

Orthodox Judaism and the Lubavitcher Rebbe Approve of Plural Marriage as Kosher

Another related subject in which we find the same ongoing difference of opinion concerns the permissibility of marrying more than one wife. Among Ashkenazim the cherem (ban and prohibition) of Rabbeinu Gershon (Me'or Hagolah) is strictly adhered to in all religious circles while Sefardic Jews never accepted the cherem and up to modern times continue to practice polygamy in Sefardic countries.

We may suggest an explanation of this dichotomy in correlation to the general philosophy covering marriage as expressed by the Rambam:

The sensible course is for man first to choose an occupation that will give him a livelihood, then buy himself a home; and after that take a wife; as it is said "and what man is there that has planted a vineyard and not redeemed it...what man is there that has built a new house and has not dedicated it? ...and what man is there that has betrothed a woman and not taken her?" (Devorim [Deuteronomy] 20:5-7) But the foolish first marry, then if one of this sort can afford it, he purchases a house; and last of all, towards the end of his life, he sets about seeking a trade or lives on charity. Thus it is said in the imprecations: "A wife you shall betroth...a house you shall build...a vineyard you shall plant" (Devorim 28:30); that is, all your activities shall be in the reverse order of what they should be.

(Laws of Moral Disposition and Ethical Conduct 5:11)

It is clear that the Rambam predicates the institution of marriage on the ability to support a wife and family.

How have Jews prospered during the long years of exile? We have seen a tangible difference between the condition in Sephardic lands among the Moslems as compared to Ashkenazic lands among Christians. The golus among the Edomites (Christians) has been considerably worse. This may depend on the fact that the Rambam rules that the Yishmaelites (Moslems) believe in G-d while Christians are actually idolaters. For this reason the golus among the Edomites has been so much more fearful.

With this in mind the Sages of Ashkenaz have felt that the pressure of the exile precluded a Jew from having more than one wife or consummating the levirate marriage. In Sefardi lands where life was easier the restrictions did not apply.

May G-d grant that speedily we will see the end of both the exile of Edom and Yishmael. "For so many years have passed since all the predestined times have passed," and we can only say "How long!"

Certainly, G-d will fulfill our request and redeem us from the golus with our youth and elders, sons and daughters, with our complete Torah and mitzvos, to our Holy Land, Yerushalayim the Holy City and the Bais HaMikdash. So may it be, speedily and truly in our time.

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Since the Lubavitcher Rebbe uses this reasoning regarding polygamy it's obvious that according to his opinion it is currently permitted where ever it is possible to practice it according to the law of the land which includes the USA as the only the only thing which is still banned is registering the 2nd 3rd etc. marriage with the state but not the relationship itself [not to mention that Cherem of Rabbeinu Gershon was reportedly made for either 300 or 1000 years in which case it ran out in the year 2000 CE at most not to mention that it was never meant to apply anywhere except where it was originally decreed Germany and Northern France etc.](#)

Warning: Lubavitcher Chassidim especially women reading this should be aware that if they take a pilegish or become one and later want to marry someone else they may need a "[get](#)" since Chabad-Lubavitch Rabbis rule according to minority opinion of the Tzemach Tzedek the 3rd Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch who opined that even pilegish should be given a get (written document of Jewish divorce) before she can re-marry. It's unclear from his responsa if this should apply everywhere or only in countries where it was a practice to do so apparently Russia and some other places. However this is a minority opinion and woman even from a Chabad - Lubavitch community who remarries with no "[get](#)" after being a pilegish wouldn't face the stigma of her children from her next marriage being considered [mamzerim \(bastards, offspring of adultery\)](#) . If you are a member of a Chabad Lubavitch Chassidic community and any of this is relevant to your situation Please Consult a Chabad-Rabbi knowledgeable in these laws.