Khadijah

As you read the biography below, think about how Khadijah’s loyalty played an important role in her husband’s life.

Khadijah (ka-DEE-jah) was a prosperous Arabian widow and a wealthy merchant. She hired Muhammad to manage the caravan business that she owned. Muhammad’s skill as a trader and his ability to handle the business impressed Khadijah. Soon her admiration toward Muhammad turned into affection.

In 595 Khadijah proposed marriage. Muhammad was surprised that such a noble woman would want to marry him, but he happily accepted. At the time of their marriage, Muhammad was 25 years old and Khadijah was 40. They had six children together, four daughters and two sons.

Their relationship was important to Muhammad’s development as a religious leader. About 15 years after they married, Muhammad had a vision. Muslims believe that while Muhammad was meditating in a cave outside of Mecca, an angel appeared to him. The angel began delivering messages from God to Muhammad. At first, Muhammad had doubts that it truly was a revelation. Khadijah encouraged him by saying, “I testify that you are the awaited prophet in this nation, and your time, if Allah wills, has come.”
Khadijah, continued

Khadijah stood by Muhammad as he struggled with doubts about his fate and many times later when others opposed his teachings. Khadijah was one of Muhammad’s most loyal followers and became the first person to embrace the new religion. Muhammad went on to unite his people in the Islamic faith. Khadijah took care of their family and ran the household, which allowed Muhammad to dedicate himself entirely to his preaching. Khadijah eventually spent her entire fortune promoting Islam.

Muhammad loved and respected Khadijah so much that he took no other wives—even though customs of the time would allow him to do so—until after her death in 619. Many years after she passed away, Muhammad said that Khadijah “believed in me when all others disbelieved; she held me truthful when others called me a liar; she sheltered me when others abandoned me.”

In Islamic culture today, Khadijah serves as a role model and is an ideal example for Islamic women to follow. To many Muslims, Khadijah is one of the greatest women who ever lived.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

1. Explain Who was Khadijah, and what was her relationship to Muhammad before they married?

2. Analyze What do you think was Khadijah’s main contribution to Muhammad’s development as a prophet?

ACTIVITY

Khadijah set an example for Islamic women. Write a letter from the point of view of a Muslim stating Khadijah’s qualities. Address what you think might have happened if she had never encouraged Mohammad when he had his vision.