

Justification of the marriages of the Beloved Holy prophet ﷺ

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Abstract

In European countries, it has become fashion to criticise the Muslim legacy to prove their superiority over the Muslims and Islamic system. No doubt, this practice is very old, but the mode of criticism remains the same even in the present centuries.

In the recent decades, this unhealthy tradition carried out by the non Muslims to ridicule the Islamic System, revolve around three major issues i.e. the battles of the Prophet Saw, exile of the Jews from Madina, the marriages of the Prophet SAW and age of the Sayyida `Aisha R.A at the time of her marriage.

This article is a humble attempt to find out the real wisdom behind the marriages of the Prophet SAW. This inquiry reveals that the arrangement of the marriages were not due to matrimonial reasons rather it was an attempt by the head of state, to provide shelter to those who really were facing difficulties to settle down their lives due to certain reasons.

This judgement is proved through two facts:

1-Among all the wives only one (Sayyida `Aisha) was virgin while all others were widows except Hazrat Zaynab who was divorced;

2- Most of the marriages took place between the age of 55-59, while the Prophet SAW was growing older and normal life was under different types of stresses.

Hence, the view has been documented through the Islamic as well as Orientalists's sources.

Moreover, an attempt has been made to find out the fact about the real age of Sayyida `Aisha R.A at the time of her marriage. The issue has been discussed in details to examine the academic position of conventional belief on this subject. The author, however, is reluctant to accept the generally accepted view about the age, for which, the reasons of disagreement have been recorded in this article.

We need to examine the causes of disagreement of the non Muslims over the marriages of Prophet ﷺ to eradicate their level of fallacy about the prophet of Islam.

Before we examine the issue in detail, there is a need to consider the following basic facts:

- At the time of first marriage the Beloved Holy Prophet ﷺ was 25.
- He accepted the proposal of a highly respected woman Sayyida Khadija (R.A) who had already been married twice and was widow at the time of her third marriage (to the Beloved Holy prophet ﷺ).
- She was 15 years older than the Beloved Holy Prophet ﷺ.
- After the death of first wife, the next woman who came in the household was also widow of 55 years. (1)
- Among all his wives only one (Sayyida `Aisha) was virgin while all others were widows except Hazrat Zaynab who was divorced
- Most of the marriages took place between the age of 55-59, while he was growing older and normal life was under stress. (2)
- This period started with the battle of Uhud and continued up to the peace pact of Hudabiyah followed by the conquest of Khyber.
- Generally Muslim community was permitted to keep four wives at a time, but the Beloved Holy prophet ﷺ was exempted from this restriction and he married eleven wives.
- These important points will help the reader to understand the real wisdom behind these marriages.

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General command about the permissible number of marriages for a common Muslim refers in the verse 4:3 of the Holy Quran, which states “If you fear that you will not deal fairly with orphan girls, you may marry whichever (other) women seem good to you, two, three or four. If you fear that you cannot be equitable (to them), then marry only one, or your slaves: that is more likely to make you avoid bias” (3). But the command laid down in Surah Al-Ahzab verse 33 gives the special permission to the Prophet ﷺ regarding the number of wives. The Holy Quran says ; “O Prophet ! We have made lawful for you the wives whose bride gift you have paid, and any slaves, God has assigned to you through war, and daughters of your uncle and aunts on your father`s and mother`s sides, who migrated with you. Also any believing woman who has offered herself to the prophet and whom the prophet wishes to wed; this (permission) is only for you (Beloved Prophet) and not the rest of the believers: We know exactly what We have made obligatory for them concerning their wives and slave girls-so you should not be blamed; God is most forgiving most merciful” (4)

This is the command which, according to most of the theologian, revealed at the time of granting special permission of the marriages to the prophet ﷺ. However, the Beloved Holy prophet ﷺ exercised this permission, mostly, for providing shelter to the widows whom husbands had been martyred in the way of

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Allah at different occasions. This was also done to establish the sound ties with different tribes for the promotion of Islamic Cause.

It is obvious that after the death of Syyidah Khadija (R.A), nobody was there to look after the household of the Beloved Prophet. The Prophet ﷺ was in need of someone who could take the charge of his house and look after his daughters. This was the genuine reason for a new marriage. If the Prophet ﷺ had been inclined towards new marriage due to sensual reasons this was the best time to marry a young girl. But he selected a widow (Saiyidah Sawdah) of fifty-five years whose husband had recently died. Hazrat Sowda and her husband Hazrat Sakran both were the early Muslims who had suffered a lot of difficulties in the way of God and had to migrate to Abyssinia for the sake of Islam(5). The Beloved Holy Prophet ﷺ acknowledged their services for Islam and provided the shelter and honour to a widow of his devotee and raised her status (as the mother of all the believers) through this relationship.

Karen Armstrong acknowledges this fact and writes, “We should simply notice two things: First neither Sowdah nor `Aisha were chosen for their sexual charms .The marriage with Sowdah was an arrangement to take care of the household of the Beloved Prophet and she also gained the status of wife of the Prophet. Second, both marriages had a political dimension. It was also important to establish a closer tie with Abu Bakr: Muhammad was going to form an alternative kind of clan, which was not based on kinship but on ideology, yet the blood-tie was still felt to be very important”(6). There were similar situations for other marriages which will be discussed later.

However, William Muir has reviewed the situation in a very atrocious manner showing his grievances against the religion and Prophet of Islam, even though the historical facts, social atmosphere and the difficulties of the women who came in the household were not hidden from a person like him. But, he ignored every fact and used a style which never suites a person who have studied the basic sources of history of Islam in detail.

He has concluded these marriages as an attempt to satisfy the urge of sensual sensation. He says that “Shortly after the death of Khadija, he married again; but it was not till the mature age of fifty-four that he made the dangerous trial of polygamy, by taking 'A'isha, yet a child, as the rival of Sowdah. Once the natural limits of restraint were over passed, Mohammad fell a prey to his strong passion for the sex. In his fifty-sixth year he married Hafsa; and the following year, in two succeeding months, Zeinab bint Khozayma and Um Salma. But his desires were not to be satisfied by the range of a ḥarīm already in advance of Arab custom, and more numerous than was permitted to any of his followers; rather, as age advanced they were stimulated to seek for new and varied indulgence. A few months after his nuptials with Zeinab and Um Selama, the charms of a second Zeinab were by accident discovered too fully before his admiring gaze. She was the wife of Zeid, his

adopted son and bosom friend; but he was unable to smother the flame she had kindled in his breast; and, by divine command, she was taken to his embrace . In the same year he wedded a seventh wife, and also a concubine. And at last, when he was full threescore years of age, no fewer than three new wives, besides Mary the Coptic slave, were within the space of seven months added to his already well-filled ḥarīm. The bare recital of these facts may justify the saying of Ibn Al-'Abbās: ' Verily the chief set among the Muslims (meaning Moḥammad) was the foremost of them in his passion for women; a fatal example imitated too'(7).

This should be analysed in an academic way to illuminate any misconceptions related to this matter. Following are the facts about the household of the Beloved Holy prophet ﷺ

1- Hazrat Sayyidah Khadija

Syyidah Khadija(R.A) is the first wife of the Beloved Holy prophet ﷺ, had already been married twice and was widow at the time of her third marriage (to the Beloved Holy prophet ﷺ). She was 15 years older than the Beloved Holy prophet ﷺ. She was forty at the time of her marriage and remained in the household up to the age of 65, when she died. Hazrat Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) came from a noble family. Her father Khuwaylid had been one of the most honoured leaders of their tribe until he was killed in a battle. The Beloved Holy prophet ﷺ preferred to have his first marriage with a fifteen years older widow shows how the Beloved Holy Prophet ﷺ had a value of nobility and character more than anything else. As she was already married twice before marrying Prophet Muhammad (SAW), her first husband was Abu Halah Al Tamemy . She had two sons Hind and Halah. After the death of Abu Hala, she then got married to `Ateeq bin `Aaith Almakzomy. She had one daughter from her second marriage whose name was Hind as well (8). After the marriage they happily lived together for twenty five years. Hazrat Khadijah (r.a) had six children from Beloved Holy Prophet ﷺ (9).

The Beloved Holy Prophet ﷺ did not marry anyone in her presence; up to the age of 65. This relationship was so cordial and successful that the prophet never forgot her throughout his life time. Karen Armstrong reviews this marriage a very successful one and tributes as, "Whenever Muhammad ﷺ was attacked by his enemies or shaken by the power of his mystical experience , he always went straight to his wife for comfort. Khadija, the first person to recognise her husband`s exceptional ability, strengthened him, lightened his burden and proclaimed his truth. The Prophet ﷺ did not marry another woman during his first marriage with Khadija, is a fact that should be noted by those who criticise him for his polygamy in later years. Prophet ﷺ used to infuriate the women he married later, by endlessly praising Khadija and on one occasion turned white with grief when he thought he

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had heard her voice. This shows his devotion and love for Khadija. ”(10). It all shows the kindness of the Prophet for his wives and his best attitude towards women.

2-Hazrat Sayyidah Sowda bint Zam`a ﷺ

The second wife, hazrat Sowda bint Zam`a (R.A) ,who was among the some earliest converts became widow in her late fifties and the Beloved Holy prophet ﷺ took her under his shelter. She was from the lineage of near relatives of Beloved Holy prophet ﷺ. Her mother was Shamoos bint Qayas whose father was (the maternal grandfather of Hazrat Sowda) was the brother of the grandmother of the Prophet (Hazrat Salma). Hazrat Sowda first got married to her cousin ,Hazrat Sakran bin `Amr, (the brother of Suhayl bin `Amr)who embraced Islam in the very early stage and migrated to Abyssinia. After some time they came back to Makkah, where Hazrat Sakran died (11). After the death of Hazrat Sakran , she came in the household of the Prophet ﷺ through the proposal of Hazrat Khawlah bint Hakeem. She lived with the prophet for about 13 years and died in 14th year of Hijra when she was 72 years old . At the time of marriage she was about 55 years old. The Beloved prophet (p.b.u.h) granted her full support, protection, respect and shelter, even when she was in her seventies. It all shows the caring attitude of the Beloved prophet (p.b.u.h)

3-Hazrat Sayyidah `Aisha Siddiqah ﷺ

The proposal for Sayyidah `Aisha also came from Khawlah Bint Hakeem, the wife of Hazrat `Uthman bin Maza`oon just after the death of Sayyidah Khadija. The Beloved Holy Prophet ﷺ agreed with Khawlah Bint Hakeem`s proposal and sent the message of marriage to Hazrat Abubakr (r.a). This message of marriage to Hazrat Sowda and Hazrat `Ayesha (r.a) was sent at the same time. The proposal was accepted and Nikah took place two years before migration .

Sayyida `Aisha`s mother was Omm i Rooman who was first married to `Abdullah Azdi and then she got married to Hazrat Abu Bakr where she gave birth to two children ,Hazrat `Aisha and Hazrat `Abdullah .

The age of Sayyidah `Aisha at the time of marriage is a question of great importance to be examined carefully. European and Non Muslim authors have raised concerns based on the Riwayat of the marriage which should be analysed academically. It is a popular belief that Hazrat `Aisha got married when she was six and moved to the prophet`s house when she was nine. However there is another view that she was 16 years old at the time of marriage and was 19 when actually moved to her husband`s house.

Those who differ with this widely accepted view do not accept the traditions of six and nine as very sound. They consider them somewhat weak Riwayat. The total Riwayat talking about the age of marriage are ten ; i.e. S.Bukhari 5, S.Muslim 4, and from AbuDawood 1. To analyse the authenticity of these Riwayat we see the fantastic analysis of `Alaama Qazi, Abdul Daim in his

work "Sayyidul Wara". He says, "apparently these are ten Riwayat, but in fact they are only three. The reason is that all five Riwayat narrated by Imam Bukhari; two (out of four) narrated by Imam Muslim; and one narrated by Imam Abu Dawood; have come through the chain ibn-i-Hisham. The chain indicates the link as: Saheeh Bukhari: Hisham from >Urwah and from >Syyidah `Aisha, Saheeh Muslim: one is from Imam Zuhri >Urwa and >Urwah from Sayyida `Aisha while the next Riwayat from Ibraheem>Aswad>syidah `Aisha.

In all these Riwayat the main narrator is Syyida `Aisha who speaks about her own marriage saying "The Prophet (p.b.u.h) married to her when she was 6 and consummated when she was nine and remained with him for further nine years".

Riwayat from Aisha > from `Urwah bin Zubayr >from Hisham (marriage at the age of 6, and consummated when she was 9).

`Allama Qazi `Abdul Daim has established the view that Hisham`s memory went very weak at his later stage and for this reason his Riwayat are not valid to be believed. The Riwayat of Muslim through Zuhri >Urwah and Syyida `Aisha is also weak as no link could be established between Imam Zuhri and `Urwah. The last Riwayat from Imam Muslim comes through Abu Mo`awiyah > `A`mash >Ibraheem>Aswad > Syyida `A`sha. Muhadditheen considered Abo Mo`awiyah and `A`mash as Shi`a and considered the Riwayat as unauthentic for this reason.

Another historical fact which Imam Ibni Kateer has revealed about Hazrat Asma bint Abi Bakr (The mother of `Abdullah bin Zubayr and the older sister of Syyida `aisha (r.a), in his work *`Albidayah Wa al Nihayah` that hazrat `Abdullah ibn Zubayr`s mother ,hazrat Asma bint Abi Bak (the older sister of Hazrat `Aisha) was 10 years older than Hazrat `Aisha . She died in 73 year of Hijra at the age of 100 .*

According to this statement , at the event of Emigration to Madina, Hazrat Asma was 27 . Being ten years younger to hazrat Asma , hazrat `Aisha must be seventeen which is most reasonable age of marriage .

Consequently, when she would have moved as wife in the month of Shawwal , in first year of Hijra , she must be more than eighteen (12).

The marriage with Hazrat Sayyidah `Aisha proved a great mark of special ties between Hazrat Abu Bakr and the Beloved Holy prophet ﷺ . When Hazrat Khawlah went to Hazrat Abu Bakr with this proposal , he replied that "I want to speak to Muti`m Bin `Adi as they already had requested for `Aisha" for their son Jubayr (13) . But later on, Muti`m`s family refused to mature this proposal and consequently Hazrat Khawla`s proposal was accepted .

Many scholars, including Europeans, believe that this marriage was based on the special purposes to be achieved later on . M. Watt says ,` "The last feature to be noted about Muhammad's marriages is that he used both his own and those of the closest Companions to further political ends. His first wives at Medina, 'A'ishah and Hafsah, were the daughters of the men on whom he leaned most, Abu Bakr and 'Umar"14.

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On the other hand, Karen Armstrong says, 'Neither Sawdah nor `Aisha were chosen for their sexual charms. Aisha was a little girl and Sawdah was going to be fat. These were for some arrangements as Sawdah could take care of the Prophets household and `Aisha`s marriage was to establish closer ties with Abu Bakr` (15). D.S. Margoliouth also reviews this marriage to bind the ties. He says, 'The Prophet being anxious to bind his chief followers more and more closely to himself. This was doubtless his object in marrying the daughters of Abu Bakr and U`mar, while political motives with the daughters of political opponents or fallen enemies`.(16)

Moreover, this marriage proved to be a great source of learning and preserving Islamic knowledge as afterwards, Hazrat `Aisha proved to be great teacher of Islamic sciences and Ummah took a immense benefit from her scholarship. Hazrat Aisha was the greatest scholar of Hadith Fiqh, Seerah and Tibb. She had narrated 2200 Ahadith from which 174 are agreed upon. A number of great Shaba and Tab`een had the privilege to learn Hadith and Fiqh from her. She died at the age of 74 on 17th of Ramzan 57^h year of Hijrah.

Hazrat Abu Hurarah led her funeral prayer and was buried in Baqee` (17). Hazrat `Aish was the only wife who was virgin at the time of her marriage to the Beloved Prophet ﷺ.

4-Hazrat Sayyidah Hafsa bint `Umar ﷺ

Hazrat Hafsa (r.a) was the daughter of Hazrat `Umar (r.a), the second Caliph. Her Mother was Zainab bint Maz`oon. She accepted Islam with her father at a very early age. First she married to Khunays bin Hazafa(r.a), who was one of the early converts to Islam (18).

Hazrat Khunays had two migrations in the way of Islam ,Abyssinia and then Madina. When the permission of migration to Madina was granted he was at Makkak. He followed the instructions of the Beloved Prophet and set out for Madina with Hazrat Hafsa ﷺ.

Hazrat Khunays Participated in Badr and Uhad. In the battle of Uhad he fought with great courage, patience and sincerity and received a serious wound. He was nursed and treated with full care but could not survive and died after the battle of Uhad (19). This was the third year of Hijrah. Hazrat Hafsa (r.a) was only twenty one years old when she became widow. She was quite young and Hazrat `Umar was rightly worried about her future.

Hazrat `Umar proposed Hazrat `Uthman (r.a) to marry Hafsa as his wife Sayyida Ruqayyah (r.a) had recently died. Hazrat `Umar was quite sure that the proposal would be accepted but Hazrat `Uthman refused to provide any support. Hazrat `Umar was shocked with the situation but he remained silent. Then he met Hazrat Abu Bakr (r.a) but he also refused to marry Hazrat Hafsah (r.a). Hazrat Abu Bakar knew that the Prophet Muhammad (saw) had already considered marrying Hafsah. Hazrat `Umar then went to beloved Prophet Muhammad (saw) and complained that `Uthman (r.a) and Abu Bakar (r.a) did not honour me to accept the proposal of Hafsa and refused to provide any support (20).

The Beloved Prophet (saw) told Hazrat `Umar (r.a) that `Hafsa will be married to someone who will be much better than `Uthman and Abu Bakr, and `Uthman will be married to who will be better than Hafsa. Then Sayyidah Hafsa got married to the Beloved Prophet (saw) and achieved the status of the mother of the believers. This marriage was completed in Sha`aban 3rd year of Hijrah .She was a great scholar of Hadith and Fiqh and narrated 60 Hadith (21). She died in 45 Hijrah at the age of 63.

5-Hazrat Zaynab bint Khuzayma ﷺ

Hazrat Zaynab bint Khuzayma (r.a) was also a widow. Her husband `Obaidah bin al-Harith bin Abdul-Muttalib, was the first **Muslim** to be martyred in battle of Badr . Following the death of Hazrat `Obaidah, she was married to Hazrat `Abdullah bin Jahash who also got martyrdom in the battle of Uhah(22).

When Hazrat Zaynab became greatly upset due to death of her husbands, the prophet took her in his household. But she died after a few months of her marriage, with the title of the mother of believers.

She died in 4th year of Hijra in the presence of the Beloved prophet. Only Hazrat Khadija and Hazrat Zaynab bint Kuzaymah died in the life time of the prophet. The Beloved Prophet himself led her funeral prayer. She was only 30 at the time of death.

6-Hazrat Omm-i- Salma,(Hind, bint Abi Omayya) ﷺ

Her original name was Hind but generally she was known as Omm-i-Salama. She was the daughter of Hudhafa known as Abu Omayyah.

She was first married to her cousin `Abdullah bin `Abdulasd, known as Abu Salma who was the foster brother of the prophet ﷺ.

Hazrat `Abdullah and Hazrat Omm-i- Salma both were from the early Muslims who had to migrate to Abyssinia to save them from the oppression of Quraysh .

During the stay at Abyssinia, Allah (swt) blessed them with a daughter, Zaynab ,and then one son Salma , for which they were known as Abu Salma and Ommi Salma(23)

After some time they returned back Makkah and stayed there till the permission of migration to Madina .When they tried to go Madina they were intercepted by their families and Hazrat Abu Salma had to go alone to Madina . According to Hazrat Omm-i- Salma “Abu Salma saddled his camel for me and my son (Salma).Then he set out leading the camel. When the men of my clan B . Makhzum saw him they got up and said, “So for as you are concerned you can do what you like; but about your wife? Do you believe that we shall let you take her away? So they snatched the camel`s rope from his hand and took me away from him. Abu Salma`s tribe, the B . Abul `Asad became angry at this and said: “ We will not leave our son with her seeing you have torn her from our tribesmen”. So they dragged at my little boy Salma between them until they dislocated his arm and B.Al Asad took him away. My family kept me with them and my husband Went to Madina alone. Thus I was separated from my husband and my son. I used to go every morning and sit in the valley weeping continuously until a year or so had passed when one of my cousin passed and saw my plight and took pity on me .He

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met with my tribesmen and said, Why do you not let this poor woman go? You have separated wife, husband and child .They restored my son and allowed me to join my husband. So I saddled my camel took my son and set out to Madina. I was alone and nobody was with me I trusted in Allah for my safe journey. When I was not far from Tan`eem `Uthman bin Talha met me on the way and asked me about my journey. He assured me to give his assistance for my safe arrival at Madina . He took the rope of my camel and started walking .I have never seen an Arab more noble than he. He continued his journey by foot and when reached the village `Quba` he said:` your husband is in this village, so entre it with the blessings of God . Then he went off on the way back to Makkah. She used to say, By God, I do not know a family in Islam which suffered what the family of Abu Salma did . Nor have I ever seen a noble man than `Uthman bin Talha`”(24).

Hazrat Abu Salma participated in Badar and Uhad . In Uhad he got serious injuries which did not heal up completely. Two months later he commanded a battalion sent out to stop the evil designs of Banu Asad. Abu Salma fought bravely which opened the wound more seriously. After returning back to Madina , he could not survive and died in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, leaving four children and a widow behind .(25)

After the death of Abu Salma, hazrat Ommi Salma was extremely sad and was worried about her younger children. Beloved Prophet took the notice of her difficulties. He sent the message of Nikah and provided support, respect and honour to Hazrat Ommi Salma and her family .The marriage took place in Shawwal ,4th year of Hijrah(26) . She died as the last wife of the prophet in 62 Hijrah at the age of 84 while Hazrat Zaynab bint Jahash died as first wife after the death of the prophet ﷺ (27).

7-Hazrat Zaynab Bint Jahsh

Hazrat Zaynab, daughter of Jahsh, was the Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ cousin. Her mother Omayma,(being the daughter of Abdul Muttalib), was the auntie of the Beloved Prophet ﷺ. Hazrat Omayma had extreme love and attachment with the Beloved Prophet ﷺ and been always very kind to him since his childhood. Syyida Zaynab came to Madina with her family at the event of emigration at the age of thirty two. The Beloved Prophet ﷺ decided to arrange her marriage with hazrat Zayd bin Haritha . The family of hazrat Zaynab was not happy with this proposal, only due to the reason of difference of social status(28). Allah SWT sent the revelation confirming the suggestion of the Beloved Prophet ﷺ as: “ When God and His messenger have decided on a matter that concerns them, it is not fitting for any believing man or woman to claim freedom of choice in that matter: whoever disobeys God and His messenger, is far astray(33: 36)”. After hearing the revelation, they offered their willingness for the marriage and marriage took place in Madina.

The main purpose of this marriage seemed to put an end to the sense of tribal superiority over others and to establish the sense of equality of all human being in the sight of Allah SWT. But unfortunately the marriage could not last more than a year and Hazrat Zayd divorced his wife as they could not come up on the level of understanding to be acceptable by both of them.

Hazrat Zayd had very close and sincere relationship with the Holy prophet p.b.u.h. and the holy prophet showed his love and affection. This breakdown distressed the prophet and he decided to console the situation by taking Syida Zaynab in his marriage. The Beloved Prophet sent the message to Sayyida Zaynab to know her willingness. She started `Istikhra Prayer` before replying back. The moments she was offering `Istikhra prayer`, the prophet ﷺ felt the indications of new revelation. When the `revelation was completed, Syida Zaynab was then informed that Allah SWT has approved the marriage by His authority and no Nikah arrangements were required. This was the unique honour for Syidah Zaynab that Allah SWT made this Nikah with His special command and no `Formal Nikah Ceremony` took place. The relevant command of the Holy Quran says:

“When Zayd no longer wanted her, We gave her to you in marriage so that there might be no fault in believers marrying the wives of their adopted sons after they no longer wanted them. God’s command must be carried out” (33:37). This marriage was consummated in Ziq`ad 5th year of Hijrah when Syida Zaynab was(29).

This is the normal and simple situation in the sight of the Holy Quran that Allah SWT allowed to marry to the divorced or widows of the `adopted son`. But on the other hand, this permission provided a golden chance to hypocrites of Madina to express their hatred and grudge against the Prophet of Islam. They took the benefit of the situation and showed serious resentment that why Muhammad married to the divorced wife of his adopted son?

Hazrat Zayd used to be an adopted son of the Beloved Prophet (p.b.u.h). Arab culture had this custom to treat the adopted son as a real son which made things quite problematic. Allah SWT wanted to abolish these traditions of the time of ignorance and Allah SWT mmanded his Beloved Prophet to take the practical steps in this respect. If we ponder over the revelation, the Holy Quran has explained the wisdom of this marriage:

A- There might be no fault in believers marrying the wives of their adopted sons,
B- This marriage must be carried out that in the sight of God “Muhammad is not the father of any one of you men; he is God’s messenger and the seal of the prophets: God knows everything” (33:40).

However, since the time of revelation the criticism has been there, thus the situation is needed to be examined academically and carefully.

First and foremost, the article will examine the story which has formulated by many story makers.

“William Muir expresses his views based on this type of fake stories as; `One day Muhammad went to see Zayd while he was absent. His wife, hazrat Zaynab was seen by him through the half-opened door which smitten Muhammad and he exclaimed, `Glory be to God`. Zaynab reported the word to Zayd and he went

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without any delay, to Muhammad offering divorce his wife for him. He answered `keep the wife to yourself`. But the words fell from unwilling lips”.

Muir further says, “ though according to the Arabic culture , to marry the divorced wife of adopted son was not acceptable , but Muhammad had decided to have her and he took the support from God`s revelation where he was reprehended for hesitating to consummate it , from the fear of men .He further says,` could the burlesque of inspiration be carried further .Yet this verse is the part of Quran being recited in every mosque throughout Islam”(30).

But these malicious and biased views of Muir have been rejected by other non-Muslim historian for the reasons that the general character and behaviour of the Prophet does not match within given form of thinking. It was quite obvious if the Prophet had any interest in this marriage before, he could manage it easily even before the marriage of Hazrat Zaynab and Hazrat Zayd.

Regarding this marriage the author M.Watt says, “despite the stories, it is unlikely that the Prophet had any attraction in Zaynab while she was thirty five, or perhaps thirty-eight, which is fairly advanced age for an Arab women”. He further says that “aim of contracting the marriage (with Zaynab) was to break the old idea over men`s conduct. How important was this aim compared with others, which he might have had”(31).

Similarly, while reviewing the situation John Glubb says, “regarding the marriage with Zaynab, there are two basis of criticism:

1- Firstly, it was unlikely in the Arabian society to marry the divorced wife of adopted son , as they were considering the adopted son as real son in certain matters.

2- Secondly, the prophet had prohibited the shameful practice of the time of ignorance considering the wives of the father, after his death, as their property by their sons. The critics claimed that the prophet had broken his own law by marrying his son`s wife. But the reality is quite obvious that the Quran wanted to terminate this wrong notion by saying , “He (God) does not turn the wives you reject and liken to your mothers` backs into your real mothers; nor does He makes your adopted sons into real sons. These are only words from your mouths, while God speaks the truth and guides people to the right path. Name your adopted sons after their real fathers: this is more equitable in God`s eyes”(33:4-5).

The Beloved Prophet ﷺ was commanded to show a personal example of the termination of this old practice for the future generations. As a result of this marriage, adoption has never since been legally recognised by Islam at the level of real son. The revelation which authorised the Beloved Prophet ﷺ to marry Sayyidah Zaynab also condemn the hesitation in marrying her, out of fear of men. The verse 37 of chapter 33 refers to this state of affairs where Zayd being actually mentioned by name” (32).

Karen Armstrong also holds the same opinion that the marriage had not been linked with any sexual charm. It was only to provide her shelter and condolence

after Zayd had divorced Zaynab. She says,” As Muhammad had always been concerned about the unprotected women of the Ummah, he felt his responsibility for Zaynab after she was divorced. If he had wanted Zaynab for her sexual charms, he could have married her in years earlier. This marriage also demonstrated the fact that a fostering or adoptive relationship was not a lie of blood and need be no bar to marriage”(33).

J .Davenport expresses the same views in “Apology for Muhammad” as Muhammad having a great esteem for a maiden named Zainab , proposed her marriage with Zayd, a youth for whom he had a like esteem. The marriage not proving a happy one ,Zayd determined upon a divorce, notwithstanding all the remonstrance of Muhammad(p.b.u.h).The latter, conscious that he himself was to blame in having originally recommended the marriage , and moved by the tears and distress of Zaynab, resolved to make her the only reparation in his power, that of marrying her himself after her divorce from Zayd. It was with difficulty he determined upon this step , being apprehensive that such of his countrymen who still retained the custom above –mentioned would accuse him of incest , but a strong sense of duty overcame these objections, and zaynab became wife of the prophet”(34).

Keeping in mind all the evidence provided above, we cannot accept the narrations reported by some of the Mufasssireen like Al-Qurtabi in his Tafsir al-Qurtubi (Al-Jami li-Ahkam al-Qur'an) , Roohulbiyan ,Khazin and other books mentioning some of the stories reported by Muqatil. Allama Qazi Abdul Daim has also rejected these riwayat with great deliberation and we think that is the best available material on this topic (35).

8-Hazrat Juwayria Bint Al-Harith

The real name of Hazrat Jawaryah was Barraah. She was the daughter of Harith the chief of Bani Mustaliq (36). According to Ibn Hisham, the Beloved Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم received a news that Bani Mustaliq were preparing to attack on Madina. Banu Mustaliq was a branch of Banu Kuzaa`ha and its chief was Harith bin Dhiraar who was deadly against Muslims. After getting confirmation, the Beloved Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم prepared to answer their bad attentions against Islam and marched towards Mareesee`in the early days of Sha`ban in 5th year of Hijrah. Banu Mustaliq could not stand before the Muslim soldiers and ran away leaving behind two thousand camels, five thousand goats and six hundred captives. The spoil was distributed among the soldiers and Barraah ,the daughter of Harith and wife of Musafi` ibn safwan, came in the share of Thabit bin Qays. Tabit bin Qays was requested to free her with the agreement of Makatbat for the payment of ransom which was agreed. According to Ibni Hisham, she requested the Beloved Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم for help. The Beloved Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم replied, “Would you like better than that? I will discharge your debt and marry you which she accepted”. The Beloved Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم changed her name from Barraah to Juwariah. When the people heard this news they freed all the captives in the honour and respect of the relationship of Hazrat Juwariyah with Banu mustaliq. At the time of her marriage she was twenty and she

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remained in the household of the Beloved Prophet ﷺ for next six years and got the status of the mothers of the believers. Her father also accepted Islam after this marriage. She died in 56th year of Hijrah at the age of seventy one and was buried in Baqee` (37). This is the authority of Allah SWT that how he changed the status of His creation under His will and how Syyida Juwariya got this highest status in the world and in the life hereafter and became a reason of the freedom of her whole tribe and the guidance of her father.

9-Hazrat Ommi Habiba Bint Abi Sufyan ﷺ

Hazrat Omm Habiba`s original name was Ramlah. She was the daughter of Abu Sufyan. Her mother was Safiyah, the daughter of Abul`AAs who was auntie of Hazrat`Uthman (38).

Omm Habiba was married to`Ubaidullah bin Jahash and both had accepted Islam in early days. The family migrated to Abyssinia at the event of second emigration to Abyssinia(39). During their stay at Abyssinia, Allah granted them a daughter who was given the name of`Habibah`, after which Ramlah got the name of`Ommi Habibah`. But misfortune overtook`Ubaidullah and he left Islam and accepted Christianity. Hazrat Ommi Habibah was the very faithful and determined towards Islam, thus to save her faith she separated from her husband. This was a very difficult time for her, but she put her trust in Allah and continued to practice the Deen of Allah SWT. According to the historical facts, Ubaidullah entered into Christianity in the same year when Najjashi accepted Islam.

In the 6th year of Hirah, when Najjasi accepted Islam, the Prophet ﷺ sent the message through`Amar bin Omayyah Dhamri to make the arrangements of Nikah with Ommi Habibah. Najjashi sent the message to Hazrat Ommi Habibah through his slave girl Abraha, which he had received through`Amar bin Omayyah. Hazrat Ommi Habibah gave her consent to finalise the marriage. She appointed`Khalid bin Sa`eed as her Wakeel and the king paid four hundred Deenar as dowery. The King (Najjashi) also made the arrangements and sent Hazrat Ommi Habiah to Madina through Hazrat Ja`far bin Tayyar. They arrived there in the beginning of Safar 7th year of Hijrah (40).

Hazrat Ommi Habibah was so sincere with Allah and His prophet that Abu Sufyan came Madina to see her daughter but she did not allow him to sit on the bed of Holy Prophet saying`A polytheist has no right to sit on the bed of Beloved prophet of Allah`.

She was 36 at the time of this marriage and she died at the age of 74 during the period of her brother Amir Moa`wiya in 44 year of Hijrah. (41)

10-Hazrat Safiyya Bint Huyayy ﷺ

Hazrat Safiyya was the daughter of Huyayy bin Akhtab, the chief of Banu Nadhir. She had been divorced by Salam bin Mushkam and later, she married Kanana bin al Haqeeq. At the time of battle of Khyabar, when Allah SWT granted victory, Hazrat Safiyyah became a prisoner. Her husband, father (Hayy bin al Akhtab) and brother were killed. The Prophet (p.b.u.h) granted her freedom and she

accepted Islam. The Prophet (p.b.u.h) considered her position and accepted her in his household.

She was very generous, kind , and polite woman. Hazrat Safiyyah died at the age of sixty in the 50th year of Hijrah and was buried in Janatul Baqee` (42).

11--Hazrat Maymuna Bint Al- Harith ﷺ

Hazrat Maymuna was the younger sister of Ommi Fadhl (the wife of hazrat `Abbas) and was also the half-sister of Hazrat Zaynab bint Khuzayma. Earlier on she was married twice, but she became a widow in her very early age. After she became widow the second time, she had a great desire to be married to Prophet ﷺ. Hazrat `Abbas recommended her to the Beloved Prophet ﷺ. At the time of `Umrah ul Qadha , in the 7th year of HIjrah her marriage took place in Makkah. According to a narration she offered herself to the Beloved Prophet ﷺ at the time of `Umratulqadha which was accepted .The Holy Quran referred this offer as, “Also any believing woman who has offered herself to the prophet and the prophet wishes to wed “(33.50).

Hazrat Maymuna was the last blessed woman who came in the household of the Beloved Prophet ﷺ. At the time of this marriage, she was twenty six. This was a very blessed marriage as it strengthened the family ties with very important families of Makkah. Hazrat Maymuna had eight sisters of which one was the mother of Khalid bin Waleed.

Hazrat Ayesha said about Hazrat Maymuna, “Among us she had the most fear of Allah and did the most to maintain the ties of kinship”. She died in 51 year of Hijrah at the age of seventy (43).

12--Hazrat Maria al- Qibtiya ﷺ

Hazrat Maria`s father was a Copt and her mother was Christian Greek. She was born in a village of Egypt. When the Beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ sent the message of Islam to the king of Egypt (Cyrus), he thought for a long moment and then said “I was aware that a Prophet was yet to appear. I thought he would appear in al-Sham where other Prophets had appeared, but I find he has appeared in Arabia. He sent the Prophet (saw) a cordial letter and many presents including two slaves, Maria and her sister Serene, and mentioned in the letter that Maria and her sister are of a high status among the Copts. On the way to Madina Maria and her sister were homesick and afraid. But when they were presented to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, they became very happy. The Holy Prophet ﷺ kept Maria and gave Serene away to another person (44).

When Prophet ﷺ was mourning for the death of His beloved daughter, Hazrat Zaynab, he received tiding of cheer that Hazrat Maria was expecting a child. Hazrat Maria had a son, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ named him Ibrahim, after the grandfather of both Arabs and Jews.

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Outcome of the Study:

After the study of the household of the Beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, it becomes evident that all the marriages of the Beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ were arranged due to particular reasons and to achieve the specific objectives. Most of the marriages took place with the widows whose husbands had sacrificed their lives for the sake of Islam or had been divorced due to the difference of faiths. This was the case with Sayyidah Sowdah, Sayyidah Hafsa, Sayyidah Zaynab bint Kuzaymahj, Sayyidah Ommi Salma, Sayyidah Ommi Habibah, Sayyidah Maymunah and Sayyidah Zaynab bint Jahsh.

Sayyidah Safiyyah and Sayyidah Juwayriah were granted freedom when they desired to become Muslim and offered their marriage with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The marriage with Sayyidah Aysha, Sayyidah Hafsa, Sayyidah Maymunah, Sayyidah Safiyyah and Sayyidah Juwariyah were also linked to strengthen the ties with other tribes and families and reducing the level of hatred against Islam. The similar views have also been highlighted by the European scholars while explaining the reasons of marriages of the Beloved Prophet ﷺ.

Reviewing the circumstances of the marriages of Beloved Prophet ﷺ, Bosworth Smith says, “It should be remembered however, that most of Prophet Muhammad’s ﷺ marriages may be explained, at least, as much by his pity for the gloomy conditions of the persons concerned, as by other motives. They were almost all of them with widows, who were not remarkable either for their beauty not their wealth but quite the reverse. May not this fact and his undoubted faithfulness to Khadija till her dying day, and till he was fifty years of his age, give us additional ground to hope that misconception has been at work, in the story of Zaynab” (45).

Stanley Lane-poole also holds similar views in this regard. Reviewing the matrimonial life of the prophet Muhammad ﷺ, he says, “A great deal too much has been said about these wives. It is a melancholy spectacle to see professedly Christian biographers gloating over the stories and the fables of prophet Muhammad’s domestic relations like the writers and the readers of ‘Society Journals’. That he never divorced one of his wives, that all of them save one were widows. Several of these marriages must have been entered into from the feeling that those women whose husbands had fallen in battle for the faith, and who had thus been left unprotected and a claim upon the generosity of him who prompted the fight. Other marriages were contracted for motives of policy, in order to conciliate the heads of the rival factions” (46).

Washington Irving reviews the facts of marriage policy as, “This was doubtless, another marriage of policy, for Maymuna was fifty one years of age and a widow, but the connection gained in two powerful purposes: by the one was won Khalid bin

Waleed, a nephew of the widow, who had come near to destroying Muhammad at the battle of Uhad. He now became one of the most victorious champions of Islam and by his prowess obtained the appellation of Sword of God. The other proselyte was Khalid's friend `Amar ibn Al `Aas, the same who assaulted Muhammad with poetry and satire at the commencement of the prophetic career, who had been ambassador from the Qurayshite to the king of Abyssinia to obtain the surrender of the fugitive Muslims and henceforth was destined with the sword to carry victoriously into foreign land, the faith he had once too strenuously opposed" (47).

Mr. M. Watt, who holds a very critical observation on the `historical events` of early Islam and about most of the actions taken by the prophet ﷺ, has given some important aspects of the marriages of the Beloved Prophet ﷺ. He says:

“The last feature to be noted about Muhammad's ﷺ marriages is that he used both his own and those of the closest companions to further political ends. This was doubtless a continuation of older Arabian practice. All Muhammad's own marriages can be seen to have a tendency to promote friendly relations in the political sphere. Khadijah brought him wealth, and the beginnings of influence in Meccan politics. In the case of Sawdah, whom he married at Mecca, the chief aim may have been to provide for the widow of a faithful Muslim, as also in the later marriage with Zaynab bint Khuzaymah. Sawdah's husband was the brother of a man (Suhayl b. 'Amr)whom Muhammad perhaps wanted to keep from becoming an extreme opponent and Zaynab's husband belonged to the clan of al- Muttalib, for which Muhammad had a special responsibility, while he was also nurturing good relations with his own tribe of 'Amir b. Sa'sa'ah.

His early wives at Medina, 'A'ishah and Hafsa, were the daughters of the men on whom he leaned most, Abu Bakr and 'Umar. 'Umar also married Muhammad's grand-daughter, Umm Kulthum bint 'Ali. Umm Salamah was not merely a deserving widow, but a close relative of the leading man of the Meccan clan of Makhzum. Juwayriyah was the daughter of the chief of the tribe of al-Mustaliq, with whom Muhammad had been having special trouble. Zaynab bint Jahsh, besides being Muhammad's cousin, was a confederate of the Meccan clan of 'Abd Shams, but a social motive may have outweighed the political one in her case to demonstrate that Muhammad had broken with old taboos. Nevertheless the clan of 'Abd Shams, and Abu Sufyan b. Harb in particular, were in his thoughts, for Abu Sufyan had a Muslim daughter, Umm Habibah, married to a brother of Zaynab bint Jahsh; and when the husband died in Abyssinia, Muhammad sent a messenger there to arrange a marriage with her. The marriage, with Maymunah would similarly help to cement relations with her brother-in-law, Muhammad's uncle, al-'Abbas. There may also have been political motives in the unions with the Jewesses, Safiyah and Rayhanah. So far as there are any solid grounds in the accounts of his marriages or proposed marriages with women in the 'supplementary list', the dominant motive was presumably political. They nearly all came from nomadic tribes or places at a

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distance. Other two important Companions, 'All and 'Uthman b. 'Affan, were bound to Muhammad by marriages with his daughters, Fatimah and Ruqayyah (followed by Umm Kulthum); 'Ali also married Muhammad's grand-daughter (by Zaynab), Umamah bint Abi 'l-'As. Az-Zubayr b. al-'Awwam was married to Abu Bakr's daughter Asma'. 'Abd ar-Rahman b. 'Awf, on being sent in command of an expedition to Dumat al-Jandal in 627/6, was told to marry the daughter of the chief if he submitted. Thus it was by no means only Muhammad's own marriages that were political, though in his case, as head of the community, there were special reasons for taking political considerations into account (48).

Sir J Glubb also reviewed the situation and claimed that “It is noticeable that all his wives were widows, many of them middle-aged. It would seem as if he enjoyed the company of mature, sensible women rather than that of young girl. It has been suggested that his many marriages were due to his desire to have a son, but, had this been the case, younger women would have afforded him a better hole of an heir“(49).

Armstrong remarks that, “Muhammad ﷺ had himself given the Muslims an example of concern for the vulnerable women of the Ummah. After Uhad, he had taken a fourth wife, providing a home for Zynab bin Kuzaymah, whose husband, `Ubaidah bin Harith got martyrdom in the battle of Badar. She was also the daughter of the tribe of Amir, and so the match forged a political alliance” (50).

Regarding the marriage of Sayyida Ommi Habiba, Irving says: “the widow Ommi Habibah was the daughter of Aby Sufyan, Prophet Muhammad`s ﷺ arch enemy and the Prophet conceived that a marriage with his daughter might soften the hostility of the father, a political consideration” (51).

Speaking about the noble character of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Karen further says:

“Muhammad ﷺ was a passionate man but he never took another, younger wife while he was married to Khadija- a fact that should be noted by those who criticise him for his polygamy in later years” (52).

In conclusion, there is a significant evidence to condemn the view that Prophet Muhammad`s ﷺ marriages were due to the sensual reasons. This was not the suitable age for this type of polygamy, as suggested by some of the orientalist . William Muir states that, it was not until the mature age of fifty four, that the prophet made the trials of `polygamy`. It is obviously a contradiction, unworthy of a fair and impartial critic, as at such an advanced age, a man who had lived in his youth a virtuous life, and who at the age of twenty five married a widow, forty years old, during whose life time, for twenty five years, he was a faithful husband to her alone, should have sexual inclinations. To any impartial biographer and also to any thoughtful reader, this is quite impossible' (53).

There are also other grounds to refute the criticism, based on any sensual reasons, upon the polygamous aspect of the life of the Beloved Holy prophet ﷺ.

- The period between fifty three –fifty nine was a very crucial time of the Islamic movements. The opposition was on its peak. The battle of Badr, Uhad, Trench, problem of Jewish tribes Banu Qaynqa` and Banu Nadhir, battle with Banu Mustaliq, battle of Mareesee`, battle of Khybar etc. , all took place during this period. The position in Madina remained so stressful that sometimes young companions had to stay for security measures at the door of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ during the nights. These types of events have been referred in `Babul jihad` of Siha Sitta (seeratunnabi 314).

Social problems of orphans and widows were also leaving streets over the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and he tried to provide shelter through all possible ways.

- There was also continuous problem of shortage of food, due to the reasons that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his family was instructed not to disappoint any beggar in any situation. Sometimes Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had to lend something from other families to fulfil the need of the needy persons. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his family had to live on water or dates, without proper food for many days. Sayyida `Aisha relates that: “ever since the migration to Madina, the family members of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ never ate their fill of wheat bread for three continues nights till he passed away” (Riaz 287). She also relates that “when the Holy Prophet ﷺ passed away, his armour was held by a Jew in pledge for thirty measures of barley” (Riaz 295). Hazrat Abu Hurarah says that “the Holy Prophet ﷺ passed away from this world without having eaten his fill of even barley bread” (Riaz 288).

This is also evident from `Event of Eila` when the Holy prophet ﷺ went into the isolation showing his displeasure for his wives on their demand for better level of living. This has been reported by all the sources of Seerah (Bukhari Kitabal Nikah, Muslim Kitab al Nikah). The reason which Quran has declared later on, giving option to the wives of the Holy prophet ﷺ, that they had demanded better living standard. The Holy Quran says in Surah Al Ahzab, ‘O Prophet! say to your wives if your desire is for the present life and its finery, then come, I will make provision for you and release you with kindness, but if you desire God, His messenger and the Final Home , then remember God has prepared great reward for those of you who do good’ (30:28-30). It shows that the Prophet Muhammad’s ﷺ living style was very simple and Allah SWT showed his anger with his wives on the demand of better living standard. This fact also presents the proof that the Holy Prophet Muhammad’s ﷺ marriages were based on spiritual considerations and not for those which have been given by some of the non-Muslim authors.

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