



Muslimah Gems

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Bismillah ar'Rahman ar'Raheem (In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful)

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Our Lord! Make
of us Muslims,
bowing to Thy (Will),
and of our progeny
a people Muslim,
bowing to Thy (will);
and show us our
place for the
celebration of (due)
rites; and turn unto
us (in Mercy);
for Thou art
the Oft-Returning,
Most Merciful.
(The Holy Quran, Al-
Baqara, 2:128)

The Nine Conditions of the Shahadah



"Ash'hadu an'la ilaha illa Allah, wa ash'hadu anna Muhammad rasool Allah".

"There is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."

This declaration of faith is called the Shahadah, a simple formula that all the faithful pronounce. The significance of this declaration is the belief that the only purpose of life is to serve and obey God, and this is achieved through the teachings and practices of the Last Prophet, Muhammad *Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*.

The testimony of faith "The shahadah" is the first pillar of Islam. It is the statement that one must declare to be into the fold of Is-

lam. It is the statement that we, Muslims, say in our prayers. It is the only thing that will grant us paradise if Allah wills. But is this verbal statement really our salvation?

The hypocrites made this statement but Allah describes them as liars and they are in the lowest abyss of Hell-fire.

The famous Taabii Wahb ibn Munabbih was once asked "Isn't the statement of La ilah illa Allah the key to paradise?" He answered "Yes, but every key has ridges. If you come with the key that has the right ridges, the door will open for you. Yet, if you do not have the right ridges, the door will not open for you."

Therefore, it is saying the shahadah while meeting certain conditions is what makes a person benefit from the testimony of faith. But what are the conditions of the shahadah?

The shahadah has nine conditions:

The first condition is knowledge. One must have the basic and general knowledge of what is meant by the shahadah.

(Continued on page 2)

Aishah bint Abu Bakr (RA)

The life of Aishah is proof that a woman can be far more learned than men and that she can be the teacher of scholars and experts. Her life is also proof that a woman can exert influence over men and women and provide them with inspiration and

leadership. Her life is also proof that the same woman can be totally feminine and be a source of pleasure, joy and comfort to her husband.

She did not graduate from any university, there were no universities as such in

her day. But still her utterances are studied in faculties of literature, her legal pronouncements are studied in colleges of law and her life and works are studied and researched by students and teachers of

(Continued on page 4)

From the Editors

Bismillah ar'Rahman ar'Raheem (in the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful).

As'salamu alaikom wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu (May peace, mercy and blessings be upon you).

It's been three months since our last newsletter, and what fun it's been! We've made many changes to our site, www.MuslimahOnline.org, to help you navigate your way around better. We've installed a search option as well as made changes that make our site easy to use.

We are averaging 1,000 visitors per month. That's great news since we began with 87 visitors eight months ago. InshaAllah that number will continue to grow as we do.

We've added a blogging section at

www.MuslimahOnline.org/blog. If you are interested in having an online diary with us, please register. Of course, this is for our Muslim sisters only.

We've updated our Garden, www.MuslimahOnline.org/forum, and hope that you will register and share your thoughts and opinions with us. A special thank you to our members, whose loyalty has given us the courage and capability to provide information that is accurate and helpful.

We thank you all for your support and contributions. We will continue to look forward to your feedback and welcome your suggestions on how to better serve our community as we continue on our path, setting new goals and striving for more.



If there is a topic you would like to see on our website or have us explore in one of our newsletters, please email us at: muslimah@muslimahonline.org.

As'salamu 'ala man ittaba 'al'huda (Peace be upon him who has followed the guidance).

Layla and Meryem

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Last of the prophets; and Allah is cognizant of all things."

(The Holy Quran, Al-Ahzab, 33:40)

The Nine Conditions of the Shahadah (cont. from page 1)

The second condition is certainty which is the opposite of doubt and uncertainty. In Islam, any kind of doubt is equivalent to kufr (disbelief).

The third condition is acceptance. After knowledge and belief of the shahadah, a person must accept with his tongue and heart and whatever the shahadah implies.

The fourth condition is submission and compliance. This implies the actual the physical enactment with our deeds of our shahadah.

The fifth condition is truthfulness which is the opposite of hypocrisy and dishonesty. This means when we say the shahadah, we say it honestly.

The sixth condition is sincerity. When we make the shahadah, we just say it for the sake of Allah.

The seventh condition is love. This means a believer loves the shahadah, loves in accordance with the shahadah, loves the requirements and implications of the shahadah, and loves those who act on and strive for the sake of the shahadah.

The eighth condition is denial of all other deities. Allah is worshipped. Every other deity of worship must be denied. We see many who say the shahadah but practice acts of shirk. Like going to the graves and worshipping the dead. So what kind of shahadah have these people made?

The ninth condition is adherence to the shahadah until death. The shahadah is your banner until death.

Almaha

New Beginnings

It started innocuously enough, really. About a year ago, I decided that I couldn't rely on the media and hype about Islam that we were being exposed to. The "shaded" information we were being fed didn't match up with things I'd already discovered casually on my own.

So I chose to do my own research into Islam, to find out what was accurate and what was not. Since hijab is such a big issue to the west, it was really only natural that I start investigating that as well, and so I began wearing it, while at the same time learning about the history of Islam, and the words of the Qur'an.

I kind of forgot to stop wearing hijab. About four months ago, I took it a step further, and began to wear niqab, the full face veil. These things became a part of me, without any pressure from others, or religion to "force" me to wear them. Approached openly, they felt (and feel) natural, modest, and beneficial to the psyche itself.

I can't really tell at what stage things started falling into place, but I do know what made it all "click" - discovering a chat channel where muslimahs congregated.

In that place, even though I freely ad-

mitted that I was not a muslim, and was simply learning, I was warmly welcomed. The sisters there were so helpful, open, and honest, about many things, and it immediately felt like "home".

They were the first muslims I had been able to talk to directly, and entire new vistas of understanding opened up to me, ones that simply reading and researching online couldn't.

And so, a few days after meeting them, I gave shahadah. I originally thought it would only be before two people, but others heard, total strangers, and all came into the Yahoo! chat we were in to hear it, to witness it for me.

So now I am a muslim, and my life has changed in many ways. But now I feel like a little kid, it feels like a year's worth of research really didn't "mean" anything, because I now see how much I don't know. It's not that I learned the wrong things, it's that what I learned only scratched the tip of the iceberg. Islam is so full and rich, and is *not* always what we have been taught, especially when it comes to women's rights.

I went searching for the truth, and to paraphrase the popular saying, the truth has set me free.

I testify that there is no God worthy of worship but Allah, and I testify that Mohammed is the messenger of Allah.

May Allah remember the help his servants gave me so willingly and openly during this blessed month of Ramadan, and grant them their rewards in paradise. May Allah bless all his servants as they struggle to counter the biased and inaccurate words of others, both those who have submitted to the will of Allah and those who have not, and may Allah grant all wisdom and understanding to see the true path he has laid out for us through the words of the Prophets and the holy Qur'an. And may Allah guide me as I continue this journey. Assalamu alaikum.

Jamilla



What is Shirk?

Associating partners with Allah is called Shirk.

Shirk is not only the worship of idols, but also offering prayers or supplications to anyone, living or dead, believing that they hold the same attribute as Him.

The Qur'an considers Shirk as an unpardonable sin. It says:

"Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgives anything else to whom He pleases; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin most evil indeed." [An-Nisaa 4:48]

"What! Shall I seek for you as god other than Allah, while He has given you superiority over all creations." [Al-An'am 7:14]

The Holy Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, is reported to have said:

"Shirk is the greatest of all sins."

Aishah bint Abu Bakr (RA) *(cont. from page 1)*

Muslim history as they have been for over a thousand years.

The bulk of her vast treasure of knowledge was obtained while she was still quite young. In her early childhood she was brought up by her father who was greatly liked and respected for he was a man of wide knowledge, gentle manners and an agreeable presence. Moreover he was the closest friend of the noble Prophet who was a frequent visitor to their home since the very early days of his mission.

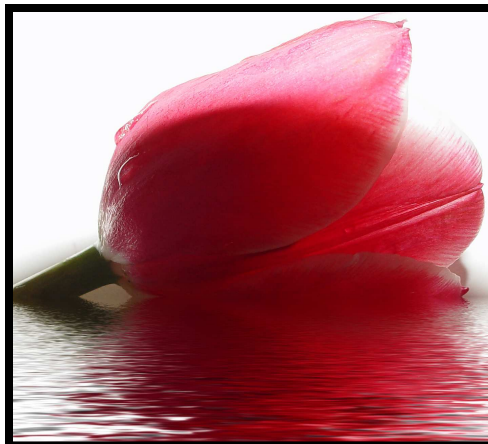
In her youth, already known for her striking beauty and her formidable memory, she came under the loving care and attention of the Prophet himself. As his wife and close companion she acquired from him knowledge and insight such as no woman has ever acquired.

Aishah became the Prophet's wife in Makkah when she was most likely in the tenth year of her life but her wedding did not take place until the second year after the Hijrah when she was about fourteen or fifteen years old. Before and after her wedding she maintained a natural jollity and innocence and did not seem at all overawed by the thought of being wedded to him who was the Messenger of God whom all his companions, including her own mother and father, treated with such love and reverence as they gave to no one else.

About her wedding, she related that shortly before she was to leave her parent's house, she slipped out into the courtyard to play with a passing friend: "I was playing on a see-saw and my long streaming hair was di-

shevelled," she said. "They came and took me from my play and made me ready."

They dressed her in a wedding-dress made from fine red-striped cloth from Bahrain and then her mother took her to the newly-built house where some women of the Ansar were waiting outside the door. They greeted her with the words "For good and for happiness may all be well!" Then, in the presence of the smiling Prophet, a bowl of milk was brought. The Prophet drank from it



himself and offered it to Aishah. She shyly declined it but when he insisted she did so and then offered the bowl to her sister Asma who was sitting beside her. Others also drank of it and that was as much as there was of the simple and solemn occasion of their wedding. There was no wedding feast.

Marriage to the Prophet did not change her playful ways. Her young friends came regularly to visit her in her own apartment.

"I would be playing with my dolls," she said, "with the girls who were my

friends, and the Prophet would come in and they would slip out of the house and he would go out after them and bring them back, for he was pleased for my sake to have them there." Sometimes he would say "Stay where you are" before they had time to leave, and would also join in their games. Aishah said: "One day, the Prophet came in when I was playing with the dolls and he said: 'O Aishah, whatever game is this?' 'It is Solomon's horses,' I said and he laughed." Sometimes as he came in he would screen himself with his cloak so as not to disturb Aishah and her friends.

Aishah's early life in Madinah also had its more serious and anxious times. Once her father, and two companions who were staying with him, fell ill with a dangerous fever which was common in Madinah at certain seasons. One morning Aishah went to visit him and was dismayed to find the three men lying completely weak and exhausted. She asked her father how he was and he answered her in verse but she did not understand what he was saying. The two others also answered her with lines of poetry which seemed to her to be nothing but unintelligible babbling. She was deeply troubled and went home to the Prophet saying: "They are raving, out of their minds, through the heat of the fever." The Prophet asked what they had said and was somewhat reassured when she repeated almost word for word the lines they had uttered and which made sense although she did not fully understand them then. This was a demonstration of the great retentive power of her memory which as the years went by was to preserve so many of the priceless sayings of the

Aishah bint Abu Bakr (RA) (cont.)

Prophet.

Of the Prophet's wives in Madinah, it was clear that it was Aishah that he loved most. From time to time, one or the other of his companions would ask: "O Messenger of God, whom do you love most in the world?" He did not always give the same answer to this question for he felt great love for many for his daughters and their children, for Abu Bakr, for Ali, for Zayd and his son Usamah. But of his wives the only one he named in this connection was Aishah. She too loved him greatly in return and often would seek reassurance from him that he loved her. Once she asked him: "How is your love for me?"

"Like the rope's knot," he replied meaning that it was strong and secure. And time after time thereafter, she would ask him: "How is the knot?" and he would reply: "Ala haaliha in the same condition."

As she loved the Prophet so was her love a jealous love and she could not bear the thought that the Prophet's attentions should be given to others more than seemed enough to her. She asked him: "O Messenger of God, tell me of yourself. If you were between the two slopes of a valley, one of which had not been grazed whereas the other had been grazed, on which would you pasture your flocks?"

"On that which had not been grazed," replied the Prophet. "Even so," she said, "and I am not as any other of your wives. Every one of them had a husband before you, except me." The Prophet smiled and said nothing. Of her jealousy, Aishah would say in later years: "I was not, jealous of any other

wife of the Prophet as I was jealous of Khadijah, because of his constant mentioning of her and because God had commanded him to give her good tidings of a mansion in Paradise of precious stones. And whenever he sacrificed a sheep he would send a fair portion of it to those who had been her intimate friends. Many a time I said to him: "It is as if there had never been any other woman in the world except Khadijah."

Once, when Aishah complained and asked why he spoke so highly of "an old Quraysh woman", the Prophet was hurt and said: "She was the wife who be-



lieved in me when others rejected me. When people gave me the lie, she affirmed my truthfulness. When I stood forsaken, she spent her wealth to lighten the burden of my sorrow."

Despite her feelings of jealousy which nonetheless were not of a destructive kind, Aishah was really a generous soul and a patient one. She bore with the rest of the Prophet's household poverty and hunger which often lasted for long periods. For days on end no fire would be lit in the sparsely furnished house of the Prophet for cooking or baking bread and they would live merely on dates and water. Poverty did not cause her distress or humiliation; self-sufficiency when it did come did not corrupt her

style of life.

Once the Prophet stayed away from his wives for a month because they had distressed him by asking of him that which he did not have. This was after the Khaybar expedition when an increase of riches whetted the appetite for presents. Returning from his self-imposed retreat, he went first to Aishah's apartment. She was delighted to see him but he said he had received Revelation which required him to put two options before her. He then recited the verses: "O Prophet! Say to your wives: If you desire the life of this world and its adornments, then come and I will bestow its goods upon you, and I will release you with a fair release. But if you desire God and His Messenger and the abode of the Hereafter, then verily God has laid in store for you an immense reward for such as you who do good."

Aishah's reply was: "Indeed I desire God and His Messenger and the abode of the Hereafter," and her response was followed by all the others. She stuck to her choice both during the lifetime of the Prophet and afterwards. Later when the Muslims were favored with enormous riches, she was given a gift of one hundred thousand dirhams. She was fasting when she received the money and she distributed the entire amount to the poor and the needy even though she had no provisions in her house.

Shortly after, a maidservant said to her: "Could you buy meat for a dirham with which to break your fast?"

"If I had remembered, I would have done so," she said. The Prophet's affection for Aishah remained to the

Aishah bint Abu Bakr (RA) (cont.)

last. During his final illness, it was to Aishah's apartment that he went at the suggestion of his wives. For much of the time he lay there on a couch with his head resting on her breast or on her lap. She it was who took a toothstick from her brother, chewed upon it to soften it and gave it to the Prophet. Despite his weakness, he rubbed his teeth with it vigorously. Not long afterwards, he lost consciousness and Aishah thought it was the onset of death, but after an hour he opened his eyes.

Aishah it is who has preserved for us these dying moments of the most honoured of God's creation, His beloved Messenger may He shower His choicest blessings on him.

When he opened his eyes again, Aishah remembered Iris having said to her: "No Prophet is taken by death until he has been shown his place in Paradise and then offered the choice, to live or die."

"He will not now choose us," she said to herself. Then she heard him murmur: "With the supreme communion in Paradise, with those upon whom God has showered His favor, the Prophets, the martyrs and the righteous..." Again she heard him murmur: "O Lord, with the supreme communion," and these were the last words she heard him speak. Gradually his head grew heavier upon her breast, until others in the room began to lament, and Aishah laid his head on a pillow and joined them in lamentation.

In the floor of Aishah's room near the couch where he was lying, a grave was dug in which was buried the Seal of the Prophets amid much bewilder-

ment and great sorrow.

Aishah lived on almost fifty years after the passing away of the Prophet. She had been his wife for a decade. Much of this time was spent in learning and acquiring knowledge of the two most important sources of God's guidance, the Quran and the Sunnah of His Prophet. Aishah was one of three wives (the other two being Hafsa and Umm Salamah) who memorized the Revelation. Like Hafsa, she had her own script of the Quran written after the Prophet had died.



So far as the Ahadith or sayings of the Prophet is concerned, Aishah is one of four persons (the others being Abu Hurayrah, Abdullah ibn Umar, and Anas ibn Malik) who transmitted more than two thousand sayings. Many of these pertain to some of the most intimate aspects of personal behavior which only someone in Aishah's position could have learnt. What is most important is that her knowledge of hadith was passed on in written form by at least three persons including her nephew Urwah who became one of the greatest scholars among the generation after the Companions.

Many of the learned companions of the Prophet and their followers benefitted from Aishah's knowledge. Abu Musa al-Ashari once said: "If we companions of the Messenger of God had any difficulty on a matter, we asked Aishah about it."

Her nephew Urwah asserts that she was proficient not only in fiqh but also in medicine (tibb) and poetry. Many of the senior companions of the Prophet came to her to ask for advice concerning questions of inheritance which required a highly skilled mathematical mind. Scholars regard her as one of the earliest fuqaha of Islam along with persons like Umar ibn al-Khattab, Ali and Abdullah ibn Abbas. The Prophet referring to her extensive knowledge of Islam is reported to have said: "Learn a portion of your religion (din) from this red colored lady." "Humayra" meaning "Red-coloured" was an epithet given to Aishah by the Prophet.

Aishah not only possessed great knowledge but took an active part in education and social reform. As a teacher she had a clear and persuasive manner of speech and her power of oratory has been described in superlative terms by al-Ahnaf who said: "I have heard speeches of Abu Bakr and Umar, Uthman and Ali and the Khulafa up to this day, but I have not heard speech more persuasive and more beautiful from the mouth of any person than from the mouth of Aishah."

Men and women came from far and wide to benefit from her knowledge. The number of women is said to have been greater than that of men. Be-

Aishah bint Abu Bakr (RA) (cont.)

sides answering enquiries, she took boys and girls, some of them orphans, into her custody and trained them under her care and guidance. This was in addition to her relatives who received instruction from her. Her house thus became a school and an academy.

Some of her students were outstanding. We have already mentioned her nephew Urwah as a distinguished reporter of hadith. Among her women pupils is the name of Umrah bint Abdur Rahman. She is regarded by scholars as one of the trustworthy narrators of hadith and is said to have acted as Aishah's secretary receiving and replying to letters addressed to her. The example of Aishah in promoting education and in particular the

education of Muslim women in the laws and teachings of Islam is one which needs to be followed.

After Khadijah al-Kubra (the Great) and Fatimah az-Zahra (the Resplendent), Aishah as-Siddiqah (the one who affirms the Truth) is regarded as the best woman in Islam.

Because of the strength of her personality, she was a leader in every field in knowledge, in society, in politics and in war. She often regretted her involvement in war but lived long enough to regain position as the most respected woman of her time. She died in the year 58 AH in the month of Ramadan and as she instructed, was buried in the Jannat al-Baqi in the City of Light, beside other companions of

the Prophet.

From the book *Stories of the Prophets*
Written by Al-Imam Ibn Khathir, 701-774 AH (1301-1372 C.E)

Translated by Sheikh Muhammad Mustapha Geme'ah, Al-Azhar

*If thou ask them,
who it is that created the heavens
and the earth,
They will certainly say,
"Allah". Say:
"Praise be to Allah!"
But most of them
understand not.*

(The Holy Quran, Luqman, 31:25)

Verses Emphasizing the Importance of Shahadah

Shahadah is the declaration that there is no god but Allah and Prophet Muhammad, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, is the Messenger of Allah.

-Allah- - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills. His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Most Great. (Al Baqarah- 2/255)

-Allah- - there is no deity except Him. To Him belong the best names. (Taha - 20/8)

That is -Allah-, your Lord; there is no deity except Him, the Creator of all things, so worship Him. And He is Disposer of all things. (Al An'am- 6/102)

And do not invoke with -Allah- another deity. There is no deity except Him. Everything will be destroyed except His Face. His is the judgement, and to Him you will be returned. (Al Qasas- 28/88)

Say, "He is -Allah-, [who is] One (Al Ikhlas- 112/1)

They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides -Allah-, and [also] the Messiah, the son of Mary.

And they were not commanded except to worship one God; there is no deity except Him. Exalted is He above whatever they associate with Him. (At Taubah - 9/31)

Also its reported in Sahih Muslim (Kitab Al-Iman -37) that Prophet Muhammad, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa salam said;

He who accepts Islam at the deathbed, before the actual agony of death, is a Muslim. It is forbidden to supplicate blessings for the polytheists. He who dies as a polytheist is one among the denizens of Hell and no means would be effective enough to take him out of that. (Sahih Muslim- 1/37)

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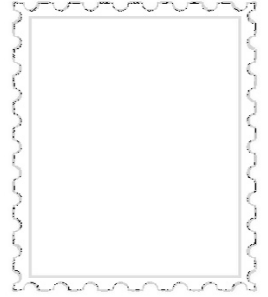
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Say: He Is Allah, The One And Only. Allah, The Eternal, Absolute. He Begetteth Not, Nor Is He Begotten. And There Is None Like Unto Him. [Holy Qu'ran, Surat 112]



To:



Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god;- Who knows (all things) both secret and open; He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god;- the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme: Glory to Allah! (High is He)

above the partners they attribute to Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms (or Colours). To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names: whatever is in the heavens and on earth, doth declare His Praises and Glory: and He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise. (The Holy Quran, Al-Hashr, 59:22-24)