

Age of Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā at the time of Marriage

Question:

I was reading the article related to Hadhrat Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā about her marriage with our Nabī Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam. In this article, the author has given some facts to prove that she was not nine when she got married.

Kindly tell me your views in detail. Hereunder is the article:

IT is said that Hazrat Aisha was six years old when her nikah was performed with Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Makkah, and nine years old when she moved in to live with her husband in Madina after Hijra.

This piece of misinformation has led to the wrong view that child marriage has the sanction of Islam. It must be noted that establishing the authenticity of hadiths, the narrators' circumstances and the conditions at that time have to be correlated with historical facts. There is only one hadith by Hisham which suggests the age of Hazrat Aisha as being nine when she came to live with her husband.

Many authentic hadiths also show that Hisham's narration is incongruous with several historical facts about the Prophet's life, on which there is consensus. With reference to scholars such as Umar Ahmed Usmani, Hakim Niaz Ahmed and Habibur Rehman Kandhulvi, I would like to present some arguments in favour of the fact that Hazrat Aisha was at least 18 years old when her nikah was performed and at least 21 when she moved into the Prophet's house to live with him.

According to Umar Ahmed Usmani, in Surah Al-Nisa, it is said that the guardian of the orphans should keep testing them, until they reach the age of marriage, before returning their property (4:6). From this scholars have concluded that the Quran sets a minimum age of marriage which is at least puberty. Since the approval of the girl has a legal standing, she cannot be a minor.

Hisham bin Urwah is the main narrator of this hadith. His life is divided into two periods: in 131A.H. the Madani period ended, and the Iraqi period started, when Hisham was 71 years old. Hafiz Zehbi has spoken about Hisham's loss of memory in his later period. His students

in Madina, Imam Malik and Imam Abu Hanifah, do not mention this hadith. Imam Malik and the people of Madina criticised him for his Iraqi hadiths.

All the narrators of this hadith are Iraqis who had heard it from Hisham. Allama Kandhulvi says that the words spoken in connection with Hazrat Aisha's age were tissa ashara, meaning 19, when Hisham only heard (or remembered), tissa, meaning nine. Maulana Usmani thinks this change was purposely and maliciously made later.

Historian Ibn Ishaq in his Sirat Rasul Allah has given a list of the people who accepted Islam in the first year of the proclamation of Islam, in which Hazrat Aisha's name is mentioned as Abu Bakr's "little daughter Aisha". If we accept Hisham's calculations, she was not even born at that time.

Some time after the death of the Prophet's first wife, Hazrat Khadija, Khawla suggested to the Prophet that he get married again, to a bikrun, referring to Hazrat Aisha (Musnad Ahmed). In Arabic bikrun is used for an unmarried girl who has crossed the age of puberty and is of marriageable age. The word cannot be used for a six-year-old girl.

Some scholars think that Hazrat Aisha was married off so early because in Arabia girls mature at an early age. But this was not a common custom of the Arabs at that time. According to Allama Kandhulvi, there is no such case on record either before or after Islam. Neither has this ever been promoted as a Sunnah of the Prophet. The Prophet married off his daughters Fatima at 21 and Ruquiyya at 23. Besides, Hazrat Abu Bakr, Aisha's father, married off his eldest daughter Asma at the age of 26.

Hazrat Aisha narrates that she was present on the battlefield at the Battle of Badar (Muslim). This leads one to conclude that Hazrat Aisha moved into the Prophet's house in 1 A.H. But a nine-year-old could not have been taken on a rough and risky military mission.

In 2 A.H, the Prophet refused to take boys of less than 15 years of age to the battle of Uhud. Would he have allowed a 10-year-old girl to accompany him? But Anas reported that he saw Aisha and Umme Sulaim carrying goatskins full of water and serving it to the soldiers (Bukhari). Umme Sulaim and Umme Ammara, the other women present at Uhud, were both strong, mature women whose duties were the lifting of the dead and injured, treating their wounds, carrying water in heavy goatskins, supplying ammunition and even taking up the sword.

Hazrat Aisha used the kunniyat, the title derived from the name of a child, of Umme Abdullah after her nephew and adopted son. If she was six when her nikah was performed, she would have been only eight years his

senior, hardly making him eligible for adoption. Also, a little girl could not have given up on ever having her own child and used an adopted child's name for her kunniat.

Hazrat Aisha's nephew Urwah once remarked that he was not surprised about her amazing knowledge of Islamic law, poetry and history because she was the wife of the Prophet and the daughter of Abu Bakr. If she was eight when her father migrated, when did she learn poetry and history from him?

There is consensus that Hazrat Aisha was 10 years younger than her elder sister Asma, whose age at the time of the hijrah, or migration to Madina, was about 28. It can be concluded that Hazrat Aisha was about 18 years old at migration. On her moving to the Prophet's house, she was a young woman at 21. Hisham is the single narrator of the hadith whose authenticity is challenged, for it does not correlate with the many historical facts of the time.

The writer is a scholar of the Quran and writes on contemporary issues.

Taken from Dawn newspaper 17/02/2012

Answer:

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

As-salāmu 'alaykum wa-rahmatullāhi wa-barakātuh.

Rebuttal of a Fitnah: The age of Hadhrat Aishah Radhiyallāh Anhā during marriage

A person Nilofar Ahmed has published an article in the Dawn newspaper claiming Hadhrat Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā's age was at least eighteen during marriage. This is substantiated with statements of Muhaddithīn, Ayāt, and historical facts.

This research rebuts the claim and points out the inaccuracies and academic dishonesty in the article. This is a research by Mowlāna Abdul Azīm, who is also a student in Takhassus Fil-Hadīth at the Darul Iftaa. Read the article of the Dawn newspaper first. You will observe how a simple minded person can get easily convinced with the article.

Mufti Ebrahim Desai

The Rebuttal

Due to the limitations of the mind, there are certain issues that are not easily comprehended by everyone. Generally there are two approaches in addressing such issues. The first is an apologetic one. In this, one endeavors to hide a reality in order to earn the confidence and pleasure of others. Authentic facts are denied and replaced by apparently appealing information with the fear that the masses, especially non-Muslims will have a negative understanding of Islām if the factual situation is presented.

The second approach is to present the factual situation of the matter. The feelings and sentiments of people are not considered. It is done with the firm belief that Allāh will defend and preserve His Dīn. While the intention in the first approach is noble, it is dangerous. The consequences of twisting information to please people are too ghastly to consider. When research uncovers the truth, Islām will be blemished contrary to ones hope of presenting a noble picture of Islām. It is also academic dishonesty and against the spirit of honesty and truthfulness which are the hall marks of Islām.

The age of Hadhrat Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā during her marriage with Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam is often highlighted and negatively presented in the context of child marriage. In an attempt to avoid the accusation of child marriage in Islām, some people have adopted an apologetic approach and began distorting the factual situation of Hadhrat Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā's age during marriage. This approach is dangerous and is based on a wrong premise. We have to be bold to claim that child marriage is not prohibited in Islām. However, there are rules that govern the issue to safeguard the interest of the child.

This article is a rebuttal of an essay written by Nilofar Ahmed that was produced in the Dawn newspaper on 17/02/2012. The essay is based on the following incorrect premises:

- Prohibition of child marriage
- Historical facts must be correlated with authentic narrations

The writer claims that the misinformation of Aisha Radhiyallāhu Anhā's age at the time of her marriage being six led to the wrong view that child marriage has sanction of Islām. The second premise is that authentic narrations must correlate with historical facts. Both premises are incorrect. Child marriage is permissible. There is no difference of opinion on this from at least the four main schools of thought, Hanafī, Shafi'ī, Mālikī, and Hambalī. Yes, there are rules that govern child marriage to preserve and protect the interest of the child.

Furthermore, historical facts are not accurate. They cannot be a measure to determine the authenticity of Ahādīth, especially if the Ahādīth themselves are clearly authentic. The guiding measure should be the Ahādīth and not historical factors. Historical factors are subservient and subordinate to authentic Ahādīth. This is a basic rule. No reliable scholar would ignore such basics. This brings to question the qualifications of the writer of the article in reference. Remember the golden advice: Be careful from who you take your Dīn.

The proof for Hadhrat Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā's age during marriage is in Sahīh al-Bukhārī and Sahīh Muslim. Consider the following Ahādīth:

حدثنا محمد بن يوسف، حدثنا سفيان، عن هشام، عن أبيه، عن عائشة رضي الله عنها: أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم تزوجها وهي بنت ست سنين، وأدخلت عليه وهي بنت تسع، ومكثت عنده تسعا (صحيح البخاري، ج 10، ص 466-467، دار البشائر الإسلامية)

*Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā reports that Nabī Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam married her while she was **six years old**. She was sent to stay with Nabī Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam when she was **nine** and she lived with Nabī Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam for nine years.*

(Sahīh al-Bukhārī)

وحدثنا يحيى بن يحيى، أخبرنا أبو معاوية، عن هشام بن عروة، ح وحدثنا ابن نمير، واللفظ له، حدثنا عبدة هو ابن سليمان، عن هشام، عن أبيه، عن عائشة، قالت: «تزوجني النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وأنا بنت ست سنين، وبنى بي وأنا بنت تسع سنين (صحيح مسلم، ج 2، ص 1039، دار إحياء التراث العربي - بيروت)

*Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā says, “Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam married me when I was **six years old**, and he started living with me when I was **nine years old**.”*

(Sahīh Muslim)

The Ummah has accepted the narrations that appear in Sahīh al-Bukhārī and Sahīh Muslim as authentic. Allāmah Hāfidh bin Hajar al-Asqalāni Rahimahullāh states in “Sharh al-Nukhbah” that the Ulamā are unanimous in accepting Sahīh al-Bukhārī and Sahīh Muslim.¹ Allāmah Sakhāwī states in “Fath al-Mughīth” that Sahīh al-Bukhārī and Sahīh Muslim are the most authentic books of Hadīth.²

The writer of the article objects on the Ahādīth of Sahīh al-Bukhārī and Sahīh Muslim saying that there is weakness in one of the narrators, namely Hishām bin Urwah Rahimahullāh.

¹ لا اتفاق العلماء بعدهما علي تلقي كتابيهما بالقبول (شرح النخبة، ص 62، دار البصائر)

² وبالجملة فكتاباهما اصح كتب الحديث (فتح المغيث، ج 1، ص 53، مكتبة دار المنهاج)

The writer further states, “*There is only one hadith by Hisham which suggests the age of Hazrat Aisha as being nine when she came to live with her husband.*”

The writer incorrectly claims Hafidh Dhahabī Rahimahullāh has spoken about Hisham’s loss of memory in his later period. Hereunder are the actual wordings of Allāmah Dhahabī Rahimahullāh:

هشام بن عروة [ع] ، أحد الاعلام.

حجة إمام، لكن في الكبر تناقص حفظه، ولم يختلط أبدا، ولا عبرة بما قاله أبو الحسن بن القطان من أنه وسهيل بن أبي صالح اختلطا، وتغيرا. نعم الرجل تغير قليلا ولم يبق حفظه كهو في حال الشبيبة، فنسى بعض محفوظه أو وهم، فكان ماذا! أهو معصوم من النسيان!

ولما قدم العراق في آخر عمره حدث بجملة كثيرة من العلم، في غضون ذلك يسير أحاديث لم يجودها، ومثل هذا يقع لمالك ولشعبة ولو كيع ولكبار الثقات، فدع عنك الخبط وذر خلط الائمة الاثبات بالضعفاء والمخلطين، فهشام شيخ الإسلام (مبزان الاعتدال)

Hishām bin Urwah is one of the great luminaries, an authority and a leader. When he aged, his memory slightly decreased however he never became a Mukhtalit (one who lost memory and errs in Hadith). There is no consideration for what some people have said regarding Hishām that he became a Mukhtalit.

How great of a person was Hishām! His memory only weakened slightly and did not remain as it was in his youth. Hence he did forget and err on certain occasions. So what? Is he not human that he is protected from forgetfulness!

When he arrived in Irāq towards the end of his life, he narrated many Ahādīth. Amongst the many Ahādīth narrated, only a few were not said perfectly. But this was also the situation with the likes of Imām Mālīk, Imām Shu’bah, Wakī’, and other great giants of Islām. Therefore, leave your incorrect uproar! Don’t mix up the strong, reliable narrators with the weak ones because Hishām is Shaikhul Islām.”

(*Miẓān al-I’tidāl*)

From the above quotations, the writer’s distortion of facts is clear. Such an attitude disqualifies one from academic merit. The words of Allāmah Dhahabī Rahimahullāh were stated in support of Hishām bin Urwah Rahimahullāh and the writer created an image that Allāmah Dhahabī Rahimahullāh does not accept Hishām’s narrations. Furthermore, Hafidh bin Hajar says in the introduction of his great commentary to Sahīh al-Bukhārī that all the experts of Hadīth consider Hishām’s Ahādīth to be authoritative and sufficient to be used as evidence.³ Also, Imām al-Bukhārī and Imām Muslim considered Hishām to be very strong. That is why they included his narrations in their books of Hadīth.

³ وقد احتج بهشام جميع الائمة (هدي الساري، ص 598، دار الحديث)

Nevertheless, for argument's sake, even if we do consider Hishām's narrations to be weak, there are other narrations without Hishām in their chains that prove Aishāh Radhiyallāhu Anhā's age to be six at the time of marriage and nine at the time she started to reside with Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam. Imām Muslim narrates the following Hadīth in which Hishām is not in the chain:

حدثنا يحيى بن يحيى، وإسحاق بن إبراهيم، وأبو بكر بن أبي شيبه، وأبو كريب، قال يحيى، وإسحاق: أخبرنا، وقال الآخرون: حدثنا أبو معاوية، عن الأعمش، عن إبراهيم، عن الأسود، عن عائشة، قالت: «تزوجها رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وهي بنت ست، وبني بها وهي بنت تسع، ومات عنها وهي بنت ثمان عشرة (صحيح مسلم، ج 2، ص 1039، دار إحياء التراث العربي - بيروت)

*Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā reports that Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam married her when she was **six years old**, he started living with her when she was **nine years old**, and he passed away when she was **eighteen years old**.*

(*Sahih Muslim*)

In Sunan al-Nasaī, a narration with a similar meaning is mentioned without Hishām in the chain. The Hadīth is mentioned with the chain:

أَخْبَرَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ سَعْدِ بْنِ الْحَكَمِ بْنِ أَبِي مَرْيَمَ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا عَمِّي، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، قَالَ: أَخْبَرَنِي عُمَارَةُ بْنُ غَزِيَّةَ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ: «تَزَوَّجَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهِيَ بِنْتُ سِتِّ سِنِينَ، وَبَنَى بِهَا وَهِيَ بِنْتُ تِسْعٍ (سنن النسائي، ج 6، ص 131، مكتب المطبوعات الإسلامية - حلب)

*Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā relates that Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam married me while she was a **six years old** girl and he lived with her when she was **nine years old**.*

(*Sunan al-Nasaī*)

Also if we look at the date of Aishah Radhiyallāh Anhā's demise and her age when she passed away, it becomes clear that her age at the time of her marriage with Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam was indeed six. In "Mawāhib al-Laduniyyah", Allāmah Qastalānī Rahimahullāh mentions that Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā passed away **fifty seven years** after the migration and at that time she was **sixty six years old**.⁴ Allāmah Qastalānī also mentions that she was married to Nabī Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam three years prior to the

⁴ وماتت بالمدينة سنة سبع وخمسين. وقال الواقدي: ليلة الثلاثاء لسبع عشرة خلت من رمضان سنة ثمان وخمسين، وهي ابنة ست وستين سنة

(المواهب اللدنية، ج 1، ص 497، المكتبة التوفيقية)

migration.⁵ When all of these facts are put together, we identify that Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā's age at the time of her marriage was six.

A second objection presented by the writer is that the Qurān sets puberty to be the minimum age of marriage. To back up her claim, the writer brings Ayah number six of Surah al-Nisā. Hereunder is the Ayah:

وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتَامَىٰ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغُوا النِّكَاحَ (سورة النساء، رقم الآية 6)

And test the orphans until they reach a marriageable age. (Surah al-Nisā)

The writer uses a general Ayah to support a specific claim. It is similar to one claiming wine is permissible and supports that with the permissibility of drinking water! The intent of this Ayah is to explain that children, well before they reach puberty should be tested through small assignments of buying and selling in order to determine their ability to conduct themselves in transactions on their own. This process of practical experimentation should continue till puberty. This is the time of special assessment. Now it should be determined if they have become smart and self-reliant in their affairs. Once this is sensed as “dependable”, it is time to hand over their property to them.⁶

The word “marriageable age” is used to refer to puberty because one is able to fulfill the purpose of marriage i.e. procreation after one reaches puberty.⁷ However, in no way does this Ayah forbid the marriages of those who are not mature. In fact there is a consensus of the four Imāms, namely Imām Abū Hanīfah, Imām Mālik, Imām Shāfiʿī, and Imām Ahmed Rahimumullāh that it is permissible to marry off a minor.⁸ Hence, this Ayah can never be used to negate Hadhrat Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā's marriage at age six.

The writer further says, “Allama Kandbulvi says that the words spoken in connection with Hazrat Aisha's age were tissa ashara, meaning 19, when Hisham only heard (or remembered), tissa, meaning nine. Maulana Usmani thinks this change was purposely and maliciously made later.”

This is a claim without evidence. There is no reference given for this claim. This statement has no grounding, especially because it contradicts authentic narrations as quoted above.

⁵ وتزوجها بمكة في شوال سنة عشر من النبوة قبل الهجرة بثلاث سنين (المواهب اللدنية، ج 1، ص 495، المكتبة التوفيقية)

⁶ Ma'ariful Qur'an, Vol. 2, Page 322, Maktaba-e-Darul-Uloom

⁷ وبلوغ النكاح. أن يحتلم لأنه يصلح للنكاح عنده، ولطلب ما هو مقصود به وهو التوالد والتناسل (الكشاف، ج 1، ص 473، دار الكتاب العربي - بيروت)

⁸ الصغر: اما الصغر فقال الجمهور منهم أئمة المذاهب الاربعة، بل ادعي ابن المنذر الاجماع علي جواز تزويج الصغيرة من كفاء (الفقه

الاسلامي وادلته، ج 7، ص 183، دار الفكر)

Continuing with the objections, the writer states, “Historian Ibn Ishaq in his *Sirat Rasul Allah* has given a list of the people who accepted Islam in the first year of the proclamation of Islam, in which Hazrat Aisha’s name is mentioned as Abu Baker’s “little daughter Aisha”. If we accept Hisham’s calculations, she was not even born at that time.”

This is a clear misunderstanding by Ibn Ishāq Rahimahullāh especially when it contradicts authentic narrations and other books of Sīrah. And Ibn Ishāq Rahimahullāh did not provide a chain of Hadīth to support his claim.

Another objection by the writer is that in Musnad Ahmad, Khawla Radhiyallāhu Anhā uses the word “Bikrun” to refer to Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā. The writer further claims that the word “Bikrun” which means virgin is only used for unmarried girls who have passed the age of puberty.

One answer to the objection is that “Bikrun” can be used for girls who have not reached puberty also. “Lisān al-Arab” a famous dictionary on the Arabic language has the following meaning for “bikrun”:

البكر: الجارية التي لم تفتض (لسان العرب)

A female who has not been deflowered (Lisān al-Arab)

“Mu’jam Lughat al-Fuqahā”, a dictionary on words used by the Jurists defines “bikrun” as:

الفتاة العذراء التي لم تزل بكارها بوطء (معجم لغة الفقهاء)

One who has not lost her virginity through intercourse (Mu’jam Lughat al-Fuqahā)

From the above-mentioned definitions, it is obvious that the word “Bikrun” is not confined to a mature lady rather includes any female who is virgin whether she has reached puberty or not.

A second and more obvious answer to the objection is that in the same Hadīth, Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā’s age is mentioned to be six.⁹ The writer only objected to the word

⁹ حدثنا محمد بن بشر، قال: حدثنا محمد بن عمرو، قال: حدثنا أبو سلمة، ويحيى، قالوا: لما هلكت خديجة، جاءت خولة بنت حكيم امرأة عثمان بن مظعون، قالت: يا رسول الله ألا تزوج؟ قال: " من؟ " قالت: إن شئت بكرة، وإن شئت ثيباً؟ قال: " فمن البكر؟ " قالت: ابنة أحب خلق الله عز وجل إليك عائشة بنت أبي بكر، قال: " ومن الثيب؟ " قالت: سودة بنت زمعة، آمنت (3) بك، واتبعتك على ما تقول "، قال: " فاذهي فاذكريهما علي "، فدخلت بيت أبي بكر، فقالت: يا أم رومان ماذا أدخل الله عز وجل عليكم من الخير والبركة؟ قالت: وما ذاك؟ قالت: أرسلني رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أخطب عليه عائشة، قالت: انتظري أبا بكر حتى يأتي، فجاء أبو بكر، فقالت: يا أبا بكر ماذا

“Bikrun” but failed to mention that later on in the same Hadīth, it is clearly stated that Aishah Radhiyallāh Anhā was six. This clearly indicates that Sahābah also used the word “Bikrun” for any virgin female, regardless of whether she reached puberty or not. Hereunder are the words of this Hadīth:

فَرَوَّجَهَا إِيَّاهُ وَعَائِشَةُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِنْتُ سِتِّ سِنِينَ (مسند احمد)

Abu Bakr Radhiyallāhu Anhū married Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā off to Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam while she was only six years of age.

(Musnad Ahmad)

The writer further objects stating, “Some scholars think that Hazrat Aisha was married off so early because in Arabia girls mature at an early age. But this was not a common custom of the Arabs at that

أدخل الله عز وجل عليكم من الخير والبركة؟ قال: وما ذاك؟ قالت: أرسلني رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أخطب عليه عائشة، قال: وهل تصلح له؟ إنما هي ابنة أخيه، فرجعت إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فذكرت ذلك له (1)، قال: "ارجعي إليه فقولي له: "أنا أخوك، وأنت أخي في الإسلام، وابتنتك تصلح لي"، فرجعت فذكرت ذلك له، قال: انتظري وخرج، قالت أم رومان: إن مطعم بن عدي قد كان ذكرها على ابنه، فوالله ما وعد وعدا قط، فأخلفه لأبي بكر، فدخل أبو بكر على مطعم بن عدي وعنده امرأته أم الفتي، فقالت يا ابن أبي قحافة لعلك مصيب (2) صاحبنا مدخله في دينك الذي أنت عليه، إن تزوج إليك، قال أبو بكر للمطعم بن عدي: أقول هذه تقول، قال: إنما تقول ذلك، فخرج من عنده، وقد أذهب الله عز وجل ما كان في نفسه من عدته التي وعده فرجع، فقال لخولة: ادعي لي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، فدعته فزوجها إياه وعائشة يومئذ بنت ست سنين، ثم خرجت فدخلت على سودة بنت زمعة، فقالت: ماذا أدخل الله عز وجل عليك من الخير والبركة؟ قالت: ما ذاك؟ قالت: أرسلني رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أخطبك عليه، قالت: وددت ادخلي إلى أبي فاذكري ذاك له، وكان شيخا كبيرا، قد أدركته (3) السن، قد تخلف عن الحج، فدخلت عليه، فحيته (4) بتحية الجاهلية، فقال: من هذه؟ فقالت: خولة بنت حكيم، قال: فما شأنك؟ قالت: أرسلني محمد بن عبد الله أخطب عليه سودة، قال: كفاء (1) كريم، ماذا تقول صاحبك؟ قالت: تحب ذاك، قال: ادعها لي فدعتها، فقال (2): أي بنية إن هذه تزعم أن محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد المطلب قد أرسل يخطبك، وهو كفاء (3) كريم، أتخبين أن أزوجهك به، قالت: نعم، قال (4): ادعيه لي، فجاء رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إليه فزوجها إياه، فجاءها أخوها عبد بن زمعة من الحج، فجعل يخطي على (5) رأسه التراب، فقال بعد أن أسلم: لعمرك (6) إني لسفيه يوم أحتي في رأسي التراب أن تزوج رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم سودة بنت زمعة، قالت عائشة: فقدمنا المدينة فنزلنا في بني الحارث من (7) الخزرج في السنع، قالت: فجاء رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، فدخل بيتنا واجتمع إليه رجال من الأنصار، ونساء فجاءت بي (8) أمي وإني لفي (1) أرجوحة بين عذقين ترجح بي، فأنزلتني من الأرجوحة، ولي جميمة ففرقتها، ومسحت وجهي بشيء من ماء، ثم أقبلت تقودني حتى وقفت بي عند الباب، وإني لأنهج حتى سكن من نفسي، ثم دخلت بي فإذا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم جالس على سرير في بيتنا، وعنده رجال ونساء من الأنصار، فأجلستني (2) في حجره، ثم قالت: هؤلاء أهللك فبارك الله لك فيهم، وبارك لهم فيك، فوثب الرجال والنساء، فخرجوا وبنى بي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في بيتنا، ما نخرت علي جزور، ولا ذبحت علي شاة، حتى أرسل إلينا سعد بن عبادة بجفنة كان يرسل بها إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، إذا دار إلى نسائه وأنا يومئذ بنت تسع سنين (مسند احمد، ج 42، ص 501-504، مؤسسة الرسالة)

time. According to Allama Kandbulvi, there is no such case on record either before or after Islam. Neither has this ever been promoted as a Sunnah of the Prophet. The Prophet married off his daughters Fatima at 21 and Ruqayya at 23. Besides, Hazrat Abu Baker, Aisha's father, married off his eldest daughter Asma at the age of 26.”

This is another baseless and non-academic opinion. It is quite clear from narrations that some marriages at a young age took place in the era of Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam, the Sahābah Radhiyallāhu Anhum, and those Muslims that came soon thereafter. For example, Hāfidh bin Hajar Rahimahullāh quotes in his Kitāb “al-Isābah” that Nabī Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam got Salmah bin Ibī Salmah Radhiyallāhu Anhu married to Umāmah bint Hamzah Radhiyallāhu Anhā while none of them had reached puberty.¹⁰ Also consider the following narration from Sahīh al-Bukhārī:

وقال الحسن بن صالح: «أدرت جارة لنا جدة، بنت إحدى وعشرين سنة (صحيح البخاري، ج 5، ص 562، دار البشائر الاسلامية)

Hasan bin Salih Rahimahullāh said: I came to know of my neighbor who became a grandmother at the age of twenty one.

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

This indicates that the woman must have been married when she was nine, gave birth when she was ten, and the same situation took place with her daughter.

The writer's claim about the age of Hadhrat Fātimah and Hadhrat Ruqayyah Radhiyallāhu Anhumā at the time of marriage is also inaccurate. Nabī Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam married Hadhrat Khadījah Radhiyallāhu Anhā at the age of twenty-five. His first daughter born from the marriage was Zainab Radhiyallāhu Anhā.¹¹ According to most of the Ulamā, Ruqayyah Radhiyallāhu Anhā is the second daughter of Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam.¹² And in “al-Isābah”, Hāfidh bin Hajar Rahimahullāh narrates on the authority of Ibn Sa'd Rahimahullāh that Utbah bin Abī Lahab married Hadhrat Ruqayyah Radhiyallāhu Anhā before the Nubuwwah.¹³ Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam's age was forty at the time of

¹⁰ وقال ابن إسحاق: حدثني من لا أتهم عن عبد الله بن شداد، قال: كان الذي زوج أم سلمة من النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم سلمة بن أبي سلمة ابنها فزوجه النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أمامة بنت حمزة، وهما صبيان صغيران، فلم يجتمعا حتى ماتا، فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: هل جزيت سلمة! (الاصابة، ج 1، ص 752، دار المعرفة)

¹¹ قال أبو عمر: لا أعرف خلافا أن زينب أكبر بنات النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم (الاصابة، ج 4، ص 2506، دار المعرفة)

¹² واختلف في رقية وفاطمة وأم كلثوم، والأكثر أنهم على هذا الترتيب (الاصابة، ج 4، ص 2506-2507، دار المعرفة)

¹³ وقال ابن سعد: بايعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم هي وأخواتها، وتزوجها عتبة بن أبي لهب قبل النبوة، فلما بعث قال أبو لهب: رأسي من رأسك حرام إن لم تطلق ابنته (الاصابة، ج 4، ص 2507، دار المعرفة)

Nubuwwah. Hence, it is clear that Hadhrat Ruqayyah Radhiyallāhu Anhā was thirteen years old or younger at the time of her marriage and not twenty three years.

After the Nubuwwah of Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam, Abū Lahab ordered his son Utbah bin Abī Lahab to divorce Hadhrat Ruqayyah Radhiyallāhu Anhā. Thereafter, Uthmān Radhiyallāhu Anhu married Ruqayyah Radhiyallāhu Anhā.

Even Ruqayyah Radhiyallāhu Anhā's marriage with Uthmān Radhiyallāhu Anhu took place well before she was twenty three years of age. Uthmān Radhiyallāh Anhu and Ruqayyah Radhiyallāhu Anhā migrated together to Ethiopia in the fifth year after Nubuwwah.¹⁴ This indicates that they were definitely married before the fifth year of Nubuwwah. Hence, Ruqayyah Radhiyallāhu Anhā's age at the time of her marriage to Uthmān Radhiyallāhu Anhu was between thirteen and eighteen years old and not twenty three years old.

With regards to Fātimah Radhiyallāhu Anhā's age at the time of her marriage to Alī Radhiyallāhu Anhā, there is a difference of opinion because there is a difference of opinion on her year of birth. Some say that she was born when Nabī Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam was thirty five years of age and others say that she was born right before Nubuwwah when Nabī Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam was approximately forty years of age.¹⁵ Regarding the year of her marriage, some Ulamā are of the opinion that Alī Radhiyallāh Anhū married her the first year after migration¹⁶ and others say that he married her in the second year after the migration.¹⁷ If we suppose that she was born when Nabī Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam was approximately forty years of age and was married in the first year after the migration her age at the time of marriage was about thirteen. And if we suppose she was born when Nabī Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam was thirty five years of age and she was married in the second year after the

¹⁴ الموسوعة الميسرة في التاريخ الاسلامي، ج 1، ص 17، مؤسسة اقرأ

¹⁵ واختلف في سنة مولدها، فروى الواقدي، عن طريق أبي جعفر الباقر، قال: قال العباس: ولدت فاطمة والكعبة تبنى، والنبي صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم ابن خمس وثلاثين سنة، وبهذا جزم المدائني.

ونقل أبو عمر عن عبيد الله بن محمد بن سليمان بن جعفر الهاشمي - أنها ولدت سنة إحدى وأربعين من مولد النبي صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم. وكان مولدها قبل البعثة بقليل نحو سنة أو أكثر (الاصابة، ج 4، ص 2596، دار المعرفة)

¹⁶ ومن طريق عمر بن علي، قال: تزوج علي فاطمة في رجب سنة مقدمهم المدينة، وبنى بها مرجعه من بدر، ولها يومئذ ثمان عشرة سنة. (الاصابة، ج 4، ص 2597، دار المعرفة)

¹⁷ وتزوجها علي أوائل المحرم سنة اثنتين بعد عائشة بأربعة أشهر، وقيل غير ذلك. وانقطع نسل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم إلا من فاطمة. (الاصابة، ج 4، ص 2596، دار المعرفة)

migration, then she was about eighteen years of age at the time of her marriage and not twenty one years of age as the article suggested.

The writer further objects saying, “*Ḥaẓrat Aishah narrates that she was present on the battlefield at the Battle of Badar (Muslim). This leads one to conclude that Ḥaẓrat Aisha moved into the Prophet’s house in 1 A.H. But a nine-year-old could not have been taken on a rough and risky military mission. In 2 A.H, the Prophet refused to take boys of less than 15 years of age to the battle of Uhud. Would he have allowed a 10-year-old girl to accompany him?*”

Once again, this is a mere assumption without clear evidence. It is clear that the prohibition of Nabī Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam was for males and not females because the males were the ones to actively participate in the expeditions.¹⁸ The females would only provide services when needed. This objection does not hold any weight especially when there are clear and authentic narrations in Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Saḥīḥ Muslim, and various other books of Hadīth proving the age of Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā to be six at the time of marriage.

Providing another argument, the writer say, “*Ḥaẓrat Aisha used the kunniat, the title derived from the name of a child, of Umme Abdullah after her nephew and adopted son. If she was six when her nikah was performed, she would have been only eight years his senior, hardly making him eligible for adoption. Also, a little girl could not have given up on ever having her own child and used an adopted child’s name for her kunniat.*”

The kunyah of Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā was given to her by Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam. The background of the incident is mentioned in Sunan Abī Dāwūd. The narration is as follows:

عن عائشة رضي الله عنها، أنها قالت: يا رسول الله، كل صواحي لهن كنى، قال: «فاكتني بابنك عبد الله» يعني ابن اختها قال مسدد: عبد الله بن الزبير، قال: فكانت تكنى بأُم عبد الله (سنن أبي داؤد، ج 5، ص 441، دار اليسر)

It is reported from Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā that she said, “O’ Rasūlullāh, every one of your wives has a Kunyah.” So Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam said, “Keep your Kunyah according to your son’s name (meaning nephew’s name) Abdullāh. Hence, her Kunyah became Umm Abdillāh.

(Sunan Abī Dāwūd)

¹⁸ (فلم يجزه) أي: فلم يمضه ولم يأذن له في القتال (عمدة القاري، ج 17، ص 177، دار إحياء التراث العربي)

This proves that the Kunyah was given to Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā after she started to reside with Rasūllullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam. Hence, she was at least nine years old if not older when she was given this Kunyah and not six years old as the writer has suggested.

Furthermore, the writer did not provide any reference for the adoption of Abdullāh bin Zubair Radhiyallāh Anhū. The mere fact that Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhu's kunyah was attributed to his name does not necessitate that she had adopted him. Also, the writer suggested that the kunyah was given to Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā because she gave up on having a child. However, from the Hadīth of Sunan Abī Dāwūd, it is clear that the reason why Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā was given the kunyah was because she expressed her desire to have a kunyah, as the other wives of Rasūllullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam had one.

Making another objection, the author writes, *“Hazrat Aisha’s nephew Urwah once remarked that he was not surprised about her amazing knowledge of Islamic law, poetry and history because she was the wife of the Prophet and the daughter of Abu Bakr. If she was eight when her father migrated, when did she learn poetry and history from him?”*

Again there is no reference whether this saying of Urwah Radhiyallāhu Anhu is authentic or not. However, even if we accept this to really be Urwah's statement, it is normal for young children to learn very quickly. Even these days we see small children learning very complicated information. In fact, so many children before the age of eight memorize the entire Qurān. And it is well known that children in the past had memories far greater than the memories of children in today's times.

And even if Abu Bakr Radhiyallāhu Anhu migrated to Medinah Munawwarah when Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā was only eight, she also migrated to Medinah. Just because she was staying with Nabī Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam in Medinah does not necessitate that she stopped learning from her father.

In the final objection, the author writes, *“There is consensus that Hazrat Aisha was 10 years younger than her elder sister Asma, whose age at the time of the hijrah, or migration to Madina, was about 28. It can be concluded that Hazrat Aisha was about 18 years old at migration.”*

The writer's claim of consensus here is incorrect and the writer does not even provide reference for the claim. In the book “Usd al-Ghābah”, Allāmah Jazrī Rahimahullāh quotes Abū Naʿīm saying that Asmā Radhiyallāhu Anhā was born twenty seven years prior to migration. And in “al-Isābah”, Hāfidh bin al-Hajar Rahimahullāh says that Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā was born four or five years after the Nubuwwah of Nabī Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam. This proves that Asmā Radhiyallāhu Anhā was eighteen or nineteen years older than Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā and not ten years older as was claimed by the writer. Hence

Aishah Radhiyallāh Anhā's age at the time of migration was eight or nine years of age and not eighteen.

In conclusion, for information to be valid and authentic, it must be passed down from generation to generation through a valid chain of narrators. Hence, there is an authentic chain in Sahīh al-Bukhārī and other books of Hadīth that prove Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā's age to be six at the time of marriage. So any claim made against this through certain historical arguments holds no weight, especially when it is not supported by an authentic chain.

Allāh will preserve His Dīn and the respect of our beloved Rasūl Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam with the fact that Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu Alaihi Wa Sallam married our Mother Hadhrat Aishah Radhiyallāhu Anhā at the age of six and started living with her when she was nine years old. Let us preserve the facts and let Allāh preserve His Dīn.

See the following article, "The Young Marriage of Ayesha R.A.", how Allāh uses His servants to defend the cause of Islām: http://askimam.org/public/question_detail/17300

And Allah Ta'āla Knows Best

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