

Man "Wedding" Four

*and*

Lawfully More?

*By*

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful, I begin to write**

## Man "Wedding" Four and Even More?

[Know may Allah's Mercy be upon you that before answering this Question, it is important to remind of the following fundamental matters:

- 1-Allah is All Knowledgeable,
- 2-All-Just,
- 3-All-Wise,
- 4-Most Merciful,
- 5-Free of all imperfection, and
- 6-Creation is His and His is the Commandment.

Allah, the One free of all imperfection, the Most High, Says:

﴿ وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبْعًا فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا ﴾ [النساء، ٣]

**"And if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan-girls then marry (other) women of your choice, two or three, or four; but if you fear you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or (the slaves) that your right hands possess. That is nearer to prevent you from doing injustice."**  
[Qur'aan 4: 3; also refer to ch. 4, verses 25-26.]

So, Allah limited the number of wives to four, and made lawful those that our right hands may possess without limit.<sup>1</sup> And this is from His Favor and perfect Legislation and it agrees with His Wisdom and Mercy. Since there are those from mankind who are overcome by powerful sexual lust such that it may not be repelled by one wife, so He gave man permissibility to four and extra from the possessed slaves. **All made lawful** to him. Man's intensity of sexual drive is overall stronger than that of women. Man is able to have sexual intercourse with more than one wife in a very short period. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to have intercourse with his wives in the same night. Prophet Suleiman (*'aleihi as-salaam*) slept with ninety of his wives in one night. Know also

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<sup>1</sup>Women bought as slaves or taken from the booty of war. It is not affirmed that the Prophet (ﷺ) enslaved any of the war captives, rather he (ﷺ) freed the slaves of Makkah and those from Bani Al-Mustalaq, and Hunayen battles. Also it is confirmed that he (ﷺ) freed the slaves he had from the times before the advent of his messengership. In addition he (ﷺ) freed those given to him as gifts. Nevertheless, it is confirmed the rightly guided Caliphs after the Prophet (ﷺ) took captive slaves based on the principle of reciprocity. So, they didn't allow every aspect of slavery but limited it to the captives in openly conducted and declared battles against the disbelievers, and eliminated all of its other forms, maintaining the general line of the principle of freeing slaves since it is one of the means of nearness to attain the Pleasure of Allah. At the advent of Islam the ways and means of enslavement were numerous while the outlets of freeing were almost nil; so Islam reversed this formula by diversifying and multiplying the outlet to freedom and drying up the sources of enslavement.

that once intercourse is finished, the woman's desire for more is subsided. Thus the Wisdom of Pre-decree (ordinances in due proportion), legislation, creation, and commandment all coincide (in agreement). The overall nature of women is coolness (towards sex) and that of man is passion. In fact, some of the Salaf, said concerning the saying of Allah:

وَحُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا

**“And man was created weak (cannot be patient to leave sexual intercourse with woman).”**[Qur'an 4:28].

Remember that this statement came at the end of that permitting man to wed believing girls from among those (slaves) whom your right hands possess. There Allah made it clear that He wishes to **“lighten (the burden) for you,”** because of our weakness, so he permitted for us to marry up to four and to wed from those possessed by the right hand.

The slave of Allah, concerning these matters, has three conditions:

- 1-Ignorance as to what is lawful and unlawful,
- 2-Negligence and inadequacy,
- 3-Weakness and impatience,

Concerning the first state, Allah dealt with it by **making things clear to man**. He said in these verses concerning marriage [4:26]: **“Allah wishes to make clear (what is lawful and what is unlawful) to you, and to show you the ways of those before you...”**

And regarding the second state, He said in dealing with it [4:27]: **“And Allah wishes to accept your repentance.”** Therefore, accepting man's repentance for his negligence once man turns to Him alone.

As to the third condition, He dealt with it by making it clear that He intends to lighten things for man concerning wedding of woman because of man's weakness towards this particular lust. That is why He said [4:28]: **“And Allah wishes to lighten (the burden) for you.”**

Wedding is the original solution for this weakness. The other legal alternative for those who cannot afford marriage is **fasting**. The Prophet (ﷺ) said admonishing the youth: *“He who can afford to marry should marry, because it will keep him to lower his gaze (from looking at forbidden things and other women), and save his private parts (from committing illegal sexual intercourse etc.) and he who cannot afford to marry is advised to observe fasting, as fasting will diminish his sexual power.”* [Saheeh al-Bukhari, vol.3, no. 129].

It is worth noting that man's weakness includes his:

- 1-Lust,
- 2-Structure (build up),
- 3-Strength, and

4-Will,  
5-Knowledge, and  
6-Patience.

Allah created him on this nature, and it is from the things for which Allah is praised and lauded, as this is entailed by His Wisdom and Might. This is because all that takes place due to this weak form of creation or entailed by it is, with respect to Allah, **Goodness, Justice and Wisdom**. It is because this nature is due to Allah's Perfection in His Attributes of Richness (free of all want), Knowledge, Might, Wisdom, and Mercy. And with respect to man it is divided into:

1-Good and evil, beautiful and ugly-as entailed by his need, injustice, ignorance, poverty (in want), and weakness,

2-Obedience and disobedience, righteousness and wickedness as necessitated by his compliance or non-compliance to Allah's commands.

**So either he deals with his nature by ways made permissible and thus legally considered as obedience and a legal perfection for his nature, or through illegal ways leading himself to destruction.<sup>2</sup>**

***After this introduction, let us contemplate the following:***

**1-** Marrying more than one wife (polygamy) was in the previous religions and in the laws of Islam as well. Having more than one wife is not particular to our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Prophet Jacob, peace be upon him, had two wives, and Prophet Sulaiman (Solomon), peace be upon him, had ninety-nine (99) wives.

**2-** This does not stand in opposition to the intellect nor to what is necessitated by the natural disposition (*Fitrah*). Rather it is something entailed by wisdom. Indeed women may exceed men in certain communities and/or nations due to many causes. So, if they are not married then this leads to illegal sexual relations, as it is the case in many societies that prevent or do not practice polygamy.

**3-** In general, men have a stronger sexual desire than women such that having only one wife is not sufficient. So either they look for additional "outlets" in the dark or are legally permitted to marry more than one wife when they fulfill certain conditions as decreed by Allah. These conditions center upon **justice**, meaning to spend equally on their welfare and to divide his time of stay equally between them.

**4-** Women may encounter many conditions like diseases, menses, post-partum bleeding, all standing as impediments to the manifesting of sexual desires by the husbands. The husband may have an impatient nature concerning these issues.

He needs another legal means to accommodate this matter, otherwise the society may end up encountering illegal relations with terrible impact on its overall welfare. And it

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<sup>2</sup>Based upon Imaam Ibnul Qayyim's (*rahimahu Allah*) Explanation of verses 4 and 26-28 of soorat an-Nisaa' (Chapter 4 of the Noble Qur'an) with slight adaptations. See *Ad-Daw'il Muneer 'ala at-Tafseer*, vol. 2; which is a compilation of Ibnul Qayyim's explanations of many verses in the Noble Qur'aan. It was published by Shayekh 'Alee Muhammad As-Saalihee, may Allah's Mercy be upon him.

is in the best interest of his original wife (wives) to stay in marriage, honored and in a stable and providing environment.

**5-**Some women may be widows and have no one to take care of them. Some men like to do good to them and accommodate them in marriage. So why should this be prevented?

**6-**Since polygamy is legally allowable and intellectually as well as naturally accepted, and was practiced by the previous Prophets, then it should not be strange that the Prophet (ﷺ) married more than one wife.

**7-**The Prophet (ﷺ) looked for establishing strong bondage with specific tribes in order to bring forth more strength to Islam during the times of its establishment and propagation.

**8-**The Prophet's (ﷺ) marriages to some widows sheltered them and compensated for the loss of husbands and brought them warmth and good company.

**9-**Setting the example for the rest of Muslims to do the same regarding women in similar situations.

**10-**Aiming at achieving strength of the Muslim *Ummah* (nation) by contributing to the increase in the birth of additional human resources as a source for its strength.

**11-**The pure sexual drive was not the Prophet's (ﷺ) goal since it is known that he did not marry any virgin or young one except 'Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her. Had the drive been purely sexual, he would have chosen the **young and virgin only**, especially when it is known that many girls from the best of tribes would have loved to marry him (ﷺ); not to mention that his first marriage was to a woman who was fifteen years older than him.

**Some haters of Islam often say that the Prophet (ﷺ) married a "six-years old child," referring to 'Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her. What is the response?**

**The Answer:** 'Aisha's covenant of marriage was conducted when she was six years old, but the actual commencement of the marriage took place when she was nine-years of age. She was the only virgin he married. Marrying at such young age was not the exception in Arabia at that time. In fact many were married in the young age period of 9-12 when they were physically mature. Furthermore, had this been something degrading and immoral, the enemies of the Prophet (ﷺ) from the Pagans would have loved to use this against the character of the Prophet (ﷺ) and 'Aisha's father (Abu Bakr, may Allah be please with him), the first one to believe the Prophet (ﷺ) and support his propagation of Islam. Not to mention this would have been a major block against the spread of Islam amongst the Arabs if the Prophet (ﷺ) would appear as a man of "uncontrolled sexual drive."

This would have been obvious to resort to, especially when it is known that they accused the Prophet (ﷺ) of many other things like being a magician, a poet, etc. The fact that they did not attempt even to consider this marriage as a tool against the integrity of the Prophet (ﷺ) stands as a strong irrefutable evidence that such marriages

were of the norm, not the exception. In so many societies, it was even considered that the girl who does not get married before she reaches fifteen years of age as someone being "late" on the scale of marriage timing! In fact such marriages were common in Asia, East Europe, Spain and Portugal.

On the other hand, it was known that one of the Pagans (Jubair bin Mut'im bin 'Adiye) was interested to marry 'Aaisha before her engagement to the Prophet (ﷺ), but her mother (Umm Rumaan, may Allah be please with her), rejected him. This proves that she was physically mature for marriage. Her family sought the Prophet (ﷺ) because of his noble character as her mother asserted when she told her husband (Abu Bakr ﷺ) of her intent.

There was a great wisdom in her marriage whereby 'Aaisha witnessed the revelation and the rulings of Islam pertaining to the most particular and private matters of women, transmitting that to the men and women of the world. She reported about 2100 narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ) covering rulings, worships, and transactions . She was the greatest woman scholar in Islam and she had many students of knowledge from the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ).

**12-**As to the often-raised question: Why did Allah permit the Prophet (ﷺ) more than four wives while limiting the number to four for the rest of the Muslim men (Qur'aan 4: 3)?

**The answer:** This matter is from the particularities that Allah gave him. In contrast, there are certain rulings that are allowed for the general Muslims but not permitted for the Prophet (ﷺ), like taking charity.

Furthermore, many things pertaining to rulings and/or miracles were made particular to Prophets and Messengers before. Of all the Prophets and Messengers, five were distinguished the most (Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, peace be upon them all), and Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was further distinguished as the leader of all.

There is no doubt that there are great and noble wisdoms for such particularizations. We are not commanded, however, to search and find them, especially if such search arises from objection to the decree of Allah or due to certain doubts concerning it. This often comes from deviants and/or enemies of Islam. Nothing of this of course occurs from the believers. The position of the Muslims regarding the wisdoms behind matters of Islam should be as follows:

- (i) If they see any clear wisdom(s) relevant to these matters, then they take by it and thank Allah for that, and if not
- (ii) then they ask the people of knowledge, and
- (iii) in case there is no apparent wisdom reached at by the people of knowledge, then they say: "Allah Knows Best," and they should not resort to any speculation lest they end up forging lies against Allah.

What about the Prophet's (ﷺ) Marriage to Zaynab (may Allah be pleased with her) after her Divorce from Zayed bin Haarithah (may Allah be pleased with him)?

Zayed bin Haarithah (رضي الله عنه) was a slave of the Prophet (ﷺ) before he freed and adopted him. His name was Zayed bin Muhammad until Allah revealed the command:

﴿ اَدْعُوهُمْ لِآبَائِهِمْ هُوَ اَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ﴾ [الاحزاب، ٥]

**Call them (adopted sons) by (the names of) their fathers, that is more just with Allah. [Qur'aan 33: 5].**

Afterwards people called him Zayed bin Haarithah. As to Zaynab, she was Zaynab bint Jahsh bin Rabaab Al-Asdiyyah. Her mother was Umaymah bint 'Abdul Motalib, the aunt of the Prophet (ﷺ). It was the Prophet (ﷺ) who worked for her to get married to Zayed when he was his adopted son. She initially refused and said she was better than him in lineage. It is reported that Allah ﷻ revealed the following verse concerning this matter:

﴿ وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ اِذَا قَضَى اللّٰهُ وَرَسُولُهُ اَمْرًا اَنْ يَكُوْنَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ اَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلٰلًا مُّبِيْنًا ﴾ [الاحزاب، ٣٦]

**It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a plain error. [Qur'an 33: 36].**

So she accepted and submitted in obedience to the command of Allah and as a fulfillment of the wish of the Prophet (ﷺ). She stayed one year in marriage with Zayed. They encountered some marital problems. So Zayed complained to the Prophet (ﷺ), and he, Zayed, hinted that he may divorce her. So the Prophet (ﷺ) told him to hold on to the marriage and be patient despite the fact that he knew by inspiration from Allah that Zayed will divorce her and that she will be his (the Prophet's wife). He, however, feared that people might insult him as someone who marries his adopted son's wife, something forbidden in the pre-Islamic traditions. Allah (ﷻ) blamed the Prophet (ﷺ) on that:

﴿ وَاِذْ تَقُوْلُ لِلَّذِيْ اَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ اَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَاتَّقِ اللّٰهَ وَتُخْفِيْ فِيْ نَفْسِكَ مَا اللّٰهُ مُبْدِيْهِ وَتَخْشَى النَّاسَ وَاللّٰهُ اَحَقُّ اَنْ تَخْشَهٗ ﴾ [الاحزاب، ٣٧]

**"And (remember) when you said to him (Zayed bin Haarithah; the freed slave of the Prophet ﷺ) on whom Allah has bestowed Grace (by guiding him to Islam) and you (O Muhammad ﷺ too) have done favour (by manumitting him) "Keep your wife to yourself, and fear Allah." But you did hide in yourself (i.e. what**

**Allah has already made known to you that He will give her to you in marriage) that which Allah will make manifest, you did fear the people (i.e., Muhammad married the divorced wife of his manumitted slave) whereas Allah had a better right that you should fear Him. [Qur'an 33: 37].**

Therefore, you hid in yourself what Allah informed you already of that which will actually take place (divorce of Zaynab from Zayed) and your marriage of her in accordance with Allah's plan and as manifestation of His Wisdom. Moreover, that you feared people's sayings and their insults while Allah deserves to be feared most. Thus, you should have declared what was inspired to you from the details related to you, Zayed and Zaynab, without any consideration of people's attitudes.

As to the Prophet's (ﷺ) marriage from Zaynab, he conducted the marriage contract on her after she finished her waiting period following her divorce from Zayed. Allah gave her in marriage to the Prophet (ﷺ) without a guardian on her behalf or witnesses, for he (ﷺ) is the guardian of all believers. Rather he is closer to them than their own selves, as Allah described him:

﴿النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ﴾ الآية [الأحزاب، ٦]

**"The Prophet ﷺ is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are their (believers') mothers (as regards respect and marriage). [Qur'aan 33:6]**

Though this marriage, Allah ﷻ nullified adoption as practiced in the pre-Islamic era, and made it lawful for Muslims to marry the wives of adopted sons after divorce or death of the husbands. This is from Allah's Mercy and a removal of any unease regarding such relations. Allah clearly stated in the following decree:

﴿ فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ زَيْدٌ مِّنْهَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجْنَاكَهَا لِكَيْ لَا يَكُونَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ فِي أَزْوَاجِ أَدْعِيَائِهِمْ إِذَا قَضَوْا مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا ﴿٣٧﴾ مَا كَانَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ مِنْ حَرَجٍ فِيمَا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَهُ سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَّقْدُورًا ﴿٣٨﴾ الَّذِينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ رِسَالَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَخْشَوْنَهُ وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا ﴿٣٩﴾ مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَٰكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٤٠﴾ ﴾ [الأحزاب ٣٧-٤٠]

**So when Zayed had accomplished his desire from her (i.e. divorced her), We gave her to you in marriage, so that (in future) there may be no difficulty to the believers in respect of (the marriage of) the wives of their adopted sons when the latter have no desire to keep them (i.e. they have divorced them). And Allah's Command must be fulfilled. [Qur'aan 33: 37-40].**

As to the story claiming that the Prophet's (ﷺ) heart became attached to Zaynab after he saw her from behind a veil, and he fell in love and desired her, and that when Zayed knew of this he disliked her and decided to divorce her, then this has not been verified in any authentic way. The Prophets are far removed from such base manners and are in high and noble rank in their characters and behaviors. Not to forget that it was the Prophet (ﷺ) himself who wanted her to get married to Zayed in the first place. Had he been attached to her, and in love with her, he would have preferred her for himself, especially when she refused to marry Zayed in the beginning. The reality, therefore, is that it is the pre-decreed plan of Allah and His judgment in order to nullify the habits and traditions of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, and to have Mercy and Clemency on mankind.

## Why Did Not Allah Permit Women to Marry More than One Man?

This is due to Allah's Perfect Wisdom, Benevolence and Mercy to His slaves and a protection of their interests. Because, if permitted, it would lead to mischief in the world: loss of lineage, husbands killing of each other, afflictions, wars, loss of uprightness of woman affairs being shared by quarrelling husbands, and so forth. All stand as proofs of Allah's Wisdom, Mercy, and Care of creation.

### Polygamy is Just and Fits Man's Nature

“Polygamy is allowed in Islam and we don't argue with this. On the other hand, anyone (Muslim or not) who studied psychology would have to agree with polygamy even without learning that it is allowed in Islam. It is in the basic nature of man to desire more than one sexual partner. It is in the basic nature of woman to be satisfied with a sole partner tending to her needs. Since Allah is the one who created the specific nature of man and the specific nature of woman, **it follows that Allah knows best what is needed to satisfy man and what is needed to satisfy woman.** In order to affirm/confirm the normal basic needs of human males and females that He created, Allah, the All-Knowing and the All-Wise, allowed polygamy and forbade polyandry.”<sup>3</sup>

And Allah Knows Best.

The slave of Allah,  
Saleh As-Saleh  
27<sup>th</sup> of Thul Qi'dah 1425 AH  
January 8, 2005

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<sup>3</sup>From the words of sister *Umm Ahmad al-Kanadiyah* (from Canada). Like every child she was born on the natural inclination of submitting to the Creator (i.e. Islam); like many children in the world she was raised in a non-Muslim environment; searched for the truth (like many seekers), and found it in Islam. So she reverted to her natural state of Islam in. May Allah preserve her and her family.