

## Introduction

The greatest personality of mankind, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) had eleven wives. No act of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) is devoid of logic and wisdom and it will be disbelief (kufr) to question it. However, living in the West and being bombarded with the way of the Western life through the form of the media, Muslims as well as non-Muslims question the multiple marriages of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). It will be made clear by reading this book the background of the Arab Society at the time, hence the reason why the people, fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters gave their daughters and sisters for marriage.

While disapproving the tradition of polygamy in Islam, the European writers have criticized the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) for marrying several times. He married eleven times and had nine wives living at one time. However, after the Qur'anic injunction limiting the number of wives to four was revealed the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) did not marry. The Qur'an has permitted a Muslim to marry four wives only under special circumstances and has tied down this permission with very strict conditions e.g. equal treatment of all the wives; failing which, he is directed to content himself with only one wife. The Qur'an states:

*“And if you fear that you will not be able to do justice to the orphan girls marry such women who are agreeable to you, two or three or four; but if you fear that you cannot do justice (to so many) then marry only one...”<sup>i</sup>*

This has been a favourite theme for Western scholars in biographies of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Norman Daniel in *Islam and the West – The Making of an Image*, gives a detailed account of some of the medieval charges of Muhammad's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) sexuality and how these have come to survive the ages even into the period of so called enlightened scholarship or objective research.<sup>ii</sup>

Margoliouth, starts on a comparatively sympathetic note, disputing the usual charge by European scholars as to the motives for the Messenger of Allah's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) multiple marriages. He rejects the charge of blind passion, arguing that they were '*...mainly dictated by motives of a less coarse kind*'. He mentions three basic reasons: political alliance, cementing of relationships and the strong desire for a son.<sup>iii</sup>

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) married his first wife Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) when he was 25 years old and she was a twice widowed elderly lady aged 40 years. He led a monogamous<sup>1</sup> life with this lady for 25 years. When she died at the age of 65 he was in his 50<sup>th</sup> year.

### **In defence of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)**

The famous writer Thomas Carlyle says about the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) that: *“Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was not a sensual man. We shall make a mistake widely if we consider this man as a common voluntary intent mainly on base enjoyments, nay, on enjoyments of any kind.”<sup>iv</sup>*

Sir E. Dennison Ross, in his introduction to George Sale's Translation of the Qur'an observes: *“For many centuries the acquaintance which the majority of Europeans possessed of Muhammadanism (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was based almost entirely on distorted reports of fanatical Christians which led to the discrimination of a multitude of gross calumnies. What was good in Muhammadanism (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was entirely ignored and what was no good in the eyes of Europe was exaggerated or misinterpreted.”<sup>v</sup>*

The fact is that European writers are simply amazed at the grand success of the Messenger of Allah's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) mission and his glorious emergence as a leader of the nations of the world. No reformer, no king, no warrior has ever been able to influence mankind as did the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) of Islam. In just 23 years of his Prophethood, he transformed the uncivilized and savage Arabs into the best organised and disciplined nation.

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<sup>1</sup> Only married to one partner.

### **Offers rejected**

The non-Believers of Makkah in order to wean away the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) were prepared to pay any amount of wealth and offer any number of beautiful women to him, provided he gave up his mission, but he had flatly refused. If the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) had been after money and women, he could have got them and saved himself from the hatred of the Mekkans and led a comfortable and peaceful life. In fact this was far from his nature and mission and while marrying Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) there was no consideration of money or sex.

### **Mothers' of the believers**

Due to the marriages to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) the wives of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) have been given a high status and due to this the Qur'an has many verses that state 'May Allah be pleased with her', 'them' and their greatness. The wives of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) are all 'Mothers' of the believers'; hence, it is obligatory for all to respect them as mothers. The Qur'an states:

*'And his wives are their mothers.'*<sup>vi</sup>

*'O wives of the Prophet! You are not like other women if you fear Allah.'*<sup>vii</sup>

The absolute number and sequence of the 'Mothers of the believers' marriage are certainly points of differentiation between scholars. However, 11 wives are agreed upon to have been the blessed wives of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). From these, Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) and Zainab bint Khuzaimah (may Allah be pleased with her) passed away before him and at the time of demise, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) had 9 wives.

It is not natural for us to take the view that after passing the age of fifty a sudden change took place in the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) which did not allow him to be content with one wife but rather to continue to marry until he had taken eleven wives. At such an age can these marriages be attributable to a desire for women or to motives linked to satisfying the reproduction instinct in terms of sexual intercourse? Or were there other motives, which were required by the reality of the type of life which the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was engaged in, i.e. the life of the Message, which he had been ordered to convey to the people? In order to understand this issue, let us examine the incidents surrounding the Messenger of Allah's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) marriages.

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<sup>i</sup> Surah Nisa: Surah No: 4; Verse: 3.

<sup>ii</sup> Image of the Messenger of Allah Muhammad (ay Allah bless him and grant him peace) in the West. A Study of Muir, Margoliouth and Watt. P 81.

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iv</sup> Carlyle's Works, Vol. VI

<sup>v</sup> The Family of the Holy Messenger of Allah, (Peace be upon him). Pg. 59.

<sup>vi</sup> Surah Ahzab. Surah no: 33. Verse No: 6

<sup>vii</sup> Surah Ahzab. Surah no: 33. Verse No: 32