

A Visit To A Bride

After finishing her morning prayer, Fatimah usually sat down to recite a chapter from the Holy Qur'an. She always found great pleasure in reading each verse as she thought about the sublime meaning of the Divine words. At such times, she felt as though she on a higher plane, a spiritual world with a sacred atmosphere. The words taught her lessons and flooded her life with new light when she read the Qur'anic verses:

“And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion. Most surely, there, are signs in this for people who reflect.” (Al-Rum, 30:21)

And,

“And they who say: Oh our Lord! Grant us in our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes and make us guides to those who guard (against evil).” (Al-Furqan, 25:74)

The words reminded her of famous Muslim believers. She gave a deep sigh. She really felt quite sad when she saw some Muslims failing to continue striving towards perfection. However, there were still promising examples. She thought about her friend, Khadijah, who had just begun her married life and was visiting some holy shrines during her honeymoon. Khadijah was a good Muslim sister who chose her partner carefully and according to religious measures. She rejected all anti-Islamic traditions that distorted the meaning and essence of marriage.

She always said that, according to Islam, marriage is the first brick of a foundation in raising a generation of good believers. Fatimah beseeched Allah to guide her dear friend along the right path in her new life. She had barely finished her prayer when one of her Muslim friends rang the doorbell. She had come to tell Fatimah that Khadijah had returned from her honeymoon and that she had settled in her new home. Fatimah rushed to put on her hijab to go and visit her, but the sister told Fatimah it was too early to go that day, and that Khadijah was not quite ready to receive visitors. Fatimah was surprised. How could Khadijah refuse a Muslim sister's visit? She felt sad and said, "I can hardly believe this. Why don't we go and clear up the matter?"

The sister replied, "Oh, perhaps Khadijah will be annoyed for some particular reason."

Fatimah said, "Yes, it may be so. Otherwise, she would not refuse her sister's visit simply because she lacked furniture or some similar reason. She has never been concerned about materialistic things."

Fatimah spent that day depressed. She feared Khadijah might yield to the false values of society, yet she knew that her friend was a good believer and would not change easily.

At nine o'clock that evening, the doorbell rang and Fatimah went to open it. She was so pleased to see Khadijah standing there that she could hardly believe her eyes. They exchanged kisses and words of welcome and Fatimah congratulated Khadijah, and told her of her desire to visit her. Khadijah expressed surprise at the delay in visiting her, but Fatimah said, "Have you not announced that you are not ready to receive friends?"

Khadijah replied, "Why should I? I have missed you all so much and have been waiting for your visit since my arrival."

Fatimah said, "Well someone said that your house was not fit yet for visitors."

Khadijah was surprised and said, "Oh, dear! Since when have I cared for such trifles? How can you believe it?" Fatimah was pleased to hear this. She said, "Praise is to Allah! How happy I am to hear you say this! But such un-Islamic rumors should be stopped. We are quite happy that you have begun your married life in harmony with your religious beliefs. We shall soon visit you, God willing."

Khadijah warmly replied, "You are all welcome any time; the sooner, the better."

The next morning Fatimah phoned the other sisters and told them of her proposed visit to Khadijah on that day. While she was thinking about telling her cousin, she heard her talking to her mother. Fatimah went to her and asked her to join them, but her cousin said, "Oh, thank you, but..."

Fatimah was surprised at her cousin's answer, and asked, "What is the matter with you? Didn't you say that you wanted to go with us?"

Her cousin replied, "Yes, but it is clear that you do not want me to accompany you."

Fatimah was amazed. "What makes you think so?" she asked.

Her cousin answered, "How can you inform me of the visit on the same day? How am I to get ready when I need at least two days to get a new dress and buy a nice present? Do you think I can go without a gift?"

Fatimah said, "Not necessarily. A present can enhance friendship and is recommended in our religion. But buying a present should not cause financial strain. Otherwise, it seems as if it were a tax to be paid. A present can be something simple and still special. Our Prophet (SAWS) used to accept even a cup of

milk as a present."

Fatimah's cousin retorted, "Don't you think it would be shameful to give her a cheap present?"

Fatimah said firmly, "A gift is not valuable because of its price, but by its being given. A useful book, for instance, is a good gift. As for a new dress, I suggest you visit Khadijah in your old dress and you can buy a new one another time."

The cousin thought for a while, then agreed to go. On that day, the new bride Khadijah was busy with her daily work. She baked a cake for her expected visitors.

She was active and at ease. Thinking of the upcoming visit, she recalled pleasant memories of the past. The doorbell rang and one of her relatives, who also happened to be her neighbor, was at the door. Khadijah welcomed her and invited her in. They sat down and chatted a while.

Her relative told Khadijah about their district, most of the inhabitants of which were wealthy. Khadijah said, "I do not care much for this aristocratic district. A true Muslim does not change his or herself to fit in with any particular class of people."

The relative answered, "Well, I just wanted to tell you about some matters concerning the district where you have settled."

"Does it really matter?" asked Khadijah.

"The style of your hijab is not accepted here. You look peculiar."

Khadijah proudly replied, "I am happy to look different in my decent Islamic dress."

Bewildered, her relative asked, "Why should you be happy to be so different from the rest?"

Khadijah said, "First of all, my aim is to obey my Creator and gain His pleasure. Also, when I wear my hijab, I surely remind others of Allah and their obligation to worship Him according to the Qur'anic verse:

"And I have not created the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me."(Al-Zariat, 51:56)

"My duty is to enjoin the good and forbid evil. Through my appearance I call people to Allah's religion. In any case, thank you for your advice."

Khadijah's relative could not believe her ears. She changed the subject, saying, "You are expecting some guests, aren't you? I smell fresh cake."

Khadijah smiled and said, "Yes, I expect some of my sisters in faith."

"It is pity you have not furnished your home yet,"

Khadijah's relative remarked, looking around the living room. "Since you have no chairs, I can lend you some, and any other things you might need."

"Thank you very much, but I do not need to borrow any chairs. I can manage without them. I consider such things to be of little value. I believe in the Qur'anic verse:

...And the embellishment of gold, and all of this is naught but provision of this world's life; and the hereafter is with your Lord; only for those who guard (against evil). " (Al-Zukhruf, 43:35)

That evening, Khadijah entertained her friends, who enjoyed the visit and were warmly welcomed by the bride.

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