



KHADIJA DAUGHTR OF KHUWAYLID

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

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

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

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

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

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



دار السيدة خديجة التي كانت منزل النبي (ص) و
مولد فاطمة الزهراء (ع) الواقعة في سوق الصاغة
في مكة هدمتها الحكومة السعودية عام ١٤١٣ هـ .

3-Story house of Khadija where she and the Prophet of Islam lived and where their daughter, Fatima, was born, before its demolition in 1413 A.H./1993 A.D.



Dome over the grave of Khadija at the Baqee' Cemetery before its demolition.

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

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

Zainab, their oldest, was born before the prophetic mission and was married to Abul-`As ibn al-Rabee`. She had accepted Islam before her husband did and participated in the migration from Mecca to Medina. She died early in 8 A.H./629 A.D. and was buried in Jannatul Baqee` where her grave can still be seen defying the passage of time. Ruqayya and Umm Kulthoom married two of Abu Lahab's sons. Abu Lahab,

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

One particular quality in Khadija was quite interesting, probably more so than any of her other qualities mentioned above: she, unlike her people, never believed in nor worshipped idols. There was a very small number of Christians and Jews in Mecca, and a fairly large number of Jews in Medina. What brought those Jews to Mecca and Medina? Some of them had migrated from Najran, Yemen, after being massacred by a fanatical Christian governor ruling on behalf of the Ethiopian Negus. The date of the massacre is 523 A.D., and its details are outside the scope of this book. Others had come from Greater Syria (including Jerusalem, Palestine) either escaping the persecution of the Romans or driven by curiosity and the desire to meet a new prophet of God whose advent was predicted in their books. The Holy Qur'ān tells us that Jewish scriptures make a reference to Prophet Muhammed, and here are proofs testifying to this fact not from the Holy Qur'ān but from the Jews themselves:

`Abdullah ibn Salam, a Jewish rabbi who later on accepted Islam when the Prophet was in Medina, was asked once by `Omar ibn al-Khattab, 'Do you have any reference to Muhammed in your books?' 'Yes, by Allāh, said `Abdullah, 'We can identify him by the description whereby Allāh described him if we see him among you just as one of us identifies his son once he sees him in the company of other children.'¹ According to the reference titled *Dala'il al-Nubuwwah*, Hassan ibn Thabit, the renowned poet, is quoted by a chain of narrators saying, 'By Allāh! I was a young child of 7 or 8, yet I could very well understand whatever I heard. One day I heard a Jew on the summit of a hill shouting as loudly as he could for other Jews to go to him. 'Woe unto you,' said they, 'what is the matter with you?!' He said, 'The star that signals the birth of Ahmed the prophet did, indeed, appear last night!'²

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

A group of Jews came to the Messenger of Allāh. The most knowledgeable person among them asked him about certain things, and he, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny, answered them for him. He, therefore, accepted Islam then took out a white sheet of *riqq* (papyrus) wherein he recorded the statements of the Prophet and said to him, 'O Messenger of Allāh! I swear by the One Who sent you a

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

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

Prophet in truth that I have not copied this except from tablets which Allāh, the most Exalted and the most Sublime, had dictated to Moses son of Amram (ʿImran). I have also read in the Torah so many of your merits that I even doubted them. For forty years, I have been wiping out any reference to you in the Torah, yet whenever I wiped it out, I saw it fixed again therein. I have read in the Torah that nobody can answer these questions (which I have just asked you) except you, and during the time wherein you answer them, Gabriel would be on your right, Michael on your left, and your *wasi* in front of you. The Messenger of Allāh said, AYou have surely said the truth. Here is Gabriel on my right and Michael on my left and my *wasi* Ali ibn Abu Talib in front of me. The Jew believed and proved that his conviction was sound.³

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

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

Since Khadija did not travel with her trade caravans, she had always had to rely on someone else to act as her agent to trade on her behalf and to receive an agreed upon commission in return. In 595 A.D., Khadija needed an agent to trade in her

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

merchandise going to Syria, and it was then that a number of agents whom she knew before and trusted, as well as some of her own relatives, particularly Abu Talib, suggested to her to employ her distant cousin Muhammed ibn `Abdullah who, by then, had earned the honoring titles of *al-Sādiq*, the truthful, and *al-Amin*, the trustworthy. Muhammed did not have any practical business experience, but he had twice accompanied his uncle Abu Talib on his trade trips and keenly observed how he traded, bartered, bought and sold and conducted business; after all, the people of Quraysh were famous for their involvement in trade more than in any other profession. It was not uncommon to hire an agent who did not have a prior experience; so, Khadija decided to give Muhammed a chance. He was only 25 years old. Khadija sent Muhammed word through Khazimah ibn Hakim, one of her relatives, offering him twice as much commission as she usually offered her agents to trade on her behalf. She also gave him one of her servants, Maysarah, who was young, brilliant, and talented, to assist him and be his bookkeeper. She also trusted Maysarah's account regarding her new employee's conduct, an account which was most glaring, indeed one which encouraged her to abandon her insistence never to marry again.

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

What items did Muhammed carry with him to Busra, and what items did he buy from there? Meccans were not known to be skilled craftsmen, nor did they excel in any profession besides trade, but young Muhammed might have carried with him a cargo of hides, raisins, perfumes, dried dates, light weight woven items, probably silver bars, and most likely some herbs. He bought what he was instructed by his employer to buy: these items may have included manufactured goods, clothes, a few luxury items to sell to wealthy Meccans, and maybe some household goods. Gold and silver currency accepted in Mecca included Roman, Persian, and Indian coins, for Arabs during those times, including those who were much more sophisticated than the ones among whom Muhammed grew up such as the Arabs of the southern part of Arabia (Yemen, Hadramout, etc.), did not have a currency of their own; so, barter was more common than cash. The first Arab Islamic currency, by the way, was struck in Damascus by the Umayyad ruler `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (697-698 A.D.) in 78 A.H./697 A.D., 36 years after the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty (661-750).

The time Muhammed stayed in Busra was no more than a couple of months during which he met many Christians and Jews and noticed the theological differences

among the major Christian sects that led to the disassociation of the Copts, the Syrian (Chaldean) Nestorian, and the Armenian Christians from the main churches of Antioch (Antakiya), Rome, and Egyptian Alexandria. Such dissensions and differences of theological viewpoints provided Muhammed with plenty of food for thought; he contemplated upon them a great deal.

There is another testimonial to the cloud that shaded young Muhammed; it comes from the holy and pure offspring of Muhammed. Imām al-Hasan al-`Askari⁴ has narrated saying that he once asked his father (Imām) Ali ibn Muhammed, peace be upon them, about the miracles performed by the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him and his progeny, in Medina and Mecca. Here is what Imām al-`Askari said to his son:

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

While in Syria, a monk named Nestor observed some signs of Prophethood about Muhammed, so he asked Maysarah, AIs there a glow, a slight redness, around his eyes

⁴One of the offspring of Prophet Muhammed, Abu Muhammed Imām Hasan al-`Askari was the son of Imām `Ali al-Naqi and the father of the Awaited Imām, the Mahdi, peace and blessings of the Almighty be upon all of them. He was born in Medina on Rabi` II 10, 232 A.H./December 4, 846 A.D. and was martyred in Samarra, Iraq, on Rabi` I 8, 260 A.H./January 1, 874 A.D. poisoned by the `Abbasid ruler al-Mu`tamid. If the reader wishes to learn more about him and about the other Infallible Fourteen, I strongly recommend the book titled *Biographies of Leaders of Islam* by his eminence Sayyed `Ali Naqi Naqwi which I edited. It is available from Imām Hussain Foundation, P.O. Box 25-114, Beirut, Lebanon.

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

that never parts with him? Nestor asked Maysarah. When the latter answered in the affirmative, Nestor said, AHe most surely is the very last Prophet; congratulations to whoever believes in him. And Nestor very much desired to see Muhammed. The rest of the story is narrated by `Abbas, Muhammed's uncle, who quotes `Abdul-Muttalib quoting Abu Talib saying,

We once took Muhammed on a (business) trip to Syria. When we were in the marketplace, a high priest named Nestor came and sat in front of him, looking at him without saying anything. He kept doing so for three consecutive days. He then could no longer do so without going to him and coming behind him, as if he was requesting him for something. I said to him, AO monk! Do you want anything from him? AYes, Nestor said, AI do want something from him. What is his name? AMuhammed son of `Abdullah, said I. By Allāh, his face changed colour, then he said, ACould you please ask him to agree to uncover his back so that I may look at it? Muhammed drew his garment from his back, and when Nestor saw the mark of Prophethood on it, he kept kissing him and crying. Then he said, AO man! Hurry and take this child back to the place where he was born, for if you only know how many his enemies in our land are, you will not even think much of the reason because of which you came here. Nestor kept looking after him every day, carrying food for him. When we departed from Syria, Nestor brought Muhammed a shirt and said to him, ACould you please wear this shirt so that you may remember me thereby? But Muhammed did not accept it, and I noticed how he did not like the idea, so I took the shirt myself so that his feelings would not be hurt and said to him, AI shall wear it. Then I hurried and took Muhammed back to Mecca. By Allāh, not a single woman or man, young or old, stayed without eagerly welcoming him back with the exception of Abu Jahl, may Allāh curse him, for he then had drunk so much wine that he was completely drunk.⁶

Here is another testimonial to that incident:

Bakr ibn `Abdullah al-Ashja`i quotes his forefathers saying that in the same year when the Messenger of Allāh went to Syria, `Abd Manat ibn Kinanah, Nawfal ibn Mu`awiyah ibn `Orwah ibn Sakhr ibn Nu`man ibn `Adiyy also went out as businessmen. When Abu al-Muwayhib, the monk, met them, he asked them, AWho are you? AMerchants from the people of the sanctuary, from Quraish. AFrom which (clan of) Quraish are you? He asked them again. They answered his question, whereupon he asked them, AIs there anyone else from Quraish in your company? They said, AYes, a young man from Banu Hashim named Muhammed. Abu al-Muwayhib then said, AHe, by Allāh, is the one I am seeking! They said to him, ABy Allāh, there is none among the Quraishites more obscure than him, and they refer to him only as the orphan of Quraish. He is hired by one of our women named Khadija; so, what do you want with him? He kept moving his head as he said, AHe is the one! He is the one! Then he requested them to take him to meet Muhammed. AWe left him (trading) at Bostra's market. Just as they were talking thus, the Messenger of Allāh came. The monk immediately said, AThis is the one! He spent an hour in a dialogue talking to him, then he kissed his forehead and took out something from his pocket which we could not tell what it was. He kept asking Muhammed to take it from him as a gift, and Muhammed kept refusing. Once he left him, he said to us, ADo you accept my advice? This, by Allāh, is the last Prophet! By Allāh, he will soon invite people to testify that: *La ilaha illa Allāh, Muhammadun Rasool-Allāh*; so, when he does so, you should follow him. Then he asked us, ADoes his uncle Abu Talib have a

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

son named Ali? We answered him by saying, ANo. AHe must have either been born, or he will be born this year⁷. He will be the first to believe in him. We know him, and we have a description of him as the *wasi* just as we have Muhammed described as the Prophet. He shall be the master and the scholars of the Arabs among whom he will be like Thul-Qarnain. He will be the most prominent among all creation on the Day of Judgment next only to the prophets. Angels call him Athe victorious hero; wherever he goes, victory shall go with him. By Allāh, he is more known in the heavens than the shining sun.⁸

One of Muhammed's observations when he was in that Syrian city was the historical fact that a feud was brewing between the Persian and Roman empires, each vying for hegemony over Arabia's fertile crescent. Indeed, such an observation was quite accurate, for after only a few years, a war broke out between the then mightiest nations on earth that ended with the Romans losing it, as the Holy Qur'ān tells us in Chapter 30 (The Romans), which was revealed in 7 A.H./615-16 A.D., only a few months after the fall of Jerusalem to the Persians, just to win in a successive one. Only four years prior to that date, the Persians had scored a sweeping victory over the Christians, spreading their control over Aleppo, Antioch, and even Damascus. Muhammed was concerned about either of these two empires extending its control over the land inhabited by Muhammed's fiercely independent Pagan people. The loss of Jerusalem, birthplace of Christ Jesus son of Mary, was a heavy blow to the prestige of Christianity. Most Persians were then following Zoroastrianism, a creed introduced in the 6th century before Christ by Zoroaster (628-551 B.C.), also known as Zarathustra, whose adherents are described as worshippers of the Apyre, the holy fire. APersia, hence, meant Athe land of the worshippers of the pyre, the sacred fire. Modern day Iran used to be known as AAryana, land of the Aryan nations and tribes. Not only Iranians, but also Kurds, and even Germans, prided in being Aryans, (Caucasian) Nordics or speakers of an Indo-European dialect. Some Persians had converted to Christianity as we know from Salman al-Farisi who was one such adherent till he fell in captivity, sold in Mecca and freed to be one of the most renown and cherished *sahabis* and narrators of *hadīth* in Islamic history, so much so that the Prophet of Islam said, ASalman is one of us, we Ahl al-Bayt (People of the Household of Prophethood).

The war referred to above was between the then Byzantine (Eastern Roman) emperor Heraclius (575 - 641 A.D.) and the Persian king Khusrau (Khosrow) Parwiz (Parviz) or Chosroes II (d. 628 A.D.). It was one of many wars in which those mighty nations were embroiled and which continued for many centuries. Yet the hands of Divine Providence were already busy paving the path for Islam: the collision between both empires paved the way for the ultimate destruction of the ancient Persian empire and in Islam setting root in that important part of the world. Moreover, Muhammed's (and, naturally, Khadija's) offspring came to marry ladies who were born and raised at Persian as well as Roman palaces. Imām Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib, Muhammed's grandson and our Third Holy Imām, married the daughter of the last Persian emperor Jazdagird (Yazdegerd) III son of Shahryar and grandson of this same Khusrau II. Jazdagird ruled Persia from 632-651 A.D. and lost the Battle of Qadisiyyah to the

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

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 202-204.

Muslim forces in 636, thus ending the rule of the Sassanians. Having been defeated, he fled for Media in northwestern Iran, homeland of Persian Mede tribesmen, and from there to Merv, an ancient Central Asian city near modern day Mary in Turkmenistan (until very recently one of the republics of the Soviet Union), where he was killed by a miller.

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

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

The trip's measure of success encouraged Khadija to employ Muhammed again on the winter trip to southern Arabia, i.e. Yemen, the land that introduced the coffee beans to the rest of the world, the land where the renown Marib irrigation dam was engineered, the land of Saba and the renown Balqees, the Arabian Queen of Sheba (Saba) of Himyar, who married prophet Solomon (Sulayman the wise, peace be upon him), in 975 B.C. (after the completion of the construction of the famous Solomon's Temple⁹), the land of natives skilled in gold, silver and other metal handicrafts, not to mention their ingenuity in the textile industry and domestic furniture..., and it may even be the land that gave Arabic its first written script which, as some believe, was modelled after written Amheric, then the official language in Ethiopia and its colonies. Yemen, at that time, was being ruled by an Ethiopian regent. This time Khadija offered

⁹This temple was built by Solomon (Prophet Sulayman) to express his gratitude for what the Almighty had granted him. Solomon had in advance obtained his Lord's permission to erect it. A glimpse of its grandeur is described in the Holy Qur'ān in 27:44: "It was said to her (to Balqees, the Queen of Sheba): Enter the palace; but when she saw it, she deemed it to be a great expanse of water, that is, its marble floors shone like glass, reflecting her image as water does. This temple was later ordered by Solomon to be demolished in its entirety, and the claim of the Jews that the al-Aqsa mosque is built on its very foundations is false. The Jews plot to demolish the al-Aqsa mosque in order to rebuild Solomon's Temple. The Jews intend to do so at the right time, when they realize that the Muslims of the world, because of the weakness and hypocrisy of most of their rulers, are too weak to stand between them and the achievement of their most vile goals, and when the Christian West will be ready, more so than now, to help them achieve their objectives. The West has been supporting the Jews against the Muslims, and there will never be any reversal to this trend... *We belong to Allāh, and to Him shall we return...*

Muhammed three times the usual commission. Unfortunately, historians do not tell us much about this second trip except that it was equally profitable to both employer and employee. Some historians do not mention this trip at all.

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

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

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

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

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

All praise is due to Allāh Who has made us the progeny of Ibrahim (Abraham), the

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

Nawfal then stood up and said,

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

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

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

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

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

The Messenger of Allāh had no desire to accumulate wealth; that was not the purpose for which he, peace and blessings of Allāh upon him and his progeny, was created. He was created to be the savior of mankind from the darkness of ignorance, idol worship,

polytheism, misery, poverty, injustice, oppression, and immorality. He very much loved to meditate, though his meditation deepened his grief at seeing his society sunk so low in immorality, lawlessness, and the absence of any sort of protection for those who were weak and oppressed. Khadija's period of happiness lasted no more than 15 years after which her husband started his mission to invite people to the Oneness of God, to equality between men and women, and to an end to the evils of the day.