



‘The Jewel of Medina’ by Sherry Jones

a response to the American Journalist’s contentious novel

By Shaykh M I H Pirzada, November 2008

ISLAM IS A natural religion and a complete code of life that completely fulfils the demands of every age. This is why, even today, everywhere, the fastest growing religion is Islam, be it the poor and undeveloped countries of Africa, or the wealthy and developed countries of Europe and America.

‘A’ishah Siddiqah (“the truthful”)

Not only is ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) the darling wife of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him and grant him peace), she is also the honourable mother of the entire Muslim Ummah and a role model for female scholars, teachers, preachers and wives of the Muslim world. The number of *ahadith* (prophetic traditions) reported from her are 2210 and academics write that the Muslim Ummah received approximately one-quarter of all Islamic decrees through her.

Al-Zuhri cites that the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “If the knowledge of the Prophet’s wives and of all the other women of the Muslim Ummah was gathered together, the knowledge of ‘A’ishah would overwhelm it all.”¹

Abu Musa al-Ash’ari (Allah be pleased with him) states, “Whenever we, the Companions of the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace), encountered difficulties in the understanding of a *hadith*, and queried that with ‘A’ishah (Allah be pleased with her), we found the knowledge regarding that *hadith* to be with her.”²

‘Amr b. Ghalib narrates that one particular person insulted ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) in the presence of ‘Ammar b. Yasir (Allah be

pleased with him), and he (‘Ammar) said to him, “Get out from here before your face is disfigured and dogs begin barking at you. You are insulting the beloved wife of Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace).”³

Sherry Jones

Sherry Jones is an American journalist who wrote a 358 page novel on ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) called ‘The Jewel of Medina’, which was published in October 2008, in New York, USA. On the cover of this novel is the picture of a woman, the seeing of which the beholder imagines her to be ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), but in fact, this is the imaginary painting of the 19th century German artist, Max Ferdinand Bredt, wherein a wife is shown with jewellery and wearing a veil according to Arabic custom and tradition. He named this painting ‘The Queen of the Harem’, and it is available today from the Bridgeman Art Library, London, at a cost of €39.00.

The author describes the background for writing this novel:

“In spring of 2002, when the U.S. sent troops into Afghanistan, I began hearing news about the reversals for women there under the Taliban, how girls were no longer allowed to go to school and women were required to wear burqas, how the windows of their homes had to be painted black so they could not be seen from the outdoors, etc. As a feminine, I was disturbed by these reports and I wanted to learn more.

I knew very little about Middle Eastern culture or Islam at the time, so I read a few books about women in the Middle East by American Journalists Geraldine Brooks and Jan Goodwin. In these books I discovered that the Prophet Muhammad had multiple wives and concubines. Being unable to find very much information about any of them made me want to tell their stories to the world ... I didn't choose A'isha; she chose me! ... That scene played itself in my mind over and over again until, while working out in the gym, I realized that if I couldn't stop thinking about A'isha, I should probably write about her.⁴

Objections of Sherry Jones

Opponents and critics have been trying to disparage Islam for the past 1400 years. After deriving benefit from their books, Sherry Jones has narrated their objections in a fictitious and exaggerated manner. Although she has used some uncivilised language for the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) and his Pious Wives (*Azawaj Mutahharat*) at some places, and attributed many indecencies to them that cannot be referenced but in the infamous book of Salman Rushdie. I shall, however, in a cultured manner, present in this article, refutations to some of her significant objections, so that no misunderstandings arise to anyone when reading that book.

Objection One

Muslim scholars say that the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) performed multiple marriages for educational and political purposes, but Sherry Jones states that because all of his wives were beautiful, and that is why, according to her, he might have had personal reasons to those marriages.⁵

For example, regarding the marriage to Zaynab (Allah be pleased with her), Sherry Jones writes that one day, Muhammad (Allah bless him and grant him peace) inadvertently saw Zaynab (Allah be pleased with her) naked and fell in love with her, and eventually married her.⁶

Response to Objection One

Regarding this objection, with only one glance at the biography of the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace), no just person could base him having multiple wives upon sexual gratification because the drive for sensual desire usually lasts from ages 15 to 50 years. Between the ages of 15 to 25 years, the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) uniquely suppressed his desires in such a noble and exemplary manner that even enemies could not find a fault in his chastity. Then, at the age of 25 years, he performed his first marriage with a widow, Khadijah (Allah be pleased with her), who was 15 years older than him. He spent a period of 25 years with that one widow. Just imagine, when he was 50 years of age, his wife Khadijah (Allah be pleased with her) was 65 years old, meaning, that despite the old age of his wife, the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) did not even consider a second wife, and even then, if he is accused of having uncontrollable sexual urge, then the world may never have heard a whiter lie!

This life of 50 years and the entire age of prime youth was before the eyes of the Makkans; even an enemy never had the courage to draw any accusation on his chaste life in relation to sexual waywardness. In fact, the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was referred to with the titles 'the Truthful, the Trustworthy'. If the reason behind polygamy was sexual gratification and pleasure, the most appropriate time for that would have been in prime youth and not old age.

Once, the leaders of Makkah gathered together and came to the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) and said, "We are prepared to give you so much wealth that you would become the wealthiest of Makkah, whichever of the women of the Quraysh you like, we are prepared to give to you in marriage ten women of the Quraysh whom you prefer. We are even prepared to accept you as the leader and ruler of Makkah, but you must not talk ill of our idols." Upon this, the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied, "If you place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand and expect me to renounce the invitation to *tawhid* (monotheism), then that is not possible."⁷

In this material world, what greater aspiration could there be for one than to become the ruler of one's

own country and the wealthiest of all. If there was a desire for multiple marriages, wealth and power in any corner of the holy Prophet's mind, then this was the finest proposition. His mission, however, was the promulgation of monotheism, for the cause of which he clashed against huge calamities but would not give up that mission.

After the demise of Khadijah (Allah be pleased with her), the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) married Sawdah (Allah be pleased with her), and up until the age of 54 years, he had only one wife at any one time. Other marriages took place between 54 and 59 years of age. After the age of 59 years, he did not marry again. Any man of reason is unable to accept that a human be content with only one wife at any one time for up to 54 years of age, and then, all of a sudden, a sexual tempest throws his desires into such commotion that he is compelled into taking many wives. The holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was upon that lofty status of self-restraint that in the state of continuous fasting, he required no food for days upon end. So how can that being not be content with one wife for a few years of old age?

*Wisdom is named madness and madness is wisdom,
The beauty of your wonderworking may do as it will.*

Of all the wives of the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace), only one ('A'ishah Siddiqah) was a maiden and all others were either aged, widowed or divorcées, and his series of polygamous marriages only began when he was the only sovereign of the Islamic state and thousands were on-the-ready to sacrifice their lives at his indication. If carnal inclination was a factor in his marriages then virgins would have been selected, but, contrarily, he married the aged, the mature, the intelligent and the loyal women, in order so that those feminine issues that were difficult to explain explicitly (such as menstruation, postnatal bleeding and marital affairs, etc.) due to feeling ashamed and modesty, they could be taught through those women.

A large wealth of *ahadith* was bestowed upon the Muslim Ummah by virtue of the Pious Wives of the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace), e.g. from 'A'ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), two thousand, two hundred and ten (2210) narrations, and from Umm Salamah (Allah be

pleased with her), three hundred and seventy eight (378) narrations are mentioned in books of *hadith*. Moreover, the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) married women from various tribes of Arabia so that relations may be extended to their tribes through them, and hence, it was profiting for the expansion and effectiveness of Islam. Anyhow, behind the polygamy of the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) were several educational, social, proselytizing and political dynamics, for the details of which see *Sirat Diya' al-Nabi*, volume 7, by my spiritual guide, Diya' al-Ummat, Justice Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari (d. 1418 AH).

Objection Two

At the time of marriage, 'A'ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) was 9 years of age and the age of the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was 54 years. Hence, she has made the marriage of a man, relatively six times older, to a girl of such a tender age, the object of her taunt and reproach.⁸

Response to Objection Two

At the time of his marriage to 'A'ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), the age of the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was 54 years. According to *hadith* books, the age of 'A'ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) was then 9 years. As soon as they reach maturity, the prompt marriage of a boy or girl has been encouraged in Islam, and some girls, against the norm, can mature sooner than others. Such as in Europe and America, girls become mature after 11 years of age, usually, but girls of 8 years old becoming pregnant have also been reported, and so, it could be, that 'A'ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) also matured sooner, against the norm. Furthermore, 'A'ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) was very intelligent and wise from childhood, and one of the purposes of marrying her at tender age was also that by paying special attention to her education and training, she would be rendered a renowned teacher and preacher.

But because modern people give preference to apparent situations, and they only make the age of 9 years their target of censure, therefore, I present to

them another point of view according to which the age of ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) at the time of marriage was not 9 years but 19 (nineteen) years. In the second year after *hijrah* (Migration), when the marriage of Fatimah al-Zahra (Allah be pleased with her) took place, her age was also 19 years. According to this, at the time of marriage, the ages of both Fatimah al-Zahra (Allah be pleased with her) and ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) were almost identical.

Mawlana Faruq Khan has written a book in Urdu on the age of ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her). Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood has published an English translation of it under the name *Hazrat A’isha Siddiqah R.A.*, in which she has proven with 17 pieces of evidence and references that at the time of marriage, ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) was 19 years of age. As an example, I present the first two of those proofs – for details, see her book.

1. Ibn Kathir al-Dimishqi has stated that ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) was 10 years younger than her elder sister Asma’ b. Abi Bakr (Allah be pleased with her), and Asma’ b. Abi Bakr (Allah be pleased with her) was 27 years old at the time of the Migration, therefore, at the time of the Migration, the age of ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) was 17 years, and at the time of marriage she was 19 years old.⁹

Likewise, ‘Allamah Ghulam Rasul Sa’idi writes that according to the explanation of the science of *Asma’ al-Rijal* (cyclopaedia of Hadith narrators), the sister of ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), namely, Asma’ (Allah be pleased with her), was 10 years older than her, and it has been explained in *al-Isabah* and *Asd al-Ghabah* that at the time of the Migration, Asma’ (Allah be pleased with her) was 27 years of age. According to this calculation, at the time of the Migration, the age of ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) works out to be 17 years.¹⁰

2. It has been stated in *Tarikh al-Umam wa’l-Muluk* (History of Nations and Monarchs) that two sons and two daughters of Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) were born prior to the announcement of prophethood (of Prophet Muhammad). Namely, ‘Abd Allah, ‘Abd al-

Rahman, Asma’ and ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with them). Therefore, at the time of the Migration, not one of these sons or daughters was aged below 13 years. Then how can the age of ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) be under 9 years.¹¹

Therefore, according to new research, at the time of marriage, the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was not six times the age of ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), but three times, which means that the age of ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) was 19 years and that of the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was 54 years.

Today, in Europe, Britain and America, there is no restriction upon an 18/19 year-old girl to marry a man three times her age, i.e. 50/60 years old, if she so wishes, and in fact, there are countless such marriages taking place. So therefore, it is improper for anyone to reproach the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) on this marriage.

Objection Three

On the eve of the Migration, when ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (Allah be pleased with him) informed the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) that the youth of every clan of the Quraysh were going to martyr him that night, his face turned pale as if he were already dead.¹²

Response to Objection Three

The Quraysh had devised the plan in utmost secrecy to kill the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace), such that even Shaykh al-Najdi, i.e. Satan, was only permitted to attend the meeting after intense scrutiny. ‘Ali (Allah be pleased with him) was not aware of this, rather, the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) told him after being informed by Allah (Most High).

That night, when the non-Muslims of Makkah brought their swords and stood outside the residence of the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace), he said to ‘Ali (Allah be pleased with him), “Tonight, I have been commanded to leave Makkah. Today, you don my red mantle and

sleep in my bed. Surely, nothing that you dislike will come to you from those disbelievers.”¹³

Just imagine, the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) who is ensuring ‘Ali (Allah be pleased with him) that the swords of the Qurayshi youths would not be able to harm him the slightest, how could he himself become so worried that his face would reflect death?!

It is strange logic that up until yesterday, Orientalists have been declaring that Muhammad (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was a warrior and a tyrant, and that he spread Islam by the sword, but today, they suddenly realised that Muhammad (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was a coward and chicken-hearted, and he became worried when seeing the swords of the enemy. Someone has rightly said that the memory of a liar is very weak (Persian saying).

I would like to say to the Orientalists that on the night of the Migration, the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) did not flee from the back by ripping open the roof of his house and nor by breaking down the wall, and that he exited from the very door outside of which the youths of the Quraysh were standing with their swords but they could not see him. He had no need to fear them because he was migrating by the command of Allah (Most High) and it was He Who was protecting him.

Anyhow, history testifies that the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) had so much trust and belief in Allah (Most High) that he was never apprehensive, be he alone or in the battleground.

In this regard, let us observe only two, out of uncountable episodes:

1. The holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was returning with his army from the Battle of Dhat al-Riqa’. On the way back, they pitched camp and all the soldiers laid down in the shades of trees for slumber. The holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) hung his sword on a tree and took a rest. By some stealth manner, a soldier from the enemy suddenly approached the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) and taking the Prophet’s sword he began

saying:

“Who can save you from my sword?”

The holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) confidently replied:

“Allah (Most High) will save me.”

Hearing this, the sword fell from his hand and the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) picked up the sword and said:

“My Allah (Most High) has saved me. Now you tell me, who will save you from my strike?”

He replied:

“No-one can save me. Forgive me.”

The holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) asked:

“Do you accept Islam?”

He replied:

“That cannot be, but I promise you that I will never participate in any battle against you.”

Hearing this conversation, the Companions (Allah be pleased with them) gathered around the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) and if he wanted, he could have had him killed. The holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) released him and he returned to his non-Muslim colleagues and told them that Muhammad was a better human than anyone.¹⁴

2. During the Battle of Hunayn, when the Muslim vanguard fled fearing from the sudden shower of arrows, the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) challenged the enemy with courage and complete steadfastness and he read this Arabic couplet:

ana’n-nabiyyu la kadhib; ana’bnu ‘abdi-l-muttalib

[I am the Prophet, this is no lie,
I am the son of ‘Abd al-Muttalib.]

Upon hearing the voice of the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace), the fleeing army was overwhelmed with encouragement, and when they returned and inflicted an attack with their whole might, the enemy lost its stance and they fled having suffered defeat. This is how the unprecedented valour and incomparable persistence of the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him

peace) transformed the defeat of the Muslims into victory.¹⁵

In relation to the gallantry and bravery of the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace), let us see a statement of his. The holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “If I did not consider it difficult upon my Ummah, I would never back away from any battle. Surely, I would love to be martyred in the path of Allah (Most High), then brought back to life, then martyred again, and then brought back to life again, and then martyred again.”¹⁶ This means that he had no fear or apprehension of showing courage and the spirit of sacrifice in the battlefield.

Objection Four

‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) would pray for her marriage not to be with Prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him and grant him peace) because she wished to be married to Safwan b. Mu’attal (Allah be pleased with him), and even after marriage, she would spend time with him, and that is why people would call her *fahishah* (adulteress) – Allah-forbid!¹⁷

Response to Objection Four

On the one hand, the tender age of ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) at the time of marriage is being objected to, and on the other hand, her pre-marital relations with Safwan (Allah be pleased with him) and her desires to marry him are being mentioned, which is a bizarre contradiction. Nonetheless, this is not a new allegation.

In fact, on the return from the Battle of Banu Mustalaq, the leader of the hypocrites ‘Abd Allah b. Ubayy imputed a wrongful act committed by ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) with Safwan (Allah be pleased with him), and with undue exaggeration, he propagated it in such a manner that some simple-minded Muslims were sucked into it. When they were unable to produce four witnesses, they were subjected to the *Hadd* of *Qadhif*¹⁸, i.e. struck eighty lashes each.¹⁹

In the traditions recorded in *Sahih Muslim* and *Sahih al-Bukhari*, ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with

her) described this incident herself:

Whenever the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) would intend to go on a journey, he would draw lots between his wives; he would take with him on the journey the lot of whom would be drawn. ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) says that when the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) drew lots, as usual, for a battle (Battle of Banu Mustalaq), my name was drawn, and consequently, I went with the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace). I was made to sit in the *hawdaj*²⁰; whenever the army would set off, my *hawdaj* would be placed atop the camel, and wherever we would camp, my *hawdaj* would be removed (from the back of the camel).

When Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) returned from that battle, he spent the night somewhere on the way, and when, in the last part of the night it was announced that we arise, answer the call of nature, tie the belongings, and prepare for departure, I went out (of the *hawdaj*) to answer the call of nature. When I returned, I noticed that my necklace had broken and fallen off somewhere. I exited in search of the necklace. I found the necklace, but when I returned, the army had already gone from that place. Those who would place my *hawdaj* on the camel, they had done so, and they had thought that I was inside the *hawdaj* - in those days, women were very light because they would eat less, which is why the bearers did not realise my absence from the *hawdaj*. When I returned, no-one was there, and so I sat down. I thought that when they do not find me, they will come here in search of me. I was sitting there when I was overcome with slumber and so I went to sleep.

It was the duty of Safwan b. Mu’attal (Allah be pleased with him) to remain

behind the army and pick up the luggage dropped from it. When he saw me sleeping, he called out in distress ‘inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji’un’. I awoke with his exclamation and I veiled my face with my mantle. He did not say anything and brought his she-camel to me and sat it down. I mounted it and he began walking in front, holding onto the bridle of the she-camel, until we caught up to the army from the rear. Seeing us, the Leader of the Hypocrites, ‘Abd Allah b. Ubayy slandered us, and upon reaching Madinah, he flared up this propaganda. In order to end this propaganda, the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) entered the Prophet’s Mosque one day, and standing upon the pulpit, he said, “Who will assist me against that individual, the inflictions of whom have reached my home? By Allah! I know nothing of my wife but good, and that person whom they have mentioned, regarding him, I also know nothing but good.”

Upon this, Sa’d b. Mu’adh al-Ansari (Allah be pleased with him) stood up and said, “I am present. If that individual is from the clan of Banu Aws, we will smite his neck, but if he is from the Banu Khazraj, then you command us and it shall be acted upon.”

Then, when the ten verses (11-20) of Surat al-Nur were revealed, the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “O ‘A’ishah! Surely, Allah (Most High) has vindicated you.”²¹

Important points concerning this incident:

- In relation to this incident, Sherry Jones has made grossly indecent remarks over dozens of pages, whereas she must know that if such an allegation was made against ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), then a similar allegation was made against Maryam (‘Mary’, upon her be peace). Research scholars write that when Prophet Yusuf (‘Joseph’, upon him be peace) was slandered against, Allah (Most High) declared his acquittal through a minor,

and when Maryam (upon her be peace) was slandered against, Allah (most High) declared her acquittal through her son Prophet ‘Isa (‘Jesus’, upon him be peace), who was then only an infant of a few days old. However, when ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), was slandered against, Allah (Most High) declared her exculpation by revealing ten verses of the holy Qur’an. For the acquittal of ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), Allah (Most High) did not select any child or prophet, but pronounced her exoneration through his Own divine word.²²

In these verses, with the acquittal of ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), the acquittal of Safwan (Allah be pleased with him) is proven sua sponte. The holy Qur’an has itself provided the testimony of the chastity of these two pious personalities, greater than which there can be no other testimony, and thus, doubting their chastity is akin to doubting the holy Qur’an.

- The holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) climbed upon the pulpit and declared, under oath, the chastity of his wife, and he ordered punishment of the calumniator. We learn from this that the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was certain regarding the falsity of the accusers of ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), otherwise he would not have sworn the oath and nor commanded the punishment against the slanderers.

As al-Razi writes, “Prior to this incident of slander, the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) and all the Muslims knew that ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), was very distant and absolutely secure from the causes and factors of indecencies, and that being the wife of the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was evidence enough in itself, because Prophets (upon them be peace) have been sent to invite disbelievers to the true religion, and that is why it is incumbent that no such blemish exists in them that would make people despise them, and, notably, people loathe the one whose wife is immoral.”²³

- The rightly-guided Caliphs also acknowledged the innocence and chastity of 'A'ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), in this most troubled period of calumny, as al-Nasafi writes that 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him) said to the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace), "I am sure of the lies of the hypocrites (that they are lying) as Allah (Most High) has safeguarded you from such that a fly sit on your body, because the fly is covered with filth when it sits on it. So when Allah (Most High) has preserved you from the contact with such a minute creature of filth, then how could He want to make any immoral woman your wife?"

'Uthman (Allah be pleased with him) said, "Allah (Most High) protected your shade from appearing on the ground so that no human foot would tread on it. So, if it is not possible for anyone to step on your shadow, how could it then be possible for any individual to dishonour your wife?"

'Ali (Allah be pleased with him) said, "Allah (Most High) sent Jibril (Gabriel) and informed you that an impurity had come in contact with your shoes, so therefore, remove those shoes from your feet. If, for instance, your wife was an adulteress, then Allah (Most High) would have definitely ordered you to separate yourself from her."²⁴

- Al-Razi writes that Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (Allah be pleased with him) asked his wife, "Do you know what is being said about 'A'ishah and Safwan?" His wife replied, "If you was in the place of Safwan, then could you think of committing any mischief with the honourable harem of Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace)?" He replied, "Never!" His wife then said, "If I was in the place of 'A'ishah, I would never think of unfaithfulness against Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace). Relating to them, how can such a misdemeanour be imagined when 'A'ishah is more excellent than me and Safwan is more excellent than you?"²⁵

Upon Safwan (Allah be pleased with him), the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him

peace) imposed the responsibility of remaining behind the army, and if the possessions of anyone had fallen off, he was to pick them up and hand them to their owner. How could one, whom Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) had appointed the custodian of the deposits of others, misappropriate the trust of his own guide, master and commander-in-chief?!

- Ibn Zayd states that when a believer does not commit immoral acts with his own mother, and nor a mother with her son, and 'A'ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), is the mother of all the believers,²⁶ consequently, it is a sin even to think of her in that manner.
- Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) states that no wife of any prophet ever committed adultery.²⁷ The immoral offence of a wife is such a defect that even the non-Muslims despise it, and it is only natural that nobody is fond of the immorality of his own wife. Hence, the wives of Prophet Nuh ('Noah', upon him be peace) and Prophet Lut ('Lot', upon him be peace) were although non-Muslims, even they were not involved in this moral crime, because Allah (Most High) has protected the wives of all prophets from adultery, during the lives of those prophets and also after their deaths.²⁸ When the wife of any prophet has never indulged in immorality, how can then the chastity be sullied of 'A'ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), the pious wife of the Leader of all the Prophets, Muhammad (Allah bless him and grant him peace).

Objection Five

The Pious Wives of the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) were not satisfied with him. They would call him stubborn and wilful.²⁹

Response to Objection Five

Of the Pious Wives of the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace), none was such that was dissatisfied with him. In fact, each one was so proud of her love and connection to him that she could sacrifice every luxury of the world but would not be

prepared for separation from the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace).

For example, when the sequence of conquests had begun and the financial situations of the common Muslims of Madinah had improved, the Pious Wives of the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) also requested for an increase in their maintenance allowance. This was unbearable on the sensitive heart of the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace), and upon that, Allah (Most High) said:

“O Prophet, say to your wives: If you seek the life of this world and its embellishment, then come! I shall make a provision for you and release you honourably, but if you seek Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter, then surely Allah has prepared a great reward for the righteous amongst you.” (*Qur’an*, 33:28-29)³⁰

When these verses were revealed, then first of all, the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said to ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), “Today, I am about to ask you something. Do not rush into answering it, but discuss it with your parents and then reply.” After that, the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) recited these verses, and ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), asked, “Shall I ask my parents regarding this? (My answer is clear), I choose Allah (Most High), His Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) and the Hereafter.”³¹ After ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), the other wives also gave the same reply.

If, as according to Sherry Jones, ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) wished to marry Safwan (Allah be pleased with him), then this would have been the perfect opportunity to seek divorce, but just imagine, how much love the Pious Wives of the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) had for him that they declined all the luxuries of the mundane life and accepted poverty and starvation, as they could not bear separation from the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace). It is easy to talk the talk, but not everyone can walk the walk.

Allah (Most High) placed the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) upon the loftiest

station of manners. (*Qur’an*, 68:4)³² Observe some *ahadith* relating to his mildness of manners and courtesy, that his pious wife ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) herself narrated:

1. ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) reports that Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) never killed anyone other than in battle in the way of Allah (Most High), nor did he ever smack a woman and nor strike a servant.”³³
2. ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her) reports that Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) never took revenge from anyone for himself, but when someone transgressed the boundaries set by Allah (Most High), he would then seek retribution from him for the sake of Allah (Most High).”³⁴
3. Sa’d b. Hisham (Allah be pleased with him) reports that he asked the Mother of the Believers, ‘A’ishah Siddiqah (Allah be pleased with her), “Tell me about the manners of Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace).” She replied, “Do you not recite the Qur’an?” I said, “Of course.” She then said, “The manners of the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) are the Qur’an.”³⁵ In other words, whatever has been stated in the holy Qur’an regarding good manners, the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was a practical image of that. How beautifully Shah Ahmad Rida Khan has put it in his Urdu couplet which translates as:

*Your character is great and beautiful your creation,
By your Creator, you had and will have no imitation.*

Freedom of Speech

Freedom of writing and speech is considered a significant issue of today’s age, whereas it really began when Allah (Most High) expressed to create the first human, Prophet Adam (upon him be peace) as a vicegerent, and the angels said, “Will You place therein one who will cause corruption in it?” (*Qur’an*, 2:30)³⁶

The world cannot produce a greater example of freedom of speech than this; that even when Allah

(Most High), Who is the absolute Omnipotent, Independent and the Creator and Master of everything, not answerable to anyone, and the angels exercise their right of freedom of speech to Him and reveal their apprehensions to Him; Allah (Most High) did not show displeasure.

However, when someone adopts a word or a manner of expression for the holy Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) whereby the possibility emerges of any aspect of insolence, that He forbade – in fact, then that particular individual has been threatened with the destruction of his faith and noble actions. (*Qur'an*, 49:2)³⁷

Islam is the first to declare freedom of speech, but for that, specific limitations have been imposed. For example, Islam binds its followers not to verbally abuse the deities of others and neither to adopt a libellous approach to them, as Allah (Most High) said:

“And (O Muslims) do not abuse those deities whom they worship beside Allah, as they will abuse Allah, unknowingly, exceeding all limits.” (*Qur'an*, 6:108)³⁸

Insult to Religious Leaders and the Bible

1. "And tell the children of Israel that anyone who curses his God must pay the penalty: he must die. All the congregation shall stone him; this law applies to the foreigner as well as to the Israelite who blasphemes the name of Jehovah. He must die." (Leviticus, 24:16)³⁹
2. "If the defendant refuses to accept the decision of the priest or judge appointed by God for this purpose, the penalty is death. Such sinners must be purged from Israel. Then everyone will hear about what happened to the man who refused God's verdict, and they will be afraid to defy the court's judgement a second time." (Deuteronomy, 17:12-13)⁴⁰

Yvonne Ridley

Yvonne Ridley is a British Journalist who wrote a 216 page narration of her imprisonment in Afghanistan,

entitled *In the Hands of the Taliban*, which was published in 2001 from London. Thereafter, she began to study Islam and in 2003, she became Muslim.

Conclusion

The attack on the same country, Afghanistan, was the reason behind studying Islam for both women. Both of them were journalists and both of them wrote books based on their own impressions.

The American woman saw the Afghan Muslims on television whilst sitting on the comfortable sofa of her own home, and then, she formed a mindset under the influence of media, studied Islam from the books of American journalists and began writing against it. The British woman saw Muslims with her own eyes whilst living in Afghanistan, in the captivity of the enemy, and then after being released, she returned to Britain and studied Islam unreservedly, and after becoming Muslim, she undertook the promulgation of Islam.

From this, readers can guess as to whose opinion, out of both of these women, is based on the truth.

*'Tis not mere human effort, the gift of Islam,
By Allah's favour and mercy it is bestowed.*

I suggest to Sherry Jones that she adopt a dialogue with Yvonne Ridley, and try to understand Islam without prejudice. Today, it is required for an environment of mutual understanding to be created by calling various religions together, and not to satirise the religious personalities of others, and thereby, create disharmony.

¹ Al-Haythami (d. 807 AH), *Majma' al-Zawa'id wa Manba' al-Fawa'id*, Book of al-Manaqib, volume 9, page 243.

² Al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 AH), *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Book of al-Manaqib (45), 63, 4257.

³ Ibid, Book of al-Manaqib (45), 63, 4262.

⁴ S Jones, *The Jewel of Medina*, pages 355-356.

⁵ Ibid, page 357.

⁶ Ibid, page 144.

⁷ Ibn Kathir (d. 774 AH), *al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, volume 1, page 474; al-Halabi (d. 1044 AH), *al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, volume 1, page 430.

⁸ S Jones, *The Jewel of Medina*, pages VII and 355.

⁹ R W Maqsood, *Hazrat A'isha Siddiqah R.A.*, page 11.

¹⁰ Sa'idi, *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, volume 3, page 831.

¹¹ Al-Tabari (d. 310 AH), *Tarikh al-Tabari*, page 562; R W Maqsood,

Hazrat A'isha Siddiqah R.A., page 12.

¹² S Jones, *The Jewel of Medina*, page 31.

¹³ Al-Halabi (d. 1044 AH), *al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah*, volume 2, page 36.

¹⁴ Al-Alusi (d. 1270 AH), *Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani*, in the commentary of Surat al-Nisa' (4), verse 102; al-Nawawi (d. 676 AH), *Riyad al-Salihin*, Chapter of al-Yaqin wa'l-Tawakkul, page 50.

¹⁵ Diya' al-Ummat, Justice Shaykh Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari (d. 1418 AH), *Sirat Diya' al-Nabi*, volume 4, page 510; al-Tabari (d. 310 AH), *Tarikh al-Tabari*, page 442.

¹⁶ Al-Bukhari (d. 256 AH), *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book of al-Iman (2), 27, 36.

¹⁷ S Jones, *The Jewel of Medina*, pages 3, 4, 35, 8 and 155.

¹⁸ Divine statutory punishment for false accusation of unlawful sexual intercourse.

¹⁹ Al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 AH), *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Book of Tafsir al-Qur'an (43), 25, 3477-3481.

²⁰ A curtained seat on the top of a camel.

²¹ Al-Bukhari (d. 256 AH), *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book of al-Tafsir (65), 6, 4797; Muslim (d. 261 AH), *Sahih Muslim*, Book of al-Tawbah (51), 10, 7196.

²² Al-Qurtubi (d. 671 AH), *al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an*, in the commentary of Surat al-Nur (24), verse 26.

²³ Al-Razi (d. 604 AH), *al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, in the commentary of Surat al-Nur (24), verse 11.

²⁴ Al-Nasafi (d. 710 AH), *Madarik al-Tanzil*, in the commentary of Surat al-Nur (24), verse 12.

²⁵ Al-Razi (d. 604 AH), *al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, in the commentary of Surat al-Nur (24), verse 12.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Abu Hayyan (d. 754 AH), *al-Bahr al-Muhit fi'l-Tafsir*, in the commentary of Surat al-Tahrim (66), verse 10.

²⁸ Al-Alusi (d. 1270 AH), *Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani*, in the commentary of Surat al-Nur (24), verse 17.

²⁹ S Jones, *The Jewel of Medina*, page 132.

³⁰ *Qur'an*, Surat al-Ahzab (33), verses 28-29.

³¹ Muslim (d. 261 AH), *Sahih Muslim*, Book of al-Talaq (19), 5, 3769.

³² *Qur'an*, Surat al-Qalam (68), verse 4.

³³ Muslim (d. 261 AH), *Sahih Muslim*, Book of al-Fada'il (44), 20, 6195.

³⁴ Al-Bukhari (d. 256 AH), *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book of al-Adab (78), 80, 6194.

³⁵ Muslim (d. 261 AH), *Sahih Muslim*, Book of Salat al-Musafirin (7), 18, 1773.

³⁶ *Qur'an*, Surat al-Baqarah (2), verse 30.

³⁷ *Qur'an*, Surat al-Hujurat (49), verse 2.

³⁸ *Qur'an*, Surat al-An'am (6), verse 108.

³⁹ *The Living Bible*, Leviticus, chapter 24, verse 16.

⁴⁰ Ibid, Deuteronomy, chapter 17, verses 12-13.