



**In the name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful**

Praise be to God, and peace upon the Seal of Prophets.

**Age of Al-Sayyida Aisha When She Married the Prophet Muhammad**

**(peace and mercy of God be upon him)**

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**Abstract**

Although the widely-cited hadith states that Aisha was nine years old when her marriage to the Prophet (upon him be peace) was consummated, this is contradicted by strong historical evidence. Tabari, the famous historian and hadith expert, states that Aisha was born at least fifteen years before the marriage was consummated, and both early prophetic biographers, Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham, mention that Aisha was amongst the earliest converts to Islam, once again making her much older than the 'six-nine' reports indicate, and corroborating Tabari's opinion. Also, reports of Aisha's age in works by such authorities as Nawawi, `Asqallani and Ibn Kathir all place her in her late teens at the time the marriage was consummated. Moreover, historical reports in books such as Saheeh al-Bukari contain descriptions of Aisha in which she appears much older than the 'six-nine' narrations would suggest. Pre-modern people were typically not aware of age or birth dates as we are in modern bureaucratised society, and conceptualisation of numbers was also very different in the past. Pre-modern people would often approximate their age when asked, and numbers were often expressed as descriptors rather than intended to be chronologically precise.

### **Introduction**

This article argues that Al-Sayyida Aisha was between fifteen and nineteen years of age when her marriage to the Prophet (peace be upon him) was consummated and not nine as is often assumed.

The widely-cited prophetic narration (hadith), recorded by al-Bukhari and others, in which Aisha stated that she was betrothed when she was six and the marriage was consummated when she was nine<sup>1</sup>, has become the basis of personal attacks on the character of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

This article argues that the ages mentioned in this hadith are contradicted by historical evidence, including other hadiths and historical reports.

The author also suggests that the actual numbers stated in the hadith were never meant to be precise, and Arabs of the time, like many other pre-modern people, did not have a calendar system and chronological accuracy was simply not a feature of their culture. It is almost certain that Aisha did not know her precise age and, in fact, it was not a feature of her socio-cultural milieu to be accurately aware of one's age in the way that one is accustomed to in today's bureaucratised society.

The authenticity of this hadith is not questioned but, rather, the argument is that the figures mentioned are not chronologically precise.

Several traditional Muslim scholars<sup>2</sup> and western academics<sup>3</sup> have also questioned that Aisha was only nine years old when the marriage was consummated.

#### **Orientation to Dates:**

Commencement of prophecy was in year 609 CE, when the Prophet (upon him be peace) was in his fortieth year of age. The Hijrah, or emigration to Medina, took place thirteen years later in 622 CE, and the marriage to Aisha was consummated in 623 or 624 CE (in the second year after the hijrah).

#### **Awareness of Age in Pre-Modern Societies**

Perusing the extensive classical Islamic biographical literature<sup>4</sup> reveals that birth dates, which were important in the authentication of hadith transmission, are almost always disagreed upon, even for the most famous personalities. Almost all biographical notes mention several opinions regarding the subject's year of birth. This is the case even following the introduction of the Islamic calendar during the caliphate of Sayyiduna Umar. Of course, it would not have been known at birth that a person was destined to become a hadith transmitter, and that his birth date would become an important item of information. A hadith transmitter, just like any other medieval citizen, would not be expected to know his year of birth or age except in an approximate sense. This demonstrates that in medieval Arab civilisation, even

following the introduction of a formal calendar system, people were not aware of their precise birth dates. Pre-modern people, in general, simply did not measure and record time in the way we do today. This still exists, as it is not difficult to find people in less 'developed' countries who have only very approximate ideas of their age. The way pre-Islamic Arabs referred to the chronology of events was to relate them to particularly memorable occurrences. For example, the 'Year of the Elephant' referred to the year in which Abraha's army tried to invade Makkah. We know when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was born because biographers mention that he was born in the 'Year of the Elephant'.

Only relatively recently, as modern societies became more bureaucratised, were people in general required to be aware of their exact ages.

In ancient Rome, for example, according to historian, Karen Cokayne, "... the Romans' knowledge of age was often imperfect and many of the uneducated would have been unaware of their correct calendar age. Age-rounding, when age was rounded up to the nearest unit of 5 or 10, was also common, especially on the funerary epigraphy."<sup>5</sup>

Looking at England as another typical case, historian Pat Thane, writes: "Accurate, large-scale, systematic recording of births and deaths began in England only in 1837... Individuals were only gradually required to know their own exact ages as society became bureaucratized and official records increasingly required such information. Before the nineteenth century precise age was rarely required of people of any age...most could certainly offer an age when required, sometimes quite precisely, though some would 'round up' their possible age to a plausible round number or add years as they reached later ages."<sup>6</sup>.

Even today, in rural communities in developing countries, one finds ordinary people do not know their age, and will typically approximate or 'round' up or down when questioned. A villager may tell you his age when questioned, only

to give you a completely different figure when asked again some time later. It is not that he is trying to mislead, but this is actually the culturally 'normal' way of expressing age.

**Evidence that Aisha was Between Fifteen and Nineteen Years of Age when the marriage was consummated.**

The marriage of Sayyida Aisha was consummated after the Hijrah. Hadith specialist, al-Nawawi, places it definitively in the second year, after the Battle of Badr.<sup>7</sup> This provides a good example of how memorable events, in this case, the Battle of Badr, were used as reference points for other events.

Despite the 'six-nine' hadith mentioned in the introduction, most eminent early Muslim historians either state explicitly or imply that Aisha was born prior to prophecy, which commenced thirteen years before the Hijrah.

Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalláni states in al-Isábah, citing al-Wáqidi, on the authority of al-`Abbás (uncle of the Prophet ﷺ), that "Fatima was born while the Ka`ba was being built... and the Prophet ﷺ was thirty-five years of age... and she [Fatima] was about five years older than Aisha."<sup>8</sup>

We can assume that this statement of al-`Abbas is reliable as he remembers the birth of his nephew's daughter taking place while the Ka'ba was being rebuilt. This was an event of major spiritual significance for Quraysh, and thus firmly etched in their memories.

For example, most people can tell you what they were doing the day President Kennedy was assassinated (if they are old enough), the first man walked on the moon or, to take a more recent event, the day the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks in New York took place.

This report indicates that Aisha was born approximately when the Prophet ﷺ was forty, ie at the commencement of prophecy. Therefore, she would have been at least fifteen when the marriage was consummated in the second year after Hijra.

Early Islam's most renowned historian, al-Tabari, states: "In the Age of Ignorance [pre-Islamic period], Abu Bakr married Qutaila daughter of `Abd al-`Uzza...and she bore for him `Abdullah and Asmaa...he also married, in the Age of Ignorance, Umm Ruman daughter of `Amir...she bore for him `Abd al-Rahman and `Aisha. All four of these children were born in the pre-Islamic period."<sup>9</sup>

This statement of al-Tabari, a scholar renowned for his accuracy and critical methodology<sup>10</sup>, clearly asserts that Aisha was born before the beginning of prophecy. However, we know that al-Tabari is aware of the 'six-nine' hadith as he quotes it in the same book.<sup>11</sup> This apparent contradiction can be understood when the methodology of the early hadith scholars is taken into account. Early works, like al-Tabari's, were careful to differentiate between transmitted reports from earlier authorities and the compiler's own opinion. For example, in his famous tafsir work, Tabari's format is to cite the opinions of earlier scholars (with the corresponding chain of narrators) before giving his own opinion on the quranic verse in question. Often he will agree with one of the transmitted reports and give his reasoning as to why he believes it is stronger than other opinions. This method constituted the scholarly responsibility to preserve faithfully the knowledge of preceding generations even if it contradicted one's own opinion.

We can assume that where Tabari states that she was born prior to prophecy, he is expressing his own opinion based upon all the evidence in his possession, having taken into account the 'six-nine' narration.

The earliest biographers of the Prophet ﷺ, Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham, both state explicitly that Aisha was amongst the earliest people to embrace Islam.

Ibn Ishaq, as quoted by Al-Nawawi in *Tahdheeb al-Asmaa wal-Lughaat*, states that Aisha “embraced Islam when she was young, after eighteen others had become Muslim.”<sup>12</sup>

Ibn Hisham lists the first converts to the new religion and includes Aisha as one of them, adding that she was young (*sagheerah*) at the time.<sup>13</sup> Aisha embraced Islam, according to Ibn Hisham, at the same time as the likes of Abu Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah, Saeed ibn Zaid, Khabbab, and al-Arqam.

If the ‘six-nine’ reports were taken literally, Aisha would not even have been born at this time. Clearly, the opinions of Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham indicate that Aisha must have already been of an age where she was able to understand and accept the new faith; therefore she would have been well into her late teens when the marriage was consummated.

Al-Nawawi mentions in *Tahdheeb al-Asmaa wal-Lughaat*, quoting Ibn Abi Zinad, that “Asma was ten years older than `Aisha, and...was born twenty-seven years before the hijrah of the messenger of Allah (peace be upon him)...”<sup>14</sup> According to this, Aisha’s birth would have been four years before the commencement of prophecy, so she would have been nineteen years of age when the marriage was consummated. This is further supported by Ibn Kathir who states that Asmá, the sister of Aisha, was ten years older than her and died in 73 A.H. at the age of one hundred years: “Of the notables who were killed with Ibn al-Zubayr in 73 [A.H.]...was Asma daughter of Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq...she was older than her sister, Aisha, by 10 years...and she reached the age of 100 years, not having lost any of her teeth, and her mind still sharp, may God have mercy on her.”<sup>15</sup> Simple mathematics shows that this also equates to nineteen years of age for Aisha in the second year of hajrah when the marriage was consummated.

Other clues as to Aisha’s real age can be found in reports of historical events in which Aisha participated, by examining the description that is given of her and seeing if it correlates to her expected age if the ‘six-nine’ hadiths are accurate. We can be

sure that these descriptions of Aisha are accurate because they are anchored in the witness's memory to the event in question.

Al-Bukhari narrates that Aisha said, "I was a playful girl (*jariyah*) when the verses, 'Nay, the Hour (of Judgment) is the time promised them...' were revealed to Muhammad, peace and mercy of God be upon him".<sup>16</sup> According to the tafsir of Ibn Ashur, this surah was revealed five years before the hijrah.<sup>17</sup> The use of the term 'girl' (*jariyah*) in this hadith (rather than 'child' (*saby*) for example) is significant as 'jariyah' in classical Arabic means a young woman around adolescence or older.<sup>18</sup> According to this, Aisha would already have been an adolescent seven years before the marriage was consummated. This also concords with the age of approximately nineteen at consummation of the marriage.

If we took the 'six-nine' hadith literally, it would mean that she was only two years old when these verses were revealed. However, the term 'jariyah' is not appropriate for a two year old according to the authoritative lexicons, and secondly, the fact that Aisha remembers the verses being revealed is important as this is not possible for a two-year old. Psychological studies have shown that we are amnesic for our early childhood, and do not retain active memories of events occurring before the age of about four.<sup>19</sup>

Another hadith in Sahih al-Bukh ari states: "On the day (of the battle) of Uhud when (some) people retreated and left the Prophet, I saw Aisha, daughter of Abu Bakr, and Umm Sulaim, with their robes tucked up so that the bangles around their ankles were visible, hurrying with (in another narration it is said, 'carrying') water skins on their backs. They would pour water in the mouths of people, and return to fill the water skins again, and came back again to pour water in the mouths of people."<sup>20</sup>

As Uhud took place a year after the marriage was consummated, this would make Aisha only ten if we follow the 'six-nine' narration. The description however does not seem to be of a ten year old girl, and it is extremely unlikely



that a girl of ten would have been allowed onto the scene of battle. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not even permit several boys to join the army, as they were too young. The description does fit for a young woman in her late teens or early twenties.

Three years later, when the Muslim community faced its most difficult trial yet at the Battle of the Trench, Aisha was there again at the side of the Prophet ﷺ. One bitter cold night, the Prophet ﷺ himself was guarding a potential breach point along the trench. When he would become overwhelmed by the cold, he would come to Aisha who would warm him in her embrace, and he would return to guarding the trench. Finally, the Prophet ﷺ called out for someone to relieve him and was answered by Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas.<sup>21</sup> This description certainly does not fit for a thirteen year old which would have been her age if we accepted the age of nine at consummation.

All of the early authorities quoted above concur that Aisha was born before the commencement of prophecy (ie at least thirteen years before hijrah), although they knew of the 'six-nine' reports. It seems likely that they were aware of the chronological imprecision inherent in such reports, and as historians, were basing their conclusions on a survey of all the evidence available to them.

In summary, pre-modern people typically did not have accurate knowledge of their ages, especially those who had no formal calendar system. There is no reason to believe that Aisha was exceptional in this regard. The reports that relate Aisha's age to major events, such as the building of the Ka`ba, commencement of prophecy, and the prophetic battles, are likely to be more reliable than Aisha's own statements regarding her age.

### **Chronological Imprecision in the Prophetic Biography**

Aisha was almost certainly no exception to the rule that the medieval Arabs did not keep track of their birth dates or the accurate passage of years. In fact, the chronology of many famous events in the life of the Prophet himself, peace be upon him, are the subject of difference of opinion.

Even for something as important as the length of the Makkan period, we find that Ibn `Abbas states that “the Apostle of Allah... remained in Makkah for thirteen years...then migrated to Medina...”<sup>22</sup> However, Rabia ibn Abi Abd al-Rahmán says, “He stayed ten years in Makkah receiving revelation, and stayed in Medina for ten years...”<sup>23</sup> Both hadiths are recorded in Saheeh al-Bukhari.

This demonstrates that even a hadith in Saheeh al-Bukhari need not be taken as precise with respect to chronological matters, despite its authentic transmission. In fact, few major events in prophetic biography have complete consensus as to their chronological occurrence.

### **Conceptualisation of Numbers in Primitive Societies**

An overlooked aspect of this issue is how numbers were conceptualised by people in the past. Many people today grow up learning to use and manipulate numbers from an early age. Understanding numbers in an abstract way soon becomes second nature for us, and our minds are able to conceptualise a huge range of numbers.

We can easily forget that our modern system of counting which utilises place-value notation to generate an abstract number sequence able to extend ever upwards to infinity, was only introduced to Europe at the turn of the sixteenth century. India was the land where, uniquely, the essential component that makes such a number sequence possible, the zero, was first invented. No other civilisation is known to have taken this critical step and develop a symbol for the zero. The advanced Indian system of numerals was adopted

by the medieval Islamic civilisation, and later the 'Indian-Arabic numerals' spread to the rest of the world.

Historians such as German scholar, Karl Menninger, have shown that in previous civilisations, conceptualisation of numbers varied depending on how developed the number system.<sup>24</sup> In primitive cultures, numbers were closely associated with the actual things counted. People in such cultures found difficulty in 'abstracting' numbers from real objects. For such people, the first ten digits were often of special significance as this is the number of fingers on the two hands. Numbers up to ten were easily 'visualised' and tangible; above ten were often inaccessible to the primitive mind. The Roman poet, Ovid, wrote:

"...ten... This number was of old held high in honour,  
for such is the number of fingers by which we count."<sup>25</sup>

The fact that numbers are still called 'digits' in English hearkens back to the time when fingers were the basis of counting.

According to Menninger, "Early man wants to see numbers, they must remain visible to him, and he must be able to touch them if he is to grasp them with his mind. For this reason he breaks down larger numbers into smaller ones, if he can...[for example] the answer given by an aged Sicilian woman when asked how old she was: *tre vvote vinti cincu anni*, "3 times 20-5 years" (=75)."<sup>26</sup>

Although the Arabs were very sophisticated in their language (and hence thought), when it came to numbers, however, there are indications that they were quite simplistic. Although the Quraysh were notable traders, most of the Arabs, including the Medinans, were simple farmers or bedouins.

The grammatical structure of Arabic number-words gives clues to the historical development of the use of numbers by the ancient Arabs, and offers a glimpse of a time when the first ten digits may have been the limit of their

number system. The counted object following any number up to ten is in the plural form and genitive case, e.g. *thalathatu rijaalin* 'three (of) men'. Above ten, a clear change takes place, and the counted object begins to appear in the singular and accusative case, e.g. *thalathata `ashara rajulan* 'three'ten (13) man'. We see that the Arabic number-word for twenty, '*ishruna*', is in fact not the dual form of ten, but the plural, literally 'many tens'. This may be remnant from an ancient time when ten was the limit of the Arabs' number sequence, and anything over ten simply considered 'many'.<sup>27</sup>

The structure of number-words in Arabic is also instructive. For example, the number 34 is spoken as 'four and thirty' [*araba` wa thalathun*]. The single unit, four, comes first as this is most tangible, and then, thirty, *thalathun*, which is probably shortened from 'three tens' - early man's attempt to break a difficult number, 34, into conceivable parts, 'four and three tens'. That the thousand, *alf*, was their highest number shows how limited the Arabs were in dealing with higher numbers.

This object-based understanding of numbers is beautifully illustrated by the hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to some Companions, "We are an unlettered people; we do not write or calculate. The number of days in the month is thus or thus."<sup>28</sup> Upon the first 'thus' he displayed his ten fingers twice, and nine fingers once (withdrawing his thumb), i.e. indicating twenty-nine days. And upon the second, he displayed his ten fingers three times, i.e. thirty days.<sup>29</sup> Numbers such as twenty-nine and thirty may have been difficult for his audience to grasp, without a visualised 'supplementary quantity', in this case the Prophet's fingers (peace be upon him).

The translation of counted objects into supplementary quantities indicates a primitive stage of handling numbers. A chieftain on the island of Celebes was sentenced by the colonial authorities to pay a fine of twenty buffaloes.

Someone expressed surprise at the severity of the punishment. Quite

astonished, the chieftain asked: “Do you consider the fine that high?” and began to count out nuts from a pouch, one for each buffalo. Only when he had ‘grasped’ the number in the truest sense of the word did he become incensed at the punishment.<sup>30</sup>

Consider also the ayah of Quran in Surah al-Muzzammil which magnificently states: “Over it are nineteen” (referring to Hell). The text goes on to explain: “And We have set none but angels as Guardians of the Fire; and We have fixed their number only as a trial for Unbelievers...”<sup>31</sup> Fakhr al-Deen al-Razi, the famous exegete, explains that it was the actual number itself (nineteen) which was the trial. The disbelievers of Quraysh were astonished at a number as “unusual” as nineteen being mentioned in the Quran. In fact, “they mocked the revelation, asking why the number of Guardians was not twenty”<sup>32</sup>, a far more ‘acceptable’ number for the primitive mind to grasp.

In summary, pre-modern people would often offer an age when asked, but this would be an approximation as they did not typically keep accurate records of birth dates. Such expressions of one’s age were not meant to be taken as chronologically precise, and it is possible that for Aisha the first ten digits were familiar and larger numbers difficult to conceptualise.

### **Differences in the ‘six-nine’ narrations**

Examination of the various narrations of the ‘six-nine’ hadith confirms that the numbers are approximations. For example, al-Bayhaqi reports that Aisha said, “The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) married me...when I was six **or** seven years old...”<sup>33</sup> Ibn Sa’d relates from two of the leading authorities on Aisha’s hadith narrations, al-Zuhri and Hisham ibn `Urwah, who both said that she married the Prophet (peace be upon him) when she was nine **or** seven years of age.<sup>34</sup> This shows that even the narrations from Aisha are not

consistent, and the age at which the betrothal took place varies between six, seven and nine years of age.

The Arabs' conceptualisation of numbers was primitive, and the single units, i.e. one, two, three...nine, were closer to their understanding. Aisha is unlikely to have known her age, and her intention was to emphasise that she was young at the time of her marriage, as is clear from the context of her speech.

In mathematically-naïve societies, numbers were often not used in a precise numerical sense, but as adjectives. The most primitive numbers, one and two, still take the grammatical form of adjectives in Arabic to this day.

#### **More Evidence that the Relationship was not Inappropriate**

It is noteworthy that the marriage was not consummated immediately in Makkah. In fact it was about five years later that Aisha was sent to the house of the Prophet (peace be upon him). There was no reason for Aisha's parents to send her to her husband before the appropriate time, and all biographical reports indicate that they were loving and responsible parents who would have no reason to do anything contrary to their daughter's best interests. In fact, after five years had passed and the Prophet (peace be upon him) was showing no signs of taking Aisha into his household, it was her father himself who came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, "What prevents you from consummating the marriage with your wife?" Only then was the marriage consummated and she was taken into the prophetic household.<sup>35</sup>

This well-authenticated report refutes those who imply that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was slave to his passions with respect to this marriage.

In fact, he appears to have been not particularly concerned about taking Aisha into his house, only doing so on the insistence of his father-in-law.

Secondly, there is no evidence to show that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was attracted to young girls. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was the ruler

of a city, and later a nation, with followers who were absolutely devoted to him. If he wished, he may have had any woman of his choosing. His first wife, Khadeeja, was fifteen years his senior, and he did not marry another while she was alive. After her demise, all of the women he married were widows except Aisha. The marriage to Aisha was an important political alliance between two noble families of Quraysh and a cementing of his relationship with his closest friend and ally, Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq. Abu Bakr later asked for the hand of the Prophet's daughter in marriage for himself, proving that significant age differences between spouses was not contrary to their socio-cultural norms.

#### **Why did the 'six-nine' narrations gain such prominence?**

One may ask why early Muslim scholars did not refute the ages mentioned in the "six-nine" narration in their commentaries. It is possible that they simply took for granted that particular figures in such reports were not necessarily regarded as chronological data, and did not feel the need to comment further as this was self-evident for people of that time.

American professor, Denise Spellberg, theorises that political factors, in particular the Shi'a-Sunni split, may have been important in the prevalent notion of Aisha's young age at marriage. Her young age, and therefore that she was not known to any man before the Prophet ﷺ, was an important point for supporters of the Sunni Abbasid caliphate as it proved her status as a divinely-appointed wife, and thus a reliable source regarding the 'thorny' question of his succession<sup>36</sup>. It may have been that Sunni scholars favoured the reports which placed Aisha at nine years of age as it helped raise her status as the only virgin bride of the Prophet ﷺ.

One may also add that the Shi`a cult around the figure of Sayyiduna Ali no doubt used the fact that he had been brought up in the prophetic household from his early childhood as a mark of his distinction above the other Companions, particularly Aisha. The Shi`a rejected the authority and status of Aisha, and it may have suited Sunni scholars to highlight those reports that showed Aisha to be very young when she entered the Prophet's household



### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, although the 'six-nine' hadith may be authentic, it is based ultimately on the authority of Aisha. In view of prevailing norms of her time, it is very unlikely that she knew her own age, and other reports and historical evidence indicate that she was, in fact, between fifteen and nineteen years of age when the marriage was consummated. As these other reports relate Aisha's age to actual historical events that took place, they are likely to be a far more reliable indicator.

History shows that the conceptualisation of numbers in medieval times was often primitive. Care must be exercised not to read historical reports with 'modern' eyes and a contemporary numerical mindset. Commonly, when pre-modern man states his age, it is often 'rounded' up or down, or simply an approximation. Even though expressed as a precise figure, it is not meant to be understood as such.

Finally, it should be remembered that the 'six-nine' narration is an *ahad*<sup>87</sup> hadith and therefore not considered to provide absolute certainty according to the Sunni epistemological system.

And God knows best.



### Appendix: Author's note

Sayyida Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) occupies a huge place in the Islamic tradition. Being the second most prolific narrator of the prophetic sunnah means that approximately a quarter of what we know about the prophet (peace be upon him) has come directly through her. Thus, for a non-entity like myself, even thinking about writing such an article as this filled me with great trepidation, so that many times I considered abandoning the project altogether. For Muslims, Sayyida Aisha is not only one of the greatest Companions, beloved consort of the Beloved of God ﷺ, but also, as the Quran has decreed, she is our mother.

This article is not an apologetic response, but a sincerely held opinion after investigating the issue. Ultimately this is my opinion based on a reading of historical evidence. The job of the student of the Islamic tradition is to investigate to the best of his or her ability, and Allah knows best the reality of the situation.

Ridhwan ibn Muhammad Saleem

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<sup>1</sup> al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari: Chap. 'Marriage of the Prophet, peace be upon him, to Aisha, and her Arrival at Medina...*, Publ. Dar al-Salam, Riyadh (1999), pg. 654, no. 3894

<sup>2</sup> These include Muhammad Ali [Living thoughts of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)] and Abu Tahir Irfani [Urdu pamphlet *Rukhsati kai waqt Sayyida Aisha Siddiqa ki umar*: 'The age of Lady Aisha at the time of the start of her married life'], both of the deviant Qadiyani sect. Hakim Niaz Ahmad and Habib-ur-Rahman Kandhalwi both reportedly have booklets in Urdu on this issue which I have not been able to obtain, and Ruqaiyyah Maqsood has a booklet in English (published by IPCI), which she states is based on work by Muhammad Farooq Khan.

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- <sup>3</sup> Spellberg, D., *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past: the Legacy of A'isha bint Abi Bakr*, Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 4
- <sup>4</sup> For example, the classic biographical encyclopaedia: Dhahabi, *Siyar i'lam al-nubul*. Publ. Mu'assasah al-risalah, Beirut. (1993).
- <sup>5</sup> Karen Cokayne, *Experiencing old age in Rome*, (pg 2), Routledge (2003)
- <sup>6</sup> Pat Thane, *Old age in English history: Past Experiences, Present Issues*, (pp. 19-20), Oxford Uni Press (2000)
- <sup>7</sup> Nawawi, *Kitab Tahdhib al-asmaa wal-lughaat: Chap. Biography of Aisha Mother of the Believers*, Publ. Dar al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, Lebanon, vol. 2, pg. 351
- <sup>8</sup> Ibn Hajar al-'Asqallani, *al-Isaabah fi tamyeez al-sahabah*, Publ. Dar al-Jeal, Beirut (1412H), vol. 8 pg. 54 (Biography of Fatima al-Zahraa)
- <sup>9</sup> Tabari, *Tarikh al-Tabari: Chap. Year 13, Section 'Mention of the Names of the Wives of Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq'*. Publ. Dar al-Ma'arif, Egypt (1962), vol. 3, pg. 425-6
- <sup>10</sup> Zaimche (2001), *Early Muslim Historians*, Foundation for Science Technology and Civilization, Nov 2001
- <sup>11</sup> Tabari, *Tarikh al-Tabari*. Retrieved from internet site: Ya'sub, vol. 2, pg. 413.
- <sup>12</sup> Nawawi, *Kitab Tahdhib al-asmaa wal-lughaat: Chap. Biography of Aisha Mother of the Believers*, Publ. Dar al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, Lebanon, vol. 2, pg. 351
- <sup>13</sup> Ibn Hisham, *Al-seerah al-nabawiyya, [Chap. 'Mention of those of the Companions who became Muslim by the invitation of Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him']*, Publ. Dar al-Khayr, Damascus (1999), vol. 1, pg. 604
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