

# Ā'ISHA

THE MOTHER *of* THE BELIEVERS

*Upon her be peace*

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## OUR MOTHER ‘Ā’ISHA

All praise is to **Allah**, Lord of the W-orlds, and peace and salutations upon our master **Muhammad**, his Household and his noble Companions.



Lady ‘Ā’isha (upon her be peace) was the youngest of the wives of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. She was born during the fourth year following the announcement of prophethood<sup>1</sup>, and is numbered among the Mothers of the Believers (*ummahāt al-mu’minīn*).<sup>2</sup>

**Genealogy** She is the noble daughter of the first caliph of Islam, Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq<sup>3</sup>, and her mother’s name was Lady Zaynab; who was famously known as Umm Rūmān bint ‘Āmir.<sup>4</sup> Her sister’s were Lady Asmā’ bint Abu Bakr (d. 73 or 74H) and Lady Umm Kulthūm; and brothers, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, ‘Abd Allah and Muhammad.

Her genealogy on her father’s side is as follows:

Lady ‘Ā’isha daughter of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, son of Abu Quḥāfa, son of ‘Āmir, son of ‘Amr, son of Ka‘b, son of Sa‘d, son of Taym, son of Murra, son of Ka‘b, son of Lu‘ayy.<sup>5</sup>

1 Muhammad Ḥāshim al-Tatthwī, *Sirat i sayyid il-ambiyā’* (p. 94); Ibn Ḥajar mentions 4H or 5H. —*al-Iṣāba* (8:231).

2 ‘The Prophet is more protective towards the believers than they are themselves, while his wives are their mothers.’ —Qur’an, *Surah al-Aḥzāb* (33:6).

3 The *Shaykh al-Islam*, ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Āmir al-Qurashī al-Taymī (d. 13), the Prophet’s ﷺ intimate friend after Allah, exclusive companion at the Prophet’s Basin (*hawḍ*) and in the Cave, greatest supporter, closest confidant, first spiritual inheritor, first of the men who believed in him and the only one who did so unhesitatingly, first of his four Rightly-Guided successors, first of the ten promised Paradise, and first of the Prophet’s Community to enter Paradise. —G.F. Haddad

4 She accepted Islam very early on in Makka. —Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (8:276)

5 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (8:46), Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* (8:440).

Her teknonym was, Umm ‘Abdullāh<sup>6</sup>, gifted to her by the noble Prophet ﷺ: it is narrated that Lady ‘Ā’isha once carried her nephew, ‘Abdullāh b. Zubayr<sup>7</sup> to the noble Prophet ﷺ. The noble Prophet ﷺ placed his blessed spittle into the mouth of ‘Abdullāh and said, “He is ‘Abdullāh (the servant of Allah), and you are Umm ‘Abdullāh (the mother of ‘Abdullāh).”<sup>8</sup> She stated: Thereafter, I was always remembered by this teknonym, and I did not give birth to any child. Abu Ḥātim has related this.<sup>9</sup>

Among her titles are: *umm al-mu’minīn* (the Mother of the Believers) which was bestowed upon her by Allah Most High; *al-Ṣiddīqa* (the truthful lady) and *Humayrā’* (little red one)<sup>10</sup>, *al-mabar’rā* (the innocent one)<sup>11</sup>, *al-tayyiba* (the purified); and the Prophet ﷺ also referred to her as ‘Ā’ish and ‘Uwaysh,<sup>12</sup> due to his love for her.

Her foster parents were: Abu al-Qu‘ays and his wife, for she fostered ‘Ā’isha early on.<sup>13</sup>

**Lady ‘Ā’isha’s marriage to the Prophet ﷺ.** ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar narrates that our master Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, “Jibrīl came to me and said: ‘Allah has married you to ‘Ā’isha.’”<sup>14</sup>

The marriage of Lady ‘Ā’isha to the noble Prophet ﷺ was performed in the month of Shawwāl<sup>15</sup>, she says, “The Prophet ﷺ married me in the month of Shawwāl,<sup>17</sup> during the tenth year of prophethood. The dowry was four hundred *dirham’s*. She was the only wife that had previously not married when the Prophet ﷺ married her.<sup>18</sup>

6 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (8:86).

7 He was ‘Abdullah b. Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām, and his teknonym was Abu Bakr. He was the first to be born in the homes of the Emigrants (*muhājirūn*) after the migration. He passed away in 73H. — Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī‘āb* (1:237); *al-Iṣāba* (4:89).

8 Al-Dihlawī, *Madārij al-nabuwwa* (2:468).

9 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (8:66).

10 The title *Humayrā’* has been mentioned in the tradition of al-Nasā’ī, *Sunan al-kubrā* (§8951); al-Tahāwī, *Mushkil al-āthār* (§292) and Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-bārī* (3:444).

11 Refer to Aḥmad’s, *Musnad* (§26086).

12 Ibn Ḥajar states: the Prophet ﷺ addressed Lady ‘Ā’isha as ‘Uwaysh when calling her... al-Ṭabarānī relates in *al-‘Ishrah*. — *al-Iṣāba* (8:151)

13 Refer to *al-Iṣāba* (8:287).

14 Al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ al-mawāhib* (4:387).

15 It is also said that the Prophet ﷺ married her after emigration.

16 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (8:46).

17 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (§1423).

18 The other wives had all been married prior to marrying the Prophet ﷺ.

**Shown to the Prophet ﷺ in a dream** Lady ‘Ā’isha narrates that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, “I was shown you in a dream for three nights. I dreamt that an angel carried you (i.e. an image) on a piece of silk and said, ‘Here is your wife,’ and when I removed (the cloth) from your face, I saw you. I said, ‘If this is from Allah, He will carry it out.’”<sup>19</sup>

Yūnus narrated to us from Hishām ibn ‘Urwā from his father from Lady ‘Ā’isha that our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, “I was shown you in a dream twice. I dreamt that a man carried you on a piece of silk and said, ‘This is your wife.’ I opened it and saw you. I said, ‘If this is from Allah He will carry it out.’”<sup>20</sup>

Legal position: A dream of the Prophet ﷺ is in the same position as a revelation. (Ibn ‘Asākir)

**“This is your wife in this world, and in the hereafter.”** Lady ‘Ā’isha narrates, “Jibril came to the Prophet ﷺ with her image upon a piece of green silk cloth, and he said, ‘This is your wife in this world, and in the Hereafter.’”<sup>21</sup> This is evidence of the glad tidings given to her that she is amongst the inhabitants of Paradise.

### *The love they shared for one another*

It was said to the Prophet ﷺ, ‘Who is the most beloved person to you?’ He replied, “‘Ā’isha.” “Among the men?” it was said. He replied, “Her father.”<sup>22</sup>

The Prophet ﷺ said to his daughter, Lady Fāṭima, “O Fāṭima! Do you love who I love?” Lady Fāṭima replied, “Yes (of course).” The Prophet ﷺ said, “Love ‘Ā’isha.”<sup>23</sup>

The Mother of the Believers ‘Ā’isha narrates that whilst she was on a journey along with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, “I had a race with him (the Prophet ﷺ) and I outran him on my feet. When I became fleshy, (again) I had a race with him and he outran me. He ﷺ said, “This is for that.””<sup>24</sup>

The Mother of the Believers ‘Ā’isha would often seek reassurance from the

19 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (§2438).

20 Al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā’il al-nabuwwa*; Ibn ‘Asākir in *al-Arba’īn: Kitāb al-arba’īn fī manāqib ummahāt al-mu’minīn* (§8).

21 Al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan* (§3906).

22 Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (§4358).

23 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (§2442).

24 Abu Dāwūd, *Sunan* (§2578).

Prophet ﷺ that he loved her. “How is your love for me?” she once asked. “Like the rope’s knot,” he replied, meaning that it was strong and secure. Many times after that she would ask, “How is the knot?” and he would reply, “The same as ever!”<sup>25</sup>

The Prophet ﷺ would address our mother, ‘Ā’isha, with the nickname: ‘O ‘Ā’ish...’ due to his love for her.

Lady ‘Ā’isha, would speak to the Prophet ﷺ regarding any matter, or issue, and this was due to the love and proximity they shared for one another.<sup>26</sup>

**Jibrīl conveys his greetings** The Prophet ﷺ said to me one day, “O ‘Ā’ish, this is Jibrīl conveying his greetings upon you.” So I replied, “May Peace, mercy and blessings be upon him as well, (O Prophet ﷺ) you see what I do not see.”<sup>27</sup>

**Revelation descended to the Prophet ﷺ while he was with her** The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to Lady Umm Salama, “O Umm Salama, do not harm me in respect to ‘Ā’isha, for verily I take an oath by Allah, revelation did not descend upon me while I lay besides any of you, except for ‘Ā’isha.”<sup>28</sup>

**‘Have you not heard that the horse of Sulaymān has wings?’** The Prophet ﷺ asked, “What is this O ‘Ā’isha?” She replied, “My dolls.” Among them he saw a horse with wings made of rags, and asked, “What is this I see among them?” She replied, “A horse.” He asked, “What is this that it has on it?” She replied, “Two wings.” He asked, “A horse with two wings?” She replied, “Have you not heard that the horse of Sulaymān has wings?” She said, “Thereupon, the Prophet ﷺ laughed so heartily that I could see his molar teeth.”<sup>29</sup>

**Her honour** Certain verses of the Qur’ān were revealed elevating her status, when she was falsely accused and slandered.<sup>30</sup>

‘Ammār b. Yāsir narrates that he heard a man speak ill in regards to the Mother of the Believers Lady ‘Ā’isha, and he said to him, “O wretched one,

25 Abu Nu’aym, *al-Hilyat al-awliyā’*.

26 *Madārij al-nabuwwa* (2:471).

27 Al-Bukhārī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (§3768).

28 Al-Bukhārī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (§3775), narrated by the father of Hishām.

29 Abu Dāwud, *Sunan* (§4932).

30 Qur’an, *Surah al-Nūr* (24:11-26).

do you speak ill of the beloved of the Prophet ﷺ?”<sup>31</sup>

‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān said, “Allah Most High did not cast the Prophet’s ﷺ shadow upon the earth in case someone trod upon it; if such is the case with the Prophet’s ﷺ shadow, what then would be said about the honour of the wife (i.e. ‘Ā’isha) of the Prophet ﷺ?”<sup>32</sup>

Whenever the successor (*tābī‘ī*) Masrūq would narrate from the Mother of the Believers Lady ‘Ā’isha, he would do so in the following manner: ‘This hadith has been transmitted to me from the Truthful Lady, daughter of the Truthful One (Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq), the beloved of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; or he would say: ‘The beloved of the beloved of Allah, she whose purity has descended from the heavens.’<sup>33</sup>

Ibn Ḥajar mentions, “She is the Truthful Lady, daughter of the Truthful One (*al-ṣiddīqa bint al-ṣiddīq*).”<sup>34</sup>

**Her knowledge** She narrated approximately 2210 prophetic traditions. 174 are agreed upon by al-Bukhārī and Muslim; a further 54 traditions narrated by al-Bukhārī, and 67 by Muslim.<sup>35</sup>

‘Urwā said: I found no one more learned in poetry, medicine or jurisprudence than Lady ‘Ā’isha.<sup>36</sup> He also said: I found no one more learned than Lady ‘Ā’isha in the knowledge of the Qur’an, inheritance, the laws of halal and haram, poetry, the statements of the Arabs, and in knowledge of ancestry.

Al-Zuhrī said: If the knowledge of all women, including that of the Mothers of the Believers, was to be gathered, the knowledge of Lady ‘Ā’isha would surpass it.<sup>37</sup>

Mu‘āwiya said: I have found no one to be more intelligent, or eloquent than Lady ‘Ā’isha.<sup>38</sup>

Mūsā b. Ṭalḥa said: I have found no one to be more fluent [in speech] than Lady ‘Ā’isha.<sup>39</sup>

31 *Al-Ḥilyat al-awliyā’* (2:55 §1460).

32 *Al-Nasafī, Tafṣīr al-madārik* (p. 772), under Surah Nūr, verse 12.

33 *Madārij al-nabuwwa* (2:469).

34 *Fath al-bārī* (7:107).

35 *Madārij al-nabuwwa* (2:472), al-‘Aynī, ‘*Umdat al-qārī* (1:38).

36 *Al-Isāba* (8:258).

37 Al-Haythamī, *Majma’ al-zawā’id* (§15318).

38 *Majma’ al-zawā’id* (§15319).

39 Al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan* (§3884).

Al-Suyūṭī in *Tadrib al-rāwī* quotes Ibn Ḥazm’s report that most of the Companions’ legal views came from only seven of them: ‘Umar, ‘Alī, Ibn Mas‘ūd, Ibn ‘Umar, Ibn ‘Abbās, Zayd b. Thābit and Lady ‘Ā’isha, and this was from thousands of Companions.<sup>40</sup>

**Her passing** The Mother of the Believers Lady ‘Ā’isha passed away on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Ramadān in 57H<sup>41</sup>, or 58H<sup>42</sup>; she was sixty-six years of age at the time of her passing, *upon her be peace*. Abū Hurayra performed her funeral prayer. She was laid to rest during the night in the blessed cemetery of *Baqī’ al-Gharqad (janna al-baqī’)* in Madīna al-Munawwara, as per her will.<sup>43</sup>

When news of her passing reached the Mother of the Believers, Umm Salama, she weeped, and said, “May Allah have mercy upon her, she was the dearest to the Prophet ﷺ after her father.”<sup>44</sup>

**The Messenger of Allah’s ﷺ passing was in her arms** Lady ‘Ā’isha said, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away in my home, on the day of my turn while he was resting on my chest closer to my neck; and, Allah Most High made my spittle mix with his [pure] spittle.” Lady ‘Ā’isha adds, “‘Abd al-Raḥmān [ibn Abu Bakr] came to me with a toothstick (*siwāk*), however, the Prophet ﷺ was too weak to use it. I took it and chewed it and then [I passed it to him and he] passed it over his teeth.”<sup>45</sup>

When the Prophet ﷺ passed away, Lady ‘Ā’isha was eighteen years old.<sup>46</sup>

May **Allah** Most High accept our efforts.



40 Al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrib al-rāwī* (2:219).

41 *Sharḥ al-Mawāhib* (4:392).

42 As reported by al-Wāqidi. (al-Qastallānī, *al-Mawāhib al-ladunniya*)

43 *Al-Mawāhib al-ladunniya*.

44 *Madārij al-nabuwwa* (2:473).

45 Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (§3100), narrated by Ibn Abu Mulayka.

46 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (8:46).