

Was Hazrath Aisha 9 years old when she got married?

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EVIDENCE #1: Reliability of Source

Most of the narratives printed in the books of hadith are reported only by Hisham ibn `Urwah son of Zubair, and Urwah's mother was Aisha sister Asma, who was reporting on the authority of his father. First of all, more people than just one, two or three should logically have reported. It is strange that no one from Medina, where Hisham ibn `Urwah lived the first 71 years of his life narrated the event, despite the fact that his Medinan pupils included the well-respected Malik ibn Anas. The origins of the report of the narratives of this event are people from Iraq, where Hisham is reported to have shifted after living in Medina for most of his life.

Tehzibu'l-Tehzib, one of the most well known books on the life and reliability of the narrators of the traditions of the Prophet, reports that according to Yaqub ibn Shaibah: "He [Hisham] is highly reliable, his narratives are acceptable, except what he narrated after moving over to Iraq" (Tehzi'bu'l-tehzi'b, Ibn Hajar Al-`asqala'ni, Dar Ihya al-turath al-Islami, 15th century. Vol 11, p. 50).

It further states that Malik ibn Anas objected on those narratives of Hisham which were reported through people in Iraq: "I have been told that Malik objected on those narratives of Hisham which were reported through people of Iraq" (Tehzi'b u'l-tehzi'b, Ibn Hajar Al-`asqala'ni, Dar Ihya al-turath al-Islami, Vol.11, p. 50).

Mizanu'l-ai`tidal, another book on the life sketches of the narrators of the traditions of the Prophet reports: "When he was old, Hisham's memory suffered quite badly" (Mizanu'l-ai`tidal, Al-Zahbi, Al-Maktabatu'l-athriyyah, Sheikhpura, Pakistan, Vol. 4, p. 301).

CONCLUSION: Based on these references, Hisham's memory was failing and his narratives while in Iraq were unreliable. So, his narrative of Ayesha's marriage and age are unreliable.

CHRONOLOGY: It is vital also to keep in mind some of the pertinent dates in the history of Islam:

pre-610 CE: Jahiliya (pre-Islamic age) before revelation

610 CE: First revelation

610 CE: AbuBakr accepts Islam

613 CE: Prophet Muhammad begins preaching publicly.

615 CE: Emigration to Abyssinia

616 CE: Umar bin al Khattab accepts Islam

620 CE: Generally accepted betrothal of Ayesha to the Prophet

622 CE: Hijrah (emigration to Yathrib, later renamed Medina)

623/624 CE: Generally accepted year of Ayesha living with the Prophet

EVIDENCE #2: According to Tabari:

ذلك الواقدي والكلبي قالوا وهي قتيبة ابنة عبدالعزى بن عبد بن أسعد بن جابر بن مالك بن حسل بن عامر بن لؤي فولدت له عبدالله وأسماء وتزوج أيضا في الجاهلية أم رومان بنت عامر بن عميرة بن ذهل بن دهمان بن الحارث بن غنم بن مالك بن كنانة وقال بعضهم هي أم رومان بنت عامر بن عويمر بن عبد شمس بن عتاب بن أذينة بن سبيع بن دهمان بن الحارث بن غنم بن مالك بن كنانة فولدت له عبدالرحمن وعائشة فكل هؤلاء الأربعة من أولاده ولدوا من زوجتيه اللتين سميناها في الجاهلية

However, in another work, Al-Tabari says: “All four of his [Abu Bakr’s] children were born of his two wives during the pre-Islamic period” (Tarikhu’l-umam wa’l-mamlu’k, Al-Tabari (died 922), Vol. 2, p. 616, Arabic, Mausasth Ilmi, Beirut, 1979).

If Ayesha was betrothed in 620 CE (at the age of seven) and started to live with the Prophet in 624 CE (at the age of nine), that would indicate that she was born in 613 CE and was nine when she began living with the Prophet. Therefore, based on one account of Al-Tabari, the numbers show that Ayesha must have born in 613 CE, three years after the beginning of revelation (610 CE). Tabari also states that Ayesha was born in the pre-Islamic era (in Jahiliya). If she was born before 610 CE, she would have been at least 14 years old when she began living with the Prophet. Essentially, Tabari contradicts himself.

EVIDENCE #3 : Ayesha’s Age in relation to Asma’s Age

وهي أكبر من عائشة بعشر سنين. وماتت بمكة أن قتل ابنها بأقل من شهر. ولها العمر مائة سنة. وذلك سنة ثلاث و سبعين.

According to Abda’l-Rahman ibn abi zanna’d: “Asma was 10 years older than Ayesha (Siyar A`la`ma`l-nubala`, Al-Zahabi, Vol. 2, p. 289, Arabic, Mu`assasatu`l-risalah, Beirut, 1992).

According to Ibn Kathir: “She [Asma] was elder to her sister [Ayesha] by 10 years” (Al-Bidayah wa`l-nihayah, Ibn Kathir, Vol. 8, p. 371, Dar al-fikr al-`arabi, Al-jizah, 1933).

According to Ibn Kathir: “She [Asma] saw the killing of her son during that year [73 AH], as we have already mentioned, and five days later she herself died. According to other narratives, she died not after five days but 10 or 20, or a few days over 20, or 100 days later. The most well known narrative is that of 100 days later. At the time of her death, she was 100 years old.” (Al-Bidayah wa`l-nihayah, Ibn Kathir, Vol. 8, p. 372, Dar al-fikr al-`arabi, Al-jizah, 1933); Ibne Asakir vol69 Page 18; Alsunan Alkubra Albehaqi Vol6 Page204

According to Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani: “She [Asma] lived a hundred years and died in 73 or 74 AH.” (Taqribu`l-tehzib, Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, p. 654, Arabic, Bab fi`l-nisa`, al-harfu`l-alif, Lucknow).

According to almost all the historians, Asma, the elder sister of Ayesha was 10 years older than Ayesha. If Asma was 100 years old in 73 AH, she should have been 27 or 28 years old at the time of the hijrah.

If Asma was 27 or 28 years old at the time of hijrah, Ayesha should have been 17 or 18 years old. Thus, Ayesha, being 17 or 18 years of at the time of Hijra, she started to cohabit with the Prophet between at either 19 to 20 years of age.

EVIDENCE #4: Surat al-Qamar (The Moon)

According to the generally accepted tradition, Ayesha was born about eight years before hijrah.

حدثنا إبراهيم بن موسى حدثنا هشام بن يوسف أن بن جريج أخبرهم قال أخبرني يوسف بن ماهك قال إني عند عائشة أم المؤمنين قالت لقد أنزل على محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم بمكة وإني لجارية ألعب { بل الساعة موعدهم والساعة أدهى وأمر {

But according to another narrative in Bukhari, Ayesha is reported to have said: “I was a young girl (jariyah in Arabic)” when Surah Al-Qamar was revealed (Sahih Bukhari, kitabu'l-tafsir, Bab Qaulihi Bal al-sa`atu Maw`iduhum wa'l-sa`atu adha' wa amarr).

Chapter 54 of the Quran was revealed eight years before hijrah (The Bounteous Koran, M.M. Khatib, 1985), indicating that it was revealed in 614 CE. If Ayesha started living with the Prophet at the age of nine in 623 CE or 624 CE, she was a newborn infant (sibyah in Arabic) at the time that Surah Al-Qamar (The Moon) was revealed. According to the above tradition, Ayesha was actually a young girl, not an infant in the year of revelation of Al-Qamar. Jariyah means young playful girl (Lane's Arabic English Lexicon). So, Ayesha, being a jariyah not a sibyah (infant), must be somewhere between 6-13 years old at the time of revelation of Al-Qamar, and therefore must have been 14-21 years at the time she married the Prophet.

CONCLUSION: This tradition also contradicts the marriage of Ayesha at the age of nine.

EVIDENCE #5: Arabic Terminology (The Bakra)

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا محمد بن بشر قال حدثنا محمد بن عمرو قال ثنا 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 بكرا وإن شئت ثيبا قال فمن البكر قالت ابنة أحب خلق الله عز وجل إليك عائشة بنت أبي بكر

According to a narrative reported by Ahmad ibn Hanbal, after the death of the Prophet's first wife Khadijah, when Khaulah came to the Prophet advising him to marry again, the Prophet asked her regarding the choices she had in mind. Khaulah said: “You can marry a virgin (bikr) or a woman who has already been married (thayyib)”. When the Prophet asked the identity of the bikr (virgin), Khaulah mentioned Ayesha's name.

All those who know the Arabic language are aware that the word bikr in the Arabic language is not used for an immature nine-year-old girl. The correct word for a young playful girl, as stated earlier, is jariyah. Bikr on the other hand, is used for an unmarried lady without conjugal experience prior to marriage, as we understand the word “virgin” in English. Therefore, obviously a nine-year-old girl is not a “lady” (bikr) (Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Vol. 6, p. .210, Arabic, Dar Ihya al-turath al-`arabi, Beirut).

CONCLUSION: The literal meaning of the word, bikr (virgin), in the above hadith is “adult woman with no sexual experience prior to marriage.” Therefore, Ayesha was an adult woman at the time of her marriage.

SUMMARY:

The narrative of the marriage of nine-year-old Ayesha by Hisham ibn `Urwah cannot be held true when it is contradicted by many other reported narratives. Moreover, there is absolutely no reason to accept the narrative of Hisham ibn `Urwah as true when other scholars, including Malik ibn Anas, view his narrative while in Iraq, as unreliable. Thus, the narrative of Ayesha's age at the time of the marriage is not reliable due to the clear contradictions seen in the works of classical scholars of Islam.

The above proves 100% that aeysha was not 6 or 9 or 4 when she got married it is a as myth. She was at least 17, Moreover, the Quran rejects the marriage of immature girls and boys as well as entrusting them with responsibilities