162287 - Why did the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) not allow ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib to take a second wife when he was married to Faatimah (may Allah be pleased with them both)?

the question

Why did the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) not allow ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) to marry the daughter of Abu Jahl even though she was Muslim, and her father had also died by that time? Why did the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbid him to do that even though it was something that was basically permissible?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The Muslim should accept everything that has been proven from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) of words and deeds, and should understand that all wisdom is in what the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said or did. Those who know that know it, and those who are unaware of it are unaware of it.

Plural marriage or polygyny is something that is well established in Islam on the basis of clear, unambiguous texts which cannot be undermined in any way whatsoever, no matter what skeptics and fabricators say.

However this marriage could have exposed him to problems and negative consequences that outweighed any benefits; in such cases plural marriage is disallowed, as in the case where the husband is not able to treat all his wives fairly, and he is afraid of being unfair or unjust towards them, or other cases in which the negative consequences outweigh any benefits that may be sought.

It is on this basis that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib to take another wife in addition to his daughter Faatimah (may Allah be pleased with her),

even though plural marriage was permissible in principle for him and for others.

It was narrated from al-Miswar ibn Makhramah that ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib proposed marriage to the daughter of Abu Jahl, when he was already married to Faatimah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

When Faatimah heard about that, she went to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and said to him: Your people are saying that you do not get angry for the sake of your daughters, and ‘Ali is going to marry the daughter of Abu Jahl.

Al-Miswar said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) stood up and I heard him when he bore witness, then he said: “I gave a daughter of mine in marriage to Abu’l-‘Aas ibn ar-Rabee‘; when he spoke he told me the truth and when he made me a promise he fulfilled his promise. Faatimah is a part of me, and whatever hurts her hurts me. By Allah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah and the daughter of the enemy of Allah will not be joined together as wives of one man.”

So ‘Ali abandoned that proposal.

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 3110; Muslim, 2449.

The scholars mentioned a number of reasons for the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbidding ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib to go ahead with this marriage. These reasons all boil down to four things:

-1-

This marriage would be hurtful to Faatimah; whatever hurt her would hurt the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and whatever hurts the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is a major sin. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) stated that clearly when he said: “Faatimah is a part of me, and whatever hurts her hurts me.”

According to another version: “She is a part of me; what disturbs her disturbs me and what hurts

her hurts me.”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5230; Muslim, 2449

Ibn at-Teen said:

The most correct way to interpret this story is that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade ‘Ali to be married at the same time to his daughter and the daughter of Abu Jahl, because he gave as the reason for that the fact that this would hurt him, and hurting him is haraam according to consensus.

It would have been permissible for him if he had not been married to Faatimah; but being married to them at the same time, which would have been hurtful to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) because Faatimah would have been hurt by it, meant that it was not permissible.

Quoted from him in Fath al-Baari, 9/328

An-Nawawi said: Because that would have led to hurting Faatimah, in that case it would have hurt the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) too, and the one who hurts him is doomed. For that reason he forbade him to do that, out of compassion towards ‘Ali and towards Faatimah.

End quote from Sharh Saheeh Muslim, 16/3

Ibn al-Qayyim said: By mentioning his other son-in-law (Abu’l-‘Aas ibn ar-Rabee‘), and praising him for having spoken the truth and fulfilled his promise, he hinted to ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and encouraged him to follow his example. This gives the impression that he had made him a promise that he would not disturb her or hurt her, so he encouraged him to fulfil that promise, as his other son-in-law had fulfilled a promise he made.

End quote from Zaad al-Ma‘aad, 5/118

What is mentioned above does not apply to any woman other than Faatimah (may Allah be pleased with her).

-2-

The fear that this would put Faatimah to trial with regard to her religious commitment

It was narrated by al-Bukhaari (3110): “I fear lest she be put to trial with regard to her religious commitment.”

According to Muslim (2449): “Faatimah is part of me, and I fear lest she be put to trial with regard to her religious commitment.”

Jealousy is something natural in women, and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) feared that jealousy might push her to do something that would not be befitting to her status, as she is the leader of the women of the worlds.

Moreover, she had lost her mother and then her sisters one after another, so she had no one to comfort her and help to make things easier for her, or listen to her concerns if she became jealous.

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar said: This incident occurred after the conquest of Makkah, at which time none of the daughters of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was still alive except her; after losing her mother, she had lost her sisters, and giving her cause to become jealous would have exacerbated her grief.

End quote from Fath al-Baari, 7/86

-3-

Objection to joining the daughter of the Messenger of Allah and the daughter of the enemy of Allah together as wives of one man.

As the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “By Allah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah and the daughter of the enemy of Allah will not be joined together as wives of one man.”

An-Nawawi said: It was said that what is meant here is not the prohibition on them being joined together; rather what is meant is: I know by the grace of Allah that they will not be joined together.

It may also be understood as meaning that it was haraam to join them together… So one of the things that are haraam with regard to marriage is being married to both a daughter of the Prophet of Allah and a daughter of the enemy of Allah at the same time.

End quote from Sharh Saheeh Muslim, 8/199

Ibn al-Qayyim said: By disallowing ‘Ali to join together Faatimah (may Allah be pleased with her) and the daughter of Abu Jahl as co-wives there is great wisdom: because a woman will follow her husband and be at the same level as him in Paradise, but she may deserve to be of a high level by virtue of her own merits in addition to those of her husband. This is applicable in the case of Faatimah and ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with them both).

But Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, would not allow the daughter of Abu Jahl to be of the same status as Faatimah (may Allah be pleased with her), whether on her own merits or those of her husband, when there was such a great difference between them. For her to become a co-wife of the leader of the women of the worlds would not be something appropriate, either in terms of sharee‘ah or in terms of the divine decree.

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) indicated that when he said: “By Allah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah and the daughter of the enemy of Allah will not be joined together in one place.” This may refer to the Hereafter too.

End quote from Zaad al-Ma‘aad, 5/119

-4-

Out of respect for Faatimah and so as to highlight her great status.

Ibn Hibbaan said: If ‘Ali has done this deed, it would have been permissible, but the Prophet

(blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) disliked it out of respect for Faatimah, not because this deed was haraam.

End quote from Saheeh Ibn Hibbaan, 15/407

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar said: The context indicates that it was permissible for ‘Ali, but the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) disallowed it out of care for Faatimah’s feelings, and ‘Ali accepted it out of obedience to the instructions of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). Thus it seems to me that it is not far-fetched to suggest that one of the unique characteristics of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was that his sons-in-law were not to marry other wives when they were married to his daughters. Or it may be that this is something that applied only to Faatimah (may Allah be pleased with her).

End quote from Fath al-Baari, 9/329

In conclusion:

These reasons, as a whole or individually, explain why the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not let ‘Ali go ahead with this marriage.

This story does not give the slightest support to those who try to use it to restrict plural marriage. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) dealt with this when he said, in the same story, “and I am not making any permissible thing forbidden, or any forbidden thing permitted.”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 3110; Muslim, 2449

And Allah knows best.