



Polygyny: What It Means When African American Muslim Women Share Their Husbands

Debra Majeed

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“Captivating, provocative, and groundbreaking. Taking up the mandate that women’s realities matter, Majeed writes with depth and analytical rigor about a topic we have scarcely begun to understand.”—Amina Wadud, author of *Inside The Gender Jihad*

“Tackles the contours and intimacies of a much practiced but seldom spoken about quasi-marriage that leaves women without legal support. A much-needed text on an extremely sensitive topic. Majeed excavates this terrain with finesse and a deft scholarly hand.”—Aminah Beverly McCloud, coeditor of *An Introduction to Islam in the 21st Century*

“Utilizes ethnographic research methods to imaginatively and constructively complexify the reality of polygyny in the lives of African American Muslim women.”—Linda Elaine Thomas, author of *Under the Canopy*

“Majeed’s womanist approach is critical, yet balanced enough to include the concerns of women, men, and children, affording readers a broad and vital gaze into the lives of these unconventional households.”—Zain Abdullah, author of *Black Mecca*

“A powerful and long overdue study of polygyny in African American Muslim communities.”—Shabana Mir, author of *Muslim American Women on Campus*

Debra Majeed sheds light on families whose form and function conflict with U.S. civil law. Polygyny—multiple-wife marriage—has steadily emerged as an alternative to the low numbers of marriageable African American men and the high number of female-led households in black America.

This book features the voices of women who welcome polygyny, oppose it, acquiesce to it, or even negotiate power in its practices. Majeed examines the choices available to African American Muslim women who are considering polygyny or who are living it. She calls attention to the ways in which interpretations of Islam’s primary sources are authorized or legitimated to regulate the rights of Muslim women. Highlighting the legal, emotional, and communal implications of polygyny, Majeed encourages Muslim communities to develop formal measures that ensure the welfare of women and children who are otherwise not recognized by the state.

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