

# RESPONSIBLE POLYGAMY VS IRRESPONSIBLE POLYGAMY<sup>1 2</sup>

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All praise is due to Allah and may peace and blessing be upon the messenger of Allah. To begin:

The initial thing that our respected reader might find a tad strange is the choice of words we laid down for our main title. One may ask “why didn’t you correctly name it *Responsible Polygamy Vs Monogamy*? The reason why we did not provide such a title is because that would give the impression that many societies which oppose polygamy in word also oppose it in practice, no matter what form it inconspicuously takes. Via our choice of title we sought to emphasise that most societies practise mutant forms of polygamy; therefore, what *really* should be up for dispute here are the two adjectives that modify the term ‘polygamy’.

## **BEFORE ISLĀM THERE WAS POLYGAMY**

In this day and age where there is media frenzy about anything remotely connected to Islam, it could be very easy for an individual to forget that polygamy long existed before the dawn of Islām. If anything, Islām came to *reform* polygamy by taking it out of the hands of the abusers and fine-tuning its moral mechanism to play a positive role in maintaining a community’s infrastructure. Polygamy, when performed correctly, plays a vital role in fending off social and sexual diseases related to promiscuity, debauchery and lewdness. Not only does it act as a preventive method, it can also facilitate a service for women who are finding it difficult to fortify themselves through marriage.

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<sup>1</sup> The most apt term is actually polygyny. Polygamy is a broad term which includes polygyny. The Arabic phrase for polygamy is **تَعَدُّدُ الزَّوْجَاتِ**.

<sup>2</sup> This paper was conducted by AbdulHaq al-Ashanti and Abū Ameenah AbdurRahmān Sloan.

Polygamy is a very ancient practice found in many human societies.<sup>3</sup> The Bible did not condemn polygamy. To the contrary, the Old Testament and Rabbinic writings frequently attest to the legality of polygamy. King Solomon is said to have had 700 wives and 300 concubines (**1 Kings 11:3**) Also, king David is said to have had many wives and concubines (**2 Samuel 5:13**). The Old Testament does have some injunctions on how to distribute the property of a man among his sons from different wives (**Deut. 22:7**). The only restriction on polygamy is a ban on taking a wife's sister as a rival wife (**Lev. 18:18**). The Talmud advises a maximum of four wives.<sup>4</sup> European Jews continued to practice polygamy until the sixteenth century. Oriental Jews regularly practiced polygamy until they arrived in Israel where it is forbidden under civil law.

However, under religious law which overrides civil law in such cases, it is permissible.<sup>5</sup> What about the New Testament? According to Father Eugene Hillman stated in his insightful book, *Polygamy Reconsidered*:

**Nowhere in the New Testament is there any explicit commandment that marriage should be monogamous or any explicit commandment forbidding polygamy.**<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, Jesus has not spoken against polygamy though it was practiced by the Jews of his society. Father Hillman stresses the fact that the Church in Rome banned polygamy in order to conform to the Greco-Roman culture (which prescribed only one legal wife while tolerating concubinage and prostitution). He cited St. Augustine:

**Now indeed in our time, and in keeping with Roman custom, it is no longer allowed to take another wife.**<sup>7</sup>

African churches and African Christians often remind their European brothers that the Church's ban on polygamy is a cultural tradition and not an authentic Christian injunction.

## **WORLD GENDER RATIOS**

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<sup>3</sup> Anthropological studies have reported that 80-85% of societies allowed polygamous marriage.

<sup>4</sup> Leonard J. Swidler, *Women in Judaism: the Status of Women in Formative Judaism* (Metuchen, N.J: Scarecrow Press, 1976), pp. 144-148.

<sup>5</sup> Lesley Hazleton, *Israeli Women: The Reality Behind the Myths* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977), pp 44-45.

<sup>6</sup> Eugene Hillman, *Polygamy Reconsidered: African Plural Marriage and the Christian Churches* (New York: Orbis Books, 1975) p. 140.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17.

In most human societies, females outnumber males. Salvatore Mann, a journalist for a popular Online men's magazine wrote an article on the top ten cities wherein women outnumber men around the world:

1. Kiev, Ukraine – 54% female
2. St. Croix, Virgin Islands – 54% female
3. Mahe Island, Seychelles – 53% female
4. Budapest, Hungary – 53% female
5. Beirut, Lebanon – 52% female
6. Sozopol, Bulgaria – 52% female
7. Moscow, Russia – 52% female
8. Willemstad, Curacao, Dutch Antilles – 52% female
9. San Juan, Puerto Rico – 52% female
10. Dakar, Senegal – 52% female

The only places in the world which are contrary to this norm are the countries which have cultures of female infanticide such as India and China. In China, the policy of one-child families coupled with selective abortion of girls has produced "surplus" males. Such men are called "bare branches," and China could have 30 million of them by 2020. Mira Katbamna stated in an article entitled 'Half a good man is better than none at all':

**A study of polygamy in Russia might not seem an obvious place to look for insights into how the financial crisis might play out in suburban Kent or rural Yorkshire. But Caroline Humphrey, Sigrid Rausing professor of collaborative anthropology at Cambridge University, says central Asia and Russia have much to teach us.**

Katbamna continues:

**Humphrey specialises in the anthropology of communities on the edges of the former Soviet Union, and has spent much of her career studying the Buyrat people who live north of the Mongolian border in Siberia. Humphrey says that anthropologists slowly build a deep knowledge and understanding of a place and culture, but nevertheless, her discovery that there is a polygamy lobby was a surprise.**

Then Katbamna states:

**Elsewhere, in the former Islamic regions of Russia, men argue that polygamous marriage is traditional and will encourage men to take greater responsibility – thereby alleviating poverty and improving "moral" education.**

Improbably, for both groups, this is polygamy as a solution to contemporary social ills – and, according to Humphrey, is appearing outside Islamic regions. In rural areas the "man shortage", exacerbated by war, alcoholism and mass economic migration, is even more serious. But when it comes to polygamy, rural women have a quite different agenda from their nationalist male counterparts.

Katbamna concludes the article by highlighting:

Perhaps unsurprisingly then, Humphrey's investigations have uncovered women who believe that "half a good man is better than none at all". "There are still some men around – they might be running things, with a job as an official, for example, or they might be doing an ordinary labouring job, but either way, there aren't very many of them," she says. "Women say that the legalisation of polygamy would be a godsend: it would give them rights to a man's financial and physical support, legitimacy for their children, and rights to state benefits."<sup>8</sup>

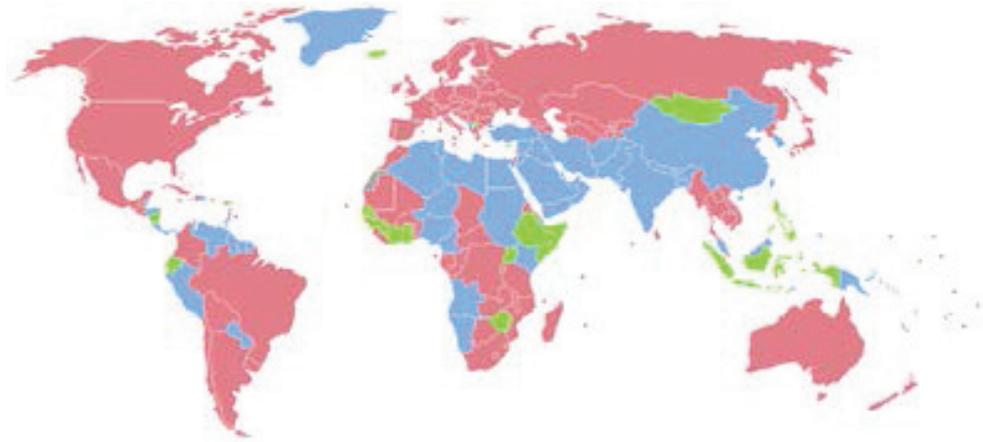
Then we have to look at the condition of men today:

- ❖ A large percentage of men are in prison – these can be discounted as valid marriage partners
- ❖ A large percentage of men are lazy and irresponsible, not the 'marriage' type
- ❖ A large percentage of men are unemployed
- ❖ A large percentage of men are gay and not interested in women
- ❖ A large percentage of men are criminals

Hence, with such a short reserve of decent and appropriate male partners, it makes for polygamy to be a valid option for an intelligent woman. See the human sex ratio below taken from Wikipedia:

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<sup>8</sup> Mira Katbamna, 'Half a good man is better than none at all' in *The Guardian* (London), Tuesday 27 October, 2009.



Map indicating the [human sex ratio](#) by country.

- ❖ Pink indicates - Countries with more **females** than males.
- ❖ Green indicates - Countries with the **same** number of males and females.
- ❖ Blue indicates - Countries with more **males** than females.
- ❖ Grey indicates - No data

Interestingly, if the above ratio is accurate, the Muslim countries have slightly more men than women. While China and India, which are nations which practice female infanticide have numbers of men which far outnumber that of women, this is not accurately represented in the above wikipedia human sex ratio diagram.<sup>9</sup> What should a society do towards such unbalanced sex ratios?

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<sup>9</sup> Amartya Sen wrote an article for the *New York Review of Books*, vol.37, no.20, December 20 1990, entitled 'More Than a 100 Million Women Are Missing'. The article has a particular focus on China and India and can be accessed here: <http://ucAtlas.ucsc.edu/gender/Sen100M.html>

another article in *The Economist* entitled 'Gendercide', dated 4 March 2010 stated:

**Most people know China and northern India have unnaturally large numbers of boys. But few appreciate how bad the problem is, or that it is rising. In China the imbalance between the sexes was 108 boys to 100 girls for the generation born in the late 1980s; for the generation of the early 2000s, it was 124 to 100. In some Chinese provinces the ratio is an unprecedented 130 to 100. The destruction is worst in China but has spread far beyond. Other East Asian countries, including Taiwan and Singapore, former communist states in the western Balkans and the Caucasus, and even sections of America's population (Chinese- and Japanese-Americans, for example): all these have distorted sex ratios. Gendercide exists on**

The problem of the unbalanced sex ratios becomes truly problematic at times of war. Native American Indian tribes used to suffer highly unbalanced sex ratios after wartime losses. Women in these tribes, who in fact enjoyed a fairly high status, accepted polygamy as the best protection against indulgence in indecent activities. European settlers, without offering any other alternative, condemned this Indian polygamy as '*uncivilised*'.<sup>10</sup> After the second world war, there were 7,300,000 more women than men in Germany (3.3 million of them were widows). There were 100 men aged 20 to 30 for every 167 women in that age group.<sup>11</sup> Many of these women needed a man not only as a companion but also as a provider for the household in a time of unprecedented misery and hardship. Uthman al-Mukhtar stated in an article entitled *Polygamy Promoted to Tackle Women's Plight of Anbar's Women*:

Roughly 1.7 million people live in Anbar province, of whom more than 130,000 are estimated to be widowed or unmarried women with no male relative to support them. Across Iraq, the number of such women is estimated to be around one million.

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**almost every continent. It affects rich and poor; educated and illiterate; Hindu, Muslim, Confucian and Christian alike. Wealth does not stop it. Taiwan and Singapore have open, rich economies. Within China and India the areas with the worst sex ratios are the richest, best-educated ones. And China's one-child policy can only be part of the problem, given that so many other countries are affected.**

**In fact the destruction of baby girls is a product of three forces: the ancient preference for sons; a modern desire for smaller families; and ultrasound scanning and other technologies that identify the sex of a fetus. In societies where four or six children were common, a boy would almost certainly come along eventually; son preference did not need to exist at the expense of daughters. But now couples want two children—or, as in China, are allowed only one—they will sacrifice unborn daughters to their pursuit of a son. That is why sex ratios are most distorted in the modern, open parts of China and India. It is also why ratios are more skewed after the first child: parents may accept a daughter first time round but will do anything to ensure their next—and probably last—child is a boy. The boy-girl ratio is above 200 for a third child in some places.**

See: [http://www.economist.com/node/15606229?story\\_id=15606229](http://www.economist.com/node/15606229?story_id=15606229)

<sup>10</sup> John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A history of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988) p. 87.

<sup>11</sup> Ute Frevert, *Women in German History: from Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation* (New York: Berg Publishers, 1988) pp. 263-264.

While Anbar accounts for less than six per cent of the population of Iraq, its widows and unmarried women make up more than one-tenth of the country's total.

Many link the disproportionate number of widows in the province to the recent conflict, which was particularly bloody in Anbar and mostly claimed the lives of its young men. As well as destroying many people's marriages, the violence has made it harder for others to embark upon them.

Thousands of young men have left the province to find work outside an economy still crippled by conflict. Many of those left behind do not have stable jobs and are deterred by the high costs associated with weddings and starting a family.

Rabiya al-Naeel, a member of Anbar's provincial council and a supporter of the campaign to encourage polygamy, believes the growing number of widowed and unmarried women poses a threat to Anbar's traditional and deeply conservative society.

“Marriage helps women remain chaste and secure a livelihood,” she said. “Young generations must take more than one wife to prevent the fabric of society from falling apart.... The call for polygamy is not motivated by Islam but by social and humanitarian concerns.”

Al-Mukhtar continues:

On the streets of Anbar, reaction to the polygamy initiative was mixed.

Basiha Hamad, a Fallujah widow in her early thirties and the mother of three children, said she would like to marry again - but not at the expense of her dignity.

“I would only marry a man who accepts me and my children for what we are and does so with the consent of his wife. I would not want someone who brings me to his house to be his servant,” she said.

“The money raised for promoting polygamy should be used to build workshops so we can live in honour and dignity, instead of being intruders in other people's households.”<sup>12</sup>

Hence, the need for polygamy is not obsolete by any means, indeed, on the contrary! To the present day, polygamy continues to be a viable solution to some of the social ills of modern societies.

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<sup>12</sup> Uthman al-Mukhtar, “Polygamy Promoted to Tackle Plight of Anbar’s Women” in *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, issue 353, 23 September 2010.

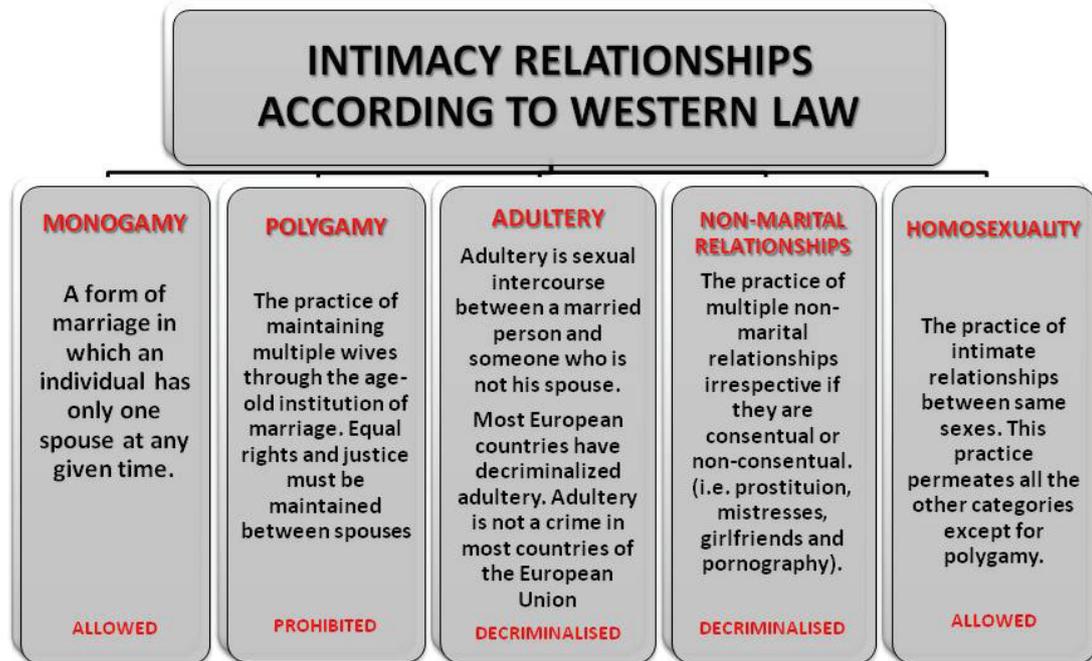
## SO WHY MONOGAMY?

We are actually asking here why monogamy in name as opposed to true practice. Taking into consideration that polygamy is an ancient practice which can be found in most ancient religious books and societies, why then is it prohibited under contemporary law throughout Western countries? Is this because monogamy, due to investigative studies, provides a social and moral equilibrium? Or is it because man in his nature has a natural disposition towards monogamy? Is the word 'monogamy' a euphemism for harsher, more sobering words which reflect the bitter reality of our society?

Straight away when we analyse Western societies and their policies towards polygamy, we are met with contradictory standards. These contradictory standards take shape in the form of prohibiting responsible polygamy but allowing polyamory.<sup>13</sup> Actually we can even take this *bizarre* contradiction quite a few steps further and say that adultery (in many societies and states), fornication, prostitution, homosexuality and pornography are all permitted by law. To spot the inconsistencies, which run rife through Western law, here's a simple chart drafted for such convenience:

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<sup>13</sup> Polyamory (from Greek πολύ [poly, meaning many or several] and Latin amor [love]) is the practice, desire, or acceptance of having more than one intimate relationship at a time with the knowledge and consent of everyone involved:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyamory#The\\_fringes\\_and\\_outliers\\_of\\_polyamory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyamory#The_fringes_and_outliers_of_polyamory)



This table highlights multiple discrepancies found in Western law in that other “partnerships”, relationships and “arrangements” are allowed outside the framework of marriage, yet polygamy is outlawed even among consenting adults. Actually, one of the main justifications for the legitimacy for homosexuality is that it is a relationship formed by consenting adults.

Not only is this a *clear* case of legislative inconsistency, it also demonstrates a *clear* case of double standards. How can polygamy, with all of its social and preventive benefits, be a greater evil than non-marital relationships and homosexuality? This goes a long way in proving that there is something *detrimentally* wrong with this system. It makes you wonder why the powers that be refuse to decriminalise Polygamy. We could posit some of the reasons which outlaw polygamy:

1. For tax and monetary reasons
2. Because allowing it will demonstrate that Islam’s stance on the issue is accurate, and this is an uncomfortable pill for many to swallow.
3. The Christian roots of monogamy

Adultery<sup>14</sup> in many countries and states is legal<sup>15</sup> and even in those countries where it is illegal, adultery laws matter little; they are merely relics which were inherited from English common law but have not been enforced since World War II.

We can sum up our findings like this: everything that can erode the fabric of a society is legal, or the few preventative factors against this erosion are hardly enforced as law. However, the one thing which can cater for man's natural disposition<sup>16</sup> and at the same time go a long way in preserving the social and moral stability of a society is illegal! Contemporary times teach us that social advancements are based on technological and scientific progression and little thought is given to moral values as a true yard stick for measuring the progress of a society.<sup>17</sup>

## **THE CONSEQUENCES OF IMPOSING MONOGAMY ON A SOCIETY**

So since monogamy, as a practice, doesn't really exist, but is at best recognised as a passive law, what sort of detrimental effects does this have on a society? I guess a few facts and figures *vis-à-vis* extra-marital relationships, pornography which all circumvent the law of monogamy – can swiftly prove its redundancy as a productive, governing law.

We can analogise monogamy in terms of a straight-jacket that restricts the natural movements of a hyperactive person. We don't advocate here that the straight-jacket should be totally removed (especially if his hyperactivity is detrimental to himself), but what we do propose is that we provide a safe vent as an outlet from his physical confinement. I guess what we are saying here is that man's high instinctual sexual drive should be recognised so that it can be catered for in a responsible, answerable fashion.

## **THE PROOF IS IN PROSTITUTION<sup>18</sup>**

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<sup>14</sup> Alfred Kinsey's famous 1948 survey of American sexual behaviour found that seven out of 10 men had cheated on their wives. However, modern day surveys suggest there's been a rapid increase in wifely philandering. We would argue here that this phenomenon is a part of a greater one which comes in the shape of...

<sup>15</sup> In France, Prime Minister François Mitterrand's mistress stood next to his wife at his funeral.

<sup>16</sup> I guess we are arguing here more theory than an actual proven fact that polygamy is endemic to man.

<sup>17</sup> Abraham Lincoln once said, "The strength of a nation lies in the homes of its people."

<sup>18</sup> Prostitution Statistics: <http://sex-crimes.laws.com/prostitution/prostitution-statistics>

Under the wise laws of the United Kingdom, prostitution is legal. So let's get this straight: it is legal to exchange sexual services for money, but it is illegal to marry a second wife for love or support?! Astonishingly, it is illegal for a woman to maintain her honour and dignity through the age-old custom of polygamy, but it's legal for a woman to degrade herself by marketing her body as an organic sexual device and to subject herself to consensual rape!<sup>19</sup> How can that *not* be a means for inducing low self-esteem?!<sup>20</sup>

Is it a product of coincidence or causality that the large majority of prostitutes are female? Given the fact that the over-whelming majority of persons who provide sexual favours for money are female is this not indicative of man's polygamous proclivity? If observational evidence suggests that males have a stronger sex drive<sup>21</sup> than the fairer sex, how then is monogamy a natural habitat for housing man's delicate disposition? Let's not forget here that we are not arguing that the whole reason for polygamy is to cater for man's sexual needs as to prevent him from seeking forbidden outlets. Rather, this is one wisdom from the collective wisdoms that prop up the validity of polygamy.

## **PROSTITUTION: LET THE STATS AND ACADEMIC RESEARCH SPEAK**

There are estimated to be around 80,000 people involved in prostitution in the UK. Research by the Poppy Project identified 1500 establishments involved in the off-street sex industry in London alone. In a debate in the Commons in November 2007, Denis MacShane said that according to

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<sup>19</sup> Yes, this sound like a paradox but Susan Kay Hunter and K.C. Reed wrote in their book *Taking the side of bought and sold rape*: "About 80% of women in prostitution have been the victim of a rape. It's hard to talk about this because..the experience of prostitution is just like rape. Prostitutes are raped, on the average, eight to ten times per year. They are the most raped class of women in the history of our planet. "

<sup>20</sup> Some researchers suggest that prostitutes, in general, suffer from 'negative identities' or lack of self esteem.

<sup>21</sup> "Study after study illustrates that men's sex drives are not only stronger than women's, but much more straightforward. The sources of women's libidos, by contrast, are much more difficult to pin down." <http://www.webmd.com/sex/features/sex-drive-how-do-men-women-compare>

home office estimates, “25,000 sex slaves” worked in British massage parlours and brothels.<sup>22</sup> 74% of women involved in prostitution cited poverty, the need to pay household expenses and support their children, as a primary motivator for entering sex work.<sup>23</sup> If this 74% of women were allowed to be a part of a safe polygamous marriage, they may not *feel* the need to render themselves as meat for a male orientated market. Ward et al (2005:468) compared results from survey of men aged between 16-44 in 1990 (n=6000) and again in 2000 (n=4672). Amongst others on sexual lifestyles questions asked about paying for sex with a woman, the last time this happened, and the number of different women paid for sex. They show that there had been a significant increase in the prevalence of buying sex over the decade with 8.8% of men in 2000 admitting to buying sex in their lifetime, compared to 5.6% in 1990.<sup>24</sup> Bob and Susan Berkowitz, two sexologists, authored an article for the Healthy Place.com website entitled *Why Do Married Men Visit Prostitutes?* They put forth the following suggestion for married couples which have been plagued by the husband frequenting prostitutes:

**One other possibility, although improbable, is that some couples may have a private deal. She’s not interested in having sex, or if she is, it’s not the kind that he wants, and therefore he has permission to visit a prostitute. No emotion that might threaten the marriage is allowed, but he can remain sexual. This might be on the condition that he practices safe sex and uses complete discretion.**<sup>25</sup>

They also noted in their article:

**Statistics tell us that about 20 percent of married men are unfaithful to their spouses. That was even the case in the survey we did for our book, "He's Just Not Up for It Anymore. When Men Stop Having Sex and What You Can Do About It."**

Rachel Bell states:

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<sup>22</sup> Robert Booth, ‘UK brothel users escape crackdown on forced prostitution’ in *The Guardian* (London), Wednesday 18 August 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Melrose, M. (2002), *Ties that bind - Young People and the Prostitution Labour Market in Britain presented at Fourth Feminist Research Conference.*

<sup>24</sup> Rissel, C.E., Richters, J., Grulich AE., et al., ‘Sex in Australia: Experiences of Commercial Sex in a Representative Sample of Adults’, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* 27:191-7.

<sup>25</sup> Bob and Susan Berkowitz, “Why Do Married Men Visit Prostitutes?” HealthyPlace.com, November 28 2008.

Yet academic research has linked lap-dancing to trafficking, prostitution and an increase in male sexual violence against both the women who work in the clubs and those who live and work in their vicinity. A recent conference in Ireland highlighted the use of lap-dance clubs by human traffickers as a tool for grooming women into prostitution; the clubs also normalise the idea of paying for sexual services. And a report by the Lilith Project, run by the charity Eaves Housing, which looked at lap-dancing in Camden Town, north London, found that in the three years before and after the opening of four large lap-dancing clubs in the area, incidents of rape in Camden rose by 50%, while sexual assault rose by 57%.

One factor in the proliferation of these clubs is the 2003 Licensing Act which introduced the one-size-fits-all premises licence, meaning that strip clubs are no longer required to get special permission for nudity. The campaign group, Object, which is launching its Lap-Dance Challenge on April 22, wants legislation changed to classify lap-dancing clubs as "sex encounter establishments" and recognise them as part of the sex industry, which would allow local authorities to regulate them as such.<sup>26</sup>

Bell also states:

The sex industry doesn't just tell lies about women. One of its biggest lies is that it is positive for men. Statistics show that addiction to the porn and sex industries is the third biggest cause of debt in the UK, while sex and relationship therapists are seeing an increase in the number of men suffering from sex addiction.

## **THE PHENOMENAL USAGE OF PORNOGRAPHY IN MODERN SOCIETY**

Pornography is another legal outlet for man to resort to when he feels the straight-jacket of monogamy restraining his sexual desires. Everywhere around him, he sees images of attractive women scantily dressed, whispering to him in alluring postures. He is bombarded with these sexual images at work, on the streets, his local newsagents and even behind the walls of his own castle. So on one hand, monogamy is the choice of law, and yet on the other, man is ever creative in finding ways to circumvent the law of monogamy to satisfy his sexual cravings which are induced

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<sup>26</sup> Rachel Bell, "The reality of lap-dancing, by a former lap dancer" in *The Guardian* (of London), Wednesday 19 March 2008.

by images all around him. It's a bit like placing a person in a sauna and advising him not to sweat – something eventually has to give.

According to the Shorter Oxford Dictionary, the word 'pornography' dates to 1864, when it described "the life, manners, etc of prostitutes or their patrons". More recently, it has come to signify material, in the words of Chambers, "intended to arouse sexual excitement". The internet is *the* major mediator when it comes to providing web pages "intended to arouse sexual excitement". On a website called *Top Ten Reviews* it states the following about internet pornography statistics:

**The statistics are truly staggering. According to compiled numbers from respected news and research organizations, every second \$3,075.64 is being spent on pornography. Every second 28,258 internet users are viewing pornography. In that same second 372 internet users are typing adult search terms into search engines. Every 39 minutes a new pornographic video is being created in the U.S.**

It also states;

**It's big business. The pornography industry has larger revenues than Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo, Apple and Netflix combined. 2006 Worldwide Pornography Revenues ballooned to \$97.06 billion. 2006 & 2005 U.S. Pornography Industry Revenue Statistics, 2006 Top Adult Search Requests, 2006 Search Engine Request Trends are some of the other statistics revealed here.<sup>27</sup>**

The website then goes on to provide statistics for **pornographic web pages by country** with the UK placed fourth (8,506,800) and the USA a clear front runner (244,661,900).<sup>28</sup> Under the section titled **Adult Internet Pornography Statistics**, it provides stats for male and female pornography website visitors: 72% male - 28% female. Dr Stephen Maddison (a senior lecturer at the Social Sciences, Media and Culture Studies department at the University of East London) stated that in 1985 there were 75 million video rentals in the US, by 1996 this had risen to 665 million and by 2002 there were 2.9 billion rentals.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> <http://internet-filter-review.toptenreviews.com/internet-pornography-statistics.html>

<sup>28</sup> Interestingly, when compiling the **Top Pornography Banning Countries**, the list goes as follows: Saudia Arabia, Iran, Syria, Bahrain, Egypt, UAE, Kuwait, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Kenya, India, Cuba, and China.

<sup>29</sup> Stephen Maddison, 'The Second Sexual Revolution: Big Pharma, Porn and the Biopolitical Penis' in Topia: *The Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*, 22, Fall 2009. See:

## THE DYSFUNCTIONAL DILEMMA

Edward Marriot stated in an article in *The Guardian* (of London) in 2003:

In its hardcore form, pornography is now accessed in the UK by an estimated 33% of all internet users. Since the British Board of Film Classification relaxed its guidelines in 2000, hardcore video pornography now makes up between 13% and 17% of censors' viewing, compared with just 1% three years ago, a rate of growth that is being cited as a causal factor in the recent bankruptcy of Penthouse, at one time the very apotheosis of porno chic but in recent years little more risqué than Loaded. In the US, with the pornography industry bringing in up to \$15bn (£8.9bn) annually, people spend more on porn every year than they do on movie tickets and all the performing arts combined. Each year, in Los Angeles alone, more than 10,000 hardcore pornographic films are made, against an annual Hollywood average of just 400 movies.<sup>30</sup>

Marriot also notes in his article:

David Morgan, consultant clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst at the Portman Clinic in London, which specialises in problems relating to sexuality and violence, describes this phase as "transitional, like a rehearsal for the real thing. The problem with pornography begins when, instead of being a temporary stop on the way to full sexual relations, it becomes a full-time place of residence." Morgan's experience of counselling men addicted to porn has convinced him that "the more time you spend in this fantasy world, the more difficult it becomes to make the transition to reality. Just like drugs, pornography provides a quick fix, a masturbatory universe people can get stuck in. This can result in their not being able to involve anyone else."

Marriot highlights the following case:

Andy Philips, a Leeds art dealer and, at 38, a father for the first time, says there have been times when he has been "a very heavy user". His initial reaction, like that of many of the men to whom I spoke, is studiedly jokey: "I love porn." Yet, as he grows

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[http://www.colum.edu/Academics/Humanities\\_History\\_and\\_Social\\_Sciences/Cultural\\_Studies/Colloquium/Readings/Maddison\\_Second\\_Sex\\_Revolution\\_Topia\\_for\\_CCC.pdf](http://www.colum.edu/Academics/Humanities_History_and_Social_Sciences/Cultural_Studies/Colloquium/Readings/Maddison_Second_Sex_Revolution_Topia_for_CCC.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Edward Marriot, "Men and Porn" in *The Guardian* (of London), Saturday 8 November 2003.

more contemplative, he admits: "I've always used it secretly, never as part of a relationship. It's always been like the other woman on the side. It's something to do with being naughty, I guess."

Again and again, despite now being married, he is drawn back. "You can easily get too much of it. It's deadening, nullifying, gratuitous, unsatisfying. At one point I was single for three years and I used a lot of porn then. After a while, it made me feel worse. I'd feel disgusted with myself and have a huge purge."

## **OBJECTIFICATION AND DEHUMANISATION**

What sort of attitude does pornography cultivate in the minds of males? Does objectification of women for one's own sexual pleasures remove the humanistic elements from women and render them as mere commodities, packaged in bulk to satisfy the carnivorous, sexual-appetites of men? Many writers note that dehumanisation and degradation is also involved in such material. For example, Cowan and Campbell (1994) defined degrading pornography as that involving three distinct but related themes: "domination, inequality, and objectification"<sup>31</sup> (p. 325). Hamilton (2004) stated: "Women are uniformly portrayed as the passive objects of men's sexual urges."<sup>32</sup> Feona Attwood (2005) has also highlighted how popular male "lifestyle" "lad's" magazines have "incorporated many of the conventions of top-shelf titles, both in terms of their visual style and editorial content, reworking the spirit of *Playboy's* 'bachelor hedonism' for a new, younger audience" (McNair, 2002: p.48). Attwood notes:

**Lad mags increasingly favour a particular type of female ideal, the 'babe', who combines characteristics of the fashion and glamour body. She is embodied by sexy, unthreatening performers; It girls, lingerie and glamour models and famous girlfriends.**<sup>33</sup>

Attwood continues:

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<sup>31</sup> Cowan, G., & Campbell, R. (1994). Racism and sexism in interracial pornography: A content analysis. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 18.

<sup>32</sup> C. Hamilton (August 17 2004), *The Australian*, p.11.

<sup>33</sup> Feona Attwood, 'Male Heterosexuality in Magazines for Men' in the *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol.8, no.1, 2005, pp.87-104.

Ordinary-but-glamorous women feature in explicitly sexual contexts; they are quizzed about their sex lives and fantasies and invited to compete as pin-ups, for example in FHM's 'High Street Honeys'. At its extreme, this focus on women's appearance takes the form of judging women entirely in terms of their looks. FHM's 'Dog or Fox?' invites men to distinguish attractive from unattractive, asking 'can you...tell a hound from a honey?' (p.39) Given that women generally only feature in terms of their sexual appeal, there is a tendency towards the flattening out of distinctions between ordinary and celebrity babes. The new men's weeklies operate a similar set of conventions; emphasizing women's appearance and their sexual availability and activity. Across the spectrum of magazines for men, women are objectified to embody sex; the celebrity and the reader's wife increasingly indistinguishable, the media and everyday life increasingly blurred – a mediascape of sexual display.

Attwood also highlights:

In an analysis of the sex advice presented in women's magazines (2003), Petra Boynton notes that although ostensibly concerned with bodily pleasure, there is a tendency for these to focus instead on women's appearance. Here, women's bodies are presented primarily as objects of display 'to be shown in the best poses, lighting, and in the most flattering lingerie' (p.10). In this respect, they have much in common with the presentations of women's bodies in magazines for men. Women's bodies are the currency used to represent sex, and this is true at the most abstract and general level.

According to a highly detailed study and survey of 1000 Australian porn consumers conducted by Albury, Lumby and McKee in 2003, 82% of consumers were male.<sup>34</sup> They also found that 55% of porn users were in monogamous relationships, while 28% were single.<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, they found that few Muslims consumed pornography and say that this is a result of either Islam being more successful than other religions at stamping out pornography or due to Muslims being less willing to admit its usage.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Alan McKee, Kath Albury and Catharine Lumby, *The Porn Report* (Melbourne University Press, 2008), p.26.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p.31

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p.30

**EVIL EFFECTS OF IRRESPONSIBLE POLYGAMY**

It was narrated that ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar (*radiya Allāhu anhumma*) said: ‘The Messenger of Allāh (*sallallāhu alaihi wa sallam*) turned to us and said: *Immorality never appears among a people to such an extent that they commit it openly, but plagues and diseases that were never known among their predecessors will spread among them.*<sup>37</sup>

<p><b>SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES</b></p>	<p><b><u>USA</u></b></p> <p>Other than HIV, the most common STDs in the United States are chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, genital herpes, human papillomavirus, hepatitis B, trichomoniasis, and bacterial vaginosis. Adolescents and young adults are the age groups at the greatest risk for acquiring an STD. Approximately 19 million new infections occur each year, almost half of them among people ages 15 to 24.</p>
	<p><b><u>UK</u></b></p> <p>Unfortunately, in 2010 sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) have become very common. Last year, there were nearly half a million new cases of STDs reported from clinics. This increase is undoubtedly because more and more people are having enjoyable, but sometimes risky, sex lives – <u>often with several partners.</u><sup>38</sup></p>
	<p><b><u>UK HIV</u></b></p> <p>A doubling of new HIV infections in the UK in the past decade is leading experts to tell GPs to offer testing to all adult male patients in some areas. Health Protection Agency data shows new UK-acquired cases rose from just under 2,000 in 2001 to nearly 3,800 in 2010. Many of these new cases are among men who have sex with men and it is this group that campaigners hope to target.<sup>39</sup></p>
	<p><b><u>US</u></b></p>

<sup>37</sup> Collected by Ibn Mājah (4019) and declared *hasan* by Shaykh al-Albāni.

<sup>38</sup> [http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/health\\_advice/facts/venerealdiseases.htm](http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/health_advice/facts/venerealdiseases.htm)

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-12817564>

**THE  
PHENOMENON  
OF ONE-PARENT  
FAMILIES**

In 2006, 12.9 million families in the U.S. were headed by a single-parent, 80% of which were headed by a female.<sup>40</sup> The U.S. Census Bureau released a report in November, 2009 called '*Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support: 2007*', and this report outlined some interesting single parent statistics and numbers. Some of the key points of the report were as follows:

- There are almost 14 million single mothers and fathers currently raising their children in the United States.

**UK**

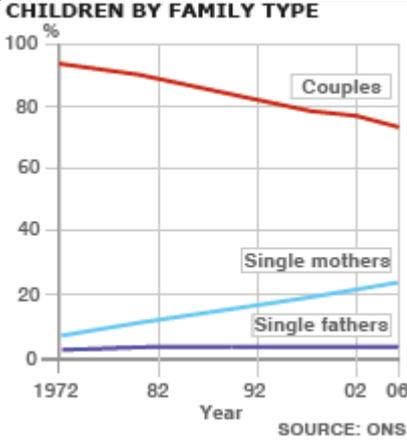
There are 1.9 million single parents as of 2009, with 3 million children.

In 2007 the Office for National Statistics said children in the UK were three times more likely to live in one-parent households than they were in 1972. Last year almost 60% of men and 40% of women aged between 20 and 24 in England still lived with their parents. The department's annual Social Trends report studies patterns in UK society. Since 1971 the proportion of all people living in "traditional" family households of married couples with dependent children has fallen from 52% to 37%. More children are born in Britain today outside of marriage than in most other European countries, the report also said.

The average figure is 44%, compared with just 3% in Cyprus, and just 12% in Britain in the early 1970s.

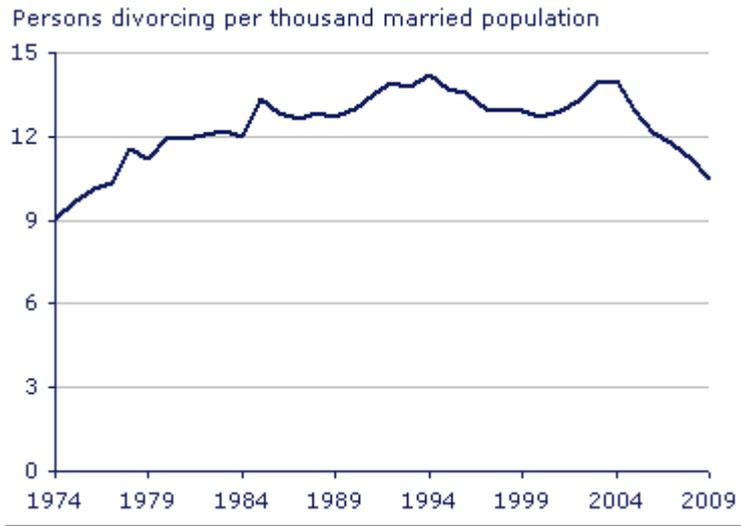
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<sup>40</sup> <http://www.census.gov/aprd/techdoc/cps/cpsmar06.pdf>

	
<p><b>DIVORCE</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u><b>US</b></u></p> <p>Dr. Jan Halper’s study of successful men (executives, entrepreneurs, professionals) found that very few men who have affairs divorce their wife and marry their lovers. Only 3 percent of the 4,100 successful men surveyed eventually married their lovers.</p> <p>Spouses who get hooked on Internet porn are a growing complaint among spouses filing for divorce, according to a survey of 350 divorce attorneys. "If there's dissatisfaction in the existing relationship, the Internet is an easy way for people to scratch the itch," said lawyer J. Lindsey Short, Jr., president of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, which conducted the study.</p> <p>Most experts do consider the 'educated guess' that at the present time some 50 to 65 percent of husbands and 45 to 55 percent of wives become extramaritally involved by the age of 40 to be a relatively sound and reasonable one." According to Peggy Vaughan, author of <i>The Monogamy Myth</i>, first published in 1989 by Newmarket Press (third edition published 2003).</p> <p>According to Annette Lawson, author of <i>Adultery</i>, published in 1989 by Basic Books. "The various researchers arrive at a general consensus...suggesting that above one-quarter to about one-half of married women have at least one lover after they are married in any given marriage. Married men probably still stray more often than married women—perhaps from 50 percent to 65 percent by the age of forty." According to Maggie Scarf, author of <i>Intimate Partners</i>, first published in 1987 by Random House, re-issued in 1996 by Ballentine.</p>

**UK**

**In the 1950s, a million divorces would have taken 30 years. Since 1980, a million divorces have occurred every 6 years. Divorce rates have been steady since 1980 but 6 times higher than they were in the 1950s. In 1960, a divorce took place every 20 minutes. Since 1980, a divorce has taken place every 3 minutes. Compared to the 1950s, there are now 25% fewer marriages but 5 times as many divorces every year.<sup>41</sup>**



**In 2009 the divorce rate in England and Wales fell to 10.5 divorcing people per thousand married population compared with the 2008 figure of 11.2, a fall of 6.3 per cent. The divorce rate is at its lowest level since 1977 when there were 10.3 divorcing people per thousand married population. For 67 per cent of divorces in 2009, the wife was granted the divorce. For all divorces granted to an individual (rather than jointly to both), behaviour was the most common reason for divorce.<sup>42</sup>**

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.2-in-2-1.co.uk/ukstats.html>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ci/nugget.asp?id=170>

<p><b>ABORTION</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u><b>US</b></u></p> <p>Since 1973, over 45 million legal abortions have been performed in the United States.<sup>43</sup></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u><b>UK</b></u></p> <p>According to the Department of Health in 2009: for women resident in England and Wales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the total number of abortions was 189,100, compared with 195,296 in 2008, a fall of 3.2%</li><li>• the age-standardised abortion rate was 17.5 per 1,000 resident women aged 15-44, compared with 18.2 in 2008</li><li>• the abortion rate was highest at 33 per 1,000, for women aged 19, 20 &amp; 21, each lower than in 2008</li><li>• the under-16 abortion rate was 4.0 and the under-18 rate was 17.6 per 1,000 women, both lower than in 2008</li><li>• 94% of abortions were funded by the NHS; of these, over half (60%) took place in the independent sector under NHS contract</li><li>• 91% of abortions were carried out at under 13 weeks gestation; 75% were at under 10 weeks</li><li>• medical abortions accounted for 40% of the total</li><li>• 2,085 abortions (1%) were under ground E, risk that the child would be born handicapped.<sup>44</sup></li></ul> <p>Among under-15s, there were 1,047 abortions (down from 1,097 in 2008), of which 136 were on girls under 14 and 911 were on 14-year-olds. Among all under-16s, there were 3,823 abortions (down from 4,113 in 2008) and 17,916 among under-18s (down from 19,387 in 2008).</p>
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<sup>43</sup> [http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_induced\\_abortion.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html)

<sup>44</sup>

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsStatistics/DH\\_116039](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsStatistics/DH_116039)

	<p><b>Girls aged 15 to 19 accounted for 39,020 abortions in 2009.<sup>45</sup></b></p>
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## ISLĀM AND ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS POLYGAMY

So with the advent of Islām, the following verse was revealed:

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ ۚ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا ﴿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 that you shall not be Able to deal justly (with them), Then only one or (the captives and the slaves) that your Right hands possess. That is nearer to prevent you from doing injustice.”

{an-Nisā (4): 3}

As for classical commentary on the section: *and if you fear that you shall not be Able to deal justly with the orphan girls*, Ā’isha said to her nephew Urwa regarding this section of the verse:

O my nephew! This verse refers to the orphan girl who is under the guardianship of her guardian who likes her beauty and wealth and wishes to (marry her and) curtails her mahr. Such guardians have been forbidden to marry them unless they do justice by giving them their full mahr, and they have been ordered to marry other than them.<sup>46</sup>

Therefore based on this verse, Islām came to do away with all forms of immoral relationships and to restrict the number of wives a man might wish to take in marriage. Not only did Islām honour the Arabian society with its corrective, social maintenance, it also insists that the Muslim man deal justly with his wives.

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2010/may/25/abortion-statistics-map>

<sup>46</sup> Sahih Bukhāri, the book of Nikāh, no.5092.

## **PRE-ISLĀMIC JĀHILIYAH RELATIONSHIPS**

Before we provide the conditions for polygamy and point-structured collection of some of the wisdoms which rationalise and justify the institute of polygamy, let us first a glimpse at the types of relationships that existed prior to the advent of Islām. In an authentic narration collected by Bukhāri, Urwa bin az-Zubayr said that Ā'isha, the wife of the Prophet (*sallallāhu alaihi wa sallam*) told him that there were four types of marriage during the Pre-Islāmic Period of Ignorance:

One type was similar to that of the present day, i.e. a man used to ask somebody else for the hand of a girl under his guardianship or for his daughter's hand, and give her *mahr* and then marry her. The second type was that a man would say to his wife after she had become clean from her period 'Send for so-and-so and have sexual relations with him.' Her husband would then keep away from her till she got pregnant from the other man with whom she was sleeping. When her pregnancy became evident, her husband would sleep with her if he wished. Her husband did so (i.e. let his wife sleep with some other man) so that he might have a child of noble breed. Such marriage was called *al-Istibdā*. Another type of marriage was that a group of less than ten men would assemble and enter upon a woman, and all of them would have sexual relations with her. If she became pregnant and delivered a child and some days had passed after her delivery, she would send for all of them and none of them would refuse to come, and when they all gathered before her, she would say to them 'You (all) know what you have done, and now I have given birth to a child. So, it is your child, O so-and-so!' Naming whoever she liked, and her child would follow him and he could not refuse to take him. The forth type of marriage was that many people would enter upon a lady and she would never refuse anyone who came to her. Those were the prostitutes who used to fix flags at their doors as signs, and he who wished, could have sexual intercourse with them. If anyone of them got pregnant and delivered a child, then all of those men would be gathered for her and they would call the *Qā'if* (a person skilled in recognising likeness of a child to his father) to them and would let the child follow the man (whom they recognised as his father) and she would let him adhere to him and be called his son. The man would not refuse all that. But when Muhammad (*sallallāhu alaihi wa sallam*)

was sent with the Truth, he abolished all the types of marriages observed in the Pre-Islāmic Period of Ignorance except the type of marriage the people recognise today.<sup>47</sup>

## CONDITIONS FOR POLYGAMY

Polygamy is not just a casual arrangement which anyone can walk into. In Islām there are certain conditions which must be met before anyone can partake in a polygamous marriage.

### 1. JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

Allāh the Most High states:

﴿٣﴾ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ أَذَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا ﴿٣﴾

“But if you fear that you shall not be Able to deal justly (with them), then only one or (the captives and the slaves) that your right hands possess. That is nearer to prevent you from doing injustice.”

{an-Nisā (4): 3}

This section of this noble verse clearly states that equality and even handed treatment is a condition for the practice of polygamy. A lack of either one will be, in most cases, a destructive force which will weaken the family infrastructure. Also there is an authentic narration which drives home the importance that Islām places on equality between wives. The Prophet (*sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*) said: “Whoever has two wives and leaned unduly to one of them will come on the Day of Judgment with half of his body leaning.”<sup>48</sup>

### 2. ECONOMICAL ABILITY TO MAINTAIN ALL WIVES

Allāh the Most High states:

﴿٣٣﴾ وَلِيَسْتَعْفِفِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّىٰ يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ﴿٣٣﴾

“And let those who find not the financial means for marriage keep themselves chaste, until Allāh enriches them of his Bounty.”

{an-Nūr (24): 33}

<sup>47</sup> Sahīh Bukhāri, the book of Nikāh, no.5127.

<sup>48</sup> Sunan Abu Dāwūd.

## **WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE GOOSE IS ALSO GOOD FOR THE GANDER?**

Given the fact that we exist in a point in time when women and men are constantly bombarded with ideas and concepts of gender equality,<sup>49</sup> Imām Ibn ul-Qayyim said:

**That is from the complete wisdom of the Lord and His Kindness and Mercy towards His slaves and His taking care of their affairs. Exalted is He far above anything else and His Divine Legislation are above suggesting anything else. If it were permitted for a woman to have two husbands or more, the world would be corrupted, lineages would be lost, the husbands would kill one another, there would be great misery, tribulation would intensify and there would be continuous trouble. How could a woman be in a good position if she were shared by a number of men who were quarelling all the time over her? How could the men who share her be in a good situation? The fact that shari'ah brings the teachings it does is one of the greatest signs of the wisdom of the Lawgiver and His mercy and care.**

So if it is said: "how come men are taken care of and given free rein to satisfy their desires and move from one wife to another according to their desires and needs, when a woman's sex drive is the same as a man's?" Then it should be said in response: because women are usually hidden behind veils and inside their houses, and women tend to be more even-tempered than men, and less active than men, and men have been given more physical strength and energy which makes men's desires greater than woman's and men are affected by these desires more than women, a man is allowed to marry more partners than a woman is. This is one of the things that have been given exclusively to men and not to women, one of the things in which they have been given something more than women, just as they are also favoured over women in that only men can be Messengers, Prophets, caliphs, kings, governors, judges, participants in jihad etc. Men have been made *qawwāmūn* (protectors and maintainers) of women, taking care of them, working to provide

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<sup>49</sup> Islām is all for gender equality in terms of justice and equality through the recognition that both sexes have the shared ability to perform righteous good deeds. Islām ushered in many human rights long before the European Convention on Human Rights was drafted in 1950.

them with the means of living, exposing themselves to danger, travelling about in the land and exposing themselves to all sorts of trials all for the benefit of their wives.

The Lord is Ever-Appreciative and Forbearing, so He appreciates the men's efforts and has rewarded them by giving them something that He has not given to the women. If you compare the exhaustive efforts and hard work that men do for the sake of woman with the jealousy that women suffer, you will find that the men's share of fatigue, effort and diligence is greater than the women's share of having to put up with jealousy. This is the perfect justice, wisdom and mercy of Allāh, may He be praised as He deserves.<sup>50</sup>

## **A BENEFIT FOR OUR MUSLIM SISTERS**

Imām Muhammad bin Sālih al-'Uthaymeen stated in regards to the benefits from the verse in Sūrah:

There is no problem in a person disliking what has been decreed for him, his dislike is not due to what Legislator has instructed, rather, his dislike is natural. As for the Legislator has instructed then there has to be pleasure with this and an open heart to it.<sup>51</sup>

Imām Muhammad bin Sālih al-'Uthaymeen stated:

Allāh's saying

“...even though you despise it...”

{*al-Baqarah* (2):216}

You have to know that the dameer (personal pronoun) in his saying “...and it is (wa huwa)” refers to fighting and not the prescription because it is not possible that the Companions, may Allāh be pleased with them, would dislike Allāh's obligations. Rather they disliked killing, and they fight and are killed. There is a difference between a person hating the rule of Allah and hating what the rule includes.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Imām Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *I'lām ul-Muwaqī'een 'an Rabb il 'Ālameen* (Dammām, KSA: Dār Ibn ul-Jawzī, Rajab 1423 AH, ed. Shaykh Mashhūr bin Hasan Āl Salmān), vol.3, pp.325-326.

<sup>51</sup> Tafseer Ibn 'Uthaymeen.

<sup>52</sup> Mu'allifāt Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen, vol.2, p.438.

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**Translator's note:** Imām 'Uthaymeen means here that hating the hukm in and of itself is harām but hating what it includes (i.e. liking to share your husband) is not harām but natural.