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Article

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Ahl al-Sunnah insist on proving that A'yshah was betrothed to the Prophet Muhammad (S) at six years of age and that she entered his house at nine years [where the marriage was consummated]. [Ahl al-Sunnah] consider this to be evidence for A'yshah's superiority over the other wives of the Messenger of Allah. Does this, however, reflect reality? In the following article we will investigate this matter.

However, before embarking on the crux of the matter, we must shed light on the history of the Prophet's marriage to A'yshah so that we may afterwards draw a conclusion as to how old she was when she married the Messenger of Allah.

There are differing views in regard to the history of the Messenger of Allah's marriage to A'yshah. Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Bukhari [d. 256 A.H/870 C.E] narrates from A'yshah herself that the Messenger of Allah betrothed her three years after [the death] of Lady Khadijah (Allah's peace be upon her):

حدثنا قُتَيْبَةُ بن سَعِيدٍ حدثنا حُمَيْدُ بن عبد الرحمن عن هِشَامِ بن عُرْوَةَ عن أَبِيهِ عن عَائِشَةَ رضي الله عنها قالت ما غَرْتُ على امرأةٍ ما غَرْتُ على خَدِيجَةَ من كَثْرَةِ ذِكْرِ رسولِ اللَّهِ (ص) إِيَّاهَا قالت وَتَزَوَّجَنِي بَعْدَهَا بِثَلَاثِ سِنِينَ وَأَمْرُهُ رِيُّهُ عز وجل أو جِبْرِيلُ عليه السَّلَامُ أَنَّ يُبَشِّرَهَا بِبَيْتٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ من قَصَبٍ

It has been narrated by A'yshah (may Allah be pleased with her) [where] she said: "I have not been jealous of any woman as I have with Khadijah. [This is because first], the Messenger of Allah (S) would mention her a lot". [Second], she said: "he married me three years after her [death] and [third], his Lord (Exalted is He!) or [the archangel] Jibril (peace be upon him) commanded him to bless her with a house in heaven made out of reed (qasab)."

See: al-Bukhari al-Ju'fi, Muhammad b. Isma'il Abu Abd Allah (d. 256 A.H/870 C.E), *Sahih al-*

Bukhari, ed. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha (Dar ibn Kathir: Beirut, 3rd print, 1407 /1987), III: 3606, hadith # 3606. *Kitab Fadha'il al-Sahabah* [The Book of the Merits of the Companions], *Bab Tazwij al-Nabi Khadijah wa Fadliha radhi Allah 'anha* [Chapter on the Marriage of The Prophet to Khadijah and her Virtue[s] (may Allah be pleased with her)].

Given that Lady Khadija (Allah's peace be upon her) left this world during the tenth year of the Prophetic mission (*bi'ithah*), the Messenger of Allah's marriage with A'yshah therefore took place during the thirteenth year of the Prophetic mission.

After having narrated al-Bukhari's tradition, Ibn al-Mulqin derives the following from the narration:

. وبنى بها بالمدينة في شوال في السنة الثانية

...and the Prophet (S) consummated the marriage in Madinah during [the month] of Shawwal in the second year [of the Hijrah].

See: al-Ansari al-Shafi'i, Siraj al-Din Abi Hafs 'Umar b. 'Ali b. Ahmad al-Ma'ruf bi Ibn al-Mulqin (d. 804 A.H/1401 C.E), *Ghayat al-Sul fi Khasa'is al-Rasul (S)*, ed. 'Abd Allah Bahr al-Din 'Abd Allah (Dar al-Basha'ir al-Islamiyah: Beirut, 1414/1993), I: 236.

According to this narration, the Messenger of Allah betrothed A'yshah in the thirteenth year of the Prophetic mission and officially wed her [i.e. consummated the marriage] in the second year of the Hijrah.

From what has been related by other prominent [scholars] of Ahl al-Sunnah, we can [also] conclude that the Prophet wed A'yshah during the fourth year of the Hijrah. When commenting on the status (*sharh al-hal*) of Sawdah, the other wife of the Messenger of Allah (S), al-Baladhuri [d. 297 A.H/892 C.E] writes in his *Ansab al-Ashraf* that:

وتزوج رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، بعد خديجة، سودة بنت زَمعة بن قيس، من بني عامر بن لؤي، قبل الهجرة بأشهر... فكانت أول امرأة وطئها بالمدينة

After Khadijah, the Messenger of Allah (S) married Sawdah b. Zam'ah b. Qays from Bani 'Amir b. La'wi a few months before the Hijrah...she was the first woman that the Prophet joined [in matrimony] in Madinah.

See: al-Baladhuri, Ahmad b. Yahyah b. Jabir (d. 279 A.H/892 C.E), *Ansab al-Ashraf*, I: 181 (retrieved from al-Jami' al-Kabir).

Al-Dhahabi [d. 748 A.H/1347 C.E], on the other hand, claims that Sawdah b. Zam'ah was the only wife

of the Messenger of Allah for four years:

وتوفيت في آخر خلافة عمر ، وقد انفردت بصحبة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أربع سنين لا تشاركها فيه امرأة ولا ... سرية ، ثم بنى بعائشة بعد

[Sawdah] died in the last year of ʿUmar’s caliphate, and for four years she was the only wife of the Prophet (S) where neither [free] woman nor bondmaid was partnered with her [in sharing a relationship with the Prophet (S)]..

See: al-Dhahabi, Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ʿUthman (d. 748 A.H/1347 C.E), *Tarikh al-Islam wa al-Wafiyat al-Mashahir wa al-Aʿlam*, ed. Dr. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salam Tadmuri (Dar al-Kutub al-ʿArabi: Beirut, 1st print, 1407/1987), III: 288.

According to this conclusion, A’yshah married the Prophet in the fourth year of the Hijrah (i.e. four years after the Prophet’s marriage to Sawdah).

Now we shall investigate A’yshah’s age at the moment of her betrothal by referring to historical documents and records:

Comparing the Age of A’yshah with the Age of Asma’ b. Abi Bakr

One of the things which may establish A’yshah’s age at the moment of her marriage with the Messenger of Allah is comparing her age with that of her sister Asma’ b. Abi Bakr [d. 73 A.H/692 C.E]. According to what has been narrated by the prominent scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah, Asma’ was ten years older than A’yshah and was twenty-seven years of age during the first year of the Hijrah. Moreover, she passed away during the year 73 of the Hijrah when she was a hundred years of age.

Abu Naʿim al-Isfahani [d. 430 A.H/1038 C.E] in his *Maʿrifat al-Sahabah* writes that:

أسماء بنت أبي بكر الصديق ... كانت أخت عائشة لأبيها وكانت أسن من عائشة ولدت قبل التاريخ بسبع وعشرين سنة.

Asma’ b. Abi Bakr al-Siddiq...she was the sister of ʿA’yshah through her father’s [side i.e. Abu Bakr] and she was older than ʿA’yshah and was born twenty-seven years before History [i.e. Hijrah].

See: al-Isfahani, Abu Naʿim Ahmad b. ʿAbd Allah (d. 430 A.H/1038 C.E), *Maʿrifat al-Sahabah*, VI: 3253, no. 3769 (retrieved from al-Jamiʿ al-Kabir).

Al-Tabarani [d. 360 A.H/970 C.E] writes:

مَاتَتْ أُسْمَاءُ بِنْتُ أَبِي بَكْرٍ الصِّدِّيقِ سَنَةَ ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ بَعْدَ ابْنِهَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الزُّبَيْرِ بِلَيَالٍ ... وَكَانَ لِاسْمَاءِ يَوْمَ مَاتَتْ
مِائَةً سَنَةً وُلِدَتْ قَبْلَ التَّارِيخِ بِسَبْعٍ وَعِشْرِينَ سَنَةً

*Asma' b. Abi Bakr al-Siddiq died on **the year 73** [of the Hijrah], after her son ﷺ Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr [d. 73 A.H/692 C.E] by [only] a few nights. Asma' was a **hundred years of age** the day she died and she was born **twenty-seven years** before History [Hijrah].*

See: al-Tabarani, Sulayman b. Ahmad b. Ayyub Abu al-Qasim (d. 360 A.H/970 C.E), *al-Muʿjam al-Kabir*, ed. Hamdi b. Abd al-Majid al-Salafi (Maktabat al-Zahra': al-Mawsil, 2nd Print, 1404/1983), XXIV: 77.

Ibn Asakir [d. 571 A.H/1175 C.E] also writes:

كانت أخت عائشة لأبيها وكانت أسن من عائشة ولدت قبل التاريخ بسبع وعشرين سنة

Asma' was the sister of ﷺ A'yshah from her father's [side] and she was older than ﷺ A'yshah where she was born twenty-seven years before History [Hijrah].

See: Ibn Asakir al-Dimashqi al-Shafi'i, Abi al-Qasim Ali b. al-Hasan b. Hibat Allah b. Abd Allah (d. 571 A.H/1175 C.E), *Tarikh Madinat Dimashq wa Dhikr Fadhlaha wa Tasmiyat man Hallaha min al-Amathil*, ed. Muhib al-Din Abi Sa'id Umar b. Ghuramah al-Amuri (Dar al-Fikr: Beirut, 1995): IX: 69.

Ibn Athir [d. 630 A.H/1232 C.E] also writes:

قال أبو نعيم : ولدت قبل التاريخ بسبع وعشرين سنة

Abu Na'im said: [Asma'] died before History [Hijrah] by twenty-seven years.

See: al-Jazari, Izz al-Dim b. al-Athir Abi al-Hasan Ali b. Muhammad (d. 630 A.H/1232 C.E), *Asad al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat al-Sahabah*, ed. Adil Ahmad al-Rifa'i (Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi: Beirut, 1st Print, 1417/1996), VII: 11.

Al-Nawawi [d. 676 A.H/1277 C.E] writes:

. وعن الحافظ أبي نعيم قال ولدت أسماء قبل هجرة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بسبع وعشرين سنة

[It has been narrated] from al-Hafiz Abi Na'im [who] said: Asma' was born twenty seven-years before the Hijrah of the Messenger of Allah (S).

See: al-Nawawi, Abu Zakariyah Yahya b. Sharaf b. Murri (d. 676 A.H/1277 C.E), *Tahdhib al-Asma' wa al-Lughat*, ed. Maktab al-Buhuth wa al-Dirasat (Dar al-Fikr: Beirut. 1st Print, 1996), II: 597-598.

Al-Hafiz al-Haythami [d. 807 A.H/1404 C.E] said:

وكانت لأسماء يوم ماتت مائة سنة ولدت قبل التاريخ بسبع وعشرين سنة وولدت لأسماء لأبي بكر وسنه إحدى وعشرون سنة.

Asma' was a hundred years of age when she died. She was born twenty-seven years before History [Hijrah] and Asma' was born to her father Abi Bakr when he was twenty-one years of age.

See: al-Haythami, Abu al-Hasan ʿAli b. Abi Bakr (d. 807 A.H/1404 C.E), *Majmaʿ al-Zawa'id wa Manbaʿ al-Fawa'id* (Dar al-Rabban lil Turath/Dar al-Kutub al-ʿArabi: al-Qahirah [Cairo] – Beirut, 1407/1986), IX: 260.

Badr al-Din al-Ayni [d. 855 A.H/ 1451 C.E] writes:

أسماء بنت أبي بكر الصديق... ولدت قبل الهجرة بسبع وعشرين سنة ، وأسلمت بعد سبعة عشر إنساناً ... توفيت بمكة في جمادى الأولى سنة ثلاث وسبعين بعد قتل ابنها عبد الله بن الزبير ، وقد بلغت المائة ولم يسقط لها سن . ولم يتغير عقلها ، رضي الله تعالى عنها .

*Asma' b. Abi Bakr al-Siddiq...she was born **twenty-seven years** before the Hijrah and she was the seventeenth person to convert to Islam...she died in Makkah in the month of Jamadi al-Awwal in the **year 73** [of the Hijrah] after the death of her son ʿAbd Allah b. al-Zubayr when **she reached a hundred years of age**. [Despite her old age], none of her teeth had fallen out and neither was her intellect impaired (may Allah – Exalted is He! – be pleased with her).*

See: al-Ayni, Badr al-Din Abu Muhammad Mahmud b. Ahmad al-Ghaytabi (d. 855 A.H/1451 C.E), *Umdat al-Qari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari* (Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-ʿArabi: Beirut (n.d)), II: 93.

Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani [d. 852 A.H/1448 C.E] writes:

أسماء بنت أبي بكر الصديق زوج الزبير بن العوام من كبار الصحابة عاشت مائة سنة وماتت سنة ثلاث أو 825 . أربع وسبعين .

#825 Asma' b. Abi Bakr al-Siddiq married al-Zubayr b. al-Awwam who was one of the great Sahabah. She lived [up to] a hundred years of age and she died in the year 73 or 74 [of the Hijrah].

See: al-Asqalani al-Shafi'i, Ahmad b. ʿAli b. Hajar Abu al-Fadhl (d. 852 A.H/1448 C.E), *Taqrib al-*

Tahdhib, ed. Muhammad ʿAwwamah (Dar al-Rashid: Suriyah [Syria], 1st Print, 1406/1986), I: 743.

[He also wrote]:

لها سن ولم ينكر لها عقل وقال أبو نعيم الأصبهاني ولدت قبل الهجرة بسبع وعشرين سنة

[and] she had [her full set of] teeth and she had not lost her intellect. Abu Naʿim al-Isbahani said [that] she was born before the Hijrah by twenty-seven years.

See: al-ʿAsqalani al-Shafiʿi, Ahmad b. ʿAli b. Hajar Abu al-Fadhl (d. 852 A.H/1448 C.E), *al-Isabah fi Tamyiz al-Sahabah*, ed. ʿAli Muhammad al-Bajawi (Dar al-Jil: Beirut, 1st Print, 1412/1992), VII: 487.

Ibn ʿAbd al-Birr al-Qurtubi [d. 463 A.H/1070 C.E] also writes:

Asma' died in Makkah in [the month of] Jamadi al-Awwal in the year 73 [of the Hijrah] after the death of her son ʿAbd Allah b. al-Zubayr...Ibn Ishaq said that Asma' b. Abi Bakr converted to Islam after seventeen people had [already] converted...and she died when she reached a hundred years of age.

See: al-Nimri al-Qurtubi, Abu ʿUmar Yusuf b. ʿAbd Allah b. ʿAbd al-Birr (d. 463 A.H/1070 C.E), *al-Istiʿab fi Maʿrifat al-Ashab*, ed. ʿAli Muhammad al-Bajawi (Dar al-Jil: Beirut, 1st Print, 1412/1992), IV: 1782–1783.

Al-Safadi [d.764 A.H/1362 C.E] writes:

وماتت بعده بأيام يسيرة سنة ثلاث وسبعين للهجرة وهي وأبوها وابنها وزوجها صحابيون قيل إنها عاشت مائة

[Asma'] died a few days after ʿAbd Allah b. Zubayr in the year 73 of the Hijrah. And she [herself], her father, her son and husband were Sahabis. It has been said that she lived a hundred years.

See: al-Safadi, Salah al-Din Khalil b. Ayyub (d. 764 A.H/1362 C.E), *al-Wafi bi al-Wafiyat*, ed. Ahmad al-Arna'ut and Turki Mustafa (Dar Ihya' al-Turath: Beirut, 1420 /2000), IX: 36.

The Difference in Age Between Asma' and A'yshah

Al-Bayhaqi [d. 458 A.H/1065 C.E] narrates that Asma' was ten years older than A'yshah:

أبو عبد الله بن منده حكاية عن بن أبي الزناد أن أسماء بنت أبي بكر كانت أكبر من عائشة بعشر سنين

Abu ʿAbd Allah b. Mundah narrates from Ibn Abi Zannad that Asma' b. Abi Bakr was older than ʿA'yshah by ten years.

See: al-Bayhaqi, Ahmad b. al-Husayn b. ʿAki b. Musa Abu Bakr (d. 458 A.H/1065 C.E), *Sunan al-Bayhaqi al-Kubra*, ed. Muhammad ʿAbd al-Qadir ʿAta (Maktabah Dar al-Baz: Mecca, 1414/1994), VI: 204.

Al-Dhahabi and Ibn ʿAsakir also narrate this:

قال عبد الرحمن بن أبي الزناد كانت أسماء أكبر من عائشة بعشر.

ʿAbd al-Rahman b. Abi al-Zannad said [that] Asma' was older than ʿA'yshah by ten [years].

See: al-Dhahabi, Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ʿUthman (d. 748 A.H/1347 C.E). *Siyar Aʿlam al-Nubala'*, ed. Shuʿayb al-Arna'ut and Muhammad Naʿim al-ʿIrsusi (Mu'wassasat al-Risalah: Beirut, 9th Print, 1413/1992–1993?), II: 289.

قال ابن أبي الزناد وكانت أكبر من عائشة بعشر سنين.

Ibn Abi al-Zannad said [that Asma'] was older than ʿA'yshah by ten years.

See: Ibn Asakir al-Dimashqi al-Shafi'i, Abi al-Qasim ʿAli b. al-Hasan b. Hibat Allah b. ʿAbd Allah (d. 571 A.H/1175 C.E), *Tarikh Madinat Dimashq wa Dhikr Fadhlaha wa Tasmiyat man Hallaha min al-Amathil*, ed. Muhib al-Din Abi Saʿid ʿUmar b. Ghuramah al-ʿAmuri (Dar al-Fikr: Beirut, 1995), IX: 69.

Ibn Kathir al-Dimashqi [d. 774 A.H/1373 C.E] in his book *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* writes:

وممن قتل مع ابن الزبير في سنة ثلاث وسبعين بمكة من الأعيان... أسماء بنت أبي بكر والدة عبد الله بن الزبير... وهي أكبر من أختها عائشة بعشر سنين... وبلغت من العمر مائة سنة ولم يسقط لها سن ولم ينكر لها عقل

...of those who died along with ʿAbd Allah b. al-Zubayr **in the year 73** [of the Hijrah] in Makkah [were]... Asma' b. Abi Bakr, the mother of ʿAbd Allah b. al-Zubayr... and **she was older than her sister ʿA'yshah by ten years**...her life span reached **a hundred years** and none of her teeth had fallen out nor did she lose her intellect [due to old age].

See: Ibn Kathir al-Dimashqi, Ismaʿil b. ʿUmar al-Qurashi Abu al-Fida', *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (Maktabat al-Maʿarif: Beirut, n.d), VIII: 345–346.

Mulla ʿAli al-Qari [d. 1014 A.H/1605 C.E] writes:

وهي أكبر من أختها عائشة بعشر سنين وماتت بعد قتل ابنها بعشرة أيام... ولها مائة سنة ولم يقع لها سن ولم ينكر من عقلها شيء، وذلك سنة ثلاث وسبعين بمكة.

[Asma'] was older than her sister **A'yshah by ten years** and she died ten days after the killing of her son...she was a hundred years of age and her teeth had not fallen out and she did not lose a thing of her intellect. [Her death took place] in **the year 73** [of the Hijrah] in Makkah.

See: Mulla Ali al-Qari, Ali b. Sultan Muhammad al-Harawi. *Mirqat al-Mafatih Sharh Mishkat al-Masabih*, ed. Jamal Ilytani (Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah: Beirut, 1st Print, 1422 /2001), I: 331.

Al-Amir al-San'ani [d. 852 A.H/1448 C.E] writes:

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

[Asma'] was ten years older than **A'yshah by ten years** and she died in Makkah a little less than a month after the killing of her son while she was a hundred years of age. This took place in the year 73 [of the Hijrah].

See: al-San'ani al-Amir, Muhammad b. Isma'il (d. d. 852 A.H/1448 C.E). *Subul al-Salam Sharh Bulugh al-Maram min Adilat al-Ahkam*, ed. Muhammad Abd al-Aziz al-Khuli (Dar Ihya' al-Arabi: Beirut, 4th Print, 1379/1959), I: 39.

Asma' was **fourteen** years of age during the first year of the Prophetic mission (*bi'thah*) and **ten** years older than A'yshah. Therefore, A'yshah was **four** years old during the first year of the Prophetic mission [14 – 10 = 4] and as such, she was **seventeen** years of age during the **thirteenth** year of the Prophetic mission [4 + 13 = 17]. In the month of Shawwal of the second year of the Hijrah (the year of her official wedding to the Prophet) she was **nineteen** years of age [17 + 2 = 19].

On the other hand, Asma' was a hundred years of age during the **seventy-third** year after Hijrah. A **hundred** minus **seventy-three** equals **twenty-seven** (100 – 73 = 27). Therefore, in the first year after the Hijrah she was **twenty-seven** years old.

Asma' was **ten years** older than A'yshah. **Twenty-seven** minus **ten** equals **seventeen** (27 – 10 = 17).

Therefore, A'yshah was **seventeen** years of age during the first year of the Hijrah. [In addition to this], we previously established that A'yshah was officially wed the Prophet during the month of Shawwal of the second year after Hijrah, meaning that A'yshah was **nineteen years** of age [17 + 2 = 19] when she was wed to the Messenger of Allah.

[When did A'yshah convert to Islam?](#)

A'yshah's conversion to Islam is also an indicator as to when she married the Messenger of Allah. According to the prominent scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah, A'yshah became a believer during the first year

of the Prophetic mission and was among the first eighteen people to have responded to the Messenger of Allah's [divine] calling.

Al-Nawawi writes in his *Tahdhib al-Asma'*:

وذكر أبو بكر بن أبي خيثمة في تاريخه عن ابن إسحاق أن عائشة أسلمت صغيرة بعد ثمانية عشر إنسانا ممن أسلم

Ibn Abi Khuthaymah narrates from ibn Ishaq in his Tarikh that ʿAʿyshah converted to Islam while she was a child (saghirah) after eighteen people who had [already] converted.

See: al-Nawawi, Abu Zakariyah Yahya b. Sharaf b. Murri (d. 676 A.H/1277 C.E), *Tahdhib al-Asma' wa al-Lughat*, ed. Maktab al-Buhuth wa al-Dirasat (Dar al-Fikr: Beirut. 1st Print, 1996), II: 615.

[Muttahar] al-Maqdisi [d. 507 A.H/1113 C.E] writes that:

وممن سبق إسلامه أبو عبيدة بن الجراح والزيبر بن العوام وعثمان بن مظعون ... ومن النساء أسماء بنت عميس الخثعمية امرأة جعفر ابن أبي طالب وفاطمة بن الخطاب امرأة سعيد بن زيد بن عمرو وأسما بنت أبي بكر وعائشة وهي صغيرة فكان إسلام هؤلاء في ثلاث سنين ورسول الله يدعو في خفية قبل أن يدخل دار أرقم بن أبي الأرقم

*Of those [among males] who had precedence [over others] in their conversion to Islam were Abu ʿUbaydah b. al-Jarrah, al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwam and ʿUthman b. Mazʿun...and among the women were Asma' b. ʿUmays al-Khathʿamiyah (the wife of Jaʿfar b. Abi Talib), Fatimah b. al-Khattab (the wife of Saʿid b. Zayd b. ʿAmru), Asma b. Abi Bakr and ʿAʿyshah who was a child [at the time]. **The conversion to Islam of these [people occurred] within the [first] three years of the Messenger of Allah having invited [people] to Islam in secret [which was] before he entered the house of Arqam b. Abi al-Arqam.** [1](#)*

See: al-Maqdisi, Muttahar b. Tahir (d. d. 507 A.H/1113 C.E), *al-Bada' wa al-Tarikh* (Maktabat al-Thaqafah al-Diniyah: Bur Saʿid [Port Said], n.d), IV: 146.

Similarly, Ibn Hisham [d. 213 A.H/828 C.E] also mentions the name of Aʿyshah as one of the people who converted to Islam during the first year of the Prophetic mission while she was a child:

إسلام أسماء وعائشة ابنتي أبي بكر وخباب بن الأرت وأسماء بنت أبي بكر وعائشة بنت أبي بكر وهي يؤمئذ صغيرة وخباب بن الأرت حليف بني زهرة

Asma and ʿAʿyshah, the two daughters of Abi Bakr, and Khabab b. al-Aratt converted to Islam [in the initial years of the Prophetic mission, and as for] Asma' b. Abi Bakr and ʿAʿyshah b. Abi Bakr, [the latter]

was a child at that time and Khabab b. al-Aratt was an ally of Bani Zuhrah.

See: al-Humayri al-Ma'arif, ʿAbd al-Malik b. Hisham b. Ayyub Abu Muhammad (d. 213 A.H/828 C.E), *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, ed. Taha ʿAbd al-Ra'uf Sa'ad (Dar al-Jil: Beirut, 1st Print, 1411/1990), II: 92.

If A'yshah was seven years of age when she converted to Islam (the first year of the Prophetic mission), she would have been **twenty-two** years old in the second year after the Hijrah (the year she was officially wed to the Messenger of Allah) [7 + 13 + 2 = 22].

If, [however], we accept al-Baladhuri's claim that [A'yshah] was wed to the Messenger of Allah four years after his marriage to Sawdah, that is, in the fourth year after the Hijrah, then A'yshah would have been twenty-four years of age when she married the Prophet.

This number, [however], is subject to change when we take into consideration her age when she converted to Islam.

In conclusion, A'yshah's marriage to the marriage to the Messenger of Allah at six or nine years of age is a lie which was fabricated during the time of Banu Ummayah and is not consistent with historical realities.

¹. Translator's note: for early Muslims, the house of Arqam was a safe-haven for worship given its relatively isolated location.

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