

ROLE MODELS IN ISLAM (PART 2 OF 2)

Rating:

Description: A brief description of the life and character of two well-known wives of Prophet Muhammad and a few words about the power role models have to influence others.

Category: [Lessons](#) › [Increasing faith](#) › [Means to increasing faith](#)

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Objective:

- To understand how influential adults can be and why the behavior of role models should demonstrate Islamic morals and manners.

Arabic terms:

- Sahabah* - the plural form of "Sahabi," which translates to Companions. A *sahabi*, as the word is commonly used today, is someone who saw Prophet Muhammad, believed in him and died as a Muslim.
- Hadith* - is a piece of information or a story. In Islam it is a narrative record of the sayings or actions of Prophet Muhammad and his companions
- Al-Fatihah* – the opening chapter of the Quran. Literally - the opening.

Because human beings learn so much through imitating the behaviour of others it is important that they choose or are given access to good role models. In a world that more often than not derides Islamic morals and manners it is essential that Muslims have people to look up to, admire and emulate. There are no better people than members of the *sahabah*, those men, women and children that were close to Prophet Muhammad and were taught Islam as it was revealed. In the previous lesson we looked briefly at two male *sahabi* and now we will look at two of Prophet Muhammad's most influential wives.

Khadijah, the daughter of Khuwaylid

Khadijah was the first, and for 25 years, the only wife of Prophet Muhammad. She was 40 years old and twice widowed when she married Muhammed, then aged 25, who had not at that stage been granted prophethood. Khadijah was an accomplished businesswoman, wealthy in her own right with a reputation of dealing with the disabled, orphans, widows and the poor with kindness and compassion; she was known as "At-Tahira", the pure one. Khadijah loved and supported Prophet Muhammad through the

first difficult years of Islam. She did so in the spirit of partnership and companionship that is inherent in a truly Islamic marriage.

Khadijah was the first person to accept the message of Islam and she stood by her husband as family and friends turned against him, and plotted to kill him. Khadijah supported the rise of Islam with her wealth and health. She provided food, water and medicines for the banished and boycotted community. Even though she was not accustomed to deprivation, Khadijah never complained about the poor conditions she was forced to endure. After Khadijah passed away (three years before the migration of Muslims from Makkah to Madina), Prophet Muhammad remarked that she had been a loving mother, a loyal and sympathetic wife who shared all his deepest secrets and dreams.

Aisha the daughter of Abu Bakr

Aisha was the daughter of Abu Bakr, one of the Prophet Muhammad's closest companions. During her marriage to the Prophet Muhammad, the couple developed a close relationship and it was in Aisha's arms that the Prophet Muhammad died in 632 CE. Regarded by many as his favourite wife, she was an active figure in numerous events and an important witness to many more.

Aisha was generous and patient. She bore without complain the poverty and hunger that was common in the early days of Islam. 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. The poverty did not distress or humiliate Aisha and the self-sufficiency when it did arrive did not corrupt her gentle ways.

Aisha was also well known for her wisdom and curiosity. She would always ask questions and clarify even the smallest points; this made her a priceless resource. More than 2,000 *hadith* narrations can be traced back to her. Due to her vast knowledge, she was often consulted before rulings were made or decisions taken. She lived long after the death of the Prophet and she was able to teach the Muslims their religion for many years before her death.

As we discussed in lesson 1, people, particularly children learn by copying the behaviour of the important or famous people in their lives. Try to remember the last time you listened to children playing; many of them desire to be the latest sports star or music sensation. Sadly in some cases by the time they reach adulthood these children can tell you everything about media stars but not a single fact about the companions of Prophet Muhammad. They can quote sporting statistics perfectly but stumble through the recitation of *Al-Fatihah*. On the Day of Resurrection, these entertainment idols will ignore and disown all those who took them as role models. Interestingly, at the conclusion of a Reebok ad the basketball idol walks to the camera and says, "Just because I dunk a ball doesn't mean I have to raise your kids." Even the stars themselves realise that they do not always display behaviour that others should aspire to or emulate.

Role models not only demonstrate the best behaviour, they also demonstrate how to learn from mistakes and failures. The *sahabah* in particular often found themselves in difficult situations and on steep learning curves. In many cases it was Prophet Muhammad himself who corrected their behaviour, and he did it in a way that did not humiliate or upset the offender. Good role models, such as the *sahabah* teach by their behaviour; they teach those who look up to them to live in a way that is pleasing to Allah. From them we learn that human beings are not perfect but they can seek to please Allah in everything they do and in every reaction to outside influences.

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