Great WOMEN OF ISLAM

WHO WERE GIVEN THE GOOD NEWS OF PARADISE

by

Mehmood Ahmd Ghadanfar

Revised by

Sheikh safiur-Rehman Al-Mubarakpuri

DARUSSALAM

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Great Women of Islam

Who Were Given the Good News of Paradise

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

"Verily, the Muslims (those who submit to Allah in Islam) men and women, the believers men and women (who believe in Islamic Monotheism), the men and the women who are obedient (to Allah), the men and women who are truthful (in their speech and deeds), the men and women who are patient (in performing all the duties which Allah has ordered and in abstaining from all that Allah has forbidden), the men and the women who are humble (before their Lord-Allah), the men and the women who give Sadaqat (i.e. Zakat and alms), the men and the women who observe Saum (fast) (the obligatory fasting during the month of Ramadhan, and the optional Nawafil fasting), the men and the women who guard their chastity (from illegal sexual acts) and the men and the women who remember Allah much with their hearts and tongues. Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward (i.e. Paradise)." (33:35)

Publisher's Note

All praises are due to Allah the Almighty, the Lord of all that exists. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon His final Prophet and Messenger, Muhammad, his noble family and his Companions.

Darussalam is pleased to present this valuable book, 'Great Women of Islam, Who Were Given the Good News of Paradise'. It was compiled in the Urdu language by a great scholar and a compiler of Islamic books, Mahmood Ahmad Ghadanfar, and translated by our Muslim sister Jamila Muhammad Qawi.

This book is about the life stories of the Mothers of the Believers and sixteen women Companions of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). They were those pure and virtuous women of Islam who were honored during the very Life time of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) with the prediction that they would live forever in Paradise in the hereafter.

All the Mothers of the Believers were of very noble character and conduct and pleased Allah so much that He sent special greetings for Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) 'A'ishah (May Allah be pleased with her) had a brilliant mind and a remarkable memory, and had the distinction of being the source of many Ahadith (Prophetic narrations) because of her long association with the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Her knowledge of the many branches of religion like Tafsir legislation), her wisdom in interpretation, her mastery of the teachings of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) all these qualities made her one of the most remarkable personalities of the time.

Women Companions were very active in religion as well as in politics and business. They were courageous in the battlefield and provided services like giving medical aid to the soldiers, nursing the wounded, and providing food and water to the needy in a manner which has no parallel in history. They spread the message of Islam and it is proved by many instances that their conduct converted many disbelievers to Islam.

There are many more stories like this that will encourage our Muslim sisters to acquire more knowledge about such great women. I hope that they will study this book thoroughly and try their best to follow these noble women of Islam.

I pray to Allah the Almighty that He grants them all – the writer, translator and editor and everyone else who participated by any means – the best reward in this world and in the hereafter, for their support in the completion of such a valuable book. Ameen

Exploits and Achievements of the Sahabiyat (Women Companions)

The Sahabiyat (Women Companions) were the noble women who were the contemporaries of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). They were the pure, virtuous crusaders of Islam, and were honored during the very lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) with the prediction that they would live forever in Paradise in the hereafter. Their achievements and influence are found in every sphere of that momentous period in the history of the world, which transformed the whole of humanity forever. They were as active in religion as in politics, as courageous in war as in the peaceful and persuasive propagation of the teachings of Islam. These noble, selfless women could be found in the battlefields among the foremost ranks of those taking part in Jihad. They were to be found in the political arena, in the field of education, in the courts of Islamic jurisprudence, in the interpretation of Shariah The collective body of laws as revealed by Allah (SWT) in trade and commerce, in agriculture, in medicine and in nursing. In short, there was no sphere that did not benefit from their intellect, their wisdom and their gentle yet firm strength of character.

Religious Achievements

Among the many services that one can render to Islam, is to fight in the battlefields. Few, if any, examples of such zeal, determination, perseverance and courage can be found in history. When the disbelievers attacked the Muslims during the Battle of Uhud, only a few devoted followers were left to fight with the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).At this critical stage, the woman Companion Umm ‘Ammarah (May Allah be pleased with her) shielded him with her body and warded off the enemy with her sword as well as her bow and arrows. When one of the disbelievers of the Quraish, Ibn Qamiah, got within striking distance of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), it was she who bore the brunt of his attack. She had a deep wound on her shoulder, yet she continued to attack him with her sword. But he was well protected and she could not make a dent in his armor. Later, she fought so courageously against Musailamah Al-Kaththab that she suffered a dozen wounds and lost an arm.

In the Battle of Ahzab (Battle of the Trench), the Companion Safiyyah (May Allah be pleased with her) displayed brilliant military strategy in handling the Jewish attack, and slew one of the Jews. In the Battle of Hunain, Umm Sulaim (May Allah be pleased with her) set out to attack the enemy with her dagger.

In the Battle of Yarmook, Asma’ bint Abu Bakr, Umm Aban, Umm Hakeem, Khawlah, Hind and the Mother of the Believers Juwairiyah (May Allah be pleased with them) displayed extraordinary valor. Asma bint Yazid (May Allah be pleased with her) killed nine enemy soldiers. In the year 28AH

‘Umm Haram (May Allah be pleased with her) took part in the attack on Cyprus.

The Mother of the Believers 'Aishah, Umm Sulaim and Umm Salit (may Allah be pleased with them) were among those who were very proficient at nursing the wounded.

The Sahabiyat (may Allah be pleased with them) usually accompanied the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) on his military expeditions and took part in battles both on land and at sea. Standing side by side with the soldiers they would hand them arrows, and generally help to keep up the morale of the army. They also helped to carry the martyred and the wounded back to Madinah. Umm 'Atiyah (may Allah be pleased with her) took part in seven battles, and fought during the rule of the Caliph ‘Umar Farooq (May Allah be pleased with him), the women and even the children helped to bury the dead.

They spread the message of the new religion and through example converted many of the disbelievers to Islam. It was Fatimah bint al-Khattab (May Allah be pleased with her) who converted her brother ‘Umar bin al-Khattab (May Allah be pleased with him); he was to become one of the bravest and

most faithful of the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). It was Umm Sulaim (May Allah be pleased with her) who influenced Abu Talhah (May Allah be pleased with him), and it was Umm Hakim (May Allah be pleased with her) who convinced her husband,'Ikrimah to accept Islam. Umm Shriek al-Dawsiyah (may Allah be pleased with her) very discreetly worked among the women of the tribe of Quraish to spread Islam.

Another aspect of missionary work is to preserve the religion in its pristine form, and protect it from any modifications, impurities and innovations that may creep in because of cultural or traditional practices already prevalent in society. This very important work of preserving the purity of Islam was performed by many of the Sahabiyat; most prominent among them was 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her).

In the year 35 AH, when Caliph 'Uthman (May Allah be pleased with him) was martyred and there was chaos and confusion over who was next in the line of succession, it was she who brought unity into the ranks by influencing the Muslims of Basrah (Iraq) and Makkah.

Leading the prayers and calling the Adhan, or the call for prayer, is another important aspect of religious life. Although women cannot lead men in prayers, they can do so with assemblies of women. Many women contemporaries of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) performed this task as well. 'A'ishah, Umm Sulaim, Umm Waraqah and Sa'dah bint Qamamah (may Allah be pleased with them) were some of the most prominent among these. In fact, Umm Waraqah (may Allah be pleased with them) turned her house into a place of prayer for women; the Adhan (The call to prayer given 5 times during the day) Was given there by a lady Mu'adhdhin (The Mu'adhdhin's duty is to give the Adhan) for the women's congregation, and Umm (May Allah be pleased with her) performed the duties of the Imam in leading the prayers.

Political Achievements

The Sahabiyat (Women Companions) played a prominent role in politics as well. Caliph 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) so valued Shifa' bint 'Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with her) for her political intelligence and insight that he very often consulted with her. He often gave her the responsibility of running the affairs of state relating to trade and commerce. Before the Hijrah (migration) of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to Madinah, the disbelievers wanted to lay siege to his house, it was Ruqayyah bint Saifee (May Allah be pleased with her) who warned him. The Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) then secretly left for Madinah, leaving 'Ali (May Allah be pleased with him) asleep in his place. Vast political rights are granted to women in Islam. A woman even has the right to grant shelter to an enemy, if she so wishes. A historian, Abu Dawood relates that Umm Hani (May Allah be pleased with her), the sister of Ali (May Allah be pleased with him) had given refuge to an enemy disbeliever and the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

"If you have guaranteed sanctuary and safety to a person, then we stand by you."

This is the law of Islam that the Imam (The Imam leads the prayer in the congregation) or leader has to stand by the guarantee offered by the woman.

Education, Knowledge and the Fine Arts

There are various subjects, an understanding of which are essential for a thorough knowledge of Islam and its tenets. Qira'at (The correct way of reading the Qur'an – elocution and enunciation), interpretation and commentary, Shari'ah, Fiqh, study of Hadith, all are important aspects of Islamic studies. Many of the women Companions were experts in these fields. 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) memorized the Qur'an as did Hafsah, Umm Salamah, Umm Waraqah (may Allah be pleased with them). Hind bint Usaid, Umm Hisham bint Harithah, Zaidah bint Hayyan; Umm Sa'ad

bint Sa'ad (may Allah be pleased with them) all knew portions of the Qur'an by heart. The latter used to regularly lecture on the Qur'an. In the sensitive sphere of interpretation of Hadith, all were experts, but 'A'ishah and Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with them) were exceptional masters of interpretation and commentary. With the former, 2,210 Ahadith are associated and 378 with the latter.

'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) was an expert on interpretation and commentary due to her close association with the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Much of the Book of Tafsir in Sahih Muslim contains narrations from her.

Asma' bint Abu Bakr, Umm 'Atiyah, Umm Hani and Fatimah bint Qais (may Allah be pleased with them) also had extensive knowledge of Ahadith.

In Islamic jurisprudence or Fiqh 'Aishah's verdicts could fill several volumes. The same could be said of Umm Salmah's recorded verdicts.

The invaluable verdicts of Safiyyah, Hafsah, Umm Habibah, Juwairiyah, Fatimah (the Prophet's daughter), Umm Shareek, Umm 'Atiyah, Asma' bint Abu Bakr, Laila bint Qai'f, Khawlah bint Tuyait, Umm Darda, 'Atikah bint Zaid, Sahlah bint Suhail, Fatimah bint Qais, Zainab bint Jahsh, Umm Salamah, Umm Aiman, Umm Yusuf (may Allah be pleased with them) could fill several volumes.

'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) was also well versed in the law of inheritance and many renowned and respected Companions consulted her on the finer points of the law.

Besides being masters of Islamic law and of the finer points of Fiqh, the women Companions had skill and ability in other branches of knowledge. Asma' bint Yazid bin Sakan (may Allah be pleased with her) was an expert in making speeches; Asma' bint 'Umais (may Allah be pleased with her) was famous for her interpretation of dreams. Several Companions were noted for their skill in medicine and surgery. Aslamiyah Umm Matta'a, Umm Kabshah, Hamnah bint Jahsh, Mu'aathah, Ammaimah, Umm Ziad, Rubai bint Mu'awwith, Umm 'Atiyah, Umm Sulaim (may Allah be pleased with them) were some of them, well known for their skills. Rufaidah Aslamiyah's tent, set up as a surgery station with all the necessary instruments, was situated close to the Prophet's Mosque at Madinah. The arts were not neglected by any means. Some of the most noted poetesses were, Sa'adi, Safiyah, 'Atikah bint Zaid, Hind bint Athathah, Umm Aiman, Kabashah bint Rafi'a, Umamah Maridiah, Hind bint Harith, Zainab bint 'Awwam Azdi, Maimoonah and Ruqayyah (may Allah be pleased with them). A book of verses by Khansa' (may Allah be pleased with her) the best known among them has been published.

Industry, Trade and Commerce

The women Companions also practiced the practical or survival skills as we know them today. Agriculture, business, trade and commerce, writing, editing, cottage industries like weaving, manufacture and designing of clothes — all these are mentioned in the Musnad (collection of Ahadith) of Imam Ahmad. Agriculture was not so common, but was mainly practiced in the rural fertile areas around Madinah, especially by the women of the Ansar. Among the immigrants or Muhajir as they were known, Asma' also practiced farming. The era before the advent of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was known as the age of illiteracy, but some of these worthy women were highly educated and skilled in the arts of penmanship and calligraphy. Shifa' bint 'Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with her) learned to read and write even during these dark ages and was celebrated for her skill in this art. Hafsah, Umm Kulthum bint 'Uqbah and Karimah bint Miqdad (may Allah be pleased with them) were all literate. 'A'ishah and Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with them) could not write but they could read. Both of them were blessed with remarkable memories and inquiring minds; and because of their close association with the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) many of the authentic Ahadith originated from them.

some of the Sahabiyat also ran businesses. Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) was a very

successful businesswoman and used to send trading caravans to different countries. Khawlah, Maleekah, Thaqafiyah, and Bint Fakhariyah (may Allah be pleased with them) used to trade in the oriental oil-based perfumes known as 'Itr. Saudah (may Allah be pleased with her) operated a leather tanning industry. The daughters of the Ansar would compose verses and poems for festive occasions and sing. According to a Hadith narrated by Rubai' bint Mu‘awwith (may Allah be pleased with her) they recited their poems in the presence of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), who appreciated their literary skills.

Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her) used to recite the Qur’an with Tajweed, which is a difficult skill and much appreciated.

Thus there was no sphere of activity – social or cultural – that was not influenced and assisted by the presence of these great ladies. May Allah (S.W.T) have mercy on their souls!

May Allah be pleased with them and they with Him.

Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (May Allah be pleased with her)

Narrated Abu Hurairah (Peace be upon him): Jibril (Gabriel) came to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and said:

"O Allah's Messenger! This is Khadijah, coming to you with a dish having meat soup (or some food or drink). When she reaches you, greet her on behalf of her Lord (Allah) and on my behalf, and give her the glad tidings of having a palace made of Qasab in Paradise, wherein there will be neither any noise nor any toil (fatigue, trouble, etc.)."

Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (May Allah be pleased with her)

The strength of character and noble qualities of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) earned her the honor of being greeted by Allah (SWT) through His Angel Jibril (Peace be upon him).

The epitome of faithfulness, integrity, truth, modesty, good manners and nobility; generous, wise and understanding, nurtured in an atmosphere of wealth and luxury, she was the first person to have an abiding faith in the utterances of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and to accept Islam as her religion and her way of life. She was blessed with the distinction of having been greeted with Salam by Allah (SWT) and the Angel Jibril (Peace be upon him). She was the first lady ever to be so honored. She was the first wife of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and he did not marry again during her lifetime. They lived together in peace and harmony for more than 24 years. It was in her house that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) received the revelations of Allah (SWT), through the Angel Jibril (Peace be upon him). During the siege that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) underwent in Makkah, in the Shi‘b Abi Talib, she was there by his side, constantly supportive and sacrificing all the comforts of life. When she passed away, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was heartbroken at the loss of a dedicated companion who stood by him during the most difficult period of his life. He personally supervised the preparation of her grave, and climbed down into it to ensure it was well-prepared. He then lowered her body into the grave himself. Thus ended the life of the lady who was the greatest supporter of Islam in its earliest days. She, who was the mother of Fatimah (May Allah be pleased with her) the First Lady of Paradise, the grandmother of the beloved grandchildren of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), Hasan and Hussain (May Allah be pleased with them) who are to be the foremost of the youths in Paradise.

‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that one day the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) drew four lines on the earth and asked his Companions if they understood what these lines stood for. They respectfully replied that he knew better. He then told them that these lines stood for the four foremost ladies of the universe. They were Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, Fatimah bint Muhammad, Maryam bint Imran, the mother of Prophet Isa (May Allah be pleased with her) and 'Asiyah bint Mazahim (May Allah be pleased with them) (the wife of the Pharaoh).

The first named has the distinction of being the mother of all the believers, or practicing Muslims; the second Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was given the glad tidings that she would be the leader among the women of Paradise. Maryam (May Allah be pleased with her), the Pure and Chaste is the only woman to have given birth to ‘Isa (Peace be upon him), a Prophet of Allah without having been touched by any man.

‘Asiyah, the long suffering and righteous wife of the evil Pharaoh, had advised her husband to adopt the infant Musa (Moses) (Peace be upon him). This was at a time when infanticide was the law of the land. All the newborn boys of the tribe of Israel were being murdered because of the prediction that one of them would finally overthrow the Pharaoh and destroy him. She not only nurtured him in the very palace of Pharaoh, but also was one of the first to accept Islam, as preached by Musa (Peace be upon him).

‘A'ishah (May Allah be pleased with her) narrates that whenever the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) talked about Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her), it was in terms of the highest praise. One day her innate feminine envy overtook her sense of decorum and she spoke in disparaging terms of her, wondering why the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) missed her when he was blessed with a better, younger wife by Allah (SWT). This displeased him, but forbearing as he was, he just sighed and answered:

“I have not yet found a better wife than her. She had faith in me when everyone, even members of my own family and tribe did not believe me, and accepted that I was truly a Prophet and a Messenger of Allah (SWT). She converted to Islam, spent all her wealth and worldly goods to help me spread this faith, and this too at a time when the entire world seemed to have turned against me and persecuted me. And it is through her that Allah (SWT) blessed me with children.″

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was born in Makkah in the year 556 CE. Her mother’s name was Fatimah bint Za’id, and her father’s name was Khuwaylid bin Asad. He was a very popular leader among the tribe of Quraish, and a very prosperous businessman who died while fighting in the famous battle of Fujjar. Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) thus grew up in the lap of luxury. She married Abu Halah Malak bin Nabash bin Zarrarah bin At-Tamimi. She bore him two children, Halah and Hind. She wanted to see her husband prosper and financed him in setting up a big business. But unfortunately he passed away. Sometime later, the young widow married 'Ateeq bin 'Aith bin ‘Abdullah Al- Makhzumi, and she had a daughter by him as well named Hindah. But the marriage soon broke up on grounds of incompatibility. After this all her attention was devoted to the upbringing of her children, and building up the business she inherited from her father.

Her astuteness and business acumen made hers one of the most widespread businesses among the zuraish. Her policy was to employ hardworking, honest and discriminating managers to deal on her behalf. There was no network of travel and communication as there is today and a lot depended on the integrity of the employees who traveled far and wide on her behalf. She exported her goods to far away markets like Syria, and her managers bought goods from those markets to be sold at home. Makkah being strategically located on the trading caravan routes and the center of international trade fairs, was a very profitable market for the goods brought back. The managers would get fifty percent of the profit, and this was enough incentive for them.

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) had heard of the integrity, honesty and principled behavior of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), and sent a job offer to him to head her trading caravans. He gladly accepted the offer and started working for her. Khadijah sent him on a business trip; her old and trusted slave Maisarah being delegated to accompany and serve him.

This trip proved to be an extremely profitable venture and Maisarah was astounded by some very remarkable scenes he witnessed on this trip. He was impressed and completely won over by the Prophet’s integrity, strength of character, adherence to principles, his amicable dealings and his business abilities. On the way back from Syria, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) lay down under a tree to rest for a while. Nestor, a Christian monk, noted for his knowledge of religion and for his insight saw him and asked Maisarah who he was. Maisarah told him all about Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his reputation for honesty and intelligence. Nestor then told him that this man would be elevated to Prophet hood in the future, as no man had ever rested under that particular tree but Prophets.

Tradition has it that Maisarah saw two angels bearing a cloud over the Prophet’s head to protect him from the glare and heat of the sun. He was stunned and overcome by a sense of gratitude that he had been given the opportunity of benefiting from the close companionship of this man soon to be chosen by Allah (SWT) as His Messenger.

When he returned home, Maisarah reported to Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) all that had

taken place on the trip to Syria. She was deeply moved and impressed, and started thinking of proposing marriage to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). But how could she express her thoughts to him? She already rejected several proposals of marriage from men belonging to some of the noblest families of the Quraish. How would her tribe react? What would her family say? And what was more, would her proposal be acceptable to this young, yet unmarried man of the tribe of Quraish?

As she pondered over these questions and debated within herself, one night she dreamt that the shining sun had descended from the heavens into her courtyard, radiating her home. When she woke up she went for the interpretation of this wonderful dream to her cousin, Waraqah bin Nawfal, a blind man noted for his skill in interpreting dreams, and for depth of his knowledge, particularly of the Torah and the Injil. When he heard her dream, he gave a serene smile, and told her not to worry, as this was a very promising dream. The glorious sun she saw descending into her courtyard indicated that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) whose advent had been predicted in the Torah and the Injil was to grace her home and she would gain from his presence in her life.

After this meeting with Waraqah she became stronger in her desire to marry Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). But she was still not sure how to go about it. One of her very close friends, Nafeesah bint Manbah knew of her inclination. One day she told Khadijah that what was bothering her so much was not a major problem, and she herself would help her to solve it. She went immediately to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), and without much ado she requested his permission to ask him a very personal question. When he said he had no objection, she asked why he had not yet got married. He said he did not have the financial resources to do so. Then she asked him if he would be willing to marry a beautiful lady from a noble and wealthy family, who was inclined towards marriage with him. He asked whom she was referring to; when he learnt her identity he said that he was willing, provided she was willing to marry him. Of course Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was overjoyed. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was then twenty-five years of age and Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was forty years old. (According to one tradition, she was twenty-eight).

The two uncles of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), Hamzah (May Allah be pleased with him) and Abu Talib approached her uncle ‘Umar bin Asad with the formal proposal. It was accepted and the date was fixed. The two families began preparing for the wedding. On the date that had been fixed, the families and friends gathered and the marriage was solemnized. Halimah Sa‘adiyah who nursed the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) in his infancy was specially invited for the wedding and traveled to Makkah from her village. When she left after the festivities, Khadijah presented her with household goods, a camel and forty goats as an expression of gratitude to the lady who had taken such good care of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) in his infancy.

Khadijah was very blessed in the marriage, and had six children: first two sons, Qasim and ‘Abdullah; followed by daughters, Zainab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum and Fatimah (May Allah be pleased with them). They were wonderful, intelligent children and it was a very happy, peaceful and content household. But all this did not seem enough. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) felt something was missing, and he was extremely restless. He would retire for a month once a year to the Cave of Hira’ to dedicate himself entirely to prayer and meditation.

One day he felt the presence of another being who held him in his arms in a tight embrace. Then he loosened his hold and asked him to 'Read';

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) answered that he was illiterate. But the person repeated the same act and the same command again and again. Then finally he read these Hayat which are the first revelation of the Qur’an. They are from Surah Ire or Al-‘Alas of the Noble Qur’an:

"Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists). He has created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not." (96:1-5)

Then the being disappeared. This was such an overwhelming experience that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) returned home sweating and shaking. He called out to Khadijah asking her to cover him with a sheet or a blanket. After lying down for some time he became a little more relaxed. When he had calmed down to some extent, he told his wife that he feared for his life, and narrated the whole incident to her.

Khadijah, a picture of loyalty and serenity consoled him saying that Allah (SWT) would surely protect him from any danger, and would never allow anyone to revile him as he was a of man of peace and reconciliation and always extended the hand of friendship to all. He never lied, was always hospitable, carried the burdens of others and helped those who were in trouble. These soothing and encouraging words of sympathy and understanding from Khadijah gave him immeasurable strength and confidence.

She then took him to meet her cousin, Waraqah bin Nawfal, who immediately guessed the identity of the being in the Cave of Hira' as the Angel Jibril (Peace be upon him), the Messenger of Allah who had visited Musa (Moses) (Peace be upon him) as well. Waraqah, who was very old, wished that he could live to see the time when the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would be forced into exile by his people. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was very surprised and asked if his people would really do this to him. Waraqah assured him that it was typical of human beings that they would never appreciate or follow a Prophet who rose among them. As the proverb has it, *"A Prophet is never honored in his own land."* Waraqah added that he wished he were alive at that time and be able to help him. He added that if what he had been told were true then surely it meant that her husband was the Prophet of Allah whose advent had been mentioned in the scriptures.

As mentioned earlier, the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had six children by Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) four daughters and two sons. The four daughters grew up to be faithful and courageous daughters of Islam. They were named Zainab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum and Fatimah (May Allah be pleased with them). They all migrated to Madinah, with the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). Zainab (May Allah be pleased with her) was married to Abul 'Aasbin Rabee'ah and Ruqayyah (May Allah be pleased with her) was married to 'Uthman (Peace be upon him). When she passed away he married Umm Kulthum (May Allah be pleased with her) Fatimah (May Allah be pleased with her) was married to 'Ali bin Abi Talib (May Allah be pleased with him). The first three daughters died during the lifetime of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his beloved daughter Fatimah (May Allah be pleased with her) lived just six months after he passed away.

The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had three sons, two by Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) and Ibrahim, a third son by Maria Qibtiyyah (May Allah be pleased with her). The first son was named Qasim and the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) came to be known as Abu'l Qasim (Father of Qasim). The second son, 'Abdullah was also known as Tahir (the pure) or Tayyib (the good). Both died in their childhood and the disbelievers were overjoyed that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had no heirs to carry on his noble mission. The third son, Ibrahim was born by his wife, Maria Qibtiyyah (May Allah be pleased with her).He also died in infancy. When he saw Ibrahim dying, he gently picked him up and said that he was helpless and could do nothing before the Will of Allah (SWT):

'We know that death is inevitable and is a fact of life. We also know that those who are left behind will catch up with those who have gone ahead; if this were not so we would grieve even more for Ibrahim. The heart mourns and the eye weeps, but it is not fitting that we utter words which might

displease our Rabb, our Creator and Sustainer.*'*

On the day Ibrahim passed away there was a solar eclipse. The Arabs of ancient times were superstitious and associated these phenomena of nature - lunar and solar eclipses — with a great man's death. Many Muslims even started associating the solar eclipse with Ibrahim's death. But the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) immediately went up to the pulpit and in his sermon said:

'Solar and lunar eclipses are signs of Allah. They never occur because of the death of any human being. When you see any of these offer Salat.'

His enemies now started calling him Abtar, the one who had no descendants, whose lineage was cut off. But, Allah (SWT) had more lasting bounties in store for him. He then revealed to him the beautiful Verses of Surat Al-Kawthar, the 108th Surah of the Noble Qur'an:

"Verily, We have granted you Al-Kawthar. Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice. For he who hates you, he will be cut off." (108:1-3)

When the disbelievers saw that Islam was attracting more and more followers in spite of all their tactics, they had a meeting to decide what steps should be taken to stop the spread of this new religion. They decided to declare an open and total political and economic boycott of the tribe of Banu Hashim. This took place in the seventh year after the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) declared himself the Messenger of Allah (SWT)

The boycott was so severe that innocent children faced starvation and hunger, and adults survived eating the leaves of trees. Yet the firm followers of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not turn away from their true religion and they came out of the ordeal stronger and purer than before.

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) who had been brought up in luxury in her wealthy father's home now faced the economic hardships with patience and courage, which are a necessary part of any siege.

Khadijah's nobility of character and conduct pleased Allah (SWT) so much that He sent special greetings for her. This incident was narrated by Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) and quoted in a Hadith of Sahih Al-Bukhari.

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) was an ideal wife and mother. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) lived in her house which became a blessed place due to his presence and the fact that Jibril (Peace be upon him) came often to visit him there with Qur'anic revelations. It became the center of Islam, where the Companions and women Companions visited often to partake of the hospitality of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his wife.

After the Hijrah (migration) of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to Madinah, the house was occupied by the brother of 'Ali. Later Mu'awiyah bin Abu Sufyan (May Allah be pleased with him) who transcribed some of the Divine Revelations purchased this house and built a mosque. Thus the site of the house of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) became a place of prayer and worship for all time. She had been used to praying two Rak'aat (units) of Salat (prayer), in the mornings and evenings with the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), even before prayers were made compulsory by Allah (SWT).

There is one incident recorded in history regarding this. After accepting Islam she became more contemplative and inclined towards worship; she found a blessed feeling of peace in prayer.'Afif Kindi relates that 'Abbas bin 'Abdul Muttalib (May Allah be pleased with him) was a great friend of his and he used to visit him often in Yemen in connection with his business in perfumes. On one occasion when they were standing and chatting in Mina, they saw a handsome young man approach.

He carefully washed his hands and feet and then stood respectfully with his arms crossed on his breast. Soon a dignified lady of noble bearing and a young handsome young lad joined him.

‘Afif asked ‘Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) what they were doing and whether this was a new form of exercise. ‘Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) replied that the youth was his brother ‘Abdullah’s son, and the lady was his wife. She was a woman of great wealth and virtue, and an ideal wife and mother. The lad was his brother Abu Talib’s son. He added that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had announced that he was a Messenger of Allah and had started preaching a new religion called Islam. In due course 'Afif accepted Islam, but he always regretted the fact that he had not joined the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions in their prayers and supplication on that memorable day in Mina, when he had first heard of Islam.

Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) passed away just three years before the Hijrah, or the Prophet’s migration to Madinah. She died at the age of sixty-five, having given almost twenty-five years to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and the cause of Islam. When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) saw her in the throes of death he consoled her saying Allah (SWT) had so ordained it, and that the thing she was dreading, would prove favorable for her. Her eyes lit up and as she gazed at her beloved husband, and her soul left its earthly body. Her grave was prepared at a place called Hujjoon, near Makkah. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) stepped into it to see that everything was as it should be, and with his own hands lowered her gently into it. Thus passed away the ‘Mother’ of all Muslims, the one who had sacrificed her all for Islam.

The same year the Prophet’s greatest supporter and protector from among his family, his uncle Abu Talib passed away. Thus within the space of a few months two of his closest companions, supporters and benefactors had passed away. Besides his personal sense of loss and bereavement, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was deeply disturbed by the fact that his work of spreading the word of Allah (SWT) was faced with problems and obstacles. His uncle had protected him at critical moments with his influence and authority; his wealthy wife gave her all generously to the cause, and also provided great moral and emotional support. Her house was a haven of peace for him as she took upon herself all of the responsibilities of running the household and bringing up four young daughters. Whenever he was abused by the disbelievers she provided moral support and unflagging faith.

One of the ladies of the Quraish, Khawlah bint Hakim, visited the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) to console him, and saw his state of depression and grief and remarked on it. He replied it was only natural that he should be touched by her absence, as she had been a loving mother to his now neglected children; she had been a loyal and sympathetic wife who shared his secrets. It was only human and natural that he should feel her loss as she was there for him during his most difficult times.

A Companion of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) narrates that whenever any gift was brought to him he would immediately send it to some lady who had been a friend of Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her). ‘A’ishah (May Allah be pleased with her), a favorite wife of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) says that whenever a goat was slaughtered the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would send some meat to Khadijah’s friends; when she remarked about this on one occasion he told her:

‘I have great regard for her friends, as she has a special place in my heart.’

‘A'ishah (May Allah be pleased with her) said she never experienced such a feeling of natural feminine jealousy for any other wife of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) as she did for Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her)

She also narrates that whenever Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) spoke of her he would talk at great length and praise her qualities, and pray for her forgiveness.

As Allah (SWT) says in Surah Al-Fajr in the Noble Qur'an that it will be said to the pious believers:

"O the one in complete rest and satisfaction! Come back to your Lord – well-pleased (yourself) and well-pleasing (unto Him) ! Enter you then among My (honored) servants, and enter you My Paradise." (89:27-30)