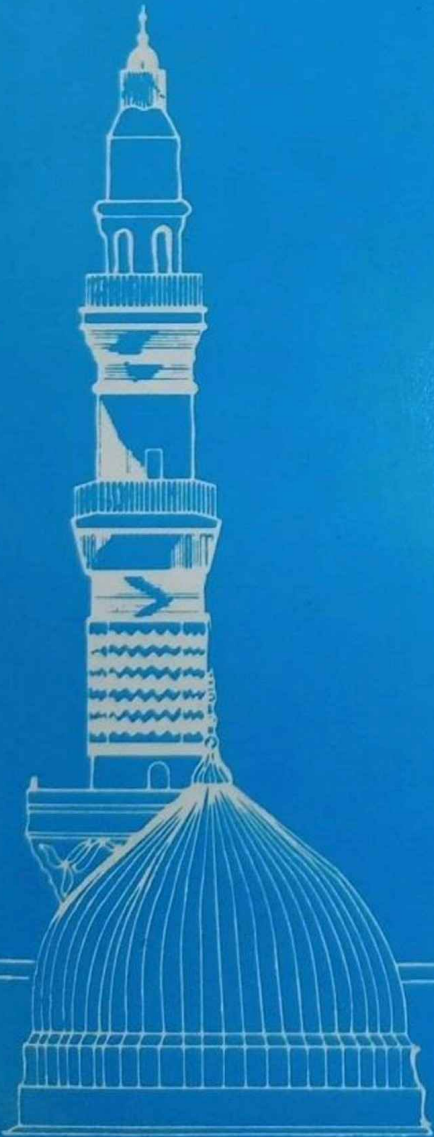


THE MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS (Ummahātul Mominīn)

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NATIONAL HIJRA COUNCIL
ISLAMABAD – PAKISTAN

THE MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS

(Ummahatul Mominin)

by

Zafar Ali Qureshi



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INTRODUCTION

The plural marriages of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) have been made the target of most hostile and venomous attacks by his Christian detractors of the West. It may be stated at the outset that most of the Orientalists, particularly the noted Biographers of the Holy Prophet, are ordained Priests, donning the robes of Professors, or have deep priestly connections.

Before we deal with the case of each individual marriage of the Holy Prophet and show that there was nothing of the sort of sensual in contracting these marriages, as alleged, we would like to throw some light on the background and reasons for Orientalists' hostility towards the Holy Prophet which will set in proper perspective their spiteful tirade against the Holy Prophet.

These reasons may be classified under the broad headings of military, political and religious aspects. We take up the military and political aspect first.

In accordance with the notions of the Universality of Islam the Holy Prophet had sent letters to the various rulers of the day inviting them to embrace Islam. One of the Prophet's envoy, Harith bin 'Umair, while he was on his way to the governor of Busra, carrying the Prophet's letter, was murdered by a Christian chief, Shurahbil bin 'Amr, a vassal of the Byzantine Empire.¹

1. al-Waqidi, *Kitab al-Maghazi*, edited by Marsden Jones, Oxford Univ. Press, London 1966, Vol. II, pp. 755-756; Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, Beirut, 1376 A.H./1957 A.D., Vol. II, p. 128; Ibn Sayyid-an-Nas, *'Uyun al-athar*, Cairo, 1356 A.H., Vol. II, p. 153.

The Prophet sent a small expeditionary force under the command of Zayd bin Haritha to avenge the foul murder.²

They were confronted by a formidable host of Byzantine troops. The small Muslim army met with disaster and the position was retrieved with great difficulty by Khalid bin Walid, the great General of Islam.³

After the death of the Holy Prophet the fight was carried on by the Caliphs and Muslims carried everything before them capturing a sizeable portion of Christendom. Then, the West stormed the East in the shape of the Crusades. When the Arabs weakened the Turks stepped forward and carried their inroads into the West. Then the West launched its onslaught on Muslims enslaving many countries. And finally the ceaseless struggle of Muslims to throw off the thraldom of the West has been crowned with success.

This military clash between Christendom and the World of Islam has, to a great extent, conditioned and clouded the thinking of the West towards the Prophet and Islam. This is admitted in so many words by various Western writers.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith records in his book *Islam in Modern History*:

Europe has known Islam for thirteen centuries, mostly as an enemy and a threat. It is no wonder that Muhammad more than any other of the world's religious leaders has had a "poor press"

2. Waqidi, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 755-756; Ibn Sa'd, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 128; *Uyun al-Athar*, Vol. II, p. 153.

3. Al-Bukhari, *al-Sahih*, Muhammad Ali Sabih and Sons, Cairo, Bab' Ghazwah Mu'tah, Vol. V, pp. 181ff, Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah an-Nabaw-
iyyah*, edited by Mustafa al-Saqa etc. Egypt, 1375 A.H. Vol. II, pp. 373ff; al-Baladhuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, edited by Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah, Dar al-Ma'arif, Egypt, Vol. I, p. 380; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil Fil Tarikh*, Beirut, 1358 A.H. Vol. II, pp. 234ff.

in the West, and that Islam is the least appreciated there of any of the world's outside faiths.⁴

Philip K. Hitti states in his work *Islam and the West: Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and other less highly developed religions were never subjected to such a barrage of abuse and condemnation. They posed no threat to the medieval West and offered no competition. It was, therefore, primarily fear, hostility and prejudice that coloured the Western views of Islam and conditioned its attitude. Islamic beliefs were enemy's beliefs, and, as such suspect, if not false.*⁵

George Sale tells us in his Preliminary Discourse to his *Translation of the Holy Qur'an* as to why Christian writers intentionally try to vilify the Holy Prophet and Islam:

The terrible destruction of the Eastern Churches, once so glorious and flourishing by the sudden spreading of Mohammedanism, and the great success of its professors against the Christians, necessarily inspire a horror of that religion to whom it has been so fatal; and *no wonder if they endeavour to set the character of its founder, and its doctrines in the most infamous light.*⁶

Now about the religious aspect of Western hatred of the Prophet and Islam. George Fisher says:

We say that Christianity is the perfect form of religion. It is the

4. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, A Mentor Book 1958, pp. 109-110.

5. Philip K. Hitti, *Islam and the West*, Princeton University Press, 1962, pp. 48-49.

6. Rev. E. M. Wherry, *A Comprehensive Commentary on the Qur'an comprising Sale's Translation & Preliminary Discourse with Additional Notes & Emendations*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., London, 1896, Vol. I, pp. 70-71.

absolute religion. It is the final outcome of this long process of growth.⁷

Rev. W. Montgomery Watt declares emphatically: The Christian claims that in Jesus what was wrong with the world has been set right.⁸

Dr. Speer asserts dogmatically that Christ is sufficient, absolute and final Saviour. There can be no revelation displacing and supplementing the revelation in Him.⁹

Islam came forward challenging these claims of Christianity. Sir Hamilton Gibb puts it succinctly:

Thus Islam appeared not as a new religion but a revival of pure Abrahmic monotheism, purified at once of the accretions of Judaism and Christianity and *superseding them as a final revelation*.¹⁰

Rev. W. Montgomery Watt tells us in his book *The Cure for Human Ills*:

Just as the war propaganda of a secular society emphasizes

7. George F. Fisher, *The Beginning of Christianity*, Charles Scribner, New York, 1886, p. 25.

8. Rev. W. Montgomery Watt, *The Cure for Human Ills: A Statement of the Christian Message in the Modern Times*, S.P.C.K., London, 1959, p. 37.

9. P. C. Dewick, *The Christian Attitude to Non-Christian Religions*, Cambridge University Press, 1953, p. 149, Quoting Dr. Speer's remarks at the Jerusalem Conference, 1928 (Report Vol. I, pp. 343-345).

10. H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism*, Oxford University Press, London, 1954, p. 47.

the inferiority of the enemy and vilifies their actions, so Christendom disparages its Religious Enemies. . . .¹¹

So this military and political clash between Christendom and the World of Islam, and this religious rivalry between Christianity and Islam has conditioned, warped and clouded the thinking of Western writers about Islam, and more particularly about the Prophet of Islam. Most of these writers are still labouring under the spell of the war propaganda of the Crusades. And this is admitted in so many words by more than one writer that they cannot be objective in the matter of Islam and its Prophet.

Rev. W. Montgomery Watt declares: The difficulty is that we are heirs of a deep-seated prejudice which goes back to the "war propaganda" of medieval times. From about the middle of the eighth century A.D. Christian Europe began to be conscious of Islam as her great enemy threatening her in both the military and spiritual spheres. In deadly fear Christians had to bolster confidence by placing the enemy in the most unfavourable light possible. The image created in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries has continued to dominate European thinking about Islam, and even in the second half of the twentieth century has some vestigial influence.¹²

Lester Mondale frankly states: Of all the world's religions Islam is the most difficult for the person of Jewish or Christian background to evaluate objectively.¹³

And now what are the Judeo-Christian background, traditions

11. W. Montgomery Watt, *The Cure for Human Ills; A Statement of the Christian Message in the Modern Times*, op.cit., p. 132.

12. Idem, *What is Islam?* Longmans, 1968, p. 2.

13. Lester Mondale, Degree from the Harvard Divinity School and holder of Unitarian Pastorate in different Cities of the U.S.A., *Values in World Religions*, p. 35.

and notions about marriage which make the Western writers indulge in venomous criticism of the plural marriages of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Harper's *Bible Dictionary* states: Plural marriages were sanctioned in Old Testament times and Deuteronomic law did not forbid them. Polygamy with concubines, hand-maids and secondary wives was normal. Patriarchs like Abraham, Jacob and Joseph had more than one wife. Kings had several wives like David and Solomon for political alliances.¹⁴

John Mackenzie's *Dictionary of the Bible* tells us that 700 wives and 300 concubines of Solomon must be an exaggeration of popular tradition How deeply rooted polygamy was before the exile may be seen from the parable of Ezk 23 which represents Yahweh as the husband of *two wives*.

That concubinage existed as an institution regulated by custom and to some extent by law is clear. . . 300 of Solomon's harem have this designation. They were possessed by Abraham, David and others

Rehoboam had 18 wives and 60 concubines:¹⁵ Jewish writer Abram Leon Sachar tells us in his *History of the Jews* that polygamy was not legally forbidden until the edict of Rabbi Gershom issued well along in the Middle Ages. *A man could have any number of wives so long as he supported them*. We are told that *Gideon had seventy wives* and we know the names of at least seven of David's wives. Solomon probably maintained the largest harem in Jewish history. These were exceptional cases, however,

14. Madeleine S. Miller and J. Lane Miller, *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1954, p. 421; article 'Marriage'.

15. John L. Mackenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1968, Article 'Marriage', pp. 549-550.

*dictated largely by political considerations.*¹⁶

The celebrated writer, Edward Westermarck states in his *History of Human Marriage* that tradition shows polygyny and concubinage to have been customary among the Hebrews during the patriarchal age. After making a mention of *Solomon's 700 wives and 300 hundred concubines and of Rehoboam's eighteen wives and three score concubines* he adds that *polygyny was so much a matter of course that the law did not even criticise it.* However Talmudic right restricted the number of legitimate wives to four.¹⁷

NOW WE COME TO CHRISTIANITY.

No direct views of Jesus Christ on marriage problem are traceable in the New Testament. However according to Mathew 25.1 in the *Parable of Ten Virgins*¹⁸ it is stated that Ten Virgins went forth to meet the coming "Bridegroom", and, in the various Commentaries of the Bible by the words the coming "bridegroom", Jesus, the Messiah is meant.¹⁹

From this Parable of Ten Virgin who prepare and go forth to meet the coming "Bridegroom", Jesus, the Messiah, it can be

16. Abram Leon Sachar, *A History of the Jews*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1972, p. 94.

17. Edward Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, Macmillan & Co., London, 1903, pp. 431-432.

18. Matthew, 25: 1.

19. Matthew Black, General Editor, *Peake's Commentary of the Bible*, Nelson & Sons, London, 1967, p. 794; Charles Gore & al., *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture*, S.P.C.K., London, 1929, p. 195; Rev. J. R. Dummelow, *A Commentary of the Holy Bible*, Macmillan, London, 1912, pp. 705-706; Rev. Reginald C. Fuller & al., *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, Nelson & Co., London, 1975, p. 947.

gathered that there is nothing basically and intrinsically wrong in numerous Virgins going forth to meet their coming Bridegroom.

Not to speak of Jesus, the Messiah, whom Ten Virgins go forth to meet as their coming "Bridegroom", there is the blasphemous Parable of Ezekiel 23:1 where Yahweh himself is made the husband of two wives. Decency and decorum forbids us from quoting the full text of this Parable.

In other words, plurality of 'brides' or wives is not such an offensive and despicable thing as made out by Christian controversialists.

Leaving this aside, we come to the Christian viewpoint in the matter.

G. Simpson Marr writing in his book '*Sex in Religion*' throws some light on the matter in these words:

The few incidents in the life of Christ in which sex factor is concerned clearly show us that Christ set his face against a purely negative view of women. Christ's attitude to women was positive, wholesome, sane and just. He never despised women, but sought to set them upon an equality with men, and it is only as we come to understand the position of His time do we realize how courageous and even revolutionary was the attitude He adopted.²⁰

He states at another place: The most influential force directing early Christianity down the ascetic path, however, was undoubtedly exercised by the Apostle Paul.²¹

20. G. Simpson Marr, *Sex in Religion, (An Historical Survey)*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1936, p. 73.

21. *Ibid*, p. 75.

In his *History of Human Marriage*, the famous writer Edward Westermarck brings out early Christian views on marriage in these words:

St. Paul held celibacy to be preferable to marriage. 'He that giveth his virgin in marriage doeth well' he says, 'but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better' (1 Corinthians, Chap. VII, V. 38). Origen thought marriage profane and impure. Tertullian said that celibacy must be chosen even if mankind should perish. . . . But gradually as continence came to be regarded as a cardinal virtue, and celibacy as the nearest approach to the Divine perfection, a notion that the married state is not consistent with the functions of the clergy became general.²²

The famous scholar Lecky tells us in his *History of European Morals*: Another injurious consequence resulting in a great measure from asceticism was a tendency to depreciate extremely the character and position of woman. . . . Woman was represented as the door of hell, as the mother of all human ills. She should be ashamed at the very thought that she is a woman.²³

Lecky writes further: The ascetic ideal, however, remained unchanged. To abstain from marriage or in marriage to abstain from a perfect union was regarded as a proof of sanctity and marriage was viewed in its coarsest and most degraded form. Two consequences of this way of regarding marriage were a *very strong disapproval of second marriages and a very strong desire to secure celibacy in the clergy.*²⁴

22. Edward Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage*, op.cit., p. 154-155.

23. W. E. H. Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Watt & Co., London, 1946, Vol. II, pp. 141-142.

24. *Ibid*, Part, II, p. 136.

But this suppression of natural human instinct of marriage had had its most serious repercussions on the Church dignitaries. Nature asserted itself and celibacy vows were broken with impunity, and the priests indulged in most scandalous type of unnatural relations.

Lecky tells us further in his *History of European Morals*, that Pope John XXIII was accused for incest and adultery, the abbot-elect of St. Augustine at Canterbury was said to have seventeen illegitimate children in a single village; or an abbot of St. Pelayo in Spain was proved to have kept no less than *seventy concubines*. Henry III Bishop of Liege had sixty five illegitimate children. . . *The writers of the Middle Ages are full of accounts of nunneries that were like brothels, of vast multitude of infanticide within their walls and that inveterate prevalence of incest among the clergy which rendered it necessary again and again to issue the most stringent enactments that priests should not be permitted to live with their mothers or sisters.*²⁵

So the pendulum swung from one extreme of depreciation of marriage to the other extreme of unbridled sexual indulgences. Then a change, drastic change, has come over the attitude of the Church.

Calverton writes in his work *'The Bankruptcy of Marriage'*: The attitude of the Christian Church itself has undergone a surprising change. In the early centuries of its era "*married life was treated as absolutely unlawful*". St. Ambrose declared that "*married people ought to blush at the state in which they are living*", and Tertullian maintained that *the disappearance of man was better than his propagation by sexual intercourse*. The Christian hatred of woman strengthened her subjection. "*Marriage and propagation are of Satan*", was one of the famous proclamation of the priest Saturninus. Today the Church has reversed its attitude completely. Marriage is now lawful, and

25. *Ibid*, Part, II, p. 139.

priests and preachers confirm and bless it. The words of Tertulian are repudiated. It is the multiplication and not the extinction of mankind which is embodied in its opposition to birth control and abortion. The recent consideration of companionate marriage by certain Protestant sects may be only a slight indication of what later will prove another very great change.²⁶

Westermarck writes in his book *The Future of Marriage in Western Civilization*:

On various occasions Luther speaks of polygyny *with considerable toleration*. It had not been forbidden by God; even Abraham, who was a "perfect Christian", had two wives. God had allowed such marriages to certain men of the Old Testament in particular circumstances. . . . *Certain Christian sects have even advocated polygyny with fervour*. In 1531 the Anabaptists openly preached at Munster that *he who wants to be a true Christian must have several wives*. Among the Mormons the duty of polygyny, when economic resources permitted, was urged upon the men, both as a means of securing external salvation and a step in harmony with their earthly interests.²⁷

Westermarck writes at another place: A return to polygyny, the natural relationship between the sexes, would remedy many evils: prostitution, venereal diseases, abortion, the misery of illegitimate children, the misfortune of millions of unmarried women resulting from the disproportion between the sexes, adultery, and even jealousy since the disregarded wife would find consolation in her cognisance of not being secretly deceived by her husband.²⁸

26. V. F. Calverton, *The Bankruptcy of Marriage*, John Hamilton, London, pp. 305-306.

27. Edward Westermarck, *The Future of Marriage in Western Civilization*, Macmillan & Co., London, 1936, pp. 173-174.

28. *Ibid*, pp. 178-179.

The upshot of these preliminary remarks is that due to the military clash between Christendom and the World of Islam and religious rivalry between Christianity and Islam most of the Orientalists are very much prejudiced and biassed in their writings about Islam, and they intentionally try to blacken the fair name of the Holy Prophet and tarnish his glory.

And, secondly, polygamy and concubinage were duly practised by the great Hebrew Prophets and kings, and Christian attempts to depreciate marriage and uphold celibacy and thus stifle the basic human instinct of marriage resulted in miserable failure, and the West is now thinking of upholding polygamy and legalising it.

Now we come to the wild criticism of the plural marriages of the Holy Prophet. We do not have the heart to quote all the scurrilous remarks and dirty allegations which have been made against the Holy Prophet. However we quote a few authors with a heavy heart.

The Jewish Encyclopaedia records:

In his married life, as well as in his religious life a change seems to have come over Mohammed after his removal to Medina.²⁹

Philip Schaff states in the *History of the Christian Church*: Muhammad was a slave of sensual passion. . . The motive of his excess in polygamy were his sensuality which grew with his years, and his desire for male offspring.³⁰

Gibbon writes in his *Decline and Fall of Roman Empire*: In his

29. Isidore Singer & al, *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, Funk and Wagnallis Coy., New York, 1916, Vol. VIII, p. 647.

30. Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, New York, 1888, Vol. IV, p. 169.

private conduct Mohammed indulged the appetites of a man and abused the claims of a Prophet.³¹

Gustav Weil writes in his *History of the Islamic Peoples: Muhammad's harem occupies a conspicuous place in the Qur'an... It shows how easily the Prophet, in matters sensual, was carried away by his passions.*³²

Will Durant states in his *Age of Faith: Women and power were his only indulgences.*³³

Nabia Abbot states in her work *A'ishah the Beloved of Muhammad: Muhammed, the prayerful and perfumed prophet of Islam was avowedly a great lover of ladies.*³⁴

For refutation of these wild allegations of sensuality levelled against the Holy Prophet we can do no better than quote the considered views of various other Western scholars who are not carried off their feet by prejudice and bias. We also quote the views of certain otherwise bigoted writers, who could not help but admit the high moral character of the Holy Prophet and the real motives which prompted him to marry more than one wife. We divide the life of the Holy Prophet into four periods as under:

- (1) Life up to the age of 25 years.
- (2) From 25 years to 50 years.

31. Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, The Modern Library, New York, Vol. II, p. 694.

32. Gustav Weil, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, Calcutta, 1914, pp. 18-19.

33. Will Durant, *The Age of Faith*, New York, 1950, pp. 172-173.

34. Nabia Abbot, *Aish'ah, The Beloved of Muhammad*, Chicago, 1944, Second Impression, p. vii Preface.

- (3) From 51 years to 54 years.
- (4) From 55 years to 63 years.

We deal with the first part of the life up to the age of 25.

The Holy Prophet was born in a society which may be called a 'free society' where there was no bar to having extramarital relations. The Prophet was very handsome and well-built too. However, his youthful life up to the age of 25, when passions are very strong, presents a spectacle of very chaste and unblemished moral life. No critic Eastern or Western has been able to raise his little finger of scorn in this period of his life.

We quote some observations of various Western scholars about the high moral character of the Prophet before his marriage to Khadija.

Sir William Muir, a very hostile critic, admits: All authorities agree in ascribing to the youth of Mahomet a modesty of deportment and purity of manners rare among the people of Mecca.³⁵

P. de Lacy Johnstone writes in his work *Muhammad and His Power*: He enjoyed a high character among the citizens and nothing stands against his name.³⁶

Rev. Marcus Dods states in his work *Mohammed, Buddha and Christ*: His unmarried youth had been exceptionally pure.³⁷

35. Sir William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, Smith, Elder & Co., London, 1861, Vol. II, p. 14.

36. P. De Lacy Johnstone, *Muhammad and His Power*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1901, p. 51.

37. Rev. Marcus Dods, *Mohammed, Buddha and Christ*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1878, p. 23.

Emile Dermengham records in his *Life of Mahomet*: Mahomet's youth has been chaste.³⁸

We come to the *second period* of the Prophet's life from 25 years to 50 years.

At the age of 25 he married Khadija who was 40 years old. Before her marriage to the Prophet she had been married twice and had children born out of these unions. The Prophet remained wedded to her for full 25 years and all his children except Ibrahim were born to her. Their married life was a model of conjugal happiness, and deep affection. The Prophet did not marry any other wife till Khadija lived.

Leon Nemoy writes in the *Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia*: Undoubtedly a marriage of convenience (Khadija on her part needed an energetic and experienced businessman to manage her mercantile interests) it developed, however, into a nearly ideal companionship of affection and mutual respect. Mohammed took no other wives during Khadija's lifetime and ever thought of her in terms of deep gratitude.³⁹

Rev. Hughes records in his classic *Dictionary of Islam*: The house of Muhammad and Khadija was bright and happy one and their marriage fortunate and fruitful.⁴⁰

The Holy Prophet used to praise Khadija very much. A'isha said that she felt very jealous and said once to the Prophet. "Has

38. Emile Dermengham, *The Life of Mahomet*, Translated by Arabella York), George Routledge & Sons, London, 1930, p. 52.

39. Issac Landman & al, edited by, *The Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia*, Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia Coy., New York, 1942, Vol. VII, p. 609, article 'Mohammad',

40. Rev. T. P. Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, London, 1885, p. 969.

not Allah given you a better wife than her?" The Prophet got very angry and said, "By Allah, He has not given me a better wife than her. She became a Muslim when others disbelieved in me. She testified to my truthfulness when others called me a liar. She gave me all her wealth when others made my life miserable. She bore me children when I did not have children from my other wives".⁴¹

We give the remarks of some authors on the happy conjugal life of the Prophet with Khadija:

Emile Dermengham states that the Prophet "remained faithful to one wife much older than himself for a quarter of a century".⁴²

John Davenport records in his *An Apology for Muhammad and Koran*: Mohammed's gratitude to her memory survived her to his latest hour.⁴³

41. Zurqani, *Sharh al-Mawahib al-Ladunniya*, (On the margin Zad al-Ma'ad) Matba'a al-Azhariya, Cairo, 1320 A.H., Vol. III, p. 224.

42. Emile Dermengham, *The Life of Mahomet*, op.cit., p. 52.

43. John Davenport, *An Apology for Mohammed and the Koran*, (Reprint of London Edition, 1869,) Lahore, 1975, p. 24.

SAUDA BINT ZAM'A

We come to the third period of the Holy Prophet's life from 51 to 54 years.

After the death of Khadija Khawla bint Hakim suggested to the Prophet that he should marry. When the Prophet enquired as to with whom she proposed his marriage. She suggested Sauda bint Zam'a and A'isha bint Abi Bakr. The Prophet agreed to the proposition. Sauda was married and Ayesha, being a minor was simply betrothed. Sauda was the widow of Sukran b. Amru, one of early followers who had emigrated to Abyssinia to escape persecution at the hands of Quraish.

Sauda was a widow of mature age. She came in the Prophet's household three years before the Hijrah and remained *with him for four years as his only wife.*

About her marriage with the Prophet W. Montgomery Watt writes: In the case of Saudah, whom he married in Mecca, the chief aim may have been to provide for the widow of a faithful Muslim.⁴⁴

Sir William Muir states about this marriage: From the time of their marriage shortly after the death of Khadija she continued to be for three or four years the only wife of Mahomet.⁴⁵

So the Holy Prophet had only one wife up to the age of fifty four, and there was nothing sensual in contracting marriage with Sauda bint Zam'a.

44. W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1956, p. 287; *Idem, Muhammad at Mecca*, Oxford, 1953, p. 137.

45. Sir William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, op.cit., Vol. III, p. 15.

A'ISHA BINT ABU BAKR

We come to the Prophet's marriage with *A'isha*.

A'isha was the only virgin wife of the Holy Prophet. At the time of her betrothal she was a minor girl of about seven years of age.

Sir William Muir, while speaking about Prophet's marriage with Sauda, writes about the marriage with A'isha in these words: "About the same time he contracted a second marriage with Ayesha, the young daughter of Abu Bakr – a connection mainly designed to cement the attachment with his bosom-friend. The yet undeveloped charms of Ayesha could hardly have swayed the heart of Mahomet".⁴⁶

Washington Irving admits: Perhaps he (i.e. the Prophet) sought, by this alliance, to grapple Abu Bekr still more strongly to his side.⁴⁷

John Davenport records in his *Apology for Mohammed and the Koran*: . . . the principal object of this last union being to cement still more strongly their mutual attachment.⁴⁸

Rev. W. Montgomery Watt states: Since Muhammad had a political aim in nearly all his marriages, he must have seen in this one a means of strengthening the ties between himself and

46. *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 208.

47. Washington Irving, *The Life of Mahomet*, Everyman's Library, London, 1949, p. 70.

48. John Devenport, *An Apology for Mohammad and the Koran*, *op.cit.*, p. 25.

Abu Bakr, his chief follower.⁴⁹

It is admitted by all scholars that A'isha occupies a prominent place amongst the most distinguished traditionists and hundreds of traditions are recorded as having been reported by her from the mouth of the Prophet.

She was often consulted on theological and juridical subjects.⁵⁰

So in this marriage with A'isha there was a desire to cement the bonds of friendship with Abu Bakr as well as the desire for propagating the teachings of Islam, particularly delicate matters relating to womenfolk, through the Prophet's wives.

It appears that the Holy Prophet must have noticed early the precocious nature of A'isha. So in this marriage with A'isha nothing of the sensual was involved.

49. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, 1960, Vol. I, pp. 307-308, article A'isha bint Abi 'Bakr' by W. Montgomery Watt.

50. H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kraemers, *The Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, article 'A'isha' by M. Seligsohn, pp. 25-26; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, 1960, article 'A'isha bint Abu Bakr', Vol. I, pp. 307-308.

HAFSA BINT UMAR B. AL-KHATTAB

We come to the Holy Prophet's marriage with Hafsa bint Umar b. al-Khattab.

Hafsa was married to Khunays b. Hudhafa al-Sahmi. On return from Badr he died at Medina. Umar offered her hand in marriage to Abu Bakr and Uthman b. Affan, but both declined. The Prophet proposed marrying her and Umar readily agreed. Later on Umar complained to Abu Bakr for his refusal. Abu Bakr said that 'the Prophet had made a mention of marrying Hafsa and as it was a secret at that time so I did not like to disclose it'.

As regards this marriage various Western writers are of the view that this marriage, too, was contracted by the Prophet for cementing his friendship with Umar, his devoted and zealous follower.

In his article on 'Hafsa' in the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Henri Lammens, a bigoted priest, admits: Muhammad who wished to secure Umar's co-operation, married her after the "day of Uhud".⁵¹

Sir William Muir, a bitter critic of the Prophet reluctantly admits that with this marriage the Prophet "bound closer his friendship with her father".⁵²

51. *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, op.cit., pp. 125-126, article 'Hafsa' by H. Lammens.

52. William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, op.cit., Vol. III, p. 151.

P. De Lacy Johnstone writes: By his own marriage to Hafsa Muhammad allied himself as closely to Omar as he already was to Abu Bakr.⁵³

John Bagot Glubb records: He (i.e. the Prophet) had already married A'isha, the daughter of Abu Bekr, and his marriage to the daughter of Omar may perhaps be ascribed to his desire to bind his two principal assistants more closely to himself.⁵⁴

In the article on 'Hafsa', in the *New Edition of Encyclopaedia of Islam*, L. Veccia Vaglieri states: It is very likely that the Prophet was led to contract this marriage for reasons of policy, wishing to strengthen his bonds with such a valuable supporter as Umar, all the more so because shortly before he had asked in marriage Abu Bakr's daughter, A'ishah.⁵⁵

So by this marriage with Hafsa the Prophet wanted to strengthen his friendship with Umar and no sensuality was involved.

53. P. De Lacy Johnstone, *Muhammad and His Power*, op.cit., p. 98.

54. John Bagot Glubb, *The Life and Times of Muhammad*, New York, 1971, p. 235.

55. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1971 Edition, Vol. III, pp. 63-65, article 'Hafsa bint Umar'.

ZAINAB BINT KHUZAIMA

We come to the Prophet's marriage with Zainab bint Khuzaima.

She was married to Tufail bin Harith who divorced her. Then Ubaida b. Harith married her. He was killed at the battle of Badr. The widow needed help and succour and the Prophet married her in Ramadhan 4 A.H. but she died a few months later.

While writing of Sawda bint Zam'ah W. Montgomery Watt states that the "Chief aim may have been to provide for the widow of a faithful Muslim, as also in the later marriage with Zaynab bint Khuzamah!"⁵⁶

She was 30 years old at the time of her marriage with the Prophet. So in the marriage, too, no question of sensuality was involved.

56. W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, op.cit., p. 287.

UMM SALMA BINT ABI UMAYYAH

We come to the Prophet's marriage with Umm Salma bint Abi Umayyah.

Sir William Muir writes: Umm Salma was the widow of Abu Salma to whom she had borne several children. Both had been exiles to Abyssinia from whence they had returned to Medina. At Ohod Abu Salma was wounded. . . It was eight months after the battle of Ohod when Abu Salma died; and four months later, Mahomet married his widow. One of her children was also brought up by him.⁵⁷

Other reports state that she had several children and the Prophet knowing her plight, undertook to be a father to all her children. She was twenty nine years old at the time of her marriage to the Holy Prophet.

It may be stated that out of several Muslims who had taken refuge in Abyssinia some had died there. Their widows and children who were left without their bread-winners needed help and succour. By marrying such widows the Prophet discharged his obligations to the families of his dead followers who had suffered because of their loyalty to Islam.

The Quraysh had sent a deputation to the Negus of Abyssinia for handing over these fugitives to them but the kind-hearted ruler declined to comply with their request.

57. Sir William Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, op.cit., Vol. III, p. 227.

In his article on Islam in the work *'Religious Systems of the World'*, Dr. Leitner says: The king did not give them up to their persecutors. Some of them died in Abyssinia and their widows, who would otherwise would have perished, Muhammed took into his household. The idea that the Prophet had any improper intention in so doing is without foundation; especially if we consider that he had given abundant proof during his youth of continence.⁵⁸

So in the marriage with Umm Salma nothing of sensual was involved.

58. *The Religious Systems of the World*, Swan Sonnenschein, London, 1905, pp. 298-299.

UMM HABIBAH BINT ABU SUFYAN

We come to the case of Umm Habibah bint Abu Sufyan.

Her name was Ramlah. She was daughter of Abu Sufyan, the implacable enemy of the Holy Prophet. She was married to Ubaidallah bin Jahsh. He emigrated with Umm Habibah to Abyssinia but turned Christian there. However Umm Habibah remained firm in her faith in Islam.

When the Prophet heard about her plight he sent a message to the Negus with marriage proposal with Umm Habibah. This was agreed to by her.

Washington Irving writes in his work *The Life of Mahomet*: The widow was the daughter of Mahomet's arch-enemy, Abu Sofian; and the Prophet conceived that a marriage with the daughter might soften the hostility of her father — a political consideration.⁵⁹

William Muir, admits that the Prophet "hoped to make Abu Sofian, the father of Umm Habibah, more favourable to his cause".⁶⁰

Umm Habibah was 35 years old at the time of her marriage with the Prophet.

Emile Dermengham writes: Being no longer young, her status in the harem was not important, but the marriage, apart from giving

59. *Washington Irving, The Life of Mahomet, op.cit., pp. 155-156.*

60. *Sir William Muir, The Life of Mahomet, op.cit., Vol. IV, p. 59.*

an honourable position to the widow of a well-known man, it brought together the Prophet and her father.⁶¹

In his article on 'Abu Sufyan' in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, W. Montgomery Watt states that Muhammad's marriage to his daughter may have softened his heart. . . Certainly when Muhammad marched on Mecca soon after (Hudaibiya) Abu Sufyan along with Hakim of Hizam came out and submitted to him (apparently now becoming a Muslim).⁶²

So the question of providing relief and succour to the needy widow who was stranded in a foreign land and political considerations were at work in contracting this marriage with Umm Habibah and no sensuality was involved.

We shall deal with the marriage of Zainab bint Jahsh at the end because lot of malicious and venomous allegations have been levelled against the Holy Prophet which require some detailed examination and refutation.

61. Emile Dermengham, *The Life of Mahomet*, op.cit., pp. 284-285.

62. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1960 Edition, Vol. II, p. 151, article 'Abu Sufyan' by W. Montgomery Watt.

JUWARIYA BINT HARITH

We now come to the case of Juwariya bint Harith.

According to W. Montgomery Watt Juwariya was the daughter of the chief of the tribe of al-Mustaliq with whom Muhammad had been having special trouble.⁶³

Sir William Muir tells us in his *Life of Mahomet* that the Bani Mustalick, a branch of Khuza'a, hitherto friendly to his cause were now raising forces with the view of joining the Coreish in the threatened attack on Medina. He resolved by a bold inroad to prevent this design.⁶⁴

In the battle of Mariysah the enemy were worsted and a rich booty fell to the lot of Muslims. Juwariya fell to the lot of Thabit bin Qais Ansari. Taking her social standing in view he fixed nine ounces of gold as her ransom money. Juwariya came to the Prophet for help in raising the ransom.

The Prophet said to her, "How about my paying your ransom money and marrying you?" She agreed and the ransom was paid and the Prophet married her.

Commenting on this Sir William Muir writes: As soon as the marriage was noised abroad, the people said that the Bani Mustalick were now become their relatives, and that the rest of the prisoners should go free, as Juweiria's dower; and 'no woman,

63. W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, op.cit., p. 287.

64. Sir William Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, op.cit., Vol. III, p. 237.

said Ayesha', telling the story in after days, 'was ever a greater blessing to her people than this Juweiria'.⁶⁵

Washington Irving states: . . . her ransom was paid by the Prophet to Thabet; her kindred were liberated by the Moslems, to whose lot they had fallen; most of them embraced the faith.⁶⁶

Emile Dermengham writes: To confirm this alliance and supply a dower for the fiance the Mussulmeen released a hundred prisoners. El-Hareth, the Sheikh, his son and several others of the Bani Mostaliq were immediately converted.⁶⁷

Sir John Glubb says in his book *Life and Times of Muhammad*: . . . it won over Bani Mustaliq to Islam more successfully than a battle.⁶⁸

So in the case of this marriage political consideration weighed in the matter. The tribe was won over and enmity turned into friendship and blood relationship. Hence no question of sensuality was involved in this case too.

65. *Ibid*, Vol. III, p. 243.

66. Washington Irving, *Complete Works of Washington Irving*, Vol. VII, *Mahomet and His Successors*, Society of English and French Literature, New York, 1849, p. 116.

67. Emile Dermengham, *Life of Mahomet*, op.cit., p. 243.

68. Sir John Glubb, *Life and Times of Muhammad*, New York, 1971, p. 263.

SAFIYA BINT HUYAYY

We now come to the case of Safiya bint Huyayy.

She belonged to the Jewish tribe of Bani Nadhir. Her father Huyayy b. Akhtab was one of those who had settled at Khaibar.

Safiya had been the wife of Sallam b. Mashkam who had divorced her. Then Kinana b. al-Rabi had married her at the end of 6th A. H. or early 7th A. H.

When the Prophet attacked Khaibar to thwart the machinations of the Jews they were overwhelmed. Safiya fell to the lot of Dihya al-Kalbi as a war prisoner. The Prophet redeemed her from Dihya and her dower consisted in her emancipation.

The Prophet proposed marriage to her which she accepted and became a Muslim. It appears that the Prophet wanted to soften the hostility of the Jews by entering into blood-relationship with them as he had done in the case of Bani Mustaliq.

Commenting on this marriage W. Montgomery Watt writes in his work *Muhammad at Medina*: There may also have been political motives in these unions with Jewesses Safiya and Rayhana.⁶⁹

So in this case, too, no sensuality was involved.

69. W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, op.cit., p. 288.

MAIMUNA BINT HARITH

We now come to the case of Maimuna bint Harith.

Masud bin Amru Thaqafi had married Maimuna in the Jahiliya, then divorced her. Then Abu Rahm bin Abdul Uzza married her. He died and then the Prophet married her in 7 A.H.

When the Prophet had gone on a lesser pilgrimage after Hudaibiya he thought of marrying Maimuna. He sent Aris b. Kholi and Abu Rafi'i to Abbas b. Abdul Muttalib and sought the hand of Maimuna in marriage. She was living with Abbas. This was agreed to and the marriage was solemnised in a village near Mecca.

About this marriage various Western authors have expressed the following viewpoints:

In his article on "Maimuna" in the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* Frants Buhl states that the Prophet "wooed her primarily, no doubt, for political reasons."⁷⁰

Sir William Muir writes in his *Life of Mahomet*: Another sister of Maimuna was the mother of Khalid bin Walid. Not long after the marriage of his aunt to the Prophet, Khalid repaired to Medina, and gave in his adhesion to the cause of Islam.⁷¹

Emile Dermengham records in his *Life of Mahomet* that this marriage established an excellent relationship between the

70. *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, op.cit., article 'Maimuna', p. 315.

71. Sir William Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, op.cit., Vol. IV, p. 91.

Prophet and her nephew, Khalid b. Walid, the distinguished general.⁷²

Washington Irving writes in his *Life of Mahomet*: This was doubtless another marriage of policy, for Maimuna was fifty-one years of age and a widow, but the connection gained him two powerful proselytes. One was Khalid Ibn al-Walid, a nephew of the widow, an intrepid general . . .

The other proselyte was Khaled's friend, 'Amr bin al'Aas. . .⁷³

Sir William Muir writes at another place: The position of Mahomet at Mecca was greatly strengthened by the accession of such leading men.⁷⁴

So this marriage was contracted for political reasons and no sensuality was involved.

Marriage with Maimuna was the last marriage contracted by the Holy Prophet.

72. Emile Dermengham, *The Life of Mahomet*, op.cit., p. 285.

73. Washington Irving, *Life of Mahomet*, op.cit., pp. 160-161.

74. Sir William Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, op.cit., Vol. IV, p.92.

ZAINAB BINT JAHSH

Now we deal with the question of the marriage of Zainab bint Jahsh with the Holy Prophet.

This marriage has been made the target of most hostile, scurrilous and venomous remarks against the Prophet. We shall show how bigotry and malice can stoop down to any depths to sully the honour of the Holy Prophet.

Before we take up the question of the marriage of Zainab bint Jahsh with the Holy Prophet we first state the facts about the marriage of Zainab with Zaid bin Haritha, after whose divorcing of Zainab the Prophet married her.

Zaid bin Harith was made a slave in early life. He was brought to Mecca and purchased by Khadija who presented him to the Prophet. He treated him so nicely and lovingly that when Zaid's father came to redeem him, he refused to go along with him and preferred to remain with the Prophet, who freed him and adopted him as his son. Zaid was known as Zaid bin Muhammad.⁷⁵

Zainab bint Jahsh was the daughter of Umaymah bint Abdul Muttalib, aunt of the Prophet, sister of his father Abdullah b. Abdul Muttalib.⁷⁶

In accordance with the notions of Islam of doing away with the distinctions of caste and colour, of high and low, of free men and slaves, the Prophet thought of marrying Zainab bint Jahsh, his first cousin, with Zaid bin Haritha, his freedman and adopted son.

75. Ibn Sa'd, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 40ff.

76. Ibn Sa'd, *op.cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 307.

According to a version of Ibn Abbas, cousin of the Prophet, recorded in Tabarani, the Prophet proposed marriage to Zainab. She thought that he himself was asking her hand in marriage. When, however, she learnt that the Prophet was asking her hand for Zaid bin Haritha she refused, felt uneasy, and said, "I am from Quraish. I don't like it. I am better than him in lineage".⁷⁷

In some other version she is reported to have said, "O Apostle of Allah, I am from Quraish. I am the daughter of your aunt. I don't like him for myself".⁷⁸

Then the verse of the Quran was revealed:

"And it becometh not a believing man and a believing woman that when Allah and His Messenger have decided an affair (for them) that they should (after that) claim any say in their affairs; and whoso is rebellious to Allah and His Messenger he verily goeth astray in error manifest."⁷⁹

All the Commentators of the Holy Qur'an are of the unanimous view that this verse was revealed in connection with Zainab's refusal to marry Zaid bin Haritha.⁸⁰ However when Zainab and her brother heard this verse they acquiesced and entrusted the matter to the Prophet who solemnised the marriage of Zainab bint Jahsh with Zaid bin Haritha.

77. Zurqani, *Sharh al-Mawahib al-Laduniyya*, Vol. III, p. 245.

78. *Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani*, Lahore Reprint, Vol. 22, p. 23.

79. Surah 33: 30.

80. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, (Matba' al-Istiqama, Cairo, 1375 A.H.) Vol. III, p. 489; *Tafsir Khazin* (On the Margin Ma'alam Tanzeel) Cairo, 1395 A.H./1955 A.D., Vol. IV, pp. 261ff; *Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani*, Vol. 22, p. 23.

However this marriage did not run its smooth course and ended in a divorce. More than one author has thrown light on the reasons for the dissolution of this marriage.

It is recorded in the *Tafsir Khazin*: Zaid came to the Holy Prophet and said, "I want to divorce Zainab." The Prophet enquired, "What is the matter with you? Do you find anything bad in her?"

Zaid replied, "No, Apostle of Allah! I have seen nothing but good in her. But she takes too much airs on her noble lineage and torments me with her tongue." The Prophet said, "Keep your wife to yourself, and fear Allah in her case."

But Zaid divorced Zainab.⁸¹

Zurqani states that Zaid divorced her because of his dislike of her on account of her taking airs on her high pedigree.⁸²

Baladhuri writes in his *Ansab al-Ashraf*: Zaid complained to the Prophet and said that Zainab is bad-tempered and asked the Prophet's permission for divorcing her. But the Prophet said to him, "Keep thy wife to thyself and fear Allah."⁸³

On the other hand it must be stated in defence of Zainab that in deference to the wishes of the Holy Prophet she had agreed to marry Zaid. Zaid was of swarthy complexion, short statured with a flat nose.⁸⁴

81. *Tafsir Khazin*, Vol. IV, p. 261.

82. Zurqani, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, p. 245.

83. al-Baladhuri *Ansab al-Ashraf*, Vol. I, pp. 434ff.

84. Ibn Sa'd, Vol. III, p. 44.

Whatever may be the case the fact remains that there was incompatibility of temperaments between Zaid and Zainab, and the couple could not pull on for long and the marriage ended in divorce of Zainab by Zaid.

All the exhortations of the Prophet to Zaid to keep his wife to himself failed in their purpose.

Mirza Abu'l Fazl throws some light on the role of the Holy Prophet in this matter in these words: . . . But from the moment it was clear that the relation of Zaid and Zainab could not last long it became a cause for grave anxiety to Mohammed. He had arranged the marriage when the people of Zainab were averse to it, and now he was to be the cause of disgrace to the family. Not long after, his apprehension proved too true; Zaid divorced Zeinab.

The position of Mohammed at this juncture may well be imagined. In fact, he was responsible for this "unequal" union in a world divided by colour and caste, which had extinguished the spark of human instinct of love and affection; and he certainly owed it to her people who were more than humiliated and disgraced by this divorce of their daughter by a freedman, which must have touched their sense of honour and not a little injured them in the eyes of their people, to undo all by manfully coming forward to accept the hand of Zeinab; and amidst the great rejoicing of her people Mohammed married Zeinab.⁸⁵

Before the Prophet actually married Zainab he had some apprehensions that since the pagan Arabs considered their adopted sons as their real sons his idea of marrying Zainab bint

85. Mirza Abu'l Fazl, edited by, Godfrey Higgins' *Apology for Mohammed* (With Introduction, Critical Notes, Appendices, and a Chapter on Islam) Lahore (Reprint of London Edition 1829), pp. cxxxix-cx1 introduction.

Jahsh might not provoke some adverse comments from the common folks. At this juncture Allah revealed the following verses of the Qur'an whereby he was told not to fear the common folks but to fear Allah alone. He was further commanded as a duty to marry Zainab, wife of his adopted son, so that this age-old pagan custom of considering marriage with the wives of their adopted sons as something unlawful and sacrilegious might be done away with, as Muhammad "is not the father of any male member of the community."

The verses run as under:

"And recall what time thou wast saying unto him on whom Allah had conferred favour and thou hadst conferred favour: 'Keep thy wife to thyself and fear Allah'; and thou wast concealing in thy mind that which Allah was going to disclose, and thou wast fearing mankind whereas Allah had a better right that Him thou shouldst fear. Then when Zaid had performed his purpose concerning her, We wedded her to thee, so that there should be no blame for believers in respect of wives of their adopted sons, when they have performed their purpose concerning them.

No blame there is upon the Prophet in that which Allah hath decreed for him. That hath been Allah's dispensation with those who have passed away afore – and ordinance of Allah hath been a destiny destined.

Those who preached the message of Allah and feared Him, and feared none save Allah, and Allah sufficeth as a Reckoner.

Muhammad is not the father of any of your males, but the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets; And Allah of everything is ever the Knower.⁸⁶

86. Surah 33: 37-40.

The Prophet carried out this directive of Allah by marrying Zainab bint Jahsh. It did not provoke much adverse comments by the people at large. This has, however, been the subject of most hostile, malicious and scurrilous comments by a large majority of the Orientalists on the basis of a "cock and bull" story fabricated by an evil-minded person.

The story is recorded in the *Tabaqat* of Ibn Sa'd coming from the narration of his teacher, Muhammad b. Umar al-Waqidi.

With a heavy heart we reproduce the version of Ibn Sa'd for purposes of its refutation: 'We are informed by Muhammad b. Umar al-Waqidi who said that it was related to me by Abdullah bin Amar al-Aslami on the authority of Muhammad bin Yahya bin Habban who said: The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) came to the house of Zaid bin Haritha looking for him. And the people used to call him Zaid bin Muhammad.

Whenever the Prophet missed Zaid he would at once say, "Where is Zaid?"

He (i.e. the Prophet) came to the house of Zaid looking for him but he did not find him there. And Zainab bint Jahsh, his wife, stood up before the Prophet in her working clothes. The Prophet turned his face from her. She said, "O Apostle of Allah! Zaid is not here. By my parents, you please come in." The Prophet declined to enter the house.

Then it was said to Zainab that the Apostle of Allah is at your door. Verily she made haste to dress, stood up at once and the Prophet liked her. He turned back and was saying in low-tone some words which could not be understood except when he was talking aloud, "Praise be to Allah, the Transformer of Hearts."

When Zaid came to the house his wife informed him that the Apostle of Allah had come to their house. Then Zaid said, "And

did you not ask him to enter the house?" She said, "I said so to him but he declined." He said, "Did you hear him say anything?" She said, "When he turned his back I heard him say something slowly which I could not understand but when he spoke loudly I heard him say, "Praise be to Allah the Great, the Transformer of hearts!"

Zaid came to the Prophet and said, "O Apostle of Allah! I have been informed that you had come to my house, then why did you not enter the house? By my parents, perhaps Zainab has appealed to you. I shall part company with her."

The Prophet said, "Keep your wife to yourself." After that Zaid did not carry on amicably with her. He again came to the Prophet and told him that he was going to leave her. The Prophet again told him, "Hold fast to your wife."

But Zaid separated from her, left her and she became lawful for marriage. (In other words, her waiting period was over).

He said, when the Prophet was sitting talking to A'isha he came under the spell of revelation and when it was over he was smiling and saying, "Who will go to Zainab and give glad tidings to her that Allah has betrothed her to me from the High Heaven?" Then he recited the following verses of the Quran:

"And when thou saidst to him to whom Allah had shown favour and to whom thou hadst shown a favour: 'Keep the wife to thyself', till the whole story.

A'ishah said that strange thoughts came to her as 'we had been receiving reports of her beauty. And moreover the most important matter was that Allah had married her to the Prophet from the high heaven and she would take pride over us in this respect.'

A'ishah said further, then Salma, the servant of the Prophet, went to Zainab in haste and informed her about the verses of the Qur'an. Zainab gave her the silver trinklets she was wearing.⁸⁷

We deal with this story from the points of view of *Riwayat* (i.e. veracity of the narrator and the chain of narrators) and *Dariyat* (on the basis of examination of the *matn* or text of the story).

We take up the case of Mohammad bin Umar al-Waqidi first.

We quote the views of various reputable scholars, critics and connoisseurs of Hadith in this respect:

Imam Shafi'i, one of the most penetrating brains of Islam, a great jurist and versatile scholar said,

"All the books of Waqidi are lies."⁸⁸

At another place he said;

There were seven persons in Medina who used to fabricate "chain of narrators". Waqidi was one of them.⁸⁹

Ibn Madini, teacher of Imam Bukhari, said:

Waqidi has got 20,000 traditions for which there is no basis or authority.⁹⁰

87. Ibn Sa'd, *op.cit.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 101-102.

88. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*, Dar'ia-tal-Maa'rif, Hyderabad Deccan, 1326 A.H. Vol. IX, p. 366.

89; *Ibid*, Vol. IX, p. 367.

90. *Ibid*, Vol. IX, p. 366.

Yahya bin Mueen said:

Waqidi has falsely imputed some 20,000 traditions to the Apostle of Allah. ⁹¹

Imam Bukhari said:

He is discarded in narration of Hadith. Ahmed b. Hanbal, Ibn Mubarak, Ibn Numeer and Isma'il b. Zakariya have discarded him. ⁹²

He said at another place:

Ahmed bin Hanbal called him a liar. ⁹³

Imam Nasa'i, author of one of the *Sihah Sittah* (Six canonical books) said:

He is considered among the 'weak' narrators who are well known for telling lies in respect of the Apostle of Allah. And they are four: Waqidi in Medina, Muqatil in Khorasan, Muhammad bin Saeed, the 'hanged one' in Syria and named the fourth also. ⁹⁴

Abu Da'ud, compiler of one of the *Sihah Sittah*, said:

I do not write traditions of Waqidi nor do I narrate on his authority. I am convinced that he forged traditions. ⁹⁵

91. Ibn Sayyid an Nas, *Uyun al-Athar*, Matba Quds, Cairo, 1356, Vol. I, p. 20.

92. *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*, Vol. IX, p. 364.

93. *Ibid*.

94. *Ibid*, Vol. IX, p. 366.

95. *Ibid*, Vol. IX, p. 367.

Ishaq b. Rahweh said:

I am of the view that he used to concoct traditions. ⁹⁶

Abu Zar'a al-Razi, Abu Bashar al-Dulabi and Uqeelee said:

He is discarded in traditions. ⁹⁷

Abu Hatim said:

He used to concoct traditions. ⁹⁸

Imam Nuwawwi said:

All have agreed that Waqidi is "weak" in reporting traditions. ⁹⁹

Dhahabi said:

All are unanimous on the unreliability of Waqidi. ¹⁰⁰

Ibn Khallikan said:

The traditions received from Waqidi are considered to be of "weak" authority and doubts have been expressed on the subject of his veracity and reliability. ¹⁰¹

96. *Ibid.*

97. *Ibid.*

98. *Ibid.*

99. *Ibid*, Vol. IX, pp. 367-368.

100. *Ibid*, Vol. IX, p. 368.

101. Ibn Khallikan, *Wafiyat al-Aayan* (al-Matba'a al-Memmonia Cairo, 1310 A.H.) Vol. I, pp. 506-507.

Ibn Sayyid an-Nas says in his *Uyun al-athar* that people have made much criticism about him. He is considered "weak" in reporting traditions and allegations of concocting *Ahadith* on his part have been levelled against hem. ¹⁰²

Waqidi is a favourite with the Orientalists since they can find lot of fabricated and concocted material in his reports. They always find excuses for praising him. But sometimes they are compelled to admit the truth about him i.e., his unreliability.

B. H. Stern says about his not laying much stress on the criticism of *Isnad*:

As far as criticism of the *isnad* is concerned al-Waqidi was not regarded with favour by the orthodox theologians and scholars of his period and later times; such people as Ibn Hanbal, al-Bukhari, Ibn Mu'in and Ibn Mubarak disapproved of him . . . It seems his fault lay in the fact that he was more interested in the *matn* rather than the *isnad*. ¹⁰³

Sir William Muir states:

Neither he (i.e. Waqidi) nor any other writers of the time was addicted to the use of reason and argument. The sole ambition of each was to collect the largest number of traditions and to transmit them with exactness

Waqidi seems to have taken as few traditions as possible from the Sunna

His great learning enabled him to assign ten different authorities

102. Ibn Sayyed an-Nas, *Uyun al-Athar* (Matba al-Quds, Cairo, 1356 A.H.) Vol. I, p. 20.

103. G. H. Stern, *Marriage in Early Islam*, London, 1939, p. 10, Introduction.

for a single tradition, with as many varying texts of the same; and to supply many interesting anecdotes which had escaped Ibn Ishaq and his other predecessors. ¹⁰⁴

In his article on "Waqidi" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* Horovitz says:

Muslim scholars reject him for Hadith proper. ¹⁰⁵

In his book *Master Historians* Angus Butterworth castigates Gibbon for his use of Waqidi's unreliable material in these words:

For the history of Mohammed he, in common with other contemporaries took without question the *dubious material to be found in the romances of al-Waqidi*. ¹⁰⁶

Even Sprenger, who is very hostile to the Prophet, admits the unreliability of al-Waqidi in these words:

According to the canons of traditional criticism Wackidi is reckoned untrustworthy, partly because he was uncritical in the choice of his authorities and not himself invariably true. ¹⁰⁷

It will be seen from the foregoing viewpoints that Waqidi used to concoct and fabricate not only Hadith but "chain of narrators"

104. Sir William Muir, *The Mohammedan Controversy and other Allied Subjects*, Edinburgh, 1897, p. 126.

105. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1933 Edition, Vol. IV, p. 19, article 'Waqidi' by J. Horovitz.

106. L. M. Angus Butterworth, *The Master Historians*, University Press, Aberdeen, 1961, p. 69.

107. Sir William Muir, *The Mohammedan Controversy and other Allied Subjects*, op.cit., p. 127.

also, and no reliance has been placed on his versions by Muslim scholars through the ages.

Even the scholars of the West whom we have quoted, admit his unreliability, some openly and candidly, others willy-nilly. Sir William Muir's remarks that he supplied *interesting anecdotes* left by Ibn Ishaq and others are a pointer in the direction that such "interesting anecdotes" must have been coined by Waqidi himself, otherwise there is no reason why Ibn Ishaq and others should have omitted to mention anything important pertaining to the Holy Prophet.

ABDULAH BIN AAMAR AL ASLAMI

Now we come to the next person in the chain of narrators- Abdullah bin Aamar al-Islami about whom the following opinions have been expressed by Muslim scholars of repute:

Ahmed b. Hanbal, Abu Zar'a, Abul 'Asim and Nasa'i have called him "weak" in narration of Hadith.

Abu Hatim said, "He is discarded in Hadith.

Yahya bin Mu'een said: He is nothing, he is "weak" in narration.

Bukhari said: People have questioned his retentive memory.

Ibn Sa'd said: He is narrating lot of Ahadith. He was called "weak" in narration.

Abu Da'ud and Dar Qutni call him "weak" in reporting Hadith.

Ibn Habban said: He used to interchange the *Isnad*, and *Matn* (text) and those which are "disconnected" hadith he would make them reach the Prophet himself. (In other words, he used to forge traditions).¹⁰⁸

Ibn Habban said at another place:

Abdullah b. 'Aamar Aslami was too much engrossed in prayers that he was unmindful of exactitude in narrating Hadith, his memory had become blunted, and he would make "unreliable"

108. *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*, op.cit., Vol. V, pp. 275-276.

traditions ascribe to the Prophet himself. When he began to make big blunders he was discarded in narration of Hadith. ¹⁰⁹

In short the unanimous verdict of Muslim scholars of Hadith is that Abdullah b. 'Aamar Aslami was not only "weak" in reporting Ahadith, had poor memory but was guilty of fabricating Hadith also as he would not only change the chain of narrators but the *matn* or text of the Hadith also and was held guilty of making "disconnected" traditions reach the Prophet himself. In other words he would falsely ascribe to the Prophet matters for which there was absolutely no authority.

109. Mahmud Ibrahim Za'ad, edited by, Ibn Habban's *Kitab al-Majroheen min al-Muhadatheen wal-Zu'afa wal Matrukeen*, Dar al-Ma'arifa, Beirut, Vol. II, p. 7.

MUHAMMAD B. YAHYA B. HABBAN

Now we come to the third person in the chain of narrators, in fact, the first person who is said to have narrated this Hadith. His name is mentioned as Muhammad b. Yahya b. Habban. In the books of 'Asma *ar-Rijal* he is said to be a reliable person.¹¹⁰

But the point is that this version of Muhammad b. Yahya b. Habban, if at all he has got anything to do with it, comes through the intermediary of two most untrustworthy and unreliable persons. Waqidi has unanimously been condemned by all critics of Hadith for his unreliability in narration of Hadith. He is also guilty of concocting Hadith as well as the chain of narrators.

And the second person in the chain of narrators, Abdullah b. 'Ammar Aslami is also reported to be "weak" in narration, had faulty memory, and made serious blunders. He is also held guilty of interchanging *matn* as well as the "chain of narrators", and also guilty of making "disconnected" traditions reach the Prophet. What reliance can therefore be placed on any tradition which may come through such an unreliable person. He may have played havoc with the "*matn*" of Hadith.

Since both al-Waqidi and Abdullah b. 'Ammar Aslami are accused of forging "chain of narrators" also it is most likely that the name of Muhammad b. Yahya b. Habban may have been falsely implicated by one of them just to lend credence to their concocted and forged story.

But the most likely possibility is that this forged and concocted story is the work of al-Waqidi who is said to have falsely imputed some 20,000 traditions to the Prophet.

110. Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, op.cit., Vol. IX, pp. 507-508.

And the most important point in this story being a fabricated one is that Waqidi died in the beginning of the third century A.H., whereas Abdullah b. 'Ammar Aslami died in 121 A.H. and Muhammad b. Yahya b. Habban died in 120 A.H.

So the first person who said to be the originator or narrator of this story died more than a century after the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. If at all Muhammad b. Yahya b. Habban has got anything to do with this tradition how he came to know of this story after the lapse of a full century. The story does not reach any Companion of the Prophet nor any member of his household.

So what reliance can be placed on a story which does not originate from a contemporary source, or, someone who may have been connected more intimately with the Holy Prophet or his family members.

On the face of it, it is a spurious piece of lie fabricated just to defame the Holy Prophet.

Now we come to the criticism of the *matn* or text of this story.

At the very outset the narrator makes a mention of the "working clothes" of Zainab in which she stood up to greet the Prophet. It may be asked whether there were any wardrobes in every hut of the wives of the Prophet which may have comprised of "working clothes" and clothes of "finer variety"? The wives of the Prophet lived a life of poverty, privation and penury. They could ill-afford to have different categories of clothes.

Then the story goes on to state Zainab told the Prophet that Zaid was not in the house and she requested him to enter the house which he declined. The matter ends here and naturally the Prophet must have turned his back to go away.

The narrator here thinks that his purpose is not served fully. Suddenly he thrusts in another version with a mean and sordid purpose in view. And it is stated:

“Then it was said to Zainab that the Apostle of Allah is at the door. She made haste to dress, stood up at once and the Prophet liked her”.

First of all where was the necessity of thrusting another version in between when the Prophet is about to go away?

Secondly, who told Zainab that the Prophet is at the door? The name of the informant is not given.

Then Zainab is made to dress up. But already the narrator has stated that she was in her “working clothes”. Then, why the necessity has arisen of dressing up again?

The insinuation is that she was not properly dressed, and the Prophet is made to like her. But Zainab was no stranger to the Prophet. She was his first cousin, daughter of his aunt. And the orders for the seclusion of women had not yet been revealed. And it is ordinary common sense that the Prophet must be visiting the house of his aunt and seeing Zainab, and, Zainab, too, must be visiting the house of the Prophet, they being so closely related to each other. Then why this cooked up story of the Prophet liking her suddenly?

If she had any attraction for the Prophet he could have had her just for the asking, marry her when she was young and virgin too. *Now when she was thirty-eight years old, past the prime of her youth and beauty the Prophet is made out as being enamoured of her.* It is a stupid piece of fabrication which has no relevance to time and age!

Then a dialogue is inserted between Zayd and Zainab to the

effect that Zayd puts the question to her, "Did you hear the Prophet say anything?" And Zainab replies, that he was saying something but she could not make out when he was speaking in low tones, but when he spoke loudly he was saying, "Praise be to Allah, the Transformer of Hearts."

The point is that when Zayd returned home and learnt that the Prophet had been to his house he could have enquired from Zainab whether he had given any message? Instead of that Zayd is made to say, "Did you hear him say anything?". The narrator here wants to put in a sordid story, and, that is why the dialogue has been worked out to fit in with that scheme, otherwise this question is not at all relevant to the situation.

And the fabrication touches the bottom when the narrator puts in Ayesha's mouth the following:

Strange thoughts gripped Ayesha who said that "reports of her beauty had been reaching them." etc.

The point is that Zainab was not living in some other country at some distance from Medina. She was probably living with the Prophet after the migration to Medina, or living next door to him or at the most at some distance in the city. She was fully known to the Prophet and Ayesha. The Prophet had been seeing her for the past thirty-eight years. So why all this talk of the beauty of Zainab pouring in the Prophet's family? The purpose is to defame the Prophet. The narrator is completely unmindful of hard facts and historical realities of the situation.

We have already shown from the writings of various Western writers that most of the marriages of the Prophet were made either for rendering much-needed help and succour to the widows of his dead followers, or for reasons of policy – either to cement his friendship with his devoted friends, or, to win over sworn enemies or hostile tribes. Other reasons were that the *Prophet*

wanted that the teachings of Islam, particularly those relating to womenfolk should reach them through his wives etc. None of the marriage had been contracted for beauty's sake. Excepting Ayesha who was a virgin all were widows, some of whom had two husbands, some were in their forties, some in their fifties. And none was stated to be remarkable for beauty.

As far as Zainab bint Jahsh was concerned she was thirty-eight years old at this time. She was his first cousin. The Prophet had seen her from the stage of a crawling babe to a full grown woman. If he was at all interested in her and her beauty he could have married her when young and virgin. Now when she had passed all these stages this talk of her beauty pouring in the Prophet's family, causing anguish of heart to the other ladies, is a blantant lie, a sheer concoction of the brain of a dirty mind.

And it has to be remembered that it was the Prophet himself who had arranged her marriage with Zaid b. Haritha.

In the circumstances of the case it is ludicrous and absurd to suggest that the Prophet or his family members were impressed by her beauty.

We have examined the story critically and shown that it has no relevance to either the Prophet's career, or his character and personality. The story simply flies in the face of historical realities of the case. It is a sheer piece of fabrication, the outpourings of the brain of a dirty mind who is out to malign the Prophet and sully his honour.

We leave aside the old hidden enemies of the Prophet and turn to the open enemies of today, the Orientalists who have made most malicious and scurrilous remarks about the Prophet in this case.

In fact we are told by Tor Andrae that this marriage has been the cause of most unfavourable judgment on the Prophet made in the

West. His wording is:

In the following year, the fifth after the Hegira, an event occurred in the private life of the Prophet which, perhaps more than anything else, has provoked the most unfavourable judgment of Mohammed's personality which prevails to this day in the West.¹¹¹.

We quote some two traducers of this marriage of the Prophet.:

In his article on "Zainab" in the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* V. Vacca, after admitting that Zainab was the daughter of Umaina bint Abd al-Muttalib and that it was the Prophet himself who gave her in marriage to his freedman and adopted son, Zaid bin Haritha, makes these disgraceful remarks:

In 4 A.H. Muhammad, visiting Zaid in his house, saw Zainab alone and fell in love with her. Zaid divorced her in order that the Prophet might marry her; the latter's scruples were set at rest by the revelation of Kuran 33:36-39.¹¹².

Rev. T.P. Hughes writes in his *Dictionary of Islam*:... But the relations of the Arabs to their adopted children were so strict that nothing but a revelation from heaven could settle the difficulty. It was to meet this domestic emergency that the Prophet produced the verses of the Kuran 33:36-39 to sanction his own heart's desire.¹¹³.

111. Tor Andrae, *Mohammed the Man and His Faith* (Translated by Theophil Menzel) George Allen & Unwin, London, Second Impression, 1956.

112. *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, article 'Zanab bint Jahsh' by V. Vacca, p. 653.

113. T. P. Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, London, 1885, p. 378.

We have already refuted the "cock and bull" story fabricated by Waqidi and his associates. We refute it further.

The strongest refutation of the baseless charge that the Prophet became enamoured of Zainab which forced Zaid bin Haritha to divorce his wife lies in the fact that after her waiting period (*Iddat*) was over, the Prophet asked Zaid himself to convey his proposal of marriage to Zainab bint Jahsh.

The following version comes from Anas b. Malik, the devoted servant of the Holy Prophet:

When Zaid had divorced Zainab the Prophet said to Zaid: "I do not find more trustworthy person than yourself to convey this message. You go to Zainab and convey my marriage proposal to her.

Zaid went to her house and felt respect for her. He conveyed the proposal of the Prophet for marriage with her while his back was turned towards her. He said, "Congratulations! The Prophet has made a mention of you."

She said, "I would not say anything unless I consult my Lord." And she stood up for prayer. ¹¹⁴ -

It will be clear from this unambiguous statement that if the Prophet's conduct would not have been above board he would not have asked Zaid to convey this marriage proposal to Zainab, whom Zaid had divorced.

Secondly, if there had been the least suspicion in Zaid's mind

114. Ibn Sa'd, *op.cit.*, Vol. VIII, p. 104; Muslim, *Sahih*, Kitab an Nikah, Bab Zwaj Zainab bint Jahsh, Vol. IV, pp. 148ff; Zurqani, *Sharh Mawahib al-Laduniyya*, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 245ff; Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Cairo, 1375 A.H., Vol. III, p. 491; Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani, Lahore Reprint, Vol. 22, pp. 26ff.

about the role of the Prophet in bringing about the divorce of his wife, Zainab, as alleged, Zaid was the last person to have gone to Zainab's house to convey the marriage proposal of the Prophet to her. These facts should silence all carping criticism of the Holy Prophet made in the case of Zainab.

For refutation of the baseless criticism of the Holy Prophet by these modern critics we can do no better than quote the considered views of some other Western scholars who are not carried off by blind prejudice in this matter.

R. Bosworth Smith writes in his work *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*:

His (i.e. the Prophet) marriage with Zainab, the wife of his freedman and adopted son, after her divorce from him, bears on the face of it a worse complexion; but I am satisfied, after a close examination of the circumstances of the case, that it does not bear the interpretation usually placed upon it by Christians. It raised an outcry among the Arabs of the Ignorance, *not because they suspected an intrigue on the Prophet's part to secure a divorce; but because they looked upon AN ADOPTED SON AS THOUGH HE WERE A REAL SON*, and considered therefore that the marriage fell within the prohibited degree. *This restriction, which Muhammad, for whatever cause, considered to be an arbitrary one, he abolished by this marriage, not for his own benefit only but for that of the Arabs at large . . . much that was comparatively innocent has been made to wear the appearance of deep guilt.*¹¹⁵

In the footnote Bosworth Smith writes:

It should be remembered, however, that most of Muhammad's

115. R. Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, Lahore Reprint of Second Edition, pp. 94-95.

marriages may be explained, at least, as much by his pity for the forlorn condition of the person concerned, as by other motives. *They were almost all of them with widows who were not remarkable either for their beauty or 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 age, give an additional ground to hope that *calumny or misconception has been at work in the story of Zainab?* For example, Zainab was the Prophet's cousin, and there was nothing to prevent his having married her himself when both he and she were younger, instead of giving her in marriage to his freedman . . . Muhammad, by his subsequent marriage with her removed a restriction which he thought unnecessary; and showed that at all events he saw nothing degrading in a marriage connection with a freedman. Anyhow it is certain, *if he had suspected, as Christians have done, anything in the nature of an intrigue on his part to alienate his wife's affection from him, he could not have served him as he did even to the day of his death with all the loyalty and devotion of a zealous disciple.* ¹¹⁶

As regards the promulgation of Sura 33:37–40 which, it is contended by these Orientalists, the Prophet produced to suit his purpose, the tragedy of thinking of these critics is that they do not consider Muhammad as a Prophet of God, and do not also accept the position that the Prophet could get revelations from God. They consider themselves as the favourites of heaven and Divine revelation is the sole prerogative of Jews and Christians, the Chosen of the Lord, to the entire exclusion of the rest of humanity!

R. Bosworth Smith gives a very cogent rejoinder to these critics who contend that the Prophet produced this sura for his ends. He writes:

116. *Ibid*, Footnote, pp. 95-96.

The promulgation of this Sura, whatever it proves about Muhammad seems to me to prove not his conscious insincerity, but the reverse; he had already attained his end, why then blazon his shame if shame he felt it to be? Why forge the name of God? Why lay himself open to the crushing retort which his enemies would at once bring against him? . . . Surely a single act of conscious imposture in the matter of the Kuran would have sapped all his strength. . . . It would have made such a speech as that wherein, at the very close of his life, Samuel-like he boldly challenged all Musulmans to mention aught against that they had against him, impossible.¹¹⁷

Dr. Leitner, too, refutes the baseless allegations made in the matter of Prophet's marriage with Zainab. He writes:

The story of the marriage of the Prophet with Zainab, the divorced wife of his freedman and adopted son, Zaid, has also, given rise to misconception. It may be premised that the heathen Arabs considered it wrong to marry the divorced wife of an adopted son, although they had no objection to marry the wives (excluding their own mother) of a deceased father, just as some people nowadays might not mind breaking the Decalogue who would on no account "whistle on a Sunday."

Mohammed excluded all this "nonsense" by saying that an adopted child was not a real child; and this being so, it could not be supposed to be within the prohibited degree. *To affirm this truth and not to justify a new marriage, the Prophet received a revelation which has been misconstrued as a sanction to a wrongful act.*¹¹⁸

Rev. W. Montgomery Watt, who is generally very hostile to the Prophet, admits that the underlying idea in the marriage of

117. *Ibid*, p. 102.

118. *The Religious Systems of the World*, p. 299.

the Prophet with Zainab bint Jahsh was to break the hold of old ideas over men's conduct. He writes:

We cannot be certain of all that is involved, but the most natural explanation of the Quranic passages is to suppose that there was something objectionable about the equating of adoptive sons with real ones, and that it *was desirable that there should be a complete break with the past in this respect*. The Qur'an implies that Muhammad had originally been unwilling to marry Zainab and afraid of public opinion, but had come to acknowledge the marriage as a duty imposed on him by God; his marriage demonstrated to the believers that there was no blame in marrying the divorced wife of an adoptive son. The criticism of Muhammad, then, was based on a pre-Islamic idea that was rejected by Islam, and *one aim of Muhammad in contracting the marriage was to break the hold of the old idea over men's conduct*.¹¹⁹

Watt refutes the charge that the Prophet was infatuated with Zainab's beauty. He writes:

Perhaps he (i.e. the Prophet) felt that the time had come when he was strong enough to go against public opinion and contract this marriage that was politically and socially desirable. *Despite the stories, then, it is unlikely that he was swept off his feet by physical attractiveness of Zaynab*. The other wives are said to have feared her beauty; but *her age when she married Muhammad was thirty-five or perhaps rather thirty-eight, which is fairly advanced for an Arab woman*.¹²⁰

So the story of the marriage of Zainab bint Jahsh with the Holy Prophet, which has been made the target of most scurrilous

119. W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, op.cit., p. 330.

120. *Ibid*, p. 331.

and hostile remarks stands refuted. We have refuted it on the basis of *Riwayat* as well as *Dariyat*. We have given *coup de grace* to the carping criticism of certain biased Orientalists with the cogent and well-reasoned arguments of other Western scholars who have refuted the baseless allegations levelled against the Holy Prophet.

While on the subject of the marriage of Zainab bint Jahsh with the Holy Prophet, which has been made the subject of hostile and scurrilous attacks by Western writers, we would like to mention, in passing, the double standard of these critics. We refer to the case of David, Prophet and King of Israel, who not only kept a numerous harem, but enticed away Bethsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of his loyal soldiers, whom he got murdered at the front – thus “compounding adultery with murder”, and yet he is lionized and eulogized beyond measure by Western writers, and Jesus’ descent is enthusiastically ascribed to him!

McKenzie records in his *Dictionary of the Bible*: The story of David has been edited by the omission of some disagreeable of features; his bandit life, his adultery with Bethsheba, the murder of Uriah, and his family troubles are not included.

The stories of David exhibit not only physical violence but the violence of passion, the blazing anger which would destroy Nabal and his house and the flame of desire which took the willing Betsheba after a single glance. Like all Oriental potentates David kept a numerous harem.

David is mentioned in the NT most frequently in the phrases “son of David” or “seed of David” spoken to Jesus or about him. It is evident from Paul’s references to the descent of Jesus from David (Rm1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8) that the royal descent was a key element in the messianic character of Jesus as seen in the primitive

Church.¹²¹

The Jewish scholar Abram Leon Sachar says in his '*A History of the Jews*':

... The chroniclers detail, with remarkable objectivity, the story of his moral decay.

The harem, we are told, grew until it swarmed with women, some of them the pompous daughters of neighbouring kings. David found himself under the obligation of maintaining a court in keeping with their dignity. His own unruly passions, stimulated by the enervating life of the harem, eventually conquered his earlier military austerity. He stole Bath-sheba, the attractive wife of one of his faithful soldiers, and sent the poor man off to die for the glory of the king. *He compounded adultery with murder. . . .*

It is easy to understand how a people, embittered by misfortune and hounded by persecution, would look back upon the days of David with loving yearning, and how the shining figure of the poet – warrior would grow to epic proportion, *the dross transformed, the good exaggerated, until even the Messiah Himself was to spring from the house of the peerless king.*¹²²

We leave aside this digression and come back to the point.

121. John L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, op.cit., article 'David', pp. 179-180. See also M. F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, Moody Press, Chicago, Seventh Printing, 1961, pp. 242ff; *Aids to Bible Understanding*, The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, New York, 1971, p. 427; F. L. Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Catholic Church*, Oxford University Press, London, 1957, p. 374.

122. Abram Leon Sachar, *A History of the Jews*, New York, 1972, Fifth Revised Edition, p. 37; *The Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia*, op.cit., Vol. 3, p. 4801; Daniel-Rops, *Israel and the Ancient World*, London, 1960, p. 148.

For further refutation of the charge of sensuality levelled against the Holy Prophet we reproduce here the views of various Western scholars who have rebutted the charge in their own way.

The famous scholar, Thomas Carlyle writes:

Mahomet himself, after all that can be said about him, was not a sensual man. We shall err widely if we consider this man as common voluptuary, intent mainly on base enjoyments, — nay on enjoyment of any kind. His household was of the frugalest; his common diet barley-bread and water; sometimes for months there was not a fire once lighted on his hearth. They record with just pride that he would mend his own shoes, patch up his own cloak. A poor, hard-toiling, ill-provided man; careless of what vulgar men toil for. Not a bad man, I should say; something better in him than *hunger* of any sort, or these wild Arab men fighting, jostling three and twenty years at his hand, in close contact with him always, would not have revered him so! . . . No emperor with his tiaras was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his clouting.¹²³

J.W.H. Stobart writes in his work *Muhammad and His Power*:

His domestic conduct was that of a faithful and affectionate husband, whilst his reserved, meditative, and sober manners in public secured him the love and praise of his fellow — townsmen. It is impossible to suppose, if his conduct and character had been licentious and hypocritical, that the reputation which he established and maintained would have been as high and faultless as it was.¹²⁴

123. Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus and On Heroes and Hero Worship* (With Introduction by W. H. Hudson) Everyman's Library, J. M. Dent & Sons, London, 1975, pp. 304-305.

124. J. W. H. Stobart, *Islam and Its Founder*, S.P.C.K., London, 1901, pp. 64-65.

Dr. Leitner states:

It is true that at the age of fifty-five we find him taking wife after wife: but is it not fair to assume that in the case of a man who has shown such self-control till that age there may be reasons other than those assigned by Christian writers for his many marriages? What are these reasons?

I believe that *the real cause of his many marriages at an old age was charity, and in order to protect the widows of his persecuted followers.*¹²⁵

Gerald L. Berry records in the work *Religions of the World*:

The numerous wives in his last years were probably the result of charity to protect widows of his followers – certainly not the result of sensuality.¹²⁶

Lord Headley, the Muslim convert, wrote in his book *'The Three Great Prophets of the World*:

He was deeply attached to Ayesha and the other wives he married were the widows of his friends who had fallen in fighting his defensive engagements. The position of "widow" has always been a sad one in the East and it is not difficult to imagine that the tender heart of Muhammad went out to those defenceless ones whose protectors had given their lives in his glorious cause, and he did the best for them by letting them have the shelter of his home. As actual wives he had no need of them but *as protector of the friendless he did the right thing and secured the blessings of many whose life would otherwise have been cheerless and*

125. *The Religious System of the World*, op.cit., p. 298.

126. Gerald L. Berry, *Religions of the World*, Barnes and Noble, New York, 1965, p. 65.

unhappy.¹²⁷

Some scholars have stated that many marriages were contracted by the Prophet for political reasons.

In his article on the Prophet in the *Chambers Encyclopaedia* James Robson writes:

It has often been argued that the deteriorated after he migrated to Medina, but this view is based on misunderstanding. It is true that he contracted several marriages, but these marriages may be explained on grounds of policy.¹²⁸

D. S. Margoliouth, a hostile critic of the Prophet, states in his article on the Prophet in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*:

In several of his marriages it is easy to see that political considerations were dominant.¹²⁹

Will Durant, who had attacked the Prophet, admits: Some of his marriages were acts of kindness to the destitute widows of his followers and friends. . . . Some were diplomatic marriages. . . . Some may have been due to a perpetually frustrated hope for a son. . .¹³⁰

127. Lord Headley, *The Three Great Prophets, Moses, Jesus and Muham-mad*, Woking, 1923, p. 104.

128. *Chambers Encyclopaedia*, Permagan Press, Oxford/London, 1967, Revised Edition, article 'Mohammed' by J. Robson.

129. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Edinburgh, 1967 Impres-sion, article 'Mohammed', Vol. 8, p. 879; *The Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia*, New York, 1942, article 'Mohammed'.

130. Will Durant, *The Age of Faith*, op.cit., p. 172; *Encyclopaedia Brittanica*, 1960 Edition, Vol. 15, pp. 647-648, article 'Muhammad'.

John Davenport observes in his work *An Apology for Mohammed and the Kuran*:

It should be remembered that he lived from the age of five-and-twenty to that of fifty years satisfied with one wife; that until she died at the age of sixty-three he took no other, and that left him without male issue; and it may then be asked, 'is it likely that a very sensual man, should be contented for five-and-twenty years with one wife, she being fifteen years older than himself; and is it not far more probable that Mohammad took the many wives he did during the last thirteen years of his life chiefly from a desire of having male issue?'¹³¹

Writing in his work '*Studies in a Mosque*' Stanley Lane-Poole refutes the charge of sensuality levelled against the Holy Prophet in these words:

. But to say that Mohammed was a voluptuary is false. The simple austerity of his life, to the very last, his hard mat for sleeping on, his plain food, his self-imposed menial work, point him as an ascetic rather than a voluptuary in most senses of the word. . . . 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 fables of Mohammed's domestic relations like the writers and readers of "society" journals. . . Be it remembered that, within his unlimited power, he need not have restricted himself to a number insignificant compared with the harems of some of his successors, that he never divorced one of his wives, that all of them save one were widows. . . . Several of

131. John Davenport, *An Apology for Muhammad and the Kuran*, Lahore, 1975, pp. 25-26; S. Vernon McCasland and al, *Religions of the World*, New York, 1969, p. 317; Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, op.cit., Vol. 4, p. 169. See also Marcus Dods, *Muhammad, Buddha and Christ*, London, 1878, p. 23: . . . "the sons Khadija bore him died in their infancy, and his enemies taunted him, in most offensive terms, with his lack of male heir."

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 been left unprotected, had a claim upon the generosity of him who prompted the fight. Other marriages were contracted from motives of policy, in order to conciliate the heads of rival factions. . . . Perhaps the strongest reason — one of which it is impossible to over-estimate the force — that impelled Mohammed to take wife after wife was his desire for male offspring.

After all, the overwhelming argument is his fidelity to his first wife. . . he married Khadija, who was fifteen years older than himself, with all the added age that women gain as quickly in the East. For five-and-twenty years Mohammed remained faithful to his elderly wife, and when she was sixty-five, and they might have celebrated their "silver wedding", he was as devoted to her as when first he married her. During all these years there was never a breath of scandal. Thus far Mohammed's life will bear microscopic scrutiny. . . Then Khadija died; and he married many women afterwards. . . he never forgot his old wife, and loved her best to the end, 'when I was poor she enriched me, when they called me a liar she alone believed in me, when all the world was against me she alone remained true.'

*This loving, tender memory of an old wife, laid in the grave belongs only to a noble nature; it is not to be looked for in a voluptuary.*¹³²

Prof. Vaglieri has stoutly refuted the charge of sensuality against the Holy Prophet in these words:

Enemies of Islam have insisted in depicting Muhammad as a sensual individual and a dissolute man, trying to find in his

132. Stanley Lane-Poole, *Studies in a Mosque*, Khayats, Beirut, 1966, pp. 77-79.

marriages evidence of a weak character not consistent with his mission. They refuse to take into consideration the fact that during those years of his life when by nature the sexual urge is strongest, although he lived in a society like that of the Arabs, where the institution of marriage was almost non-existent, where polygamy was the rule, and where divorce was very easy indeed, he was married to one woman alone, Khadija, who was much older than himself, and that for twenty-five years he was her faithful, loving husband. Only when she died and when he was already more than fifty years old did he marry again and more than once. *Each of these marriages had a social and political reason*, for he wanted through the women he married to honour pious women, or to establish marriage relations with other clans and tribes for the purpose of opening the way for the propagation of Islam. With the sole exception of A'isha, he *married women who were neither virgins, nor young nor beautiful*. Was this sensuality?¹³³

133. Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, *Muhammad the Seal of Prophets*, London, 1982, p. 278, quoting Prof. Vaglieri's work *An Interpretation of Islam*, pp. 67-68; See also John Bagot Glubb, *The Life and Times of Muhammad*, New York, 1971, pp. 237-240; Syed M. H. Zaidi, *Mothers of the Faithful*, Calcutta, 1935; Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *Translation and Commentary of the Holy Quran*, New York, 1946, Vol. II, p. 1113, foot-note No. 3706.