



ORIENTALISTS' CRITICISM OF SAIDA AISHA'S MARRIAGE: ANALYTICAL STUDY OF HADITH NARRATIONS

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Abstract

This Article presenting the divergent orientalist's opinions, that were not indicated in most cases by reliable historical texts, about the ages of Saida Aisha when she got married to the Prophet. They have noticed the scarcity of information about the childhood of Saida Aisha and if her childhood was shrouded in mystery, then how could it be possible to confirm her early marriage. This research adapted the descriptive approach by collecting contradicted evidence of debaters and analyzing them in the light of Hadiths data related to the subject. The researchers concluded that reconsidering the age of Saida Aisha is necessary since the clear indications to her age in al-Bukhari and other canonical books of prophetic traditions are not prophetic statements but historical records of the companions and individual matters. Her sister Asma' was 10 years older, and she was 27 years when they migrated to Yathrib which means Saida Aisha was 17 when they migrated! According to this historical account the age of Saida Aisha when got married was around nineteen.

Keywords: Saida Aisha. Puberty. Hadith. Orientalists. Tradition.

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INTRODUCTION

Many debates and argumentations conducted on Saida Aisha and her age when she got married to the prophet in time that Arabs had no registry of birth and death, for instance, Muslims used to say Abraha the king of Yemen marched to Mecca leading a huge army accompanied with elephants to destroy Ka'ba and in that year, the year of Elephant our Prophet was born! That's mean a big event like that was a historical milestone used to denote other events, such as the birthdate of some notables, but the problem is that great event itself has not been properly recorded by historians outside the Arabian Peninsula!

The orientalist, in their criticism of the Prophet's marriage to Saida Aisha, do not rely too much on her age as much as they care about his marriage to young women when he became the governor of Madinah, and this, in their opinion, is evidence of his drift with his overwhelming sexual abietites and the loss of control over sexual desires. The Prophet's marriages were interpreted pragmatically by orientalist, for instance, the Prophet's marriage to Saida Khadija was a profitable business deal¹. Through this marriage, the Prophet was able to secure a suitable source of financial income to support his plans of attracting the poor and slaves.

ORIENTALIST ARGUMENTS ON AISHAH'S CHILD MARRIAGE AND PUBERTY

Orientalists criticized the Prophet's marriage to Safia bint Huyay ibn Akhtab and claimed that the Prophet married her out of his desire to insult and humiliate the Jews of Khaybar². And they claimed that Safia, whom the Prophet asked for marriage and offered her Islam, did not find a way to refuse, because all her family were killed, including her husband and her father, and there was no longer a

¹ Watt. W. Montgomery. 1974. *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*. UK: Oxford University Press. P. 24.

² Worrill, William. H. 1928. *The Case of Muhammad*. Journal of the American Oriental Society. P. 146.

difference between living with the Prophet or joining her people and her destiny would be like theirs. As evidence for their claim, they distorted al-Waqidi statement and gave it an interpretation that is commensurate with their previous analysis³. Their distortion of the text depends on selectivity, as they excluded sentences and phrases that show Safia's love for the Prophet and the vision she saw, and how her harsh husband punished her for. They also excluded the narrations that show love between her and the Prophet and the Prophet's defense of her and how Safia wished to be in the place of the Prophet when his illness became severe.

For instance, Although the British Encyclopedia did not discuss the details of Aisha's marriage and her age when she got married, it confirmed her marriage at the age of nine when stated that she was nineteen years old when the Prophet died⁴.

The orientalist's opinions about the ages of the wives of the Prophet, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, were divergent and not indicated in most cases by reliable historical texts. The orientalist Montgomery Watt raises doubts about the age of Saida Khadija and believes that she was much younger than forty, as she had been pregnant eight times, and this means her age in the last pregnancy was forty-eight, and this is impossible, or perhaps a miracle!!⁵ In his view, he may have relied on some ancient Islamic sources, which mentioned different ages for Saida Khadija when she got married. Some of them said she was thirty-five and others said that she was twenty-eight⁶. Rather, Al-Bayhaqi went that she was twenty-five years old when the Prophet married her.⁷

Christian theologians in Syria, Turkey and Iraq during the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphate have been writing apologies to Christian congregations criticizing Islamic beliefs and at the same time defending the doctrines of Trinity and the crucifixion of Christ. These pedagogic letters were mainly of an educational nature aimed at preventing Christians from embracing Islam. Those theologians felt how dangerous the situation was after hundred thousand of Christians converted to Islam for several reasons, foremost of which was their anger at the unjust Roman authorities, and they strongly believed that the Christians' ignorance of their religion was a major reason for their apostasy. Hence, they began to simplify the beliefs of Christianity in their apologies, and amid these explanations, they launched an organized campaign against Islamic beliefs. John of Damascus, for example, degraded the morals of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, and took advantage of the rumors that circulated about his marriage to Saida Zainab bint Jahsh to confirm his claims.

Perhaps the Orientalists were surprised, as we are, from the attitude of Christian theologians who lived in the Middle East during the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties and criticized the Holy Quran in their writings in Arabic, Greek and Syriac like Ammar al-Basri and Abdul Masih al-Kindi. Their objections were many about the personality of the Prophet and some of his marriages, especially his marriage to Saida Zainab bint Jahsh and Saida Khadijah, but they did not address the issue of the Prophet's marriage to Saida Aisha and her age.

Among these theologians was John of Damascus⁸, who was executive administrator for collecting tax from Christians in Syria. After being dismissed from his post by Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz, he retired to a monastery near Jerusalem and devoted himself to study Bible and write pedagogic pamphlets for Christian communities in Middle east. He produced influential works that embraced the views of

³ Al-Waqidi, Muhammad ibn Omar bin Waqid. 1984. *Magazi al-Waqidi*. Edited by Marsidin Johns. Beirut: 'Alamul Kutub. 3rd Edition. P.668.

⁴ Encyclopedia Britannica. Vol1. P. 180.

⁵ Watt. W. Montgomery. 2002. *Muhammad fi Mecca*. Translated by: Abdulrahman Hussein Isa. Cairo: al-Haiyah al-'Amma lil Kitab. P. 99.

⁶ Ibn Sa'd, Muhammad ibn Sa;d ibn Mani'. 1990. *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*. Edited by: Muhammad Abdulqadir 'Ata. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah. 8/17.

⁷ Al-Baihaqi, Ahmad ibn al-Hussein al-Khurasani. 1984. *Dala'il al-Nubuwwah wa Ma'rifat Ahwal Sahib al-Shari'ah*. Beirut: Dar al-Kurub al-Ilmiyyah. 2/71.

⁸ Azmi, Ahmad Sanusi & Mesbahul Hoqqe Chowdhury. 2015. *Orientalists' Studies of the Quran & Sunnah*. Malaysia: Islamic Science University Press. P.19-21.

Orthodox and Catholics alike especially after translating his works into Latin. Theologians of Spain, Netherlands and other Western countries repeated John's views, and become one of the main references for orientalist's analysis and criticism of Islamic heritage.

John of Damascus was preoccupied with theological issues, especially the defense of the doctrine of the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus, the son of Mary. His main concern was to save the Christian communities in the Middle East from the danger of Islam and its conversion, and it seems that the issue of Aisha's early marriage did not attract his attention. Whoever reads his arguments about the divinity of Christ and the adoption of method of dialogue and questions will realize how great his sense of responsibility was towards the Christians and the need to educate them in the smallest details of their beliefs.

Among them too, is Ammar Al-Basri⁹, who figured out some scrutinized rules to judge the religious text as authentic or false. He believed himself knowledgeable enough to interpret some Quranic verses using a new approach to support the philosophy of Trinity; Another theologian is Abd al-Masih al-Kindi, who wrote letters in refutation of the Quranic beliefs and had complaints about the marriages of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, and other theologians who lived in Syria, Iraq and eastern Turkey.... All of them didn't pay any attention or importance to the marriage of Saida Ayesha although they directed harsh criticism to the marriage of the Prophet to Saida Zainab bint Jahsh.

They counted marriage of Saida Zainab as evidence that the Prophet, peace be upon him, couldn't control His sexual appetite¹⁰, as He married the ex-wife of His adopted son, Zaid bin Haritha. They criticized the prophet's marriage to Saida Khadijah too, claiming that He Enhanced His social status with Khadija's money and trade and He used her as an instrument to achieve his Final goals, therefore, after her demise He began polygamy and searched for beautiful ladies from aristocrat families!

Orientalists have noticed the scarcity of information about the childhood of Saida Aisha¹¹, If her childhood was shrouded in mystery, then how could it be possible to confirm her marriage at the age of seven? In this regard, she was given title of Siddiqa bint al-Siddiq (the truthful daughter of the truthful)¹² and we have only very few narrations, most of which depend on Urwa bin Al-Zubayr, who was very young at that time. In a serious matter such as this issue, about which there are conflicting opinions, it is necessary to rely on abundant narratives to confirm the age of her marriage.

SUNNAH AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ABOUT AISHAH'S AGE AND PUBERTY

Based on al-Bukhari's narration, Saida Aisha became sane, and her parents were Muslim:

"لم أعقل أبوي إلا وهما يدينان الدين"¹³

means that her age was between four and five when her father converted to Islam if we assume, she was born that year. Abu Bakr embraced Islam in the first year of the prophecy, and this means that the age of Aisha in that year was four at least. If we add twelve years of the Meccan period to her age, it becomes sixteen, and therefore when the Prophet married her in Madinah, she was at least eighteen years old!! This postulate could be opposed to another preposition saying she was born six years before migration to Madinah and her statement is still true!

Ibn Katheer recorded another two narrations about the marriage's age of Saida Aisha in two of his books:

⁹ Azmi, Ahmad Sanusi. 2015. *Orientalists' Studies of the Quran & Sunnah*. P.34-35.

¹⁰ Azmi, Ahmad Sanusi. 2015. *Orientalists' Studies of the Quran & Sunnah*. P.21.

¹¹ Watt. W. Montgomery. 2002. *Muhammad Prophet & Statesman*. UK: Oxford University Press. P. 102.

¹² Spellberg, Denise A. 1996. *Politics, Gender and the Islamic Past, the Legacy of Aisha Bint Abi Bakr*. US: Colombia University Press. P. 34.

¹³ Al-Bukhari, Muhammad bin Isma'il. 1987. *Al-Jami' al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar*. Edited by Mustafa Deib al-Bugha. Beirut: Ibn Katheer Press. 3rd Edition. Hadith No 464. 1/181.

"وتزوج الصديقة بنت الصديق عائشة بنت أبي بكر، رضي الله عنهما، وهي بنت ست سنين قبل الهجرة بسنتين، وقيل: ثلاث"¹⁴،
 "وعائشة الصديقة بنت الصديق - رضي الله عنهما - أم عبد الله، أم المؤمنين، وحببية رسول رب العالمين، عقد عليها وهي بنت
 ست سنين قبل الهجرة بسنتين وقيل بثلاث"¹⁵.

This statement means Saida Aisha was nine years before Hijrah and twelve years old when got married! This record added more disturbance and reduced the chances of compatibility around the age of Saida Aisha. Ibn 'Ashur in his commentary added another two years while interpreting chapter al-Qamar which has been revealed five years before the prophetic migration to Yathrib and Aisha that year was six years old:

وعائشة يومئذ بنت ست سنين، وذكر بعض المفسرين أن انشقاق القمر كان سنة خمس قبل الهجرة¹⁶

Considering this statement age of Aisha before Hijrah was eleven years and when she got married (her marriage was in third year of Hijrah) become fourteen!

If we look at the age of her sister Asma' we will find all traditional accounts saying Asma' was 10 years older than Aisha, and she was 27 years when they migrated to Yathrib which means Saida Aisha was 17 when they migrated to Yathrib and simply she was 4 years in the first year of prophecy the same year her father embraced Islam! Her we come again to the first postulate about her age but using different calculation! According to this accurate historical account the age of Saida Aisha when got married was around nineteen.

But the main obstacle that we face is the statement of Saida Aisha herself in what was reported by her nephew Urwah:

تَزَوَّجَنِي النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَنَا بِنْتُ سِتِّ سِنِينَ، فَقَدِمْنَا الْمَدِينَةَ فَنَزَلْنَا فِي بَيْتِ الْحَارِثِ بْنِ خَزْرَجٍ، فَوَعَكَتْ فَتَمَرَّقَ شَعْرِي، فَوَقَى جَمِيمَةً، فَأَتَتْنِي أُمِّي أُمُّ رُوْمَانَ وَإِنِّي لَفِي أَرْجُوْحَةٍ، وَمَعِيَ صَوَاجِبُ لِي، فَصَرَّحَتْ لِي، فَأَتَيْتُهَا لَا أَدْرِي مَا تُرِيدُ لِي، فَأَخَذَتْ بِيَدِي حَتَّى أَوْقَعْتَنِي عَلَى بَابِ الدَّارِ وَإِنِّي لَأُهْجِحُ حَتَّى سَكَنْ بَعْضُ نَفْسِي، ثُمَّ أَخَذَتْ شَيْئًا مِنْ مَاءٍ فَمَسَحَتْ بِهِ وَجْهِي وَرَأْسِي، ثُمَّ أَدْخَلْتَنِي الدَّارَ، فَإِذَا نِسْوَةٌ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ فِي الْبَيْتِ، فَقُلْنَ: عَلَى الْخَيْرِ وَالْبَرَكَاتِ، وَعَلَى خَيْرِ طَائِرٍ، فَأَسْلَمْتَنِي إِلَيْهِنَّ، فَأَصْلَحْنَ مِنْ شَأْنِي، فَلَمْ يُرْعِنِي إِلَّا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَأَسْلَمْتَنِي إِلَيْهِ وَأَنَا يَوْمَئِذٍ بِنْتُ تِسْعِ سِنِينَ"¹⁷

This statement from Aisha narrated by Hisham ibn Urwah is confirming that her age when she got married was nine years and this hadith shows Aisha's astonishment and her lack of awareness of what is happening around her! And how her mother, Umm Ruman, took her hand and brought her into the house, and she found women from Ansar who prepared her adornments and arrange her decorations and beautify her for the wedding! Another statement from Urwah himself without mentioning Aisha:

¹⁴ Ibn Katheer, Isma'il bin Omar al-Dimashqi. 1999. *Tafsir al-Quran al-'Azim*. Edited by Sami bin Muhammad Salamah. SA: Taibah Press. 2nd Edition. 6/404.

¹⁵ Al-Safarini, Shamsuddin Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Salim al-Hanbali. 1982. *Lawami' al-Anwar al-Bahiyah, sawati'u; Asrar al-Athariyya li Sharh' al-Durrah al-Madhiyyah fi Aqd al-Firqatil Mardhiyyah*. Damascus: al-Khafaqain Press. 2nd Edition. 2/373. See also: Al-Safarini, Shamsuddin Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Salim al-Hanbali. 1994. *Lawa'h al-Anwar Assaniyyah wa Lwaqihul Afkar Assaniyyah*. Edited by: Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Sulaiman al-Basri. SA: al-Rushd Press. 1st Edition. 2/68.

¹⁶ Ibn 'Ashur, Muhammad al-Tahir. 1997. *Al-Tahrir wal Tanwir*. Tunisia: Dar Sahnun Press. 1st Edition. 27/166.

¹⁷ Al-Bukhari, Muhammad bin Isma'il. 1987. *Al-Jami' al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar*. Hadith No 3681. 3/1414. Also recorded by: Muslim, Abu al-Hussein ibn al-Hajjaj. 2014. *Al-Jami' al-Sahih*. Beirut: Darul Jil and Darul Afaq Press. Hadith No 3545. 4/142. And: Bin Hanbal, Ahmad. 1999. *Musnad Ahmad*. Edited by Shu'aib al-Arna'ut and others. Beirut: Al-Risalah Press. 2nd Edition. Hadith No 25769. 42/502. And: Al-Nasa'i, Ahmad bin Shu'aib. 1986. *Al-Mujtaba Minal Sunan*. Edited by Abdulfattah Abu Ghuddah. Aleppo: Maktab al-Matbu'at al-Islamiyyah. Hadith No 3379. 6/131.

" أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ تَزَوَّجَهَا وَهِيَ بِنْتُ سَبْعِ سِنِينَ، وَزُفَّتْ إِلَيْهِ وَهِيَ بِنْتُ تِسْعِ سِنِينَ، وَلُعْبُهَا مَعَهَا، وَمَاتَ عِنْدَهَا وَهِيَ بِنْتُ ثَمَانَ عَشْرَةَ"¹⁸

In this record from al-Bukhari Urwah is documenting the age of Saida Aisha when got married to the Prophet (7 years) and her age – which was 18 – when He died. In this narration Saida Aisha took her toys with her when she was sent to her husband's home!! This short addition from Urwa may indicate that the age of Saida Aisha was really under ten at the time of her wedding and it was widely used by opponents of child marriage.

However, the researcher corrects this statement by discussing the historical issue of the toys of Saida Aisha, as it is not necessary for her to be less than ten years old to have some toys. Girls of that time, and in an arid environment like that of the Arabian Peninsula, devoid of means of entertainment and enjoyment, did not dispense, and give away of their toys easily even if she was eighteen years old! In fact, we can imagine this in our current era, where toys become like friends despite many means of entertainment.

There are clear indications that Aisha was engaged to a young man from wealthy and powerful families in Makkah, which means she was of the right age to get engaged and get married. Mut'im ibn Adi proposed Aisha for his son Jubair:

فَدَخَلَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ عَلَى مُطْعِمِ بْنِ عَدِيٍّ وَعِنْدَهُ امْرَأَتُهُ أُمُّ الْفَتَى فَقَالَتْ يَا ابْنَ أَبِي فُحَافَةَ لَعَلَّكَ مُصَبِّ صَاحِبِنَا مُدْخِلُهُ فِي دِينِكَ الَّذِي أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ تَزَوَّجَ إِلَيْكَ قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ لِلْمُطْعِمِ بْنِ عَدِيٍّ أَقُولُ هَذِهِ تَقُولُ قَالَ إِنَّمَا تَقُولُ ذَلِكَ فَخَرَجَ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ وَقَدْ أَذْهَبَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مَا كَانَ فِي نَفْسِهِ مِنْ عِدْتِهِ الَّتِي وَعَدَهُ¹⁹

Abu Bakr was afraid that he had broken his promise to marry his daughter to him, but they were more afraid that their son would follow the religion of Abu Bakr! This distrust of them and fear of converting to Islam caused the engagement to end. This narration indicates, indirectly, that Aisha was of a suitable age for marriage, otherwise how would some noble families from Quraish hasten to propose to her?

The researcher quoted these statements, although they are in the incident of Ifk, and we will mention it in detail in a future chapter. However, this painful incident carries with it some indications to the age of Aisha, namely:

1. If Saida Aisha was too young prophet wouldn't choose her to accompany Him in a battle.
2. Her attitude towards people shows psychological and intellectual maturity.
3. Her reaction to the prophet when He came with annunciation is a perceived self-esteem of mature women.
4. Her patience, absolute faith, Chastity of the tongue and endurance of severe harm befits a fully mature woman.
5. The first point recorded in Hadith al-Zuhri heard it from Urwah, Saeed ibn al-Musayyib, Alqamah ibn Waqqas and Ubaidullah ibn Abdullah:

كان رسول الله ﷺ إذا أراد أن يخرج سفرا أقرع بين نسائه فأبتهن خرج سهمها خرج بها رسول الله ﷺ معه قالت: فأقرع بيننا في غزوة عزاها فخرج سهمي فخرجنا مع رسول الله ﷺ وذلك بعد أن أنزل الحجاب²⁰

¹⁸ Muslim, Abu al-Hussein ibn al-Hajjaj. 2014. *Al-Jami' al-Sahih*. Hadith No 3546. 4/142. Ibn Katheer called this hadith (Mursal) which means some transmitters in the chain of narration were omitted and usually such hadith is not valid, see: Ibn Katheer, Isma'il bin Omar al-Dimashqi. 1988. *Al-Bidayah wal Nihayah*. Edited by Ali Shiri. Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi. 2nd Edition. 3/161.

¹⁹ Bin Hanbal, Ahmad. 1999. *Musnad Ahmad*. No 25769. 42/502.

²⁰ Ibn Hibban, Muhammad ibnu Hibban al-Busti. 1993. *Sahih Ibnu Hibban bi Tartib ibn Balban*. Edited by Shu'aib al-Arna'ut. Beirut: Al-Risalah Press. 2nd Edition. Hadith No 4212. 10/13.

Which means Saida Aisha was chosen by a lot after Hijab was imposed on prophet's wives. We cannot imagine the Prophet, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, entering a young girl into an important lottery that determines who of his wives will go with him on an exhausting and cruel campaign. Such raids are not tourist trips for entertainment and recuperation, and only the toughest fighters, opinion-makers, and wise advisors join and contribute.

And if the Prophet took some women with him to the battlefields, it was a request of their help to treat the wounded and make food for the fighters. Some of the wives of the Prophet had a great and effective advisory role in some of the battles, such as Umm Salama, who advised the Prophet to cut his hair in the Treaty of Hudaibiyah so that the Muslims who were indignant and did not implement the Prophet's order would follow:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ لِأَصْحَابِهِ «قُومُوا فَأَنْحَرُوا، ثُمَّ احْلِقُوا». قَالَ فَوَاللَّهِ مَا قَامَ مِنْهُمْ رَجُلٌ حَتَّى قَالَ ذَلِكَ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ، فَلَمَّا لَمْ يَبْقَ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدٌ دَخَلَ عَلَى أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ، فَذَكَرَ لَهَا مَا لَقِيَ مِنَ النَّاسِ. فَقَالَتْ أُمُّ سَلَمَةَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ، أَتُحِبُّ ذَلِكَ اخْرُجْ نُمَّ لَا تُكَلِّمَ أَحَدًا مِنْهُمْ كَلِمَةً حَتَّى تَنْحَرَ بُدْنَكَ، وَتَدْعُو حَالِقَكَ فَيَحْلِقَكَ. فَخَرَجَ فَلَمْ يُكَلِّمَ أَحَدًا مِنْهُمْ، حَتَّى فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ نَحَرَ بُدْنَهُ، وَدَعَا حَالِقَهُ فَحَلَقَهُ. فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا ذَلِكَ، قَامُوا فَانْحَرُوا، وَجَعَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ يَحْلِقُ بَعْضًا، حَتَّى كَادَ بَعْضُهُمْ يَقْتُلُ بَعْضًا عَمَّا²¹

Silence of ruthless theologian is an issue of cardinal importance because of the positive connotations it bears about the marriage of the Prophet, peace be upon him, to the mother of the believers, Ayesha. It could be interpreted in two ways: There is nothing wrong with this marriage because it was common in eastern circles, whether among Muslims or Christians, and this interpretation is excluded because Urwah's narration indicates that Ayesha was too young, however, it is a valuable opportunity to criticize the Prophet's behavior and question his morals. The second explanation is that it was proven to them in some ways that Saida Ayesha was of a suitable age for marriage, so they remained silent about the whole issue, and this interpretation is closer to truth. Otherwise, how can this silence be explained about an issue that in our time raised a great controversy among Muslims themselves?! not to mention the Christian theologians who were eagerly searching for slanders by which they could deform the image of the Prophet, peace be upon him, as a prophet, leader, educator, and teacher?

AL-IMAM AL-BUKHARI AND AGE OF SAIDA AISHA

There is no doubt that specifying the age of Aisha when she got married recorded in the authentic and canonical books of Hadiths, including Sahih Al-Bukhari, therefore, many scholars did not dare to contradict Al-Bukhari. However, the authentic hadith is what was reported from the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, with an authentic chain of transmission, but all hadiths about the age of Saida Aisha are not reported from the prophet rather quoted from Saida Aisha herself or reported by some Tabi'in. For this simple fact, whatever reported in Bukhari and other canonical books of hadith about age of Aisha are not Hadith but historical statements which could be right or wrong. Undoubtedly, the chain of transmitters for these accounts is valid and perfect but does not end with the prophet.

What Saida Aisha said about her age, or what Urwah bin Al-Zubayr or others said about her age, even if it was mentioned in Al-Bukhari, is not at all in the level of the hadith of the Prophet in terms of the obligation to ratify, comply and not violate or disobey. It is nothing but historical statement and personal status.

Discussing the age of Saida Ayesha when the Prophet, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, married her is not by challenging Sahih al-Bukhari and the authentic hadiths, but rather by interpreting those *hadiths* in a balanced and rational approach. Ultimately, al-Bukhari is a transmitter of Companions (Sahabah) and Tabi'in views about the age of Saida Ayesha. Muslim scholars appreciated Al-Bukhari's tremendous efforts in investigating the authentic *hadith*, studying the biographies of the narrators, tracking their biographies, judging their narrations, and making sure that each successive pair in the

²¹ Al-Bukhari, Muhammad bin Isma'il. 1987. *Al-Jami' al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar*. Hadith No 2581. 2/974.

chain of narration met each other. As for studying the text and analyzing it, considering the historical facts and valid narrations in the Prophet's biography, it is not the job of Imam Al-Bukhari, but rather the responsibility of the commentators of *hadith*.

Contemporary researchers tend to believe that the age of Saida Ayesha was suitable for marriage and in accordance with contemporary laws that prohibit underage marriage. There is no reason at all to adopt this opinion and avoid slandering the authentic books of *Hadith* at the same time, especially Sahih al-Bukhari, may God be pleased with him. Al-Bukhari said that Ubaid bin Ismail narrated to him that Abu Usamah narrated to him, on the authority of Hisham on the authority of his father Urwah bin al-Zubayr, so he is the transmitter of this report and the origin of the report is Hisham on the authority of his father, Therefore, it is necessary to consider several issues, including the date of birth and death of Hisham bin Urwa and his father Urwa bin al-Zubayr, and the extent of his father's closeness to the House of Prophethood to determine the extent of his knowledge of the secrets of the Prophet's House, the biography of Saida Ayesha, and the details of her marriage to the prophet.

The narrator of *Hadith*, Urwah Bin al-Zubair Bin al-Awwam, is a nephew of Saida Ayesha. Regardless of his very close relation to Saida Ayesha, Urwah was among the young Sahabah and his elder brother, Abdullah, was just 10 years old when prophet, peace be upon Him, passed away. This means that Urwah was unreliable to document this sensitive matter! Who would accept the narration of an eight-year-old boy in which he talks about his aunt's marriage that took place before he was born?! If Urwah had said that my father al-Zubayr had told me or Aisha herself had told me, the matter would have been different, but he didn't. In addition to, Hisham bin Urwah lost his memory at the end of his life, and forgetfulness brings down the rank of *hadith*! This close relationship does not mean anything in this crucial issue!!

As for the second narration through al-A'mash on the authority of Ibrahim on the authority of al-Aswad on the authority of Aisha, is also unreliable, and there is no relative kinship between them and Saida Aisha that could be relied upon in knowing family secrets. In addition, al-Aswad didn't confirm that Saida Aisha told him directly. Narration of Muhammad bin Amr on the authority of Yahya bin Abd al-Rahman bin Hatib on the authority of Aisha, it is lower rank of al-A'mash, so it not trustworthy for the reasons. It is obvious in all these narrations narrators did not say that Saida Aisha told them or that she said such-and-such. they did not confirm the direct hearing explicitly.

But the interesting thing about the attitude of Shiites towards Saida Aisha is their silence regarding the Prophet's marriage to her as a fault or defect, and they did not discuss this issue even though they confirm that Aisha conspired with Hafsa poisoned the Prophet. Their father is also involved in this plot! Rather, al-Majlissi confirmed that the narration of the Prophet's demise due to the poison that Aisha and Hafsa put in is a strong record, and their fathers were involved in this plot as well!!²²

LOVE AND AGE DETERMINATION

Hadith and historical sources confirm the love of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, for Saida Aisha, and the continuation of this love until his death:

عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهَا قَالَتْ: قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ: كَيْفَ حُبُّكَ لِي؟ قَالَ: «كَعُقْدَةِ الْحَبْلِ»
فَكُنْتُ أَقُولُ: كَيْفَ الْعُقْدَةُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: فَيَقُولُ: «هِيَ عَلَيَّ حَالِهَا»²³

Aisha asked the Prophet, "How is your love for me?" He said, "It is like a knot in a rope." She used to ask him from time to time how is the knot, and he would say: as it is! The person who transmitted this statement from Aisha was her nephew Urwah ibn al-Zubair who was like a secret box for her privacy life. The love between them was deep, equal, complementing each other, and reaching the point where he advised women to look to Aisha as an example and role model.

²² Sufi, Abdulqadir Muhammad Ata. 2004. *Al-Sa'iqah fi Nasf Abatil wa Ifitira;at al-Shi'a 'Ala Ummil Mu'minin Aisha*. Al-Riyad: Dar dhaw' al-Salaf. P. 52.

²³ Al-Asbahani, Abu Nu'aim Ahmad bin Abdullah bin Ahmad. 1989. *Hilyatul Awliya' wa Tabaqatul Asfiya'*. Beirut: Darul Kutub al-Ilmiyah. 2/44.

This love was a source of inspiration, power and pride for Aisha even after a decade had passed since the death of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace. She was boasting of her love for the remaining wives of the Prophet alive after his death (Hafsa bint Omar, Zainab bint Jahsh, Umm Salama, Juwayriya bint Al-Harith and others). As for his life, this love was the cause of wild jealousy from the rest of his wives and make sure to please him in every way to the extent that she used to chase him at night when he came out of her boudoir:

عن جابر عن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت: قام رسول الله ﷺ ذات يوم فلبس ثيابه، ثم قام فأمرت جاريتي بريدة تتبعه، فتبعته حتى جاء إلى البقيع، فوقف فوقفت بقره ما شاء الله أن يقف، فانصرف فسبقته فأخبرتني، فلم أذكر شيئاً لرسول الله ﷺ حتى أصبح، فسألته فقال: بعثت إلى أهل البقيع لأصلي عليهم²⁴

One night, the Prophet went out to the al-Baqi cemetery to pray for the souls of the deceased, and Aisha felt his departure, so she sent her slave girl, Barira, to catch up with him and see what he would do. In another record Aisha herself chased him and rushed back home before Him²⁵ but prophet Knew for she was restless, and her heartbeat accelerated, so he blamed her for not trusting the prophet and told her what happened. However, the most important point in this love story is what Aisha said about the competition between her and the Prophet, and that she preceded him the first time, then after the years passed, they competed again, so the Prophet peace be upon Him was faster than her, and she explained her loss by being obese:

عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ: سَابَقَنِي النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَسَبَقْتُهُ، فَلَبِثْنَا حَتَّى إِذَا أَرْهَقَنِي اللَّحْمُ سَابَقَنِي فَسَبَقَنِي، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «هَذِهِ بَيْتُكَ»²⁶

We cannot imagine Saida Aisha getting fat when she was a girl under the age of twenty, but this matter becomes acceptable as she approaches the age of thirty, thus her age when she got married was about eighteen years old, and not eighteen when the Prophet peace be upon Him passed away.

CONCLUSION & FINDINGS

What Saida Aisha said about her age, or what Urwa bin Al-Zubayr or others said about her age, even if it was mentioned in Al-Bukhari, is not at all in the level of the hadith of the Prophet in terms of the obligation to ratify, comply and not violate or disobey. It is nothing but historical statement and personal status. Discussing the age of Saida Ayesha when the Prophet married her is not by challenging Sahih al-Bukhari and the authentic hadiths, but rather by interpreting those *hadiths* in a balanced and rational approach. Ultimately, al-Bukhari is a transmitter of Companions (Sahabah) and Tabi'in views about the age of Saida Ayesha. As for studying the text and analyzing it, considering the historical facts, is not the job of Imam Al-Bukhari, but rather the responsibility of the commentators of *hadith*.

If we look at the age of her sister Asma' we will find all traditional accounts saying Asma' was 10 years older than Aisha, and she was 27 years when they migrated to Yathrib which means Saida Aisha was 17 when they migrated to Yathrib and simply she was 4 years in the first year of prophecy the same year her father embraced Islam! Her we come again to the first postulate about her age but using different calculation! According to this accurate historical account the age of Saida Aisha when got married was around nineteen.

²⁴ Al-Rabee', Ibn Habib ibn Amr. 1995. *Musnad al-Rabee' ibn Habib*. Edited by Muhammad Idris and Ashur ibn Yusuff. Beirut & Uman: Darul Hikmah & Maktabatul Istiqamah. P. 194.

²⁵ Muslim, Abu al-Hussein ibn al-Hajjaj. 2014. *Al-Jami' al-Sahih*. Hadith No 2301. 3/64. Also see: Bin Hanbal, Ahmad. 1999. *Musnad Ahmad*. Hadith No 25855. 43/43. And: Ibn Hibban, Muhammad ibnu Hibban al-Busti. 1993. *Sahih Ibnu Hibban bi Tartib ibn Balban*. Hadith No 7110. 16/45.

²⁶ Ibn Hibban, Muhammad ibnu Hibban al-Busti. 1993. *Sahih Ibnu Hibban bi Tartib ibn Balban*. Hadith No 4691. 10/545.

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