

SISTERS' WEEKLY · WOMEN OF JANNAH · PART 1

Khadijah bint Khuwaylid

The first to believe: the life of the wife of the Prophet ﷺ, from the markets of Makkah to the cave of Hira, the valley of the boycott and the Year of Sorrow.

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ABOUT THIS SERIES

The lives of the great women of Islam, one part every Wednesday, told from the sources. A reference follows each statement: the Qur'an by surah and ayah, hadith by collection and number, and the early biographies by name.

Reports from the biographies and the historians are historical accounts and are not held to the standard of authentic hadith; the text says when a statement rests on such a report. Dates before the Hijrah are approximate.

CHAPTER 1

Her Family and Her People

Khadijah was the daughter of Khuwaylid ibn Asad ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza ibn Qusayy, of the tribe of Quraysh. Her mother was Fatimah bint Za'idah, of the clan of Banu 'Amir ibn Lu'ayy, also of Quraysh. (Ibn Hisham; Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat) Her lineage meets that of the Prophet ﷺ in their common ancestor Qusayy ibn Kilab, the man who had gathered Quraysh into the valley of Makkah and organised its affairs. Through Qusayy the two families were cousins, and the Arabs, who kept their genealogies with great care, regarded this closeness of descent as an honour in itself.

Her clan was Banu Asad ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza, one of the branches of Quraysh that lived in the heart of Makkah, close to the Ka'bah. It was not the largest of the clans, nor the one that held the keys of the House, but it was respected and prosperous, and several of its men were among the notable figures of the city. The family into which Khadijah was born would give the history of Islam a remarkable number of its people.

Her relatives

Her cousin **Waraqah ibn Nawfal ibn Asad** was one of the few men of Makkah who had turned away from the idols. He had become a Christian in the Jahiliyyah, read the earlier scriptures, and wrote out portions of the Gospel. He was an old man and had lost his sight by the time the revelation began, and he plays a decisive part in her story. (Bukhari 3)

Her brother **al-'Awwam ibn Khuwaylid** married Safiyyah bint 'Abd al-Muttalib, the aunt of the Prophet ﷺ, and their son was **az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwam**, one of the ten Companions given the glad tidings of Paradise. Khadijah was therefore az-Zubayr's paternal aunt.

(Ibn Hisham)

Her nephew **Hakim ibn Hizam**, the son of her brother Hizam, was a wealthy merchant and one of the nobles of Quraysh. He was born, according to the well-known report, inside the Ka'bah itself. He accepted Islam only at the conquest of Makkah, but throughout the years of persecution he remained loyal to his aunt and did not abandon her. (Ibn Hisham)

Her sister **Halah bint Khuwaylid** married ar-Rabi' ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza of Banu 'Abd Shams, and their son **Abul-'As ibn ar-Rabi'** would later marry Zaynab, the eldest daughter of Khadijah and the Prophet ﷺ. (Ibn Hisham) Halah outlived her sister, and her voice, so like Khadijah's, would one day move the Prophet ﷺ in Madinah, as told in Chapter 17.

Her birth

The historians place her birth about fifteen years before the Year of the Elephant, that is, around 555 CE. This follows from the common report, given by Ibn Sa'd and others, that she was forty years old when she married the Prophet ﷺ, who was then twenty-five. Another report puts her age at marriage at twenty-eight. The first is the better known and is the one followed by most of the biographers, but it is a historical report and not a statement of the Prophet ﷺ, and certainty about it is not possible.

(Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat; Ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum)

Her father Khuwaylid ibn Asad was a man of standing in Quraysh. The biographers report that he died before her marriage to the Prophet ﷺ, some placing his death around the time of the War of Fijar, the feud fought between Quraysh and the tribes of Hawazin in the sacred months. For this reason, according to the stronger report, it was her paternal uncle 'Amr ibn Asad who gave her in marriage. (Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat)

CHAPTER 2

Makkah in the Days of Her Youth

To understand Khadijah it is necessary to understand the city in which she lived. Makkah lay in a barren valley in which nothing could be grown, enclosed by bare hills. (Qur'an Ibrahim 14:37) It had no farmland and no river. What it had was the Ka'bah, the House built by Ibrahim and Isma'il, to which the Arabs came every year on pilgrimage, and a position on the routes that carried goods between Yemen in the south and Sham in the north.

Quraysh had made trade the business of the whole city. Each year they sent out two great caravans: in winter to Yemen, and in summer to Sham, to markets such as Busra and Gaza. The Qur'an refers to these two journeys and to the security that Allah gave Quraysh, so that their caravans could cross the desert unharmed when other tribes lived in constant fear of raids. (Qur'an Quraysh 106:1-4)

A caravan was a joint enterprise. Almost every family of Quraysh with something to invest sent goods with it, and a large caravan could number over a thousand camels. Those who did not travel themselves gave their goods or their capital to men who did, on agreed terms. This was the arrangement the Arabs called *mudarabah*, or *qirad*: one partner provides the capital, the other the labour and travel, and the profit is divided between them in an agreed share, while a loss falls on the capital. Islam later kept this form of partnership and regulated it. (Ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum)

Women in Makkah

The position of women in the Jahiliyyah was mixed and often harsh. Some tribes buried their infant daughters alive, out of fear of poverty or shame, a practice the Qur'an condemns in the strongest terms. (Qur'an At-Takwir 81:8-9; Qur'an An-Nahl 16:58-59) A widow could be inherited by her husband's relatives along with his property, and in most tribes women did not inherit at all. At the same time, a woman of a noble family could hold wealth, and a few women of Quraysh managed considerable property of their own. Khadijah was the most famous of them.

At-Tahirah

The biographers report that in the Jahiliyyah she was known as *at-Tahirah*, the Pure. (Ibn Hisham; Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat) It was an unusual title in a city where idol worship, drinking and loose conduct were common, and it reflects the reputation she had among her own people: a woman of dignity, of careful conduct and of intelligence. Ibn Ishaq describes her as a woman of honour and wealth, firm in her judgement, and among the most noble of Quraysh in lineage, the greatest of them in honour and the richest of them in wealth.

(Ibn Hisham)

No report states that Khadijah ever worshipped an idol, and none states the opposite. The sources are silent. What they do record is that she was quick to recognise the truth when it came, and that she had in her own family a cousin who had already rejected the idols and was waiting for a prophet.

CHAPTER 3

Her First Marriages

Before she married the Prophet ﷺ, Khadijah had been married twice, and both of her husbands had died. The biographers differ about the order of these two marriages.

(Ibn Hisham; Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat)

One of her husbands was **Abu Halah**, Hind ibn an-Nabbash, of the tribe of Tamim, who lived in Makkah as an ally of Banu 'Abd ad-Dar. She bore him two children, a son named **Hind** and, according to some reports, another son named Halah. Hind ibn Abi Halah grew up in the household of the Prophet ﷺ as his stepson and accepted Islam. He became known for his eloquence, and the famous description of the Prophet's ﷺ appearance and manner that al-Hasan ibn 'Ali asked his uncle to give him was narrated from Hind ibn Abi Halah. (Ash-Shama'il, at-Tirmidhi)

Her other husband was **'Atiq ibn 'A'idh** of the clan of Banu Makhzum. She bore him a daughter, also named **Hind**, who later accepted Islam. (Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat)



After the death of her second husband, Khadijah did not remarry for some years. The biographers report that many of the nobles of Quraysh wished to marry her, attracted by her lineage, her character and her wealth, and that she turned them down. (Ibn Hisham) She managed her own affairs and her trade, and raised her children.

It is worth noting how ordinary the remarriage of widows was among the Arabs, and how Islam continued this. Most of the women the Prophet ﷺ married were widows or divorced women. The image of the young bride as the only honourable kind of marriage has no basis in the life of the Prophet ﷺ: his first and, by his own testimony, his most beloved wife was a widow fifteen years older than him who had been married twice before.

CHAPTER 4

A Merchant of Quraysh

Khadijah's wealth came from trade. Ibn Ishaq reports that she used to hire men to trade with her money, and give them a share of the profit. (Ibn Hisham) She did not travel with the caravans herself. She provided the capital and the goods, chose the men who would carry them to the markets of Sham or Yemen, and agreed with them on their share of what they earned.

This required judgement of a kind not every merchant had. The man to whom a merchant entrusted a share of a caravan would be weeks away, in foreign markets, buying and selling with goods that were not his own, and there was no way of checking his accounts except his own word and the word of those who travelled with him. A dishonest agent could ruin his partner. The whole business rested on choosing trustworthy men.

Khadijah's success in this suggests that she had what the sources say she had: a sharp mind and a good judgement of people. Ibn Ishaq says that her own share of a caravan of Quraysh could equal the share of all the rest of the merchants together, although this appears to be the kind of praise the historians use for emphasis rather than an exact measure. (Ibn Hisham) What is certain is that she was one of the wealthiest people in Makkah, and that she held her wealth in her own name and managed it herself.

The household

Her household included her children, servants and slaves, as was usual for a wealthy family of Makkah. The one whose name comes down to us most clearly is her servant **Maysarah**, who travelled with her caravans and, in the next chapter, brought her the report that changed her life. Her nephew Hakim ibn Hizam was a merchant in his own right, and Ibn Ishaq reports that he once came back from a trading journey with a number of young slaves, and invited his aunt to choose one for herself. She chose a boy named Zayd ibn Harithah. (Ibn Hisham) That boy, Zayd ibn Harithah, is part of this story too.



CHAPTER 5

The Trusted One

Muhammad ﷺ grew up in Makkah as an orphan. His father 'Abdullah had died before he was born, his mother Aminah when he was six, and his grandfather 'Abd al-Muttalib when he was eight. He was raised after that by his uncle Abu Talib, a man of high standing in Quraysh but of limited means. (Ibn Hisham)

As a young man he tended sheep for the people of Makkah for a small wage. He later said: "Allah did not send any prophet except that he tended sheep." His Companions asked: "And you?" He said: "Yes, I used to tend them for the people of Makkah for a few qirats." (Bukhari 2262) He also travelled with the trading caravans, once as a boy with Abu Talib to Sham, and later on his own account. (Ibn Hisham)

By his twenties he was known throughout Makkah by a name the people had given him: *al-Amin*, the Trustworthy. He did not take part in the idol worship of his people, did not drink, and was known for his truthfulness and for keeping his word. As a young man he was present at the pact of the virtuous, *Hilf al-Fudul*, in which several clans of Quraysh pledged to stand with anyone wronged in Makkah, whether a local or a stranger, until his right was returned to him. He said of it, years later, that he would not have exchanged his part in it for the finest red camels, and that if he were called to its like in Islam he would answer. (Ibn Hisham)

The offer

Khadijah heard of his truthfulness, his trustworthiness and his noble character. Ibn Ishaq reports that she sent to him and proposed that he take goods of hers to Sham to trade with, offering him more than she used to give other men, and that her servant Maysarah would go with him. He accepted, and set out with her goods and with Maysarah for Sham. (Ibn Hisham)

The caravan reached Busra, the market town on the southern edge of Sham in today's southern Syria. Ibn Ishaq reports that the Prophet ﷺ stopped to rest in the shade of a tree near the cell of a monk, and that the monk asked Maysarah who the man under the tree was. When Maysarah told him he was a man of Quraysh, of the people of the Haram, the monk said that no one had ever stopped under that tree but a prophet. (Ibn Hisham) Ibn Ishaq also reports that Maysarah saw, during the heat of the day, two angels shading him from the sun as he rode. These are historical reports from the biographies and are not established with the strength of authentic hadith; the biographers recorded them, and they were part of what Maysarah carried back to his mistress.

What is not in doubt is the outcome of the journey. He sold the goods he had brought, bought what he wished to buy, and returned to Makkah with Maysarah. Khadijah sold what he had brought back and it yielded double, or nearly double, what she usually made.

(Ibn Hisham)

Maysarah told her what he had seen of the young man on the road: his honesty in dealing, his manners with people, and the other things he had witnessed. Khadijah was a woman who judged people for a living. She now had before her a man whose conduct she had seen tested with her own wealth, far from home, and whose reports came to her from her own trusted servant.

CHAPTER 6

The Proposal

It was Khadijah who sought the marriage. Ibn Ishaq reports that, after the journey to Sham, she sent to the Prophet ﷺ and said to him, in words he records: "O son of my uncle, I have come to desire you because of our kinship, your standing among your people, your trustworthiness, your good character and your truthfulness." Then she offered herself to him in marriage. (Ibn Hisham)

Ibn Sa'd reports the approach in more detail, through a woman named **Nafisah bint Munyah**, who acted for Khadijah. According to her account, she went to the Prophet ﷺ and asked him what kept him from marrying. He said that he did not have the means. She asked: "And if you were spared that, and were invited to beauty, wealth, honour and suitability, would you not accept?" He asked who she meant, and she said: "Khadijah." He asked how that could be arranged, and she said that she would see to it. (Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat) The two reports can be joined: the matter was raised through an intermediary, as was the custom, and Khadijah also spoke of it herself.

The reasons she gave are worth noticing. She did not mention his wealth, because he had none. She mentioned his lineage, which placed him among the best of Quraysh, and then four qualities of character: trustworthiness, good character, truthfulness, and the respect he had earned among his own people. Years later the Prophet ﷺ would teach that a woman is married for four things, her wealth, her lineage, her beauty and her religion, and that the one who wins the woman of religion has truly prospered. (Bukhari 5090) Khadijah, in choosing a husband, chose the equivalent in a man.

The marriage

The Prophet ﷺ spoke to his uncles about the proposal. Ibn Ishaq reports that his uncle Hamzah went with him to Khuwaylid's family to ask for her hand; other reports mention Abu Talib, who as head of the family spoke for him at the marriage.

(Ibn Hisham; Ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum) A short address attributed to Abu Talib on that occasion is recorded in later books. In it he praised his nephew as a young man who, though poor in wealth, outweighed any man of Quraysh he was measured against in nobility, virtue and intelligence. Its wording varies between the sources and its chain is not strong.

The dowry, according to Ibn Ishaq, was twenty young she-camels. (Ibn Hisham) She was given in marriage, according to the stronger report, by her uncle 'Amr ibn Asad, her father having died before this. (Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat) The marriage took place around 595 CE, about fifteen years before the first revelation. The Prophet ﷺ was twenty-five years old. Khadijah, according to the most widely followed report, was forty.

(Ibn Hisham; Ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum)

It was the first marriage of the Prophet ﷺ, and for the next twenty-five years it was his only one. 'A'ishah said: "The Prophet ﷺ did not marry anyone else while Khadijah was alive."

(Muslim 2436) In a society where men of standing commonly took several wives, this is a fact the sources record with intent.

CHAPTER 7

Their Home

The Prophet ﷺ moved into Khadijah's house, which stood in the middle of Makkah, a short walk from the Ka'bah. It remained his home for the rest of his life in Makkah, until the Hijrah. Later generations knew the site as the house of Khadijah, and it was preserved and visited for centuries. (Akhbar Makkah, al-Azraqi)

Very little is recorded of their daily life in the first fifteen years, before the revelation began. What is recorded is the character of the household: a home in which the Prophet ﷺ was free to live as he chose, with a wife who had the means and the will to support him, and in which several people who would later be central to Islam were raised.

Zayd ibn Harithah

Khadijah gave the Prophet ﷺ the young slave Zayd ibn Harithah, whom she had chosen from those her nephew Hakim had brought back. (Ibn Hisham) Zayd was an Arab of the tribe of Kalb who had been carried off as a child in a raid and sold. His father, Harithah, searched for him for years, grieving, and composed verses about his lost son.

When his father and uncle finally found him in Makkah, they came to the Prophet ﷺ to ransom him. The Prophet ﷺ told them he would let Zayd choose: if he chose them, he could go with them for nothing; if he chose to stay, he would not force him to leave. Zayd was called and asked, and he said he would not choose anyone over him. His father said: "Woe to you, Zayd! Do you choose slavery over freedom and over your father and your family?" Zayd said that he had seen something in this man that made him unable ever to choose anyone over him. The Prophet ﷺ then took him to the Ka'bah and declared before Quraysh that Zayd was his son, who would inherit from him and from whom he would inherit. His father and uncle, seeing this, were content and went home.

(Ibn Hisham; Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat)

From then on he was called Zayd ibn Muhammad, until the Qur'an later abolished adoption as a form of legal kinship and commanded that people be called by their fathers' names. (Qur'an Al-Ahzab 33:4-5; Bukhari 4782) He remained the Prophet's ﷺ beloved freed slave, and his name is the only name of a Companion mentioned in the Qur'an. (Qur'an Al-Ahzab 33:37) All of this began with a gift from Khadijah.

'Ali ibn Abi Talib

Ibn Ishaq reports that Quraysh were struck by a severe drought, and that Abu Talib, who had a large family and little wealth, was hard pressed. The Prophet ﷺ suggested to his uncle al-'Abbas that they ease his burden by each taking one of his sons. Al-'Abbas took Ja'far, and the Prophet ﷺ took 'Ali, who was then a young boy. 'Ali grew up in the house of Khadijah and the Prophet ﷺ and was living with them when the revelation came. (Ibn Hisham)

Umm Ayman

Also in the household was Barakah, known as **Umm Ayman**, an Abyssinian woman who had belonged to the Prophet's ﷺ father and had cared for the Prophet ﷺ in his infancy. According to Ibn Sa'd, he freed her when he married Khadijah, and she married and became the mother of Ayman. The Prophet ﷺ used to call her "my mother after my mother." (Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat) After the death of Khadijah she married Zayd ibn Harithah, and bore him Usamah, the beloved son of the beloved.

The rebuilding of the Ka'bah

When the Prophet ﷺ was thirty-five, ten years into their marriage, Quraysh rebuilt the Ka'bah after it had been damaged by floods. When the walls reached the place of the Black Stone, the clans quarrelled over which of them would have the honour of setting it in place, and came close to fighting. They agreed to accept the judgement of the first man to enter the sanctuary, and the first man to enter was the Prophet ﷺ. "This is al-Amin," they said. "We are content." He asked for a cloak, placed the Stone on it, had a man from each

clan hold its edge and lift it together, and then set the Stone in its place with his own hand. (Ibn Hisham) It is a measure of the reputation he had in Makkah in those years, the years of his marriage to Khadijah.

CHAPTER 8

Their Children

Khadijah bore the Prophet ﷺ all of his children except one. The only child he had from another wife was Ibrahim, born in Madinah to Mariyah, who died as an infant. (Ibn Hisham) When the Prophet ﷺ later spoke of Khadijah, he would say: "She was this and that, and from her I had children." (Bukhari 3818)

Ibn Ishaq names her children with the Prophet ﷺ as al-Qasim, at-Tayyib and at-Tahir, and the four daughters Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum and Fatimah. He adds that the sons died in the Jahiliyyah, before Islam, and that all the daughters lived into Islam, accepted it and emigrated with him to Madinah. (Ibn Hisham) Other scholars say that at-Tayyib and at-Tahir were two titles of a single son named 'Abdullah, born after the prophethood, so that the sons were two, al-Qasim and 'Abdullah. This is the view that most later historians prefer. (Ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum)

CHILD	WHAT IS RECORDED
Al-Qasim	The eldest. The Prophet ﷺ was known by his name: Abul-Qasim, "father of al-Qasim". He died in infancy, in Makkah.
Zaynab	The eldest daughter. Married her cousin Abul-'As ibn ar-Rabi', son of Khadijah's sister Halah. Emigrated to Madinah after Badr. Died in 8 AH.
Ruqayyah	Married 'Uthman ibn 'Affan. Emigrated with him to Abyssinia and then to Madinah. Died during the battle of Badr, 2 AH.
Umm Kulthum	Married 'Uthman after her sister's death, which earned him the title Dhun-Nurayn, "possessor of the two lights". Died in 9 AH.
Fatimah	The youngest daughter. Married 'Ali ibn Abi Talib; mother of al-Hasan and al-Husayn. The only one of his children to outlive him; died six months after him, 11 AH.
'Abdullah	Called at-Tayyib and at-Tahir. Born, according to most reports, after the prophethood. Died young in Makkah.

The deaths of their sons were a grief they bore together, and one that their enemies later used against them. When the Prophet's ﷺ son died, al-'As ibn Wa'il of Quraysh said of him that he was *abtar*, cut off, a man with no son to carry on his name, and that when he died he would be forgotten. The commentators report that Allah revealed Surah al-Kawthar in response: (Ibn Hisham; Tafsir Ibn Kathir)



Indeed, We have given you al-Kawthar. So pray to your Lord and sacrifice. Indeed, it is the one who hates you who is cut off.

Qur'an Al-Kawthar 108:1-3

Of their daughters, Fatimah is the subject of the next part of this series. Of all the descendants of the Prophet ﷺ who are alive today, every one descends from Khadijah, through Fatimah.

CHAPTER 9

The Cave of Hira

As the Prophet ﷺ approached the age of forty, solitude became dear to him. 'A'ishah describes how it began: (Bukhari 3)

The first of the revelation that came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the true dream in sleep. He would not see a dream except that it came like the break of dawn. Then solitude was made beloved to him, and he used to go into seclusion in the cave of Hira, and worship there for a number of nights before returning to his family, and he would take provisions for that. Then he would return to Khadijah and take provisions for the like of it.

Sahih al-Bukhari 3

Hira is a cave near the top of a steep mountain north-east of Makkah, later called Jabal an-Nur, the Mountain of Light. The cave is small, with room for a person to sit and to pray, and from its entrance the Ka'bah can be seen in the valley below on a clear day. The climb from the valley takes an hour or more even for a fit person today.

This short phrase in the hadith, "then he would return to Khadijah and take provisions for the like of it," describes years of her life. The Prophet ﷺ went up the mountain for days and nights at a time, and Khadijah prepared his food and water for each stay and saw him off. There is no record of her objecting, or asking why her husband was leaving his home and his family to sit alone in a cave. Ibn Ishaq reports that he would spend a month of every year in Hira, the month of Ramadan, and feed the poor who came to him, and that at the end of it he would go first to the Ka'bah and circle it before going home. (Ibn Hisham) The biographers also mention reports that Khadijah sometimes went up to him with provisions herself.

The worship he practised there is described in the hadith with the word *tahannuth*, which the narrator explains as devotion over a number of nights. The scholars discussed what form it took. The likeliest view is that it was reflection, remembrance of Allah and contemplation of His signs, in the way of Ibrahim, since there was no revealed law yet to follow.



CHAPTER 10

The Night of Revelation

In the month of Ramadan, when the Prophet ﷺ was forty years old, around 610 CE, the angel came to him in the cave. 'A'ishah continues: (Bukhari 3)

The truth came to him while he was in the cave of Hira. The angel came to him and said: "Read." He said: "I am not one who reads." The Prophet ﷺ said: "He took hold of me and pressed me until it was more than I could bear, then released me and said: Read. I said: I am not one who reads. He took hold of me and pressed me a second time until it was more than I could bear, then released me and said: Read. I said: I am not one who reads. He took hold of me and pressed me a third time, then released me and said: Read in the name of your Lord who created; created man from a clinging clot. Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous."

Sahih al-Bukhari 3

These were the first five ayat of Surah al-'Alaq, the first words of the Qur'an to be revealed.

(Qur'an Al-'Alaq 96:1–5)

"Cover me"

The narration continues: the Messenger of Allah ﷺ returned with it, his heart trembling, and came in to Khadijah bint Khuwaylid and said: "Cover me, cover me." They covered him until the fear left him. Then he told Khadijah what had happened, and said: "I fear for myself." (Bukhari 3)

Of everyone on earth, Khadijah was the person to whom he went. The most important event in the history of mankind since the last prophet had just taken place on a mountain outside Makkah, and its first witness, shaken and afraid, came down the mountain to his wife.

Her answer

Khadijah's reply is preserved word for word in Sahih al-Bukhari:

Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep the ties of kinship, you bear the burden of the weak, you earn for the one who has nothing, you honour the guest, and you help against the calamities that befall people in truth.

Khadijah, in Sahih al-Bukhari 3

Every part of this answer repays reflection. She did not say: "It was nothing," or "You were imagining it." She took what he told her seriously. Nor did she share his fear. She reasoned from what she knew. She had lived with this man for fifteen years and knew his conduct when no one else was watching. Her argument was simple: Allah does not humiliate a man



like this. A man who keeps the ties of his family, who carries the burdens of those who cannot carry their own, who gives to those who have nothing, who honours guests and stands by people in their hardships, is not a man whom Allah abandons to an evil spirit.

The five qualities she named are not religious rites. They are the conduct of a man with people: his relatives, the weak, the poor, the stranger, and anyone afflicted. She knew her husband's prayer in Hira only from the outside, but she knew from the inside how he lived in his own home and among his people. On that evidence she was certain.

It is also significant that the first words of comfort the Prophet ﷺ received after the first revelation were spoken by a woman. The scholars have pointed to this answer as evidence of the depth of her understanding. Ibn Hajar, in his commentary on this hadith, notes that her words show that good character and good deeds are a cause of safety from harm, and that she understood this from her own reasoning before any revelation had taught it.

(Fath al-Bari, Ibn Hajar)

CHAPTER 11

Waraqah ibn Nawfal

Khadijah did not stop at words of comfort. 'A'ishah continues: (Bukhari 3)

Then Khadijah set out with him until she brought him to Waraqah ibn Nawfal ibn Asad ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza, the son of Khadijah's paternal uncle. He was a man who had become a Christian in the Jahiliyyah, and he used to write the Hebrew script, and he would write from the Gospel in Hebrew as much as Allah willed him to write. He was a very old man who had become blind.

Sahih al-Bukhari 3

She took her husband to the one person in Makkah who might know what had happened to him. It was an act of judgement as much as of faith. Waraqah was her own cousin and a man she trusted, and he knew the earlier scriptures, in which the coming of prophets was described. If anyone could recognise what the Prophet ﷺ had seen, it was he.

Khadijah spoke first. She said to Waraqah: "O son of my uncle, listen to your nephew." Waraqah said to him: "O son of my brother, what do you see?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ told him what he had seen. Waraqah said to him: (Bukhari 3)

This is the Namus whom Allah sent down to Musa. If only I were young in it. If only I were alive when your people drive you out.

Waraqah ibn Nawfal, in Sahih al-Bukhari 3



The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked: "Will they drive me out?" Waraqah said: "Yes. No man has ever come with the like of what you have brought except that he was treated with hostility. If your day reaches me, I will support you with all my strength." Then, the narration says, it was not long before Waraqah died, and the revelation paused for a time. (Bukhari 3)

The word *Namus* means the keeper of secrets, and here it refers to Jibril, the angel who brought revelation to the prophets. Waraqah recognised in the Prophet's ﷺ description the same angel who had come to Musa, and understood that his young relative had been chosen as a prophet. He also understood, from the history of the prophets, what this would cost: rejection by his own people and exile from his home. All of this was said in front of Khadijah. From the first day, she knew where the path would lead.

Testing the angel

Ibn Ishaq records a report, through Isma'il ibn Abi Hakim, that Khadijah wished to be certain that what came to her husband was an angel and not a devil. She asked him to tell her when the visitor came. When he told her that Jibril had come, she asked him to sit on her left side, then her right, then in her lap, and each time asked whether he could still see him; he said that he could. Then she uncovered her head and asked again, and he said he could no longer see him. She said: "Be firm and rejoice. By Allah, he is an angel and not a devil," reasoning that an angel would withdraw from a woman uncovering herself, while a devil would not. (Ibn Hisham) This is a report from the biographies, and the scholars have noted weakness in its chain. It is mentioned here because the biographers preserved it as part of her story, but it does not reach the strength of the narration in al-Bukhari.

The pause in revelation

After the first revelation there was a period during which no revelation came, called the *fatrah*. Its length is not known with certainty; the reports range from a few days to much longer. It was a time of great distress for the Prophet ﷺ. Then, as he was walking, he heard a voice from the sky, looked up, and saw the angel who had come to him at Hira, seated on a throne between the sky and the earth. He was struck with fear and returned home, saying: "Cover me, cover me." Then Allah revealed: (Bukhari 4)

O you who are wrapped in your cloak, arise and warn, and your Lord glorify, and your clothing purify, and uncleanness avoid.

Qur'an AL-Muddaththir 74:1-5

After this, the narration says, revelation became frequent and continuous. (Bukhari 4) Once more, it was to his home and his family that he returned, and once more it was there that he was covered and comforted.



CHAPTER 12

The First to Believe

The scholars are agreed that Khadijah was the first person to believe in the Prophet ﷺ and in what he brought. Ibn Ishaq says: "Khadijah bint Khuwaylid believed in him, and accepted as true what came to him from Allah, and supported him in his affair. She was the first of the people to believe in Allah and His Messenger and in what came from Him."

(Ibn Hisham) Ibn Kathir and others report the consensus of the scholars that she was the first to accept Islam of all people, man or woman. (Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah, Ibn Kathir)

The scholars sometimes list the first believers by category: of the free men, Abu Bakr; of the boys, 'Ali; of the freed slaves, Zayd ibn Harithah; and of the women, Khadijah. Three of these four lived in her house. The first community of Islam was, in its first days, a household: her husband, herself, her daughters, the boy 'Ali whom they were raising, and the freed slave Zayd whom she had given her husband.

The first prayer

Ibn Ishaq reports that, when the prayer was first made obligatory, Jibril came to the Prophet ﷺ on the heights of Makkah, struck the ground with his heel in the side of the valley, and a spring burst out. Jibril performed wudu while the Prophet ﷺ watched, to show him how to purify himself for the prayer, and the Prophet ﷺ performed wudu as he had seen him do it. Then Jibril prayed with him. The Prophet ﷺ returned home to Khadijah and performed wudu in front of her to teach her, as Jibril had done, and then prayed with her as Jibril had prayed with him, and she prayed with him. (Ibn Hisham)

Ibn Ishaq also records the account of a merchant named 'Afif al-Kindi, who came to Makkah in those early days and stayed with al-'Abbas. He saw a young man come out, look at the sky, and turn to face the Ka'bah to pray. Then a boy came and stood on his right, and then a woman came and stood behind them. They bowed and prostrated together. 'Afif asked al-'Abbas what this was, and he told him: this was his nephew Muhammad, who claimed that Allah had sent him, and the boy was 'Ali, and the woman was Khadijah, Muhammad's wife, who followed him in his religion. 'Afif later said, after he accepted Islam, that he wished he had been the fourth. (Ibn Hisham)

A house of the message

For the first three years the call to Islam was made privately. The Prophet ﷺ spoke to those he trusted, and the small number who accepted met in secret. Throughout this time Khadijah's house was his base. It was where he received revelation, where he prayed, and

where he returned at the end of each day. Her standing among Quraysh and her clan gave the household a certain protection, and her wealth meant that the Prophet ﷺ did not need to work for a living and could give his time to the message.

The Prophet ﷺ later described what she gave him in those years. When 'A'ishah once spoke of her jealously, saying that Allah had given him better than that old woman of Quraysh, he became angry and said: "By Allah, Allah has not given me anyone better than her. She believed in me when the people disbelieved in me, she accepted me as truthful when the people called me a liar, she supported me with her wealth when the people deprived me, and Allah gave me children by her when He did not give me children by other women."

(Musnad Ahmad 24864)

Four things: belief, confirmation, wealth and children. The first three were given when they cost her something.

CHAPTER 13

The Years of Hostility

When the command came to proclaim the message openly, the Prophet ﷺ climbed the hill of as-Safa and called the clans of Quraysh. When they had gathered, he asked them whether they would believe him if he told them that horsemen were in the valley about to attack them. They said they had never known him to lie. He said: "Then I am a warner to you of a severe punishment ahead." His uncle Abu Lahab said: "May you perish for the rest of the day! Is this what you gathered us for?" Then Allah revealed Surah al-Masad.

(Bukhari 4770; Bukhari 4971)

From then on, the hostility of Quraysh grew year by year. They mocked him, called him a madman, a poet and a sorcerer, and turned their anger on the weaker Muslims, who were beaten and tortured. Khadijah's house was now the home of a man whom most of the city's leaders regarded as an enemy.

Her daughters

The hostility reached into her family. Her daughters Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum were married, or according to other reports engaged, to two sons of Abu Lahab, 'Utbah and 'Utaybah. After Surah al-Masad was revealed, condemning Abu Lahab and his wife, Abu Lahab ordered his sons to separate from the daughters of Muhammad, and they did so.

(Ibn Hisham; Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat) Ruqayyah then married 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, who had accepted Islam through Abu Bakr.



Quraysh also pressed her eldest daughter's husband, Abul-'As ibn ar-Rabi', to divorce Zaynab, offering him any woman of Quraysh he wished. He refused. Ibn Ishaq records that he said he would not part with his wife and would not want any woman of Quraysh in her place. (Ibn Hisham) He did not accept Islam until much later, but he stood by his wife, the daughter of Khadijah.

The neighbours

The house of Khadijah was surrounded by the houses of men who hated what the Prophet ﷺ brought. Ibn Ishaq names those who used to harm him in his own home: Abu Lahab, al-Hakam ibn Abi al-'As, 'Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt and others of his neighbours. One of them would throw the entrails of a sheep onto him while he was praying, and another would throw filth into his cooking pot when it was set on the fire. The Prophet ﷺ would lift it out on a stick, stand at his door and say: "O Banu 'Abd Manaf, what kind of neighbourliness is this?" and then throw it into the road. (Ibn Hisham) Khadijah lived through these years in that house, in the middle of her own people, among neighbours who did this to her husband at her door.

Their daughters saw it too. 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud narrated that once, while the Prophet ﷺ was prostrating at the Ka'bah, 'Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt brought the entrails of a slaughtered camel and laid them on his back, while the leaders of Quraysh laughed until they fell against one another. The Prophet ﷺ stayed in prostration and did not raise his head, until Fatimah, still a girl, came running, lifted the filth off his back, and turned on the men who had done it. (Bukhari 240)

The emigration to Abyssinia

In the fifth year of the prophethood, when the persecution of the weaker Muslims became unbearable, the Prophet ﷺ permitted a group of them to emigrate to Abyssinia, whose Christian king was known for his justice. Among the first to leave were 'Uthman ibn 'Affan and his wife Ruqayyah, Khadijah's daughter. (Ibn Hisham) Khadijah saw her daughter cross the sea to a foreign land for the sake of her religion. Ibn Ishaq reports that 'Uthman and Ruqayyah were among those who later came back to Makkah, and that they emigrated again, to Madinah, after Khadijah's death. (Ibn Hisham)

Throughout these years Khadijah's wealth went to the needs of the message and of the Muslims. The sources do not give an account of how she spent it, but they record its end: she entered the marriage as one of the richest people in Makkah, and by the last years of her life the household had little left.



CHAPTER 14

The Valley of Abu Talib

In the seventh year of the prophethood, Quraysh decided to break the Prophet ﷺ and his clan by a total boycott. Abu Talib and Banu Hashim, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, had refused to hand him over, and Banu al-Muttalib stood with them. The other clans of Quraysh agreed among themselves that no one would marry with them, trade with them, or sell them anything, until they gave up Muhammad to be killed. They wrote this agreement on a document and hung it inside the Ka'bah. (Ibn Hisham; Bukhari 1590)

Banu Hashim and Banu al-Muttalib withdrew into a narrow valley on the edge of Makkah belonging to Abu Talib, known as the *Shi'b* of Abu Talib. Abu Lahab alone of Banu Hashim left them and sided with Quraysh. Khadijah went into the valley with her husband.

(Ibn Hisham)

She was not of Banu Hashim. The boycott was not aimed at her clan, and nothing obliged her to go. She was by then about sixty-two years old, by the common reckoning, and had lived her whole life in comfort. She chose to share the valley with her husband.

The siege

The boycott lasted about three years. Supplies ran short, and the besieged were reduced to eating leaves and skins. The biographers report that the crying of hungry children could be heard from outside the valley. Food reached them only in secret, carried at night by relatives in other clans who could not bear to see them starve. (Ibn Hisham; Ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum)

Among those who did this was Khadijah's nephew, Hakim ibn Hizam. Ibn Ishaq reports that Abu Jahl met him one night with a servant carrying flour, which Hakim meant for his aunt Khadijah, who was with the Prophet ﷺ in the valley. Abu Jahl seized hold of him and said: "Are you taking food to Banu Hashim? By Allah, you and your food will not move from here until I disgrace you in Makkah." Abu'l-Bakhtari ibn Hisham, another man of Quraysh, came upon them and told Abu Jahl to let him pass: it was food his aunt had left with him, and he was sending it to her. When Abu Jahl refused, a fight broke out, and Abu'l-Bakhtari struck him and drove him off. (Ibn Hisham)

The end of the boycott

In the end, several men of Quraysh who were related to Banu Hashim through their mothers, led by Hisham ibn 'Amr, turned against the boycott and resolved to tear the document up. Ibn Ishaq reports that when they went to take it down, they found that termites had eaten it except for the words "In Your name, O Allah," with which the Arabs began their writings. The Prophet ﷺ had told Abu Talib in advance that this had happened. (Ibn Hisham)



The boycott ended in the tenth year of the prophethood. The Muslims and Banu Hashim came out of the valley. Khadijah came out with them, weakened by three years of hardship. She lived only a short time after.

CHAPTER 15

The Year of Sorrow

Khadijah died in Makkah in the tenth year of the prophethood, around 619 CE, a short time after the boycott ended. 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, her great-nephew, said: "Khadijah died three years before the Prophet ﷺ left for Madinah." (Bukhari 3896) The common report places her death in the month of Ramadan, at the age of sixty-five. (Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat) She had been married to the Prophet ﷺ for about twenty-five years: fifteen before the revelation and ten after it.

She was buried in al-Hajun, the cemetery on the upper side of Makkah, later known as Jannat al-Mu'alla. Ibn Sa'd reports that the Prophet ﷺ went down into her grave himself to lay her in it. The funeral prayer had not yet been prescribed at that time, and so no funeral prayer was offered for her. (Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat)

Abu Talib

In the same year the Prophet ﷺ lost his uncle Abu Talib, who had raised him from the age of eight and had protected him from Quraysh for ten years of the call, though he never accepted Islam himself. The reports differ over which of the two died first and over how many days or weeks separated their deaths, but they agree that both died in the same year, shortly after the end of the boycott. (Ibn Hisham; Ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum)

Ibn Ishaq describes what this double loss meant: Khadijah had been a true support to him in Islam, to whom he took his troubles, and Abu Talib had been his support and protector against his people. With both gone, the misfortunes followed one after another. Quraysh now did to him what they had not dared to do in Abu Talib's lifetime; one of their fools threw dust on his head in the street, and he went home with the dust still on him. One of his daughters washed it off him, weeping, and he said to her: "Do not weep, my daughter. Allah will protect your father." (Ibn Hisham)

The later historians gave this year a name: *'Am al-Huzn*, the Year of Sorrow. It was in the months that followed that the Prophet ﷺ went to Ta'if to seek support and was driven out with stones. He later told 'A'ishah that the day of Ta'if was the hardest day he had faced from his people. (Bukhari 3231) He went through it without Khadijah to return to.



After her death, the Prophet ﷺ married Sawdah bint Zam'ah, a widow who had emigrated to Abyssinia, to care for his household and his young daughters. (Ibn Hisham) Three years later came the Hijrah to Madinah, and the years in which most of his other marriages took place. None of them took Khadijah's place in his heart, and he never pretended otherwise.

CHAPTER 16

Her Daughters After Her

Khadijah left four daughters. None of them was older than her late twenties, and the youngest, Fatimah, was still unmarried. All four would see the Hijrah and the years in Madinah that their mother did not live to see. What became of them is part of her story, since they carried her name and her example into the life of the Ummah.

Zaynab

Zaynab, the eldest, remained in Makkah with her husband Abul-'As when the Muslims emigrated, since he had not accepted Islam. When he was captured at Badr and ransomed with his mother-in-law's necklace, as told in the next chapter, the Prophet ﷺ released him on the condition that he let Zaynab go to Madinah. Abul-'As kept his word. Ibn Ishaq reports that as she left Makkah, men of Quraysh pursued her, and one of them, Habbar ibn al-Aswad, frightened her camel with his spear so that she fell; she was pregnant, and lost the child. She reached Madinah only after this hardship. (Ibn Hisham)

Some years later Abul-'As was caught by a Muslim raiding party while leading a caravan of Quraysh, and fled to Madinah by night to seek Zaynab's protection. She declared publicly in the mosque, after the dawn prayer, that she had given him protection, and the Prophet ﷺ honoured it. Abul-'As went back to Makkah, returned to every man of Quraysh the goods he had entrusted to him, and then declared his Islam and emigrated. The Prophet ﷺ returned Zaynab to him. (Ibn Hisham) She died in Madinah in 8 AH. Umm 'Atiyyah, who was among the women who washed her body, narrated the instructions the Prophet ﷺ gave them for washing his daughter, which became the basis of the rulings on washing the deceased. (Bukhari 1253; Muslim 939)

Ruqayyah

Ruqayyah emigrated twice, first to Abyssinia and then to Madinah, with her husband 'Uthman ibn 'Affan. When the Muslims marched out to Badr in 2 AH she was gravely ill, and the Prophet ﷺ told 'Uthman to stay behind and nurse her, and gave him the same share of the spoils and the same reward as those who had fought. (Bukhari 3130) She died while the army was away. The biographers report that the news of the victory at Badr reached Madinah as they were levelling the earth on her grave. (Ibn Hisham)



Umm Kulthum

After Ruqayyah's death, the Prophet ﷺ married her sister Umm Kulthum to 'Uthman, in 3 AH. Because he had married two daughters of the Prophet ﷺ, 'Uthman was called *Dhun-Nurayn*, the possessor of the two lights. Umm Kulthum died in 9 AH. Anas ibn Malik narrated that he was present at the burial of a daughter of the Prophet ﷺ, and that the Prophet ﷺ sat beside the grave with his eyes flowing with tears. (Bukhari 1285)

Fatimah

Fatimah, the youngest, married 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, the boy who had grown up in her mother's house, in 2 AH. She was the only one of the children of Khadijah to outlive the Prophet ﷺ. In his last illness he told her a secret that made her weep, and then another that made her laugh: first, that he would die of that illness; and then, that she would be the first of his family to follow him, and that she was the leader of the women of Paradise. (Bukhari 3623; Bukhari 3624) She died about six months after him. Her life is the subject of Part 2 of this series.

CHAPTER 17

A Love That Never Faded

The most striking evidence of Khadijah's place in the life of the Prophet ﷺ comes from the years after her death, in Madinah, and much of it is narrated by 'A'ishah, who never met her.

I never felt jealous of any of the wives of the Prophet ﷺ as I felt of Khadijah, though I never saw her. But the Prophet ﷺ used to mention her often. Sometimes he would slaughter a sheep, cut it into parts and send them to the women who had been Khadijah's friends. I would say to him: "It is as if there were no woman in the world except Khadijah." And he would say: "She was this and that, and from her I had children."

'A'ishah, in Sahih al-Bukhari 3818

'A'ishah also said that the Prophet ﷺ had been commanded to give Khadijah the glad tidings of a house in Paradise, and that this was one of the reasons for her jealousy. (Bukhari 3816; Bukhari 3817) The Prophet ﷺ said of his love for her, simply: "I was given her love." (Muslim 2435) He did not describe it as a choice he had made. It was a provision Allah had given him.

Halah at the door

Years after Khadijah's death, her sister Halah bint Khuwaylid came to Madinah and asked permission to enter upon the Prophet ﷺ. Her voice and her manner of asking were so like Khadijah's that he was startled, recalling his wife, and said: "O Allah, it is Halah!" 'A'ishah, who saw this, said to him: "Why do you keep remembering an old woman of Quraysh, with red gums, who died long ago, when Allah has given you better than her in her place?" (Bukhari 3821) In the narration of Musnad Ahmad, given in Chapter 12, the Prophet ﷺ answered her: "By Allah, Allah has not given me anyone better than her," and listed what Khadijah had given him. (Musnad Ahmad 24864)

Her necklace

After the battle of Badr in 2 AH, Abul-'As ibn ar-Rabi', the husband of Zaynab, was among the prisoners taken by the Muslims. The people of Makkah sent wealth to ransom their prisoners, and Zaynab sent wealth to ransom her husband. Among what she sent was a necklace that had belonged to Khadijah, which her mother had given her on her wedding day. When the Prophet ﷺ saw it, he was overcome with tenderness, and he said to his Companions: "If you see fit to release her prisoner for her and return to her what is hers, then do so." They said: "Yes," and released Abul-'As and returned the necklace. (Abu Dawud 2692) Abul-'As later accepted Islam and was reunited with Zaynab.

Her friends

Al-Hakim records that an old woman once came to the Prophet ﷺ in Madinah, and he received her warmly and asked about her and her family at length. When she left, 'A'ishah asked who she was to be welcomed in such a way. He said: "She used to visit us in the days of Khadijah, and keeping faith with old ties is part of iman." (Al-Mustadrak, al-Hakim)

The scholars drew from these narrations a lesson about loyalty: that honouring those whom a person loved, after his death, is a continuation of honouring him, and that faithfulness in love does not end with the grave. The Prophet ﷺ showed it to Khadijah for the rest of his life.

CHAPTER 18

Her Rank in Islam

Khadijah holds a place among the women of this Ummah that is established by the clearest texts.

Greetings from her Lord

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Jibril came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: (Bukhari 3820)



O Messenger of Allah, this is Khadijah, coming to you with a vessel of food, or drink. When she reaches you, convey to her greetings of peace from her Lord, and from me, and give her the glad tidings of a house in Paradise made of hollowed pearl, in which there is no noise and no toil.

Sahih al-Bukhari 3820; Sahih Muslim 2432

Greetings of peace from Allah Himself, carried by Jibril, is the honour for which she is best known. The scholars have pointed out how fitting the description of the house is to her life. She had spent her years in Makkah in a household of noise, opposition and toil, holding it together for her husband; her reward was a house in which there is neither. Ibn Hajar mentions this explanation in his commentary. (Fath al-Bari, Ibn Hajar)

The best of the women of the world

'Ali ibn Abi Talib narrated that he heard the Prophet ﷺ say: "The best of its women is Maryam, daughter of 'Imran, and the best of its women is Khadijah." (Bukhari 3432; Bukhari 3815) The scholars explained that each was the best of the women of her own time.

Anas ibn Malik narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Sufficient for you among the women of the world are Maryam daughter of 'Imran, Khadijah daughter of Khuwaylid, Fatimah daughter of Muhammad, and Asiyah the wife of Fir'awn." (Tirmidhi 3878) And Ibn 'Abbas narrated that the Prophet ﷺ drew four lines on the ground and asked his Companions whether they knew what they were. They said that Allah and His Messenger knew best. He said: "The best of the women of the people of Paradise are Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, Fatimah bint Muhammad, Maryam bint 'Imran and Asiyah bint Muzahim, the wife of Fir'awn." (Musnad Ahmad 2668)

It is from this narration that this series takes its name, Women of Jannah, and its first four parts: Khadijah, then her daughter Fatimah, then Maryam, then Asiyah.

Mother of the Believers

Allah says: "The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are their mothers." (Qur'an Al-Ahzab 33:6) Khadijah was the first to hold this title. The scholars discussed whether Khadijah or 'Aishah had the greater virtue among the Mothers of the Believers, and expressed different views, each pointing to distinct merits: Khadijah's in the first days of Islam, her support and her precedence in faith, and 'Aishah's in knowledge and in what she transmitted of the religion to the Ummah. Both are honoured, and the matter is one on which the scholars differed with respect.



Her place in history

Every account of the beginning of Islam passes through Khadijah. The first revelation came to her husband, and he came home to her. The first words of reassurance were hers. She took him to the man who would confirm what he had seen. She was the first to believe, and the first to pray behind him. For ten years her house was the house of the message, her wealth was spent for it, and her standing protected it, until she went with him into the valley of the boycott, and came out of it only to die.

She did not live to see the Hijrah, or Badr, or the conquest of Makkah, or the people entering the religion of Allah in crowds. She gave her support at the time when it was hardest to give and least likely to be rewarded in this world, and the Prophet ﷺ never forgot it.

AT A GLANCE

Timeline of Her Life

APPROX. DATE	EVENT
c. 555 CE	Born in Makkah, of Banu Asad of Quraysh (on the report that she was 40 at her marriage).
c. 570 CE	Year of the Elephant: birth of the Prophet ﷺ.
Before 595 CE	First two marriages, to Abu Halah and to 'Atiq ibn 'A'idh; both husbands die. Manages her own trade.
c. 595 CE	The Prophet ﷺ trades with her goods in Sham, with Maysarah. Marriage; he is 25.
c. 595–610 CE	Their children are born: al-Qasim, Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum, Fatimah. Zayd and 'Ali join the household.
c. 605 CE	Rebuilding of the Ka'bah; the Prophet ﷺ places the Black Stone.
610 CE	First revelation in Hira. Her words of comfort; the visit to Waraqah. She is the first to believe.
c. 613 CE	The open call begins; her daughters are separated from the sons of Abu Lahab.
c. 615 CE	Her daughter Ruqayyah emigrates to Abyssinia with 'Uthman.
c. 616–619 CE	The boycott: she lives with the Prophet ﷺ in the valley of Abu Talib.
c. 619 CE	Death in Ramadan, aged about 65; buried at al-Hajun. Death of Abu Talib in the same year.

Dates before the Hijrah are approximate and follow the most common reports.



Sources

The Qur'an	Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah, Ibn Hisham, from Ibn Ishaq
Sahih al-Bukhari	
Sahih Muslim	At-Tabaqat al-Kubra, Ibn Sa'd
Sunan Abi Dawud; Jami' at-Tirmidhi	Akhbar Makkah, al-Azraqi
Musnad Ahmad	Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah, Ibn Kathir
Ash-Shama'il al-Muhammadiyah, at-Tirmidhi	Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, Ibn Kathir
Al-Mustadrak, al-Hakim	Fath al-Bari, Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani
	Ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum, Safiur-Rahman Mubarakpuri

Qur'an and hadith are given in English meaning. Please refer to the Arabic in the mushaf and the books of hadith.

Next Wednesday, in sha Allah: Part 2, Fatimah az-Zahra, the daughter of Khadijah.