A Review on the Story of the Holy Prophet and Zaynab Bint Jahsh

Ibrahim Ibrahimi 1: Seyyid Majid Nabavi 2: Robab Shahmoradi 3

1 Ph.D. faculty member, Arak University, Iran
2 Ph.D. Student of Quran and hadith sciences, Arak university, Iran
3 Student of the forth level, group of Tafsir, sciences and knowledge of Quran, Jame’ah al-Zahra (s.a.), Qum, Iran,

Email: e-ebrahimi@araku.ac.ir; majidnabavi1366@gmail.com; shahmoradi.robab@yahoo.com

http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v5i3.1081

Abstract

Regarding the verse 37 of Surah Ahzab, some traditions and stories have been narrated which come in the following in brief:

“One day Prophet wanted Zayd ibn Harithah- his slave- do something for him, he came to his home. When he entered his home, he saw Zaynab bint Jahsh, the wife of Zayd. Her beauty surprised him. The Prophet fell in love with him and wished Zayd divorced her so he could marry her.” In the present study authenticity of this story has been studied. The method of this research is library and descriptive-analytic.

After reviewing text and sources, it becomes clear that these traditions are not authentic, the source-based shortcoming is presence of weak narrators in the chain of narrators. Likewise, in the chain of narrators, we have seen Tabe’in or those who could not have been eye-witnesses of this story.

Concerning the text of this tradition, it should be said that these traditions are not compatible with verses of Quran and the history of Prophet. Presence of ambiguity and discordance of these narrations with the infallibility of Prophet is another reason of rejecting this story.

Keywords: Weak Traditions; Zaynab Bint Jahsh; Zayd Ibn Harithah; The Prophet
1. Introduction

The concern of scholars of Islam especially at the beginning of recording traditions was to collect and save traditions to leave them behind for next generations in various collections but by the passage of time and reflection on the texts and documents of traditions, the authentic traditions can be recognized from the false ones. One of these traditions which found its way to the book of hadiths and interpretations is the story of the Prophet and Zaynab Bint Jahsh. The holy Prophet first gave Zaynab to Zayd but after a year Zayd divorced Zaynab. Various traditions and issues have been mentioned by some interpreters following the verse 37 of Surah Ahzab

And when you said to him whom Allah had favored and you sought to hide in yourself what Allah was to reveal, fearing people; although Allah has a better right for you to fear Him. And when Zayd had accomplished what he would of her (divorce), We gave her to you (Prophet Muhammad) in marriage, so that there is no fault in believers concerning (marriage to) the former spouse of their foster children if they divorced them. The decree of Allah must be done.”

In the present study, we are narrating them and after that we try to evaluate their authenticity.

2. Statement of the Problem

Regarding the verse 37 of Surah Ahzab, we read some traditions which say the holy Prophet fell in love with Zaynab, the wife of his slave, Zayd. In traditions, it is said, the holy Prophet was surprised by her beauty and wished to marry her and hoped Zayd divorced her.

The present study reviews these claims and traditions.

3. Familiarity with Zayd, Zaynab and Their Marriage

To understand this story better and to have a more precise picture, it is essential to know Zayd and Zaynab and also to know about their marriage story which is related to our discussion.

3.1. Zayd ibn Harithah

His name was Zayd ibn Harithah Sharahil and was from Bani-Kalb.( ibn Hisham, n.d., vol.1,p.264) He was the slave of the Prophet. The holy Prophet adopted him. Ibn ‘Umar said that we always called him Zayd ibn Muhammad until this verse was sent down. «دُعُوْهُمُ لِآبائِهِمْ» Ahzab 5(Bukhari, al-Tarikh al-Kabir, n.d., p.379). It is said he was the first man after Imam Ali who accepted Islam. He was so dear for the Prophet that he was called Zayd al-Hub (ibn Athir, 1377 , vol.2, p.226) ibn Hishām narrated the story of Zayd and his familiarity with Khadijah (s.a.) like this: Hakim ibn Hazam returned from one of his business trips, Khadijah came to see her, Hakim told his aunt, “among goods of this trip I brought some slaves, see them and choose each one you like for yourself. Khadijah chose Zayd and after marrying Prophet gave her to the Prophet and in this way Zayd joined Prophet. When he joined Prophet he was eight years old and this event was at the same time of Prophet and Khadijah marriage. ( ibn Hisham, n.d., vol.2, p.265) Zayd before Zaynab was married to Umme Ayman, maid of the Prophet and Usamah is
from this marriage. Prophet was given Umme Ayman to Zayd in marriage. He married several women after divorcing Zaynab. ( ibn Hajar, al-Isabah, n.d., vol.1, p.392) Zayd was present in many wars and was commanders of some Sarijyah. ( ibn Hisham, n.d., vol.3, p.491)

3.2. Zaynab Bint Jahsh

Zaynab was named Barrah and Prophet changed her name after marrying her. It seems Zaynab Bint Jahsh was born about 33 years before Hijrah and 10 years before Bet‘ahat. Her father was Jahsh bin Riyah and her mother Umaymah, the daughter of Abdul-Mu’tallib and the aunt of the holy Prophet. Zaynab and the family of Jahsh were among the first migrants to Medina. After the death of Zaynab, no money left after her, because during her life time, she had donated all of her wealth to poor people. The holy Prophet remembered this positive character of his wife and told his other wives the fastest one of you to join me after death is the one who is more generous. Zaynab generosity was in a way that in a few hours sent all 12 thousand Dirham of her annual pension to orphans, widows and poor ones. Her personality was so great that ‘Aishah remembered her as a lady who was higher than everyone regarding faith, piety, honesty, giving alms and joining family members and she always paid special attention to orphans and widows. In another news, ‘Aisha said Zaynab was the most beloved wife of the Prophet after herself. Zaynab in the year 20 AH. passed away. She was the first wife of the Prophet who passed away after Prophet and was buried in Baqi’ besides home of ‘Aqil and Muhammed ibn Hanafiyyah. ( Taken from encyclopedia of Islam, 1375, Mu’assesseh al-Ma’rif al-Islamiyah, vol.1, p.6837)

4. Marriage of Zayd to Zaynab Bint Jahsh

The marriage story of Zayd and Zaynab is related to the verses of Quran. Quran says, 

«وَِماِكانَِل مُؤْم نٍِوَِلَِمُؤْم نَةٍِإ ذاِقَضَىِاللََُِّّوَِرَسُولُهُِأَمْراًِأَنِّيْكُونَِلَهُمُِالْخ يَرَةُِم نِْأَمْر ه مِْ...»

“It is not for any believer man or woman to have the choice in the affair when a matter is decreed by Allah and His Prophet. Whosoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger strays into clear error.” (33:36)

Concerning the reason of sending down this verse, it is said, “ Prophet proposed Zaynab bint Jahsh for Zayd ibn Harithah and Zaynab, the cousin of Prophet told Prophet, oh the messenger of God! Am I not free in personal matters? Then the mentioned verse was revealed. After this verse, Zaynab told Prophet, I obey whatever your decision is.” ( Ali ibn Ibrahim Qumi, 1363, vol.2, p.194. Seyyed Hashim Ba’ath, 1415 Ah., vol., p.471/ Feyz Kashani, vol.4, 190/ Siyuti, 1404 AH, vol.5, p.200) quite a few number of interpreters regarded the mentioned claim the reason of sending down this verse but some others said that Zaynab thought at first Prophet had proposed her for himself, so she said yes but later she saw Prophet proposed her for Zayd. After this she said I am higher than him in my family but after this verse she accepted to marry him. (Siyuti, 104 AH, vol.5, p.200) therefore the marriage of Zaynab Bint Jahsh and Zayd was after their migration to Medina and by the order of the Prophet.

5. Examples of Narrations about the Story of Zaynab and Prophet

About the Prophet and Zaynab various narrations in the explanation of the verse 37 of surah Ahzab have been quoted. In addition, a few narrations have come in the explanation of the verse 4 of surah Ahzab. «...وَ ما جُهِلَ أُذُيعِيَتَكُمْ أَيَّامَكُمْ...» First various versions of these narrations are mentioned and then their documents and texts are evaluated. As the document of each narration is different with other

1 Sarijyah or Ba’ath refers to wars in the era of the Prophet (peace be upon him) without the direct presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him) but under the command of one of his companions.
narrations to some extent if there is a document-wise evaluation it comes under the examples and after them their textual-evaluation are included.

5.1. First example:

A narration is quoted in Qumi interpretation book which other interpreters after him also narrated it. Qumi quoted from Abi Jarud and Abi Ja’far that the holy Prophet gave Zaynab Bint Jahsh to Zayd though Zaynab did not accept it at first but after coming down the verse 36 of surah Al-Ahzab she accepted and lived with him for a while. Then he continued that "فَأَخْبَرَتْهَا فَقَالَ زَيْدُ: يَا رَسُولُ الَّلَّهُ تَأْذَنُ يُطَالَق هَاِفَإ نَِّف يهَاِك بْراًِوَِإ نَّهَاِلَتُؤْذ ين يِب ل سَان هَا، فَذَل كَِقَوْلُِاللَّّ ،ِعَزَِّوَجََّ َِّ:ِوَإ ذِْتَقُولُِل لَّذ يِأَنْعَمَِاللَُّهُ عَلَِ..."

Then they both (Zaynab and Zayd) were arguing about an issue. To solve it, they came to Prophet. The Prophet took a look at Zaynab and her beauty wondered him. Zayd went to Prophet and said, "فَخلَصَهَاِفَإ نِّيِأُر يدُِأَنِْأُفَار قَِصَاح بَت ي،ِفَقَالَِ:ِمَاِلَكَِفَوَقَعَِ فَنَظَرَِإ لَيْهَاِالنَّب يُِّ(ص)ِثُمَِّرَجَعَِرَسُولُِاللََّّ ِ(ص)ِإ لَىِمَنْز ل ه ِثُمَِّرَجَعَِرَسُولُِاللََّّ ِ(ص)ِثلَمَاِمُنْز لَهُِيَسْأَلُِعَنْهُِفَِرَأَيْتُِإ لَِخَيِْرَةٍِ..."

5.2. Second example

It is narrated from Qumi that "فَلَعَلَّكِْوَقَِ فَقَالَِرَسُولُِاللََّّ:ِلََ،ِاذْهَبِْفَاتَّق ِاللَََِّّوَِأَمْس كِْعَلَيْكَِزَوْجَكَِوَاتَّق ِاللَََِّّوَتُخْف يِف يِنَفْس كَِمَاِاللََُِّّ..."

Zayd and Zaynab went to his home while love of Zaynab was filled his heart. Zayd came back to his home. Zaynab told him what Prophet had said. Zayd told Zaynab do you let me divorce you so Prophet could marry you? Your love might fill his heart. She said I am worried you divorce me but he does not marry me. Therefore, Zayd went to Prophet and said, "فَأَخْبَرَنَاِابْنُِوَهْبٍ،ِقَالَِ:ِقَالَِابْنُِزَيْدٍِ:ِيْهَاِفَقَلْب ه ِمَوْق عاًِعَج يباً، فَذَل كَِقَوْلُِاللَّّ ،ِعَزَِّوَجََّ َِّ:ِوَإ ذِْتَقُولُِل لَّذ يِأَنْعَمَِاللَُّهُ عَلَِ..."

5.3. Third example

فَذَل كَِقَوْلُِاللَّّ ،ِعَزَِّوَجََّ َِّ:ِوَإ ذِْتَقُولُِل لَّذ يِأَنْعَمَِاللَُّهُ عَلَِ..."
behavior of her bother you? He said, I swear by God no the messenger of God. And nothing has received from her to me unless goodness. The holy Prophet said to him that do keep your wife for you and fear God. And what was God its revealer you hide in your heart and you scared people, if Zayd divorces her you marry her.” (Muhammad ibn Jair Tabari, 12 AH., vol.22, p.10)

5.3.1. Documental evaluation:

This tradition is narrated by ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn Zayd ibn Aslam (ibn Zaid). ‘Abdul-Rahman belonged to the second generation of Tabe’in and passed away in the year 182 AH and he was not eye witness of what he narrated. Likewise he did not mention other narrator who had told him this narration. Therefore the document of this hadith is Maqtu’ 2. Abdullah ibn Ahmad Hanbal said, “my father regarded ‘Abdul-Rahman one of the weak narrators and said he narrated Munkar 3 tradition.” And ibn Mo’in and ibn Mada’in and an-Nasa'i and Abuza’er eh all agreed on his weakness. Ibn Habban said he changed news while he did not know, for example he changes Asnad to Irsal and mentioned them as Muquf. Therefore his traditions are better to be left aside. (ibn Hajar al-Asghari, n.d., Tahzib al-Tahzib, vol.6, p.177) Regarding ibn Vahab, we should say that ibn Vahab in this hadith is the same Egyptian ‘Abdullah ibn Vahab who was surreptitious and an-Nasa'i said he was imprecise in receiving hadith. (ibn ‘Uday, 1405 AH., al-Kamil, vol.4, p.155)

5.4. Forth example

In a tradition Qitade said, "جاء زيد بن حارثة إلى النبي(ص) فقال: إن زينب اشتُدعت عليّ لسانها، و ألي أريد أن أطلقها. و خشي مقالة الناس أن أمره بطلاً فنزلت هذه الآية. و روي عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما أنه قال: النبي رسول الله (ص) ذات يوم إلى زيد بن حارثة بطلنه في حاجة له. فإذا زينب نبت حجج قائمة في دفع و حمار. فلما رأاه أعجبته و وقعت في نفسه، فقال: "سبحان الله مقلب القلوب، ثبت قلبي. فلم تجَّل فرجح رسول الله (ص). فلما جاء زيد ذكر ذلك له. فعرف أنها أعجبته و وقعت في نفسه. و أعجب بها رسول الله (ص) وقال: يا رسول الله: إن زينب أمراً فيها كبر، تعصي أمري، ولا تبرقسمي، فلا حاجة لي فيها. فقال له: "نلق الله يا زيد في أهلك و أمشك عليك زوجك". و كان يجب أن يطلقها قطُف لها زيد و نزلت هذه الآية." Zayd ibn Harithah went to Prophet and said, Zaynab is speaking bad to me and I want to divorce her. Prophet told him fear God and keep your wife for yourself. While Prophet liked he divorced her but he worried about what people might say if he ordered them to divorce. Due to this, this verse was sent down. It is quoted from ibn ‘Abbas who said that the holy Prophet once went to Zayd ibn Harithah as he needed him for some work; suddenly he saw Zaynab standing while she had scarf. He saw her beauty and was surprised. Her love filled his heart. So he said, oh God You are Pure! Oh you the manipulator of hearts, stable my heart. When Zaynab heard this sat down and the Prophet returned home. When Zayd came back to his home, Zaynab told him what had happened, and he understood beauty of Zaynab had surprised him. He went to the Prophet and said oh the messenger of God! Zaynab is an arrogant woman, she disobeyed me and is not satisfied with her right, I do not need her. Prophet told him oh Zayd fear from God about your family and keep your wife for yourself; but Prophet loved Zayd to divorce her. Zayd divorced him and this verse was sent down. (Samarghandi, 1416 AH., vol.3, p.62) similar to this tradition was narrated by Tha’labi. (Tha’labi, 1422 AH., vol.6, p.47)

5.4.1. Documental evaluation:

Qetadeh is Tabe’i and could not be eye witness of this event so the document of the story is Maqtu’.

---

2 A narrative that its chain of documents leads to one of the Tabe’an is called Maqtu’. This term is more common in Sunni narratives.

3 A tradition that one of its narrators is accused of making many mistakes and errors in narrating.
5.5. fifth example

It is quoted from Maqatil ibn Sulayman who said that Prophet gave Zaynab bint Jahsh in marriage to Zayd, she stayed with him for a while. She had white skin and broad shoulders and she was one of the most beautiful women of Quraysh. So Prophet fell in love with her and said, Oh God! you are Pure. Oh the changer of hearts! Zaynab heard this and told this to Zayd. Zayd thought with himself and asked Prophet to let him divorce her with this excuse that she is arrogant... (Qurtabij, 1364 Sh, vol.14, p.191)

Qurtabji narrated this narration in his interpretation book and knew this incompatible with the infallibility of the Prophet. (ibid)

5.5.1. documental evaluation:

This narration is quoted by Maqatil without mentioning its narrating chain. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī also to reject and weaken Maqatil mentioned words of ibn Saʿad, Bukhārī, an-Nasaʾī, ibn Haban, Dar Qatni and others. ( al-ʿAsqalānī, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, 1404 AH., vol.10, p.253)

5.6. sixth example

This is quoted from Muhammad ibn Yahya Haban ( may God be satisfied with him) that he said, Prophet went to the home of Zayd ibn Harithah to get him to do something. And Zayd was called Zayd the son of Muhammad. By chance, Prophet could not find him. So he went to Zayd ibn Harithah’s home to get something done but he could not find him. He entered his home. Zaynab bint Jahsh, the wife of Zayd, stood up. The holy Prophet turned his face. Zaynab said, oh the holy Prophet of God! Zayd is not at home. Enter, but Prophet did not enter. Zaynab’s beauty surprised Prophet. The Prophet returned home while he was murmuring something which could not be understood except when he said loudly, “God is Pure, Pure is the God who desists hearts. Zayd came back to his home, his wife told him about Prophet. Zayd asked, “Did you tell him enter?” Zaynab said, “I told him but he did not.” She continued, “I have heard something from him saying while he was coming back home but I did not understand. He was saying, “God is Pure, Pure is the God who desists hearts.” Zayd came to Prophet and said, oh the Prophet of God! I have heard you came to my home why didn’t you come in? oh the holy Prophet! If Zaynab’s beauty surprised you, I can divorce her? The holy Prophet said, keep your wife for you.” (Siyyuti, 1404, vol.5, p.201, ibn Saʿad, n.d., vol.8, p.101)

5.6.1. documental evaluation:

Muhammad ibn Haban is one of the Tabe’aan and passed away in 121. He can not be an eyewitness of this event and if the last narrator is one Tabe’ei, the narration is considered as cut-off and in ‘Ilm Hadith is of lower authenticity. ( ibn Hajar ʿAsqalānī, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, 1404, vol.9, p.363)
5.7. Seventh example

And the Prophet entered Zayd’s home and saw Zaynab who was his cousin. It seemed her love filled the heart of Prophet. Therefore, God sent down this verse, “And when you said to he whom Allah had favored and yourself have favored: ‘Keep your wife and fear Allah’, … (33:37)” (Siyuti, 1404, vol.5, p.204)

5.7.1. Documental evaluation:

Siyuti had omitted the document of this tradition and only sufficed to some individual who are at the beginning of the tradition. In addition, ‘Ikrimah himself accepted Islam in the year 8 of AH. In conquering Mecca and the story of Prophet and Zaynab belonged to the fourth and fifth year of Hijri. Therefore, ‘Ikrimah could not be one of the eye-witnessed to assert his claim. He should narrate this narration through a mediator who had seen the event himself. A lot of narrations of this story are Mursal or Maqtu and are considered as weak Ahadith.

5.8. Eighth example

‘Abdul-Razzaq quoted from Moa’mmer and he from Qetade who said that Zayd went to Prophet and said Zaynab is speaking harshly to me and I want to divorce her. Prophet told him fear from God and keep your wife for yourself but in fact Prophet liked they got divorced and he was afraid of ordering to divorce. Due to this God sent down, “….” (San’ani, ‘Abdul-Razzaq, 1411 AH, vol.2, p.96)

5.8.1. Documental evaluation:

Qetade is also from Tabe’aan and did not narrate this from Sahabeh. And he himself was not an eye-witness of this story.

To be brief, we did not include other traditions here. It is necessary to say that there are other several narration in Tafsir Tabari in this regard (Muhammad ibn Jarir Tabari, 1412 AH., vol.22, p.10) and ibn Juzi narrated them in the interpretation book of “Zad al-Masir fi ‘ilm al-Tafsir” and evaluated some of them. Some others who only sufficed to quote narrations that we can refer to mentioned addresses to know more. (ibn Jozi, 1422 AH., vol.3, pp.465, 467, 468 and Baghavi, 1420 AH., vol.3, p.641, p.643 & Sa’adi, Abdul-Rahman, 1408 Ah., p.798).

In the end of this part, it is worth saying that some famous interpreters like sheikh Tabarsi and sheikh Tusj made the same mistake that their previous and next interpreters came up with. They tried to justify instead of rejecting them. For example we read in Majma’ al-Bayan that “قّال النبطي: يجوز أن يكون ‘بلى’ على ما يقولونه أن النبي استحسنها قفطانه أن يفارقها زيد فيتزوجها، وكم ذلك لأن هذا التم ثانى فطيح عليه البشر ولا حرج على أحد…” (Tabarsi, 1372, vol.8, 564) “Balkhi said it is proper to marry what people say if Prophet considered Zaynab beautiful and wished her divorce from Zayd so that married him but hide this, because this wish is nature of human beings (and human beings are created based on this nature) and it is no sin if someone wished like this…” Tabarsi did not evaluate this story but justified that

4 Mursal news is a hadith that either has no document or does not mention the names of all its narrators.

5 It is a hadith that some of its narrators are unknown or its connection to the infallible is unknown. In the Sunnite term, any hadith that expresses the speech or deeds of Tabe’an is Maqtu’. In Shi’ite opinion it lacks authority.
Prophet did not betray and he knew that Zaynab in future will marry him, so it was not wrong for Prophet if he had a look at her. Likewise, Sheikh Tus in Tafsir Tebyan said when Prophet saw Zaynab found her beautiful and wished her divorce from Zayd. Then Sheikh Tus quoted from Balkhi that this is natural and based on people’s nature. (Tus, n.d., vol.8, 344) if we consider this behavior natural, it causes muslims have the same wish when they see wives of each other but this is completely against each sound mind.

6. The Relationship of This Story with the Story of Previous Prophets and Evaluating It

God states in verse 37 of surah Ahzab,

«ما كان على النبيّ من خرج فيما فرض الله له سنة الله في الذين خلو من قبل و كان أمر الله قدراً مقدوراً»

“No fault shall be attached to the Prophet for doing what Allah has obligated for him. Such was the way of Allah with those who passed away before the decree of Allah is a decree determined.” (33:38)

Some interpreters wrote about this verse the love of Prophet to Zaynab was like Davood’s to his wives and this numerous numbers of wives for prophets is natural and considered it like the lifestyle of previous prophets like Davood. “... سنة الله في الذين خلو من قبل و كان أمر الله قدراً مقدوراً” this was the sunnah of God which was common among ancestors” and then he counted many wives for Davood and Sulayman.

For example Siyuti in Dur-al-Manthur wrote similar to Davood who looked at a woman and fell in love with her so married her God ordered Prophet to marry Zaynab and as God’s sunnah was this for Davood to marry that woman God did the same for Zaynab. (Siyuti, 1404 Ah., vol.5, p.203) likewise from Muhammad ibn Ka’ab Qarzi said, “it means he can marry as many as women he desired and this was the sunnah of the previous prophets, hazrat Sulayman had a thousand wives and Davood a hundred wives, Ibn Jurayh said that the name of the woman who married Davood was Yasi’ah and this is sunnah of God for Muhammad and Zaynab, و كان أمر الله قدراً مقدوراً and this is how the sunnah of God for Davood and that woman (Yasi’ah) was applied to the Prophet and Zaynab. (Siyuti, 1404 AH., vol.5, p.203) in Tafsir of Sharif Lahiji and Menhaj al-Sadeqin fi elzam al-Mokhalefin similar to this story has been narrated but for Davood a hundred wives and Sulayman three hundred wives have been claimed. (Kashani, n.d., vol.7, p.297 & Eshkevari, 1373 Sh, vol.3, p.639).

Likewise Tha’labi and baghavi asserted the story of Prophet and Zaynab is similar to the story of Davood and the wives he liked; though they did not mention number of wives of Davood and Sulayman. (Tha’labi, 1422 Ah.,p.49 & Baghavi, 1420, vol.3, p.645)

6.1. Documental evaluation:

These reports have been cited by ibn Jurayh and Muhammad ibn Ka’ab Gharzi who are both from Tabe’aan who are considered cut-off and they are not narrated from Prophet.

6.2. Textual evaluation:

Concerning its texts, it should be said that having as many as these wives for prophets are not logical and these reports introduced prophets like kings who had Haramsara and were busy there; but the life style of prophets and their night prayers are in exact opposition with having a hundred wives or thousand wives. These are distorted texts like Torah which claims 800 wives and 300 maid for Sulayman; infallibles are pure.
In addition, all traditions regarding the verse 38 are based on the similarity of the story of Davood and previous infallibles with the story of Prophet and Zaynab which by proving falseness of this story, the stories attributed to Davood and Sulayman and relating it to the story of Zaynab is not acceptable.

7. **Textual Evaluation of Narrations**

There are numerous reasons in declining this story.

7.1. **Opposition with Quran**

These narrations are in complete opposition of Quran and through checking these narrations with Quran this opposition can be cleared.

It seems that the best source is first the holy Quran itself and there is nothing in holy Quran called the love of Prophet to Zaynab and the narrations which are incompatible with Quran should be thrown away as infallibles taught us.

7.1.1. **Opposition with the verse** 

This verse referred to the point that Zayd divorced Zaynab willingly and because there was no feeling of need in her. Quran said in this regard, فَلَمَّا قَضَى زَي دٌْمِن هاْوَطَرا

But some narrations claimed that the reason of this divorce was the love of Prophet to him and Zayd did so for the Prophet’s sake and as a favor to him; but this is in complete opposition of the verse. The verse says Zayd did not feel need to her any more so divorced him.

7.1.2. **Opposition with the verse**

Quran says, وَأَز واجاً من هُم ْوَ.ْ

If the love of Zaynab entered Prophet’s heart and wanted their divorce; definitely God reveals that because it is not true that God says He will clear something مَاِاللََُِّّمُبْد يه ِ

But hides it and in the verse itself He promises to clear something that Prophet hides. According to the style and Sahih narrations, fear of Prophet was from the blaming words of hypocrites who might tell later that Prophet married the wife of his adopted son and cited the reason of this marriage like this، «ل كَيِّلَِيَكُونَِعَلَىِالْمُؤْم ن ينَِحَرَجٌِف يِأَزْواج ِأَدْع يائ ه مِْ

so there will be no sin marrying faithfuls with the wife of their adopted sons after they get divorce.”

Therefore, fake narrations who pointed to the love of Prophet to Zaynab are rejected.

7.1.3. **Opposition with the verse**

In the verse 38 of surah Ahzab God Almighty says، "Do not stretch your eyes at the flower of this life which We have given couples to enjoy, it is with this that We might try them; and the provision of your Lord is better, and more enduring.” (20: 131)

“Do not stretch your eyes to that We have given pairs of them to enjoy, nor sorrow for them, and lower your wing to the believers.” (15:88)
Therefore, how would it be possible Prophet fell in love with Zaynab, the wife of Zayd, and wished her divorce; while God prohibits him of looking at wives of others? It seems that this kind of narrations are in complete opposition with Quran and are not acceptable.

"It is not proper for Prophet to betray by his eyes. God says about eye betrayal that «يَعْلَمُِخائ نَةَِالأَْعْيُن ِوَِماِتُخْف يِ الْصُّدُورُِ» "He (Allah) knows the furtive looks of the eyes and what the chests conceal.” (40:19)

7.2. Opposition with the history life of Prophet

Zaynab bint Jahsh was the daughter of Prophet’s aunt. Since her birth, she accompanied Prophet everywhere. At the time, when Hijab was not obligatory for Muslims, Prophet had seen her uncovered. And more important is it was the Prophet who made her marry Zayd. Therefore how is it possible Prophet fell in love with her suddenly? While he had seen Zaynab since her childhood and he made her marry?!

If the cause of this love was her beauty, Prophet could have proposed her for himself earlier and definitely if Prophet proposed a woman, she accepted it right away as she knew it the cause of her salvation.

7.3. Distress in the texts of narrations

In quoted narrations about this story, we are witnessing distress and disagreement which are pointed to in the following.

In one of the narrations, it is said that Zayd and Zaynab were arguing in the presence of Prophet, and then her love filled the heart of Prophet.

In another narration we read that Prophet came to Zayd’s home and Zaynab came to the door and answer him.

In another narration, we read Zaynab did not come out but wind pushed the curtain hanged on the door away while she was sitting in her room and Prophet saw him.

In another narration, Prophet came to Zayd’s home and saw Zaynab while she was sitting in the center part of her room.

In another, Prophet came to Zayd’s home and saw her while she was taking Ghusl.

Presence of these differences is another reason on the weakness of these narrations and rejecting them.

7.4. Opposition with the infallibility of Prophet

Definition of infallibility: infallibility is a quality of soul which prohibits its owner of committing sins.( Mohammad Ali Tahanavi, 1996 AD., p.1183) regarding the infallibility of Prophets we should say that Prophets are immune of mistakes and errors in three levels: 1.infallibility in terms of committing sins and opposing divine orders. 2. Infallibility in terms of mistakes and forgetfulness in receiving and transferring revelation of God. 3. Infallibility from mistakes and forgetfulness in executing divine Laws or performing personal and social duties. This claim can be supported by numerous logical and tradition-based reasons but as the goal of this article is not to prove infallibility we do not mention them here. Likewise, concerning the Prophet per se. specifically various verses of Quran like

“Nor does he speak out of desire.” (53, 3)
Have been revealed that refute any lust or mundane desire for Prophet because Prophet’s actions and speech are a practical role model for Muslims and are devoid of any shortcoming. Therefore these claims about Prophet’s love to Zaynab are against infallibility of Prophet. Many Shia and Sunni Islamic scholars do not regard this ugly speech about Prophet untrue and regard related narrations weak and fake; of course in Shia sources we find fewer narrations in this regard because of Shia’s more belief in infallibility of Prophet.

8. Orientalists’ Opinion in This Regard and Evaluation

As these narrations have been mentioned in narrative and interpretational books some orientalists and those who have hatred towards Prophet took advantage of these kind of narrations (which are disregarded by most Muslims and here we mention whys) to disparage Prophet and Islam.

Mohammad Taqi Deyari Bigdeli and Yalchin Ali-uf in an article titled “study of opinions of orientalists about marriage of Prophet and Zaynab” reviewed opinions of orientalists we do not evaluate their ideas here and to know more one can refer to it in Orientalists Quran-Pazhohi Journal, no.16. This article was published in spring and winter of 1393 and is free-access in internet.

9. Interpreters against This Story

Some interpreters rejected this story and weak narration as in the following:

Ibn Arabi in the book Ahkam al-Quran and Qurtabi in al-Jame’ le-Ahkam al-Quran did not know these narrations authentic. (ibn Arabi, 1408 AH., vol.3, p.1542 & Qurtabi, 1364 Sh., vol.14, p.191) Alusi refuted narrations about the love of Prophet to Zaynab and some interpreters like Zahri, Bakr ibn ‘A’la’, Qashiri, al-Qazi Abi Bakr bin al-Arabi, and others are against these narrations. They introduce narration of Imam Sajjad as an authentic (Sahih) narration which comes in the following. (Alosi, 1415 Ah., vol.11, p.204) Jamaluddin Qasemi also in the book Mahasin al-Tavil has rejected these narrations by many reasons. (Qasemi, Jamaeddin, Mahasen al-Tavil, 1418 AH., vol.8, p.81) Shanghiti said about these narrations and stories, “there is no doubt that this claim is not Sahih and does not deserve Prophet. (Shenqiti, 1427 AH., vol.6, 381) ‘Allameh Tabatabae and Banoo Amin also rejected these narrations and are opposing them. (‘Allameh Tabataba’ee, 1390, vol.16, p.323, Amin, Nosrat Beigom, n.d., vol.10, p.233) Ayatullah Makarem while talking about this verse opened a discussion with the title of lie myths and evaluated the mentioned claims about Prophet. (Makarem Shirazi, 1371, vol.17, p.325) Mohammad ‘Ali Eshkevari in Tafsir Lahiji after quoting the story of Zaynab bint Jahsh referred to Shahid Sa’eed Thani and ‘Allameh Helli who confirmed the story and said their words and justification are not devoid of shortcoming. (Eshkori, 1373 Sh., vol.3, p.636)

As it is clear the interpreters who were men of research and thought evaluated this story and regards Prophet of Islam far from this and did not suffice to quoting without thinking.

10. The Reason of Sending Down Sahih Verse

It seems that the reason of sending down Sahih verse is that God revealed to the Prophet that Zayd will divorce Zaynab. When Zayd complained Prophet of Zaynab’s bad temper and said he wanted to
divorce him, Prophet told him out of his politeness and morality, fear from God! and keep your wife while Prophet knew that they will divorce later and this is what the holy Prophet was hiding. He was afraid of people saying he married the wife of his adopted son and God said, do you fear from people while God is more deserved to be afraid of? This narration is quoted from Ali ibn al-Husayn, Zahri and others in Shia and Sunni sources. (Tabarsi, 1372, vol.8,564)

11. The Hikmah of the Marriage of Prophet and Zaynab

Zaynab belonged to the high level family. In contrast, Zayd was the slave of the Prophet. At the beginning of their marriage, Zaynab and her brother both disagreed. But by revealing that verse both yielded to the order of God. Nearly a year later, Zayd divorced Zaynab. Naturally this was hard for Zaynab because of her family and as she married him by the order of God but then Zayd divorced her. It seems that one of the Hikmah of the marriage of Prophet and Zaynab was to compensate Zaynab’s obedience of God. And God due to this obedience made her the wife of the Prophet.

It is worth saying that orders of God may have several Hikmah. It seems the mentioned Hikmah was one of the Hikmah and the most significant Hikmah clearly states by Quran is to nullify custom of ignorant time.

But regarding nullifying the custom of ignorant time we should say that Zayd and Zaynab married in the early of the fourth year of Hijri and by the order of Prophet and according to the verse 36 of Surah Ahzab and surah Ahzab was sent down in the year four and early of year five. Ibn Sa’ad in the book Tabaqat knew ziq’a’de of the year five the time of Prophet’s marriage to Zaynab. (ibn Sa’d, n.d., vol.8, p.114) if it is true, Zaynab and Zayd lived together for a year. This short time of their life together has a Hikmah and the mentioned verse openly pointed out to this Hikmah and that is in ignorant time marrying wife of adopted son was disapproved but after this it has changed and faithful ones could marry wives of their adopted sons. Quran says, «لِكَيْ لَا يَكُونَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ فِي أُزْوَاجِ أَدْعِيَاهُمْ» so that there is no fault in believers concerning (marriage to) the former spouse of their foster children if they divorced them. (33:37)

Therefore, according to this verse, the most significant Hikmah of the marriage of Prophet and Zaynab was to violate one of the sunnah of ignorant time so that faithfuls are allowed to marry wives of their adopted sons.

Conclusion

According to the researches, this is concluded that the mentioned narrations about the story of the Prophet and Zaynab are not Sahih. These narrations have documental and textual shortcoming; there are weak narrators in the chain of narrators or are narrated from Tabee’in or those who were not seen this marriage.

Regarding the texts also it should be said these narrations are in opposition with Quran and incompatible with the verse 38 of Surah Ahzab. Because Prophet himself made Zayd and Zaynab marry each other and if Prophet wished to marry Zaynab, he could marry him earlier. Distress among these narrations and differences in narrations are another reason of rejecting this story. These narrations are not compatible with the infallibility of Prophet because a prophet who could not control himself and is eager to marry wife of another man is not suitable to guide people. And the most important Hikmah of sending
down this verse is to nullify prohibition of marrying wife of adopted son which was common in the ignorant time.

**Sources**


Amin, Nuşrat Beigum, Tafsir Makhzan al-‘Irфан in Quran sciences, 15 volumes, no name, no place, no date.


Bahranī, Hashim bin Sulayman fi Tafsir al-Quran, Bunyad Be’that, Islamic research Unit, 5 volumes, al-Be’that institution, Ghesmul Derasat al-Islamiyah, Qum, 1415 AH.


Feyz Kashani, Tafsir al-Safī, 5 volumes, Maktabat al-Šadr, Iran, Tehran, 1415 AH.

Ibn al-‘Arabi, Ashkam al-Quran, 4 volumes, Dar al-Jil, Beirut, 1408 A.H.

Ibn Athīr, Usdul Ghabah fi Ma’rifat al-Sahabah, Lebanon, Beirut, Dar Ahya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, 1377.


Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, 1404 A.H., 14 volumes.

al-Ḥuwayzī, Nur al-Thaqalayn, edited by: Hashem Rasouli, 5 volumes, pub: Isma’iliyan, Qum, 1415 AH.

Ibn Sa’īd, Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra, Dar Šādir, Beirut, no date.


Ibn ‘Uday, ‘Abdullah, Al-Kamil, Beirut, 1405 A.H.

Ishkevari, Muhammad ibn ‘Ali, Tafsir Sharif Lahiji, 4 volumes, Dad pub. Tehran, 1373 Sh.
Kashani, Fathullah ibn Shokrullah, Zubdeh al-Tafisir, researcher: Bunyad Ma’arif Islami, 7 volumes, pub: Mu’assesah al-Ma’rif al-Islamiyah, Qum, 1423 AH.

Makarim Shirazi, Naṣer, Tafsir Nemoneh, 28 volumes, Dar al-Kutub al-‘Islamiyah, Tehran, 1371.


Qasemi, Jamaluddin, Māhāsin al-Tavil, 9 volumes, Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, Manshurat Muhammad ‘Ali Beizun, Beirut, 1418 AH.

Qumi, ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim, Tafsir al-Qumi, 2 volumes, Darul Kitab, Qum, 1363 Sh.

Qurt̲abī, Muhammad ibn Ahmad, al-Jami’ lil-Ahkam al-Quran, 20 volumes, Iran, Tehran, 1364 Sh.


Samarqandi, Naṣr ibn Muhammad, Tafsir al-Samarqandi al-Mosami Bahrul ‘Ulam, 3 volumes, Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, first publication, 1416 AH.


Siyuti, ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn Abi-Bakr, al-Durrul Manthur fi Tafsir bil-Mathur, 6 volumes, public library of Hazrat Mar‘ashi Najafi, Qum, 1404 A.H.

Ṭabarî, Muhammad ibn Jarir, Jami’ al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Quran, 30 volumes, Dar al-Ma’rifah, Beirut, 1412 AH.

Ṭabarṣı, Fazl ibn Hasan, Majma’ al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Quran, 10 volumes, Naser Khosro Tehran, 1372 Sh.

Tafsir Kanzul-Daqiq va Bahrul Gharq’ib, Qumi Mashhadi, researched by: Hussein Dargahi, pub: Iran, Islamic culture and guidance ministry, Sazman Chap va Intesharat, 1368 Sh.

Tha’labi, Ahmad ibn Muhammad, Al-Kashf val Bayan Al-Ma’ruof Tafsir al-Tha’labi, 10 volumes, Dar Ahyā’ al-Turğth al-‘Arabi, Beirut, 1422 A.H.

Ṭusi, Muhammad ibn Hasan, al-Tebyan fi Tafsir al-Quran, 10 volumes, Dar Ahyā’ al-Turğth al-‘Arabi, Beirut.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).