

INTRODUCTION

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah bint 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Uthmān al-Taymī al-Qurashī is the daughter of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr al-Siddiq and Sayyidah Umm Rūmān رَضِيَ عَنْهَا. She has the rare privilege of being born to Muslim parents in the early stages of Islam. She was born four to five years after Nubuwwah. Both her parents, her sister Asmā', and her brother 'Abd Allāh were all Muslims. She was thus nurtured in one of the first Muslim homes by the cream of this ummah, Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ عَنْهُ, and is reckoned among the early Muslim women of Islam. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would visit their family twice every day, in the morning and evening.

HIJRAH & MARRIAGE

The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ told Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ عَنْهَا, "You were shown to me in my dream for three nights. The angel brought you covered in a silken cloth and he (the angel) would say, 'This is your wife.' When I moved the cloth, I saw that it was you. I said, 'If this is from Allah, He will let it be.'" [Sahīh al-Bukhārī, # 3895]

She did not begin living with the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ immediately after marriage. It was only after the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ made hijrah to Madīnah Munawwarah accompanied by her father that he sent two Companions to bring his family to Madīnah. At the same time, Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ عَنْهُ made plans for his family to travel to Madīnah. So the family of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and the family of Abū Bakr رَضِيَ عَنْهُ made hijrah together. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ عَنْهَا began living with the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ about 7 months after his arrival in Madīnah.

THE BELOVED OF THE PROPHET صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ عَنْهَا was definitely the most beloved of his wives, after Sayyidah Khadijah رَضِيَ عَنْهَا. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ himself declared this when he was questioned as to who was the most beloved person to him. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ also testified to her purity saying, "By Allah, revelation does not come to me when I am in the bed of any of my wives besides 'Ā'ishah." [Sahīh al-Bukhārī, # 755]

STRIVING IN THE PATH OF ALLAH

She was a very courageous and brave woman and requested permission from the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to assist in the battles. Sayyidunā Anas ibn Mālik رَضِيَ عَنْهُ narrates about the Day of Uhud, during the counter attack of the Mushrikin, "I saw 'Ā'ishah bint Abī Bakr and Umm Sulaym, with their robes tucked up so that the bangles around their ankles were visible hurrying with their water skins. Then they would pour the water in the mouths of the warriors, and return to fill the water skins again and return to pour water in the mouths of the soldiers." [Sahīh Muslim, # 4455]

THE SLANDER

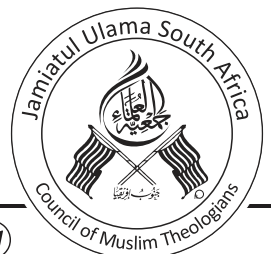
The leader of the hypocrites 'Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy began the rumour that Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ عَنْهَا was involved with Sayyidunā Safwān ibn al-Mu'attal al-Sulamī رَضِيَ عَنْهُ. This nasty rumour caused much pain and anguish to the heart of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ knew she was innocent and announced it in his khutbah saying, "By Allah, I only know virtue regarding my family." [Sahīh al-Bukhārī, # 2661]

Finally, Allah سُبحانه وتعالى revealed seventeen verses exonerating Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ عَنْهَا and declaring her innocence, chastity, and purity. In these verses, Allah سُبحانه وتعالى admonished the believers for getting ensnared in this slander.

THE PROPHET'S صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ LOVE FOR HER

The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had a Persian neighbour who once invited the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ over for meals. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ enquired whether Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah—his beloved—was invited as well. The Persian indicated in the negative, so the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ rejected the invitation. This occurred on three occasions, it was only when the neighbour also invited the Prophet's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ beloved, did he accept the invitation and attend. [Sunan al-Nasa'i, # 3436]

The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ once challenged Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ عَنْهَا to a race while they were travelling together.



They raced and Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها won. The next time they raced, after she had gained some weight, The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم came first and commented, "This for that." [Sunan Abī Dāwūd, # 2578]

Affirming that Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها was his most beloved wife is not the outcome of speculation. Rather, it is the product of revelation. Sayyidunā 'Amr ibn al-'Ās رضي الله عنه narrates that he approached the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and asked, "Who is the most beloved person to you?" "'Ā'ishah," was the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم instantaneous reply. He then asked, "From the men?" "Her father," came the reply. [Sahīh al-Bukhārī, # 4358]

The Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم words are the product of revelation. Hence, she being the most beloved to him—after Sayyidah Khadijah رضي الله عنها—is from the revelation sent by Allah سبحانه وتعالى upon him.

LOVING THE PROPHET صلى الله عليه وسلم DEMANDS LOVING SAYYIDAH 'Ā'ISHAH AS WELL

Love for Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها is the demand of love for the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. Anyone who loves the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم must definitely love his most beloved wife. In fact, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم advised his most beloved daughter Sayyidah Fātimah رضي الله عنها saying, "O my beloved daughter, do you not love those whom I love?" "Definitely," she replied. "Then love 'Ā'ishah." he commanded. [Sahīh al-Bukhārī, # 755] When this was the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم command to his most beloved daughter, then it is mandatory upon all his followers to have love for Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها.

It is only a Munāfiq (hypocrite) who does not have love for her; Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah was told, "A man says that you are not his mother." "He has spoken the truth," she commented, "I am the mother of the believers; not the mother of the hypocrites." [Al-Ājurri: al-Sharī'ah, 5/393]

KNOWLEDGE

Allah سبحانه وتعالى had gifted Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها with a remarkable memory and retention. She lived with the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم from the age of nine to eighteen and acquired an abundance of beneficial knowledge during this period. She is renowned for being the most knowledgeable female of this Ummah. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها has transmitted 2210 ahādīth and is the fourth most prolific narrator of hadīth; after Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah, Sayyidunā 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar, and Sayyidunā Anas ibn

Mālik رضي الله عنه. Al-Zuhri says, "If the knowledge of 'Ā'ishah was compared with the knowledge of all women, 'Ā'ishah's knowledge would be superior." [Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr, 299]

THE VIRTUE OF SAYYIDAH 'Ā'ISHAH AND SAYYIDAH FĀTIMAH

The scholars have disputed over whether Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah or Sayyidah Fatimah رضي الله عنها is more virtuous. Ibn al-Qayyim has settled the debate in a magnificent manner. He says:

If by virtue, more reward is meant by Allah, the Majestic and Mighty, then this is something which cannot be determined except by an explicit divine text. However, if by virtue superiority in knowledge is meant then there is no doubt that Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها is more knowledgeable and has benefitted the ummah more in this field, and has passed on to the ummah an abundance of knowledge which others have not. The elite and common folk of the ummah are indebted to her knowledge. And if by virtue, nobility and grandeur of lineage is meant, then undoubtedly, Fātimah is superior for she is part of the Nabī صلى الله عليه وسلم. This is a privilege that none besides her siblings share with her. And if leadership is meant, then Fātimah is the Queen of the women of the ummah. [Badā'i' al-Fawā'id, 3/162]

DISTINCT PRIVILEGES

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was informed through revelation that she is his wife. She was the only virgin that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم married. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم passed away while lying in her lap, and he is buried in her home. The angels were permanently around her house, (on account of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم). She was the daughter of his closest friend and khalifah. Allah revealed her innocence in the Qur'ān, and Allah referred to her as pure in the Qur'ān and granted her the purest husband. She was promised forgiveness and a noble sustenance.

DEMISE

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها passed away in Madīnah al-Munawwarah, on Monday night, the 17th of Ramadān, 58 A.H, during the khilāfah of Sayyidunā Mu'āwiyah رضي الله عنه. Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه led her Salāt al-Janāzah and she was buried in al-Baqī'. May Allah be pleased with her.



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