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regarding the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)**

**Thesis Topic: Non-Muslim accuses Prophet Muhammad  
(ﷺ) of pedophilia by marrying Aisha (May Allaah be  
pleased with her) at her young age.**



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*In the name of Allaah, the most gracious, the most merciful. May Allaah have mercy on the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and those who follow him until the Day of Judgment.*

## **Abstract**

*There are numerous criticisms against Islam that are propagated by non-Muslims and orientalists as well in the present age. One of these criticisms is that the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was accused of marrying an under-aged girl based on the hadith quoted by Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim where Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) mentions that she married the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) when she was six and consummated the marriage when she was nine. (This article focuses on: The claim that she actually had in her teens when she got married and are they so strong that we can disprove Aisha's hadith?) Why the marriage of Aisha has become a problem in modern times when it was not at the time of marriage? In conclusion, claiming that she was a teenager when she got married is more a reaction to our own insecurity rather than a neutral way of seeking the truth. This article also shows how happy and satisfied Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) was in her married life with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and how successful their married life was. This article will explain if there was any criticism from any individual when the aforementioned historical marriage took place.*

## **Chapter 1 - Introduction:**

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) married Aisha *bint* Abu Bakr (May Allaah be pleased with her), when she was a young girl. This marriage took place almost 15 centuries ago where not a single complaint was made against this marriage by anyone at that period. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) is our mother and is not just a number. For more than fourteen-hundred years, her age has never been a subject of controversy or a defining feature. In the history of Islam, she is brilliant and a great scholar and very intellectual. However, in recent years her age at the time of her marriage to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) has become a favorite topic of discussion among Islamophobes and orientalists, and it has become a source of suspicion for young Muslims. Not a single word had been written by any historians, groups or

individuals up until the modern era of our time by any of the revisionists and non-Muslim orientalist as part of their routine attacks on the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and Islam. We will examine that,

- Was there any criticism or condemnations by any person in the earlier centuries'; if not,
- Why does it become an issue in modern times?
- Did child marriage exist during the period of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) or was it looked down upon by the community as a whole?

If a young age had been an issue Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) would have been the first person to raise this issue at some point in her life. She must express her negative feelings, emotions about her marriage at a young age through her teachings, writings etc. When Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) approached Abu Bakr (father of Aisha) about the marriage, why was Abu Bakr hesitant? Was Abu Bakr hesitant, concerned about the young age of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) or was it because Aisha was a niece figure to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)?

### **What is the accurate age for Marriage?**

There is no fixed or accurate age of marriage anywhere in the world, it is changing and differs from place to place and from time to time, with some numbers in contemporary times differing from 10 years to 25 years. It is fluctuating over the time period. If Aisha's (May Allaah be pleased with her) marriage is contentious, there must be a marriage age beyond dispute in the society by which we can judge, but we do not have that. There are two things that we have to take into consideration, physical capabilities and mental acceptance. Recent research indicates that onset of puberty has fluctuated dramatically in the course of history. Case in point, whilst it would have been everyday for a younger lady to begin puberty at around fourteen years of age for the duration of the Western Industrial Revolution (eighteenth–nineteenth Century). In the twenty-first century, some women began puberty as early as six years old. (Jessa Gamble). The motives for those fluctuations are nonetheless in a large part undetermined, despite the fact that they had been linked to variances

in genetics, nutrition, stress, or even the over-sexualization of Western societies. (Sandra K. Cesario and Lisa A. Hughes)

### **Age of consent**

Sexual consent is a mutual agreement between two individuals to take part in any form of sexual entertainments. It should be a pleasurable experience between the husband and wife (Islamic concept) or between partners based on mutual understanding and respect (some modernists). This age of consent roughly estimated corresponding to the age of puberty when a girl can get married.

At what age can an individual give consent for sexual activities? It is a modern phenomenon (1880). Age of consent for having legal sex can vary from country to country, even from state to state and from culture to culture around the world. This age of consent is different for both genders and time even within the same country.

For the first time, many western countries by 1880, had established an age of consent of 12 or 13 years. Then only 40 years later in 1920, most of the countries revised age of consent upward, 14 or 15. (“Age of consent Law”).

Age of consent is constantly changing throughout the world time to time based on the geographical dynamics and financial considerations which play a vital role in determining the age of consent. Following chart shows the variations of consent in different time and places.

#### **Primary Source Text**

##### **Age Limit in Age of Consent Laws in Selected Countries**

	<b>1880</b>	<b>1920</b>	<b>2007</b>
Bulgaria	13	13	14
Denmark	12	12	15
England & Wales	13	16	16

	1880	1920	2007
France	13	13	15
Germany	14	14	14
Luxembourg	15	15	16
Portugal	12	12	14
Romania	15	15	15
Russia	10	14	16
Scotland	12	12	16
Spain	12	12	13
Sweden	15	15	15
Switzerland	various	16	16
Turkey	15	15	18
Chile	20	20	18
Canada	12	14	14
New South Wales	12	16	16
Queensland	12	17	16
Victoria	12	16	16
Western Australia	12	14	16
Alabama	10	16	16
Arizona	12	18	18

	<b>1880</b>	<b>1920</b>	<b>2007</b>
Arkansas	10	16	16
California	10	18	18
Colorado	10	18	15
Connecticut	10	16	16
District of Columbia	12	16	16
Delaware	7	16	16
Florida	10	18	18
Georgia	10	14	16
Idaho	10	18	18
Illinois	10	16	17
Indiana	12	16	16
Iowa	10	16	16
Kansas	10	18	16
Kentucky	12	16	16
Louisiana	12	18	17
Maine	10	16	16
Maryland	10	16	16
Massachusetts	10	16	16
Michigan	10	16	16

	<b>1880</b>	<b>1920</b>	<b>2007</b>
Minnesota	10	18	16
Mississippi	10	18	16
Missouri	12	18	17
Montana	10	18	16
Nebraska	10	18	17
Nevada	12	18	16
New Hampshire	10	16	16
New Jersey	10	16	16
New Mexico	10	16	17
New York	10	18	17
North Carolina	10	16	16
North Dakota	10	18	18
Ohio	10	16	16
Oregon	10	16	18
Pennsylvania	10	16	16
Rhode Island	10	16	16
South Carolina	10	16	16
South Dakota	10	18	16
Tennessee	10	18	18

	1880	1920	2007
Texas	10	18	17
Utah	10	18	16
Vermont	10	16	16
Virginia	12	16	18
Washington	12	18	16
West Virginia	12	16	16
Wisconsin	10	16	18
Wyoming	10	16	16

*"European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 8 (2000): 466; Odem, Mary. *Delinquent Daughters: Policing and Protecting Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

According to the above table, in 1880 most countries had the age of consent set at ten or twelve years, some countries had an even lower age like Delaware where this age was seven years and Nigeria eleven years. There is no common age of consent for all countries and cultures; it varies from country to country. So, this is the modern age of consent, marriage can take place even before this age.

So, the consent age of one country can be considered as pedophilia in another country. There must be a criteria that can be used to define when a girl can be considered sexually mature and physically capable of bearing a child and this naturally happens at puberty. This vital fact of puberty is not appropriate to determine by the political opinions, or any other interference; it is a natural process of division. While, in our current time it is without doubt the actual onset of puberty does not make a person fully mature mentally, socially and physically, and ready to make an independent autonomous family, but this is because of the nature and requirements

of our sophisticated lifestyle. It is inconceivable to expect that our current requirements should be valid and applicable to ancient society.

Furthermore, we open ourselves to rational embarrassment with the useful resource of the usage of misinterpreting history. The official website for BBC History Magazine and BBC History Revealed, “You could get married as soon as you hit puberty, and parental consent was not required”

One of the aspects of pedophilia is sexual exploitation, physical abuse of a girl, exchange of money, taking pleasure with no marriage taking place. If we take a close look at the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ), when he married Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her), it was a proper marriage without any aspects or elements of pedophilia in any form or shape. That was in the seventh century.

In England, in the seventh century, the minimum age of consent was seven years; “it was possible for the couple to get engaged at the age of seven, with the right to withdraw from the relationship as long as the minimum age of consent is reached (Stone 1965: 652).” Based on this information, was England legalizing pedophilia? Ancient societies had no set age of consent. Children of the past reached their maturity level earlier than the present times because of the social structure, the economic situation, and environmental reasons.

### **What does the Bible say about marriage age?**

There is no indication in the Bible about the explicit marriage age; rather it uses the general terms of marriage. Any “grown up” is allowed to get married; there is no specific minimum age of marriage that has been given by the Bible.

*“Turn back, my daughters; move to your way, for I'm old enough to possess a husband. If I should say I actually have hope, even if I should have a husband this day and will bear sons, would you so wait until they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it's extremely bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me.” Ruth 1:12-13*

According to the Bible, a person can get married at the age when they are physically mature enough for sex and child-bearing capability. A girl can get married when she reaches the age of puberty; no age was mentioned here either. There is a factor that says a father of a girl can determine his daughter's marriage. The book of Exodus says:

*“And if a man entices a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.”*(Exodus 22:16-17 KJV).

## **Abraham**

In the Bible, the book of Genesis recorded about Abraham and Hagar:

*“There were no children for Sarah, the wife of Abraham. But Sarah had a servant who lived in Egypt; her name was Hagar; so Sarah said to Abraham, ‘The Lord has kept me from having children. Go to my servant Hagar and stay with her; Maybe I can build a family through Hagar.’ Abraham accepted what Sarah said. So, Abraham had been living in Canaan for ten years. After that, his wife Sarah took her Egyptian servant Hagar and gave her to her husband as a wife. Abraham stayed with Hagar, and Hagar got pregnant. ... So She bore Abraham a son and Abraham gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. Abraham was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.”* (Genesis, chapter 16, verses 1–4, and 15–16, New International Version. (Zahid Aziz)

According to this narration, it clearly shows that age difference between Abraham and Hagar was around fifty years. And also, Hagar was made to sleep with Abraham; no consent was obtained from Hagar.

## **David**

In the Bible, the first book of Kings mentioned the following incident -

*“When David the king got old enough he could not keep warm even though he was covered up well. His servant requests him, ‘Let us have a young chaste girl to sleep with the king so that she can take care of him. And she can sleep beside the king to keep him warm. They searched for a young beautiful chaste girl in the whole of Israel. Then they found a girl Abishag, a Shunammite, and she was brought to the king. She was good looking, beautiful and attractive, she was taking care of the king and waiting on him, but the king had no intimate relationship with her.”* (1 Kings, chapter 1, verses 1–4, New International Version.)

## **Mary and Joseph**

This is one of the most famous historical marriages that took place in Christian history. According to the Biblical evidence, when Mary was twelve years old, the elders of the temple decided to give her in marriage to a husband. They selected the husband for Mary by drawing lots; the person they selected was an old man, Joseph. Some reports suggest that his age was ninety years. They handed over Mary to Joseph, there was no consent and Mary did not play any part in the selection process.

*“It simply came to our notice then. At the age of forty, Joseph married a woman named Melcha or Escha or Salom. They lived together for forty-nine years and had six children... One year after the death of his wife the priests announced throughout Judea that they wanted to find a respected man in the Judean tribe who would be with Mary, then Joseph, aged twelve to fourteen years of age. He was at the time ninety years old; candidates went to Jerusalem, A miracle reveals that God chose Joseph...”* (St. Joseph, online article)

Marriage can take place for different reasons, sometimes it can be political; such as King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Spain, this marriage was purely political for the unification of Spain where Ferdinand was one year younger than Isabella.

## **Are there any other under-aged marriages that took place throughout history?**

When we say underage, it implies that there is an obvious minimum age limit for marriage. But there was no minimum age limit for the age of consent or marriage conduct in the medieval time or pre-medieval time. This concept developed with social progression, introduction of politics and its stability, and financial development in different localities in different periods. Demographical, racial and gender difference are playing a role between those who marry young and those who do not. As for White and Latin girls, their likelihood is high to get married at an early age. On the other hand, for African-American girls their likelihood is less to get married at a young age. As for Latin men, they are most likely to marry at a young age, followed by White men. (Hamilton, supra 7)

Numerous marriages took place throughout history at the age of under 10 in different times and places.

There is a narration from Rabbis in the medieval history. When Isaac married Rebecca her age was not more than three years. This age was taken from the Bible itself. There is another narration for the same marriage, that her age was 10. (Kaleef K. Karim). Another source put her age down as three when she left her father's house. (Tractate Soferim, Hosafah [addition] 1, 1:4).

1160 November 2, a marriage took place between Henry, son of Henry II, and Eleanor of Aquitaine. The wife was Margaret, Elder daughter of Louise VII of French from his second marriage, to Constance of Castile. Henry and Margaret were still little children, crying in the cradle, he only five years of age, she a mere tow. (L. Dggelmann)

In India, in spite of officially banning underage marriage, more than 50 percent of marriages are taking place underage. "Almost 200,000 Christian children were married before the age of 10 in India. (Census data from Government Of India). 102

million were married before turning marriage age. (Ending Child Marriage : A profile of progress in India, UNICEF).

Teri Dobbins Baxter, Child Marriage as a Constitutional Violation, mentioned, "In the Majority of the marriages where there is at least one minor it implies that younger girls marry older men". (Hamilton)

*"For example, the Virginia Department of Health shows that between 2004 and 2013, approximately 4,500 children were married. About 90% of them were girls, about 90% were married adults, and some of those adults were decades older. Similar records from Maryland show that from 2000 to 2014, 3,100 children were married off. Again, most of them were girls married to adult men. "(Tahirih Justice CTR.)*

Those who find it difficult to comprehend the young age of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) when her marriage took place with the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ), also find it hard to comprehend that the puberty age was much earlier than in the twenty-first century. The life expectancy was much lower than contemporary times.

With excessive maternal mortality in the course of childbirth, as a result of inappropriate health care, and inadequate nutrition, the suggestion was that procreating should start as early as possible. In richer families, marrying younger additionally assured the protection and acquisition of wealth, securing the destiny of one's own circle of relative's inheritance through a sort of enterprise merger. Likewise, political elites took advantage of early marriage to set up alliances among opponents, an expedient opportunity to war.

Marrying a child (under age) is illegal in many countries in our modern era, but what we consider illegal now was the norm at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ). In the Arabian Peninsula, no one expressed any concern regarding the marriage of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ), and that is why no Medieval Classical Islamic scholars mentioned the age of Aisha in her marriage. Some of the comments about these issues need to be discussed.

Imam Abd Allah Muhammad Idris As-Shafi mentioned that “I witnessed that there are many women in Yemen, at the age of nine reaching their puberty”. (Dhahabi, Siyar). He further mentioned, “I witnessed in a grandmother in Sana who was a girl the age of twenty-one years. Her daughter, at the age of nine, hit puberty and gave birth to a child at the age of ten. The daughter of that girl also reached puberty at the age of nine and gave at the age of ten.” (Bayhaqi, al-Sunaan al-Kubra). Another incident mentioned by Al-Hasan ibn Salih, “I met with a slave girl who belonged to us, who at the age of twenty-one became a grandmother. (Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-Kubra). Undoubtedly, many girls can reach the age of puberty in nine years.

Those who accuse the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) of being a paedophile, womanizer and with lustful attitudes towards women, have a hidden agenda behind such blatant attacks on Islam and the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) due to insufficient knowledge of the past history. They need to know how the society functioned at the time of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) and his surroundings.

### **Minimum age requirement to marry**

In addition to the above chart (Age Limit in Age of Consent Laws in Selected Countries), in modern times, the minimum age for marriage is set by the authority of any given country, under the laws of the country. Teri Dobbins Baxter said: “But twelve and fourteen years of age were not the true minimum age of marriage”. The English common law demonstrates that “Children at the age of seven were allowed to marry.” (In re-Marriage of J.M.H). He also said: “Based on a study, which was carried out by the Tahirih Justice Center”, more than twenty-thousand children, under the age of 18 got married in between the years 2000 and 2015 in America.” (Tahirih Justice CTR.). In states with no minimum marriageable age with judicial consent, the court has approved marriages involving very young children. In Louisiana, judicial approval was given to marriages where the bride was only twelve years old. In Florida, a pregnant eleven-year-old girl was allowed to marry. (Tahirih Justice CTR.)

## Chapter -2

### Wives of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) married multiple wives on different occasions, not a single marriage was to fulfill the physical desire. Most of his marriage took place after he reached the age of over fifty years, except his first wife Khadija *bin* Khuwalid (May Allaah be pleased with her). And among the wives, most of them were married before they married the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) except Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her). We will briefly glance over the mothers of the faithful believer's marriage to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ), to examine whether this marriage was merely one of lust or there could be others reasons.

#### Let us review all the marriage of the Prophet (ﷺ).

##### Khadija *bint* Khuwailid al-Qurayshia:

Prophet Muhammad's first marriage was contracted at the age of 25 years to someone who was a few years older than him and he remained with her until her death at the age of 65, he being 50 years old. Khadija (May Allaah be pleased with her) was a widow twice before being married to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) who gave him four daughters and two sons. Allaah (SWT) blessed Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) with all the children except Ibrahim through Khadija (May Allaah be pleased with her). They had a successful marriage, shared the same conduct and their hearts, and shared the same feeling. Khadija (May Allaah be pleased with her) was the inner peace of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) while he was surrounded by many stresses, she consoled the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) even when Allaah sent down the first revelation. The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was frightened after receiving the revelation. To give him mental support, Khadija made a famous statement,

*"Nay! By Allaah, Allaah will never dishonour you. You maintain the good relationships with your relatives; you serve your guests generously, help the needy*

*and the destitute and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones."* (Sahih al-Bukhari 6982)

Khadija (May Allaah be pleased with her) never made any complaint nor had any doubt about the personal character of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) even being older than the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ). Had he been a lustful womanizer type of person he would not have a deep love for Khadija, but the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) had a deep-rooted love and affection for Khadija throughout her life and even after her death.

Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) the wife of the Prophet, explains her jealousy towards Khadija as a woman who is jealous of her husband when loving another woman more than her; Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) used to love Khadija (May Allaah be pleased with her) and he expresses his love by frequently mentioning her name. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) mentioned that she would hate Khadija more if she had been alive. Khadija (May Allaah be pleased with her) received the glad tidings of a soundless house in Jannah (paradise). The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) used to slaughter a sheep and distribute its meat among the female friends of Khadija (May Allaah be pleased with her). Imam al-Qurtubi mentioned that frequently mentioning her name is a sign of his love even though she passed away long ago. Also, Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) narrated, that the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) very rarely used to go out without praising or mentioning Khadija's name. According to the above narrations, it clearly shows that the love of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) never allowed him to get married to another woman during the life of Khadija (May Allaah be pleased with her). Only after her death, Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married his second wife Sawda (May Allaah be pleased with her).

### Sawda bint Zam'ah al Qurayshia

After the death of the first wife Khadija (May Allaah be pleased with her), the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married an elderly widowed woman, Sawda *bint* Zam'ah, in her late fifties. She lived with the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) in his household around thirteen years. She was a pious worshipper who lived a long life until the reign of Umar ibn al-Khattab.

## Aisha *bint* of Abu Bakr as-Siddique

Aisha *bint* Abu Bakr ibn Abi Quhafa (May Allaah be pleased with her), who born 614 A.D. in Macca as a Muslim and was given out for foster-parentage to a Makhzumite family. (Ibn Hanbal, Musnad)

Khawlah *bint* Hakim (May Allaah be pleased with her), a maternal aunt of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) suggested that he could marry Aisha *bint* Abu Bakr. (Ibn Sa'd). After receiving consent from the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ), Khawlah *bint* Hakim went to the house of Abu Bakr (May Allaah be pleased with him). Abu Bakr's wife, Umme Rumman, became very happy when she received this marriage proposal as she felt that her anticipated dream would come true by this marriage relationship and it would be a blessing for this world and the hereafter. She did not utter a single word regarding the young age of Aisha nor did she say anything about the age gap between the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) and Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her). The only words she uttered, were go and "Talk to Abu Bakr" out of great happiness. Initially, Abu Bakr was a little hesitant for two reasons:

1. He considered the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) as his brother. (Tabari, Tarikh). And
2. There was an issue that, Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) had already been promised to a young relative, Jubair ibn Mut'am ibn Adi. Then Abu Bakr went to the house of Mut'um ibn Adi and his wife, the mother of Jubair, who said to Abu Bakr boldly: "I do not want to see my son enter the religion of Muhammad by marrying your daughter." Abu Bakr didn't say anything; he just turned to Mut'am ibn Adi who said he refused the previous arrangement due to the fear that this marriage would lead Jubair into converting to Islam. That is how Allah (SWT) set free Abu Bakr, he felt a great relief for the divine arrangement that Allaah had promised him. (Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Sa'd).

Abu Bakr's hesitation to marry Aisha to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) **was not because of the young age of Aisha.**

The marriage of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) is one the fulfillments of a divine sign, which when the angel Jibril came to the prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) and

showed Aisha in a piece of green silk and told him, "This is your wife in this world and the next world."

Later on, Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) narrated that the Prophet told her that you were shown to me by the Angel Jibril in my dream for two nights, wrapped in green silk and told me –

" هَذِهِ زَوْجَتُكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ "

"*This is your wife in this life and the life to come.*" (Jami` at-Tirmidhi 3880, Sahih al-Bukhari 7101).

#### Hafsa bint Umar al-Khattab

She was married to 'Hisam ibn Hudhafa' who took part in the battle of Badr. He sustained some injury, and later on he passed away in Madinah and Hafsa (May Allaah be pleased with her) and she became a widow. Umar ibn al-Khattab went to Abu Bakr then he went to Uthman ibn Affan (May Allaah be pleased with all of them) and proposed his daughter in marriage to them but Umar didn't receive a positive response from any one of them. He was very concerned regarding the marriage of Hafsa, increasing his distress. When the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) noticed the distress of Umar, he consoled him and showed his interest about Hafsa. Then the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married Hafsa bint Umar and she became one of the mothers of the faithful believers. She was extremely pious and was entrusted with the keeper of the official Quran (Mushaf).

#### Zaynab bint Khuzaima

Zaynab (May Allaah be pleased with her), previously married Abdullah ibn Jahsh. To avoid the Quraish persecutions, she migrated to Abyssinia. In the third year of Hijrah her husband Abdullah received his martyrdom and she became a widow and then married the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ). 'Mother of the Poor' died after eight months of her marriage.

### Umm Salama *bint* Abi Ummayah

Umm Salama (May Allaah be pleased with her) was previously married to Abdullah ibn Abdul Asad, known as Abu Salama and migrated to Abyssinia. Abu Salama died in Madinah. Then the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married her. Umm Salama entered into the household of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) and became one of the mothers of the believers.

### Zaynab *bint* Jahsh al-Asadyah

Zaynab previously married Zaid ibn Haritha, the adopted son of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) before the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ). The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) proposed this marriage between Zaynab (May Allaah be pleased with her) and Zaid (May Allaah be pleased with him), initially she did not agree and rejected the proposal, and then reluctantly accepted the marriage proposal.

The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married her after she was divorced by Zaid, which Allaah the almighty says in the Quran:

*“...So when Zaid had no longer any need for her, We married her to you...”* (Quran, surah al-Ahzab: 37)

There is a narration by Anas (May Allaah be pleased with him):

*"When this Ayah was revealed about Zainab bint Jahsh, "So when Zaid had no longer any need for her, We gave her to you in marriage" (Quran surah al-Ahzab, 33:37) - he said: "She used to boast to the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ): 'Your families married you (to him) while Allaah married me (to him) from above the Seven Heavens.'" (Jami` at-Tirmidhi 3213)*

Some of the western scholars and orientalist claim that the prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was always lustful, while she was already married to Zaid, the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) had his eye on Zaynab and was stunned by her beauty. This claim is baseless,

fabricated and inappropriate; it is an evil and ill approach to defame the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) and attack Islam. Their naked and shameless attempt is rejected by the almighty Allaah by the following verse, where Allaah says,

“...So when Zaid had no longer any need for her, We married her to you...” (Quran, surah al-Ahzab: 37)

Allaah (SWT) wanted to put an end to this pre-Islamic practice that an adopted son’s divorcee wife cannot be married by the father, and uses the prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) as the example for mankind. Allaah (SWT) stated in the Quran:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

“And you are truly ‘a man’ of outstanding character.” (Quran: Al-Qalam: 4)

And also, Allaah says in another verse:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ  
كَثِيرًا

“Indeed, in the Messenger of Allaah you have an excellent example for whoever has hope in Allaah and the Last Day, and remembers Allaah often.” (Quran, al-Ahzab: 21)

### Zuairreeya bint Harith

Zuairreeya (May Allaah be pleased with her) was known as Barraah, the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) changed her name to Zuairreeya. She was previously married to Mani ibn Safwan, and then she married the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) by her own will.

### Umm Habeebah Ramlah bint Abi Sufiyan

She had gone to Ethiopia with her husband Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh, the first group of emigrants from Makkah. Her husband died and she became a widow. When the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was informed about her loneliness, he then proposed to her

through Negus (*Najjashi*) in marriage. Umm Habeebah happily accepted the marriage proposal and became one of the mothers of the believers. She had a great time with the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) since she returned from Ethiopia, and she met the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) at Khaybar.

#### Safiyah *bint* Huyayah ibn al-Akhtar

She was a daughter of Huyayah, the leader of Banu Nadhir who previously married Kinanah ibn Abi al-Huqaya. When she fell as a captive, the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) gave her an option; if she accepts Islam, she will be set free. She accepted and then became one of the mothers of the faithful believers. The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) did not force her to convert to Islam nor to get married to him, it was Safiyah (May Allaah be pleased with her) who willingly converted to Islam and married the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ).

The attacker of Islam, some orientalist and ignorant people made claim that the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) expelled the Jewish people from al-Madinah by force and married their women. In response to this immature claim, this is the mother of the believers Safiyah bint Huyayah who lost her father in the battle of Banu Quraydhah, lost her husband during the expedition of Khaybar, and witnessed her tribes-men massacred by the Muslim army; still she was worried for the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) that the Jews might kill him, because of her experiences about the characteristics of the Jewish tribes in Madinah and the Muslims and their leader Muhammad ibn Abdullah.

#### Maymoona *bint* al-Harith al Hilaliya

She was previously married and her name was Barraah. The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) changed her name to Maymoona (May Allaah be pleased with her). She was a gentle, kind and pious individual who lived with the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) for about three years until he passed away. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) narrated about Maymoona that,

*“She was the most pious among us and the kindest to the kith and kin”. (Ibn Sa’d, at-  
tabaqat)*

Marriage is not invented by the human being, rather it is a union between two individuals (between the opposite sex) which is a gift, given by Allaah the almighty and marriages strengthen the relationships. All of the Prophets of Allaah (ﷺ) got married, Allaah says in the Quran:

*“I have sent before you O Muhammad (ﷺ) many messengers and I have given those  
wives and children.” (Quran,13: 38).*

All four of the Prophets’ close companions (*Sahabah*) had a marital connection with the prophet of Allaah (ﷺ), and these marriages were geared to strengthen the ties of unity and friendship between himself and his close companions. The marriage contract plays a vital role to form a natural society between individuals as well as between families and for tribal connections. The mothers of the believers have a special status. No one could marry them after the death of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ).

### **Dispel the accusation of sexual gratification and Polygamy**

The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was the best human being but not the super human being, he had the same natural human attitude, quality and inclination as any other human being has. The desire of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) towards women was not out of his control which affected his marriage. This desire was created by Allaah as a human being and it is completely justified. An accusation regarding high sexual passion leads him to marry multiple wives; the other Prophets of Allaah had multiple wives too, this is natural inclination and the fact which cannot be denied.

Arguments that say he was obsessed with sexual gratification, does not make any sense, he spends most of his youth time building a family with an elderly woman Khadija (May Allaah be pleased with her) who bore him at least six children and supported him in his mission until her death. The life of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was

extremely busy with numerous struggles; he had to face many challenges, engaged in at least 27 battles and travelled all over the Arabian Peninsula.

It is blatant and strange that someone would assert that this is an individual who would spend time with women-folk fulfilling his desires, given his challenges, struggles, etc. Of course, he spends his time, devoted by enjoying his wives, he was the best human being; he is the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ). He had proper attentions for his wives, gave them comfort and fulfilled their due rights as a successful husband.

Another point that needs to be focused on is polygamy; even some of the Muslim writers apologize for polygamy, by saying that this is an exception rather than the rule and should be done only under certain circumstances. But the reality is that the condition for polygamy is only that a man has to be just among the wives.

These isolated individuals do not take into account the inclusion of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) in the "High moral character" of the fact that in a short span of twenty years the most thorough transformation of a nation, which alone, without help, vanished. Get rid of wickedness in a country like Arabia, which has been titled "Mercy to the Mankind" by the Qur'an. Can a person who has come to sweep out and purify society, who "shines a light", ever be a person for sin? Can an unholy distinctive feature be preached? How can he help sinners to be freed from the bondage of sin if he himself is bound by it?

There are a number of reasons why these marriages should be contracted. Among them, disproportion of women to men in the society, more women than men, if the wife cannot bear children, while at the same time a man wants offspring. But these are not the rules and these conditions do not necessarily have to exist for a man to have more than one wife. Islam permits it, but does not leave room for him to just pursue his sexual gratification; he has to be just and give them their due rights, obeys and fulfils his responsibilities. In this regard, the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) is the exemplary role model for the entire mankind, culture and times. He himself said, one cannot control the lenience of the heart but can keep within the bounds of what Allaah ordered, one heart can be inclined one way or the other. Islam is distinct from certain western societies where polygamy is prohibited but illicit relationships and

relationships outside marriage are allowed because of this disproportion between men and women.

### **The permissibility to have multiple wives mentioned in the Quran:**

*“And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those right hand possessors. That is more suitable that you may not incline [to injustice].”* (Quran, surah an-Nisa: 3)

But the special permission was given to the Prophet of Allaah in the Quran:

*“O Prophet, indeed We have made lawful to you your wives to whom you have given their due compensation and those your right hand possessors from what Allaah has returned to you [of captives] and the daughters of your paternal uncles and the daughters of your paternal aunts and the daughters of your maternal uncles and the daughters of your maternal aunts who emigrated with you and a believing woman if she gives herself to the Prophet [and] if the Prophet wishes to marry her, [this is] only for you, excluding the [other] believers. We certainly know what We have made obligatory upon them concerning their wives and those their right hands possess, [but this is for you] in order that there will be upon you no discomfort. And ever is Allaah Forgiving and Merciful.”* (Quran, surah al-Ahzab: 50)

The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) exercised the above permission which was given by Almighty Allaah, to give shelter to those who lost their husband and became a widow. The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married them and gave them their due rights and social status and he never humiliated them. None of the mother of the believers regretted their marriage to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ); rather, they have expressed their utmost appreciations to Almighty Allaah for being the wife of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ).

Emmanuel Luther Ratiq, a Christian writer, mentions the following reasons which made the Prophet of Allaah marry multiple wives:

1. To teach and sometimes to set a parable to marry the divorced wife of an adopted son and cousin. It is lawful according to the Islamic law. Thus, the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married Zaynab bint Jahsh who was a cousin of his and was the divorced wife of his adopted son Zaid ibn Haritha.
2. The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married Safiyah bint Huyayah ibn Al Akhtar, to set an example that marriages of inter-cast is allowed. She was a Jewish lady.
3. The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married Hafsa bint Umar, Zaynab bint Khuzaima and Umme Salama to set an example that marriages of divorced women should be given shelter and protection.
4. He married Zuaireeya bint Harith to set her free from the prison.
5. The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married Aisha bint Abu Bakr as a bright and intelligent girl who became one of the Islamic scholars.
6. The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married Safiyah, Umme Habiba. These marriages were political in nature.

### **Prophet married Aisha, at the age of six**

The only maiden girl, the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married at the age of six is Aisha the daughter of Abu Bakr. She was active in politics and religion; most intelligent, knowledgeable, had a sharp memory, correct understanding of the issues, and acquired the information way beyond that of the other women around her. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) was an Islamic scholar who taught many students after the death of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ). She had an inquisitive, curious mind and was a critical thinker who asked the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) questions until she became satisfied with the answers. She narrated many prophetic traditions authentically, meticulously and became a bridge between the time of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) and the present day life. Her knowledge was not limited to the Prophetic traditions; she also had a clear understanding of *Fiqh*, *Tafseer* of the Quran, literature and poetry. One of four most prolific prophetic tradition's (*hadith*) narrator, Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) conveyed almost 2,210 hadith, 174 is agreed upon (in Bukhari and Muslim both narrated these hadith). We know our religion of Islam, we know our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) through Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her).

It is a divine wisdom from the seven heavens where Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) was introduced to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) by the Angel Jibril and from the human being was Khawla bin Hakim. The following *hadith* is one of the most authentic *hadith* narrated almost every book of *hadith* about the marriage of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) at the age of six.

Then the marriage of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) took place when she was six years of age, and consummation took place when she reached the age of puberty, at nine years.

Aisha bint Abu Bakr (May Allaah be pleased with her) herself narrated, about her age when the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married her:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ تَزَوَّجَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَأَنَا بِنْتُ سِتِّ وَدَخَلَ عَلَيَّ وَأَنَا  
بِنْتُ تِسْعِ سِنِينَ وَكُنْتُ أَلْعَبُ بِالْبَنَاتِ .

"The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) married me when I was six, and consummated the marriage with me when I was nine, I used to play with dolls." (Hadith, Sunan an-Nasai 3378, Sahih Muslim Book 8, Hadith 3310)

According to the above *hadith*, narrated by Imam al-Bukhari and Imam al-Muslim, where a non-Muslim jumped up and claimed that the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married Aisha at the age of six and consummated at the age of nine, and this was a child marriage.

Her amazing character never allows her to narrate against any blameworthy person by the perpetrator name even if they accused her inappropriately. The exemplary character of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) never kept her pen or tongue silent when she witnessed any matter which went against the Islamic principles or went against her moral character. She was a woman who argued and challenged many things in her life with the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ). Had her marriage been inappropriate, it is expected that Aisha would have been the first person to complain against her marriage, but she never regretted her marriage in her entire life. Aisha

(May Allaah be pleased with her) never hinted at any single word of abuse that potentially came or manifested itself in an imbalanced marriage; never hinted at any of the dynamics or feature that are prevalent in child marriage as being prevalent in her inner action not just with the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) but in her action with the larger society. Rather she expressed her charming feeling with the Prophet of Allaah in this regard and stated how successful and blessed the marriage she had with the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) in her writings. Aisha herself said that, "*The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was the most exalted person that I have ever seen.*" She was confident at her marriage consummation because marrying at the young age was normal in the seventh-century in Arabia. So it was not considered immoral. The notions of puberty, maturity and family law are influenced by culture and are therefore not universal.

So, who we are to make this an issue, illegitimatising the marriage which took place fifteen hundred years ago based on our modern world view? It is not an appropriate approach to apply the modern legislation to the society which existed fifteen hundred years ago. This marriage was perfectly supported by the customs and culture of the Arabian Peninsula. Had the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) promoted the exploitation of children, why would he then consummate his marriage with Aisha after three years? It was off course considering the young age of Aisha.

The child of the modern era was considered an adult in pre-medieval era. I am not advocating or encouraging child marriage or under-aged marriage in our contemporary society, but Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) was not the same child who is defined by the view of the modern world today. A modern world's child was considered an adult in that era. Early marriage is not allowed in modern times due to the safety net of the child, but the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was the exemplary role model for the mankind who ensured the safety and the security of the society as a whole. Allaah the almighty says, in the Quran:

*"And We have sent you, O Muhammad, as a mercy to the entire worlds."* (Quran: surah al-Anbiya: 107).

The marriage of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) in her age was nothing new in that society, she merely followed the footsteps of the other girls before her who

had reached the age of puberty and then started their married life. Every society and locality has some customs to which every one of us is hostage, and the marriage of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was not unusual, it is completely understandable and justifiable.

Some of the facts that need to be considered about the marriage of Aisha:

- The marriage took place in Makkah, then the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) and Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) migrated from Makkah to Madinah along with the other family members. The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) did not make an approach to Aisha until she reached puberty at the age of nine.
- Almost three years later, when Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) reached the age of puberty, Abu Bakr went to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) and said to him with the greatest respect: “O Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ)! Are you not going to consummate your marriage with your wife Aisha?” The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) replied with a smile, and assured it by the grace of Allaah (SWT).
- Hypocrites of Madinah and the Quraish of Makkah never get tired of accusing the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) and his family (such as the incident of slander) but they never accused the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) in the matter of Aisha’s marriage. They were the cause of many distresses of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) but they never claim that the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) had any elements of lewdness in his character.
- Followers of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) are not allowed to have more than four wives at a time but the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was exempt from this restriction. If we look at some other early Prophets of Allaah (ﷺ) in this regard, we find that the Prophet David (Dawood) had 100 wives; the Prophet Solomon had 1,000 wives.

Some writers concluded that the marriage of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) was satisfying the sensual sensation. But this claim carried no weight for one simple

reason. When the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married Aisha his age was around 54 years. If the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was incited by the sensual sensation, it would have happened in his early life. But it did not happen even though the society was unrestricted from polygamy.

### **How was the marriage life of Aisha with the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ):**

Love of Aisha for the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) ran so deep-rooted that she couldn't permit something unexpected to be said about the Prophet of Allaah. One day a person told the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ), 'May Allaah offers you dying'! Once Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) heard this she stated, 'how dare you to wish death for the Prophet of Allaah'? Rather, 'May Allaah grants death, and a curse on you.' Aisha was continually prepared to sacrifice every material possession she had, but she was not at all inclined to sacrifice her intimacy with the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ).

The lifetime of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) and also the wives of the Prophet were troublesome in terms of finance. Once the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) left this world, the lifestyle of Aisha wasn't modified despite the fact that she had access to wealth. Aisha favoured the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) in every aspect of her life, so that her prayer foremost resembled the prayer of the Prophet of Allaah. Urwa said that when I visited my aunt Aisha and saw her cry while she prayed, I wanted to draw her attention by moving behind to the objects then went for shopping, then came back and she was still praying.

Whenever she received some charity from the people, she would give that away and typically content herself with dates and Zamzam water. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) narrated, *"I by no means ate sufficient to grow to be full, even after the Prophet of Allaah."*

She was no longer happy to percentage her time with the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) with others and desired to spend more time with the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ). The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) similarly divided his time amongst his wives fairly; Aisha's flip was every

nine days. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her), on her day, desired to spend all of her time with the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) and they were interactively joyful together.

The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) drew lots to choose which wife would accompany him on his expeditions. On one occasion, Aisha and Hafsa (May Allaah be pleased with both of them) had been decided on for the expeditions. When night time fell and they took a break, the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) sat with Aisha. After seeing this, Hafsa went to Aisha and proposed transferring the camel without letting anyone know to see what the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) would do. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) took it as a joke and accepted the proposal. It happened that the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) went to the camel of Aisha but Hafsa was inside that camel. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) accepted the game. However it was now no longer easy for her to swallow the outcome. She felt very depressed and requested Allaah to send a scorpion or snake to chew her.

Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) used to boast herself that she got married in the month of Shawwal and no other wives of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) can claim this blessing. She had a special status even among the wives of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ). Aisha narrated the second-most hadith from the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ). If she was not happy with the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) she would not boast about her marriage, she would not narrate the hadith from the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ).

There is a narration that after the death of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ), Aisha would cry, when any good food was presented to her due to the fact of the matter that the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) never filled his stomach with this type of food.

They had a love and affection for each other in the family of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) which was increasing day by day. The perfect human being, the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ), never persecutes any one of his wives nor does he deceive them. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) said,

*“The Prophet of Allaah never beat any one of his servants or any one of his wives and his hand never hit anything.”* (Sunaan Ibn Majah).

## Some of the Excellency of Aisha

Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) was excellent in understanding, eloquent in speech, and poetic in nature, paying attention to the details, she made no grammatical errors when she was narrating the hadith. Abdul Malik bin Umayr narrated from Musa ibn Talha,

*"I have never seen anyone more eloquent than Aisha."* (Sunan al-Tirmidhi 3884).

The following are some of the many blessings from Allaah that distinguished Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) from all the other women in the world with the exception of Maryam *bint* Imran, the mother of the Prophet ESA (as):

1. The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) received the revelation from Allaah (SWT) while he was in the house of Aisha. It became a distinctive blessing for Aisha that the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) received the revelation only while he was on the bed of Aisha; no one else has this blessing.
2. The Angel showed her image wrapped in green silk to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) and told him that this was the picture of the lady chosen by Allaah (SWT) to be his consort both in this world and the next.
3. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) was introduced to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) by the angel. Angel Jibril showed Aisha to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) in a dream twice, wrapped in a silk.
4. Both of her parents were Muslim at her birth and then they migrated from Makkah to Madinah to avoid the persecution.
5. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) was the only wife of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ), who never married anyone besides the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ).

6. The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) prayed at night while Aisha was sleeping in front of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ).
7. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) narrated that “I was defended by Allaah (SWT) from above the seven heavens when no one in this world defended me.” Allaah (SWT) revealed sixteen verses in the Quran to declare her innocence.
8. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) took a shower from the same container as the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ).
9. The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) passed away on her night.
10. Aisha narrated that, “The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) passed away in my house on my chest.” No one else had this blessing.
11. The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was buried in the house of Aisha.
12. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) was born as a Muslim, her father Abu Bakr was a Muslim and the most beloved of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) among all the companions, and also Aisha’s grand-father Abu Kuhafa was a Muslim.
13. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) narrated that, “When the Prophet of Allaah died, his saliva and my saliva were together.” No one else had this blessing.

The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) had a very deep love and affection for Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her). There is a narration, the companion of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ), Amr ibn al-Aas, had the belief that the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) loves him more than any other companions, and he wanted to verify this: He asked the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ), ‘Who do you love most?’ The Prophet of Allaah said, Aisha (May Allaah be

pleased with her). Then he asked again, 'from the men who do you love most?' The Prophet of Allaah responded by saying, 'her father.' (Tirmidhi 3886)

Once returning from one expedition, Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) had a race with the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) and won the race. Some years later they had another race where Aisha lost a similar race because she gained some weight. (Ibn Majah, 979).

Aisha narrated that the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) used to stand at the door of her residence to assist her in looking at the spots played by Abyssinian players with the daggers in the mosque of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ). The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was standing with Aisha till she became glad and went back. (Sahih Muslim, Book 4, Hadith 1941)

Aisha narrated that, "I used to drink from a cup and gave it to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ), and he would drink from the same place wherefrom I drank." The Prophet used to make a dua for Aisha to Allaah. That shows how joyful their family life was. The marital life is not all about physical enjoyment, foreplay, eating, drinking and going out. It is the duty of a husband to play with his wife, sometimes making fun, which makes the family bond stronger.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Literature Review**

Some attempts have been made to find the real age of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) when she married the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ), among them even by some of the Islamic writers. Some of them find this event as a negative part of the Islamic History. They are trying to prove the hadith narrated by Imam al-Bukhari, Imam al-Muslim and others, as an inauthentic narration, and misquoted the age of Aisha due to the modern age of marriage. Political disagreement of the age of marriage does not fit the contemporary world view.

'While such reactions appear legitimate within the context of our 21st-century, Western experiences, they have little experience discussing the cases of people who lived centuries ago. It is much less difficult to condemn the savage nomads of the 7th century as "barbarians" than to recognize our own ethical judgments, a characteristic of our surroundings because of the judgments of our ancestors.' (Ali Asadullah & Dr. J. Brown).

Many writers find this marriage as an affront so they are trying to reshape the narrations to please the modern phenomenon. These attempts have failed due to proper consideration of the cultural variations and time.

The age of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) became very important after the division between the Sunni version and Shia version of Islam. Aisha continued to influence the Muslim community throughout her life and is still an important figure in Islam. From a Shia perspective, Aisha is seen as in direct opposition to the establishment of tradition. According to their view, 'Aisha and her father Abu Bakr openly opposed the authority of Fatima and Ali and their movement from the Sunni authority. Some of the Shia version of Muslims condemns Aisha as a less important Muslim wife. Many Shia sects of Muslims believe that Aisha's outspoken behaviour, and in particular her participation in the camel war, differs from that of an acceptable Muslim woman.' (Elsadda, H.. (2001)

Kecia Ali points out that some modern and contemporary Muslim writers are trying to reconcile the issue of the age of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) when she married, in her '*Sexual Ethics and Islam*,' and proper application of medieval standards in modern life, further takes a look into the accuracy of the historical information. I am very clear here that the information we have from our most authentic sources (Bukhari and Muslim), in the Islamic law is based alone on these sources. If we are trying to reshape our established information to please the modern arguments to fit the present occurrences into the past, it will bring huge confusion in the Islamic law. Marriage age was not an issue in earlier centuries throughout the history.

Kecia Ali claims that, ‘following the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) blindly is dangerous, and at the same time, it is also dangerous to take our prejudices and fit them into the past.’ I am strongly opposing the first part of the claim, ‘*following the Prophet blindly is dangerous.*’ The Muslims are obliged to follow Allaah and His Prophet unquestionably. The Quran state in this regards,

“O believers! Obey Allaah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you...” (Quran, surah An-Nisa: 59)

Academically speaking, one cannot use the twenty-first century standard to justify the past, and the seventh century’s standard. In contemporary time, society may not think that it is appropriate to have marital consummation with a nine year old girl; there was nothing strange or socially inappropriate behaviour in the seventh-century in Arabia, it was the norm. It was not surprising in that era.

The age difference did not seem to have been controversial in that era. Many marriages took place with a similar age gap and it was a widely accepted social behaviour. Some behaviour may be accepted by some countries at any given time, but it may not be accepted by the other countries at the same time. Naturally, marriage expects to be between males and females, and it was widely accepted until the twentieth century. However, what are we witnessing in the twenty-first century? In the contemporary time, same sex marriage is recognised by some cultures, while it may not be necessarily recognised by other cultures.

## Concerning age gap

“In 1762, Arthur Dobbs, the sixth governor of the Royal colony of North California, took his second wife, his first having predeceased him in their native Ireland. Dobbs’s second wife, Justina Davis, was fifteen, and Dobbs was then seventy-three.” (Nicholas L. Syrett). Arthur Dobbs and Justina Davis’s age gap was (73 - 15) **fifty-eight years**. According to the Christian traditions, when Joseph married Mary, Joseph’s age was ninety years and Mary was twelve years. Their age difference was (90 – 12) **seventy-eight years**. Abraham married Hagar at the age of eighty-six

years while Mary was **more than fifty years** younger than Abraham. The age gap between the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) was {54, age of the Prophet (-) 9, the age of Aisha when the marriage was consummated} **forty-five years**. It was a much lesser age gap than the age gap of other traditions.

## **Some of the narrations concerning the age of Aisha**

### Sahih al-Bukhari, Narrated by Aisha

*“That the Prophet (ﷺ) married her when she was six years old and he consummated their marriage when she was nine years old, and then she remained with him for nine years (i.e., till his death).”* (Sahih al-Bukhari Vol. 7, Book 62, Hadith 64)

### Sahih al-Bukhari, Narrated by Hisham

*I have been informed that 'Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) remained with the Prophet for nine years (i.e. till his death).” what you know of the Quran (by heart)’* (Sahih Bukhari Vol. 7, Book 62, No. 65)

### Sahih al-Bukhari, Narrated by 'Urwa

*“The Prophet wrote the (marriage contract) with 'Aisha (May Allaah be with her) while she was six years old and consummated his marriage with her when she was nine years old, and she remained with him for nine years (i.e. till his death).”* (Sahih Bukhari Vol. 7, Book 62, No. 88)

### Sahih Muslim, Narrated by Aisha

*“Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) reported, Allaah’s messenger (ﷺ) married me when I was six years old, and I was admitted to his house at the age of nine.”* (Sahih Muslim, book 8, No. 3310)

### Sunan Abu Dawud, Narrated by Aisha

*“Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) said, the messenger of Allaah married me when I was seven years old (the narrator said: or six years) and he had intercourse with me when I was nine years old.” (Sunan Abu Dawud, 2116)*

According to the science of *hadith*, the chain of the narrators (*isnaad*) of these above *hadiths* is called ‘Golden chain of narrations’ meaning as bright as the sun. These are the authentic *hadiths* where there is no way to deny or cast doubt about this chain. Imam al-Bukhari, Imam al-Muslim and others narrate these *hadiths* from Hisham bin Urwa, from his father, and from Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her). Some transmitted from Ma’mar, from al-Zuhri, from Urwa, from Aisha. Also, others through al-Aswad bin Yazid al-Nakhai from Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her). There are also some other chains that trace back to Aisha for these *hadiths*.

### Seerah Ibn Hisham

*“The Prophet married Aisha (May Allaah be with her) in Makkah when she was a child of seven and lived with her in Madinah when she was nine or ten. (Ibn Ishaq, Sirat Rasulullah (The Life of Muhammad), translated by Alfred Guillaume [Oxford University Press, Karachi, tenth impression 1995], p. 792)*

### Ibn Qyyum (May Allaah have mercy on him)

*‘The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married Aisha, the daughter of Abu Bakr as-Siddique, whom Allaah has honoured from the above of the seven heavens. She was the most beloved wife of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ). She was shown by the angel Jibril to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) wrapped in a piece of green silk cloth, before the marriage took place. The angel Jibril told him, this is your wife. Then the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) married her in the month of Shawwal, in Makkah when she was six years and consummated the marriage at the age of nine when she was in Madinah. The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) did not marry any virgin girl except Aisha, and a revelation*

*never came down to him while he was under the blanket with any of his wives, except Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her).’ (Ibn Qayyim Al-Juaziyah)*

Safi-ur Rahman al-Mubarakpuri

*“In Shawwal of the same year, the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) formally married ‘Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her), when she was six years of age, and consummated his marriage with her in Shawwal, in the year 1 A.H. in Madinah when she was nine. (Rahman, Safiur, p.g.: 134)*

### **Consensus (Ijma) concerning the age of Aisha**

A consensus had taken place regarding the age of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her), even though generally there is no consensus regarding the age in the Islamic history.

Ibn Hazm says: *‘The age of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) has been recorded in the book and there is no difference of opinion.’ (Hujjiat-I-Wida, 435)*

Ibn Kathīr says: *‘There is no difference of opinion concerning the age of Aisha.’ (al-Sīrat al-Nabawiyya, ii. 141).*

Ibn Abd al-Barr says: *‘I do not know of anyone differing in opinion over the age of Aisha.’ (al-Istiab, iv. 1881)*

Based on the above narrations, the age of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) was six when she got married, and at the age of nine she consummated her marriage with the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ), and it perfectly matches and fits with the other narrations.

Wanting to change the age of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her), represents a frame of mind, methodology, a paradigm that, once we open the door then we will use the same path again and again for other issues as well. When do we need to

revise the past history? We need to consider it first, is there any need for it? Are we trying to change the text according to our choice, meaning re-shaping the text the way we like or that contemporary society likes, which will create a huge chaos and confusion?

### **Response to the Dr. Salah al-Din al-Idlibi's study**

Dr. Salah al-Din al-Idlibi in "*The Age of the Lady Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her), On the Day of Her Marriage Contract and the Day of Her Wedding,*" claims that, *the age of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) was near 18.*

With his apologetic approaches, he uses Universalist and Modernist approaches. The evidence he presented about the age of Aisha is as follows-

1. **The age gap between Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) and her sister Asma.** Aisha bint Abu Bakr is younger than her sister Asma by 10 years. Asma was born 27 years before the Hijrah, or 14 years before the start of the revelation. According to this information, Aisha was born 4 years before the Revelation. And Asma was born before the start of the Islamic calendar by 27 years, and she died in 73 AH in Makkah, at the age of 100 years. Quraysh had rebuilt the Ka'ba before the revelation came to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) by five years, meaning 18 years before the Hijrah. That makes her age 9 years old.

**My response:** Referring to the above argument, Ali bin al-Hsan is a Tabioon (subsequent generation after the companions of the Prophet), who narrate this age, he is not even a companion of the Prophet. When he was narrating the age of Asma (May Allaah be pleased with her) he did not intend to relate the age of Asma precisely, but simply stated a round figure. It is possible that the narrator made a sincere mistake. In the earlier generations they did not maintain the date of birth. We can't deny the authentic narration (which was narrated by Aisha, "*The Messenger of Allaah married me when I became six, and consummated the wedding with me after I became nine.*") based on the indistinct narration. There are a few narrations wherein we are able to

discover that the age gap between Aisha and Asma (May Allaah be pleased with both of them) from thirteen to nineteen years. According to Imam Al-Dhahabi, the age difference became thirteen to nineteen years. It is not anticipated to simply accept this narration of the age gap between Asma and Aisha by ten years, this narration is implicit; on the other hand, the hadith narrated by Imam al-Bukhari and Imam al-Muslim from Aisha explicitly states that her age was six and this must be given precedence.

“Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) became eighteen years of age at the time when the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) died and she remained a widow for forty-eight years until she died at the age of sixty-seven. She witnessed the rules of four rightly guided *Caliphs* in her lifetime. She died in Ramadan, fifty-eight AH in the course of the *Caliphate* of Mu’awiya...” (Al-Nasa’i, 1997). Corresponding fifty-eight AH, she was born in the years 613/614 and Asma was born 594/595 (John L. Esposito, 2003); their age difference is nineteen years. So the argument that the age gap between Aisha and Asma is ten years is no longer reasonable according to the above factual information.

**2. The possibility that Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her), narrated hadith at a certain age.**

Concerning the following verse; Aisha narrated, “*Indeed He despatched in Makkah on Muhammad (ﷺ), while I proceeded to play (li-jariyah ala’abu)* [The verse “*But the Hour is their appointment (for due punishment), and the Hour is more disastrous and more bitter.*” (Quran, 54:46), and what was despatched down of surah al-Baqarah and surah an-Nisa besides what was ready with him.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 6, e-book sixty one No.515)

Al-Qurtubi commented on the tafseer, from ibn Abbas, “Between the sending down of this verse and between the battle of Badr was seven years.” And when it is, it means that it was despatched before the five years of the Hijrah and after the prophetic 8<sup>th</sup> year mission. Dr. al-Idlibi, concluded this factor here, the estimated age of Aisha is ten based on the meaning of Jariyah.

**My response:** the term used in the aforementioned hadith is **وَإِنِّي لَجَارِيَةٌ أَلْعَبُ** – What Aisha meant by **الجارية**. This word does not say any specific age; it is referring to a youth age, and means any girl's age from toddler to the age of puberty. So any age before reaching the age of the puberty could be 4, 5, 6 and so on years; if a girl reached puberty at the age of nine then she becomes a woman. And this word **الجارية** completely supports the authentic hadith, "*The Messenger of Allaah married me when I was six, and consummated the marriage with me when I was nine.*" Surah *al-Qamar* was revealed in Makkah when Aisha in between a toddler and puberty. It does not contradict her age of marriage at six.

### 3. The words used to describe her age

Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) narrated, hadith in Bukhari, "*I never knew my parents except as Muslims (i.e. she had no memory of them being pagans due to being born so close to their conversion to Islam). Not a day would pass except that the Messenger of Allaah, peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him, would come to us at the two extremities of the day, early and late. Once the Muslims started to face trials, Abu Bakr left towards Abyssinia, until he reached Barak al-Ghimad and met Ibn al-Dughna...*"

Dr. al-Idlibi's claim referring to the above hadith, firstly, "If she was born before the Prophetic mission by four years, and her first consciousness of her environments was in the first year of the mission, that statement is useful. And is that – it explains she begins to become aware of her environments – she sees the condition of both of them, profess the religion of Islam, and not only one condition." Secondly, Aisha's statement "So when the Muslims were tortured, persecuted by the Quraysh, Abu Bakr attempted to migrate towards Ethiopia" is a turning point in her realization of her parents and they too professed the religion in so candid a way in that when she was consciously aware of this event and the departure of the *Sahaba* from Makkah to Ethiopia, it was in the middle of the fifth year from the mission and their second *Hijrah* in the last of the fifth or beginning of the sixth.

And if Aisha was born four years after the Prophetic mission it was possible for her to be aware of that event in the beginning of the sixth year, and because she was born before the mission the possibility of her awareness for that with clarity.

**My response:** Dr. al-Idlibi's referring that Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) was born before the revelation began and that is how she would have described her surroundings at her age. But in reality is that she narrated many incidents which occurred even before she was born. She narrated many *hadiths* about Khadija (May Allaah be pleased with her), even though she never met Khadija. Here are some of the other incidents narrated by Aisha and we will examine them 'how it is related to her age'?

Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) is reported to have said, *"I did not feel jealous of any of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) as much as I did of Khadija though I did not see her, but the Prophet (ﷺ) used to mention her name very often, and whenever he slaughtered a sheep, he would cut its parts and send them to the women friends of Khadija. When I sometimes said to him, "(You treat Khadija in such a way) as if there is no woman on earth except Khadija," he would say, "Khadija was such-and-such, and from her I had children."* (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 5, Book 58, Hadith 166).

And another hadith, Urwa reported from Aisha, "I asked 'Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her): "How do you translate the statement of Allah,

*"Verily! (the mountains) As-Safa and Al-Marwa are among the symbols of Allaah, and whoever performs the Hajj to the Ka'ba or performs 'Umra, it is not harmful for him to perform Tawaf between them (Safa and Marwa.)"* (2.158).

*By Allaah! (It is clear from this revelation) there is no sin if one does not perform Tawaf between Safa and Marwa."* 'Aisha (may Allaah be pleased with her) said, "O, my nephew! Your interpretation is not correct. If your interpretation had been correct, Allaah's statement should have been: "It is not a sin for him if he does not perform Tawaf among them." But indeed, this

divine inspiration was revealed concerning the *Ansaar*, who wore the *Ihram* to worship an idol namely "*Manaf*" which they used to venerate at a place called *Al-Mushallaal* before they accepted Islam, and whoever wore *Ihram* (for the idol), would consider it not right to perform *Tawaf* between *Safa* and *Marwa*.

When they embraced Islam, they asked the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) concerning this verse, saying, "O Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ)! We used to stay away from *Tawaf* between *Safa* and *Marwa*." So Allaah revealed:

*"Verily; (the mountains) As-Safa and Al-Marwa are among the symbols of Allaah."* (Quran, Surah al-Baqara: 158

Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) added,

*"Surely, the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) set the custom of Tawaf between Safa and Marwa, so nobody is allowed to leave out the Tawaf between them."*

Then later I (Urwa) mentioned it to Abu Bakr bin 'Abdur-Rahman of Aisha's narration and he then said, 'I did not hear of such information, but I have heard that knowledgeable men say that all the people except those who 'Aisha mentioned and who used to wear *Ihram* for the sake of *Manaf*, used to perform *Tawaf* between *Safa* and *Marwa*.

When Allaah (SWT) referred to the *Tawaf* of the Ka'ba and did not mention *Safa* and *Marwa* in the Quran, then people asked, 'O Allaah's Apostle (ﷺ)! We used to perform *Tawaf* between *Safa* and *Marwa* and Allah has revealed (the verses concerning) *Tawaf* of the Ka'ba and has not mentioned *Safa* and *Marwa*. Is there any harm if we perform *Tawaf* between *Safa* and *Marwa*?' So Allaah revealed:

*"Verily As-Safa and Al-Marwa are among the symbols of Allaah."*

Abu Bakr said, "It seems that this verse was revealed concerning the two groups, those who used to refrain from *Tawaf* between *Safa* and *Marwa* in the Pre-Islamic Period of ignorance and those who used to perform the *Tawaf* them, and after embracing Islam they refrained from the *Tawaf* between them, as Allah had enjoined *Tawaf* of the Ka'ba, and did not mention *Tawaf* (of *Safa* and *Marwa*) till later after mentioning the *Tawaf* of the Ka'ba.' (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 2, Book 26, Hadith 706.)

And also, "*Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) she mentioned that she had seen two men begging who had survived the Year of the Elephant (the year that King Abrahah of Yemen sent an army of elephants to Makkah to destroy the Kaaba; the birds killed the elephants by throwing pebbles at them), which occurred 40 years before the prophetic mission, accepted as a milestone in determining history, and she passed this information only to her sister Asma. (Ibn Hisham, Seerah, 1/176). Aisha narrated that this incident occurred way before she born.*

Above narrations suggests that, Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) narrated these occurrences from the past where she was not an eye-witness. To know any events, describe any occurrence, it is not necessary to be present at the time of the events taking place. Although Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) mentioned some of these incidents of Makkah, does it really mean that she had to be a certain age at the time when these events took place? The two aforementioned events narrated by Aisha, suggest that she must have heard them from the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ).

#### **4. Time of conversion to Islam**

Ibn Ishaq says in his Seerah of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) when mentioning the names of those who accepted Islam in the beginning: Some people of the Nomadic tribes converted, among them Sayd bin Zaid bin Amr bin Nufail, and his wife Fatima bint al-Khattab, and Asma bint Abu Bakr, and Aisha bint Abu Bakr while she was a little girl... then Allaah (SWT) ordered His Prophet (ﷺ) to declare his message openly and to call people and invite them to Allaah (SWT). Maybe he had been secretive until he was told to proclaim his

message to the public, so that he spent some years after receiving the Revelation until the command came:

*"Then declare what you are commanded and turn away from the polytheists"*

(Quran, 15:94)

Then Allaah commanded His messenger (ﷺ) three years after the mission that he proclaimed what was commanded to him, and that he endured the idolaters. And Aisha became Muslim during the time of the secret call after the mission, and that she was young, and if that time period was three years, Aisha may have been brought to some of the gatherings of the Muslims at the end of the fitrah.

**My response:** above narrations quoted by Dr. Idlibi; it says the conversion of some people including Asma bint Abu Bakr and Aisha bint Abu Bakr, but there was no mention of a time frame. He mentioned, 'during the time of the secret call' is a vague term, and nothing can be established with this. On the contrary, there are some narrations suggesting that she was born, and grew up in the household of Abu Bakr as a Muslim.

## 5. Time of Abu Bakr's marriage to Aisha's mother

At-Tabari reported in his Tarikh: Abu Bakr married during the time before the Islamic period and her name was Qutayla bint Abd al-Uzza and from this marriage Abdullah and Asma were born to him. He also married Umm Ruman before the Islamic period, and from this marriage Abdur Rahman and Aisha were born to him. All four of these children were born to his two wives, which were mentioned in the pre-Islamic era.

**My response:** Dr. al-Idlibi quotes the above narration, to show that Abu Bakr married Umm Ruman before the Islamic period, but from this narration, it cannot be deduced that Aisha was born in the pre-Islamic era.

## 6. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) participated in the battle of Uhud

In the battle of Uhud, the participant's minimum age was more than 14 and Aisha participated in the battle of Uhud. Ibn Umar narrated that the Prophet of Allah did not allow him to participate in the battle of Uhud because his age was 14. Then when Ibn Umar became fifteen, the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) allowed him to participate in the battle of Trench (Ahzaab). So Aisha must have been fifteen or more at the time of the battle of Uhud.

**My response:** Ibn Umar was not allowed to participate in the battle of Uhud because he was not yet fifteen years of age. When he became fifteen years old, the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) allowed him to participate in the battle of Trench. The claim is that Ibn Umar was not given permission to join the battle of Uhud at the age of fourteen and Aisha was given permission to participate in the battle of Uhud which means that she must have been fifteen years old at the battle of Uhud. The Battle of Uhud took place one or two years after the marriage consummation of Aisha; this consummation took place at the age of thirteen or fourteen.

Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) had joined the battle of Uhud, but actually she did not participate as a combatant; she was only appointed for supplying water to the combatants. There is a narration from Anas, who said:

*“On the battle of Uhud some people retreated and left the battlefield. I saw Aisha bint Abu Bakr and Umm Sulaym, with their robes tucked up so that the bangles around their ankles were visible, hurrying with their water skins. Then they would pour the water in the mouths of the people and return to fill the water skins again, and came back again to pour water in the mouths of the people.”* (Sahih al-Bukhari)

The reason, ibn Umar had to stay behind from the battle of Uhud, was because he had not reached the minimum age of fifteen years. The following year when he reached the minimum age for a combatant, he was given permission to join. The age restriction was not applicable for Aisha (May

Allaah be pleased with her) because she had not participated as a combatant; she had participated as a nurse, supplying the water to the combatants. There was no co-relation between joining the battle as a combatant and joining the battle as a water supplier, so the idea of Aisha being fifteen years old when she participated in the battle of Uhud cannot be accepted.

## 7. Marriage proposal made by Khawla bint Hakim

When Khawla came to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) with the marriage proposal, the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) asked her: Who do you suggest? She replied: Do you want a young or an older woman? He said who the young is and who is the older woman? She said, as for the young she is Aisha bint Abu Bakr and as for the older she is Sawdah bint Zam'ah. The Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) said, go and tell both of them about me.

Dr. Idlibi made a point here that when the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) lost his beloved wife Khadija (May Allaah be pleased with her), Khawla bint Hakim wished to find a wife for the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ). It does not make any sense to find such a young girl like Aisha at the age of six, and she must have been fourteen years of age.

**My response:** Dr. Idlibi's argument here is that Aisha was a young child who could not be a wife at the age of six to serve the purpose. What is a child, how do we define a child? The approaches wherein our ancestors have described childhood, maturity, and marriage had been numerous and pretty one-of-a-kind in accordance with Western definitions.

Neil Postman, a former professor at the New York University, published a book called '*The Disappearance of Childhood.*' In this book, he claims that childhood is one of the innovations of the revival of artwork and literature beneath the impact of classical models, much like some other social structures. It is growing with the written lifestyle and the number one college training in preference to the oral lifestyle within the centre Age.'

Neil Postman states:

*“In an oral global there isn't a great deal of an idea of a person and, therefore, even much less of a baby. And this is why, in all of the sources, one reveals that the middle Ages adolescence ended at age seven. Why seven? Because this is the age at which youngsters have command over speech. They can say and comprehend what adults can say and comprehend. They are capable of realizing all of the secrets and techniques of the tongue, which can be the most effective secrets and techniques they want to realize. ... The phrase baby expressed kinship, now no longer an age. ...The medieval manner of studying is the manner of the oralist, it takes place basically via apprenticeship and service—what we'd call “on-the-task training.” ... He could have lived on his very own in accommodations within the town, some distance from his family. ... He honestly could now no longer have observed any correspondence among of college students and what they studied.” (Neil Postman)*

The Islamic way of life favours oral transmission, manages to memorise an infinite number of words and the Quran. This oral transmission gives importance to memorising and it could have an advantage to the age when a child would have the ability to reason and speech. In this process, the household job of women at the time exposes them to the life of adults better than the women around their age. Age provided no solid difference between a person's physical or mental capabilities. On this account, if we examine the *hadith* where Khawla bint Hakim understandably differentiated the age of Sawdah and Aisha to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) when she proposed to them, the response of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was identical because of the society; the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) could not see any difference.

## **8. Aisha's age in comparison to Fatima bint Muhammad**

Another argument in relation to the age of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) is, Fatima bint Muhammad was five years older than Aisha bint Abu Bakr. The Ka'ba was rebuilt at the time when Fatima was born; five years prior to

the Prophet of Allaah receiving the revelation, which rounding up the age of Aisha is twelve years old when she married the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ).

Another narration in support of the above, If Fatima was born when the age of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was thirty-five years, which is 605 CE, then Aisha was born when the age of the Prophet (ﷺ) was forty years, which is 610 CE. Some narrations suggests that the marriage of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) took place in 620/621 CE. That is how her age at the time of her marriage to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) would have been ten or eleven years.

**My response:** Let's examine the two separate narrations here, the first one from Ibn Hajar from Abu Jafar from al-Abbas who said: "Fatima was born in the year when the Ka'ba was rebuilt and the age of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was thirty-five years old." (Ibn Hajar, al- Isaba fi Tamyiz al-Sahaba). The second narrations here, from Ubaydillah ibn Muhammad ibn Sulayman ibn Jafar al-Hashimi said: "When Fatima was born, the age of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) was forty-one, and Fatima was born a year or so before the year of receiving the revelation. And also, Fatima was five years older than Aisha. (Ibn Hajar, al-Isaba).

According to the above two narrations, it raises some confusion about the accurate age of Fatima as well as the age of Aisha. The second narration says that Fatima was five years older than Aisha if the Prophet's age was forty-one. The first narration says, Fatima was born when the Prophet's age was thirty-five years old, changing the age of the Prophet from forty-one to thirty-five, causing confusion with the age and birth of Aisha. We have another report, that Fatima was born in the first year of Prophet Hood and that makes Aisha's age six when she got married. This argument can be concluded here; the implicit narration cannot be given precedence over the explicit narration (which was narrated by Aisha about her age when she got married to the Prophet of Allaah).

To summarise this chapter, the assumption that the age of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) can be disputed based on the obscenity of child marriage

is no longer well-grounded because the concept of childhood did not exist in their time. Some girls reached the age of puberty at the age of nine years, and their culture was simply different than the culture of the twenty-first century. The claim that she married when she was a teenager does not provide strong enough evidence to refute the two clear *hadiths* reported by al-Bukhari and al-Muslim, but rather it represents an attempt to legitimize our own insecurity.

## Chapter 4

### Aim of this article

Regarding the marriage of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her), we state that her age was appropriate to get married; she consummated her marriage only when she reached the age of puberty. According to the Western culture, this age of puberty may not be acceptable in the twenty-first century, which is understandable. We are not advocating marrying children at this young age or getting our children married when they are young. We make decisions based on the circumstances; maintaining the cultural value and individual preference about the marriage. The aim of this article is not to encourage youth to marry at the early age, nor is it to suggest the Western culture wrong. Marriage is protecting the individual from immorality, lewdness and indecency and reducing the social corruptions.

To portray Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) as a child, that means to portray the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) in a certain light. A light that seeks to fit Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) into a broader description of Muslim women as “humble, submissive and oppressed” and Muslim men as “oppressors, insulting and unfair” is a description that is both corrupt and dishonest. The controversy over her age prevents us from discussing her legacy and contribution to Islam, her life and marriage to the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ), her knowledge and wisdom. Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) is not only a “child-bride” but so much more. The enemy of Islam and the enemy of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) attempted to paint her as a child- bride. She was an Islamic scholar and narrator of the Prophetic traditions.

## **Conclusion:**

The marriage of Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) was completely understandable and legitimate, and it will remain legitimate. If a Muslim man, in our time marries a young girl at the age of her puberty, we as Muslims must consider it as lawful, in religious terms. We are not advocating it because it is not a widely practised behavior in our contemporary time. Being lawful doesn't mean that marriage at young age must be forced on people. It means that people are given the freedom to decide about the right age of marriage according to their circumstances, unless this freedom is being misused, then the society or the government may interfere. It is not the age that qualifies a person to marry and build a family. It is maturity, and readiness: mental, physical, psychological. This can happen at young age, and on the other hand it may not happen at any age. The society and government role should focus on educating and advising people to make sure that they are ready for marriage.

Because of the complication of contemporary times, young people have no choice but to wait before getting involved in intimate relationships, but this should be done to minimize the potential loss of their lives. When examining the marriage between the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) and Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her), we do not only find examples of the implementations of this subtlety, but we can also gather some divine knowledge for humanity, a moral law that predicts the ups and downs of human development. Increasingly over time, it should now be undeniable that the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) had the moral right to marry and love Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her). Unfortunately, some Muslims have become ignorant of their own traditions and, like critics of Islam; they have surrendered to interpreting the Islamic law in an uncompromising historical fashion.

Similarly, Western countries have not helped to set standards by focusing entirely on the surface age limit as a determinant of maturity, although they consider it socially acceptable for their own minors to be involved in sex as long as they are within the same age range. It is difficult to take Western policy seriously when there is a significant limitation between maturity and sexual intercourse. You cannot condemn the practice of child marriage on the one hand, but at the same time think that your

own children are mature enough physically and mentally to establish intimate relations. It simply doesn't make sense. The sex that a minor decides to have is still sex, whether they choose a partner of the same age or not. Western culture sends a mixed message when it tells minors that they have the right to be intimate with those they are attracted to, as long as they refrain from seeking potential partners who are legally recognized as adults. It is unreasonable to consider such arbitrary differences with a teenager, including raging hormones, or to be considered harmful, because a minority will face the same consequences as their peers as they do with adults (e.g., pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, domestic violence, exploitation, etc.). In other words, it's just an inconsistent value to follow. Thus, the non-violent resentment towards the marriage of the Prophet of Allaah (ﷺ) and Aisha (May Allaah be pleased with her) is nothing but a vain display of virtue, born out of ignorance of science, history, ethics and Islam.

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