

Islam's Perfect Man

Koran Chapter 33:21 states that Muhammad is the perfect man for Muslims to imitate if they want to meet Allah in paradise:

Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes for (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much.

Slave owner & dealer

There are numerous authoritative reports in which Muhammad was personally involved in possessing, buying, selling, or giving away slaves:

1. *It was narrated from Anas that the Prophet bought Safiyyah [one of Muhammad's wives] for seven slaves.¹*
2. *Narrated 'Aishah...the hand of Allah's Messenger did not touch any woman's hand except the hand of the woman that his right hand possessed (i.e. his captives or his lady-slaves).²*
3. *It was narrated that 'Abdul-Majid bin Wahb said: "Adda' bin Khalid bin Hawdhah said to me: 'Shall I not read to you a letter that the Messenger of Allah wrote to me?' I said: 'Yes.' So he took out a letter. In it was: 'This is what 'Adda' bin Khalid bin Hawdhah bought [from] Muhammad the Messenger of Allah. He bought from him a slave' - or - 'a female slave, having no ailments, nor being a runaway, nor having any malicious behavior. Sold by a Muslim to a Muslim.'"³*
4. *They [the Muslims] took several captives from the people of Mina' which is on the shore, a mixed lot among them. They were sold as slaves and families were separated. The apostle arrived as they were weeping and inquired the reason. When he was told he said, 'Sell them only in lots', meaning the mothers with the children.⁴*
5. Muhammad himself took the same approach toward keeping families together:
It was narrated that 'Abdullah said: Prisoners would be brought to the Messenger of Allah and he would give an entire family [to someone, as slaves], because he did not want to separate them.⁵
6. *The Prophet sent Ibn Abi Hadrad in this party with Abu Qatadah. The party consisted of sixteen men, and they were away fifteen nights. Their shares [of booty] were twelve camels [for each man]...When the people fled in various directions, they took four women, including one young woman who was very beautiful. She fell to Abu Qatadah. Then Mahmiyah b. al-Jaz' spoke of her to the Messenger of God, and*

the Messenger of God asked Abu Qatadah about her. Abu Qatadah said, "I purchased her from the spoils." The Messenger of God said, "Give her to me." So he gave her to him, and the Messenger of God gave her to Mahmiyah b. Jaz' al-Zubaydi.⁶

7. *Then they brought Umm Qirfah's daughter...to the Messenger of God...The Messenger of God asked Salamah [who had captured the daughter originally] for her, and Salamah gave her to him. He then gave her to his maternal uncle, Hazn b. Abi Wahb, and she bore him 'Abd al Rahman b. Hazn.⁷*
8. After the defeat of the Jewish Banu Qurayzah tribe, Muhammad divided up that tribe's "property, wives, and children" among the Muslims; but some of the women he sent to Najd and to Syria to be sold for horses and weapons.⁸ Muhammad personally sold some of the other captured women:

I attended the Messenger of God who was selling the prisoners of the Banu Qurayza. Abu al-Shahm al-Yahudi bought two women, with each one of them three male children, for one hundred and fifty dinars.

Muhammad also personally sold "a portion" of the women and children to 'Uthman b. 'Affan and 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf.⁹

9. After the defeat of the Jews at Khaybar, Muhammad had the women of Khaybar "distributed among the Muslims."¹⁰
10. After the Hawazin tribe was defeated, Muhammad gave Ali, 'Umar, and 'Uthman (all later caliphs) each a woman from among those captured. 'Umar then gave his to his son.¹¹ Muhammad gave other "slave girls" to some of his Muslim warriors, who, along with 'Uthman, then had "intercourse" with their slaves. It was reported that 'Uthman's slave-girl "detested him" after the "intercourse."¹²
11. Muhammad gave Hassan b. Thabit "Sirin a Copt slave-girl, and she bore him 'Abdu'l-Rahman."¹³ Sirin was the sister of Mariyah the Copt (see below) and they had both been given to Muhammad by al-Muqawqis, the ruler of Alexandria.¹⁴
12. Muhammad gave his maternal aunt a male slave,¹⁵ and gave his foster-sister a male and a female slave.¹⁶
13. Muhammad found out that one of his wives, Maimuna, had freed her slave-girl. Muhammad said Maimuna would have received more reward had she given the slave-girl to one of her uncles:

Narrated Maimuna, the wife of the Prophet that she manumitted her slave-girl and the Prophet said to her, "You would have got more reward if you had given the slave-girl to one of your maternal uncles."¹⁷

14. *It was narrated from 'Imran bin Husain that a man had six slaves, and he did not have any other wealth apart from them, and he set them free when he died. The Messenger of Allah divided them into groups, set two free and left four as slaves.*¹⁸
15. When Muhammad found out that a black slave-girl of his had given birth to an illegitimate child, he ordered that she be flogged with fifty lashes.¹⁹
16. After a raid Muhammad enslaved a captive named Yasar; he put Yasar in charge of his "milch-camels."²⁰
17. *Anas reported that a man was charged with fornication with the slave-girl of Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him). Thereupon Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said to Ali: Go and strike his neck. Ali came to him and found him in a well cooling his body. Ali said to him: Come out, and as he took hold of his hand and brought him out, he found that his sexual organ had been cut. Hadrat Ali refrained from striking his neck. He came to Allah's Apostle (may peace be upon him) and said: Allah's Messenger, he has not even the sexual organ.*²¹
18. Muhammad tried to get the Bani Salamah tribe to join him in attacking the Christian Byzantines at Tabuk. He told their leader,

*O Abu Wahb, would you not like to have scores of Byzantine women and men as concubines and servants?*²²

Muhammad even had a black slave guarding him:

*Narrated 'Umar: I went to (the house of the Prophet) and behold, Allah's Messenger was staying in a Mashruba (attic room) and a black slave of Allah's Messenger was at the top of its stairs. I said to him, "Tell (the Prophet) that here is 'Umar bin Al-Khattab (asking for permission to enter)." Then he admitted me.*²³

Muhammad did not free his slaves until the day before he died.²⁴

The "Slave Concubines" of Muhammad²⁵

Muhammad had at least two slave concubines:

1. Mariyah bint Sham'un (Qibtiyyah),²⁶ the Copt

Mariyah was a Coptic Christian given to Muhammad by al-Muqawis, the ruler of Alexandria. She bore Muhammad a son named Ibrahim. When Muhammad was informed of Ibrahim's birth by Abu Rafi, Muhammad gave Abu Rafi the gift of a slave because of the good news.²⁷ Ibrahim died as a young child in January 632.

Mariyah was the female slave mentioned in the following *hadith* where two of Muhammad's wives were angry about a particular time he had intercourse with a female slave. This resulted in the "revelation" of 66:1 of the Koran, a portion of which is mentioned at the end of this *hadith*:

It was narrated from Anas, that the Messenger of Allah had a female slave with whom he had intercourse, but 'Aishah and Hafsa would not leave him alone until he said that she was forbidden for him. Then Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, revealed: "O Prophet! Why do you forbid (for yourself) that which Allah has allowed to you, until the end of the Verse."²⁸

The *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn* noted that Hafsa was angry because while she was away, Muhammad had slept with Mariyah in Hafsa's bed.²⁹

2. **Rayhanah bint Zayd al-Quraziyah (Rayhanah bint 'Amr b. Khunafah)**

Rayhanah was among the captives when the Muslims defeated the Banu Qurayzah, and she was chosen by Muhammad. Some reported that Muhammad freed her after she accepted Islam and married her in 627, while others reported that she remained his slave girl.³⁰ She died soon after his return from the Farewell Pilgrimage in February 632.

Additional Slave Girls

In one source it was reported that Muhammad also had

two more slave girls. Jamilah, a captive, and another one, a bondwoman granted to him by Zainab bint Jahsh.³¹

And Ibn Ishaq wrote that on one occasion Muhammad had been given "four slave girls," one of whom was Mariyah.³²

¹ *Sunan Ibn Majah*, Vol. 3, No. 2272, p. 298. This purchase price was also mentioned in *Sahih Muslim*, Vol. 4, No. 1365R4, p. 360; and *Men and Women Around the Messenger*, p. 587. For a general reference that Muhammad bought Safiyyah from another Muslim, see *The History of al-Tabari: The Last Years of the Prophet*, n. 899, p. 135. There was another report that Muhammad had actually used seven camels to purchase Safiyyah – see *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir*, Vol. 2, p. 145.

Safiyyah had been among the captives taken when the Jewish community of Khaybar was defeated. The Muslims also captured two female cousins of Safiyyah, who Muhammad gave to Dihya b. Khalifa al-Kalbi, one of his Muslim warriors – see *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, p. 511.

² *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Vol. 9, Book 93, No. 7214, p. 203.

³ *Sunan Ibn Majah*, Vol. 3, No. 2251, p. 285. For a report about Muhammad buying a slave from bin Khalid, see *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Vol. 3, Book 34, Chapter 19, p. 171.

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- ⁴ *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, n. 914, p. 791. There was a similar incident in which Muhammad ordered the selling of two slaves who were brothers; he said they should only be sold together – see *Musnad Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal*, Vol. 1, No. 760, p. 385.
- ⁵ *Musnad Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal*, Vol. 3, No. 3690, p. 324.
- ⁶ *The History of al-Tabari: The Victory of Islam*, pp. 150-151.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.
- ⁸ *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, p. 466. This is also mentioned in *The Sealed Nectar*, p. 378; *Sahih Muslim*, Vol. 5, No. 1766, p. 186; and *The Life of Muhammad: Al-Waqidi's Kitab al-Maghazi*, pp. 256-257.
- ⁹ *The Life of Muhammad: Al-Waqidi's Kitab al-Maghazi*, pp. 256-257.
- ¹⁰ *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, p. 511.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 593.
- ¹² *The Life of Muhammad: Al-Waqidi's Kitab al-Maghazi*, p. 462.
- ¹³ *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, p. 499.
- ¹⁴ *The History of al-Tabari: The Last Years of the Prophet*, p. 147.
- ¹⁵ *Musnad Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal*, Vol. 1, No. 102, p. 82.
- ¹⁶ *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, p. 576.
- ¹⁷ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Vol. 3, Book 51, No. 2594, p. 442.
- ¹⁸ *Sunan Ibn Majah*, Vol. 3, No. 2345, p. 340.
- ¹⁹ *Musnad Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal*, Vol. 1, No. 1142, p. 530.
- ²⁰ *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, p. 677.
- ²¹ *Sahih Muslim*, Vol. 8, No. 2771, p. 281. *Hadrat* is an honorific title.
- ²² *Al-Wahidi's Asbab al-Nuzul*, p. 122.
- ²³ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Vol. 9, Book 95, No. 7263, p. 227.
- ²⁴ *The Sealed Nectar*, p. 555.
- ²⁵ This is the description used in *The History of al-Tabari: The Last Years of the Prophet*, p. 141. Ibn Hisham said he had been told that Mariyah was Muhammad's "concubine" - see *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, n. 129, p. 711. Mariyah and Rayhanah were referred to as Muhammad's "slave girls" in the *Tafsir Ahsanul-Bayan*, Vol. 4, p. 402.
- ²⁶ In listing "slave girls" owned by Muhammad, Ibn Kathir identified Mariyah as Mariyah Al-Qibtiyyah - see *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 7, p. 720.
- ²⁷ *The History of al-Tabari: The Last Years of the Prophet*, p. 39.

²⁸ *Sunan An-Nasa'i*, Vol. 4, No. 3411, pp. 204-205. Here is 66:1:

O Prophet! Why do you forbid (for yourself) that which Allah has allowed to you, seeking to please your wives? And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

²⁹ *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, p. 1220. A variation of this *hadith* reported that Hafsa actually found Muhammad and Mariyah in her house engaged in "an intimate moment" - see *Al-Wahidi's Asbab al-Nuzul*, p. 237.

³⁰ *The History of al-Tabari: The Last Years of the Prophet*, n. 909, p. 137. Ibn Ishaq did not indicate that Muhammad freed Rayhanah; instead, Ibn Ishaq wrote that Rayhanah "remained with him until she died, in his power" - see *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, p. 466. That she was Muhammad's "captive" instead of a freed woman was also pointed out in *The Sealed Nectar*, p. 565. In listing "slave girls" owned by Muhammad, Ibn Kathir identified Rayhanah as Rayhanah bint Sham'un An-Nadariyyah - see *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 7, p. 720. Rayhanah was not listed as being among Muhammad's wives in *The Honorable Wives of the Prophet*.

³¹ *The Sealed Nectar*, p. 565.

³² *The Life of Muhammad (Sirat Rasul Allah)*, p. 653.