

The Prophetic Biography:

The Meccan Period

Lesson 3



Nursing and Childhood

- His mother Aminah nursed him immediately after his birth.
- The most notable woman who nursed the Prophet was Halima al-Sa'diyyah.
- She belonged to the Bedouin clan of Banu Sa'd who had a high reputation for nursing and rearing children in the desert.
- It was the custom of all noble families to send their sons, soon after birth, to be nursed and raised in the desert among one of the Bedouin tribes.

Nursing and Childhood

- **Why were newborns nursed and raised in the deserts with Bedouin tribes?**
 - It was healthier for children to grow up in the desert. Epidemics were not infrequent and infant mortality rate was high so families would send their newborns to the deserts as a means of survival
 - Children who grow up in rural towns are generally tougher than city kids. If you could adjust to life in the desert, you can live anywhere. This shows that the Arabs were long term planners. They wanted their children to learn to adapt to hardship.
 - Life in the desert instilled a sense of discipline in the child.
 - Children could learn the pure unadulterated Arabic of the Bedouin Arabs

Nursing and Childhood

- It was common for desert-dwelling wet-nurses to periodically visit Mecca and offer their services to Quraysh.
- When Halima and her husband, Harith, arrived in Mecca , they set about looking for a newborn to nurse.
- Aminah offered her son first to one and then another until finally she had tried all of them and they had all refused.
- All of the wet-nurses were reluctant to accept an orphan because they hoped for some favor from the boy's father.

Nursing and Childhood

- Martin Lings, in his book 'Muhammad his life based on the earliest sources', writes that Halima narrates:

“When we decided to leave Mecca, I told my husband: ‘I hate to return in the company of my friends without having taken a baby to suckle. I shall go to that orphan and take him. ‘As you wish’, her husband said. ‘It may be that God will bless us through him. So I went and took him for no reason except that I could find none but him. ..”

Nursing and Childhood

”I carried him back to where our mounts were stationed, and no sooner had I put him in my bosom than by breasts overflowed with milk for him. He drank his fill, and with him his foster brother drank likewise his fill. Then they both slept; and my husband went to that old she-camel of ours, and lo! Her udders were full. He milked her and drank of her milk and I drank with him until we could drink no more and our hunger was satisfied...”

Nursing and Childhood

“We spent the best of nights, and in the morning my husband said to me: ‘By God, Halima, it is a blessed creature that you have taken.’ That is indeed my hope ,’ I said. Then we set out, and I rode my donkey and carried him with me on her back. She outstripped the whole troop, nor could any of their donkeys keep pace with her....”

Nursing and Childhood

”We reached the tents in the Bani Sa’d country, and I know of no place on God’s earth more barren than that then was. But after we brought him to live with us, my flock would come home to me replete at every eventide and full of milk. We milked them and drank, when others had no drop of milk.... And we ceased not to enjoy this increase and this bounty from God until the baby’s two years had passed, and I weaned him.”

Nursing and Childhood

“He was growing well”, she continued, “and none of the other boys could match him for growth. By the time he was two years old he was a well-made child, and we took him again to his mother, although we were eager that he should stay with us for the blessings he brought us. So I said to her: ‘Leave my little son with me until he grow stronger, for I fear lest he be stricken with the plague of Mecca.’

The Death of Aminah

- Ibn Ishaq reports that when the Prophet was 6, his mother took him to Medina to visit his father's mother's family, the Banī al-Najjār. On their return, she dies in al-Abwā' between Mecca and Medina.
- Her slave, Umm Ayman, brings him back to Mecca to his grandfather
- Thus, at the tender age of 6, the Prophet is left without a mother or father.

Under the Care of Abdul Muttalib

- In al-Kafi, there is a tradition from Imam al-Sadiq where he sheds light on the immense love and respect Abdul Muttalib showed the Prophet (s):

كان عبد المطلب يفرش له بفناء الكعبة لا يفرش لاحد غيره وكان له ولد يقومون على رأسه فيمنعون من دنا منه، فجاء رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وهو طفل يدرج حتى جلس على فخذي، فأهوى بعضهم إليه لينحيه عنه، فقال له عبد المطلب: دع ابني فإن الملك قد أتاه.

“The Meccans used to lay a rug out especially for Abdul Muṭṭalib in the shade of the Ka‘bah. Out of respect for Abdul Muttalib, nobody sat on it except for him. Once the young Prophet sat upon it, and Abdul Muttalib’s sons rushed to move him away. Abdul Muttalib told them, “Leave my son be, for by God, he has something great in store for him. I believe he will one day lead you all. His disposition is that of one who will lead people.”

Abdul Muttalib's Will

يا أبا طالب انظر أن تكون حافظا لهذا الوحيد الذي لم يشم رائحة أبيه ولاذاق شفقة امه،
انظر يا أبا طالب أن يكون من جسدك بمنزلة كبدك فإني قد تركت بني كلهم واوصيتك به
لأنك من ام أبيه

“O Abu Talib! Ensure that this boy remains as near to your person as your own heart, for I have overlooked all my sons and chosen you alone for this testament because you and his father are from a single mother...”

Abdul Muttalib's Will

يا أبا طالب إن أدركت أيامه فاعلم أني كنت من أبصر الناس و أعلم الناس به، فإن استطعت أن تتبعه فافعل وانصره بلسانك ويدك ومالك فإنه و الله سيسودكم ويملك ما لم يملك أحد من بني أبي

“O Abu Talib! If you live to see his heyday, then remember that I was among the most perspicacious and aware people of who he is. If you can follow him openly, then do so. Aid him with your tongue, your hand, and your wealth, for he will, by God, lead you and rule over you as none of my ancestors ever ruled...”

Abdul Muttalib's Will

يا أبا طالب ما أعلم أحدا من أبائك مات عنه أبوه على حال أبيه ولا امه على حال امه
فاحفظه لوحده

“O Abu Talib! I do not know of any of your ancestors who lost a father as he did or a mother the way he did. Thus, be mindful of his loneliness.”

- Abu Talib accepted his testament. Upon hearing Abu Talib's acceptance, he said:

الآن خفف علي الموت، ثم ضمه إلى صدره ولم يزل يقبله ويقول: أشهد أني لم أقبل أحدا
من ولدي أطيب ريحا منك ولا أحسن وجها منك.

“Now I can die easy. Thereafter he kept kissing the Prophet saying, ‘I testify that I have never kissed any of my children with a fragrance as sweet as yours or a face as pleasant as yours.’”

In the Custody of Abu Talib

- He raised him as his own son, in fact, he favored him over his own
- He took him to Syria when he was 12.
- Story of Bahira the monk in the words of Abu Talib:

“The caravan reached Bosra and stopped at a monastery there. The monk Bahira brought them food and ate with them. Bahira’s interest was peaked when he met Muḥammad ...”

In the Custody of Abu Talib

“He said, “Young boy, I shall ask you three questions for the sake of Lāt and ‘Uzzā.” Muḥammad grew angry and said, “Do not ask me for their sake, for I do not hate anything as much as I hate them. They are stone idols worshipped by my people.” Bahira said under his breath, “That is one characteristic.”

In the Custody of Abu Talib

“Then he said, “Then for the sake of God, answer me.” Muḥammad said, “Ask what you like, for you have now asked me for the sake of my God and yours, whom nothing matches.” After a few more questions, Baḥīrā falls upon him kissing him and saying, “You are the answer to Abraham’s prayer, and the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus; you are one purified of the filth of the Age of Ignorance.”

In the Custody of Abu Talib

“Then he turned to me and asked, “Who is this boy to you, for I see that you do not let him leave your side.” I said, “He is my son.” Baḥīrā said, “He is not your son. It is not possible that his actually father or mother still be alive.” So I clarified, “He is my nephew. His father died when his mother was pregnant with him. And his mother died when he was six years old.”

In the Custody of Abu Talib

“Baḥīrā said, “Now you have spoken the truth. I advise that you return him to your city. For if people see him and notice in him what I have noticed, they will do him harm, especially the Jews.” I said, “Never, God would not let harm befall him.”

Divine Care

وَلَقَدْ قَرَنَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى بِهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) مِنْ لَدُنْ [أَنْ] كَانَ فَطِيماً أَعْظَمَ مَلَكٍ مِنْ مَلَائِكَتِهِ
يَسُنُّكَ بِهِ طَرِيقَ الْمَكَارِمِ، وَمَحَاسِنِ أَخْلَاقِ الْعَالَمِ، لَيْلَهُ وَنَهَارَهُ،

“From the time he was weaned, God sent the greatest of his angels to accompany him and lead him, day and night, down a path to nobility and virtue.”- Imam Ali (a)

Divine Care

لقد رأيتني في غلمان قريش ننقل حجارة لبعض ما يلعب به الغلمان ، كلنا قد تعري ، وأخذ إزاره فجعله على رقبته ، يحمل عليه الحجارة ؛ فإني لأقبل معهم كذلك وأدير ، إذ لکمني لاکم ما أراه ، لکمة وجيعة ، ثم قال : شد عليك إزارك ؛ قال : فأخذته وشدته علي ، ثم جعلت أحمل الحجارة على رقبتي وإزاري علي من بين أصحابي

“I found myself among some boys from Quraysh. We were moving rocks around to play with them. I was also playing with them. We decided to take our clothes off and use them to hang the rocks over our shoulders. When I went to take my clothes off, something struck my hand, and then said, ‘Keep your clothes on.’ I could not see it, but I did as it told me. From then on, I carried the rocks against my neck with my friends and left my clothes on.”

The Coalition of Justice

- It is reported that once a visiting Yemeni merchant agreed to sell some of his goods to a local Meccan, Al-A'as b. Wai'l, from the clan of Sahm.
- However, when the Al-A'as refused to pay the predetermined price, the visiting merchant had no legal recourse.
- Alone and helpless, he publicly challenged the Quraysh to arbitrate the matter.
- The Prophet's uncle, Zubayr b. Abdul Muttalib, heard the merchant's cry and conveyed his concern to the leaders of Quraysh.

The Coalition of Justice

- Abdullah b. Jud'an, a man from the clan of Taym, called an open meeting at his house to address the complaint and develop a code of justice.
- Only five of the 14 Quraysh clans accepted Abdullah's invitation.
- The parties to the pact were the leaders of Banū Ḥāshim, Banū al-Muṭṭalib, Banū Asad, Banū Zuhrah, and Banū Taym.
- The attendees agreed to a simple code of ethics- that each clan would stand for the oppressed against the oppressor, regardless of who was oppressing.
- All parties submerged their hands in Zamzam and swore to help anyone who is wronged against him who has wronged him

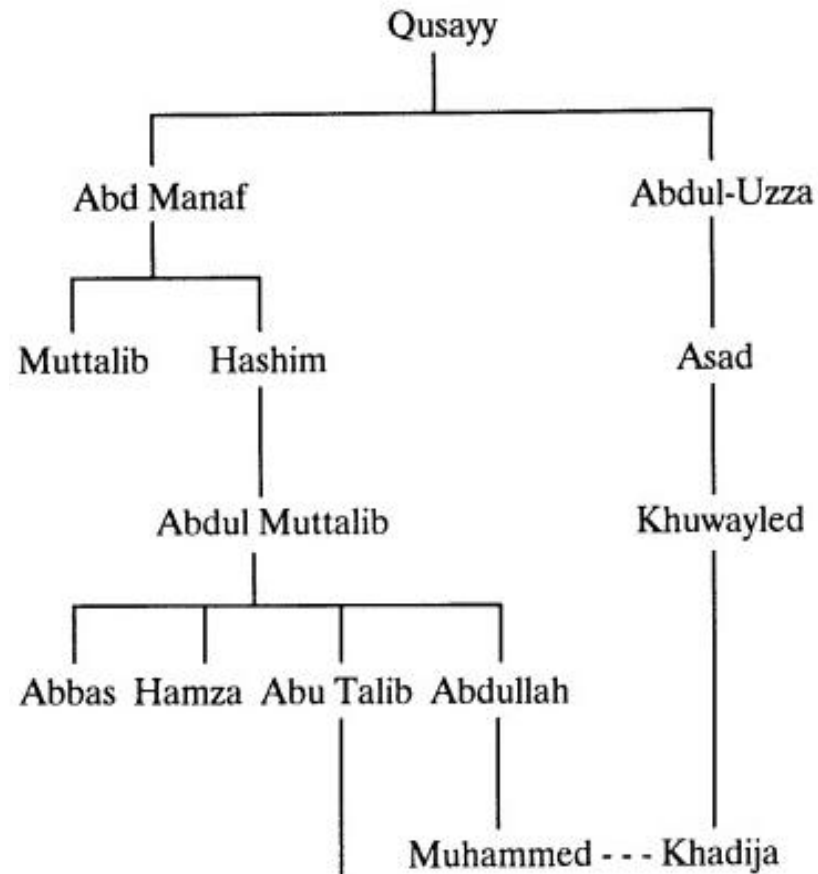
The Coalition of Justice

لقد شهدت في دار عبد الله بن جدعان حلفا ، ما أحب أن لي به حمر النعم ، ولو أديت به
في الإسلام لأجبت

“I witnessed a pact in the house of Abdullah b. Jud’an. It was more appealing to me than herds of cattle. Even now in the period of Islam, I would respond positively to attending such a meeting if I were invited.”- The Prophet (s)

Khadijah

- Khadijah, the daughter of Khuwaylid, was a resident of Mecca.
- She also belonged to the tribe of Quraysh.



Khadijah

- Khadijah was held in high esteem by the Meccans because of her exemplary character and her business savviness
- Just as the Meccans called Muhammad 'Sadiq' and 'Ameen,' they called Khadijah *Tahira*, which means "the pure one." She was also known among the Arabs as the 'Princess of the Merchants.'
- Whenever the caravans left Mecca or returned to Mecca, they noted that her cargo was larger in volume than the cargo of all other merchants of Mecca put together.

Khadijah

- When Muhammad was 25 years old, his uncle, Abu Talib, suggested to Khadijah that she consider making him a partner in one of her caravans, which was ready to leave for Syria.
- Incidentally, Khadijah was in fact in need of someone to manage the caravan of goods.
- Her servant, Maysarah, also accompanied him and served him as an aide.
- This commercial expedition to Syria was successful and generated unprecedented profits.

Khadijah

- On this journey, the Prophet (s) took a route similar to the route that his uncle Abu Talib would take on his expeditions to Syria.
- They stopped at Bosra, where another Christian monk, Nestor, observed Muhammad and confided in Maysarah that the young merchant was destined to be a prophet.
- Upon returning to Mecca, Maysarah told Khadijah about Nestor's prediction.
- Khadijah approached her cousin Waraqah, who corroborated the monk's prophecy.
- Maysarah also highlighted the truthfulness and integrity that he witnessed from Muhammad during their journey.

Khadijah

- Upon seeing the astronomical profits Muhammad yielded, Khadijah offered him twice the rate that she would give to others who worked with her but Muhammad refused and insisted on receiving the standard rate.
- The Prophet takes his earnings and gives it to Abu Talib since the latter was facing some financial hardships.
- When Abu Talib sensed that there was an attraction between Khadijah and Muhammad he recommended his nephew to pursue a marital relationship.
- Khadijah sent Nufaysah to propose to Muhammad on her behalf.

A Blessed Union

عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) قال: لما أراد رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله) أن يتزوج خديجة بنت خويلد أقبل أبو طالب في أهل بيته ومعه نفر من قريش حتى دخل على ورقة بن نوفل فابتدأ أبو طالب بالكلام

“When the Messenger of God wanted to marry Khadījah bint Khuwaylid, Abū Ṭālib proceeded with his household and some prominent members of the Quraysh until they reached the home of Waraqah ibn Nawfal, the paternal cousin of Khadījah. Abū Ṭālib initiated the conversation saying...

A Blessed Union

فقال: الحمد لرب هذا البيت، الذي جعلنا من زرع إبراهيم، وذرية إسماعيل وأنزلنا حرما
آمنا، وجعلنا الحكام على الناس، وبارك لنا في بلدنا الذي نحن فيه

“Praise is for the Lord of the Ka‘bah who made us among the offspring of Abraham and the descendants of Ishmael and placed us in this safe sanctuary and made us rulers over people and blessed us in this city in which we live.

A Blessed Union

ثم إن ابن أخي هذا - يعني رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله) - ممن لا يوزن برجل من قريش إلا رجح به ولا يقاس به رجل إلا عظم عنه ولا عدل له في الخلق وإن كان مقلا في المال

“Furthermore, this nephew of mine is a man who, if measured against any man of Quraysh would tip the balance, who, if compared to any man would prove to be greater. No match has he among God’s creatures, though he is poor in wealth...”

A Blessed Union

فإن المال رقد جار وظل زائل وله في خديجة رغبة ولها فيه رغبة، وقد جنناك لتخطبها إليك
برضاها وأمرها والمهر علي في مالي الذي سألتموه عاجله وآجله وله ورب هذا البيت حظ
عظيم ودين شائع ورأي كامل

“..but then wealth comes and goes, it is a fleeting shadow. He wants Khadījah, and she wants him. Thus, we have come to ask you for her hand at her pleasure and request. The bridal gift, which you have demanded, that which is due immediately, and that which is due later, is on me to be paid out of my holdings. By the Lord of this House, he has great promise, a piety that is well-known, and an insight that is mature.”

A Blessed Union

ثم سكت أبو طالب وتكلم عمها وتلجج وقصر عن جواب أبي طالب وأدركه القطع والبهر
وكان رجلا من القسيسين فقالت خديجة مبتدئة: يا عماه إنك وإن كنت أولى بنفسي مني في
الشهود فلست أولى بي من نفسي، قد زوجتك يا محمد نفسي، والمهر علي في مالي

“Then he was silent. Then her uncle (‘Amr) tried to speak but was unable to match Abū Ṭālib...so Khadījah stepped in and said, “O Uncle! While you are my guardian when I am absent, you are not my guardian when I am present. I hereby marry myself to you, O Muḥammad! And the bridal gift is on me.

A Blessed Union

فأمر عمك فلينحر ناقة فليولم بها وادخل على أهك قال أبو طالب: أشهدوا عليها بقبولها
محمدا وضمانها المهر في مالها

“Please request your uncle to slaughter a camel and make a wedding feast (walīmah) of it, and you may take up residence with your wife.”
Abū Ṭālib said, “Bear witness that she has accepted Muḥammad and assumed the bridal gift on herself.”

A Blessed Union

فقال بعض قريش يا عجباه المهر على النساء للرجال، فغضب أبو طالب غضبا شديدا وقام
على قدميه وكان ممن يهابه الرجال ويكره غضبه

“Some of the Quraysh said, “How strange! Bridal gifts are now paid by the woman to the man?!” Abū Ṭālib stood and retorted angrily,...

A Blessed Union

فقال: إذا كانوا مثل ابن أخي هذا طلبت الرجال بأغلا الأثمان وأعظم المهر وإذا كانوا أمثالكم لم يزوجوا إلا بالمهر الغالي

“When the man is like my nephew, he is sought after with the most expensive gifts; but when the man is like you, no one marries him unless he gives her the most expensive gifts!”

- The bridal gift was 12.5 purses of silver, each purse contains 40 dirhams (i.e., 500 dirhams)

The Age of Khadijah

- The common opinion is that she was 40 years old, and she died when she was 65. This is the opinion of one of the Sunni historian, al-Waqidi.
- Scholars unanimously agreed that they were married for 25 years, and that the Prophet was 25 years old when he got married. However, there are more authentic reports that Khadija's age was not 40 when she got married.

The Age of Khadijah

- Academically speaking, there are some problems with the assertion that Khadijah was 40 when she married the Prophet.
 - Al-Bayhaqi in his book *دلائل النبوة* and Ibn Kathir in his book *البداية والنهاية* and other classical Sunni historians note that Khadijah died at the age of 50
 - The prevalent view among historians is that Khadijah died in the 10th year after the bi'thah.
 - All historians agree that the Prophet began his prophetic mission at the age of 40.
 - The Prophet and Khadijah had at least 6 children. And a woman in her 40s, it would be very difficult to do this.

The Age of Khadijah

عن عائشة: كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا ذكر خديجة أتى عليها فأحسن الثناء، قالت: فغرتُ يوماً، فقلت: ما أكثر ما تذكرها،! حمراء الشّدق، قد أبدلك الله عز وجل بها خيراً منها، قال: ((ما أبدلني الله عز وجل خيراً منها؛ قد آمنت بي إذ كفر بي الناس، وصدقتني إذ كذبتني الناس، ووأستني بمالها إذ حرمني الناس، ورزقني الله عز وجل ولدها إذ حرمني أولاد النساء

”The Prophet used to mention Khadijah and praise her so I became jealous and said: “How often you mention her!! God replaced her with better. God never gave me a better wife than Khadijah. 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 God gave me children through Khadija while he deprived others.”

Source: Musnad Ahmad