

Prophet Muhammad and Aisha Siddiqah®?

by Sabeel Ahmed

Through the centuries, orientalists have advanced numerous accusations and far-fetched theories to discredit Islam and its last Prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him). Praise be to Allah alone, all such accusations have been successfully refuted by the Muslims Ummah. Currently, one of the 'reinvented' accusations against the noble character of the Prophet is about his marriage to young Aisha Siddiqah ®.

Let's probe some of the orientalists' charges in detail in the light of modern research, historic evidence and the Islamic sources of the Quran and the Sunnah to separate truth from falsehood, and display to the world that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is indeed an exemplary for all of mankind.

Two main theories are often advanced by orientalists to attack the pure character of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) on his marriage to Aisha ® at her young age.

A. He was a Pedophile.

B. He was involved in child abuse.

Let's analyze each theory to dig out the truth, through the Guidance of Allah (SWT).

A. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) married Aisha ® because he was a pedophile?

Definition of a Pedophile:

"Pedophile: also spelled PEDOPHILIA, psychosexual disorder in which an adult's arousal and sexual gratification occur primarily through sexual contact with prepubescent children. The typical pedophile is unable to find satisfaction in an adult sexual relationship and may have low self-esteem, seeing sexual activity with a child as less threatening than that with an adult." Encyclopedia Britannica, 1998

"pe.do.phil.ia n [NL] (1906): sexual perversion in which children are the preferred sexual object -- pe.do.phil.i.ac or pe.do.phil.ic adj." Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary

The diagnostic criteria for pedophilia according to American Psychiatric Association:

- Over a period of at least 6 months, recurrent intense sexual urges and sexual arousing fantasies involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children.
- The person has acted on these urges, or is markedly distressed by them.
- The person is at least 16 years old and at least 5 years older than the child or children in A.

DSM-III-R Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, ed 3, revised, copyright American Psychiatric Association.

"In addition to their pedophilia, a significant number of pedophiles are concomitantly or have previously been involved in exhibitionism, voyeurism, or rape". (Voyeurism's the recurrent preoccupation with fantasized or acts that involve seeking out or observing people who are naked, or are engaged in grooming or in sexual activity". Synopsis of psychiatry, Harold I. Kaplan et al., 5th ed., pg360, Publishers: Williams and Wilkins, 1988

Does the Prophet fit the above criteria of a pedophile?

With the above criteria of a pedophile in mind, lets analyze the lifestyle of the prophet and his marriages.

Name of Bride	Bride's age at marriage	Comments
Khadija bint khawilad	40	Twice widowed before
Sauda Bint Zama	50	Widow
Aisha bint Abu Bakr	9	Started living with the prophet at the age of 9.
Hafsa Bint Umar bin Khattab	22	Widow
Zainab bint Khuzaima	30	
Umm-I-Salma bint Abu Umayia	26	Widow
Zainab Bint Jahash	38	Widow
Juwaeria Bint Harith	20	Widow
Umm-I-Habiba bint Abu Sufyan	36	Widow
Marya Qibtiya bint shamun	17	Virgin, Egyptian
Safia bint Hayi bin Akhtab	17	Widow
Raihana bint umru bin hanafa	Not available	
Maimuna bint harith	36	Widow

Source: *The Prophet of Islam, the Ideal Husband*, by Syed Abu Zafar Zain, Kazi Publications, Lahore, Ist Ed., pg. 10-12

Statistics from the above table:

Percentage of his wives who were 17years and older = 91 %

Percentage of his wives who were widows = 75%

Comment: The statistics show that the prophet's marriage to Aisha at her young age was an exception and not a norm of his other marriages. Furthermore '*a pedophile's main mode of sexual satisfaction is with prepubescent girls*', which is contradictory to the 91% of prophet's marriage to women 17 years and over. An unbiased examination of Prophet's life and his marriages to his wives blatantly rejects the notion of his lifestyle fitting that of a pedophile. All his brides were aged widows (except Aisha and Marium).

Moreover, according to the criteria in the references cited above in 'Synopsis of Psychiatry', a vast majority of pedophiles possess a history of exhibitionism, voyeurism, or rape. Again, there is no single reference from either religious or secular sources that the noble Prophet ever indulged in such sadistic behavior (God forbid). This truth is observed and accepted by both Muslims and unbiased non-Muslims scholars.

*"It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme. And although in what I put to you I shall say many things which may be familiar to many, yet I myself feel whenever I re-read them, a new way of admiration, a new sense of reverence for that mighty Arabian teacher." – Annie Besant, **THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF MUHAMMAD**, Madras, 1932, p. 4.*

B. Others claim that the noble Prophet (peace be upon him) indulged in child-abuse when he married Aisha at her young age.

Let scrutinize this allegation...

Definition of Child Abuse:

Child Abuse, also called CRUELTY TO CHILDREN, the willful and unjustifiable infliction of pain and suffering on children. The term can denote the use of inordinate physical violence; unjustifiable verbal abuse; the failure to furnish proper shelter, nourishment, medical treatment, or emotional support; incest; other cases of sexual molestation or rape; and the making of child pornography. Frequently described by the medical profession as the "battered-child syndrome," abusive treatment of children is almost universally proscribed by criminal statutes. Child abuse can have serious future consequences for the victims involved. Delays in physical growth, impaired language and cognitive abilities, and problems in personality development, learning, and behavior are common following instances of child abuse or neglect. *Encyclopedia Britannica, 1998*

Comment: None of the criteria of child-abuse applies to the noble life of the Prophet (pbuh). There is no single incident of any infliction of pain and suffering by the prophet on Aisha or any other human being for that matter. Neither any instance of verbal or sexual abuse can be concluded from the relationship of the prophet with Aisha ® or any of his wives.

An abused child can have serious future consequences...delayed physical growth, impaired language..learning and behavior...etc (above definition). As one examines the chaste life of Aisha ®, her personality, physical, mental and spiritual development are all contrary to that of an abused child. In fact through the Prophet's marriage and his guidance to Aisha, history testifies that she should be labeled not as an abused child but as a 'blessed child'.

After analyzing and refuting the accusations against the noble character of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the only viable alternative left with us is:

C. The Prophet married Aisha for the benefit of Islam and Humanity.

Lets analyze...

- The Prophet married Aisha primarily for three reasons:
- To reinforce the friendly relations already existing with Abu Bakr (his closest companion).
- To educate and train Aisha so she may serve the purposes of Islam.
- To teach her to utilize her capabilities for the sake of Islam.
- Her Marriage with the prophet was a Wahi (Divine Revelation). She, herself relates from the Prophet, 'He said, *"I saw you in dreams three times. The angel brought you to me and you were clad in white silk. He (the angel) said that it was your consort and he (angel) showed me by opening your face. You are just like that..."* Sahih Muslim, Vol.2, p.285.
- Aisha ® was born after her parents had embraced Islam. Therefore, she was free from the defilement of polytheism right from her birth.
- In her youth, already known for her striking beauty and her formidable memory, she came under the loving care and attention of the Prophet himself. As his wife and close companion she acquired from him knowledge and insight such as no woman has ever acquired.

Aishah lived on almost fifty years after the passing away of the Prophet. She had been his wife for a decade. Much of this time was spent in learning and acquiring knowledge of the two most important sources of God's guidance, the Quran and the Sunnah of His Prophet. Aishah ® was one of the three wives (the other two being Hafsa ® and Umm Salamah ®) who memorized the Revelation. Like Hafsa ®, she had her own script of the Quran written after the Prophet had died.

- So far as the Hadith or sayings of the Prophet is concerned, Aishah ® is one of four persons (the others being Abu Hurrah, Abdullah ibn Umar, and Ana ibn Malik) who transmitted more than two thousand sayings. From her, 2210 Hadith have come, out of which 174 Hadith are commonly agreed upon by both Bukhari and Muslim. Many of her transmissions pertain to some of the most intimate aspects of personal behavior which only someone in Aishah's position could have learnt. What is most important is that her knowledge of Hadith was passed on in written form by at least three persons including her nephew Urwah who became one of the greatest scholars among the generation after the Companions. It is the claim of the Scholars of Islam that without her, half of the IIm-I-Hadith [knowledge, understanding of the Hadith (and Islam)] would have perished.

- Many of the learned companions of the Prophet and their followers benefited from Aishah's knowledge. Abu Musa al-Ashari once said: *"If we companions of the Messenger of God had any difficulty on a matter, we asked Aisha about it."* *"Yahya related to me from Malik from Yahya ibn Said from Said ibn al-Musayyab that Abu Musa al-Ashari came to Aishah, the wife of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and said to her, "The disagreement of the companions in a matter which I hate to bring before you has distressed me." She said, "What is that? You did not ask your mother about it, so ask me." He said, "A man penetrates his wife, but becomes listless and does not ejaculate." She said, "When the circumcised part passes the circumcised part ghusl is obligatory." Abu Musa added, "I shall never ask anyone about this after you."* **Al-Muwatta of Imam Malik Hadith 2.75**

Arwa Bin Zubair says, *"I did not find anyone more proficient (than Aisha ®) in the knowledge of the Holy Quran, the Commandments of Halal (lawful) and Haram (prohibited), IImul-Ansab and Arabic poetry. That is why, even senior companions of the Prophet used to consult Aisha ® in resolving intricate issued".* **Jala-ul-Afham by Ibn Qaiyem and Ibn Sa'ad, Vol.2, p.26**

Abu Musa al-Ashari says: *"Never had we (the companions) had any difficulty for the solution of which we approached Aisha and did not get some useful information from her"*. Sirat-I-Aisha, on the authority of Trimidhi, pg. 163

- As a teacher she had a clear and persuasive manner of speech and her power of oratory has been described in superlative terms by al-Ahnaf who said: "I have heard speeches of Abu Bakr and Umar, Uthman and Ali and the Khulafa up to this day, but I have not heard speech more persuasive and more beautiful from the mouth of any person than from the mouth of Aishah."

The Prophet said, *"The superiority of 'Aisha to other ladies is like the superiority of Tharid (i.e. meat and bread dish) to other meals. Many men reached the level of perfection, but no woman reached such a level except Mary, the daughter of Imran and Asia, the wife of Pharaoh."* Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith, Narrated by Abu Musa Al Ashari Hadith 4.643

Musa Ibn Talha ® says, *"I did not see anyone more eloquent than Aisha ®"* Mustadrak of Hakim, Vol.4,p.11

- Men and women came from far and wide to benefit from her knowledge.

Aisha's great interest in the study of the Qur'an is understandable. She was an eye-witness to a number of revelations and had therefore a clear idea of the circumstances in which they were revealed. It was on her bed alone (and no other consort's) that the Prophet received Wahi (Divine Revelations) several times. This helped her in interpreting the verses.

- At the time of the Prophet's death, the Prophet's head was on her lap. It was in her quarters that the Prophet was buried.

The life of Aishah (R) is a proof that a woman can be far more learned than men and that she can be the teacher of scholars and experts. Her life is also a proof that a woman can exert influence over men and women and provide them with inspiration and leadership. Aisha (R) is a continuing inspiration and role model to today's youth who are diligently searching for an example amongst the pop stars, movie actresses and sports stars. May the memory of her's live forever in the heart of the Muslim Ummah and may Allah grant her the highest abode in Paradise...Aameen.

Conclusion:

It was the aforementioned qualities of Aisha ® and the Prophet's guidance in molding these capabilities for the service of Islam, were the main reasons, why the Prophet Married young Aisha ®, and not the perverted reasons brought forth by misguided orientalist.

Muslims invite all sincere humans to study the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon) in the light of the authentic sources of the Quran and the Sunnah (exemplary sayings and deeds of the Prophet) and judge for themselves where the truth lies.

Indeed, by recognizing the truth of Islam as the final and complete Guidance sent by our Creator can humanity find lasting peace in this world and a means of salvation from the hell fire in the hereafter.

"I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today." George Bernard Shaw, THE GENUINE ISLAM, Vol. 1, No. 81936.

Though, the Prophet is not among us in his flesh, but his exemplary life has been preserved for all humanity to follow.

When Truth comes Falsehood disappears, Islam came, now Shirk (polytheism) must clear

Welcome to Islam...