijah (p.b.u.h.) the daughter of Khuwaylad Ibn Asad Ibn Abd al-Azi Ibn Qusay Qarashi Asadi, was the wife of the prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and the mother of his children. A descendant of Abd Manaf, her mother was Fatima, the daughter of Zai'dah Ibn al-Asam, and her grandmother was Halah the daughter of Abd Manaf.

Khadijah was a merchant who was both honorable and wealthy and hired men to trade with her money. The Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) uncles wanted to help him get married, so they went to Khadijah and asked her to give Muhammad some money to do business with; In this way, he would have enough money to get married.

After Khadijah became aware of his good characteristics, she sent him on a business trip to Damascus. During this trip, Maysarah (Khadijah's servant) witnessed the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) miracles and generosity. He also heard from a priest that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is a prophet. On his return, Maysarah reported to Khadijah about all that he had heard and Khadijah's became fonder of Muhammad; and, finally, she suggested that they be married.¹

Khadijah said to Muhammad Mustafa, "Because of your family ties with me, your nobility, honor, high morals, truthfulness, and trustworthiness among your people, I am in favor of marrying you."

¹ For more information about the Prophet's (S) asking for Khadijah's hand in marriage and Khuwaylad's (the father of Khadijah) answer, refer to history books or the book *Riahin ash-Sharia'h*: vol. 2 or *Bihar al-Anwar*: vol. 16.

And so, Khadijah and the prophet Muhammad were married. Her dowry was set at 12 Uqiyah¹, which she herself agreed to pay. Khadijah was the first woman to embrace Islam. She was a continuous supporter of her husband -the Messenger of God- spiritually and with her wealth in the cause of the religion of God.

There are various reports about the children of Khadijah and the Prophet. Ibn Abdulbar has written, “Most genealogists have asserted that they had four daughters and two sons, others, such as Ibn Ishaq, have mentioned four daughters and four sons.”²

Saduq, based on documents which Abu Basir narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) states, “Qasim, Tahir (who is also known as Abdullah), Umm Kulthum, Ruqayah, Zaynab, and Fatima were born to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) from Khadijah.”³ Kulayni reports that all of these children were born before the beginning of Muhammad’s (p.b.u.h.) prophethood, except for Fatima (p.b.u.h.).⁴

Ali Ibn Abdula’ziz Jurjani says, “The Messenger of God’s children were: Qasim, Zaynab, Umm Kulthum, Fatima, Ruqayah, and Abdullah. Tayib and Tahir were the nicknames of Abdullah. This is the truth, and other reports are erroneous.” Therefore, what is closer to the truth is that their children were Qasim, Zaynab, Umm Kulthum, Fatima, Ruqayah, and Abdullah. Abdullah was born after the advent of Islam and was known as Tayib or Tahir. All the boys died while infants,

¹ A Unit of weight used to measure silver and gold.

² al-Istia’ab: vol. 4, p. 1819; Al-Kamil Fi Tarikh: vol. 2, p. 175

³ Al-Khisal vol. 2, p. 404 of chapter seven

⁴ Kafi, vol. 1, p. 439

but the girls survived and embraced Islam. They all migrated to Medina with the Messenger of God.¹ Those who have reported the number of children of the Messenger of God to be eight thought that Tayib and Tahir were the names of the other children of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.).

Her Merits

*K*hadijah was born in a family of honor, leadership, and greatness. She was raised with good manners, thoughtfulness, wisdom, and chastity to such an extent that her tribe called her Tahirah. Ibn Sa'd gives two reports based on two sources that, "Khadijah was the first person amongst women to become Muslim."² Ibn Abdulbar says, based on his documents, from Qutadah that, "The first person amongst women to believe in God and His Messenger was Khadijah." Ibn Abdulbar reports based on his documents from the father of Abi Rifa' that, "The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) prayed³ on a Monday, Maba'th (the day he was raised to Prophethood); and, Khadijah prayed at the end of that day."⁴ Suduq reports based on his documents from Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) that he said,

¹ Usod al-Ghabah vol. 5, p. 434; Bihar al-Anwar: vol. 22, p. 151-152; Tanqih al-Maqal: vol. 3, p. 77, from the chapter on women.

² At-Tabaqat al-Kubra: vol. 8, p. 17; al-Istia'ab: vol. 4, p. 1821, and vol. 4, p. 1820

³ Daily Prayers.

⁴ al-Istia'ab: vol. 2, p. 419, no. 13

“The Messenger of God married fifteen¹ women; and, Khadijah, the daughter of Khuwaylad, was the best of them.²

Khadijah was the first wife of the Prophet. Because of her personality, characteristics, perfection, greatness, and the respect he had towards her, the Messenger of God married no one else while she was alive.³ The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) loved Khadijah, honored her, praised her, knew her as the best woman in the world and recalled her greatness and position.

Khadijah was a patient, forbearing, persevering, respectable believer. She endured the utmost sufferings for the cause of God and His Messenger. With all the wealth and comfort that she possessed, she accepted to live three years in Mecca’s Sha’b Valley during the economic blockade of the Muslims for the satisfaction of God and the Prophet. She spent all her wealth to support Islam and the Muslims.

The Quraysh used all their strength against the Messenger of God to stop him from declaring Islam. They bothered and troubled the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and his followers. He suffered much from these difficulties and troubles, but there was always someone beside him to reduce this burden and sadness, to share his sorrows, bring him comfort, and continuously help him. This person was Khadijah, his faithful and precious wife, who was a helper and the partner of the Messenger of God. It is enough for her as a tribute that she was the mother of Fatima al-Zahra (p.b.u.h.) .

¹ It should be noted that the Messenger of God (S) was not married to these 15 women at the same time.

² Al-Khisal: vol. 2, p. 419, chapter nine.

³ Tarikh Tabari: vol. 2, p. 81

Regarding Khadijah's fondness and affection towards Ali (p.b.u.h.), Majlisi states, "Ali was born after the marriage of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and Khadijah. The Messenger of God spoke with Khadijah (p.b.u.h.) about friendship and affection for Ali (p.b.u.h.). Khadijah (p.b.u.h.) loved Ali very much and sent clothes, ornaments, and other necessities for him by her servants. People said, 'This (Ali) is the brother of Muhammad, the dearest person to him, and the light of Khadijah's eyes. Well-being has come to him from every direction.' Khadijah's mercy and kindness flowed towards the house of Abu Talib every day and night, morning and afternoon."¹

Another merit of Khadijah is that she accepted the leadership of Ali just after embracing Islam. Imam al-Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said: "(After Khadijah declared Islam) the Messenger of God (p.b.u.h.) said to her: Oh Khadijah, here is Ali, your guardian and the guardian of the believers and their leader after me. She said: 'Oh messenger of Allah, What you say is true and I pledge allegiance to him on what you mentioned'"².

Ikramah has quoted Ibn Abbas as saying, "The Messenger of God (p.b.u.h.) drew four lines on the ground and said, 'Do you know what these lines are?' They said, 'God and His Messenger know better.' He said, 'the best women in Heaven are four: Khadijah Bint Khuwaylad, Fatima Bint Muhammad, Maryam Bint Imran, and Asiyah Bint Muzahim (wife of the Pharaoh)."³

¹ Bihar al-Anwar: vol. 35, p. 43

² Bihar al-Anwar: vol. 18, p. 233

³ Usod al-Ghabah: vol. 5, p. 437; al-Istia'ab: vol. 4, p. 1821

Ibn Athir based on his documents quotes Anas from the Messenger of God as saying, “Maryam, Asiyah, Khadijah, and Fatima are the best women of the worlds.” Both Shi’a and Sunni have related similar traditions with similar wordings from different chains of narrators.¹ For example, “Khadijah, Fatima, Maryam, and Asiyah are the four best women of heaven”, “Maryam, Asiyah, Khadijah, and Fatima are the best women of the worlds”, “The four foremost women of heaven are: Khadijah, Fatima, Maryam, and Asiyah”, and “The top women of the worlds are: Fatima, Khadijah, Maryam, and Asiyah”.

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said, “Gabriel came to me and said, ‘This is Khadijah who is near you. Send salutations to her from God and me. Give her glad tidings of a house in heaven, made of jewels in which there is no clamor or difficulty.’”

Khadijah’s goodness and position were so high with the Messenger of God that even Aaishah could not avoid recalling her. Aaishah says, “The Messenger of God never went out of the house without praising and bringing Khadijah to mind. One day he recalled her. I was jealous and said, ‘Was she anything but an old woman? God has given better than her to you.’ The Prophet became angry and said, ‘No, I swear to God that he has not given to me better than her. She believed in me when people rejected me. She endorsed me when people rebuffed me. She helped me with her wealth, and from among my wives, God only gave me children through her.’”

¹ Usod al-Ghabah: vol. 5, p. 437; al-Istia’ab: vol. 4, p. 1822; Al-Khisal: p. 206 the fourth chapter; al-Mu’jam al-Kabir: vol. 23, p. 8-11, 15

Aaishah said, “I was never as jealous of any of the other wives of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) as I was of Khadijah, even though I had never seen her. This is because the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) recalled her very frequently. He would even send portions of a slaughtered lamb for Khadijah’s friends.”¹

She passed away after returning from Mecca’s Sha’b Valley in the period of the severe economic blockade. Abu Talib passed away in this same year. It was the month of Ramadan, the tenth year after the beginning of the Prophethood, and three years before migrating to Medina. There are varying reports about the year of her death. Some have reported the third year before migration. Others have said the fifth year. Others have also mentioned the fourth year. The first opinion seems to be more accurate, because everyone has said that her death was several days after the death of Abu Talib and they have all reported his death to be three years before migration.²

Umm Ayman, the Prophet’s servant, bathed Khadijah’s body for burial, and the Messenger of God buried her in Hajun. He himself placed her body in the grave.³

Khadijah’s death was a great tragedy for the Messenger of God and had other tragedies accompanying it. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was patient through all these sorrows in seeking the

¹ al-Istia’ab: vo. 4, p. 1823-1824; Asad al-Ghabah: vol. 5, p. 438; al-Mu’jam al-Kabir: vol. 23, p. 12-13

² al-Mu’jam al-Kabir: vol.22, p. 451-452; al-Aa’lam Zirikli: vol. 2, p. 302; Bihar al-Anwar: vol. 16, p. 3

³ At-Tabaqat al-Kubra: vol. 8, p. 18

pleasure of God. This year was named A'am al-Ahzan (the year of sorrows).

The followers of other branches and sects of Islam, in different periods, have all referred to her in a good way.

Ibn Abdulbar and Ibn Athir have introduced Khadijah as one of the companions of the Messenger of God. Ibn Athir has written, "She was average among the women of Quraysh as far as her family and lineage, but she was the most noble and wealthy among them."¹ Ibn Ishaq has written, "Khadijah was a righteous minister for Islam. The Messenger of God found comfort in being with her."²

Shaykh Mahallati said, "Khadijah has numerous merits over Maryam and Asiyah. Virtues such as knowledge, worship, understanding, patience, fortitude, raising her children, managing her house, spending her wealth, and caring for her husband. The opportunities which Khadijah had, those two (Maryam and Asiyah) did not have. The great Khadijah was the first woman to confirm the Prophet in his prophethood. She was the first woman to pray the group prayer with the Messenger of God in Mecca. She was the first woman who expressed her faith openly before the pagans of Mecca. She was the first woman who repelled the enemies from the Messenger of God. She was the first woman who gave all her wealth to the Messenger of God, and she was the first woman in Islam who reached perfection in her faith."³ Mamqani lists her among the women transmitters of traditions and writes, "Khadijah spent her wealth for the progress of Islam. She

¹ al-Istia'ab: vol. 4, p. 1817; Asad al-Ghabah: vol. 5, p. 435

² Usod al-Ghabah: vol. 5, p. 439

³ Riahin ash-Sharia'h: vol. 2, p. 203 and 208

suffered the utmost hardships in the way of God. She had a very high degree of piety and trustworthiness.¹

Ayatullah Khui has said, “The glory, high dignity, position, bestowal of wealth for Islam, and servitude to the Prophet of Khadijah are so obvious that there is no need to mention them.”²

¹ Tanqih al-Maqal: vol. 3, p. 77 from the chapter on women.

² Mu’jam Rijal al-Hadith: vol. 23, p. 189