

# NABIYUNA

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# NABIYUNA



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And We have not sent you,  
[O Muammad], except as a mercy  
to the worlds.

(\*)Quran 21:107





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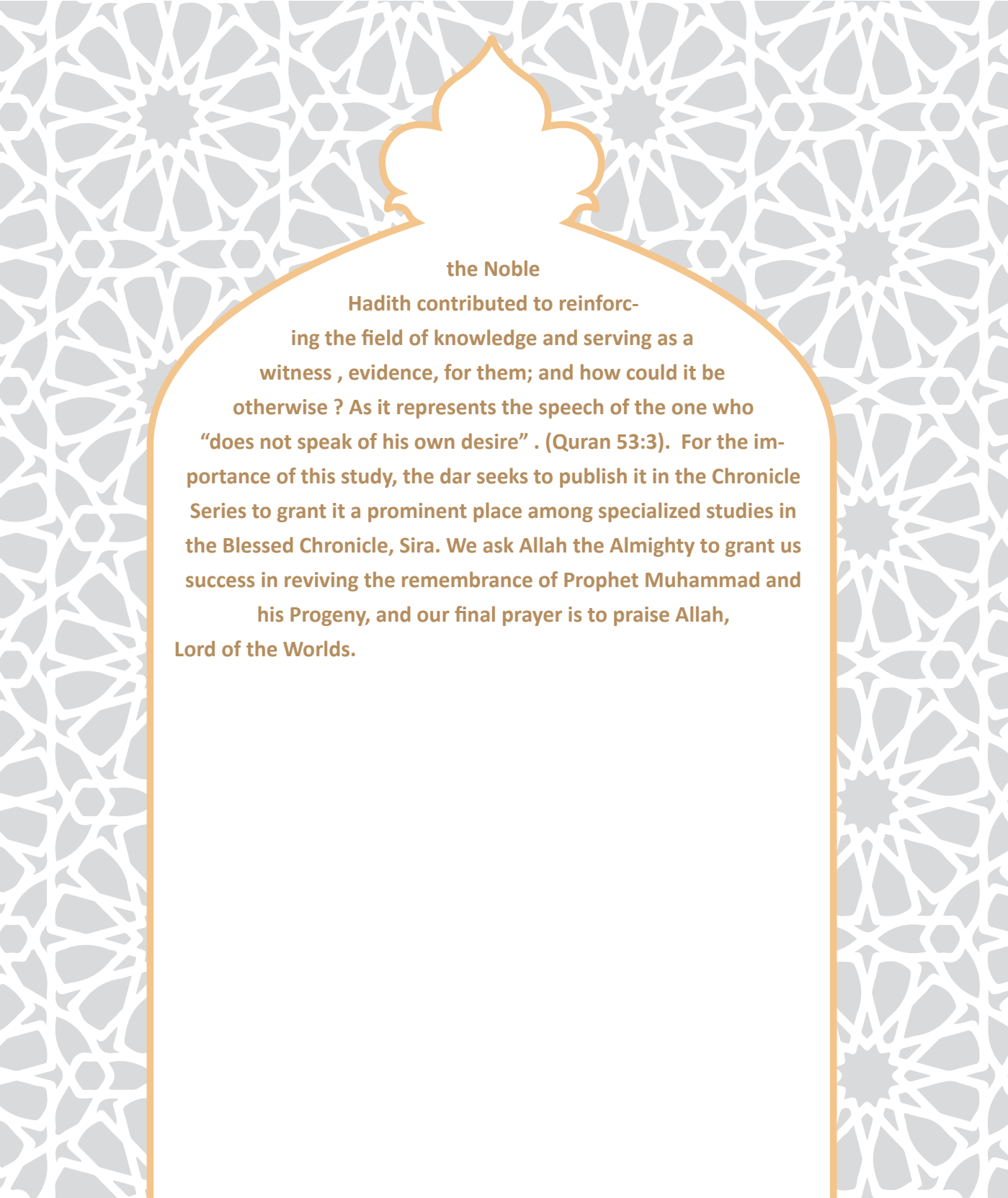
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## Editorial Note

The Greatest Prophet Dar charts for itself a path to attract the pens of researchers interested in the Glorious Prophetic Chronicle and the various scholarly studies worldwide . Such is achieved through a series of activities, including the competition for the Best Ten University Theses and Dissertations , Second Version, written on the Blessed Prophetic Chronicle. Here the initiative aims to achieve a grand objective: collecting everything pertinent to the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him and His Progeny) to establish a specialized library that gathers both hardware and software materials: “Wherein are books right and straight” . (Quran 98:3) , in a manner appropriate for the seal of messengers and prophets (Peace Be Upon Him and His Progeny), and from which every researcher seeking the truth might draw. For sheer knowledge, the subject is the acquisition and uncovering of the totality of facts, leading to the ultimate reality of the Chronicle and its truths. The thesis “Impact of Noble Prophetic Hadith on Arabic Lexicography until Fourth Hijri Century” , which participated in the second competition for the best ten university theses and dissertations written on the Prophetic Chronicle achieved the sixth position, realizes a significant goal in this field. It established the Noble Prophetic Hadith as a cornerstone for documentation, legal argumentation (Ihtijaj), exegesis, and the linguistic enrichment of Arabic lexicography. This is in addition to other linguistic issues that



the Noble  
Hadith contributed to reinforcing the field of knowledge and serving as a witness , evidence, for them; and how could it be otherwise ? As it represents the speech of the one who “does not speak of his own desire” . (Quran 53:3). For the importance of this study, the dar seeks to publish it in the Chronicle Series to grant it a prominent place among specialized studies in the Blessed Chronicle, Sira. We ask Allah the Almighty to grant us success in reviving the remembrance of Prophet Muhammad and his Progeny, and our final prayer is to praise Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

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**Orientalist Studies and Attempts to  
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riage to Zaynab bint Jahsh as Model**



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## Orientalist Studies and Attempts to Undermine Psychological Integrity of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.): Marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh as Model

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### Abstract

This research presents an analysis of Orientalist methodology regarding the incident of Prophet Muhammad's (p.b.u.h.) marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh, treating it as a prominent model for addressing psychological and behavioural dimensions of Prophetic character.

Orientalist discourse is divided into two primary trends. First is a biased, distorting trend that impugns the balance of the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) motives and reasons for polygyny. This trend attempts to negate Prophethood itself through claims related to sexual obsession, political ambitions, or psychological illness, asserting opportunism in justifying personal actions via revelation. The second trend is characterised by objectivity and fairness, approaching the incident from legislative and social perspectives while focusing on the reformatory role of marriage in nullifying pre-Islamic adoption practices.

The research adopts a critical, analytical, and comparative methodology, deconstructing negative Orientalist readings (emotional, political, and personalist) and comparing them with original Islamic sources and their historical and cultural context. It demonstrates that these readings, built on individual projections or preconceived ideological backgrounds,



ignore historical evidence—such as the Prophet’s (p.b.u.h.) delay in announcing revelation due to social apprehension, and his execution of divine command through a legislative rather than subjective methodology. Furthermore, the research shows that legislative justifications for marriage to Zaynab are established in Quran and Sunnah, and that accusations of polygyny or “sexual desire” lack foundation in the context of his era or most precise interpretations, particularly given verses prohibiting marriage after Zaynab and clarifying the limits and objectives of Prophetic marriage.

Results indicate that challenges to the psychological and behavioural integrity of the Prophet’s (p.b.u.h.) character involve methodological deviations and lack scientific or textual evidence from reliable sources. Conversely, the legitimate reformist nature of this marriage within a legislative structure to correct pre-Islamic customs is evident, establishing the life of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) as a balanced legislative leader rather than one psychologically astray or influenced by whim.

## Introduction

The character of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is the central axis of Prophetic Chronicle, not merely as a Prophet, Messenger, missionary leader, or legislator, but as the perfect human model in Islamic conception. This character and his life have formed a pivotal subject in many Orientalist studies, which varied in objectives, methods, and positions, and differed in degrees of fairness and objectivity; Orientalists were divided between biased, extremist critical trends and moderate ones.

Among issues that received particular attention in this context is the psychological and behavioural dimension of the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) character, especially regarding his marriages, their plurality, and motives. The incident of his marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh\* <sup>1 2 3 4</sup> formed a prominent model in this framework due to its psychological, behavioural, social, and legislative implications, making it a focus of extensive analysis for several Orientalists.

This study aims to analyse Orientalist positions on this issue (Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh) by classifying their readings into two main trends:

**Biased, Distorting Readings:** These sought to undermine the image of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and cast doubt on his psychological balance, purity of motives, and even his Prophethood itself, starting from a selective approach that strips facts from historical and religious contexts. Proponents of this trend proceed from the hypothesis that questioning the competence of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and discrediting him will necessarily lead to shaking the foundation upon which Islam stands as a divine message.

**Objective Readings:** These are characterised by a degree of fairness, approaching

1 Ibn Sa'd, Muhammad, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, vol. 8, pp. 40–45

2 Ibn Hisham Abdul Malik, The Biography of the Prophet, Muhammad Fawzi (Dar Al-Fikr, 1989), pp. 320–322.

3 Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, vol. 7, pp. 540–544;

4 al-Tabari Muhammad ibn Jarir, Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk, vol. 4, pp. 390–393.

\* Lady Zaynab bint Jahsh is one of the wives of Prophet Muhammad and a prominent companion in Islamic history. She was born in Mecca around 16 years before Hijra into the Quraysh tribe. Lady Zaynab was initially married to Zayd ibn Harithah, a slave whom Prophet Muhammad adopted and later manumitted. After Lady Zaynab's divorce from Zayd, Prophet Muhammad married her in the fifth year of Hijra (approx. 627 AD) based on divine command, as stated in Q. 33:37. Lady Zaynab participated in many important events during the Prophetic period and played a role in supporting the Prophet and spreading Islamic dawah. She died in Medina around 50 AH (670 AD).

the incident from a scientific perspective that relies on analysing facts within their temporal and cultural contexts, away from prejudices or the traditional Orientalist vision with its superiorist tendency.

The study poses the following fundamental questions: To what extent did Orientalist readings of the life of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) succeed in building a scientific challenge to his psychological and behavioural integrity? How successful were these readings in exploiting the incident of his marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh to consolidate this challenge? And to what extent did they adhere to scientific methodology and objectivity in this proposition?

The study will adopt a critical, analytical, and comparative approach by analysing the mechanisms of Orientalist discourse dealing with this incident, deconstructing underlying psychological and interpretive structures in its readings, and revealing methodological and epistemological contradictions, especially regarding biased extremist readings, comparing them with original Islamic sources while considering historical and psychological contexts, with the aim of deconstructing the mechanisms of impugment and evaluating them according to scientific standards.

**The theoretical framework of the study rests on three main pillars:**

**Theory of Orientalism:** As formulated by several Arab and Muslim thinkers, which revealed methodological foundations of bias in Western discourse.

**Critical Analysis of Orientalist Discourse:** As a tool for deconstructing patterns of language and narrative construction in Orientalist texts.

**Islamic Psychological Analysis\***<sup>5678</sup>: To understand dimensions of psychological balance in the character of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) from a perspective based on Islamic reference.

The importance of this study lies in its contribution to correcting erroneous Ori-

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5 Al-Tayeb, Muhammad Abdullah, *Islamic Psychoanalysis - Foundations and Concepts* (Dar Al-Fikr Al-Muasir, 2011).

6 Nasser Ali, *Islamic Psychology - Theory and Application*.

7 Shahbazi, Muhammad Reza, *Psychoanalysis in Islam - Foundations and Theories*, Samir Ahmed.

8 Nasser, Hussein, *Islamic Psychology - An Analytical Introduction*, Laila Mahmoud, Center for Arab Unity Studies, 2012

\* Taha Abd al-Rahman, (*Introduction to Orientalism*); Edward Said, (*Orientalism*); Sami Awadallah, (*Orientalism and the Culture of Hegemony*); Hassan Hanafi, (*A Critique of Orientalism from an Islamic Perspective*); Ziauddin Sardar, (*Orientalism*); Abdel Wahab El-Messiri, (*On the Critique of Orientalist Discourse*); Muhammad Abdullah Anan, (*Orientalism: A Critical Review*); Abd al-Rahman Badawi, (*Orientalism and Representation*).

entalist perceptions regarding psychological and behavioural aspects of Prophet Muhammad's (p.b.u.h.) character, exposing structural contradictions in some Orientalist writings, and enriching the epistemological debate on approaching religious texts from outside their civilisational and religious context.

### **Orientalist Descriptions of Manifestations of Psychological Defect**

Writings of several Western Orientalists include explicit accusations against Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), particularly regarding his psychological and behavioural integrity and moral motives. Some sought to doubt his Prophethood and interpret his actions from purely material or psychological perspectives. Below are the most prominent claims:

1. Illusions of Revelation and its Utilisation: Hungarian Orientalist Ignaz Goldziher (1850–1921) in *Muhammedanische Studien*<sup>9</sup>, German Orientalist Theodor Nöldeke (1836–1930) in *History of the Quran*<sup>10</sup>, and American historian John Edward Wansbrough (1928–2002) in *Quranic Studies*<sup>11</sup>, indicated that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was influenced by his environment, and that revelation he received was an expression of internal psychological motives rather than a divine source. Goldziher claimed that polygyny in Islam does not reflect divine legislation but personal desire, and that some Quranic verses, including those related to his marriage to Zaynab, represent a religious adaptation of human whims, claiming the Prophet used revelation to justify personal desire..

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9 Ignaz Goldziher , *Muhammedanische Studien*, trans. Salih Abd al-Fattah Mahfuz (Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1986).

10 Theodor Nöldeke , *History of the Quran*, trans. Mustafa Abd al-Qadir Isa (Dar al-Fikr, 1998).

11 John Wansbrough , *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, trans. Mustafa Abd al-Ghani (Dar al-Fikr, 2000).

French Orientalist Maxime Rodinson (1915–2004) in *Mohammed* used a psycho-Marxist approach and viewed Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) from a purely material-social perspective, projecting the theory of the unconscious<sup>\*12</sup>, onto religious texts, claiming Quran justifies the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) inclinations via revelation<sup>13</sup>. English Orientalist David Samuel Margoliouth (1858–1940) in *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam* considered some of the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) behaviours as evidence of apparent human weakness, accusing the Prophet of preparing the psychological and social environment for these behaviours motivated by whim, and that he used revelation to justify private actions rather than to guide them<sup>14</sup>. Belgian Orientalist Henri Lammens (1862–1937) claimed in *Mahomet* that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was “concealing himself with religious vision to satisfy personal desires”<sup>15</sup>.

Some Orientalists also claimed that revelation received by the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was merely nervous or epileptic fits. Scottish Orientalist William Muir (1819–1905) described revelation as hallucinations resulting from an abnormal mental state<sup>16</sup>. French Orientalist Régis Blachère (1900–1973) considered the experience of revelation a hysterical phenomenon of a religious nature<sup>17</sup>. As for Nöldeke, although he did not say so explicitly, he did not rule out this psychological interpretation influenced by

12 Goldziher, *Muhammadan Studies*, pp. 200–210.

13 Maxime Rodinson, *Mohammed* (p.b.u.h.), trans. Taha Abdurrahman (Dar al-Tali'a, 1982) pp. 120–135.

14 Samuel David Margoliouth, *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam*, trans. Abdul Wahab Azzam (Dar al-Nahda al-Arabiyyah, 1982) pp. 155–170.

15 Henri Lammens, *Mahomet*, trans. Sami al-Droubi (Dar Sader, 1984) pp. 110–125.

16 Muir William, *The Life of Mahomet*, 5th ed., trans. Muhammad Said Hamadah (Dar al-Ma'rifah, 2003) pp. 200–215.

17 Blachère Régis, *Prophethood in Muhammad* (p.b.u.h.), trans. Muhammad Kamil Husain (Dar al-Ma'arif, 1965) pp. 90–105.

\*Theory of the Unconscious :A fundamental concept in psychology referring to mental processes occurring outside the scope of conscious awareness .Sigmund Freud established this theory ,asserting that the unconscious contains repressed thoughts ,desires ,and feelings that influence human behaviour without awareness .These unconscious processes affect dreams ,involuntary actions ,and decisions ,shaping individual personality .The unconscious is considered a reservoir of repressed psychological conflicts that can lead to psychological disorders if not addressed .Freud Sigmund, *Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, 2nd ed., trans. Yusuf Kanaan (Dar al-Tali'a, 1982), pp. 45–78; Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychoanalysis: Principles and Applications*, trans. Muhammad Surur (Dar al-Fikr, 2010), pp. 60–90; Antoine Rabout, *Unconscious Between Theory and Practice*, trans. Sami Abdullah (Librairie du Liban Publishers, 1995), pp. 12–40.

the spiritual environment in the Arabian Peninsula<sup>18</sup>.

2. Bloodshed: Some Orientalists accused Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) of a propensity for violence and bloodshed. Margoliouth considered that there was harshness and revenge in the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) character<sup>19</sup>, while Lammens described him as a tribal leader who used religion to eliminate opponents<sup>20</sup>. Even the Scottish Orientalist William Montgomery Watt (1909–2006), despite his relative balance, indicated that the Prophet used war as a political tool to expand his authority<sup>21</sup>.

3. Power and Prestige: Some Orientalists claimed that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) sought power more than being a religious reformer. Rodinson viewed him as a social leader with material motives<sup>22</sup>. Lammens, in *Fatima and the Daughters of Muhammad*, claimed that Prophet Muhammad's (p.b.u.h.) project was a political one cloaked in religion<sup>23</sup>, while the German Orientalist Carl Becker (1879–1933) hinted that Prophet-hood was a cover for controlling the Peninsula<sup>24</sup>.

4. Sexual Inclination: Among the most prominent accusations repeated by Orientalists in their attempts to impugn the character of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) are those related to what they termed "sexual inclination". They described him as being so fond of women that it affected his physical and psychological strength, citing his polygyny and the nature of his marriage to some of them, such as Lady Khadija bint Khuwaylid, Lady Aisha bint Abi Bakr, and Lady Zaynab bint Jahsh.

The French thinker Gustave Le Bon (1841–1931) claimed that the only weakness in Muhammad's (p.b.u.h.) character was his sudden inclination toward women, despite living faithfully to his first wife Khadija until age fifty<sup>25</sup>. He cites the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.)

18 Nöldeke, *History of the Quran*, pp. 45–60.

19 Margoliouth, *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam*, pp. 175–185.

20 Lammens, *Mahomet*, pp. 130–140.

21 Montgomery Watt William, *Muhammad at Medina*, trans. Hasan Abu al-Saud (Dar al-Afaq al-Arabiyyah, 1997) pp. 310–320.

22 Rodinson, *Mohammed (p.b.u.h.)*, pp. 115–130.

23 Lammens, *Mahomet*, pp. 40–55.

24 Heinrich Becker Carl, *Muhammad the Prophet (p.b.u.h.)*, trans. Muhammad Shafiq Ghorbal (Dar al-Ma'arif, 1955) pp. 75–90.

25 Le Bon Gustave, *The Civilisation of the Arabs*, 2nd ed., trans. Adil Zuaiter (Dar al-Shorouk, 2005) pp. 120–130.

saying: “Women and perfume have been made dear to me from your world, and my comfort has been provided in prayer”<sup>2627</sup>. He adds that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) did not distinguish between the young and the old in marriage, as he married Aisha while she was a young girl and married Maymunah at an advanced age<sup>28</sup>. Goldziher also pointed to the same tradition, stating that this phrase and its likes were used by opponents of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) to impugn him and accuse him of excessive preoccupation with women, which is unbefitting of Prophethood<sup>29</sup>. Meanwhile, Lammens described his marital life as a reflection of excessive physical desire<sup>30</sup>. Rodinson viewed the motive for his polygyny as nothing but instinct wrapped in religious justifications. He went on to a forced analysis of the Prophet’s (p.b.u.h.) psychological state, saying the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) felt deep emotion toward Khadija, but when he reached old age, he wanted to “compensate” for this emotion with the young women who surrounded him; perhaps the Prophet’s (p.b.u.h.) loss of his mother in childhood is what drove him to love Khadija (the older woman)<sup>31</sup>, in a clear reference to the “Oedipus complex”<sup>32</sup> \*.

In turn, the French Orientalist Émile Dermenghem (1867–1944) claimed that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) became more inclined toward women in the last de-

26 Al-Bukhari Muhammad ibn Ismail, Sahih Al-Bukhari, 2nd ed., ed. Muhammad Zahid al-Kawthari (Dar al-Fikr, 1995) Book of Tafsir, Hadith No. 4816. In Wasa’il al-Shia by Sheikh al-Hurr al-Amili, the tradition is narrated as: “Three things from the world have been made dear to me: women, perfume, and my comfort has been provided in prayer,” vol. 2, p. 144.

27 Al-Amili Al-Hurr Muhammad bin Al-Hassan, Wasa’il Al-Shi’a, Vol. 2 (Dar Al-Hadith, 1983), p. 144.

28 Le Bon, The Civilisation of the Arabs, pp. 130–140.

29 Goldziher, Muhammedanische Studien, pp. 210–220.

30 Henri Lammens, Fatima and the Daughters of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) (Dar Sader, 1984), pp. 56–70.

31 Rodinson, Mohammed (p.b.u.h.), pp. 140–150.

32 Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, trans. Mahmoud Khattab (Dar al-Tali’a, 1986), pp. 120–130.

\* Oedipus is a mythical figure in Greek mythology, famous through the play Oedipus Rex by Sophocles. Psychologists derived a psychological condition from Oedipus’s disturbed behaviour called the “Oedipus complex,” a central concept in psychoanalysis developed by Sigmund Freud. It refers to a child’s unconscious tendency to love the parent of the opposite sex with a rivalrous and hostile feeling toward the parent of the same sex. This complex forms part of the child’s psychosexual development stages during early childhood (approx. 3–6 years). The Oedipus complex is considered a basis for understanding internal psychological conflicts and their impact on an individual’s personality and future behaviour. Successfully overcoming this complex contributes to building a balanced personality, whereas failure to resolve it may lead to psychological disorders. Its effects manifest in dreams, imagination, and emotional relationships in adult life.

cade of his life, which indicates undisciplined lust<sup>33</sup>.

Although some Orientalists noted a tendency toward asceticism and devotion in the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) character before the mission, portraying him as a devout ascetic, they return to depict him as a person immersed in pleasures. Montgomery Watt is a clear example of this contradiction. He admits that some of the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) marriages were political in nature, yet he does not hesitate to suggest the existence of relationships outside the legal framework, according to what he called the "old international system"<sup>34</sup>, in a direct accusation of the Prophet committing forbidden acts—an accusation that touches his honour and the honour of the Mothers of the Believers. Although Watt himself admits that the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) polygyny often had political motives, his writings, like most British Orientalism, are dominated by an accusatory tone and a disregard for social and cultural context.

In response to these Orientalist suspicions, the Quranic challenge to the Arabs to bring something like it—"Or they may say, 'He forged it.' Say, 'Bring ye then ten suras forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever ye can, other than Allah, if ye speak the truth!'" and "Say: 'If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Quran, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support'"—confirms that Quran is not of human manufacture; had it been so, they would have been able to imitate it. These suspicions ignore the companions' testimonies of the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) full consciousness during and after revelation; one suffering from epilepsy loses control, while the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) communicated immediately after revelation descended and dictated the revealed text to scribes of revelation. Through a general review of verses of the Holy Quran, does the linguistic and rhetorical formulation, the doctrinal and legislative rulings, parables, and exhortations they contain

33 Émile Dermenghem, *Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and the Women of Islam*, trans. Abdullah al-Bakr (Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1980), pp. 90–105.

34 Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, pp. 250–260.

suggest that they are hallucinations or the product of epileptic fits<sup>35 36</sup> \*?

On the other hand, all the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) battles were defensive or due to opponents breaking covenants; he never launched a war for control, occupying others' lands, or coercing people into religion. He used to advise against killing women and children and recommended pardon when able, as he did on the day of the Conquest of Mecca<sup>37</sup>, indicating clear mercy in wars. As for measuring the military expansion and conquests that occurred after the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) departure, the Messenger is not responsible for them nor did he order them; indeed, these invasion operations pose major problems at the level of Islamic law.

Furthermore, the accusation that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) had a tendency for prestige and power fails completely before his life story, which includes the rejection of any material or political gains in exchange for abandoning his religious mission, including offers from Quraysh<sup>38</sup>; instead, he was subjected to persecution and boycott. Moreover, he died with his shield mortgaged<sup>39</sup>, and he did not bequeath the role of Prophethood to anyone; rather, he bequeathed the leadership of the Muslim Nation to the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt according to what Allah commanded him, not based on personal desire.

As for the suspicion of the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) attachment to women, it lacks foundation because the historical reality of his life shows that most of his wives were widows or elderly, and he married them for humanitarian, social, or political purposes. His only virgin wife was Aisha, and her age at marriage to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was familiar in Arab society at that time; it cannot be evaluated by modern standards in isolation from its temporal and cultural context. The life of Prophet Muham-

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35 al-Qaisi, Muhammad Abdullah Psychiatry (Dar al-Fikr, 2011), pp. 45–47;

36 Al-Shammari Fahd, Neurology and Psychiatry (Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 2012), pp. 120–123.

37 Ibn Hisham Abd al-Malik, Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah, ed. Muhammad Fawzi (Dar al-Fikr, 1989), pp. 568–570.

38 Ibn Hisham Abdul Malik, The Biography of the Prophet, pp. 335–340.

39 Ibn Hisham, Abdul Malik, The Biography of the Prophet, pp. 820–825.

\* Epilepsy: A chronic neurological disorder characterised by recurrent seizures caused by abnormal electrical activity in the brain. Symptoms include convulsions and temporary loss of consciousness. Hallucination: A false perceptual experience occurring without a sensory stimulus. Neither condition produces intelligible speech or organized, clear texts.

mad (p.b.u.h.) regarding marriage can only be understood within the framework of its higher objectives: achieving social interest, establishing political ties, protecting widows, teaching the nation, and consolidating principles of Islamic law. It was not a matter of desire or lust, but a great responsibility carried by the Prophet of the nation with sincerity and purity, executed according to the command of his Lord, not the whim of his soul.

Indeed, some Western thinkers did not lack fairness and objectivity in this field, such as the Scottish philosopher Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), who pointed out that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was not a slave to his lusts as his enemies' claim, and it is unjust to depict him as a man only concerned with satisfying his desires. This is an unfair judgement that has no relation to the truth; Prophet Muhammad (p.b.h.u) was not like that<sup>40</sup>.

The truth is that the suspicions raised by some Orientalists regarding psychological or behavioural defects, or excessive sexual desire in the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), are the result of a set of methodological deviations, including:

Projecting their own psychological states onto an infallible religious figure.

Total disregard for the authentic Islamic narrative.

Deliberate exclusion of civilisational and historical context.

Subjection to theological or ideological frameworks previously hostile to Islam.

This tendency was clearly stated by the American-Dutch Orientalist Samuel Zwemer\* \*\* (1867–1952) when he declared that they do not seek to convert the

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Carlyle , On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History, trans. Abdul Aziz al-Duri (Dar al-Fikr, 1998), pp. 210–220.

\* Zwemer Samuel: was a Dutch-American Christian missionary with a significant role in Christian Orientalism. His positions clarify the strategy of weakening Muslims without direct conversion. His most important books in this field: *The Moslem Christ* (1912) and *The Influence of Animism on Islam* (1920). These texts were accessed via unofficial translations.

\*\* Ibn Harithah Zayd: was a noble companion and one of the first to embrace Islam, holding a high status in Islamic history. Born approx. 20 years before Hijra. He was a slave manumitted by Prophet Muhammad then adopted. After Islam abolished the custom of adoption, he stayed with the Prophet and kept his original name. Commander of the Muslim army in the Battle of Mu'tah where he was martyred in 8 AH (629 AD), and buried in Mu'tah, Jordan, where he is considered the first martyr among companions on the battlefield. He was distinguished by deep sincerity, loyalty, and service to the Prophet.

Muslim to a Christian, for that is impossible, but the goal is to make him without religion; when he is no longer a Muslim and does not profess any creed, he will then be at his weakest and easiest to lead.

### **Orientalist Interpretations of Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) Marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh**

The marriage of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) to Zaynab bint Jahsh is among the most prominent subjects that piqued the interest of Orientalists, forming fertile material for discussion and debate. Their positions varied between those who employed this event to impugn the character of the Prophet and doubt his Prophethood, and those who approached it within its social and religious context as a pivotal legislative milestone in Islam. Their analyses were divided between accusations of purely personal motives behind the marriage and visions that see it as a step to abolish the pre-Islamic system of adoption.

Zaynab was the wife of Zayd ibn Harithah, the manumitted slave of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and his adopted son before this system was abrogated by the revelation of a verse prohibiting the attribution of children to other than their biological fathers. After Zayd divorced her, Allah commanded His Prophet to marry her in the context of eliminating these customs deeply rooted in the Arab tribal environment. This was explicitly stated in the Holy Quran: "Then when Zayd had dissolved (his marriage) with her, with the necessary (formality), We joined her in marriage to thee: in order that (in future) there may be no difficulty to the Believers in (the matter of) marriage with the wives of their adopted sons, when the latter have dissolved with the necessary (formality) (their marriage) with them".

### **Following are the most important Orientalist interpretations addressing this subject:**

1. Emotional Interpretation of Marriage: Although the marriage of Zaynab and Zayd did not last long due to incompatibility, Orientalists linked the end of this marriage to emotional motives, ignoring the legislative context surrounding the event. A tendency prevailed in some Orientalist theses to interpret this marriage psychologically or romantically, suggesting that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) fell in love with Zaynab

while she was still Zayd's wife and orchestrated her divorce to marry her later. This interpretation was promoted by several Orientalists, most notably: Margoliouth<sup>41</sup>, English Orientalist George Sale (1697–1736)<sup>42</sup>, British Orientalist Reginald Reynold Nicholson (1868–1945)<sup>43</sup>, British Orientalist Richard Bell (1876–1952)<sup>44</sup>, German Orientalist Joseph Schacht (1902–1969)<sup>45</sup>, Goldziher<sup>46</sup>, Rodinson<sup>47</sup>, Montgomery Watt<sup>48</sup>, Lammens<sup>49</sup>, and British historian Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975)<sup>50</sup>.

These individuals claimed that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) loved Zaynab before her divorce, and that the saying of Allah: "But thou didst hide in thy heart that which Allah was about to make manifest" reflects repressed feelings toward her. Margoliouth alleged that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) engineered the divorce out of an emotional motive, accusing him of preparing the psychological and social environment to enable the marriage, considering revelation merely a means to justify personal desires<sup>51</sup>. Goldziher went on to say that this event represents a religious adaptation of human whims<sup>52</sup>. Montgomery Watt, despite acknowledging moral aspects of the Prophet's character, leaned toward the hypothesis of personal motive, indicating that Muhammad's desire for Zaynab was the decisive factor in the divorce<sup>53</sup>.

2. Socio-Political Interpretation: Some Orientalists saw that the marriage was not the result of emotion, but rather a reformist tool within the Prophet's project to undermine pre-Islamic social structures, foremost among them the system of adoption.

41 Margoliouth, Mohammed and the Rise of Islam, pp. 120–130.

42 George Sale, The Koran, trans. Muhammad Abd al-Rahman (Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, 1995), pp. 90–95.

43 Nicholson Reginald Reynold, A Literary History of the Arabs, trans. Abdullah Yusuf (Dar al-Fikr, 1992), pp. 150–155.

44 Richard Bell, Introduction to the Quran, trans. Ahmad Abd al-Rahman (Dar Sader, 1985), pp. 100–110.

45 Joseph Schacht, The Legacy of Islam, trans. Muhammad Said Ramadan al-Buti (Dar al-Qalam, 1990), pp. 130–140.

46 Goldziher, Muhammedanische Studien, pp. 140–150.

47 Rodinson, Mohammed (p.b.u.h.), pp. 160–170.

48 Watt, Muhammad at Medina, pp. 110–120.

49 Lammens, Mahomet, pp. 95–105.

50 Arnold Toynbee, A Study of History, trans. Abdul Rahman Badawi (Dar al-Tali'a, 1972), pp. 500–510.

51 Margoliouth, Mohammed and the Rise of Islam, pp. 120–130.

52 Goldziher, Muhammedanische Studien, pp. 140–150.

53 Watt W. Montgomery, Mohammed and the Rise of Islam, pp. 120–130.

Notable proponents of this interpretation include British-American historian Bernard Lewis (1916–2018)<sup>54</sup>, William Muir<sup>55</sup>, and American historian Michael Hart (1932–), who indicated that this marriage formed part of a strategy to expand the Prophet's authority and establish a new legislative system<sup>56</sup>. These scholars viewed the Prophet's marriage to the divorcee of his adopted son as a symbolic step to break social inheritance that treated the adopted as a real son, considering the Quranic verse came to justify this act rather than to legislate it.

3. Personalist Interpretation: This involves an accusation against the Prophet of tailoring rulings according to his personal circumstances. Some Orientalists suggested the Prophet formulated legislation according to the requirements of his private life. Among them are Ignaz Goldziher<sup>57</sup>, John Wansbrough<sup>58</sup>, and Theodor Nöldeke<sup>59</sup>, who claimed the Prophet's marriage to Zaynab represented a deviation from moral values called for by Islam, alleging the Prophet permitted for himself what he forbade for others, and that he feared people's talk rather than violating legislation, citing the verse: "Thou didst fear the people, but it is more fitting that thou shouldst fear Allah". Some relied on statements by Lady Aisha bint Abi Bakr, such as her saying, "I feel that your Lord hastens in fulfilling your wishes"<sup>60</sup>, to support this interpretation<sup>\*61</sup>.

54 Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, 2nd ed., trans. Abdullah Abu Salman (Dar al-Fikr, 1998), pp. 200–210.

55 Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, pp. 315–320.

56 Hart Michael H., *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*, trans. Abd al-Qadir Tash Makh (Dar al-Hadara, 1999), pp. 68–72.

57 Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, pp. 150–155.

58 Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 180–185.

59 Nöldeke, *History of the Quran*, pp. 210–215.

60 Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Muhammad Zahid al-Kawthari, vol. 6, p. 158; Muslim, ed. Ahmad Shakir (Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1988),

61 Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, *Sahih*, it was not transmitted in primary Shia hadith books, Ahmad Shakir, vol. 3, p. 210;

\* Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, Watt sees that Lady Aisha's expression reveals deep human aspects of the Prophet that might be used to justify legislation related to his personal life, pp. 115–120. ; Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, Margoliouth used Aisha's discussion with the Prophet to confirm the idea that the Prophet sometimes justified personal actions via revelation, pp. 125–130. ; Goldziher sees this phrase indicates the Prophet's use of a personal element in the background of legislation, *Muhammedanische Studien*, pp. 142–146. ; Rodinson, *Mohammed (p.b.u.h.)*, Rodinson interpreted the text as a justification for personal decisions, pp. 165–170. ; Lammens, *Mahomet*, Lammens cites it to show how the Prophet might have issued legislation consistent with his feelings, pp. 98–103.

4. Moderate and Fair Positions: In contrast to these non-objective interpretations, more balanced positions emerged from some Orientalists who sought to read the event within its religious and legislative framework. Most prominent among them: American writer Washington Irving (1783–1859), who stressed that the marriage was not out of personal motive but carried clear legislative dimensions<sup>62</sup>; British author Karen Armstrong (1944–), who saw that Orientalist handling of this event ignored the social and legislative reality in which it arose<sup>63</sup>; Montgomery Watt in *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*, who emphasised that projecting Western concepts onto the Islamic context led to a distortion of the interpretation of this marriage<sup>64</sup>; and finally, American academic John Louis Esposito (1940–) in *Islam: The Straight Path*, who stressed that the objective of the marriage was to reform the tribal view of the concept of adoption<sup>65</sup>.

Tracking Orientalist opinions on the marriage of the Prophet to Zaynab bint Jahsh reveals a division between extremist trends carrying impugment, doubt, and distortion, and others that attempted to provide an objective reading considering the legislative and social context. Despite the variance in interpretations, many moderate Orientalists acknowledged that this marriage was not motivated by emotion or personal desire, but came within a legislative system aimed at reforming customs rooted in Arab society.

When discussing the three biased extremist interpretations (emotional, socio-political, and personalist), we find that the emotional interpretation lacks historical support and reliable evidence; there is no text from companions or early exegetes confirming this claim. Furthermore, verses related to the incident do not point to personal feelings, but clarify that the Prophet knew through revelation that Zaynab

62 Washington Irving, *Mahomet and His Successors*, 2nd ed., trans. Yusuf Zaydan (Dar al-Shorouk, 2005), pp. 410–415.

63 Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet*, trans. Muhammad Abd al-Karim Al-Huti (Dar al-Saqi, 2004), pp. 350–355.

64 Montgomery, William Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*, 4th ed., trans. Abd al-Salam al-Masdi (Dar al-Qalam, 2010), pp. 275–280.

65 Louis Esposito John, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 3rd ed., trans. Muhammad Jawad Ali (Islamic Cultural Centre, 2002), pp. 120–125.

would be his wife after Zayd's divorce, but he postponed the announcement for fear of people's talk: "Behold! thou didst say to one who had received the grace of Allah and thy favour: 'Retain thou (in wedlock) thy wife, and fear Allah.' But thou didst hide in thy heart that which Allah was about to make manifest: thou didst fear the people, but it is more fitting that thou shouldst fear Allah" \* <sup>66</sup> <sup>67</sup> <sup>68</sup>. The Prophet persistently urged Zayd to retain his wife and be kind to her, which negates any personal emotional dimension in the event.

As for the political interpretation, it is a partial reading that marginalises the religious dimension. Although this reading is more realistic than the romantic vision, it overlooks a fundamental dimension: the Prophet did not act in all his life out of subjective political motives, but was executing a divine command within a framework of social and legislative reform. Furthermore, the assumption that the Prophet formulated legislation consistent with his private circumstances clashes with established Quranic facts, including that many rulings were not in the Prophet's personal interest, such as the prohibition of marriage for him after Zaynab: "It is not lawful for thee (to marry more) women after this, nor to change them for (other) wives, even though their beauty attract thee, except any thy right hand may possess". Moreover, Quran imposed religious and personal obligations upon him not imposed on others, confirming the independence of legislation from his subjective desires.

### **Legislative Contexts of Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) Marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh**

1. Abolition of Adoption: In the pre-Islamic era, Arabs treated an adopted son as a biological son in terms of lineage, inheritance, and marriage. Islam came to abolish this system, and Allah commanded His Prophet to embody this legislation himself: "Nor has He made your adopted sons your sons. Such is (only) your (manner of) speech by your mouths"; "Call them by (the names of) their fathers: that is juster in

66 Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an, Badr al-Din al-Ayni, Vol. 4, pp. 132-134.

67 Al-Tabarsi, Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, Vol. 8, p. 311.

68 Al-Tusi, Tafsir al-Tibyan, Vol. 8, p. 311.

\* The Prophet persistently urged Zayd to retain his wife and be kind to her. Exegetes hold that verse 37 of Sura Al-Ahzab was revealed describing the relationship between Zayd ibn Harithah and Lady Zaynab bint Jahsh when Zayd complained to the Prophet about her.

the sight of Allah". John Esposito used these two verses to clarify that marriage to Zaynab was part of a legislative correction of concepts of lineage and kinship in ancient Arab society<sup>69</sup>.

2. Implementing Divine Command Despite Consequences: The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) delayed announcing the revelation for fear of discord, yet he complied with the divine command after the verse was revealed, indicating his submission to revelation rather than personal impulses: "It is not fitting for a Believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger to have any option about their decision". Montgomery Watt pointed out that this verse is evidence that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) applied divine revelation precisely, even in sensitive matters<sup>70</sup>.

3. Deconstructing the Concept of Symbolic Fatherhood: The verse confirms: "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets". This establishes that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) is not the "father" of Zayd in terms of lineage or legislation, thereby negating any legal impediment to his marriage to Zayd's divorcee. Objective Orientalists, such as Montgomery Watt<sup>71</sup> and Armstrong<sup>72</sup>, used this to refute emotional interpretations.

4. Ethical Suspicions: This marriage did not face objection from companions; rather, they clearly understood that the objective was legislative. Had its purpose been personal, the Prophet would not have been subjected to criticism from hypocrites, nor would revelation have descended to legislate it. Furthermore, the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was married to other women and had no need for an additional marriage from a personal perspective, reinforcing that the goal was social reform and general legislation. A legislative reading reveals that the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh was not driven by emotion or a political step, but was an execution of a divine command within a legislative framework aimed at abolishing the system of adoption in pre-Islamic society.

69 Lois, John Islam: The Straight Path, pp. 120–125.

70 Montgomery, Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman, pp. 275–280.

71 Montgomery, Mohammed and the Rise of Islam, pp. 280–285.

72 Karen, Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet, pp. 350–355.



## Results and Conclusion

The subject of Prophet Muhammad's (p.b.u.h.) marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh represents a model of how Orientalist studies deal with sensitive issues in the Prophetic Chronicle. It demonstrates the difference between two approaches: one seeking to impugn the character of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) through subjective projections and selective analyses, and another attempting to approach the spirit of scientific objectivity.

Orientalists with a hostile tendency toward Islam sought to exploit this issue as a tool to undermine the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) character, particularly in its psychological and behavioural dimensions, through emotional, sexual, and authoritist interpretations that strip the event from its legislative and social context. Their attempts revealed a deliberate disregard for the social and legislative context of Islam, or ignorance of it, with the aim of doubting the integrity and justice of the Prophet. Claiming he was an unstable personality serves as the shortest path to strike at Islam by challenging the competence of its founder.

These readings show clear methodological deviations in Orientalist discourse and an epistemological defect manifested in adopting individual psychological interpretation, ignoring historical and cultural contexts, and overlooking authorised Islamic narratives, in addition to invoking the theological and ideological backgrounds hostile to Islam. Furthermore, these Orientalists relied on selecting Quranic and Hadith texts by taking certain verses out of context and interpreting them to serve their hypotheses, without regard for the legislative system in which those verses are organised, and without reference to their interpretation in original sources.

In contrast to these distorting readings, Orientalist readings characterised by a degree of fairness emerged. They sought to read the life of the Prophet in light of its historical and religious data and interpreted his marriage to Zaynab as legislation to abolish pre-Islamic adoption, not as a product of whim or personal desire.

The truth is that the challenges directed at the Prophet in this context did not withstand critical and methodological scrutiny. All attempts to undermine the psychological and behavioural integrity of the Prophet clash with the consistency of his

character, the loftiness of his morals, and the alignment of his behaviour with Quranic and legislative values. Moreover, there is an absence of any scientific or historical evidence proving the existence of a psychological or moral defect in his positions, whether in this incident or others.

Quranic texts and the established Prophetic Chronicle confirm that the Prophet's marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh was by divine command. This marriage came within an integrated and intentional legislative system aimed at abolishing the custom of adoption that was rooted in pre-Islamic society and establishing the permissibility of marriage to the divorcee of an adopted son. Understanding this event outside this framework constitutes a deliberate distortion and forgery.

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

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