

وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ
N.D

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MARRIAGES
OF
PROPHET MUḤAMMAD (S.A.W.)

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NOTE

This booklet is the translation of one of the publications in Persian from the Institute "*Dar Râhe Haq*" of Qum, Iran. This Institute is one of the most active and energetic Islâmic Centre in Iran.

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*In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent,
the Merciful*

INTRODUCTION

In the early part of eighteenth century, the Christian writers started with new tactics of attacking Islām. They aimed, through publications full of lies and slanders, at diverting attention from the noble framework of Islām and degrading the exalted person of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (May peace be on him and his progeny).

The basis of that adverse propaganda were the books written by Christian writers of the fifteenth century. A writer had written a book under the title 'Refutation to the Religion of Muḥammad'.

which became the source of later writers against Islām. These writers were unacquainted with the real facts about Islām, due to their ignorance of the Arabic language in which Islamic history and holy books were then available.

It is not strange, therefore, to see them writing against the Prophet of Islām, accusing him of lust because he had married a number of wives, whilst other Muslims were restricted to a maximum of four at a time. (They perhaps forgot that the writers of the present Bible have openly accused their own Prophets of having committed adultery!)

Of course, by misinforming their Christian brothers, and slandering the Prophet of Islām, they hoped to cause a set-back in the fast progress of Islām. But these tactics did not succeed much. We find a number of learned and fair-minded Christian writers defending the Holy Prophet against such slanders, in apologetic language.

Undoubtedly these stories of slanders are totally unacceptable to the Muslims, since part of their faith is to believe in the infallibility (*'Ismat* or Sinlessness) of the Prophets.

But at the same time it is imperative to acquaint the non-Muslims with the true facts.

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VERDICT OF HISTORY

Unbiased historians, both Muslims and Christians, are agreed that the number of marriages contracted by the Prophet of Islām was not as a result of lust or to satisfy the sexual desires. If this had been the case, he would not have married the twice-widowed Khadijah, 40 years old, at the youthful age of 25 when one is full of emotion and sexual urge.

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) lived together with his first (and, at that time, only) wife, Khadijah, happily for 26 years with great mutual affection, despite the fact that young and beautiful girls of Arabia were easily available to him and were keen to be married to the Prophet. Not even

once, during that period, did the Prophet take another wife. Undoubtedly he would have at least considered another younger wife simultaneously with Khadijah if he ever suffered from lust and fondness of young women, particularly when the country's customs wholly approved unlimited marriages.

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CRITICS DUMBFUNDED

Let us look at the life history of the Prophet of Islām. During the prime of his life, he remains satisfied with an aged and twice-widowed wife, and does not even think of another. Then during the last ten years of his life, after passing the age of fifty, in his old age, when he is surrounded by various difficult problems of the newly-borne Islamic State, he starts marrying a number of wives.

Ask these Christian writers why this phenomenon?

What logical answer can these critics give to this amazing question?

Was it not a difficult exercise and heavy burden to marry widows and support their orphans? Was it easy for a perfectly dignified man in the person of Muḥammad (s.a.w.) to marry women of different outlook, characters and tribes, including some of much younger age who were still unaware of the full responsibilities of life?

Let us ponder over the reply to these questions as given by a famous western historian, Thomas Carlyle in his book "Heroes and Heroes' Worship". He says in effect that contrary to what his enemies accuse him, Muḥammad was never lusty and sexualist and that it was a slander only out of prejudice against him and this indeed is a great injustice.

John Devenport says, "and it may then be asked, is it likely that a very sensual man, of a country where polygamy was a common practice, should be contented for five-and-twenty years with one wife, she being fifteen years older than himself".

LIST OF WIVES OF THE PROPHET OF ISLĀM

After the death of his first wife, Khadijah,
he married upto twelve wives in this order:-

- (1) Sawdah
- (2) 'Ā'ishah
- (3) Umm-Salamah
- (4) Hafṣah
- (5) Zaynab bint-Khuzaymah
- (6) Zaynab bint-Jaḥsh
- (7) Umm-Ḥabibah (*Ramla*)
- (8) Maymūnah
- (9) Zaynab bint-'Umais
- (10) Juwayriyah

(11) Şafiyah

(12) Khawlah bint-Ḥakīm

Let us examine the circumstances and conditions under which these marriages had taken place.

In principle, it can be stated that the marriages were contracted with one or more of the following objectives:-

(1) For the sake of caring for the orphans and looking after the poor widows. These were some Muslim women who had earlier enjoyed high dignity in the Arab society. But on the death of their husbands, their status and even faith were in jeopardy, because their tribal chiefs would take them back and compel them to renounce Islām, thus converting them back to polytheism.

For example, Sawdah had migrated to Abyssinia where her husband died, and she became

absolutely without helper. It was the time when the Prophet had lost Khadijah, his first wife; so he married Sawdah.

Likewise, Zaynab daughter of Khuzaymah, was an old-aged widow, who after the death of her husband was inflicted with poverty, despite her being amiable and being known as '*Ummul-Masâ-kîn*' (Mother of the poor). The Prophet married her to uphold her dignity and she died of old age only after two years of that marriage.

(2) For the sake of enacting a new law and eradicating injustice by the ignorant tribes. For example, Zaynab bint-Jahsh was the daughter of the Prophet's aunt. She was married, at the recommendation of the Prophet, to Zayd ibn-Hârithah, the freed slave and adopted son of the Prophet. This marriage was contracted to eradicate the discrimination against slaves and poor and to emphasize the Islâmic equality and brotherhood, as Zaynab was from the family of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the grandfather of the Holy Prophet and the Chief

of Quraysh, whereas Zayd was a slave who was freed by the Prophet.

Unfortunately, Zaynab due to her family pride, did not get along well with Zayd despite Prophet's persuasions. The rift between the two culminated into divorce. Meanwhile, the system of adoption of children was expressly forbidden by Allāh. So, when Zayd divorced Zaynab, the Prophet of Islām, at the express command of God, married Zaynab; and, thus, put an end to the then prevalent belief that adopted sons were like real sons and that wives or widows of adopted sons were like daughters-in-laws.

(3) For the sake of freeing prisoners and slaves. For example, 'Juwayriyah' was from a prominent tribe of *Banul-Mustalaq*. In a war against Islām this tribe was defeated; and Juwayriyah, the daughter of their Chief, was held in captivity. The Prophet married her to set an example of protection and good treatment to prisoners of war.

On seeing that the prisoners had become relatives of the Holy Prophet by marriage, the Muslims released all the prisoners of war held by them. According to Ibne Hishām, over one hundred families of *Banul-Mustalaq* were freed from captivity as a result of this marriage.

(4) For the sake of uniting some prominent Arab tribes who often were at logger heads with each other and to safeguard the internal political status of Islām.

The Prophet married ‘Ā’ishah daughter of Abū Bakr from the tribe of *Bani Tīm*, Hafṣah daughter of ‘Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb from the tribe of *Adī*, Umm-Ḥabībah daughter of Abū Sufyān from the tribe of *Umayyah*, Ṣafīyah daughter of Huaiy bin Akhtab of the Jewish tribe of *Bani an-Naḍīr*, and Maymūnah from the tribe of *Bani Makhzūm*.

Umm-Ḥabībah (i.e. Ramla) was daughter of

Abū Sufyān of *Banī Umayyah* who was the bitterest enemy of the Prophet and had repeatedly fought against him. She, as a Muslim, was in great distress since she was divorced from her original husband (who had become a Christian in Abyssinia) and her father was a great enemy of Islām.

Seeing her deprived of every help from parent and divorced from husband, the Prophet married her in sympathy. This marriage also gave a chance to the people of *Banī Umayyah* to soften their hearts for Islām.

Şafiyah was widowed daughter of Huaiy bin Akhtab, one of the chiefs of Jewish tribe of *Banī an-Nadīr*. When the prisoners of this tribe were released by the Muslims, the Prophet married her in order to safeguard her status; and, thus, also linking himself with one of the great Jewish tribes of that time, and paving the way for them to come nearer to Islām.

Maymūnah was 51 years of age and from a

prominent tribe of *Banī Makhzūm* whom the Prophet married in the year 7 after *Hijrah*.

The above marital history of the Prophet clearly shows the noble aim and objectives for which he married a number of wives. It is not difficult to see that none of these marriages was for personal satisfaction of sexual desires as unjustifiably accused by the Christian writers. Also, it is important to remember that all of these marriages, except that with 'Ā'ishah, were contracted with women who were widowed not only once, but often twice or thrice.

THE END