

Confessions Of A  
**Second Wife**



## Confessions of a Second Wife

“So we will expect you this evening,” she said happily as she put the phone down. I turned to my husband and said, “K has invited me for dinner tonight with some of her friends.” He looked up from his work, smiled and said unconcerned, “That’s nice. OK,” and carried on working.

K is the same age as me; she is a beautiful and talented woman and is my husband’s first wife. The dinner invitation was to celebrate his second marriage - to me.

As a child my mother had regularly held up the wives of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) as examples of the best women in their behaviour and lifestyle, and I carried the images of these women around in my head.

Of course being married to the same man was a challenge to Prophet’s wives, but they never had their behaviour contravening the rule of justice and the rights of each other. All were ‘equal’ wives, no matter who was older or more educated or had been married the longest.

I was daily fascinated by their sisterhood and made prayers that one day I could revive just one such

Sunnah - little realizing what the future might hold – some twenty years later.

It is strange to see people proclaiming adherence to religion and justice but when faced with a personal challenge like this they suddenly claim “multiple marriage was all meant for the Prophet’s companions”; “We cannot live the religion the way they did so we should not try at all to emulate their example” and “Anyone else, not me”. These words of ignorance more often come from educated women who know the core of religion but do not love it more than they love themselves - living off the religion not by it.

These women do not realize they are not liberated but imprisoned by their own insecurity.

My parents had always taught us “Live the justice, speak it even if people do not like it, take your rights from Allah without fear and He

will protect you. Don’t just talk about it – live it.” So for me religion is simple and uncomplicated. As long as we kept our ego in check, there was liberty and joy in this life and in the hereafter. I lived these words the day I agreed to marry my husband.



*The proposal was not without conditions from my side – The first question I asked my husband was, “Do you love your first wife? Because if you don’t it is better you work on your marriage rather than ignore it and get married again?” My husband replied, “I love my wife very much, indeed I can never forget the sacrifices she has made for me throughout her life and all her support during very difficult times. I am not marrying you because there is a problem; she is the best of wives for me.” I was relieved – this was the most important issue out of the way.*



We went on to consider the practicalities of implementing the sunnah; separate living arrangements and our potential Sharia obligations to each other as husband and wife and Sharia considerations if any, between wives. It was all so clearly laid out in the Sunnah before us, so simple – such is the generosity of Allah, the Almighty. And so it began...

K met me at the gate as I stepped out of the taxi outside her home, “**Welcome**” she said and hugged me, taking my hand and leading me in to the house. The room was bright with colours and women, all eyeing me somewhere between smiles - friendship towards me and formality - loyalty to K.

But K was totally unaware of this. I passed her some gifts and she smiled broadly opening them showing her friends with delight.

Protectively she sat next to me throughout the night – pouring my drinks and serving me food and telling the women to do the same. I was the ‘chief guest’ she told me. It was a strange feeling that when she left the room briefly, I felt lonely amongst these

women and as kind as they were to me, I desperately wanted her to return. This is a feeling that whenever we are together has remained.

When K is in the room and not sitting beside me – I feel emptiness, as if my ‘shield’ is missing. K brought in tea and I turned to her with my last few spoonful of dessert and we sat on the floor with me feeding her while she attended to the needs of the guests between mouthfuls - finishing the dessert together.

The other women watched us in amusement and confusion. That night, she waved me off in the taxi and I can recollect her image now as she stood there outside her home thanking me for coming, surrounded by her family – the beginning of something that I was to somehow be part of. It was not expected of me in a formal way but because K saw me as a sister in Islam and I held the visions of those wives in my heart and mind as I waved goodbye.

I have been to her home many, many times since then and this image remains deep in my mind.



K and I are two very different women – we are from different countries, cultures, backgrounds and lifestyles. Indeed initially we did not even speak the same language, but we share the love of Allah and of the Prophet’s sunnah. Rather we pray daily that Allah accept our good relationship and reward us abundantly.

We live about ten miles apart – we have our own homes and lives and are free to choose to meet as and when we wish. Our relationship with our husband is as individual as our own personalities. In our marriages, K does with her husband what suits her and I do what suits me. She and her husband go away for breaks as do I. Each time we travel abroad or even within the country, it is not uncommon for us to call each other.

Truly I miss her when we are apart and no matter what my mood is, I automatically smile when I hear her voice. Such is the Mercy of Allah upon me.

Once K and I went away together. We were concerned that the time together would not interfere with our relationship so we prayed Istikhara and she with her brave heart said *“Tawakul `ala-Allah – let’s go,”* much to our friends’ amusement. As it happened our gathering was short but I remember K taking me to meet her family and friends – without shame, sadness or embarrassment but with great pride. *“It is the Haq (justice),”* she always says with determination when I ask her if she is embarrassed when people asked her who I was. During these visits, each morning while I was sleeping – as I’m not used to the very early rising - I would wake to the sound of her voice *“Time for breakfast”* and it was on more than one occasion when I woke to find my breakfast by my bed.

Throughout the trip K protected me from the harshness of the culture, giving me the excuse that I

was an outsider, but this generosity also meant she took the brunt of the harshness of that environment without a moment’s thought for her own health or personal comfort. The time there made us even closer and husband joked with us one day saying *“I am getting jealous of this love!”*

Truly it was amusing I told him laughingly, *“It would be the first case in history where one wife left the husband and ran away with his other wife!”*

### *The True Purpose of Marriage*

*“And among His signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves that you may dwell in tranquility with them and He has put love and mercy between your hearts: Verily in that are signs for those who reflect.”*

*(Ar-Rum 30: 21)*

*“The most perfect of the believers is the best of you in character, and the best of you are those among you who are best to their wives.”*

*(At Tirmidhi)*

*“It is both, honest and accurate, to say that it was Islam that regulated this practice, limited it, made it more humane and instituted equal rights and status for all wives.”*

*Dr. Jamal Badawi.*

*Polygyny for Muslims, in practice and in law, differs greatly throughout the Islamic world, where polygamous marriages constitute only 5-10% of all marriages.*

## Not Two Separate Families, But a United Big One

When the three of us (K, me and our husband) sit together and have dinner or tea as occasionally we do, our relationship is completely natural. There is no sense of threat at all, we are all free and no one is in charge – we are simply ourselves and allow each other to be themselves in their individual relationships – me to K and me to my husband and K to her husband and to me. Indeed K will often call me up and say “I am making dinner for you and your husband tonight – what shall I cook?”

When we arrive she serves us as if we are her most important guests, filling our plates and encouraging me to share a glass or food with my husband. I often note the subtle way in which she will break some bread in two and give me one piece and my husband the other.

She has one of the biggest hearts I have ever known and the depth to which it loves to make others happy is overwhelming for me. We each hold a special place for each other. I acknowledge K’s skills over me and accept them as I would with any other woman – why not? I love her strength and sensitivity and why should I resent it when she is strong and sensitive for me?

These are qualities she has in abundance and I do not. I am proud of her for being the better woman and accept it happily and with some pride. K’s efforts to help me get to know her children have been both firm and subtle.

Often when we are all together, she suggests I sit with my husband and she sits with her children and other times she encourages me to sit with the chil-

dren and talk while she sits with her husband – each combination enabling the children to accept me as their father’s wife and for me to get to know the children in her presence and under her watchful eye.

It is all part of the effort of normalizing our relationship and the power of these actions lies in the fact that it is always at her suggestion – she winks at me playfully when she suggests this taking away my shyness – making it all the more poignant. Such is her care for me to be accepted and



respected. More than anyone she is the happiest when the children invite me for dinner or to a picnic or simply talk to me about their lives and at these times she quietly leaves us alone together smiling to herself. Truly this kind lady is a master of human relations!

## Model of Justice and Love

I remember the first summer after our wedding, I went to meet my husband's parents in their village and as a wedding gift I was given an almond tree with a promise that every year the almonds would be sent to me.

My husband's family chose for me - as part of the necessary cultural protocol of gift - taking, the biggest and best tree. The next summer K went and was also given a tree as a gift and instead of choosing a large, fruit bearing tree as expected - she chose a small tree - not very strong or sturdy. She chose it simply because it was the tree next to mine. Because of the feeling behind her choice- this tree I feel to be the richest and most valuable tree in the orchard.

The sweetness of her intention made the almonds from her tree taste the sweetest. It makes me feel peaceful to know somewhere out there, miles in the middle of no-where, after both K and I are no longer here - our trees will remain standing side by side as a testament to our unity, our sisterhood and love for this blessed relation.



Whenever I make du`aa' (prayer) for myself I make du`aa' for 'My K' as I call her and I feel a sense of



possessiveness over her that I enjoy. I am not able to ask Allah for something without asking the same for her and pray always that the love between her and her husband daily increases and that Allah keeps them forever closer in this life and in the Hereafter not in spite of my marriage but because of my marriage.

I remember one night she texted me while they were away on a break, the text simply said **"I make du`aa' for my husband that he married you."**

We are like a set of scales - the three of us, my husband, his first wife, and me as the weighing plates - because it is we who keep our husband in the balance!

In this way our happiness lies in each other's good works, care and love and so is constantly reinforced, because a good wife protects her husband from wrong doing.

K has many names for me - all depending on what role she is playing. Sometimes I am her daughter, sometimes her sister, sometimes she calls me by my professional title, sometimes a scholar but always a friend.

I know whenever I achieve anything she will be the most proud of what her sister has done and so I always tell my husband **“Please don’t tell K I want to tell her myself”** because I love to see the joy on her face.

Like a child I want her approval and as a woman I want her to share my success as only another woman can understand.

We have many names for our husband too, when we talk about individual needs and rights, we say

**‘My husband’; when we talk to family and friends he is ‘Our husband;’** and when he is in trouble he is ‘Your husband!’

I wonder if there is something wrong in the way we are because it seems so unusual to love one’s husband’s other wife so much. But no matter how we try to formalize our relationship and protect it through distance, Allah brings us closer together.

## My Father and My Husband’s First Wife

Here my father is our greatest supporter with the joy and happiness he feels at our sisterhood. Whenever we speak, he will always ask me first **“How is your sister”** and then **“How is your husband?”**

I am so proud of him, that in his old age he is able to support us in this blessed Sunnah in a way which no one except a father’s concern for his daughter’s happiness can understand and he tells me **“She is also my daughter”** and I feel so happy that he thinks in this way.

My father is always a just person, reminding us to be good to each other. He laughs out loud when I tell him my husband is in trouble with K because of something he has said to upset me.

My father always makes du’aa’ for my husband’s first wife. I feel it is his du’aa’ that has made this relationship so special. K believes this too because she regularly tells me she prays for my parents – as

I pray for hers.

It is unusual for me to have a conversation these days without mentioning her.

Indeed, one day I was telling a friend that my husband was on holiday with my sister K; my friend was rather disturbed that I had allowed my husband to go away with my sister. I quickly explained she was his wife and my friend laughed shaking her head, **“You talk about her so much I thought she was your actual sister I never realized she was your husband’s first wife!”**

I have often just sat and watched K’s face while she is working or sharing her life with me or shouting at her children and I feel in awe of her. She is so careful and cautious, yet so carefree and relaxed. She is so focused, yet so impulsive. She is so thoughtful, wise and so concerned.

## She is My Teacher

It's true to say that she, along with many of my friends, has taught me how to be a wife and has protected my marriage as much as her own but within



for me. I love whenever I make du`aa' for her and her husband to be together in this life and in the Hereafter how she always says "With you."

## We Enjoy Freedom

Of course we are clear with our boundaries and we agree that we should each feel the freedom to be husband and wife within the boundaries of our religion.

Yes, we live our own lives, we have our privacy with our husband but we cherish our own sisterhood equally. We do our utmost to protect our relationship from our husband and friends as much as we do for our individual marriages.

Of course when we are together, we do not cross the Islamic boundaries of conversation about our personal relationship with our husband. Both practically and psychologically there is clear boundary.

The only sadness that K and I share is about those

I have often wished that my mother – were she alive - could have met K and that I had known her when I was younger. Not because she is my husband's mother but she is in herself a remarkable

and I were talking and I was wearing my mother's which I took off and one day her eyes she took it and put it on. Now often when I come to her she especially puts it on.

women who feel unhappy that we are so close, who feel threatened at our example fearing that if their husbands may see us happy, worry that they will also take their right and remarry. This is the sad state of sisterhood for some Muslim women – who fear harm by their own lack of faith, so start the (co-wife) relationship by harming first.

*Polygamy did not disappear in modern societies, but it just became practiced outside the bonds of marriage. It may be under the label of individual choice and freedom, but happens with no commitment, rights or responsibilities put on the shoulders of either party.*



They forget that while they have power over the other wife they lose respect in the eyes of their husband and clearly do not fear Allah (SWT). But K and I agree that a good friend is one who is happy when you do good whatever that is and no matter who it affects.

I could write many pages about all K has done for me. I was a stranger in the land in which I was married and I cannot count all the times she has been there for me, all the times she has supported me against her own friends, all the times she has just cared, put her arm around me and wiped my tears and enjoyed my laughter.

I need only sneeze and she will send me a remedy for flu. I need only sound sad and she will come and see me or shout at my husband for me! I will only mention I am tired and she will volunteer one of her children to come and 'serve' me as she puts it. My husband and I call her Mudirah (Director) – a perfect title for her because with her energy and love she organizes us all.

When we were married I said to my husband that I hope when you marry me you will appreciate what a wonderful wife you already have and I hope that in my presence you will realize this about her – I think K has - without need and without doubt - proved this to be true.

I feel in many respects more fulfilled in my marriage because of her – as a woman she knows what women face, the challenges, the expectations and injustices and she is always there fighting my corner, no matter who the opponent.

She is in my mind throughout the day as we live our own lives and when I pray I wonder if she has prayed and when I clean I wonder if she is cleaning also and I picture her busy in her home all day with jobs and children.

She tells me when she prays she thinks the same and when she eats always sets aside some food for me before her husband and children to send to me when my husband comes. She does not know how many times she has had my heart's du'aa' for feeding me over the time we have known each other. Her reason is she says, because ***"I will have to account to Allah on the Last day for how I treated my sister."***

For me, this is ***Iman*** (faith).

It is truly a miracle from Allah when one wife can say that one of the greatest blessings of her marriage is her husband's other wife.

May Allah bless My K., Allah protect her, raise her in honour, grant her endless peace and happiness with her husband and keep them both for each other; and most of all keep her for me.

*"If you don't want your husband to marry another woman," the imam said, "then, reflect on the hadith of the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him). You should love for your sister what you love for yourself."*

*I turned off the video and sipped my tea in the silence of the room. I had planned to watch the prominent imam's entire lecture on the subject of plural marriage in Islam, but I couldn't get past the first few minutes.*

*It wasn't that I disagreed with his point. After all, it is true. If Muslim women who are already married think of a potential co-wife as a sister in Islam instead of a potential rival, then sharing a husband wouldn't be so difficult.*

As I see, polygamous marriages are increasing. It may be something chosen by your sister, your daughter, your widowed/divorced mother even. Think about the following when you decide to go ahead with this marriage.

Polygamy is a permitted marriage in Islam and there is no question about this. If you struggle with this fact, it is a problem with your own faith, not your husband's action.

Do not feel guilty. If you feel guilty you are suggesting that the sunnah is wrong – so be clear that this type of marriage can be and can flourish on condition that the man is fair and honest with both of his wives. (If your husband is badly behaved after the new marriage – that is a problem with him and not this sunnah).

1- **Remember that your actions reflect the personification of this sunnah and it is the priority of every Muslim to protect his faith.** If you do not work towards making this sunnah succeed, you show that sunnah in a bad light.

2- **The husband should declare his marriage without fear to enable each wife to get used to the reality of the situation.** Covering up merely prevents the wives from coming to terms with the reality of their new life.

Once the husband is married it is not right to have an 'adjustment period' for either wife. As soon as the husband is married, it is the right of his new wife to have her time. If the husband takes these rights away to give previous wives time to adjust – this is not fair (since it is all about a matter of faith). In supporting this "adjustment" idea, husband takes the rights of the other wife and they will both be answerable for this wrong-doing before Allah.

3- **The greatest gift one wife can give to the other is not material; rather, it is simply to give her, her rights and live her life as a free woman.**

4- **The husband is a free man; he does not belong to one wife more than the other so the competition for time is pointless.** Your husband does not necessarily love you more because he spends more time with you – it may be simply that you are more controlling and he is not strong enough to argue.

*“And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you may not incline [to injustice].”*

*Al-Nisaa', 4:3*

5- **Remember while you take someone's right now – can you take the punishment for that husband in the next life?** If you are taking time that is not rightfully yours – on the Last day you will have to account for this. So do not think you have succeeded if you do this. If you want more than your right – ask yourself “Is this worth taking the Fire on the Last Day?”

6- **Give your sister her time with her husband and try not to call or interrupt their time together but at the same time show some flexibility.** If there are little habits that make their relationship special and they are things they have always done/ or are doing if they are newlyweds – don't cut them off and you will feel by time how blessed your own relationship is.

Do not replace the husband's responsibility. The marriage was his choice and so it is his job to fulfil his social, financial and practical responsibility - not the job of his new wife to stand in for him.



the other simply  
 because he goes there at  
 night.

8- *If you feel you are seeing your husband more than 'expected,' ask him how much time he is spending with the other wife and ensure he is being just.* Love of another person is a test as with anything and when that love exceeds the rights of others – we fail.

9- Your allegiance is to your husband not to each other. You should prioritize your own relationship with your husband. It should not be the case that if one wife is arguing with her husband the other should also argue. Of course if there is a problem that is shared with you then it is important to encourage a return to good relations not to encourage anger and a separation. It is clearly bad to cause separation between husband and wife in any way, shape or form.

*Be as your sister in Islam, as*  
*at.* Understand that she has  
 by as you do. If your aim is  
 respect, live justice, do not  
 is pleased with you, that is

*some form of practical and*  
 consider the sunnah as the  
 aware what you share in  
 live practically. There is no

sunnah in sharing the same house/room and this is bound to cause problems. There is no sunnah to discuss your private details with each other either.

12- *Do not ask your husband what he does with his other wife and do not ask your sister what she does with her husband.* Allow them to keep their marriage private. The faithful, we are told, does not ask "Where did you come from and where are you going." Focus on your own relationship not on the other wife's. There is no need to lie to stop hurting the other person's feelings; unnecessary lying only leads to mistrust and a lack of respect. It is simply best to keep silent and remind the wives that the other relationship is not their business.

13- *Be flexible about time but not if you feel your right is being taken.* It is Ok to take your rights, do not feel guilty. But remember sometimes as human beings, a wife may need her husband to support her if she is having a difficult time. Be generous and Allah will reward you, as will the other wife.

14- *Do not replace the husband's responsibility.* The marriage was his choice and so it is his job to fulfill his social, financial and practical responsibility - not the job of the other wife/wives to stand in for him. It is injustice by the husband if he puts the responsibility of one wife on to the other.

15- *Encourage your husband to deal fairly with the other wife and she will similarly encourage him to deal fairly with you.* If she is unjust to you – do not be unjust to her. Using haram to combat haram simply means you are both in the wrong side.

16- *There is no obligation for you and your husband's other wife to be best friends but it helps if you can at least meet occasionally since this is also from the sunnah of the Prophet's wives.* This can ease any difficulties each wife may experience as a result of the husband's other relationship.

17- *Do not listen to friends who have a problem with your type of marriage. They are simply reflecting their own insecurity.* Avoid discussions about the other wife with such people because these discussions can cause problems for your relationship with the other wife and indeed your husband. A good friend will be helpful in keeping your marriage together and not encourage you against the rights of the other woman.

18- Do not allow women to feel sorry for you if your husband re-marries. You are not a victim and it in no way means there was something wrong with the previous wife. This is just an excuse made by women who are unhappy with the fact that their husband has re-married.

19- *Always make du`aa' that you have the best of intentions towards each other.*

*This true life story, written exclusively for OnIslam ([www.onislam.net](http://www.onislam.net)) has names and personal details withheld to protect the privacy of the individuals involved. The story is adapted for publication by MPAC with the kind permission of OnIslam.*

# Sekhina

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**Who is he that will loan to Allah a beautiful loan, which Allah will double unto his credit and multiply many times? (2:224)**

In a Prophetic narration related by Abu Huraira and contained in Sahih Al-Bukhari, a man asked the Prophet (PBUH), "O Allah's Messenger (PBUH)! What kind of charity is the best?" He (PBUH) replied. "To give in charity when you are healthy and greedy, hoping to be wealthy, and afraid of becoming poor. Don't delay giving in charity till the time when you are on the death bed and then you say, 'Give so much to so-and-so and so much to so-and so,' (because) as at that time, the property is not yours but it belongs to so-and-so (i.e. your inheritors)."

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## Factsheet

1. One of MPAC's community outreach projects created in 2009, the project provides HOPE and LOVE to all Nigerians that have the least chance of medical treatments in our society.
2. To date the project has provided free medical care to more than 45 Nigerians locally and overseas.
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"And if Allah touches thee with affliction, none can remove it but He: But if He bestows upon you a favour, remember that He is the Possessor of every power to do all that He wills." (Qur'an 6:17)

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Muslim Public Affairs Centre (MPAC) is an incorporated public service agency working for Muslim Defense, Muslim Empowerment and for promoting individual liberties, religious, civil and political rights of Muslims. MPAC is equally devoted to promoting the integration of Islam into the Nigerian pluralism, for a positive and constructive relationship between Nigerian Muslims and other elements in the society; building the Nigerian Muslim constituency to become an influential component in Nigerian politics, at all levels of the policy-making arena; and making Islamic ethical values available to the Nigerian political process. As an experienced and independent voice within the Nigerian Muslim community working for the good of the society, MPAC operates on the core Islamic values of justice, mercy, human dignity, freedom, sanctity of human life and equality for all.



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## **Additional Notes:**

Polygamy means a system of marriage whereby one person has more than one spouse. Polygamy can be of two types. One is polygyny where a man marries more than one woman, and the other is polyandry, where a woman marries more than one man. In Islam, limited polygyny is permitted and polyandry is completely prohibited. Polygamy is, in this article, used interchangeably with polygyny. Polygamy is a very ancient practice found in many human societies. 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. 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.

According to Father Eugene Hillman 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." Moreover, Jesus (peace and blessings be upon him) has not spoken against polygamy though it was practiced by the Jews of his society.

It must be understood that there is a consensus amongst Muslims, historically and currently, that polygamy is permissible, and that it is not allowed for a Muslim to have more than four wives at any one time. Further, that if a Muslim has two or more wives he should practice equality of provision and abode amongst them. For Allah Almighty says: **"...marry women of your choice two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them) then only one or (a captive) that your right hands possess. That will be more suitable to prevent you from doing injustice."** (**An-Nisa': 3**). This means that the criteria for engaging in polygamy include;

- It is not for every man
- The limit is four wives at a time
- The wives must be treated equally

*"None but a noble man treats women in an honourable manner. And none but an ignoble treats women disgracefully"*  
(Tirmidhi)

*"Women are twin halves of men"*  
(Tirmidhi)

*"The most hateful permissible thing (al-Halal) in the sight of Allah is divorce."*  
(Abu Dawud)

We know of no clear evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah, which encourages the Muslim to either keep to one wife, or to polygamy.

However, it has been narrated that Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: *“Whosoever had two wives and treats one of them more favourably than the other will come on the Day of Judgment bent to one side.”* (Reported by Ahmad, Abu Dawud, An-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah) This hadith warns against polygamy should the man not be able to practice equality amongst his wives. It is therefore important to reiterate that polygamy is not an obligated rule in Islam; it is simply a permissible act. So, limiting to one applies in the case where a person fears he may be unjust or unfair, and may fail to do what is required, so he should err on the side of caution and not put himself in that position. If a wife sees that her husband is favouring her co-wife at her expense, or is being unjust to her with regard to her rights, she should hasten to advise her husband in the way that is best, and remind him of what Allah has enjoined of justice, and what Allah has forbidden of injustice. She should also hasten to advise her co-wife not to accept this injustice, and not to take anything that is not rightfully hers. Perhaps Allah will guide him to be just and to give each one her due rights. The marital bond in Islam is so harmoniously described by God, that if we were to implement it correctly we would have a very successful marital life that would reap its fruits in improving our worship, bringing us closer to God.

Lastly, there are societies that currently still require and want polygamy. Furthermore, there are societies in which the spiritual intention of polygamy (providing sanctuary for some women) is ardently accepted and not stigmatized. Certain women in such societies are not offended, intimidated, or hesitant on the subject. In some cases also, polygamy serves as a solution for certain societies where some women, due to personal circumstances

only desire companionship and protection; hence, to abandon polygamy would be an injustice to those women.

### *In the Scriptures.....*

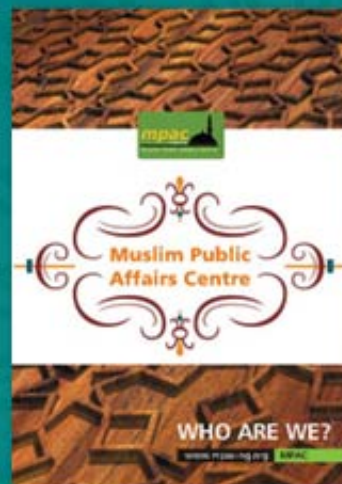
*Qur'an is the only religious book, on the face of this earth, that contains the phrase 'marry only one'. There is no other religious book that instructs men to have only one wife. In none of the religious scriptures like the Vedas, the Ramayan, the Mahabharat, the Geeta or the Bible does one find a restriction on the number of wives. According to these scriptures one can marry as many as one wishes. It was only later, that the Hindu priests and the Christian Church restricted the number of wives to one.*

*Many Hindu religious personalities, according to their scriptures, had multiple wives. King Dashrat, the father of Rama, had more than one wife. Krishna had several wives. In earlier times, Christian men were permitted as many wives as they wished, since the Bible puts no restriction on the number of wives. It was only a couple of centuries ago that the Church restricted the number of wives to one.*

*Polygyny is permitted in Judaism. According to Talmudic law, Abraham had 2 wives, and Solomon had hundreds of wives. The practice of polygyny continued till Rabbi Gershom ben Yehudah. (960 A.D to 1030 A.D) issued an edict against it. The Jewish Sephardic communities living in Muslim countries continued the practice till as late as 1950, when an Act of the chief Rabbinate of Israel extended the ban on marrying more than one wife.*



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