

Chapter 18: Khadija and Ayesha

Hadhrat Ayesha was jealous not only of those wives of Muhammad Mustafa who were living at the same time and in the same house as she was, but also of a wife who was long since dead, viz., Khadija. In fact, she was more jealous of Khadija, the dead wife, than she was of any of her living co-wives. She was so jealous of Khadija that she reserved her most bitter blasts against her.

Abbas Mahmud al-Akkad says in his book, –

"Ayesha did not nurse such strong feelings of jealousy toward any wife of the Messenger of Allah as she did toward Khadija. The reason for this jealousy was that Khadija had made a place for herself in the heart of her husband which no one else could take. Muhammad Mustafa recounted her merits night and day.

Muhammad Mustafa was constantly helping the poor and the sick. On one occasion, Ayesha asked him the reason for this, and he said: "Khadija had told me to treat these people with kindness and love. It was her last wish."

When Ayesha heard this, she flared into a rage, and shouted: "Khadija! Khadija! It seems that for you there is no other woman on the face of the earth except Khadija."

The Apostle was a man of unlimited forbearance. But when he saw Ayesha's outburst, he stopped talking with her."

If this incident points up the love that Khadija had for the poor and the sick, it also points up the esteem in which she was held by Muhammad Mustafa. He acted upon her wishes, notwithstanding the overt reaction and resentment of Ayesha. He, in fact, acted upon the wishes of Khadija as long as he lived. Didn't he know that any reference to Khadija displeased Ayesha? Of course he did. Therefore, when she asked him why he was feeding the poor, clothing the naked, and comforting the cheerless, he ought to have given her a "discreet" answer, one that would not have frayed her nerves. But he didn't. He just said: "I am carrying out the wishes of Khadija."

Was this a coincidence that the last thought that Khadija had in this world, was the welfare of the poor,

the sick, the orphans, the widows and the disabled? No. There is nothing coincidental about it. Everything that Khadija ever said or did, was precalculated to win the pleasure of Allah. And she knew that she could win the pleasure of Allah by giving love and service to the most vulnerable of His humble slaves.

Khadija's largess was reaching the hungry, the poor and the sick, even after her death. Her charity never came to a halt – in life or in death!

The name and image of Khadija were etched on the heart of Muhammad Mustafa, and neither the hand of time nor the tantrums of Ayesha could efface them.

Hadhrat Ayesha was aware that she could not dissuade Muhammad Mustafa from praising Khadija, and from talking about her. But this **knowledge did not put a crimp** upon her vis-a-vis her "anti-Khadija" stance. Abbas Mahmud al-Akkad of Egypt, relates another incident in his book, Avesha, as follows:

One day the Messenger of Allah was praising Khadija when Ayesha said: "O Messenger of Allah! Why do you talk all the time about that old woman who had inflamed gums? After all, Allah has given you better wives than her."

Muhammad Mustafa said: "No Ayesha! Allah never gave me a better wife than Khadija. She believed in me at a time when other people denied me. She put all her wealth at my service when other people withheld theirs from me. And what's more, Allah gave me children qoft through Khadija."

It appears that Ayesha's hatred of Khadija which she expressed so blatantly, backfired upon her. Her husband told her that Allah gave him children only through Khadija whereas his other wives **could not give him any** child.

To be childless, is a very painful experience for a woman. But if she is told that she is barren, the pain for her becomes a torture. And if it is her own husband who taunts her for her barrenness, then the pain becomes an agony.

But Ayesha could never repress her hatred of Khadija. She herself said once: "I have never been so jealous of any woman as I am of Khadija." She showed her jealousy over and over again, and each time she elicited from the Messenger of Allah the same anger and displeasure.

The last child of Muhammad Mustafa and Khadija was their daughter, Fatima Zahra. She was born in the fifth year of the Proclamation, and eight years before the Migration. Her brothers, Qasim and Abdullah, had died before her. It was the pleasure of Allah that the line of descent of His messenger and friend, Muhammad Mustafa, should begin with his daughter, Fatima Zahra. She was the joy of her father's heart, and the light of his eyes. He cherished her and her children as his greatest treasures. They were, for him, the epitome of the purest of all joys – both terrestrial and celestial.

From time to time, Muhammad Mustafa had to leave Medina on his campaigns. It was his invariable

practice that he sent his army ahead of him, and he himself was the last one to leave the city.

The last thing that Muhammad Mustafa did before leaving Medina, was to visit his daughter, Fatima Zahra, the blessed one, and her children. He entrusted them to the protection of God, and bade them farewell.

The first thing that Muhammad Mustafa did when he returned to Medina, was to visit the house of his daughter. He invoked God's blessings upon her and her family. During his frequent absences from Medina, there was nothing that he missed so much as the children of his daughter. When he saw them, he exchanged greetings with them, kissed them, dandled them, and played with them. Once he was with them, his weariness from the campaigns, and from long marches **in the dust** and heat of Arabia, vanished, and he was refreshed and restored.

It was a pattern of life for Muhammad Mustafa, and he never veered from it. His emotional life revolved around the house of his daughter.

Hadhrat Ayesha didn't share her husband's love for his daughter. Abbas Mahmud al-Akkad says in his book, Ayesha:

In the first place, Fatima was the daughter of Khadija; and the Messenger of Allah loved Khadija so much that he was constantly praising and complimenting her. Ayesha resented this. In the second place, Ayesha was childless. Whenever she saw her husband coddling and cuddling the children of Fatima which he was doing all the time, she was further embittered being painfully reminded of her own sterility. The relations, therefore, of Ayesha and Fatima, were not very "friendly."

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