

## Lady Khadija ﷺ

Lady Khadija ﷺ bint Khuwaylid was the first wife of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and thus the first of the ‘mothers of the believers’. This title is a Qur’anic one, taken from this verse:

*The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are their mothers (33:6).*

التِّي أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ  
وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ

So the Holy Qur’an has blessed the wives<sup>1</sup> of Prophet Muhammad a with a unique rank; that these blessed women should be treated by Muslims like their own mothers, and in fact, higher. Hence we prefix the title ‘mother of the believers’ (or *Umm al-Muminin*) before the names of the blessed wives.

She was also the first to believe in Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Khadija bint Khuwaylid was born fifteen years before the Year of the Elephant, into the most respected tribe of Quraysh. In fact her lineage meets with Prophet Muhammad’s ﷺ at Qusayy. Before the appearance of Islam, she was known as *al-Ṭāhira* (the pure) amongst the Makkans. Other titles ascribed to her include *al-Kubrā*

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1 According to the books of *Sirah*, there were eleven fortunate women who married Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and thus were given this exalted rank. They are: Lady Khadija, Lady Sawdah, Lady ‘Aisha Ṣiddīqa, Lady Ḥafṣa bint ‘Umar, Lady Zaynab bint Khuzayma, Lady Umm Salama, Lady Zaynab bint Jaḥsh, Lady Juwayriyya bint al-Ḥārith, Lady Ṣafīyya, Lady Umm Ḥabiba and Lady Maymūna bint al-Ḥārith ﷺ. When our master Muhammad ﷺ left this world, nine of them were still alive. The two that passed away during the Prophet’s own lifetime were Lady Khadija and Lady Zaynab bint Khuzayma. Of these eleven: (i) six were from the tribe of Quraysh (ii) one was from Banū Isrā’īl from the descendants of Hārūn ؑ (iii) four were from other Arab tribes.

(the great), *Sayyida Quraysh* (the 'sovereign lady of Quraysh) and *Amīrah Quraysh* (the princess of Quraysh).

She belonged to a business-minded family, and after the death of her first husband and father, she took on the role herself, becoming very successful in the process. Khadija on one occasion had requested the services of Prophet Muhammad to trade on her behalf. Khadija sent Maysarah along with him. Maysarah commented on the Prophet's integrity, honesty and intelligence during the trade trip. Profits from the trip were also double thanks to the Prophet ﷺ. Thereafter, she herself sent a proposal of marriage to him, despite the fact that she was immensely famous in Makkah and had received proposals for marriage elsewhere. She was forty when her marriage to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ took place, who himself was twenty-five at the time. The Prophet's ﷺ uncle Abū Ṭālib conducted the *nikāḥ* ceremony, in an event attended by the tribal leaders and elders of Makkah.

Lady Khadija ﷺ bore six children for the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ; Lady Zaynab, Lady Ruqayyah, Lady Umm Kulthūm and Lady Fāṭima ﷺ. She was also the mother of Qāsim and 'Abdullāh, both of whom passed away in infancy. She was the mother of all children of the Prophet ﷺ, except Ibrāhīm.

Lady Khadija ﷺ had immense love and respect for the best of all creations, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him. She witnessed his honesty first hand when the Prophet ﷺ worked as a businessman on her behalf. Her level of support for him in particular and Islam in general was unparalleled. Her words of comfort to the Prophet ﷺ at the time of the first revelation will never be forgotten. As he returned from the cave, Lady wrapped him up and reminded him:

'By Allāh! Allāh will never disgrace you! You keep good relations with your relatives. You help the poor and needy. You serve your guests honourably. You assist those in trouble' (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*).

In return, words cannot describe how much love and affection Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had for Lady Khadija ﷺ. During his

marriage to her, the Prophet ﷺ did not take another wife. Of all the blessed wives, he ﷺ spent most time with her. The Prophet ﷺ remarked that:

‘Khadija believed in me at a time when people rejected me, and she helped me with her wealth at a time when people were depriving me.’

Lady Khadija ؓ passed away on the tenth of Ramadan, in the Year of Sorrow. She was 65 at the time. She was buried in *Janna al-Mu’alla*, the graveyard in Makkah. The *Salāh al-Janāza* was not introduced at the time. Her rank in the next world is clarified in this *hadīth sharīf*:

‘The most superior of women in Paradise Khadija bint Khuwaylid, Fāṭima bint Muḥammad, Maryam bint ‘Imrān and ‘Āsiya bint Muzahim, wife of Pharaoh.’

After she passed away, the Prophet ﷺ never stopped mentioning her. Lady ‘Ā’isha ؓ comments:

I never became envious of any of the Prophet’s wives ؓ as I was envious of Khadija; on account of how he ﷺ would constantly talk about her, and I had never seen her.’

Anas ؓ reports: ‘When the Prophet ﷺ was given something, he would say, ‘Take it to so-and-so, she was a friend of Khadija; take it to the home of so-and-so, she loved Khadija.’

#### LESSONS

Lady Khadija ؓ provided unparalleled loyalty and support to our Prophet ﷺ in particular and to Islam in general. She was great at bringing comfort to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. In the early years of preaching Islam, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would sometimes be saddened by the Makkans’ refusal to accept Islam. Lady Khadija played an immense role in comforting the Prophet ﷺ. Yes, she donated huge amounts of money to Islam. But sometimes the

simple words of comfort can be worth a mountain of gold. Lady Khadija ﷺ was excellent at that.

What this shows is that when a person passes away, to remember them fondly is the Sunnah of the Messenger ﷺ. We do not forget them. We remember their sacrifices and endeavours, and we respect and honour their remaining family members.

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