

## **Rebuttal to the Allegation of Polygamy of the Prophet Muhammad SAW**

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### **ARTICLE INFORMATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Prophet Muhammad SAW. was an unparalleled pious, religious leader of the world. He possessed a unique moral character. But some people unjustly criticized him for his polygamy. Polygamy is a traditional culture from the very ancient age. Several other prophets also married more than one wife. Our Prophet Muhammad SAW. had 9/11 wives and 2/4 odalisques (concubines) also. Though he was a polygamist, his practice of polygamy was unique and different from many polygamous marriages today. The prophet SAW. was monogamous up to 50 years of age with his first wife, Khadija R. for about 25 years until her death. After Khadija's R. death, the last 13 years of his life, when he was over 50, he married other wives or concubines. All were widows and old except 'Aisha R.. She was underage, and our prophet SAW. had started living with her after she grew up. The causes of our prophet's SAW. polygamous marriages were : 1. Freedom from suppression or hostilities, 2. Strengthening Islamic ties, 3. Elimination of bad habits (customs), 4. Protecting the dignity of women, 5. Wife's longing for emancipation, 6. Propagation of Islam in women's society, etc. This article offers to present an elaborate counterargument against the unfair and baseless propaganda regarding our prophet's SAW. polygamous marriages.

### **Introduction**

“Polygamy is the form of marriage that permits a person to have more than one husband or wife. Although monogamy, the union of one husband and one wife at the same time, is the most common form of marriage. ... There are two types of polygamy, polyandry and polygyny. Polyandry is the sharing of a single wife by two or more husbands at the same time. ... Polygyny exists when a man has two or more wives at the same time.”<sup>1</sup> Prophet Muhammad SAW. was monogamous up to his age 50 with khadija R. . After the dath of Khadija R., he became polygamous up to his age 63 for about 12 years, it was not for sexual fulfillment, but only for the benefit of the human society. He was the world's best personality, a noble character, a rare man of incomparable ideals. Allah Himself has certified him as an ideal human being.<sup>2</sup> Whose ideals have stirred the entire human civilization. Whose bright flame has illuminated everywhere from the East to the West. The Prophet of Islam, Hazrat Muhammad SAW., is the one who has made an important contribution to building Islamic society and civilization. The opponents of Islam have not stop only made false accusations and slanders against Islam in order to hinder the progress of Muslims; rather, they have also made false accusations and slanders against the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad SAW.. In the era of the Prophet, in the era of the companions, and even in the present era, they have continued their efforts to smear the character of the Prophet SAW. as a last weapon after being defeated in war. They have alleged that the Prophet SAW. was immoral, he was a womanizer and he raped a virgin woman.<sup>3</sup> This article is to refute these allegations.

### **Reasons for the Prophet's Polygamy**

According to Tarikh al-Tabari, the Prophet SAW. married 15 women, consummated the marriage with 13; but he gave a list more than 15 wives.<sup>4</sup> As per our searching we found 15 wives including 02 wives abandoned and 02 slaved wives. He married them different reasons. Their identities are underneath.

### 1. Khadija bint Khuwaylid R.

The Prophet Muhammad SAW. lived a very modest life until the age of 25. At a time when young people in that society were confused, misguided and involved in adultery, the Prophet SAW. set an example of living a very honest, devoted and modest life. Even his enemies did not question his character. Such a virtuous young man needed a pure and chaste woman. Therefore, he married the 40-year-old virtuous Khadija R. . He lived with the 65-year-old Khadija R. until the age of 50.<sup>5</sup> He spent his turbulent youth with a widowed old woman. If he had been lustful or lewd, he would have definitely been attracted to another woman or married another woman.

Khadija's R. first husband was Abu Halah bin Zarah al-Tamimi, had two sons, Halah, and Hinda. After his death, her second husband, Utayyiq bin A'yez bin Abdullah Makhzumi, had a son Abdullah, and a daughter Hinda.<sup>6</sup> Later, they all became companions of the Prophet SAW..<sup>7</sup> He SAW. was her third husband and she was his first wife. He SAW. had two sons, Qasim and Abdullah, and four daughters, Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum, and Fatima. His surname was 'Abul Qasim' after the first son, Qasim. The nicknames of his son Abdullah were 'Tayyeb' and 'Tahir'.<sup>8</sup> During the Jahili period, Khadija R. was known as 'Tahirah' (Pure)<sup>9</sup> and during the Islamic period, 'Siddiqah'<sup>10</sup> (the first to believe in the truth of prophethood). As the first and eldest wife, she is also known as 'Khadijatul Kubra'. She showed such devotion to the Prophet SAW. that she gave him courage during the time of revelation, praised him highly,<sup>11</sup> and dedicated all the wealth of her business to the Prophet for Islam. She would never do so if her husband was a bad person.

### 2. Sawda bint Zam'ah R

Sawda R. accepted Islam early. Her husband Sakran bin Amar became a Muslim with her encouragement. Then they both migrated to Abyssinia.<sup>12</sup> When Sakran died on his return to Mecca, the widow Sawda R. and her children were in great trouble. The Prophet SAW., who was in jeopardy after losing Khadija R., at the age of 50, he was helplessly to marry Sawda R. a 50-year-old widow. After spending 14 years of married life with the Prophet SAW., he died at the age of 72. She was the first of the wives to die after the death of the Prophet SAW.. 1 hadith narrated by her is in Bukhari and 4 hadiths are included in Sunan Arba'at.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. 'Aisha bint Abu Bakr R.

Abu Bakr R. wanted to be related to the Prophet SAW. and married his 6-year-old virgin daughter 'Aisha R. to the 50-year-old Prophet SAW.. This virgin became a adult at the age of 9 and then lived in the Prophet's SAW. house. After living a married life for about 13 years, she died at the age of 66 after the Prophet's SAW. death.<sup>14</sup> Some people try to say that the Prophet SAW. married a virgin girl at a child age and raped her. In fact, this accusation is not correct. According to historians, she lived in the Prophet's SAW. house after becoming puberty. Due to the climate of Arabia, the girls reach puberty at the age of 9. She was a childless, intelligent, and knowledgeable woman. The senior companions gave priority to her decisions in matters of fatwa. Abu Musa 'Ash'ari said, "Whenever we were stuck on any issue, we would go to 'Aisha and seek her solution." The number of hadiths narrated by her is 2,210. The Prophet SAW. said, "Take a small part of the religion from Aisha."<sup>15</sup> She lived for 47 years after the death of the Prophet SAW.. As a result, the companions and followers gained knowledge of the religion from her for a long time.<sup>16</sup>

### 4. Hafsa bint Umar R.

Khunays bin Hudhafah Sahmi, husband of Hafsa R., migrated first to Abyssinia and then to Medina. He participated in the Battle of Badr and was martyred in the Battle of Uhud or he died before Battle of Uhud.<sup>17</sup> The Prophet SAW. was then a suitable candidate for the daughter of Umar R.. At the age of 55, he married Hafsa,<sup>18</sup> a 22-year-old widow. After 8 years of marriage, she became a widow again and died at the age of 59. She made a significant contribution to the preservation of the manuscripts of the Quran.<sup>19</sup> She narrated 60 hadiths.

### **5. Zaynab bint Khuzaima R.**

Zaynab R. lost two husbands in succession and married third time Abdullah bin Jahash, the cousin of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.. But when Abdullah bin Jahash was martyred in the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet Muhammad SAW. himself married 30-year-old Zaynab R. to show sympathy, at the age of 55. After living with the Prophet SAW. for about three months, she died. Due to her charity, she was given by the Muslims the title of 'Umm al-Masakin' (Mother of the Poor).<sup>20</sup>

### **6. Umm Salamah Hind bint Abi Umayyah R.**

When the Prophet's SAW. cousin and milk-brother, Abu Salamah R., were martyred in the Battle of Uhud, Umm Salamah Hind became a widow and was left with a son and two daughters. The Prophet SAW. married Umm Salamah Hind, a 26-year-old widow, at the age of 56.<sup>21</sup> After seven years of marriage life with the Prophet SAW., she became widow upto the age of 84. She was the last of his wives to die. Her wise advice proved very effective during the Treaty of Hudaibiyah.<sup>22</sup> She narrated 378 hadiths.

### **7. Zaynab bint Jahash R.**

Zaynab R., the cousin of the Prophet SAW., was first married to Zayd bin Haritha R., the Prophet's SAW. foster son. Zayd R. divorced her and the Prophet SAW. married Zaynab R., a 35-year-old widow, at the age of 57. After 6 years of marriage, she became a widow and died at the age of 53.<sup>23</sup> The Prophet SAW. married her to remove two prevailing superstitions. First: At that time, a foster son was considered his own son and his wife was considered his daughter-in-law and marriage with her was considered forbidden. Second: The Jews and Christians considered Uzair and Jesus SAW. to be the sons of Allah. However, creation can never be the son of the Creator Allah, just as a child born of another person's womb can never be his own child. She was known as "the mother of the poor", because of her charity and generosity.<sup>24</sup> She narrated a total of 11 hadiths.

### **8. Juwayriya bintul Harith R.**

Juwayriya R. was the daughter of Harith bin Abu Zarah, the leader of Banu Mustaliq. In the fifth year of Hijri, she was captured in a war Banu Mustaliq and converted to Islam. Father Harith came to release his daughter, Prophet SAW. proposed him to know the opinion of Juwayriya R.. She gave her option to stay with prophet SAW..<sup>25</sup> So she married the Prophet SAW. and more than a hundred prisoners of war were released due to her being the Prophet's in-law. As a result, they all became Muslims.<sup>26</sup> Juwayriya's first husband was Musafih bin Sufyan Mustaliqi. Since Juwayriya R. was the daughter of a tribal chief, the Prophet Muhammad SAW. was the best husband for her among the Muslims after she converted to Islam. Therefore, he married a 20-year-old converted widow at the age of 57. After 6 years of married life, she became a widow and died at the age of 65/71.<sup>27</sup> She narrated a total of 7 hadiths.

### **9. Umm Habibah Ramlah bint Abi Sufyan R.**

Umm Habibah Ramlah R., the daughter of the Quraysh leader Abu Sufyan, and her husband Obaidullah bin Jahsh Asadi, both couple converted to Islam and migrated to Abyssinia. When her husband died there, she became a widow with a daughter. Knowing her extreme danger, the Prophet SAW. sent a letter to King Negus in 7 AH with a proposal to marry her. Negus sent her to Medina through an envoy. The Prophet SAW. married this 36-year-old widow at the age of 58.<sup>28</sup> After about 4 years of married life, she became a widow and died at the age of 72. She narrated 65 hadiths.

### **10. Safiyah bint Huway bin Akhtab R.**

Safiyah R. was the daughter of Huway bin Akhtabr, the chief of the Jewish tribe of Banu Nazir, who was including her tribe expelled from Medina, and the wife of one of the chiefs, Kinanah bin Abil Huqaiq. Her father and husband both were killed in the Battle of Khaibar and she was taken as prisoner and later converted to Islam.<sup>29</sup> At the age of 59, the Prophet SAW. married this 17-year-old Safiyah R. . After 4 years of married life, she became a widow and died at the age of 50. She was the only Jewish daughter of Prophet's wives. She narrated 10 hadiths.

### 11. Maymuna bintul Harith R.

Maymuna was the maternal aunt of Khalid bin Walid and Abdullah bin Abbas R.; and the half-sister of Umm al-Mu'minin Zaynab bint Khuzaima (died 3 AH). After the death of her two previous husbands, she sought refuge with the Prophet SAW. and Hazrat Abbas R. proposed her marriage to the Prophet SAW.<sup>30</sup> At the age of 59, the Prophet SAW. married Maimuna R., who was 36 years old. She became a widow after three years of marriage and died at the age of 80. She narrated 76 hadiths.

In addition to these wives, he was married two other women. But they were abandoned before intercourse. The first was Asma bint Nu'man al-Kindiyyah R., also known as Jawniyyah (الجونية).<sup>31</sup> The second was Amrah bint Yazid al-Kilawiyyah R., a New Muslim.<sup>32</sup>

#### Slave wives are underneath

##### Maryam R.

In the seventh year of the Hijri, the ruler of Egypt, Muqawqis, sent Maryam as a gift to the Prophet. The Holy Prophet SAW. could not deny her due to it was against diplomatic etiquette. He could not give her to anyone else; because Maryam R. was a gift from one king to another king. He did not consider it appropriate to take her into his house without marriage. Therefore, he considered it better to take her as a wife to maintain political status. A son, Ibrahim, was born in her womb.<sup>33</sup>

##### Rayhana bint Zayd

Rayhana bint Zayd (Died 631 AD) was a Jewish woman from the Bonu Nazir, being a wife of Hakim (Died 627AD), she was also a part of the Bonu Qurayza.<sup>34</sup> During the siege of Bonu Qurayza in 627AD, she was widowed and taken captive by the early Muslims and subsequently became a concubine. She converted to Islam and Prophet SAW. married her. According to Ibn sa'ad and Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani she was a converted Muslim wife of prophet SAW.<sup>35</sup> Some author said that, She did not convert and hence prophet did not marry her, but kept her concubine.<sup>36</sup>

Abu 'Ubadah said, he SAW. had four concubines: i. Mariyah (mother of his son Ibrahim); (II) Rayhana; (III) Jamilah (beautiful prisoner of war); and iv. slave woman who was given to prophet by Zaynab bint Jahash R. .<sup>37</sup>

#### Refutation of critics' allegations

Prophet Muhammad SAW. married Khadija R., a widow of 40 years, at the age of 25. He did not marry anyone else until he was 50 years old, as long as Khadija R. was alive. After Khadija's death, he married a virgin and a widow at the age of 51 to 53. In the last 10 years of his life, he married 10 more. However, this period was a very busy life. In these 10 years, he fought 83 wars, of which he served as a commander in 27 wars. When his lust was strong, he lived a chaste life with an elderly widow. And when he was almost devastated by the mental stress of war, state management, etc. in his old age, he became lustful and lecher, this is not credible. Rather, other reasons need to be explored.

#### 1. Establishment of marital ideals for men and women of different ages

The Holy Prophet SAW. established the ideals of marriage as the most ideal man. Through polygamy, he established a good ideal of married life: a young man with an old wife, an old man with a young or virgin wife, a young man with a widowed wife, and a poor with a rich vice-versa. His polygamy contains solutions to the marital problems of men and women of different ages.

#### 2. To increase Muslim population

The Prophet SAW. encouraged the issue of polygamy, which was necessary to increase the number of Muslims when the number of Muslims decreased due to multi-faceted wars.

#### 3. Honoring femininity

In the pre-Islamic era, women did not have marital status. They were married and divorced by husband at will. No one wanted to marry a widow, nor did they allow her to live in a decent manner. The Prophet SAW. gave women the status of wives through widow marriage. Even he himself gave it to older widows; for example-khadija R. and Sawda R. are noteworthy.

#### **4. Prevention of adultery**

The Prophet SAW. introduced widow marriage to keep a large number of widows free from the corruption of secret adultery due to continuous wars. The state is responsible for maintaining widows and their children. As the head of the state and religious leader, he used to divide Muslim widows and non-Muslim captives among his companions for marriage. As a part of that, he was forced to polygamy. "Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity (of sin), O people of the prophet's household (Ahlul Bayt) and to purify you with extensive purification".<sup>38</sup>

#### **5. Abolishing the practice of concubines**

The Prophet SAW. could have kept widows and captives as slaves in his house. But instead of doing so, he married many wives to be free from the accusations of concubines. "In order that there will be upon you no discomfort."<sup>39</sup>

#### **6. Strengthening political ties and removing suppression of hostilities**

The Prophet SAW. married several wives in order to strengthen political ties and establishing lasting peace with particularly powerful leaders. The custom of the Jahili era was that they considered it shameful to fight or compete with their son in law. Therefore, Allah Almighty allowed the Prophet SAW. to marry many wives as a strategy to turn the barbaric opposing forces into supporting forces for Islam. For example—

- i. After marrying Umm Salamah R. in the fourth year of the Hijri, the famous hero of his tribe, Khalid bin Walid, who had been seen in the Battle of Uhud against Islam. Changed his fierce character and at the beginning of the seventh year of the Hijri, he came to Medina and embraced Islam.<sup>40</sup>
- ii. After marrying Juwayriya bint al-Harith R. in the fifth year of the Hijri, one hundred prisoners of war from the tribe of Banu Mustaliq immediately became Muslims and this extremely hostile tribe became an ally.<sup>41</sup>
- iii. After marrying Umm Habiba R. in the month of Muharram in the seventh year of the Hijri, her father, the leader of the Quraysh, Abu Sufyan, avoided the competition of the Prophet SAW. and embraced Islam on the eve of the conquest of Mecca in the eighth year of the Hijri.<sup>42</sup>
- iv. As a result of his SAW. marriage to Safiya R. in the month of Safar of the 7th Hijri, the war activities of the Jews against the Prophet SAW. stopped and they made a treaty with the Prophet SAW. and continued to live in Khaibar.<sup>43</sup>
- v. As a result of his SAW. marriage to Maimuna bint al-Harith R. in the month of Dhul-Q'adah of the 7th Hijri, the continuous hostility and conspiracy of the people of Najd stopped. Because Maimuna's brother-in-law was the chief of Najd.<sup>44</sup>

#### **7. Strengthening Islamic bonds R.**

The Prophet SAW. married 'Aisha R. and Hafsa R. to strengthen Islamic bonds. As a result, the Islamic brotherhood with Abu Bakr and Omar gained a firm foundation. The same purpose was laid behind making Uthman and Ali his sons-in-law.

#### **8. Elimination of bad customs**

'A foster son is like his own son and his wife is like his daughter-in-law' to eradicate this evil practice that had been prevalent for ages, he SAW. married Zaynab bint Jahash R., the divorced wife of his foster son Zayd bin Haritha R., by the command of Allah. Two verses were revealed to break this practice<sup>45</sup> and the Messenger of Allah himself set an example by breaking that practice.

#### **9. Spreading Islamic education in women's society**

In the uneducated Jahili society, women were more backward than men. Therefore, the need for female trainers was greatest to strengthen their education and training system. The wives of the Holy Prophet SAW. played an important role as companions of the Prophet. The role of 'Aisha, Hafsa, Umm Salamah, etc. was very important to spread Islamic education in women's society as well as Muslim society also.

## 10. Legality of interfaith marriage

To establish the legitimacy of interfaith marriage, he SAW. married the Christian slave girl Maryam and the Jewish girl Safiyya.

## 11. Wife's longing for emancipation

When Juwayriyya R. and Safiyya R. both captives of war, were betrothed to the prophet and asked for their freedom, he freed them and married them, as well as Sawdah R., Zainab R. and Maimuna R. also the same.

## 12. Conclusion

The enemies of Islam, the infidel critics, and the opponents of the Prophet SAW. were defeated in arguments, debates, and battles with the Prophet SAW. and finally attacked the personal character of the Prophet SAW.. When they found no fault in the character of the Prophet SAW., they began to criticize the polygamy of the Prophet Muhammad SAW., and it continues to this day. This article has exposed the baselessness of their criticisms and allegations. His polygamy has social benefits such as marital ideals, good relations with enemies, the spread of Islam, prevention of widow adultery, and the marital dignity of slaves. In spite of such benefits Prophet SAW. it limited in four for who are capable for maintain justice among the wives.

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- <sup>44</sup> Dr. Muhammad Asadullah Al-Ghalib, *Seeratur Rasool SM* (Rajshahi Bangladesh : Hadeeth Foundation Bangladesh, Nawdapara, 2015), p. 770. The Name of the chief was Al-Harith Ibn 'Amr, also known as Al-Harith Al-Najdi, Particularly the tribe of Hilalah.
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