

Explanation of
The Hadith of
Umm Zar'

The Story of Eleven Women
& Their Husbands



Abū 'Abdir-Raḥmān Fārūq Post

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مَحْفُوظٌ جَمِيعُ الْحَقُوقِ

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Compiled by: Abū ‘Abdir-Raḥmān Fārūq Post

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Transliteration Table

ع	‘	This is the letter ‘ <i>ayn</i>	خ	kh	
أ	a	About [this is the letter <i>hamzah</i>]	ل	l	Look
آ	ā	When <i>alif</i> is being used as a long vowel	م	m	Man
ب	b	Box	ن	n	Nurse
د	d	Door	و	ū	Pool [when <i>waw</i> is used as a long vowel]
ض	ḍ	Heavy “ḍ” sound	ق	q	Queen [a heavy “k” sound made at the back of the mouth, just above the throat]
ذ	dh	These, those [must be distinguished from the ‘th’ in ‘think’ and ‘thought’]	ر	r	Rabbit [it is not heavy like r in English]
ظ	ẓ	“th” sound as in “these” but heavier	س	s	Sea
ي	ī	Feet [when <i>yā’</i> is being used as a long vowel]	ص	ṣ	Heavy “ṣ” sound
ف	f	Fish	ش	sh	Ship
غ	gh	The sound you make when gargling	ت	t	Tan
ح	ḥ	Heavy “ḥ” sound	ط	ṭ	Heavy “ṭ” sound
ه	h	Hat	ث	th	Think, thought [must be distinguished from the ‘th’ in ‘this’ and ‘these’]
إ	i	Ink	و	w	Water [when <i>waw</i> is used as a consonant]
ج	j	Jar	ي	y	Yarn [when <i>yā’</i> is used as a consonant]
ك	k	Kit	ز	z	Zebra

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Introduction

The *ḥadīth* of Umm Zar' is from the famous *ḥadīth* that contains numerous benefits in it. The scholars of Islam have accepted it and many of the scholars of *ḥadīth* have transmitted it in their books of *ḥadīth*.

The beauty and eloquence contained in this narration is one that is unique and deserving of clarification and further explanation. Within this *ḥadīth* we find the eloquence and manners of the 'Arabs and how women of that time used to experience the same feelings and have the same thoughts and views about many of the women today. In order to understand the beauty of this *ḥadīth* and what it contains from benefits, it is highly important that one is familiar with the 'Arabic Language, 'Arabic Adab, and the customs and traditions of the 'Arabs.

This *ḥadīth* has been transmitted by many of the scholars of *ḥadīth* in various books such as: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in the Book of Marriage, under the chapter heading: Good Treatment of the Family (5189), *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* in the Book of Virtues, under the chapter heading: The *Ḥadīth* of Umm Zar' (2448), Imām at-Tirmidhī mentioned it in his *Shamā'il* under the chapter heading: That Which Was Narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) about Conversating in the Evening – *Samar* (235), Imām an-Nasā'ī mentioned it in his *Sunan al-Kubrā*, in the Book of Living with Women, under the chapter heading: A Woman Thanking Her Husband (9089), Imām aṭ-Ṭabarānī mentioned it in his *Mu'jam al-Kabīr* (23/266), Ibn Ḥibbān in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, in the Book of Narrations about Some Virtues of the Companions, under the chapter heading: The Statement of the Prophet (ﷺ) to 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها): **"I am to you like Abī Zar' is to Umm Zar'"** (7104), Imām Baghawī in *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, in the Book of Marriage, under the chapter heading: Living Honorably with Women (2240) and others as well.

There are many books that have explained this *ḥadīth* as well such as *Fathul-Bārī* by Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Irshād as-Sārī* by Imām al-Qaṣṭalānī, Imām an-Nawawī also explained it in his explanation of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, and other scholars who explained *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* such as al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ in his book *Ikmāl al-Mu'lim bi-Fawā'id Muslim*, as well as others.

Also, the book *Gharībul-Ḥadīth* which contains explanations of the difficult vocabulary words contained in many *ḥadīth* have explained this *ḥadīth* as well. Great Imāms elaborated on the meanings of the words in this *ḥadīth* such as Imām Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Salām al-Harawī in his book *Gharībul-Ḥadīth*, also Zamakhsharī in his book *al-Fā’iq fī Gharībil-Ḥadīth* and others. There were also complete books authored dedicated to explain this *ḥadīth* such as: *Bughyatur-Rā’id fīmā fī Ḥadīth Umm Zar’ min-al-Fawā’id*, by al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, also *Ghayātun-Naf’i fī Sharḥ Ḥadīth Umm Zar’*, by Imām as-Suyūṭī, also *Durratud-Ḍar’i li-Ḥadīth Umm Zar’*, by Imām ar-Rāfi‘ī al-Qazwīnī (580h), and *Sharḥ Ḥadīth Umm Zar’*, by Imām Abū al-Faḍl al-Ba’lī al-Ḥanbalī (709h).

From the important issues related to this *ḥadīth* is determining the authenticity of this *ḥadīth* and whether it is a *ḥadīth marfū’* [raised to the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ)] or is it *mawqūf* [speech of a companion]. The majority of the wording of the narration is from what ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated to the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), except for the ending of the narration when the Prophet (ﷺ) said to ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها): **“I am to you like Abū Zar’ is to Umm Zar’”**, which is *marfū’*. So the scholars have differed in regards to whether it is *marfū’* or *mawqūf*, but they have all agreed upon it’s authenticity, and many of the *muḥaddithūn* have transmitted this *ḥadīth* in their compilations, especially those who stipulated authenticity such as Imām al-Bukhārī and Imām Muslim.

The Hadith of Umm Zar' (Arabic Text)

حَدِيثُ أُمِّ زَرْعٍ

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ حُجْرٍ السَّعْدِيُّ، وَأَحْمَدُ بْنُ حَنْبَلٍ، كِلَاهُمَا عَنْ عَيْسَى، - وَاللَّفْظُ لِابْنِ حُجْرٍ - حَدَّثَنَا عَيْسَى بْنُ يُونُسَ، حَدَّثَنَا هِشَامُ بْنُ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ أَخِيهِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ:

جَلَسَ إِحْدَى عَشْرَةَ امْرَأَةً، فَتَعَاهَدَنَ وَتَعَاقَدَنَ أَنْ لَا يَكْتُمَنَّ مِنْ أَخْبَارِ أَزْوَاجِهِنَّ شَيْئًا.

قَالَتِ الْأُولَى: زَوْجِي لَحْمٌ جَمَلٌ غَثٌّ، عَلَى رَأْسِ جَبَلٍ [وَفِي لَفْظِ مُسْلِمٍ: وَعَرِيٌّ، لَا سَهْلٌ فَيْرَتَقَى، وَلَا سَمِينٌ فَيَنْتَقِلُ].

قَالَتِ الثَّانِيَةُ: زَوْجِي لَا أَبْتُ حَبْرَةَ، إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ لَا أَذَرَهُ، إِنْ أَذْكَرَهُ أَذْكَرَ عَجْرَةَ وَبُجْرَةَ.

قَالَتِ الثَّلَاثَةُ: زَوْجِي الْعَشَنَّقُ، إِنْ أَنْطِقَ أُطَلِّقُ، وَإِنْ أَسْكُتَ أُعَلِّقُ.

قَالَتِ الرَّابِعَةُ: زَوْجِي كَلْبٌ تَهَامَةٌ، لَا حَرٌّ، وَلَا قُرٌّ، وَلَا مَخَافَةٌ، وَلَا سَامَةٌ.

قَالَتِ الْخَامِسَةُ: زَوْجِي إِنْ دَخَلَ فَهَدَى، وَإِنْ خَرَجَ أَسَدَى، وَلَا يَسْأَلُ عَمَّا عَاهَدَ.

قَالَتِ السَّادِسَةُ: زَوْجِي إِنْ أَكَلَ لَفٌّ، وَإِنْ شَرِبَ اشْتَفَّ، وَإِنْ اضْطَجَعَ التَّفَّ، وَلَا يُوَلِّجُ الْكَفَّ لِيَعْلَمَ الْبَثَّ.

قَالَتِ السَّابِعَةُ: زَوْجِي غَيَايَاءُ - أَوْ عَيَايَاءُ - طَبَاقَاءُ، كُلُّ دَائٍ لَهُ دَائٌ، شَجَاكٍ أَوْ فَلَكَ أَوْ

جَمَعَ كُلًّا لِكَ .

قَالَتِ الثَّامِنَةُ: زَوْجِي الْمَسُّ مَسُّ أَرْزَبٍ، وَالرَّيْحُ رِيحُ زَرْزَبٍ .

قَالَتِ التَّاسِعَةُ: زَوْجِي رَفِيعُ الْعِمَادِ، طَوِيلُ النَّجَادِ، عَظِيمُ الرَّمَادِ، قَرِيبُ الْبَيْتِ مِنَ النَّادِ .

قَالَتِ الْعَاشِرَةُ: زَوْجِي مَالِكٌ وَمَا مَالِكٌ، مَالِكٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ ذَلِكَ، لَهُ إِبِلٌ كَثِيرَاتُ الْمَبَارِكِ قَلِيلَاتُ الْمَسَارِحِ، وَإِذَا سَمِعْنَا صَوْتَ الْمِزْهَرِ أَيَقِنَنَّ أَنَّهُنَّ هَوَالِكٌ .

قَالَتِ الْحَادِيَةَ عَشْرَةَ: زَوْجِي أَبُو زَرْعٍ، فَمَا أَبُو زَرْعٍ، أَنَا مِنْ حُلِيِّ أُذُنِي، وَمَلَأٌ مِنْ شَحْمٍ عَضْدِي، وَبَجَحَنِي فَبَجَحْتُ إِلَيَّ نَفْسِي، وَجَدَنِي فِي أَهْلِ غُنَيْمَةَ بِشَقٍّ، فَجَعَلَنِي فِي أَهْلِ صَهِيلٍ وَأَطِيطٍ وَدَائِسٍ وَمُنَقٍّ، فَعِنْدَهُ أَقُولُ فَلَا أُقْبِحُ وَأَرْقُدُ فَأَنْصَبِحُ، وَأَشْرَبُ فَأَتَفَنِّحُ، أُمُّ أَبِي زَرْعٍ، فَمَا أُمُّ أَبِي زَرْعٍ عَكُومُهَا رَدَاخٌ، وَيَيْتُهَا فَسَاخٌ، ابْنُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ، فَمَا ابْنُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ مَضْجَعُهُ كَمَسَلٍ شَطْبَةٍ، وَيُشْبِعُهُ ذِرَاعُ الْجَفْرَةِ، بِنْتُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ، فَمَا بِنْتُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ طَوْعُ أَبِيهَا، وَطَوْعُ أُمِّهَا، وَمِلءُ كِسَائِنِهَا، وَعَظِيطُ جَارَتِهَا، جَارِيَةُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ، فَمَا جَارِيَةُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ لَا تَبُثُّ حَدِيثَنَا تَبْثِيثًا، وَلَا تَنْقُثُ مِيرَتَنَا تَنْقِيثًا، وَلَا تَمَلَأُ بَيْنَنَا تَعْشِيشًا، قَالَتْ حَرَجُ أَبُو زَرْعٍ وَالْأَوْطَابُ تُمَخَضُّ، فَلَقِي امْرَأَةً مَعَهَا وَلَدَانِ لَهَا كَالْفَهْدَيْنِ يَلْعَبَانِ مِنْ تَحْتِ خَصْرِهَا بِرُمَّانَتَيْنِ، فَطَلَّقَنِي وَنَكَحَهَا، فَنَكَحْتُ بَعْدَهُ رَجُلًا سَرِيًّا، رَكِبَ شَرِيًّا، وَأَخَذَ خَطِيًّا، وَأَرَاخَ عَلَيَّ نَعْمًا ثَرِيًّا، وَأَعْطَانِي مِنْ كُلِّ رَائِحَةٍ زَوْجًا، وَقَالَ: كُلِّي أُمُّ زَرْعٍ، وَمِيرِي أَهْلِكَ . قَالَتْ فَلَوْ جَمَعْتُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَعْطَانِيهِ، مَا بَلَغَ أَصْغَرَ آتِيَةِ أَبِي زَرْعٍ .

قَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): « كُنْتُ لِكَ كَأَبِي زَرْعٍ لِأُمِّ زَرْعٍ » .

[هَذَا لَفْظُ الْبُخَارِيِّ]

The Ḥadīth of Umm Zar' (English Translation)

Sulaymān ibn 'Abdir-Rahmān and 'Alī ibn Ḥujr heard from 'Īsā ibn Yūnus who heard from Hishām ibn 'Urwah who narrates from 'Abdullāh ibn 'Urwah, who narrates from 'Urwah who narrates from 'Ā'ishah saying:

“(One day) Eleven women sat together (at a place), making an explicit promise amongst themselves that they would not conceal anything of the news about their husbands.

The first one said, ‘My husband is like the meat of skinny camel on top of a (rough, rocky) mountain which is neither easy to climb, nor is the meat desirable, so that one might put up with the trouble of fetching it.’

The second one said, ‘My husband (is so bad that), indeed, I shall not relate his news, for I fear that I may not be able to finish his story, for if I describe him, I will mention all his defects and bad traits.’

The third one said, ‘My husband is a tall man; if I describe him (and he hears of that) he will divorce me, and if I keep quiet, he will neither divorce me nor treat me as a wife.’

The fourth one said, ‘My husband is (a moderate person) like the night of Tihāmah, (which is) neither hot nor cold. I am neither afraid of him, nor am I discontented with him.’

The fifth one said, ‘My husband, when entering (the house) is a leopard, and when going out, he is a lion; and he does not ask about whatever is in the house.’

The sixth one said, ‘My husband, if he eats, he eats too much (leaving the dishes empty), and if he drinks, he leaves nothing, and if he sleeps, he sleeps alone (away from me) covered in garments, and does not stretch his hands here and there so as to know how I fare (get along).’

The seventh one said, ‘My husband is a wrong-doer or weak and foolish. All of the defects (that exist) are present in him. He may injure your head or your body or may do both.’

The eighth one said, ‘My husband is soft to touch like the softness of a rabbit and his smell is like the smell of a Zarnab (a kind of good smelling grass).’

The ninth one said, ‘My husband is a tall generous man wearing a long strap for carrying his sword. His ashes are abundant and his house is near

to the people who would easily consult him.’

The tenth one said, ‘My husband is Mālik, and what is Mālik? Mālik is greater than whatever I say about him. (He is beyond and above all praises which can come to my mind). Most of his camels are kept at home (ready to be slaughtered for the guests) and only a few are taken to the pastures. When the camels hear the sound of the lute (or the tambourine) they realize that they are going to be slaughtered for the guests.’

The eleventh one said, ‘My husband is Abū Zar’, and what is Abū Zar’ (i.e., what should I say about him)? He has given me many ornaments and my ears are heavily loaded with them and my arms have become fat (i.e., I have become fat). And he has pleased me, and I have become so happy that I feel proud of myself. He found me with my family who were mere owners of sheep and living in poverty, and brought me to a respected family having horses and camels and threshing and purifying grain. Whatever I say, he does not rebuke or insult me. When I sleep, I sleep till late in the morning, and when I drink water (or milk), I drink my fill. The mother of Abū Zar’, and what may one say in praise of the mother of Abū Zar’? Her saddle bags were always full of provision and her house was spacious. As for the son of Abū Zar’, what may one say of the son of Abū Zar’? His bed is as narrow as an unsheathed sword and an arm of a kid (of four months) satisfies his hunger. As for the daughter of Abū Zar’, what may one say of the daughter of Abū Zar’? She is obedient to her father and to her mother. She has a fat well-built body and that arouses the jealousy of her husband’s other wife. As for the (maid) slave girl of Abū Zar’, what may one say of the (maid) slave girl of Abū Zar’? She does not disclose our secrets to others (outside the house) but keeps them, and does not waste our provisions and does not leave the rubbish scattered everywhere in our house.’

The eleventh woman added, ‘One day it so happened that Abū Zar’ went out at the time when the milk was being milked from the animals, and he saw a woman who had two sons like two leopards playing with her two breasts. (On seeing her) he divorced me and married her. Thereafter, I married a noble man who used to ride a fast, tireless horse and keep a spear in his hand. He gave me many things, and also a pair of every kind of livestock and said, ‘Eat (of this), O Umm Zar’, and give provision to your relatives.’” She added, ‘Yet, all those things which my second husband gave me could not fill the smallest utensil of Abū Zar’.”’ ‘Ā’ishah then said: “Allāh’s Apostle (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said to me, ‘I am to you as Abū Zar’ was to his wife Umm Zar’.”

[This is the wording of al-Bukhārī]

Explanation of the Ḥadīth of Umm Zar'

All praises are due to Allāh, the Most Merciful the Most Gracious. May peace and blessings be sent upon the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), his family, his wives, his companions and upon all of those who follow him and his guidance until the Day of Resurrection.

جَلَسَ إِحْدَى عَشْرَةَ امْرَأَةً، فَتَعَاهَدْنَ وَتَعَاقِدْنَ

(One day) Eleven women sat together (at a place), making an explicit promise amongst themselves

The narrative of what 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) was mentioning to the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) starts off with her mentioning that eleven women were sitting together and all of them promised that they were going to tell everything they knew, felt, and experienced with their husbands, and that none of them would conceal anything. They agreed that they were going to describe their husbands to the rest of the women present in such a way that the other women could understand what each one's experience was with their husbands.

Women, when they get together they normally like to discuss what is going on with their families and within their households with other people as a means to relieve some of the stress and pressures they may be experiencing, or to let the other people know how blessed they are by Allāh for blessing them with such wonderful husbands and companions.

We understand this from the two words, *ta'āhadna* and *ta'āqadna* [فَتَعَاهَدْنَ وَتَعَاقِدْنَ], which come from the two 'Arabic words, 'aqd and 'ahd [عَقَدَ وَعَهَدَ], which are used to mean: a promise, a covenant, or to swear or take an oath. So this tells us that the women were serious and they didn't want to hide anything, that they would let everything spill out.

Similarly, when observing the order of the words in this narrative we see that 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) mentioned:

أَنْ لَا يَكْتُمْنَ مِنْ أَحْبَابِ أَزْوَاجِهِنَّ شَيْئًا.

that they would not conceal anything of the news about their husbands.

In the 'Arabic language when the preposition and noun come before the object it shows that more emphasis is upon that which is given precedence and here we see that what the women are going to say about their husbands is the most important subject, and they are not going to conceal anything at all, whether big or small. We know this from the indefinite noun, *shay'an* [شَيْئًا].

We can also understand that a common trait amongst many women is that they are always curious about what other women do with their husbands and families, even though there are certain topics that should not be spoken about with other people, such as intimacy between the spouses, description people's bodily features and the likes.

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ)، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):
 « إِنَّ مِنْ أَشْرِّ النَّاسِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَنْزِلَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ الرَّجُلَ يُفْضِي إِلَى امْرَأَتِهِ وَتُفْضِي إِلَيْهِ
 ثُمَّ يَنْشُرُ سِرَّهَا » .

*Narrated Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: "Among the most evil of people before Allāh on the Day of Resurrection will be a man who is intimate with a woman and she with him, then he spreads her secret."*¹

Informing other people about these types of issues is one of the greatest types of breaking the trust between husband and wife.

The First Woman

The narrative in this *hadīth* of Umm Zar' begins with the first wife, who described her husband as:

قَالَتِ الْأُولَى: زَوْجِي لَحْمٌ جَمَلٍ غَثٌّ، عَلَى رَأْسِ جَبَلٍ [وَفِي لَفْظِ مُسْلِمٍ: وَعَرٍ]، لَا
 سَهْلٍ فَيُرْتَقَى، وَلَا سَمِيمٍ فَيُنْتَقَلُ.

The first one said, 'My husband is like the meat of skinny camel on top of

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (1437)

a (rough, rocky) mountain which is neither easy to climb, nor is the meat desirable, so that one might put up with the trouble of fetching it.'

زَوْجِي لَحْمٌ جَمَلٍ غَثٌّ

My husband is like the meat of skinny camel

al-Lahm al-Ghathth [اللَّحْمُ الْغَثُّ] is the type of meat which someone doesn't like consuming, skinny, it's not appetizing, no one would buy it.

So, here she's describing her husband as bad camel meat. The majority of people do not consume camel meat anyway, and in addition to that, it is bad quality of meat as well. If it was good, clean, fresh camel meat or young camel meat, then those who consume it would accept it and eat it happily, however this type of meat described here is camel meat which is bad because of its fat, toughness, etc... Or because the camel is so skinny that no one would even look at it or even think about eating it, as it had no meat at all one its bones. A small amount of camel meat which is of no exceptional quality. So, who would climb a high treacherous mountain and tire himself/herself out to only attain a little bit of bad camel meat? The mountain is extremely difficult to climb; perhaps we would climb it to eat whatever animal is up there, but we would really prefer that it was either a lamb, sheep, or goat on top of that mountain because their meat is far more delicious than camel meat.

Basically, she wants to say that her husband has undesirable traits with him; he has bad manners and he is very difficult to live with. His manners are so bad that whatever you try to do to please him, it still doesn't satisfy him, and pleasing him is like climbing a very treacherous mountain. She does everything in her power to please him seeking any type of goodness in return, even if it is little, just like the bad camel meat.

This woman's most eloquent way in describing her husband is known by the analogies she mentioned in comparing her husband's character and arrogance to bad camel meat. She is really emphasizing that he is stingy, cheap, and has little goodness. He is so far and isolated from everyone that no one can benefit from him, even from the little good that he has in him; and he may even harm them if they come near. Thus, her comparison of him to bad camel meet is a very precise description that fits him well.

Also, camel meat has qualities and traits that other types of meat don't have; it has a strong smell and taste that many people don't like to consume.

The word, *ghathth* [غَثَّ], makes the description of this camel meat and comparing it to her husband even more likely to be abandoned.

Which is taken from the 'Arabic statement that means: "the wound poured forth pus."

غَثَّ الْجُرْحُ غَثًّا غَثِيًّا إِذَا سَالَ مِنْهُ الْقَيْحُ

She also compared him and his stinginess to a very high mountain top when she said:

عَلَى رَأْسِ جَبَلٍ [وَعْرٍ]

on top of a (rough, rocky) mountain

This is clearly describing him and his bad manners; that he is very arrogant with others and ridicules other people. Normally, mountains are known for their hardness, their height, their treacherous cliffs, and their terrain. But here, instead of just describing her husband as a plain mountain, she goes on to describe it as one of the most treacherous and highest mountains to climb; that he is the most arrogant and prideful of all people; and that this has been bothering her for a long time, hurting her heart and feelings greatly.

In her words, we can understand that she wanted everyone to know about her husband's bad manners and she clarified this by emphasizing and describing her husband with different adjectives. She could have described her husband as camel meat and her point would have been understood, but she described him as bad camel meat to make sure that they knew how bad he was. She also could have described him as a mountain and they would have understood that he is arrogant and difficult, but then she added the word 'treacherous' to it to make sure that all the other women knew how difficult he is to deal with.

لَا سَهْلٌ فَيُرْتَقَى، وَلَا سَمِينٌ فَيُنْتَقَلُ.

which is neither easy to climb, nor is the meat desirable, so that one might put up with the trouble of fetching it.

This woman also used what we call in ‘Arabic, *Uslūb al-Muqābalah*, where you use different words that have the opposite meaning of each other. Here in this woman’s description she used the words, *ghathth* and *wa’r* [عَثَّ وَوَعَرَ], along with *sahl* and *samīn* [سَهْلٌ وَسَمِينٌ]. The word, *ghathth* [عَثَّ], which is used to mean something weak, skinny, or thin, is normally used in contrast or in opposite to the word, *samīn* [سَمِينٌ], which means fat or heavy. Also the word, *wa’r* [وَعَرَ], which can mean treacherous or difficult, is the opposite of the word, *sahl* [سَهْلٌ], which means easy. These types of wordings were commonly used amongst the ‘Arabs and because of these techniques of using opposite words it was easy to understand and easy to memorize. So, this first woman who was describing her husband reached the pinnacle of eloquence in the ‘Arabic language and completely clarified how she felt about her husband.

The Second Woman

قَالَتِ الثَّانِيَةُ: زَوْجِي لَا أَبْثُ خَبْرَهُ، إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ لَا أَذَرَهُ، إِنْ أَذْكُرُهُ أَذْكُرُ عُجْرَهُ
وَبُجْرَهُ.

The second one said, ‘My husband (is so bad that), indeed, I shall not relate his news, for I fear that I may not be able to finish his story, for if I describe him, I will mention all his defects and bad traits.’

زَوْجِي لَا أَبْثُ خَبْرَهُ، إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ لَا أَذَرَهُ

My husband (is so bad that), indeed, I shall not relate his news, for I fear that I may not be able to finish his story

The second woman says that she won’t speak about her husband, nor share anything about him because of what she knew about her husband’s bad character, even though she did share a little bit of information about him. She was worried that if she said anything that her husband would

divorce her if he found out about what she said. This can be understood by her starting her speech with the word, *innī* [إِنِّي], which is used for emphasis. We can also understand that if she wanted to speak about him then she would indeed share something that would be very surprising to the women there and that if she started she would probably never be able to stop talking. For this reason she decided to remain silent and not share everything.

إِنْ أَذْكَرُهُ أَذْكَرُ عَجْرَهُ وَبُجْرَهُ

for if I describe him, I will mention all his defects and bad traits.

Her statement, *'ujarahu wa-bujarahu* [عَجْرَهُ وَبُجْرَهُ], is an analogy for his apparent and unapparent defects. *al-'Ujar* [الْعُجْرُ] means something growing on the skin that is on one's back or one's body, which is caused by the blood or nerves; and if the growth is on the stomach or belly button, it is called *al-Bujar* [البُجْرُ]. These words are also used to express sadness or grief and defects or deficiencies; or things which people conceal from others. Normally, individuals do not hide things from others except if it is bad news or information or things, because it will bring others sadness and grief and this normally occurs when deficiencies or defects are mentioned. This woman was very intelligent in the way that she spoke and the technique she used in order to avoid sharing everything in detail about her husband, even though all of the women promised to share everything they felt and knew about their husbands. Her selection of words shows us that she was highly intelligent and what she shared with them was enough to understand the situation of her husband. She used short precise words that had very deep meaning and many different meanings, somewhat similar to what the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) used to use when he would speak – *Jawāmi'ul-Kalim*. As it has been narrated about the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):

قَالَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ)، عَنِ رَسُولِ اللهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) فَذَكَرَ أَحَادِيثَ مِنْهَا
وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): « نَصِرْتُ بِالرُّعْبِ وَأُوتِيتُ جَوَامِعَ الْكَلِمِ » .

Abū Hurayrah reported to us from the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and he narrated (some) aḥādīth, one of which is that the Messenger of

Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“I have been aided by placing fear in the hearts of enemies and I have been given words which are concise but comprehensive in meaning.”²

So, basically she wanted to let them know that her husband has some apparent physical deficiencies that anyone can see; they’re not concealed from anyone. And he also has some unapparent deficiencies that only his wife would know about. Therefore, she was dispraising her husband for all of his physical deficiencies.

Many Women Are Not Loyal to Their Husbands

The amount of women who dispraise their husbands is far greater than the amount of women who praise their husbands, this is in agreement with what the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said on the day of ‘Īd:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ)، قَالَ خَرَجَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) فِي أَضْحَى - أَوْ فِطْرٍ - إِلَى الْمُصَلَّى، فَمَرَّ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ فَقَالَ: « يَا مَعْشَرَ النِّسَاءِ تَصَدَّقْنَ، فَإِنِّي أُرَبِّتُكُنَّ أَكْثَرَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ ». فَقُلْنَ وَيَمَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ: « تُكْثِرْنَ اللَّعْنَ، وَتُكْفِرْنَ الْعَشِيرَ، مَا رَأَيْتُ مِنْ نَاقِصَاتِ عَقْلِ وَدِينٍ أَذْهَبَ لِبُبِّ الرَّجُلِ الْحَازِمِ مِنْ إِحْدَاكُنَّ ». قُلْنَ وَمَا نُقْصَانُ دِينِنَا وَعَقْلِنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: « أَلَيْسَ شَهَادَةُ الْمَرْأَةِ مِثْلَ نِصْفِ شَهَادَةِ الرَّجُلِ ». قُلْنَ بَلَى. قَالَ: « فَذَلِكَ مِنْ نُقْصَانِ عَقْلِهَا، أَلَيْسَ إِذَا حَاضَتْ لَمْ تُصَلِّ وَلَمْ تُصُمْ ». قُلْنَ بَلَى. قَالَ: « فَذَلِكَ مِنْ نُقْصَانِ دِينِهَا ».

Narrated Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ):

“Once, Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) went out to the Muṣallā (to offer the prayer) of ‘Īd al-Aḍḥā – or al-Fiṭr. Then, he passed by the women and said, ‘O Women! Spend from your wealth in charity, for indeed I have seen that the majority of the inhabitants of the Hell-fire were you (women).’ The women asked, ‘Why is it so, O Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)?’ He replied, ‘You curse frequently and are ungrateful to your husbands. I have not seen anyone more deficient in intelligence and religion than you. A cautious sensible man could be led astray

²

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (523)

by some of you.’ The women asked, ‘O Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)! What is deficient in our intelligence and religion?’ He said, ‘Is not the evidence of two women equal to the witness of one man?’ They replied in the affirmative. He said, ‘This is the deficiency in her intelligence. Isn’t it true that a woman can neither pray nor fast during her menses?’ The women replied in the affirmative. He said, ‘This is the deficiency in her religion.’”³

In another narration, the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) explained:

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): « أُرِيتِ النَّارَ فَإِذَا أَكْثَرُ أَهْلِهَا
النِّسَاءُ يَكْفُرْنَ ». قِيلَ أَيَكْفُرْنَ بِاللَّهِ قَالَ: « يَكْفُرْنَ الْعَشِيرَ، وَيَكْفُرْنَ الْإِحْسَانَ، لَوْ
أَحْسَنْتَ إِلَى إِحْدَاهُنَّ الدَّهْرَ ثُمَّ رَأَتْ مِنْكَ شَيْئًا قَالَتْ مَا رَأَيْتُ مِنْكَ خَيْرًا قَطُّ ».

Narrated Ibn ‘Abbās (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ):

“The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: ‘I was shown the Hell-fire and that the majority of its inhabitants were women who were ungrateful.’ It was asked, ‘Do they disbelieve in Allāh (or are they ungrateful to Allāh)?’ He replied, ‘They are ungrateful to their husbands and are ungrateful for the favors and the good (charitable deeds) done to them. If you have always been good (benevolent) to one of them and then she sees something in you (not of her liking), she will say, ‘I have never received any good from you, ever’.”⁴

This is the behavior of women in general, and because of this you find that loyalty, dedication, and commitment is rare amongst many women. If a man is blessed with a loyal and righteous wife, then indeed this is the best possession and adornment one could acquire in this *dunyā*.

The Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) told us:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ)، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) قَالَ:
« الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَخَيْرُ مَتَاعِ الدُّنْيَا الْمَرْأَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ »

³ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (304)

⁴ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (29)

'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) reported Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) as saying: "The world is a quick, passing enjoyment, and the best enjoyment of the world is the pious and virtuous woman."⁵

The Third Woman

قَالَتِ الثَّالِثَةُ: زَوْجِي الْعَشَنُّ، إِنْ أَنْطِقُ أُطَلِّقُ، وَإِنْ أَسْكُتُ أُعَلِّقُ.

The third one said, 'My husband is a tall man; if I describe him (and he hears of that) he will divorce me, and if I keep quiet, he will neither divorce me nor treat me as a wife.'

The third woman said that her husband is extremely tall but heedless and he brings her no benefit at all. The scholars say that it is someone whose head is small and is very tall; that the distance between his brain and heart is very large. So, it is possible that the connection between his intellect and heart is broken; that he either only has an intellect without a heart or a heart without an intellect. She lives with him and is miserable. His manners are so bad that he never gives her a chance to speak, nor to remain silent, no matter what she does; he is ready to divorce her at any time. At the same time, she loves him, or she desires to live with him in the same house so she can be taken care of. She is quiet about his bad manners.

زَوْجِي الْعَشَنُّ

My husband is a tall man

Here, the third woman goes on to describe her husband as *al-'Ashannaq* [العَشَنُّ]. Within this word, as well as the fact that she selected it specifically to describe him with, are many hints and meanings that we can understand. This word is evidence that she sees her husband as one whose stature and manners are both disliked and not acceptable. *al-'Ashannaq* [العَشَنُّ] means someone who is extremely tall, and it is also a word that is used to describe someone who is dumb or foolish. Therefore, she is basically telling the other women that she's only going to share a little bit

⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (715)

about his stupidity and foolishness; and that if she went on and on about him, then the more that she spoke of him, the stranger and more terrible things they would hear from her. Also, the word, *al-'Ashannaq* [الْعَشَنَّقُ] here, is a definite adjective or description with [ال] which tells us that he is extremely tall and is not known for any other trait except this; everyone knows him to be extremely tall and that's it. So, in the 'Arabic language when an adjective is in the definite form with the definite article, *al-* [ال], it shows us that it is being used in its most extreme form and at the highest possible point of that trait.

Then, she goes on to say:

إِنْ أَنْطِقَ أَطَلَّقَ، وَإِنْ أَسْكُتَ أُعَلِّقُ

If I describe him (and he hears of that) he will divorce me, and if I keep quiet, he will neither divorce me nor treat me as a wife.

Here, she selected the word, *in* [إِنْ], and didn't use the word, *idhā* [إِذَا], but why is that? Both of them, in the 'Arabic language, are considered conditional prepositions or words, but there is a slight difference between them. The word, *in* [إِنْ], is normally used for things that one is doubtful about or not sure if they will occur or not. Whereas, the word, *idhā* [إِذَا], is used for things which one has a high level of certainty about and that they will most likely occur.

The proof for this is what Allāh says in the *Qur'ān*:

﴿وَإِذَا أَدْفَنَّا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً فَرِحُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ تُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَقْنَطُونَ﴾

“And when We let the people taste mercy, they rejoice therein, but if evil afflicts them for what their hands have put forth, immediately they despair.” (ar-Rūm, 30:36)

The word, *idhā* [إِذَا], came in relation to the Mercy, *Raḥmah* [رَحْمَةً], from Allāh because Allāh's Mercy is certain and always descending upon His creation, and His Mercy is greater than everything. Every single creature has received and is under the Mercy of Allāh the Most High. However,

the word, *in* [إِنْ], came with the possibility of evil afflicting people, so from this we can understand that people are generally not afflicted with a lot of bad and evil things; it is rare.

So, this woman choosing the word, *in* [إِنْ], shows us that she wasn't sure about what would happen to her if she spoke; that she is always anxious, worried, and confused about what could happen with her husband. With everything that she does, she is always worried that her husband may divorce her or separate from her.

She also used the same type of wording that the previous woman used – using opposite words to describe him:

أَنْطِقُ وَأَسْكُتُ/أُطَلِّقُ وَأُعَلِّقُ

antiq [أَنْطِقُ] – to speak, *askut* [أَسْكُتُ] – to remain silent, *utallaq* [أُطَلِّقُ] – to be divorced, *u'allaq* [أُعَلِّقُ] – to be separated from or left hanging.

From this, we understand the whole situation of what was going on between this woman and her husband. Everything that takes place between them doesn't go beyond these four things. She is perpetually between talking or remaining silent; she is always confused and doesn't know what to do; and she has tried everything and every technique but to no avail. She is still constantly worrying and continuously confused. She is between two fires; if she speaks about him or demands some of her rights from him, he would most likely hit her and divorce her and if she remains silent about her rights – how he neglects her and how he humiliates her – she would most likely be a *mu'allaqah*, neither his wife nor his divorcée.

So, she is complaining about her husband, her miserable lifestyle, and her fear of him. She is always worried about him hurting her or divorcing her.

In another wording of this narration, we find that it said:

وَهُوَ عَلَيَّ حِدِّ السِّنَانِ الْمُدَلَّقِي

This means that: “he is like the end of a sharp spear.” With this additional wording, we come to understand that she was very scared of her husband,

very frightened as to what would happen to her, and discontent or had an unstable life with him. In this narration, we can really understand what she was trying to tell the other women. Just imagine living or being on the head of a spear that is being used for war or for hunting. Death is certain for the one who is living in this situation. The ‘Arabs say about someone who is constantly living in fear and unstable that they are living on the head of a spear or on the edge of a sword.

عَلَى مِثْلِ سِنِّ الرُّمْحِ أَوْ عَلَى مِثْلِ حَدِّ السَّيْفِ

Every Woman Needs a Man

Someone may ask: What is the benefit of living with this type of man? We would say: A woman takes into account hundreds of things when or if she is going to be divorced. Even if she lived with her husband for food and drink alone, then this would be a great benefit for her. If she lived together with her husband to fulfill her desires in a permissible way, have children, and have a legitimate father to her children, this would also be a great benefit for her. This woman is patient living this bitter and difficult type of life with her spouse, solely because she wants to live under her husband and be maintained by a man. This is very common in many places; that you find the daughter or woman living in very uncomfortable conditions in her parents’ house, so she is ready to marry any man she can find. She is older now and tired of being under the care of her parents or brothers, so she wants to leave. So, in her eyes, it is better for her to live with a man who is her husband and have more freedom, being provided for with food and drink while being comfortable, than to live in her parents’ home, being provided with food and drink while being uncomfortable. It is an issue of weighing out the harms and the benefits. This woman didn’t ask her husband for a divorce even though she was living in somewhat uncomfortable conditions, solely because she needs him, his maintenance, and his support. Allāh has naturally made women to be comfortable around men. Thus, in this woman’s narrative, we have reached the lowest level of spousal relations in which there is nothing lower than this. She told us her husband is tall but of no benefit and his manners are very bad; she cannot complain about him and if she remains quiet then he will separate from her – she will neither be married or divorced.

The Fourth Woman

قَالَتِ الرَّابِعَةُ: زَوْجِي كَلَيْلِ تِهَامَةَ، لَا حَرٌّ، وَلَا قُرٌّ، وَلَا مَخَافَةَ، وَلَا سَامَةَ.

The fourth one said, 'My husband is (a moderate person) like the night of Tihāmah, (which is) neither hot nor cold. I am neither afraid of him, nor am I discontented with him.'

This woman described her husband with a wonderful description. She is the first woman to praise her husband. It is well known that the nights of Tihāmah have the best type of weather. She said her husband is kind to live with and a wonderful companion. His manners are not harsh, nor is he cold or careless. She is very relaxed and comfortable when speaking to her husband; she speaks with him and is not afraid of saying whatever is on her mind, nor does she remain quiet all the time.

She describes him as very kind and a great companion with good manners. He never harms anyone and she is never bored of him.

زَوْجِي كَلَيْلِ تِهَامَةَ

My husband is (a moderate person) like the night of Tihāmah

She compared her husband to *Tihāmah* [تِهَامَةُ], which is a place. It is considered to be the entire area that is below Najd up until al-Ḥijāz in as-Sa‘ūdiyyah. It is close to the ocean and because of its geographical location, it has been used in many analogies due to its beautiful weather. She added on to that, describing her husband and Tihāmah as being neither hot nor cold, and the nights of Tihāmah are the most beautiful in the area. So, when she was mentioning Tihāmah and its weather, she didn't really intend to go into detail about Tihāmah itself. Rather, she was comparing it to her husband and meant to describe her husband with these traits. His demeanor is cool and he doesn't get too hot or angry; nor does he get too cold and ignore her or neglect her. He is in between the two and his character is as gentle as the cool nights of Tihāmah.

لَا حَرٌّ، وَلَا قُرٌّ

neither hot nor cold.

In her statement, “neither hot nor cold” [لَا حَرٌّ وَلَا قُرٌّ], is her negation of all types of defects and deficiencies from her husband. She frees her husband from having any types of deficiencies, whether they are his physical traits or his behavioral traits.

وَلَا مَخَافَةَ، وَلَا سَامَةَ.

I am neither afraid of him, nor am I discontented with him.

The people of Tihāmah are known to be very brave, courageous, and noble because they are surrounded by mountains and are not afraid of invaders. Similarly, this woman lives with her husband and feels protected, honored, and secure. She also feels safe from her husband ever harming her. She has stability, tranquility, and peace in her life.

Kindness with Women

The worst type of men are those who make their women feel uncomfortable with them. The Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) used to sit with his wives and listen to their complaints. He would solve their problems with ease, relaxation, and calmness. If we were to learn from Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) the real traits and characteristics of the husband, then the majority of the problems in our houses would decrease and cease to exist.

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا)، قَالَتْ مَا رَأَيْتُ صَانِعَةَ طَعَامٍ مِثْلَ صَفِيَّةَ أَهَدَتْ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) إِذَا فِيهِ طَعَامٌ فَمَا مَلَكَتُ نَفْسِي أَنْ كَسَرْتُهُ فَسَأَلْتُ النَّبِيَّ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) عَنْ كِفَارَتِهِ فَقَالَ: «إِنَاءٌ كَانَاءٍ وَطَعَامٌ كَطَعَامٍ»

It was narrated that ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) said:

“I never saw any woman who made food like Ṣafīyyah. She sent a dish to the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) in which was some food, and I could not keep myself from breaking it. I asked the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) what the expiation was for that, and he said: ‘A dish like that dish, and food like that food.’”⁶

The problem was solved with ease, calmness, and a smile. So, if your

⁶ Sunan an-Nasā’ī (3957); with a ḥasan chain of narration.

wife is angry or upset, then be patient, calm, and listen attentively. Don't get worked up, angry, or upset. Don't be stubborn and start yelling and screaming, saying you're going to divorce her; whether directly saying you will divorce her or indirectly saying you will divorce her.

A Woman is Like a Prisoner While Under the Care of Her Husband

It is important that the husbands know that their wives are like prisoners in their care. This is how the Prophet (ﷺ) described her when he advised the companions with his last address and speech to them, before he died. It was narrated that:

عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْأَخْوَصِ، حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي أَنَّهُ شَهِدَ حِجَّةَ الْوَدَاعِ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (ﷺ) فَحَمِدَ اللَّهَ وَأَثْنَى عَلَيْهِ وَذَكَرَ وَعَظَ ثُمَّ قَالَ: « اسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّمَا هُنَّ عِنْدَكُمْ عَوَانٍ. لَيْسَ تَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُنَّ شَيْئًا غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ فَإِنْ فَعَلْنَ فَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاصْرِبُوهُنَّ صَرْبًا غَيْرَ مُبْرِحٍ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ لَكُمْ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ حَقًّا وَلِنِسَائِكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ حَقًّا فَأَمَّا حَقُّكُمْ عَلَى نِسَائِكُمْ فَلَا يُوطِئَنَّ فُرُشَكُمْ مَنْ تَكْرَهُونَ وَلَا يَأْذَنَنَّ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ لِمَنْ تَكْرَهُونَ أَلَا وَحَقُّهُنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تُحْسِنُوا إِلَيْهِنَّ فِي كِسْوَتِهِنَّ وَطَعَامِهِنَّ » .

Sulaymān ibn 'Amr ibn al-Aḥwaṣ said:

“My father told me that he was present at the Farewell Pilgrimage with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). He praised and glorified Allāh, and reminded and exhorted (the people). Then he said: ‘I enjoin good treatment of women, for they are prisoners with you, and you have no right to treat them otherwise, unless they commit clear indecency. If they do that, then forsake them in their beds and hit them, but without causing injury or leaving a mark. If they obey you, then do not seek means of annoyance against them. You have rights over your women and your women have rights over you. Your rights over your women are that they are not to allow anyone whom you dislike to tread on your bedding (furniture), nor allow anyone whom you dislike to enter your houses. And their right over you are that you should treat them kindly

with regard to their clothing and food.”⁷

Even if a woman wanted to escape or run away from her husband, she is still not permitted to marry another man, unless the husband frees her or lets her go via divorce. Otherwise, she will remain in her husband’s care for a long time, under his care and protection. So, when the woman is imprisoned and you are the guard, then you must understand the relationship between you and her. A woman cannot force you to do anything, so be patient with her, merciful with her, kind with her, and try to solve any issues, problems, or concerns with a smile, pleasant demeanor, and good words.

Wisdom of the Prophet in the Way He Dealt with His Wives

From the facts that proved to us the magnificence and greatness of the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is the fact that he was married to nine women, and accomplished everything that he did during his lifetime.

If any one of us were married to just two women, and Allāh tested us with some difficulties with even one of them, not to even speak of having difficulties with both simultaneously, you would find that person going crazy, talking to himself in the street, and looking up to the sky... When you confront him, you find him making *du‘ā’*: “*ḤasbyAllāh wa-Ni‘mal-Wakīl!*” This would be the case for the one married to only two women.

As for the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), then he had nine wives (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُنَّ). He dealt with many difficult situations such that we’d be surprised and amazed about how he dealt with them.

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) أَنَّ النَّاسَ، كَانُوا يَتَحَرَّوْنَ بِهَدَايَاهُمْ يَوْمَ عَائِشَةَ، يَبْتَغُونَ بِهَا -
أَوْ يَبْتَغُونَ بِذَلِكَ - مَرْضَاةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

Narrated Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا):

“The people used to look forward for the days of my (Ā’ishah’s) turn to send gifts to Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) in order to please him.”⁸

⁷ Sunan Ibn Mājah (1851); with an authentic chain of narration.

⁸ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2574)

They used to do this because they knew how much Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) loved her. If you love the one I love, then you are my beloved as well, and the enemy of the one I love is my enemy as well. This is the understanding of *al-Walā' wal-Barā'* from the *Qur'ān*.

The other wives (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُنَّ) of Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and many of the *ṣaḥābah* (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ) used to make sure that they sent gifts to the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) during his night with 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا), so she would have a lot of gifts. His other wives also wanted to receive gifts as well, and they wanted to divide all of 'Ā'ishah's (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) gifts evenly amongst them. So, they sent the most beloved person to the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), his daughter Fāṭimah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا), so 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) said:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا)، قَالَتْ أُرْسِلَ أَزْوَاجُ النَّبِيِّ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) فَاطِمَةَ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) بِنْتُ رَسُولِ اللهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) إِلَى رَسُولِ اللهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) فَاسْتَأْذَنْتُ عَلَيْهِ وَهُوَ مُضْطَجِعٌ مَعِيَ فِي مِرْطِي فَأَذِنَ لَهَا فَقَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) إِنَّ أَزْوَاجَكَ أُرْسَلْنِي إِلَيْكَ يَسْأَلُنكَ الْعَدْلَ فِي ابْنَةِ أَبِي قُحَافَةَ. وَأَنَا سَاجِدَةٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا رَسُولُ اللهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): «أَيُّ بِنْتِ أَلَسْتَ تُجِيبِينَ مَنْ أَحَبُّ». قَالَتْ بَلَى. قَالَ «فَأَجِيبِي هَذِهِ». فَقَامَتْ فَاطِمَةُ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) حِينَ سَمِعَتْ ذَلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) فَرَجَعَتْ إِلَى أَزْوَاجِ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُنَّ) النَّبِيِّ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) فَأَخْبَرْتُهُنَّ بِالَّذِي قَالَتْ وَالَّذِي قَالَ لَهَا فَقُلْنَ لَهَا مَا نَرَاكِ أَغْنَيْتِ عَنَّا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَارْجِعِي إِلَى رَسُولِ اللهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) فَقُولِي لَهُ إِنَّ أَزْوَاجَكَ يَنْشُدُنكَ الْعَدْلَ فِي ابْنَةِ أَبِي قُحَافَةَ. قَالَتْ فَاطِمَةُ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) لَا وَاللَّهِ لَا أَكَلِمَةَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا. قَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) فَأُرْسِلَ أَزْوَاجِ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُنَّ) النَّبِيِّ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) زَيْنَبُ بِنْتُ جَحْشٍ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) إِلَى رَسُولِ اللهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) وَهِيَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ تُسَامِينِي مِنْ أَزْوَاجِ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُنَّ) النَّبِيِّ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) فِي الْمَنْزِلَةِ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) وَلَمْ أَرِ امْرَأَةً قَطُّ خَيْرًا فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ زَيْنَبَ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) وَأَتَقَى لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَأَصْدَقَ حَدِيثًا وَأَوْصَلَ لِلرَّحِمِ وَأَعْظَمَ صَدَقَةً وَأَشَدَّ ابْتِذَالَاً لِنَفْسِهَا فِي

الْعَمَلِ الَّذِي تَصَدَّقُ بِهِ وَتَقَرَّبُ بِهِ مَا عَدَا سَوْرَةَ مِنْ حِدَّةٍ كَانَتْ فِيهَا تُسْرِعُ مِنْهَا
 الْفِيَاءُ فَاسْتَأْذَنْتَ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) وَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) مَعَ
 عَائِشَةَ (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) فِي مِرْطِهَا عَلَى الْحَالِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ دَخَلَتْ فَاطِمَةَ (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا)
 عَلَيْهَا فَأَذِنَ لَهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) فَقَالَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)
 إِنَّ أَرْوَاجَكَ (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُنَّ) أَرْسَلَنِي يَسْأَلُكَ الْعَدْلَ فِي ابْنَةِ أَبِي قُحَافَةَ وَوَقَعْتُ بِي
 فَاسْتَطَلْتُ وَأَنَا أَرْقُبُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) وَأَرْقُبُ طَرْفَهُ هَلْ أَدِنَ لِي فِيهَا
 فَلَمْ تَبْرَحْ زَيْنَبُ (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) حَتَّى عَرَفْتُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) لَا يَكْرَهُ
 أَنْ أَنْتَصِرَ فَلَمَّا وَقَعْتُ بِهَا لَمْ أَنْشَبْهَا بِشَيْءٍ حَتَّى أَنْحَيْتُ عَلَيْهَا فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
 (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): « إِنَّهَا ابْنَةُ أَبِي بَكْرٍ (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا) » .

“The wives (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُنَّ) of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) sent Fāṭimah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا), the daughter of the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), to the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). She asked permission to enter when he was lying with me under my cover. He gave her permission to enter, and she said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), your wives have sent me to you to ask you to be equitable with regard to the matter of the daughter of Abū Quḥāfah.’ I (Ā’ishah) kept quiet and the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said to her: ‘O my daughter! Do you not love the one whom I love?’ She said: ‘Yes.’ He said: ‘Then love this one.’ Fāṭimah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) stood up when she heard this and left the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), and went back to the wives (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُنَّ) of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). She told them what she had said, and what he had said to her. They said to her: ‘We do not think that you have been of any avail to us. Go back to the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and say to him: ‘Your wives are urging you to be equitable with regard to the matter of the daughter of Abū Quḥāfah.’ Fāṭimah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) said: ‘No, by Allāh; I will never speak to him about her again.’” Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) said: “So the wives (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُنَّ) of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) sent Zaynab bint Jahsh (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) to the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ); she was one who was somewhat equal to me in rank in the eyes of the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). And I have never seen a woman who was better in religious commitment than Zaynab (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا), more fearing of Allāh, more honest in speech, more dutiful in upholding

the ties of kinship, more generous in giving charity, and devoted in giving of herself in acts of charity, by means of which she sought to draw closer to Allāh. But she was quick-tempered; however, she was also quick to calm down. She asked permission to enter upon the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) when he was with ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) under her cover, in the same situation as when Fāṭimah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) had entered. The Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) gave her permission to enter and she said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), your wives (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُنَّ) have sent me to ask you to be equitable with regard to the matter of the daughter of Abū Quḥāfah.’ Then she verbally abused me at length, and I was watching the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) to see if he would allow me to respond. Zaynab (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) went on until I realized that the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) would not disapprove if I responded. Then I spoke back to her in such a way, until I silenced her. Then the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: ‘She is the daughter of Abū Bakr (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا).’”⁹

A Woman Should Be Considerate about the Feelings of Her Husband

This is a good lesson that women can learn from and observe the loyalty and trust from this woman. If a particular action or statement will ruin the relationship with her husband, then she should refrain from it. ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) didn’t stand up or try to defend, rather she said: *“I looked at the Messenger of Allāh’s (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) face, to see if he would dislike it if I responded.”* This lesson here is what women can benefit from ‘Ā’ishah’s (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) response and manners. She considered her husband’s feelings and emotions before acting or speaking. If her husband’s mood is changed, or dislikes something, then it is not permissible for her to do that thing or make that statement. This is true loyalty and true spousal companionship.

Asmā’ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) said, as it has been narrated in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*:

عَنْ أَسْمَاءَ بِنْتِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا) قَالَتْ تَزَوَّجَنِي الزُّبَيْرُ، وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ مَالٍ، وَلَا مَمْلُوكٍ، وَلَا شَيْءٍ غَيْرٍ نَاصِحٍ، وَغَيْرَ فَرَسِهِ، فَكُنْتُ أَعْلِفُ فَرَسَهُ، وَأَسْتَقِي الْمَاءَ، وَأَخْرِزُ غَرْبَهُ وَأَعْجِنُ، وَلَمْ أَكُنْ أَحْسَنُ أَخْبِرُ، وَكَانَ يَخْبِرُ جَارَاتِ لِي مِنَ

⁹ *Sunan an-Nasā’ī* (3944); authenticated by al-Albānī.

الأنصارِ وَكُنَّ نِسْوَةَ صِدْقٍ، وَكُنْتُ أَنْقُلُ النَّوَى مِنْ أَرْضِ الزُّبَيْرِ الَّتِي أَقْطَعَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) عَلَى رَأْسِي، وَهِيَ مِنِّي عَلَى ثَلَاثِي فَرَسَخٍ، فَجِئْتُ يَوْمًا وَالنَّوَى عَلَى رَأْسِي فَلَقِيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) وَمَعَهُ نَفَرٌ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ فَدَعَانِي ثُمَّ قَالَ: «إِخْ إِخْ». لِيَحْمِلَنِي خَلْفَهُ، فَاسْتَحْيَيْتُ أَنْ أُسِيرَ مَعَ الرَّجَالِ، وَذَكَرْتُ الزُّبَيْرَ وَغَيْرَتَهُ، وَكَانَ أَعْيَرَ النَّاسِ، فَعَرَفَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) أَنِّي قَدْ اسْتَحْيَيْتُ فَمَضَى، فَجِئْتُ الزُّبَيْرَ فَقُلْتُ لَقِينِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) وَعَلَى رَأْسِي النَّوَى، وَمَعَهُ نَفَرٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ، فَأَنَاحَ لِأَرْكَبَ، فَاسْتَحْيَيْتُ مِنْهُ وَعَرَفْتُ غَيْرَتَكَ. فَقَالَ وَاللَّهِ لِحَمْلِكَ النَّوَى كَانَ أَشَدَّ عَلَيَّ مِنْ رُكُوبِكَ مَعَهُ. قَالَتْ حَتَّى أُرْسَلَ إِلَيَّ أَبُو بَكْرٍ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ بِخَادِمٍ يَكْفِينِي سِيَاسَةَ الْفَرَسِ، فَكَأَنَّمَا أَعْتَقَنِي.

Narrated Asmā' bint Abī Bakr (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا):

"When az-Zubayr (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) married me, he had no real property or any slave or anything else except a camel which drew water from the well, and his horse. I used to feed his horse with fodder and drew water and sew the bucket for drawing it, and prepare the dough, but I did not know how to bake bread. So our Anṣārī neighbors used to bake bread for me, and they were honorable ladies. I used to carry the date stones on my head from az-Zubayr's (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) land given to him by Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and this land was two third Farsakh (about two miles) from my house. One day, while I was coming with the date stones on my head, I met Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) along with some Anṣārī people. He called me and then, (directing his camel to kneel down) said, "Ikh! Ikh!" so as to make me ride behind him (on his camel). I felt shy to travel with the men and remembered az-Zubayr (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) and his sense of Ghayrah, as he was one of those people who had the greatest sense of Ghayrah. Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) noticed that I felt shy, so he proceeded. I came to az-Zubayr (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) and said, 'I met Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) while I was carrying a load of date stones on my head, and he had some companions with him. He made his camel kneel down so that I might ride, but I felt shy in his presence and remembered your sense of Ghayrah (See the glossary).' On that az-Zubayr (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said, 'By Allāh, your carrying the date stones (and you being seen by the

Prophet (ﷺ) in such a state) is more shameful to me than your riding with him.’ (I continued serving in this way) till Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) sent me a servant to look after the horse, whereupon I felt as if he had set me free.”¹⁰

az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) was known to be a little harsh, and he was married to two women, and if he wanted to spank them then he would tie their braids to each other so that they wouldn’t run away, the first wife would defend herself with her hands from the hits, and Asmā’ (رضي الله عنها) wasn’t able to defend herself, and the traces of her being hit were apparent on her face, and she would complain about az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه), and Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq (رضي الله عنه) would say to her: **“Go back to az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه), for verily he is a righteous man.”**

A Woman is with the Last Husband She Was Married to in this World

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ (رضي الله عنه) قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صلى الله عليه وسلم):
« الْمَرْأَةُ لِأَخِرِ أَزْوَاجِهَا » .

*Narrated Abū ad-Dardā’ (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:
“A woman is with her last husband.”¹¹*

This means that she will be with her last husband in *Jannah*. If a woman’s husband dies and she loved him, she may not marry again. As long as she is able to live without a husband, then she can be the wife of her beloved husband who passed away. Even in the case of Umm ad-Dardā’ (رضي الله عنها), after her husband Abū ad-Dardā’ (رضي الله عنه) passed away, Mu’āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān (رضي الله عنه) came to her seeking her hand in marriage, and Mu’āwiyah (رضي الله عنه) was the chief of the believers at that time. Umm ad-Dardā’ (رضي الله عنها) said to him: **“O Mu’āwiyah (رضي الله عنه), someone like you can never be rejected, however I made a promise to Abū ad-Dardā’ (رضي الله عنه), and the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) said: ‘A woman is with her last husband.’”** Abū ad-Dardā’ (رضي الله عنه) said to her when he was alive: **“Come and let’s promise that you never marry after me”**, so that she would be his wife in the hereafter.

¹⁰ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (5224)

¹¹ aṭ-Ṭabarānī transmitted the ḥadīth in his *Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ* (3/275) and it was considered authentic by al-Albānī in *as-Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* (1281).

Abū Bakr (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) used to tell Asmā' (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا): **'My beloved daughter, az-Zubayr (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) is a good man'**. The harshness of az-Zubayr (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) was well known about him, even on one occasion when he was sitting with 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) it was mentioned that he said: *"When I'm pleased and happy, I'm very pleasant and a good believer, but when I'm mad or angry, I change completely."* 'Umar (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said to him jokingly: *"If I were to make you the khalīfah after me, you would probably consider it an emergency and call for a raid or army expedition if someone stole a little bit of grain or barley."* So az-Zubayr's (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) harshness was well known about him, and even so, he was from amongst the ten who were promised paradise, and the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said about him:

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا)، قَالَ نَدَبَ النَّبِيُّ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) يَوْمَ الْخَنْدَقِ فَانْتَدَبَ الزُّبَيْرُ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ)، ثُمَّ نَدَبَهُمْ فَانْتَدَبَ الزُّبَيْرُ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ)، ثُمَّ نَدَبَهُمْ فَانْتَدَبَ الزُّبَيْرُ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ)، فَقَالَ: « لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ حَوَارِيٌّ وَحَوَارِيُّ الزُّبَيْرِ » .

Narrated Jābir ibn 'Abdillāh (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا):

"On the day of (the battle of) the Trench, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) called the people (to bring news about the enemy). az-Zubayr (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) responded to his call. He called them again and az-Zubayr (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) responded to his call again. Then he called them for the third time and again az-Zubayr (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) responded to his call whereupon the Prophet said (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), 'Every prophet has his Ḥawārī (helper), and az-Zubayr is my Ḥawārī.'"¹²

So Asmā' (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) said that she used to go the one place which was about two farsakh away and take the date seeds and grind them for the horses. One day she was returning from that place carrying the date seeds on her head, and the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) saw her while he was riding on his camel along with some of his companions and she said: **"So the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) made the camel descend to the ground and he called me to come and ride on the camel behind him."** Then Asmā' (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) said: *"I was shy to do so, and I remembered how jealous and envious az-Zubayr (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) is. When the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) realized how shy and hesitant I*

¹²

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (7261)

was, he kept on going. Then when I went home I told az-Zubayr (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) that Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) asked me to come and ride behind him on the camel, and I thought about how jealous you get." az-Zubayr (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said to her: **"You walking with those date seeds on your head is more shameful and embarrassing to me than you riding behind him."**

From the intelligence and wisdom of Asmā' (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) and her knowledge of how jealous her husband can be, she took that into consideration when making her decision. Husbands, as the scholars say are: "The keys to paradise in relation to their wives, or one of the keys of paradise." Based on the *ḥadīth* that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said to Asmā' (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) the daughter of Yazīd (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ):

عَنْ حُصَيْنِ بْنِ مَحْصَنِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) قَالَ لِأَسْمَاءِ بِنْتِ يَزِيدٍ: «أَذَاتُ زَوْجٍ أَنْتِ؟» . قَالَتْ: نَعَمْ. قَالَ: «كَيْفَ أَنْتِ لَهُ؟» . قَالَتْ: مَا أَلُوهُ إِلَّا مَا عَجَزْتُ عَنْهُ. قَالَ: «فَانظُرِي أَيْنَ أَنْتِ مِنْهُ؛ فَإِنَّهُ جَنَّتِكَ وَنَارُكَ» .

*Narrated Ḥuṣayn ibn Miḥṣan that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said to Asmā' bint Yazīd: "Do you have a husband?' She said: 'Yes.' Then, he asked her: 'How are you with him?' She said: 'I never am negligent in being obedient to him except for what I am incapable of.' So, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: 'Be weary and observe your status with him, for verily he is your (key to) paradise or hellfire.'"*¹³

So, the right of the husband is great indeed.

Going back to what 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) said: **"I look at Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and considered whether or not he would approve or dislike me intervening..."** The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) smiled and said: **"She is the daughter of Abū Bakr (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ)"**, so the problem was solved, rather there was no problem in the first place. Observe the Prophet's (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) forbearance, patience, and wisdom. The majority of the time, every type of *nushūz* (women disrespecting men) in our houses is caused by men, because the men do not fulfill the true meaning of *qawāmah* (maintenance). As Allāh mentions in the *Qur'ān*:

¹³ an-Nasā'ī in his *Sunan al-Kubrā* (8913) and al-Albānī authenticated it in *Ṣaḥīḥ at-Targhib*.

﴿الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنِ اطَّعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ۝﴾

“Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allāh has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband’s] absence what Allāh would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance – [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allāh is ever Exalted and Grand.”
(an-Nisā’, 4:34)

If they truly maintained their wives the way they are supposed to, then many husbands would see that the disrespect of their wives would decrease greatly and this is also what the social workers, based upon their research, have said. Husbands must maintain their wives and families financially, emotionally, physically, and mentally. The key to the husbands being given respect and having authority in their households is how they spend upon their families.

The True Strength of Women is in Her Dependence upon Her Husband, with Humbleness and Humility towards Him

Women, in general, are physically weaker than men and are inclined to being comforted, maintained, protected, and accompanied by men. A woman’s true strength and true nature is in her need and dependence upon her husband and her being maintained by her husband. Those who want to supposedly ‘free or liberate’ women, really want to free her and liberate her from having a husband, and want her to have traits, characteristics, and attributes of men. They want women to think that they can live independently and free of men. As many of us know, it is very difficult for a man to live with another man in the same household.

The Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is the one who told us:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا)، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) قَالَ: « مَا رَأَيْتُ مِنْ نَاقِصَاتِ عَقْلِ وَلَا دِينِ أَغْلَبَ لِيذِي لُبٍّ مِنْكُنَّ ». قَالَتْ وَمَا نُقْصَانُ الْعَقْلِ وَالِدِّينِ قَالَ: « أَمَّا نُقْصَانُ الْعَقْلِ فَشَهَادَةُ امْرَأَتَيْنِ شَهَادَةُ رَجُلٍ، وَأَمَّا نُقْصَانُ الدِّينِ فَإِنَّ إِحْدَاكُنَّ تُفِطِرُ رَمَضَانَ وَتُقِيمُ أَيَّامًا لَا تُصَلِّي ». .

*Narrated 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا) the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: "I have not seen anyone more deficient in respect to their reasoning and religion than you women, who distract and annoy men of intellect and wisdom..." A woman asked: 'What is the defect of reason and religion?' He replied: 'The defect of reason is the testimony of two women for one man, and the defect of faith is that one of you does not fast during Ramaḍān (when one is menstruating), and keep away from prayer for some days.'"*¹⁴

So, there is generally no one who can deceive a man like a woman can. Women can be very distractive for men; they deceive and distract a man, first and foremost with their beauty, their speech, their body gestures, and the likes.

The most important thing for a woman is that she feels warm, loved, and comforted. As soon as she starts feeling neglected or cold, she starts hiding or taking her husband's wealth and starts to deceive him because she doesn't feel secure with him anymore. She also starts lying because her husband does not accept excuses. Her husband, in many cases, is the one who teaches her how to lie. However, if the woman is pampered, loved, and shown affection and warmth, then a husband can do anything he wants with her and she will be one of the best wives.

Women Desire to Feel Protected and Secure with Their Husbands

This woman said: *"My husband is like a nice night in Tihāmah"*, meaning that he is not harsh, such that whenever his wife speaks to him, she sees fire come out of his eyes. Nor is he cold, or without emotions or feelings.

¹⁴ *Sunan Abī Dāwūd (4679); authenticated by al-Albānī.*

He is neither harsh or careless nor without emotions or feelings. She is also not afraid to speak to him about anything, because he always allows her to speak and overlooks her mistakes many times. A good husband knows what makes his wife happy and what makes her angry or sad. This is known from the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) by the narration of ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) that the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said to her:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) قَالَتْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): «إِنِّي لَأَعْرِفُ غَضَبَكَ وَرِضَاكَ». قَالَتْ قُلْتُ وَكَيْفَ تَعْرِفُ ذَلِكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ: «إِنَّكَ إِذَا كُنْتَ رَاضِيَةً قُلْتَ بَلَى وَرَبِّ مُحَمَّدٍ. وَإِذَا كُنْتَ سَاخِطَةً قُلْتَ لَا وَرَبِّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ». قَالَتْ قُلْتُ أَجَلٌ لَسْتُ أَهَاجِرُ إِلَّا اسْمَكَ.

Narrated ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“I know whether you are angry or pleased.’ I said, ‘How do you know that, Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)?’ He said, ‘When you are pleased, you say, ‘Yes, by the Lord of Muḥammad,’ but when you are angry, you say, ‘No, by the Lord of Ibrāhīm!’” I said, ‘Yes, I do not leave, except your name.’”¹⁵

This was what she would say, even though the Lord is one and the meaning is the same. This is also what Ibn ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا) used to do with one of the old women from his neighbors. He would say to her: **“The lord of the generous created me, and the lord of the miserable created you.”** After hearing this, she would become angry and Ibn ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا) would laugh,¹⁶ even though the Creator of the generous and the Creator of the miserable is the same Lord, Allāh.

So ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) admitted and said: **“I won’t ever leave you, except maybe your name.”** She admitted this while having nothing to worry about, as long as she didn’t commit a sin. Even if her manners may have been a little inappropriate, a woman always loves to live comfortably with her husband, speaking with him in the way she wants to and about what she wants to as long as it is not disrespectful.

¹⁵ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (6078)

¹⁶ Ma’rifatur-Rijāl by Ibn Miḥraz 1/165

The Fifth Woman

قَالَتِ الْخَامِسَةُ: زَوْجِي إِنْ دَخَلَ فَهَيْدًا، وَإِنْ خَرَجَ أُسَيْدًا، وَلَا يَسْأَلُ عَمَّا عِنْدَ عَهْدٍ.

The fifth one said, 'My husband, when entering (the house) is a leopard, and when going out, he is a lion; and he does not ask about whatever is in the house.'

زَوْجِي إِنْ دَخَلَ فَهَيْدًا

My husband, when entering (the house) is a leopard

Here, she is likening her husband to a leopard. Leopards have many different traits and characteristics. The scholars have differed in regards to their interpretation of what the fifth wife said here. Whether she meant to praise her husband or dispraise him. So, what was she intending by describing her husband as a leopard? This is from the eloquence of the 'Arabs and particularly this woman, as she was describing her husband in a way that can be interpreted in two opposite ways. The scholars who mentioned that she was praising her husband by resembling him with a leopard said that just how a leopard is heedless sometimes, this is how her husband is when he enters the house; he doesn't nitpick and pay attention to every little and small detail in the house. They also said that normally leopards are kind and gentle animals. They are patient, pardoning, and overlooking, just like her husband is with her. Leopards are also described with having some sort of modesty, shyness, and that they do not create that much mischief. The leopard is also known for its strength and its ability to hunt. So, if what she intended was praising her husband and likening him to a leopard in these traits, then she has praised him highly by indicating that her husband is one who takes care of her and brings home sustenance. As for the scholars who say that she was dispraising her husband, then we can think about some of the negative traits of a leopard which are the most apparent. From them is that the leopard sleeps a lot and is somewhat lazy; so much so that the 'Arabs even have an expression that they use to describe someone who sleeps a lot: "lazier than a leopard" [أَنْوَمٌ مِّنَ الْفَهْدِ]. The 'Arabs dispraise someone who sleeps a lot or who is lazy. Also, the leopard has within it some ferocity; it can be ferocious and violent at times, attacking other animals with its strength, agility, and

speed. So, if she intended this, then she meant to describe her husband as someone who sleeps a lot, does not fulfill all of his responsibilities, does not adequately take care of his wife's needs, and because of his strength and ferocity, he sometimes deals with her harshly.

However, after observing her entire statement, it is 99% likely to be in praise of her husband, as the majority of the scholars who explained this *ḥadīth* explained it as though she intended to praise her husband.

It can also be understood from her speech that she was praising her husband by likening him to a leopard, when she followed that up with another statement, likening her husband to a lion:

وَإِنْ خَرَجَ أَسَدًا

and when going out, he is a lion

This is also from the eloquence of the 'Arabs and what they call in the art of *Balāghah: al-Ihtirās*, which refers to when someone says something that can be understood in two contradictory ways, and then it is followed up with more speech to clarify what the intention really was. So, she described her husband here as a lion so that no one would think that she was describing her husband with the negative traits of the leopard. She wanted to emphasize the point that she was praising her husband. As if she is saying to the women: "My husband with me is easy and gentle with us, and his *taghāful* (intentionally ignoring things) is not because of his weakness or heedlessness, rather he is a magnificent lion, who is brave, courageous, and defends us at all times." Her likening her husband to a lion also tells us that her husband was very courageous, bold, outspoken, and patient. He is not one to be reckoned with due to his strength, power, and might, as well as the fear that he places in the eyes and hearts of other people. Therefore, in this statement, she wanted to clarify the strength and might of her husband.

She used these two short words to describe great traits and characteristics within her husband, such that if we were try to enumerate all of them, we would be here for days... They also rhyme together and have greatly deep extensive meanings: *fahid* and *asid* [فَهْدٌ وَأَسَدٌ]. This is also from the eloquence of the 'Arabs and the 'Arabic language. Furthermore, with her

selection of short words with opposite meanings: *kharaja* and *dakhala* [أَخْرَجَ وَدَخَلَ], it shows us that she was attentive of how her husband acts outside the house as well as inside the house. Inside the house, he was easy, pardoning, overlooking, and gentle. Outside the house, he was serious, strong, mighty, powerful, brave, courageous, and protective. Then, she finally described her husband with:

وَلَا يَسْأَلُ عَمَّا عِنْدَ

And he does not ask about whatever is in the house.

Here, she is telling the other women how generous, kind, and gentle her husband is. He is far from being stingy. He overlooks the negative traits of his wife and intentionally ignores her small mistakes and shortcomings. He doesn't count every penny that she spends, nor the food that she buys. He doesn't inquire about where the money, which he has given her, has gone because of his generosity and graciousness.

Thus, she may have been describing him as someone who intentionally ignores some things when he comes home, which is a very praiseworthy and important trait that all men should learn. As for the man who follows everything big and small that happens in his house, he is someone who is very difficult to get along with... The wise man would practice *taghāful*; he would be aware of some things, but intentionally ignore them... As it is said: 'The intellectual' is the one who is aware of everything but intentionally ignores.

Importance of Taghāful in the House and for Leaders, Fathers, and Mothers

التَّعَافُلُ هُوَ: « تَكَلَّفُ الْعَفْلَةَ مَعَ الْعِلْمِ وَالْإِذْرَاكِ لِمَا يَتَعَافَلُ عَنْهُ تَكْرُمًا وَتَرْفَعًا عَنْ سَفَاسِفِ الْأُمُورِ » ، فَالْمُتَعَافِلُ يَعْلَمُ عَنْ هَذَا الْخَطِإِ وَيَسْتَطِيعُ مُعَاقَبَةَ الْمُخْطِئِ وَلَكِنَّهُ يَتَعَافَلُ عَنْ ذَلِكَ لِيَبْتَقِيَ حَبْلَ الْمُودَّةِ . قَالَ الْإِمَامُ أَحْمَدُ بْنُ حَنْبَلٍ (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) عَنْ هَذَا الْخَلْقِ الْعَظِيمِ: « تِسْعَةُ أَعْشَارِ حُسْنِ الْخَلْقِ فِي التَّعَافُلِ » . وَقَالَ عَنْهُ سَيِّدُ التَّابِعِينَ الْحَسَنُ الْبَصْرِيُّ (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ): « مَا زَالَ التَّعَافُلُ مِنْ فِعْلِ الْكِرَامِ » . وَقَالَ ابْنُ الْمُبَارِكِ (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ): « الْمُؤْمِنُ يَطْلُبُ الْمَعَادِيرَ ، وَالْمُنَافِقُ يَطْلُبُ الزَّلَّاتِ » .

Taghāful is a behavior that is used by the wise; a type of character and etiquette that true intellectuals try to adorn themselves with and practice regularly. *at-Taghāful* is an ‘Arabic word which means to intentionally overlook something, to intentionally ignore something, or to intentionally not pay attention to something. Meaning something that one has clear knowledge about, but they choose to act as though they didn’t know about it, see it, or hear it in order to maintain good relations with others. *at-Taghāful* is from the finest of manners and etiquettes that one can adorn themselves with. Adorning oneself with this etiquette keeps friendships and relationships together by increasing the love and good relations between people. The one who practices *at-Taghāful* knows and sees others make mistakes, and he has the ability to reprimand them, but he overlooks them and intentionally ignores them in order to keep good relations with others.

Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said: “*That nine tenths of good manners and etiquettes is in at-Taghāful.*” The great leader of the *tābi’in*, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said: “*at-Taghāful is known to be from the lofty etiquettes of the noble and generous people.*” ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Mubāarak (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said: “*The believer looks for excuses for his brothers, but the hypocrite looks for mistakes.*”

التَّعَاْفُلُ الَّذِي نَقَصِدُهُ أَلَّا يُدَقَّقُ الْإِنْسَانُ فِي الْحُقُوقِ الشَّخْصِيَّةِ، وَلَيْسَ أَنْ نَتَّعَاْفَلَ
عَنِ التَّقْصِيرِ فِي حُقُوقِ اللَّهِ، مِنْ صَلَوَاتٍ أَوْ صِيَامٍ أَوْ حِجَابٍ، فَهَذَا لَا يَجُوزُ فِيهِ
التَّعَاْفُلُ، وَيَجِبُ الْأَمْرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ بَرِّقٍ وَالنَّهْيُ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ بَرِّقٍ، وَتَنْذَكْرُ: « كَلُّكُمْ
رَاعٍ، وَكَلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنِ رَعِيَّتِهِ ». وَمَعَ الْأَسْفِ إِنَّ الْكَثِيرِينَ يَتَّعَاْفَلُونَ فِي حُقُوقِ
اللَّهِ وَلَا يَتَّعَاْفَلُونَ عَنِ حُقُوقِهِمْ.

The type of *at-Taghāful* that we intend is the overlooking, and intentionally ignoring mistakes which concern people and their personal lives. The types of things that do not have anything to do with Allāh’s rights over us. We should never overlook someone for not fulfilling their rights with Allāh such as praying, fasting, wearing *hijāb*, paying *zakāh*, or making *Hajj*. These are things we can never overlook; rather, we should remind each other with gentleness, kindness, and fine preaching.

وَقَدْ كَانَ التَّغَافُلُ عَنِ بَعْضِ الزَّلَّاتِ، وَتَرَكَ الإِسْتِصْصَاءَ عِنْدَ الْعِتَابِ وَالتَّقْوِيمِ - مِنْ هَدْيِ النَّبِيِّ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) فِي التَّرْبِيَةِ وَالْإِصْلَاحِ؛ فَقَدْ حَدَّثَ أَنَّهُ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) أَسْرَ إِلَى زَوْجَتِهِ حَفْصَةَ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) خَبْرًا وَاسْتَكْتَمَهَا إِيَّاهُ، لَكِنَّهَا أَخْبَرَتْ بِذَلِكَ السَّرَّ عَائِشَةَ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا)، وَأَفْشَتْهُ لَهَا، وَأَطْلَعَ اللهُ تَعَالَى نَبِيَّهُ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) عَلَى إِفْشَائِهَا لِلسَّرِّ، فَمَا كَانَ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) إِلَّا أَنْ أَعْلَمَهَا بِبَعْضِ الْحَدِيثِ الَّذِي أَفْشَتْهُ مُعَاتِبًا لَهَا، وَأَمْسَكَ عَنْ إِخْبَارِهَا بِبِقِيَّتِهِ مَا حَدَّثَتْ بِهِ عَائِشَةَ.

at-Taghāful – which means overlooking and intentionally ignoring other people’s faults, mistakes, and mishaps in their worldly affairs, along with not blaming or reproaching others is from the guidance of the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) in teaching his family and his companions and bringing about reconciliation. It occurred during the lifetime of Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) that he confided to his wife Ḥafṣah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) a secret that he didn’t want anyone to know about. But she informed another one of the Prophet’s (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) wives – ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) – about the secret. Then, Allāh revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) that Ḥafṣah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) had told their secret to ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا). So when the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) knew that Ḥafṣah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) had shared their secret, he only shared with her part of what he knew, and he didn’t blame her, reproach her, or act ill or mean to her; rather he overlooked her mistake, and intentionally ignored it. As Allāh said in the *Qur’ān*:

﴿ وَإِذْ أَسْرَ النَّبِيُّ إِلَى بَعْضِ أَزْوَاجِهِ حَدِيثًا فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَتْ بِهِ وَأَظْهَرَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ عَرَفَ بَعْضَهُ وَأَعْرَضَ عَنِ بَعْضٍ فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَهَا بِهِ قَالَتْ مَنْ أَنْبَأَكَ هَذَا قَالَ نَبَّأَنِي الْعَلِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴾

“And [remember] when the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) confided to one of his wives a statement; and when she informed [another] of it and Allāh showed it to him, he made known part of it and ignored a part. And when he informed her about it, she said, ‘Who told you this?’ He said, ‘I was informed by the Knowing, the Acquainted.’” (at-Taḥrīm, 66:3)

قَالَ الْمُفَسِّرُونَ: وَلَمْ يُخْبِرْهَا النَّبِيُّ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) بِجَمِيعِ مَا حَصَلَ مِنْهَا، تَكْرُمًا مِنْهُ أَنْ يَسْتَقْصِي فِي الْعِتَابِ، وَحَيَاءً وَحُسْنَ عِشْرَةٍ؛ فَإِنَّ مِنْ عَادَةِ الْفَضْلَاءِ التَّنَافُلَ عَنِ الرِّلَاةِ، وَالتَّقْصِيرَ فِي اللَّوْمِ وَالْعِتَابِ.

The Scholars of *Tafsir* say: The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) didn't inform her of everything that Allāh had told him about Ḥaḥṣah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) exposing their secret, due to his fine character and manners and not wanting to blame his wife and reproach her for her mistake.

إِذَا كُنْتَ فِي كُلِّ الْأُمُورِ مُعَاتِبًا

If you are someone who always blames other people for things,

خَلِيلِكَ لَمْ تَلْقَ الَّذِي لَا تُعَاتِبُهُ

Any friend that you meet will never be free from your blame

فَعِشْ وَاحِدًا أَوْ صِلْ أَخَاكَ فَإِنَّهُ

Live alone without any friends or be forgiving and pardoning with them

مُقَارِفُ ذَنْبٍ مَرَّةً وَمُجَانِبُهُ

Everyone commits sins sometimes, and they avoid sins at other times

إِذَا أَنْتَ لَمْ تَشْرَبْ مِرَارًا عَلَى الْقَدَى

If you've never drunk from a vessel without specks of dust in it

ظَمِئْتَ وَأَيُّ النَّاسِ تَصْفُو مَشَارِبُهُ

Then you would always be thirsty, and whose drinking vessel would always be clean.

This means that every human being has shortcomings and mistakes, there is no one who is perfect, except Allāh alone. As the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ)، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):
« كُلُّ بَنِي آدَمَ خَطَّاءٌ، وَخَيْرُ الْخَطَّائِينَ التَّوَّابُونَ »

Narrated Anas ibn Mālik (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:
“All human beings make mistakes, and the best of those who make mistakes are those who repent.”¹⁷

We all have deficiencies and character faults; some of us lie, gossip, backbite, steal, and even deceive others. If someone constantly blames and tries to pick out the petty faults or mistakes of other people, especially his friends and family members, then he will eventually end up living alone without any friends or family. He either will taste the bitterness of loneliness, or he will choose to live with friends and family while knowing that we all have mistakes and deficiencies, and try to overlook the shortcomings in worldly affairs.

التَّغَافُلُ عَنِ بَعْضِ الْأَخْطَاءِ فِي حَقِّكَ الشَّخْصِيَّ يُدِيمُ الْأَلْفَةَ وَيُبْقِي الْمَحَبَّةَ،
التَّغَافُلُ يَجِبُ أَنْ يَكُونَ بَيْنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ عُمُومًا، بَلْ حَتَّى بَيْنَ الْمُسْلِمِ وَجَارِهِ أَوْ قَرِيبِهِ
الْكَافِرِ. أَدَبُ التَّغَافُلِ هُوَ مِنْ أَدَبِ السَّادَةِ، أَمَّا السُّوقَةُ الْعَوَامُ فَلَا يَعْرِفُونَ مِثْلَ هَذِهِ
الْأَدَابِ، وَلِذَلِكَ تَرَاهُمْ لِدُنُوِّ هِمَّتِهِمْ وَخِسَّةِ أَطْبَاعِهِمْ يُحْضُونَ الصَّغِيرَةَ، وَيَجْعَلُونَ مِنَ
الْحَبَّةِ قُبَّةً، وَمِنَ الْقُبَّةِ مَزَارًا، وَهَوْلَاءَ وَإِنْ أَظْهَرُوا فِي الْإِحْصَاءِ عَلَى الْآخِرِينَ فُنُونٌ
مُتَنَوِّعَةٌ مِنْ ضُرُوبِ الذِّكَاةِ وَالْخِدَاعِ، وَلَكِنَّهُ ذِكَاةٌ أَشْبَهُ بِإِمَارَاتِ أَهْلِ الْحُمُقِ الَّذِينَ
تَسْتَفِزُّهُمْ الصَّغَائِرُ عِنْدَ غَيْرِهِمْ، وَأَمثالُ هَوْلَاءَ لَا يَكُونُونَ مِنَ السَّادَةِ فِي أَقْوَامِهِمْ.

at-Taghāful – overlooking and intentionally ignoring other people’s personal mistakes and mishaps keeps the love and affection between friends and loved ones. The Muslims must learn how to overlook each

¹⁷

Sunan Ibn Mājah (4251); authenticated by al-Albānī [*ḥasan*].

other's personal mistakes and shortcomings; those which are not related to Allāh or His Messenger's (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) rights. *at-Taghāful*, overlooking other people's faults, is from the fine and noble etiquettes of the best of the best and the finest of behavior and manners that a Muslim can adorn himself or herself with. As for the naïve, the ignorant, and the heedless, then we find that they do not have this etiquette or behavior with others, nor do they try to learn it or practice it. This is because of their deficient intellects, their lack of concern for others, and their sick souls and non-*Islāmic* mannerisms. We find them focusing and nitpicking on every small mistake and mishap that other people make... they make mountains out of mole-hills, they over-react, and they blow things way out of proportion. They appear to be smart and intelligent by finding the faults of others and blaming them for them, but in all actuality, they will never be the leaders of themselves nor the leaders of their people.

وَقَالَ بَكْرُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ):

« إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الرَّجُلَ مُوَكَّلًا بِعُيُوبِ النَّاسِ، نَاسِيًا لِعُيُوبِهِ - فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ قَدْ مُكِرَ بِهِ »

Bakr ibn ‘Abdillāh (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ), one of the salaf (pious predecessors), said:
“If you see someone busying themselves with finding the mistakes of others, while forgetting or being heedless about his own mistakes and shortcomings, then know that the Shayṭān has deceived him.”¹⁸

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):

«يَبْصُرُ أَحَدُكُمْ الْقَذَى فِي عَيْنِ أَخِيهِ، وَيَنْسَى الْجِذْعَ فِي عَيْنِهِ»

Abū Hurayrah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:
“One of you sees the speck of dirt in his brother’s eye, but doesn’t see the big log from a tree in his own eye.”¹⁹

A great poet once said about *at-Taghāful*, intentionally ignoring people's faults and mistakes in their everyday worldly affairs:

لَيْسَ الْغَيْبِيُّ بِسَيِّدٍ فِي قَوْمِهِ *** لَكِنَّ سَيِّدَ قَوْمِهِ الْمُتَغَابِي

¹⁸ *Sifat-us-Ṣafwah (3/249)*

¹⁹ Abū Nu‘aym in *Hilyah (4/99)* and al-Albānī authenticated it in *as-Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah (33)*

The heedless individual is not the leader of his people; rather the leader of the people is one who acts as though he is heedless and doesn't know what's going on, but in all actuality, he really knows.

May Allāh bestow His Mercy and Wisdom upon us and adorn us with the etiquettes and manners of *at-Taghāful*, overlooking and intentionally ignoring other people's shortcomings and mishaps.

We must constantly remind ourselves that none of us are free from mistakes, shortcomings, and character deficiencies. And that we should busy ourselves with rectifying our own deficiencies and shortcomings before we busy ourselves worrying about other people's faults.

It is impossible for people to be free from mistakes. When we deal with our families and spouses, we need to realize that, just as how we have deficiencies, so do our wives, children, and relatives. I'm sure that not even a week passes by in our homes except that one of the two spouses feels annoyed, disturbed, or angry about some type of behavior, statement, or action that the other did in the house.

It is not from the character of the Muslim to allow every small disagreement, argument, or mishap turn into a fight or name-calling, swearing, and cursing at their spouses. Sometimes, those with deficient intellects and understanding of the religion allow verbal disagreements with their spouses to lead to physical altercations with punching and hitting. Even if it is over something as petty as the food being too salty, the food being cold, the house not being cleaned, the clothes not being washed, or because the wife talked back to the husband. And we seek refuge in Allāh from such actions. Therefore, it is upon both the husband and the wife to accept the other person the way they are, with the deficiencies in character traits that they have; and to overlook, pardon, and intentionally ignore things sometimes. Unfortunately, some men scrutinize everything, are extremely picky when it comes to dealing with their wives, and always have a response to their wives or always have to have the last word. They open the refrigerator and yell: "Why aren't the things in the refrigerator arranged? Why did you put the vegetables on top and the fruit on the bottom?", "Why is the table dusty?", "Why is the floor not vacuumed?", or "I gave you 50 dollars... where did it go? What did

you spend it on?” And he makes their life together miserable!!!

It is said that generous and noble people do not scrutinize other people. Also, there are women who scrutinize their husbands. Asking their husbands: “What did you mean by that?”, “Who was that who called you on the phone?”, “Who is this one who messaged you on your phone?”, “Why did you come home late?”, or “Where were you?” They make mountains out of molehills when dealing with their husbands sometimes.

Servants of Allāh... today we are learning about the behavior of the righteous people, we are learning about *at-Taghāful*. We need to learn how to intentionally ignore things sometimes, so as to keep good relations with others. We should not be heedless about what our spouses, children, or friends are doing. Rather, we should pay attention, but we need to learn what really deserves to be pointed out and what things could we pardon and overlook at times.

Of course, if we see our children or spouses doing something that is prohibited in *al-Islām*, or they are negligent in fulfilling their religious obligations, then we would remind them with kindness, but as for the worldly affairs that have no relationship to the religion, then we need to learn to intentionally ignore things sometimes.

The intelligent person, the leader, the manager, or the boss of the company should not scrutinize everything, big and small, nor does he let the people who he’s responsible for and deals with on a daily basis know that he knows everything about them. Also, the parents should not over-exaggerate if they see some mistakes or mishaps from their children. They should put everything in its proper perspective. Every household has its ups and downs, mistakes, and shortcomings, as well as positive and good things in it. For example, accidentally breaking a glass, plate, or something else in the house should not lead one to excessively punishing or spanking one’s children.

Everyone’s household suffers from these types of problems and difficulties in raising children. Therefore, intentionally ignoring and pardoning sometimes will keep the problems and disputes at home down to a minimal level, while also keeping everyone in line with love and affection between members of the household.

قَالَ بَعْضُ الْحُكَمَاءِ: « وَجَدْتُ أَكْثَرَ أُمُورِ الدُّنْيَا لَا تَجُوزُ إِلَّا بِالتَّغَافُلِ »

Some of the wise people used to say: “I found that the majority of the affairs of this dunyā would not run smoothly except with at-Taghāful.”

These are just some examples of how we can practice *at-Taghāful* and how *at-Taghāful* is from the etiquettes and manners of the righteous and pious. It has been narrated about one of the great *Tābi‘īn* – ‘Aṭā’ ibn Abī Rabāh (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) who said: “A man would come to me and narrate a ḥadīth to me, and I would listen attentively to him, as if I have never heard that narration before, and I actually heard it before he was born.”

قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا):

« إِنَّ أُمُورَ التَّعَايُشِ فِي مَكِّيَالٍ ثُلَاثَةُ الْفِطْنَةِ وَثُلَاثَةُ التَّعَابِي »

Ibn ‘Abbās (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا) said:

“One third of happy co-existence is intellect and two thirds is intentionally ignoring, overlooking, and acting like you don’t know about something.”

May Allāh adorn our hearts and souls with *tawhīd*, and adorn our limbs with imitation of Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), and beautify our manners with *at-Taghāful* – intentionally ignoring other people’s shortcomings and mistakes so that we can maintain good relations with one another.

From the Manners of a Good Husband

It is very important and necessary for the husband – if he is the master and head of the household whom everyone is obedient to – to appease and (politically) flatter those under his care while managing them and their affairs with wisdom and intelligence. How many problems within the household occur because the man does not know how to manage and resolve the issues? Whereas many of the problems that occur inside the house could be easily resolved if the husband would sometimes intentionally ignore some things.

Our Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) advised us to use wisdom and gentleness with our families and specifically our wives by saying:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ)، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) قَالَ: « مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَإِذَا شَهِدَ أَمْرًا فَلْيَتَكَلَّمْ بِخَيْرٍ أَوْ لَيْسَ كُنْتَ وَاسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ فَإِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ خُلِقَتْ مِنْ ضِلَعٍ وَإِنَّ أَعْوَجَ شَيْءٍ فِي الضِّلَعِ أَعْلَاهُ إِنْ ذَهَبَتْ تُقِيمُهُ كَسْرَتُهُ وَإِنْ تَرَكْتَهُ لَمْ يَزَلْ أَعْوَجَ اسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ خَيْرًا » .

Abū Hurayrah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“He who believes in Allāh and the Hereafter, if he witnesses any matter he should talk in good terms about it or keep quiet. Act kindly towards woman, for woman is created from a rib, and the most crooked part of the rib is its top. If you attempt to straighten it, you will break it, and if you leave it, its crookedness will remain there. So act kindly towards women.”²⁰

The meaning here is that within every woman is some type of deficiency. What is demanded from the man is that he needs to sacrifice some of his manliness and lower himself to the level of a woman sometimes. And the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is the best person to have ever set foot on the face of the earth, and the most pious and obedient to Allāh above anyone else... This never decreased his great status at all...

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) أَنَّهَا كَانَتْ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) فِي سَفَرٍ، قَالَتْ فَسَابَقْتُهُ فَسَبَقْتُهُ عَلَى رِجْلِي، فَلَمَّا حَمَلْتُ اللَّحْمَ سَابَقْتُهُ فَسَبَقَنِي، فَقَالَ: « هَذِهِ بَيْنَكَ السَّبَقَةَ » .

‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) said, while travelling with the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):

“I had a race with him [the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)] and I surpassed him on my feet. When I became fleshy, (again) I had a race with him [the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)] and he surpassed me. He said:

“This is for that previous defeat.”²¹

For example, one day, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) told his companions to walk ahead of them (him and ‘Ā’ishah) and he told ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا):

²⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1468)*

²¹ *Sunan Abī Dāwūd (2578)*

“come here... let’s race.” ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) said: “So I raced him and beat him... then when I gained more weight we raced on another occasion... he told his companions to walk in front of us... so we raced again. This time we raced and he ended up beating me... and started to laugh and say: *‘This victory is for the victory that you beat me in previously’*” ... This didn’t decrease the Prophet’s (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) status at all, rather it only increased it.

If you are thinking of raising the status or level of your wife such that she is like you, so that there are two men in the house, this will never be correct or acceptable. A man cannot live with another man in the same house, and even if a woman is extremely serious and her manners are those resembling men, you won’t be able to live with her either. So the man of the house must lower himself sometimes to the level of a woman... and this is called *mudārāh*... for example a man who’s wife very rarely is pleased or satisfied with anything that he does... she always says he doesn’t understand, he’s dumb, and everyone deceives him... so he went to buy some shoes... and the sales person really gave him a good deal... so his wife asks him: “how much did you buy them for?” So he responds: “for 40 dollars.” Then she says: “He got over on you. If I bought them, I could have bought them for 20 dollars.” So she makes him dislike he even bought her anything, instead of saying: “May Allāh bless you for a wonderful gift, May Allāh reward you, May Allāh increase you in goodness... we always tire you out...” Even if she didn’t truly mean it, she doesn’t lose anything for saying it.

Therefore, if the man goes out and buys something for his wife while he knows that this is how his wife act, then he should just tell her that it is a gift so that he doesn’t have to hear those words from his wife. Thus, the man must use wisdom and *mudārāh*,²² which is from the good, wise, and intelligent manners of the Muslim. The Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) himself would use this technique as well.

As for the Proofs of al-Mudārāh:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا)، قَالَتْ اسْتَأْذَنَ رَجُلٌ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) وَأَنَا عِنْدَهُ، فَقَالَ: « بِنَسِ ابْنِ الْعَشِيرَةِ أَوْ أَخُو الْعَشِيرَةِ ». ثُمَّ أَذِنَ لَهُ فَأَلَانَ لَهُ الْقَوْلَ فَلَمَّا

²² To appease or somewhat placate his wife by flattering her and using good words to maintain good relations and not engage in argumentation. Even though he may not really mean them.

خَرَجَ قُلْتُ لَهُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) قُلْتُ لَهُ مَا قُلْتَ ثُمَّ أَلَنْتَ لَهُ الْقَوْلَ .
 فَقَالَ: « يَا عَائِشَةُ إِنَّ مِنْ شَرِّ النَّاسِ مَنْ تَرَكَهُ النَّاسُ أَوْ وَدَعَهُ النَّاسُ اتَّقَاءَ فُحْشِهِ » .

Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) narrated:

“A man sought permission to enter upon the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) while I was with him, so he said: ‘What an evil son of his tribe, or brother of his tribe.’ Then he admitted him and spoke with him. When he left, I said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)! You said what you said about him, then you talked politely with him?’ He said: ‘O Ā'ishah! Indeed among the vilest of people are those whom the people avoid, or who the people leave, fearing his filthy speech.’”²³

This *ḥadīth* is the basis and foundation for *al-Mudārāh*.

So this woman describes her husband as: *“When he enters the house, he’s like a leopard”*, as someone who is heedless, because leopards are tired and heedless during the majority of the time. Then she said: *“but don’t think that he is heedless amongst men when he is outside (when he goes out, he’s like a lion)”*. She described him as someone who, when at home, intentionally ignores things, but when he leaves the house, he is one who socializes and mixes with the people and is respected.

The Husband Should Not Ask His Wife About Every Single Thing

“He doesn’t ask about what happens in the house.” For example, a husband should not say: “I gave you some bananas... where are they?” Or: “I gave you fifty dollars... what did you spend it on?” Some husbands are so stingy that they count the pieces of meat that they bring home to their wives. If they find a piece or two missing, they ask... “Where are these pieces of meat...” So she says: “The cat ate it...” Then he goes and weighs the cat... This is not how a husband should act... Rather, he should be generous... Perhaps she gave some of the meat to her family, friends, or for charity. Don’t embarrass her, rather be generous with her... The fifth woman said this about her husband, because he doesn’t ask her about what happens in the house... so she actually praised her husband.

²³ *Sunan at-Tirmidhī* (1966); authenticated by al-Albānī. Also in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (6131) and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (2591).

The Sixth Woman

قَالَتِ السَّادِسَةُ: زَوْجِي إِنْ أَكَلَ لَفًّا، وَإِنْ شَرِبَ اشْتَفَّ، وَإِنْ اضْطَجَعَ التَّفَّ، وَلَا يُوَلِّجُ الْكَفَّ لِيَعْلَمَ الْبَثَّ.

The sixth one said, 'My husband, if he eats, he eats too much (leaving the dishes empty), and if he drinks, he leaves nothing, and if he sleeps, he sleeps alone (away from me) covered in garments, and does not stretch his hands here and there so as to know how I fare (get along).'

Here, the woman is describing her husband as someone with the worst of traits that are known to the 'Arab, and that he has numerous deficiencies and defects. His manners are terrible with her, he's stingy and doesn't spend upon her, he doesn't pay attention to her, he isn't concerned about her or her affairs, nor does he ask about her or her needs and wants. He sleeps a lot, eats a lot, and doesn't show her any affection or love. His whole life revolves around eating, drinking, and sleeping, without paying any attention to her at all. He doesn't joke or play with her. This woman was very eloquent as well in the way that she described her husband with her selection of words, which all rhymed and were completely comprehensive to his situation. She didn't just generally mention these bad traits, but she actually described them with detail so that the other women can actually visualize in their minds how he really acts. When she described him when he eats, she said:

زَوْجِي إِنْ أَكَلَ لَفًّا

My husband, if he eats, he eats too much (leaving the dishes empty)

الْلَفُّ يَعْنِي: الْإِكْتَاثُ مِنَ التَّخْلِيصِ

Meaning that he grabs all the different types of food together, and eats them all at once. And if he sits down with others to eat, he grabs food from in front of everyone else and doesn't leave too much for other people to eat and enjoy.

Eating in this manner is against the *Sunnah*... as the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) taught us in the *ḥadīth*:

عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ، يَقُولُ كُنْتُ غُلَامًا فِي حَجْرِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) وَكَانَتْ يَدِي تَطْبِيشُ فِي الصَّحْفَةِ فَقَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): « يَا غُلَامُ سَمِّ اللَّهَ، وَكُلْ بِيَمِينِكَ وَكُلْ مِمَّا يَلِيكَ » . فَمَا زَاكَتَ تِلْكَ طِعْمَتِي بَعْدُ.

Narrated 'Umar ibn Abī Salamah:

"I was a boy under the care of Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and my hand used to go around the dish while I was eating. So Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said to me, 'O boy! Mention the Name of Allāh and eat with your right hand, and eat of the dish what is nearer to you.'

*Since then I have applied those instructions when eating."*²⁴

"O young man, say bismillāh, eat with your right hand, and eat from in front of you." The stingy people use this *ḥadīth* in the worst of ways... They put the appetizers in front of or in easy reach of their guests and they put the main dish in front of them... and say: "everyone eat from what is in front of you..." So the guests end up eating salad and soup while the hosts eat the meat and rice...

From the manners of hosting guests is to not make him stretch his hand out too far to reach the food... This is from the generous and noble manners of hosts... Also, arranging the table in such a way that all of the guests can easily take what they like is from the manners of eating as well...

Then she described how her husband drinks saying:

وَإِنْ شَرِبَ اشْتَفَّ

and if he drinks, he leaves nothing

The wording she selected here to describe how her husband drinks shows how intelligent she really was, as well as how much eloquence she had. She used one word: *ishtaffa* [اشْتَفَّ]. This word tells us that when he drinks, he drinks everything in the water skin, cup, or bowl whether he is thirsty or not. The word, *al-ishtifāf* [الِشْتِيفَافُ], means in 'Arabic: consuming everything in the bowl or cup, taken from the word, *ash-shufāfah* [الشُّفَافَةُ], which means a small amount remaining in the bowl or cup. She explained

²⁴

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (5376)

his manner of eating then gave us details about how he eats, and explained his manner of drinking and how he drinks as well. Now she wants to explain her husband's manner of sleeping and the details of how he sleeps.

She wasn't content with only complaining about her husband's bad manners when he eats and drinks, she went on to explain how he sleeps and how lazy he is as well when she said:

وَإِنْ اضْطَجَعَ النَّفَّ، وَلَا يُوَلِّجُ الْكَفَّ لِيَعْلَمَ الْبَثَّ.

and if he sleeps, he sleeps alone (away from me) covered in garments, and does not stretch his hands here and there so as to know how I fare (get along).

When he sleeps, he wraps himself up in his own clothes or blankets. He doesn't get close to his wife and doesn't touch her when he sleeps, nor does he bring her close to him when he sleeps. What is intended here is that he doesn't pay any attention to her. He sleeps as if there is a barrier or wall between him and his wife. Her wording here can be understood to mean that her husband isn't intimate with her; he doesn't fondle her, flirt with her, or play with her. This shows us the noble manners and deep understanding of this woman in 'Arabic language and her good etiquettes – by how she mentioned what she really meant with just three words.

Then she finished her narrative about her husband by emphasizing the sentence before it, stating that her husband really ignores her and doesn't pay any attention to her at all. He doesn't put his hand out to embrace her, remove her pain or sadness, or ask her how she's feeling. What is meant by the word, *al-bathth* [الْبَثُّ], is deep sadness and sorrow. It also can be used to mean sickness that someone is unable to bare or deal with. Basically, this is an analogy by which she is saying that her husband never puts his hand under her clothes to feel what she is going through, physically, mentally, or emotionally. Not only under her clothes, but he doesn't pick her mind to see what she's thinking or feeling as well.

Evidently, he rarely ever, or perhaps never, converses with his wife. If she talks, he rarely answers and he doesn't try to remove her sadness or the hardships she is experiencing. This breaks her heart and makes her feel and think that her husband doesn't want her.

We also see how this woman was very eloquent in the way all of her words rhymed: *laffa, ishtaffa, iltaffa, al-kaffa* [لَفَّ، اِشْتَفَّ، اِئْتَفَّ، اِنْكَفَّ]. This is what they call in ‘Arabic: *Saj*’. We find these types of wordings and sentences in many *sūrahs* in the *Qur’ān*. When one ponders over how many of the ends of *Qur’ānic* verses rhyme with each other, it shows us how Allāh addressed the ‘Arabs with a similar type of speech – that which they were familiar with, but even more eloquent. Allāh challenged them to produce something similar to it, but they were not able to do so.

Thus, she described him as someone who eats from everyone’s plate. He doesn’t eat from what is in front of him. He doesn’t leave food for anyone else to enjoy. He drinks until there is nothing left. Her husband is one who loves to eat and drink everything in the house. This also shows us that this wife is a professional and she cooks very well. He wraps himself up with his garments when he sleeps and doesn’t thank his wife who cooks delicious food and drink – that which he eats and drinks everything of. He thanks her by sleeping in such a manner that he takes the whole blanket or sheet... Therefore, she is complaining about her husband in this part.

The Importance of Speaking Kindly to One’s Wife and Letting Her Know You Appreciate What She Does for You

Here, the woman is saying that her husband doesn’t put his hands on her shoulder or tap her on the back thanking her for all of her hard work. Women constantly need to hear words of appreciation, positive encouragement, and thanks from their husbands. The wives stand all day in the kitchen, cooking for the kids, washing clothes, dishes, etc... She needs to hear words of encouragement from her husband. She needs to hear and know that her hard work at home is valued and appreciated. So, the husband should not feel shy in saying to his wife: “Honey, I know you’re exhausted. May Allāh reward you greatly for everything you’ve done.” And be assured, O husbands, that when you say this... even if a woman moved a mountain for you from one place to another, indeed these words will remove any bad feelings she may have.

Every time you enter the house, make it your habit to say: “Thank you so much for everything. May Allāh reward you greatly. You are exhausting yourself for us.” Wives and mothers need to be reminded that husbands also tire themselves out for their families as well... This is well-known...

However, if you acknowledge all of the good that she does, she will acknowledge all of the good that you do... You as the husband train her and teach her how to thank you for all of your hard work.

Basically, the woman in this narrative is saying that: “My husband doesn’t put out his hand to acknowledge how much he loves me nor to give me a chance to address what I’m feeling and going through... Rather, he knows that I complain but he’s living in another dimension...” Or it can also mean: “He doesn’t reach out to me so that I can be intimate with him.”

The Seventh Woman

قَالَتِ السَّابِعَةُ: زَوْجِي غَيَّيَاءٌ - أَوْ عَيَّيَاءٌ - طَبَاقًا، كُلُّ دَاءٍ لَهُ دَاءٌ، شَجَّكَ أَوْ فَلَكَ أَوْ جَمَعَ كَلًّا لَكَ.

The seventh one said, ‘My husband is a wrong-doer or weak and foolish. All of the defects (that exist) are present in him. He may injure your head or your body or may do both.’

زَوْجِي غَيَّيَاءٌ - أَوْ عَيَّيَاءٌ - طَبَاقًا

My husband is a wrong-doer or weak and foolish.

This wife is describing her husband as one who is weak and foolish or misguided; that he is stubborn and hard-headed. He doesn’t understand anything, nor does he want to. Every defect that exists in the world is present in him. He hurts her physically by hitting her in the face or other parts of the body and breaks her bones, either of the two... This type of husband is extremely stubborn and hard-headed. She started off with the word, *ghayāyā’* [غَيَّيَاءٌ], which comes from the word, *al-ghāyah* [الْغَايَةُ], which means extreme darkness or pitch black. What she intended by using this word is that he is completely incapable; that he can never be guided or directed, and he has no direction. Some other scholars said that what is intended here is that: “He is completely immersed in evil and bad; he is totally misguided; and darkness overwhelms him from all angles – the type of darkness that, if he were to put out his hand, he wouldn’t be able to see it.” As for the word, *‘ayāyā’* [عَيَّيَاءٌ], then this word is taken from

the words, *al-'ajz* and *al-quṣūr* [العجزُ والقصورُ], which mean to be incapable, weak, or deficient, and is commonly used in reference to a male that cannot please his woman. Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Salām (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

الْعَيَاءُ مِنَ الْإِبِلِ الَّذِي لَا يَضْرِبُ وَلَا يُلْقِحُ، وَكَذَلِكَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ

In the 'Arabic language, *al-'ayāyā* [الْعَيَاءُ] is used to refer to a camel that is incapable of having intercourse with a female camel, and it is also used for men who lack sexual ability as well.

It can also be used to express one's intellectual deficiencies, lack of ability to express his wants or desires, and incapability to manage his own affairs.

Immediately afterwards, she emphasizes the fact that he is really dumb with the word, *ṭabāqā'* [طَبَاقَاءُ], which means someone who is extremely dumb and ill-mannered. Foolishness and carelessness are prevalent in him [الْمُطَبِّقُ عَلَيْهِ الْحُمُقُ وَرُغُونَةٌ]. Thus, she is basically describing her husband as someone who is really deficient, both intellectually as well as sexually.

كُلُّ دَاءٍ لَهُ دَاءٌ، شَجَّكَ أَوْ فَلَكَ أَوْ جَمَعَ كُمًّا لَكَ.

All of the defects (that exist) are present in him. He may injure your head or your body or may do both.

Then she goes on to say that every deficiency that exists is in him; every ailment is in him. She didn't explain each sickness and defect in detail, but rather, she just used this one sentence to explain that he's extremely deficient. His defects didn't stop there either, but rather, he used to hit her and cause her bodily harm. He hits her everywhere on her body and when he hits her in her head, he splits it open or causes injury to her.

Spanking Women Lightly

Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) did not permit spanking women except for the means of reconciliation between spouses... The Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) clarified, with his statements, what is intended by the general verse in the *Qur'ān* (an-Nisā', 4:34)... When the *Qur'ānic* verse is understood alone, it can be understood to mean a very harsh beating or a light spanking, as unfortunately many have understood it. However, Prophet Muḥammad

(صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) told us: **“Spank her lightly”** ... Therefore, if it comes to this stage in trying to reconcile between husband and wife, then the husband should spank his wife lightly, as one who loves his wife, not as one who is trying to hurt her or seek revenge from her. The goal behind spanking is reconciliation and rectification of the woman’s behavior.

Look at the great example that Allāh mentioned in the *Qur’ān* about Ayyūb (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) and his loyal and dedicated wife who remained with him for 18 years, serving him while he was undergoing some of the most difficult trials, calamities, and tribulations. On one occasion she did something wrong and Ayyūb (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) swore to Allāh that if Allāh cured him, he would whip her 100 times, even though she was an obedient and loyal wife who didn’t deserve to be hit at all. Allāh said:

﴿ وَخُذْ بِيَدِكَ ضِغْتًا فَاصْرِبْ بِهِ وَلَا تَحْنُثْ ۗ إِنَّا وَجَدْنَاهُ صَابِرًا ۗ نَعْمَ الْعَبْدُ ۗ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ ۗ ﴾

“[We said], ‘And take in your hand a bunch [of grass] and strike with it and do not break your oath.’ Indeed, We found him patient, an excellent servant. Indeed, he was one repeatedly turning back [to Allāh].”

(*Ṣād*, 38:44)

What is a *dighth*? It is ripe hay or grass. So Allāh told Ayyūb (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) to get one hundred pieces of hay and hit her one time with them, and it would be as though he hit her 100 times. This is solely because this woman does not deserve to be whipped 100 times, however, he swore to Allāh that he would hit her, and he could not break his oath.

Thus, the general wording in the *Qur’ān* about hitting or spanking women can only be understood properly in light of the *Sunnah*.

عَنْ إِبَاسِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي ذُبَابٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):
 « لَا تَضْرِبُوا إِمَاءَ اللَّهِ ». فَجَاءَ عُمَرُ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) فَقَالَ
 ذَرُونِ النِّسَاءَ عَلَى أَزْوَاجِهِنَّ . فَرَخَّصَ فِي ضَرْبِهِنَّ فَأَطَافَ بِأَلِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ
 (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) نِسَاءً كَثِيرًا يَشْكُونَ أَزْوَاجِهِنَّ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):
 « لَقَدْ طَافَ بِأَلِ مُحَمَّدٍ نِسَاءً كَثِيرًا يَشْكُونَ أَزْوَاجِهِنَّ لَيْسَ أَوْلَيْكَ بِخِيَارِكُمْ » .

Iyās ibn ‘Abdillāh ibn Abī Dhubāb reported the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) as saying: “Do not beat Allāh’s handmaidens’, but when ‘Umar came to the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and said: ‘Women have become emboldened towards their husbands’, he (the Prophet) gave permission to beat them. Then, many women came to the family of the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) complaining against their husbands. So the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: ‘Many women have gone round Muḥammad’s family complaining against their husbands. They are not the best among you.’”²⁵

From this *ḥadīth* in *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, we find that, at one point in time, the women felt as though they were safe from their husbands spanking them, so they started to act up and be disobedient to their husbands. Thus, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) allowed the men to spank them to keep their women in check... Then, he said that whoever hits their wives are not from the best of people. Hitting one’s wife or spanking her should not be done unless it is a dire necessity and needed, and it is a light spanking like with a *miswāk*.²⁶

The best of Muslim men are those who do not put their hands on their wives ever. However, we find that many men now go and cut down a tree or take poles or extension cords to hit their wives with... There is no prohibition from hitting, however the hitting that is permissible is only as the last resort and last stage of rectification and reconciliation between the spouses. The spanking should also not be done to hurt, harm, or cause bruises or the likes. Some husbands start with hitting as a first response, which is against the *Qur’ān* and *Sunnah*. This goes against Allāh’s statement in the *Qur’ān*:

﴿ الرَّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاصْرَبُوهُنَّ ۗ فَإِنِ اطَّعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ﴾

²⁵ *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* (2146); with an authentic chain of narration.
²⁶ As it has been narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās and ‘Aṭā’.

“Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allāh has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband’s] absence what Allāh would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allāh is ever Exalted and Grand.”
(an-Nisā', 4:34)

A man should never resort to hitting his wife, unless he has already abandoned her in bed or he is not able to do that. If he truly knows how to boycott and abandon her in the bed, then it will not lead to hitting. However, if he is forced and pushed to hit, then he can do so, because the Prophet (ﷺ) did so, but he did so in a way that wouldn't hurt, bruise, shed blood, or break bones. 'A'ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrates how the Prophet (ﷺ) was in the house:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) قَالَتْ: أَلَا أُحَدِّثُكُمْ عَنِّي وَعَنِ النَّبِيِّ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)؟ قُلْنَا: بَلَى. قَالَتْ: لَمَّا كَانَتْ لَيْلَتِي الَّتِي هُوَ عِنْدِي تَعْنِي النَّبِيُّ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) انْقَلَبَ فَوَضَعَ نَعْلَيْهِ عِنْدَ رِجْلَيْهِ، وَبَسَطَ طَرَفَ إِزَارِهِ عَلَى فِرَاشِهِ، فَلَمْ يَلْبَثْ إِلَّا رَيْثِمًا ظَنَّ أَنِّي قَدْ رَقَدْتُ، ثُمَّ انْتَعَلَ رُوَيْدًا وَأَخَذَ رِدَاءَهُ رُوَيْدًا، ثُمَّ فَتَحَ الْبَابَ رُوَيْدًا وَخَرَجَ رُوَيْدًا وَجَعَلْتُ دُرْعِي فِي رَأْسِي وَاخْتَمَرْتُ وَتَفَنَّنْتُ إِزَارِي، وَأَنْطَلَقْتُ فِي إِثْرِهِ حَتَّى جَاءَ الْبَقِيعَ، فَرَفَعَ يَدَيْهِ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ فَأَطَالَ، ثُمَّ أَنْحَرَفَ فَأَنْحَرَفْتُ، فَأَسْرَعُ فَأَسْرَعْتُ، فَهَرُولٌ فَهَرُولْتُ، فَأَحْضَرَ فَأَحْضَرْتُ وَسَبَقْتُهُ فَدَخَلْتُ، فَلَيْسَ إِلَّا أَنْ اضْطَجَعْتُ فَدَخَلَ فَقَالَ: « مَا لِكَ يَا عَائِشَةُ حَشِيًّا رَائِيَّةً ». قَالَتْ: لَا. قَالَ: « لَتُخْبِرُنِي أَوْ لَيُخْبِرُنِي اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ ». قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) بِأَبِي أَنْتَ وَأُمِّي، فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ الْخَبَرَ. قَالَ: « فَأَنْتِ السَّوَادُ الَّذِي رَأَيْتِ أُمَامِي ». قَالَتْ: نَعَمْ، فَلَهَزَنِي فِي صَدْرِي لَهْزَةً أَوْجَعْتَنِي، ثُمَّ قَالَ: « أَظَنَنْتِ أَنْ يَحِيفَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ وَرَسُولُهُ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) ». قُلْتُ: مَهْمَا يَكْتُمُ النَّاسُ فَقَدْ عَلِمَهُ اللَّهُ. قَالَ: « فَإِنَّ جَبْرِيلَ أَنَانِي حِينَ رَأَيْتِ وَلَمْ يَدْخُلْ عَلَيَّ وَقَدْ وَضَعْتَ ثِيَابِكَ فَنَادَانِي،

فَأَخْفَى مِنْكَ فَأَجَبْتُهُ فَأَخْفَيْتُهُ مِنْكَ، فَظَنَنْتُ أَنْ قَدْ رَقَدْتُ وَكَرِهْتُ أَنْ أَوْقِظَكَ، وَخَشِيتُ أَنْ تَسْتَوْحِشِي، فَأَمَرَنِي أَنْ آتِيَ الْبَقِيعَ فَاسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ». قُلْتُ: كَيْفَ أَقُولُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)، قَالَ: «قُولِي السَّلَامَ عَلَى أَهْلِ الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ، يَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ الْمُسْتَقْدِمِينَ مِنَّا وَالْمُسْتَأْخِرِينَ، وَإِنَّا إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ لَآحِقُونَ».

“A’ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) said: ‘Shall I not tell you about me and about the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)?’ We said: ‘Yes.’ She said: ‘When it was my night when he was with me,’ – meaning the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) – ‘he came back (from ‘Ishā’ prayer), put his sandals by his feet, and spread the edge of his Izār on his bed. He stayed until he thought that I had gone to sleep. Then he put his sandals on slowly, picked up his cloak slowly, then opened the door slowly, and went out slowly. I covered my head, put on my vie, and tightened my waist wrapper. Then I followed his steps until he came to al-Baqī’. He raised his hands three times, and stood there for a long time. Then he left and I left. He hastened and I also hastened; he ran and I also ran. He came (to the house) and I also came, but I got there first and entered, and as I lay down he came in. He said: ‘Tell me, or the Subtle, the All-Aware will tell me.’ I said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), may my father and mother be ransomed for you,’ and I told him (the whole story). He said: ‘So you were the black shape that I saw in front of me?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ He gave me a nudge on the chest which I felt, then he said: ‘Did you think that Allāh and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) would deal unjustly with you?’ I said: ‘Whatever the people conceal, Allāh knows it.’ He said: ‘Jibrīl came to me when I saw you, but he did not enter upon me because you were not fully dressed. He called me but he concealed that from you, and I answered him, but I concealed that from you too. I thought that you had gone to sleep and I did not want to wake you up, and I was afraid that you would be frightened. He told me to go to al-Baqī’ and pray for forgiveness for them.’ I said: ‘What should I say, O Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)?’ He said: ‘Say, ‘Peace be upon the inhabitants of this place among the believers and Muslims. May Allāh have mercy upon those who have gone on ahead of us and those who come later on, and we will join you, if Allāh wills.’”²⁷

²⁷

Sunan an-Nasā’ī (2037); with an authentic chain. Also in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (974).

Notice how he did things so gently and quietly so that he wouldn't disturb 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا). He thought 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) was sleeping and he disliked to disturb her or wake her up. This is from his compassion, love, affection, and respect for her.

Whenever the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) would address his wives (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُنَّ), he would do so with the best of manners and in the kindest and gentlest of ways. Look at how he called his wife 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا): ***“Yā Ā'ish”***, out of his love and affection for her. Whenever his wife would complain, he would be extremely kind, patient, and understanding with her. Even when false accusations were directed towards her and 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) was dishonored. Even with that occurrence, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) himself was not able to free her of those terrible accusations, but he wished that he could. His silence about the issue was as if he was accusing her as well; if she was innocent why didn't he say she was innocent? During this great trial, 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) used to cry and weep and say: ***“I cried for three days straight, until I thought that all of my crying was going to make my liver burst.”***

During all of this, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) did not comfort her, nor try to empathize with her, nor say to her: “you're innocent.” He would enter the house and ask her, “how are you?” However, he would ask her in a way as if she was distant from him. He would stand at the edge of the bed, but then he would leave out. 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) said: ***“He used to make me doubt and think that I would never find that kindness and gentleness in him again how I used to when I would complain.”***

This is because when she came back from the battle of Banī al-Muṣṭaliq, she became sick for about a month and didn't know about the rumors about her. It wasn't from the habit of Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) that whenever she became sick, he would greet her in the way that he greeted her after the false accusations. Rather, he would greet her in a way that showed his utmost compassion, affection, and care.

The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) never beat or spanked his wives or women... It was narrated that 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) said:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) قَالَتْ:

مَا ضَرَبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) خَادِمًا لَهُ وَلَا امْرَأَةً وَلَا ضَرَبَ بِيَدِهِ شَيْئًا.

‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) said: “The Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) never beat any of his servants, or wives, and his hand never hit anything.”²⁸

So, the husband mentioned here, is one who beats his wife and injures her head or breaks her bones.

The Eighth Woman

قَالَتِ الثَّامِنَةُ: زَوْجِي الْمَسُّ مَسُّ أَرْنَبٍ، وَالرَّيْحُ رِيحُ زَرْنَبٍ.

The eighth one said, ‘My husband is soft to touch like the softness of a rabbit and his smell is like the smell of a Zarnab (a kind of good smelling grass).’

زَوْجِي الْمَسُّ مَسُّ أَرْنَبٍ

My husband is soft to touch like the softness of a rabbit

This woman praises her husband and describes him as one who has smooth skin, like a rabbit’s fur – soft and smooth. His body is gentle and soft – not rough and tough. She compared his body to that of smooth rabbit fur. Why did she compare her husband and his softness to that of the fur of a rabbit? This is not only a physical description that his body is smooth as a rabbit’s fur, but she also intended that his personality was smooth and easy, such that he was a good companion to live with.

وَالرَّيْحُ رِيحُ زَرْنَبٍ.

and his smell is like the smell of a Zarnab (a kind of good smelling grass).

She explains his other praiseworthy traits and characteristics by comparing her husband to a *zarnab*, which is like a sweet smelling grass, somewhat similar to the smell of a pine or evergreen tree. She describes

²⁸ *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (1984); with an authentic chain. Also in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (2328) with a different wording.

his scent as a sweet smelling grass. She is comparing her husband's behavior amongst other people like that of a sweet smelling grass that everyone loves to be around; his good manners and etiquettes give off good energy, just as the sweet smelling grass gives off a good scent. She also could have meant that her husband always uses good smelling perfume. She could have intended all of these meanings in her statement, but surely, her husband, his good manners, his good smell, and his good reputation amongst others has a positive affect upon her. Throughout this *ḥadīth*, we find that each woman used words that were somewhat in correlation with the description of their husbands. The women who described their husbands with rough, tough, or difficult traits used heavy and strong 'Arabic words, and the women who described their husbands with nice, easy, and kind traits used easy and light 'Arabic words. She also chose words that rhyme together: *arnab* and *zarnab* [أَرْنَبٌ، زَرْنَبٌ].

These are from the types of manners that we should learn as husbands and wives. Both spouses should try to have the best of smells when around each other and try to remove any foul or bad smells that could offend or push someone away. 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) narrates about the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), that when he would first enter his house, he would use the *miswāk*. He would remove any foul smells from his mouth before entering to see his wife and family. Both spouses should practice this. This woman praises her husband and says that he is a good companion, and she didn't forget to say he smells good as well.

The Ninth Woman

قَالَتِ التَّاسِعَةُ: زَوْجِي رَفِيعُ الْعِمَادِ، طَوِيلُ النَّجَادِ، عَظِيمُ الرَّمَادِ، قَرِيبُ الْبَيْتِ مِنْ
النَّادِ.

The ninth one said, 'My husband has grand pillars; he wears a long strap for carrying his sword; his ashes are abundant; and his house is near to the people who would easily consult him.'

Here, this woman describes her husband with the greatest of traits and characteristics amongst the 'Arabs. She describes him as being tall, but different than the tallness of the other man who was described by his wife.

This one is tall, but his body is in proportion. He also wears a long sheath for his sword. Everyone wants him and depends upon him for aid, help, and assistance in their affairs; people come from far and near to be with him. He helps the poor, is very generous with his guests, and relieves the destitute.

زَوْجِي رَفِيعُ الْعِمَادِ

My husband has grand pillars

When she said her husband is: [رَفِيعُ الْعِمَادِ] can mean that he comes from a noble household, a lofty lineage, and a fine family. As the houses used to be supported by an *imād* (pillar). What the scholars of *Balāghah* say she meant was that she was describing her husband as someone who was dignified and noble. It is known that the houses of the ‘Arabs who were well respected, honored, and dignified were up on the mountains, away from the floods and landslides during the rainy season. It also means that he is very generous and has a lot of wealth.

طَوِيلُ النَّجَادِ

he wears a long strap for carrying his sword

Then she goes on to describe his stature with the words, *ṭawīlun-nijād* [طَوِيلُ النَّجَادِ], meaning that he is tall, which is a praiseworthy trait amongst the ‘Arabs, while being short is a dispraiseworthy trait.

The Virtues of Generosity and the Dispraise of Stinginess.

Then, she goes on to describe another praiseworthy trait of her husband, speaking about his extreme generosity:

عَظِيمُ الرَّمَادِ

his ashes are abundant

When she described her husband as one whose ashes are abundant, she means that he is very generous. His ashes are abundant from all of the guests that he has. He slaughters and prepares many animals for hosting

and cooking for his guests, so the firewood that he collects is constantly being burnt and the ashes are collecting from the frequency of his cooking. So here, his wife is praising him for his generosity. These are the types of characteristics that the ‘Arab used to encourage and try to practice. As generosity hides and covers up every deficiency and shortcoming, just as stinginess will conceal good deeds. The stingy person’s good deeds and goodness are not recognized because all you think about is their stinginess.

There are many verses that speak about being stingy from them is what Allāh says in the *Qur’ān*:

﴿ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَيَكْتُمُونَ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ﴾

“Those who are stingy and enjoin upon [other] people to be stingy and conceal what Allāh has given them of His bounty – and We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment.”
(*an-Nisā’, 4:37*)

In addition, there are many *ahādīth* in which the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke about the stingy people. The books are filled with mention of the stingy people and their humiliating state, contrary to the generous. Take Ḥātim aṭ-Ṭāī, who is used as an example of generosity; on one occasion, he saw his son hitting a dog, so he said to him: **“My son, don’t hit the dog. It helps us and guides our guests so that we can host them.”**, because the guests can see the fire burning or hear the dog barking.

From the stories of some of the stingy people is: that there were two men walking, while there was a stingy man who was swimming, and he was close to drowning. So, he called out: “please help me.” Thus, one of the men said: “Give me your hand”, but the stingy man who was drowning didn’t reach his hand out. The second man was smarter, so he said: “Take my hand”, and he didn’t say “give me your hand” because he knew that giving was not from the stingy person’s character, even if that would lead him to death, solely because he is not used to hearing “give me.”

There are many books that were authored about stinginess and stingy

people by al-Jāhiz, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn al-Jawzī, etc... Stinginess is a bad trait and characteristic to have and is highly disliked.

Just as there are those who are stingy, there are also those who are very generous. They are known to be extremely generous, such that they're not satisfied unless they give something. The true value and worth of a person is measured in how much they give, and not how much they take. Listen to these verses of poetry that 'Umayyah ibn Abī aṣ-Ṣult said about 'Abdullāh ibn Jad'ān: *“Should I let you know that I need something, or should it be sufficient that you already understand what I'm talking about, when you see someone praising you or making du'ā' for you when they meet you, the generous one already knows that the person is hinting to asking him to help him.”*

He doesn't make the needy person ask him for help, because he's already known as a generous person and one who doesn't hesitate to give.

With this in mind, the great Imām Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) mentioned a *ḥadīth* in his books and titled it the *Supplication to Remove Hardships*:

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا)، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) كَانَ يَقُولُ عِنْدَ الْكَرْبِ:
 « لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْحَلِيمُ الْكَرِيمُ، [لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ] سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ،
 [لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ] سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبِّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيمِ .
 قَالَ وَكَيْعٌ مَرَّةً لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فِيهَا كُلُّهَا.

Ibn 'Abbās (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا) narrated that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) used to say at times of distress:

“Lā ilāha ill-Allāhu al-Ḥalīm al-Karīm, [Lā ilāha ill-Allāhu] Subḥān-Allāhi Rabbil-'Arshil-Karīm, [Lā ilāha ill-Allāhu] Subḥān-Allāhi Rabbil-Samawātis-Sab'i wa-Rabbil-'Arshil-Karīm

(None has the right to be worshipped but Allāh, the Forbearing, the Most Generous; [None has the right to be worshipped but Allāh] glory is to Allāh the Lord of the Mighty Throne; [None has the right to be worshipped but Allāh] glory is to Allāh, the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the Magnificent Throne).”

Wakī' said with each wording, “Lā ilāha ill-Allāhu” (none has the right

*to be worshipped but Allāh) is to be included.*²⁹

And in another version with a different wording:

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا)، أَنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) كَانَ يَقُولُ عِنْدَ الْكَرْبِ:
« لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ الْحَلِيمُ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَرَبُّ الْأَرْضِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيمِ » .

Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to say at times of distress:

*“Lā ilāha ill-Allāhu al-‘Azīmul-Ḥalīm, Lā ilāha ill-Allāhu Rabbul-‘Arshil-‘Azīm, Lā ilāha ill-Allāhu Rabbus-Samawāti wa-Rabbul-‘Arshil-Karīm (None has the right to be worshipped but Allāh, the Great, the Tolerant; None has the right to be worshipped but Allāh, the Lord of the Magnificent Throne; None has the right to be worshipped but Allāh, the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the Edifying Throne).”*³⁰

This supplication is apparently praising of Allāh and not explicitly asking Him. So, why did they call it the supplication of distress?

It was said to Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah (رضي الله عنه): *“This is not a supplication, rather it is praise of Allāh.”* Thus, he responded: *“Yes of course”*, and he recited those verses of poetry, and said: *“If this is someone from the creation who is sufficed with people’s praise, then what about Allāh, the Creator? If the servant says these words of praise to Allāh and understands them, then what about Allāh, the Most High?”*

قَرِيبُ الْبَيْتِ مِنَ النَّادِ.

and his house is near to the people who would easily consult him.

Then, she goes on to describe her husband with the nearness of his house to the people, which is also an analogy used to express how generous he was. He is easily accessible to the people. His house is close to the center of town, city, or neighborhood. He mixes with them, socializes

²⁹ Sunan Ibn Mājah (3883); with an authentic chain.

³⁰ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (2730)

with them, and meets and greets them with a smiling face, open heart, and open house; and he hastily invites them over so that he can host them and feed them. It could also be an analogy that describes the nobility and honorable status that he has amongst his townspeople, such that if the townspeople differ in anything, then he is the one that they return to for guidance, direction, and consultation because he is close to all of them.

Therefore, this woman praises her husband for his generosity and from the proofs from her description indicating his generosity is when she said that his home is close to the places where people gather. His house is not far away from the people nor on the outskirts of the town, where guests would not be comfortable or not want to be invited. Rather, his home is close to the center of town, so anyone can come and visit him at any time they like. The closest example of this is like the one whose house is close to the *masjid*. If we want to drink some water, we would turn to the one whose house is closest to the *masjid* and call out to him: “hey, brother give us some water”, so this individual places himself and lives in areas where he is easily accessible to the people.

The Tenth Woman

قَالَتِ الْعَاشِرَةُ: زَوْجِي مَالِكٌ وَمَا مَالِكٌ، مَالِكٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ ذَلِكَ، لَهُ إِبِلٌ كَثِيرَاتٌ
الْمَبَارِكِ قَلِيلَاتُ الْمَسَارِحِ، وَإِذَا سَمِعْنَ صَوْتَ الْمِزْهَرِ أَيَقِنَّ أَنَّهُنَّ هَوَالِكُ.

The tenth one said, ‘My husband is Mālik, and what is Mālik? Mālik is greater than whatever I say about him. (He is beyond and above all praises which can come to my mind). Most of his camels are kept at home (ready to be slaughtered for the guests) and only a few are taken to the pastures. When the camels hear the sound of the lute (or the tambourine) they realize that they are going to be slaughtered for the guests.’

Here, the tenth woman is saying that her husband’s name is Mālik and asking them, or telling them ‘do you really want to know about him?’ He is better than anything that one could describe him with. She is the first woman to actually mention her husband’s name; this tells us that she really loves her husband and how much he fills her heart and mind. She emphasized this by her statement:

زَوْجِي مَالِكٌ وَمَا مَالِكٌ

My husband is Mālik, and what is Mālik?

لِلتَّعْظِيمِ وَالتَّعْجِبِ

She is saying how great and magnificent he is. We find this type of wording in the *Qur'ān* as well: [الْفَارِعَةُ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ، الْخَاقَةُ مَا الْخَاقَةُ].

مَالِكٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ ذَلِكَ

Mālik is greater than whatever I say about him. (He is beyond and above all praises which can come to my mind).

He is greater than words can describe. Whatever she says about him is not enough or sufficient. When she said, *dhālika* [ذَلِكَ], it was as if she is pointing to her friends, implying that he is greater than what you all are imagining him to be.

Then, she goes on to describe how he is so generous and great, in order to enable her friends to visualize even further how Mālik is:

لَهُ إِبِلٌ كَثِيرَاتٌ الْمَبَارِكِ قَلِيلَاتُ الْمَسَارِحِ، وَإِذَا سَمِعْنَ صَوْتَ الْمِزْهَرِ آيَقَنَّ أَنَّهُنَّ هَوَالِكُ.

Most of his camels are kept at home (ready to be slaughtered for the guests) and only a few are taken to the pastures. When the camels hear the sound of the lute (or the tambourine) they realize that they are going to be slaughtered for the guests.

He has many camels that are kept in the stalls and do not graze, because they are always being slaughtered for guests. When they hear the sound of the tambourine, they know that they're going to be slaughtered soon.

She started off using *lahu* [لَهُ], which tells us that she really pays attention and helps her husband out and that he himself pays attention to his camels.

Also, the indefinite noun, *ibil* [إِبِلٌ], points to the fact that he had a large amount of camels and that they were very big and great. She is describing

her husband and describing the most beloved thing to her husband, so it is also the most apparent and beloved thing to her as well.

From the signs of her husband's generosity is that when guests come, he doesn't only slaughter one or two camels, but rather, he slaughters a large amount, as she said *hawālik* [هَوَالِكُ], and this is why the camels know that they're going to be slaughtered.

One may ask, "how can camels be so certain that they are going to be slaughtered when they hear the tambourine or see the guests coming, when animals don't have intellects?" Here, we find that Mālik's wife described his camels as if they understand and know they are going to be slaughtered, but in all actuality, it is the guests who know that the camels will be slaughtered because they know about Mālik's generosity, but she described the camels as if they know they're going to be slaughtered solely because they are her husband's most beloved possession.

He has lots of blessed camels that do not stay in the pasture grazing too long, solely because he is always expecting guests. Thus, he doesn't send his children out to raise and graze the camels out of fear that guests may come and they will have nothing to slaughter for them. When the tambourine or lute is playing, we know that guests are on the way and have arrived. So, her husband greets the guests playing the lute or tambourine, and the camels in the barn know that some are going to be slaughtered and the guests have arrived.

Impermissibility of Music and Musical Instruments

What is very strange is that some people use this *ḥadīth* to allow the playing of music and musical instruments. We are definitely living in the times of strange and weird things. If the scholars of *Islāmic* Jurisprudence were to look at our times they would probably die from heart attacks because of all the people speaking without knowledge. This *ḥadīth* is not proof for what they claim. Rather, it is a narrative of what was occurring in the time of *Jāhiliyyah*, and it didn't occur in *al-Islām*. The women who were narrating their stories were not Muslim women, and 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) was conveying their stories from when they all promised to sit and tell each other about their husbands... This all occurred in *Jāhiliyyah*.

Those with doubts in their minds and hearts say: “We don’t say that it is permissible based upon the action of playing the lute or tambourine itself, rather we consider it to be permissible based on the Prophet Muḥammad’s (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) approval.” So it is said to them: “The woman who was talking bad about her husband committed *ghībah*. Based on that, should we say that the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) approved the woman talking bad about her husband?” Thus, whoever claimed that music or musical instruments are permissible has based their conclusion on a weak foundation. They wanted to build their opinion upon weak evidence and forgot the foundations, considering that we have clear proofs about the impermissibility of music and musical instruments, as what Imām al-Bukhārī mentioned in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*:

عَنْ أَبِي عَامِرٍ - أَوْ أَبِي مَالِكٍ - الْأَشْعَرِيِّ سَمِعَ النَّبِيَّ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) يَقُولُ:
« لَيَكُونَنَّ مِنْ أُمَّتِي أَقْوَامٌ يَسْتَحِلُّونَ الْحَرَ وَالْحَرِيرَ وَالْخَمْرَ وَالْمَعَازِفَ، وَلَيَنْزِلَنَّ أَقْوَامٌ إِلَى
جَنْبِ عِلْمٍ يَرُوحُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِسَارِحَةٍ لَهُمْ، يَأْتِيهِمْ - يَعْنِي الْفَقِيرَ - لِحَاجَةٍ فَيَقُولُوا ارْجِعْ إِلَيْنَا
غَدًا. فَيُبَيِّتُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَصْعُقُ الْعِلْمَ، وَيَمَسُخُ آخِرِينَ قَرْدَةً وَخَنَازِيرَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ »

*Narrated Abū ‘Āmir or Abū Mālik al-Ash‘arī that he heard the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) saying: “From among my followers there will be some people who will consider illegal sexual intercourse, the wearing of silk, the drinking of alcoholic drinks, and the use of musical instruments, as lawful. And there will be some people who will stay near the side of a mountain and in the evening their shepherd will come to them with their sheep and ask them for something, but they will say to him, ‘Return to us tomorrow.’ Allāh will destroy them during the night and will let the mountain fall on them, and He will transform the rest of them into monkeys and pigs and they will remain so till the Day of Resurrection.”*³¹

Therefore, this is a clear evidence that *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah* used to consider all music and all musical instruments as impermissible.

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Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (5590)

The Eleventh Woman (Umm Zar')

قَالَتِ الْحَادِيَةَ عَشْرَةَ: زَوْجِي أَبُو زَرْعٍ، فَمَا أَبُو زَرْعٍ، أَنَا مِنْ حُلِيِّ أَدْنِي، وَمَلَأَ مِنْ شَحْمِ عَضُدِي، وَبَجَجَنِي فَبَجَحَتِ إِلَيَّ نَفْسِي، وَجَدَنِي فِي أَهْلِ غَنِيمَةٍ بِشَقٍّ، فَجَعَلَنِي فِي أَهْلِ صَهِيلٍ وَأَطِيظٍ وَدَائِسٍ وَمُنَقٍّ، فَعِنْدَهُ أَقُولُ فَلَا أَقْبَحُ وَأَرْقُدُ فَاتَّصَبَحُ، وَأَشْرَبُ فَاتَّقَنَحُ، أُمُّ أَبِي زَرْعٍ، فَمَا أُمُّ أَبِي زَرْعٍ عَكُومُهَا رَدَاخٌ، وَبَيْنُهَا فَسَاخٌ، ابْنُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ، فَمَا ابْنُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ مَضْجَعُهُ كَمَسَلٍ شَطْبَةٍ، وَيُشْبِعُهُ ذِرَاعُ الْجُفْرَةِ، بِنْتُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ، فَمَا بِنْتُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ طَوْعُ أَبِيهَا، وَطَوْعُ أُمِّهَا، وَمَوْلَى كِسَائِيهَا، وَعَيْظُ جَارِيَتِهَا، جَارِيَةُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ، فَمَا جَارِيَةُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ لَا تَبُثُّ حَدِيثَنَا تَبِيثًا، وَلَا تُنْقِثُ مِيرَتَنَا تَنْقِيثًا، وَلَا تَمْلَأُ بَيْنَنَا تَعَشِيثًا، قَالَتْ خَرَجَ أَبُو زَرْعٍ وَالْأَوَطَابُ تَمَحَضُ، فَلَقِي امْرَأَةً مَعَهَا وَكَدَانٍ لَهَا كَالْفَهْدَيْنِ يَلْعَبَانِ مِنْ تَحْتِ حَصْرِهَا بِرُمَانَيْنِ، فَطَلَّقَنِي وَنَكَحَهَا، فَكَحَّتْ بَعْدَهُ رَجُلًا سَرِيًّا، رَكِبَ شَرِيًّا، وَأَخَذَ خَطِيًّا، وَأَرَاخَ عَلَيَّ نَعْمًا ثَرِيًّا، وَأَعْطَانِي مِنْ كُلِّ رَائِحَةٍ زَوْجًا، وَقَالَ: كُلِّي أُمُّ زَرْعٍ، وَمِيرِي أَهْلِكِ. قَالَتْ فَلَوْ جَمَعْتُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَعْطَانِيهِ، مَا بَلَغَ أَصْغَرَ آيَةِ أَبِي زَرْعٍ.

قَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): « كُنْتُ لِكَ كَأَبِي زَرْعٍ لَأُمِّ زَرْعٍ ».

The eleventh one said, 'My husband is Abū Zar', and what is Abū Zar' (i.e., what should I say about him)? He has given me many ornaments and my ears are heavily loaded with them and my arms have become fat (i.e., I have become fat). And he has pleased me, and I have become so happy that I feel proud of myself. He found me with my family who were mere owners of sheep and living in poverty, and brought me to a respected family having horses and camels and threshing and purifying grain. Whatever I say, he does not rebuke or insult me. When I sleep, I sleep till late in the morning, and when I drink water (or milk), I drink my fill. The mother of Abū Zar', and what may one say in praise of the mother of Abū Zar'? Her saddle bags were always full of provision and her house was spacious. As for the son of Abū Zar', what may one say of the son of Abū Zar'? His bed is as narrow as an unsheathed sword and an arm of a kid (of four months) satisfies his hunger. As for the daughter of

Abū Zar', what may one say of the daughter of Abū Zar'? She is obedient to her father and to her mother. She has a fat well-built body and that arouses the jealousy of her husband's other wife. As for the (maid) slave girl of Abū Zar', what may one say of the (maid) slave girl of Abū Zar'? She does not disclose our secrets to others (outside the house) but keeps them, and does not waste our provisions and does not leave the rubbish scattered everywhere in our house.'

The eleventh woman added, 'One day it so happened that Abū Zar' went out at the time when the milk was being milked from the animals, and he saw a woman who had two sons like two leopards playing with her two breasts. (On seeing her) he divorced me and married her. Thereafter, I married a noble man who used to ride a fast, tireless horse and keep a spear in his hand. He gave me many things, and also a pair of every kind of livestock and said, 'Eat (of this), O Umm Zar', and give provision to your relatives.'" She added, 'Yet, all those things which my second husband gave me could not fill the smallest utensil of Abū Zar'."

'Āishah then said: "Allāh's Apostle (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said to me, 'I am to you as Abū Zar' was to his wife Umm Zar'."

The statement of Umm Zar' and her description of her husband deserves a lot of pondering, contemplation, and thinking regarding what it contains of linguistic benefits, fiqh, manners, and etiquettes.

زَوْجِي أَبُو زَرْعٍ، فَمَا أَبُو زَرْعٍ

My husband is Abū Zar', and what is Abū Zar' (i.e., what should I say about him)?

She started off describing him somewhat similar to the previous woman using the word, *mā* [مَا], for *istifhām*, but here, it is being used to show her husband's greatness and to give the women somewhat of an introduction as to what is going to follow from her husband's wonderful description.

Since we don't know anything about him, she is going to tell us about him. She said:

أَنَاسَ مِنْ حُلِيِّ أُذُنَيَّ

He has given me many ornaments and my ears are heavily loaded with them.

‘My ears are filled with gold earrings that move and shake.’ Her husband gives her great and beautiful gifts, covering her body with gold, after she was a poor girl who had nothing. She used the word, *anāsa* [أَنَسَا], to precisely explain how her husband adorns her and takes care of her. This word is taken from the word, *an-naws* [النَّوْسُ], which means shaking and shining. This tells us that the earrings she was wearing were so heavy and so many that whenever she moved her head, her ears would shake and her earrings would be shining and gleaming.

Here, Umm Zar’ started with gold, because women love gold and silk and they love gifts of gold and jewelry. It is as if she wanted to make the other women jealous of how much her husband takes care of her and adorns her.

وَمَلَأَ مِنْ شَحْمِ عَضُدَيَّ

And my arms have become fat (i.e., I have become fat).

Then, she goes on to describe herself saying that her shoulders and arms have gotten bigger from how much her husband feeds her and takes care of her. Basically, she is describing her husband as someone who is very generous to her. She mentioned part of her body, but really intended all of her body.

She only described her shoulders and didn’t describe the rest of her body because, normally, it is one of the first features that sticks out when you look at someone’s body and the first thing that one looks at if they look down at their body. When he married her, she was skinny and had nothing, but now she has gained weight.

وَبَجَّحَنِي فَبَجَّحْتُ إِلَيَّ نَفْسِي

And he has pleased me, and I have become so happy that I feel proud of myself.

He is always flattering her and speaking kindly to her. For example, saying: Hey beautiful, Hey gorgeous, My love, etc... He calls her and speaks to her in such a kind manner that she believes him when he calls her these names. She believes what he says to her and about her, even though she knows that he knows where she came from.

وَجَدَنِي فِي أَهْلِ غُنَيْمَةٍ بِشَقٍّ، فَجَعَلَنِي فِي أَهْلِ صَهِيلٍ وَأَطِيطٍ وَدَائِسٍ وَمُنَقٍّ، فَعِنْدَهُ
 أَقُولُ فَلَا أُقْبِحُ وَأَرْقُدُ فَاتَّصَبَحُ، وَأَشْرَبُ فَاتَّقَنِّحُ

He found me with my family who were mere owners of sheep and living in poverty, and brought me to a respected family having horses and camels and threshing and purifying grain.

The, she goes on describing her situation before she married Abū Zar' and how she came from a poor family who raised sheep. It was known amongst the 'Arabs that the rich herd camels and the poor herd sheep. She used the word, *ghunaymah* [غُنَيْمَةٌ], which is called, *at-taṣghīr* [التَّصْغِيرُ] (miniaturization) in 'Arabic, which pointed to the fact that they were not just poor, but really poor, and the word, *bishaqqin* [بِشَقٍّ], adds emphasis to this point as well.

When she said about herself, 'He found me from a family that lived in the mountains who were poor sheep herders. We lived in extreme hardship and poverty. So, he took me as his wife from living in a family with nothing but sheep to live off of; taking me to live amongst those who raise horses and camels.'

Then, she goes on to say how happy and pleased she is to be part of the family of Abū Zar'. This is clear by her selection of the words, 'in the family of' [فِي أَهْلِ], and this is her describing how blessed she is to be surrounded by these endless graces and bounties.

Atīṭ [أَطِيطٌ] is the sound of the camel hoof on the sand or ground. Camels were also from the most prized possessions amongst the 'Arabs at that time. As for the people of *dā'is* [دَائِسٌ], these are farmers and those that grow fruits and vegetables. After the fruit or vegetables are harvested, they are stepped upon by the animals so that the seeds come out of them. This is an analogy explaining that they are farmers. *al-Munaqqī* [الْمُنَقِّي] is a sieve or sifter. Many of the 'Arabs weren't familiar with using the sieve or sifter except for those who were affluent. 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) mentions that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) never saw or used a sieve in his life. 'Urwah asked his aunt, 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا): "how did you guys used to eat?" She said: "we would shake it, and whatever would remain they would grind it and eat from it with the barley that came from it." 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا)

said about Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): **“The Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) passed away and he never filled his stomach one time from barley bread.”** They didn’t used to eat wheat bread at all. Going back to the word, *munaqqin* [مُنَقَّقٌ], which is used for luxury and affluence, it shows us that they had a lot of wealth. They most likely had horses, camels, and lots of crops. When they ate, they used to have the sieve to make the flour smooth and pure, so it was delicious to eat.

فَعِنْدَهُ أَقُولُ فَلَا أَفْسِحُ وَأَرْقُدُ فَاتَّصَبَّحُ، وَأَشْرَبُ فَاتَّقَحُّ

Whatever I say, he does not rebuke or insult me. When I sleep, I sleep till late in the morning, and when I drink water (or milk), I drink my fill.

This statement is a great analogy about how happy she is and the constant blessings that she receives from Allāh through Abū Zar’...

She says: “When I speak he doesn’t say I’m ugly or show me disrespect.”

Whatever she says, or whenever she speaks, her husband never says to her: ‘you’re ugly’, or ‘what you said was bad...’ Rather, she was given respect, honor, and dignity. Whenever she spoke, everyone would listen.

Then she goes on to say: “I sleep until the time of *Duḥā*.” She used to sleep until late morning.

These two sentences tell us that she was living a very luxurious life, such that whenever she spoke, she would be respected and listened to, and she could sleep as late as she wanted to in the morning without any concern.

This indicates that she had a servant or many servants, because if she didn’t have any servants, she would have had to wake up early in order to take care of the affairs of the house and its maintenance. This is like many of our wives today; they cannot sleep after *Fajr* because they have to get our children ready to go to school and fix them breakfast. We men are constantly working outside the house... So, if she was sleeping until *Duḥā* time, after the sun rises, this means that she had maid servants who were helping her do her chores in the morning. Then, she goes on to say, “I drink until I drink my fill.” There are two different wordings – one that says *ataqammaḥ* [أَتَقَمَّحُ] and another one that says *ataqannaḥ* [أَتَقَنَّحُ].

The first wording is used to describe how the camel drinks; that when the camel drinks to its fill, it raises its head and doesn't want to drink anymore because its thirst is quenched. So, with this wording, we can understand that after she drinks her juice, that she leaves half of the cup full, because she drank to her fill. As for the other wording, then it means that she eats and drinks because her husband is always feeding her and feeding her until she is satiated. This would not normally occur except if her husband spoiled her and loved her greatly.

Description of the Mother of Abū Zar'

أُمُّ أَبِي زَرْعٍ، فَمَا أُمُّ أَبِي زَرْعٍ عَكُومُهَا رَدَاخٌ، وَيَيْتُهَا فَسَاخٌ

The mother of Abū Zar', and what may one say in praise of the mother of Abū Zar'? Her saddle bags were always full of provision and her house was spacious.

She says: "As for the mother of Abū Zar' then let me tell you about her." She is her mother-in-law and she didn't mention anything about her except what she said. This is based upon the principle, "The beloved of my beloved is my beloved as well." When a woman loves her husband, she honors her husband's mother who gave birth to him. This is a blessing for the wife – that her mother-in-law gave birth to her husband. Then, she goes on to say, "Her bags are big and deep." *Radāḥ* [رَدَاخٌ] means someone who likes to speak for a long time and explain things in detail. *Ukūm* [عَكُومٌ] are the bags they used to use to store food. When people store rice, then don't store it in small bags, rather they store it in cotton bags. This statement shows that her mother-in-law's house is filled with goodness, and lots of goodness at that, based on the meaning of *radāḥ* [رَدَاخٌ].

Description of the Son of Abū Zar'

ابْنُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ، فَمَا ابْنُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ مَضْجَعُهُ كَمَسَلٍ شَطْبَةٍ، وَيُشْبِعُهُ ذِرَاعُ الْجَفْرَةِ

As for the son of Abū Zar', what may one say of the son of Abū Zar'? His bed is as narrow as an unsheathed sword and an arm of a kid (of four months) satisfies his hunger.

Then she goes on to say: "As for the son of Abū Zar', then let me tell you

about him. His bed is as narrow as an unsheathed sword and an arm of a baby goat that satisfies his hunger.”

She is describing the son of Abū Zar’ as a skinny, very thin boy and likened his bed to the sheath of a sword and likened him to the sword. It was common for the ‘Arabs to liken men to swords. She was likening him to a sword due to what they share of traits such as being thin, strong, sharp, shiny, and feared if seen and taken out of their place of rest.

We can also understand from this that Abū Zar’ was married previously. Here, she describes the bed of the son of Abū Zar’ and says that it is made of date palm tree branches and woven leaves. So, basically, the boy is skinny and his muscles are lean. Amongst the ‘Arabs, someone who is skinny and lean is praiseworthy because he doesn’t get as tired as someone who is heavy. He can come and go, maneuvering more easily than someone who is heavier. Thus, she described his bed to indicate this, from which we can understand that the son of Abū Zar’ was thin, because if he was heavy, he wouldn’t be able to lie on the bed and would break it. *al-Jafrah* [الجفرة] is a baby goat. Therefore, here, she is describing the son of Abū Zar’ explaining that if he was to eat the front leg of a baby goat, he would be satiated. This is also something that is praiseworthy amongst the ‘Arabs – that the kids eat a little and do not take all of the food, contrary to women eating little, which is considered dispraiseworthy.

It is strange that Umm Zar’ is describing her husband’s son from another wife in such a delightful way, as normally, woman are not comfortable around the step children or her husband’s children from another wife. They usually don’t get treated the same or respected the same. However, her extreme love and affection for Abū Zar’ made her completely forget that about his son, and she considered him as if he was her own son.

Description of the Daughter of Abū Zar’

بِنْتُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ، فَمَا بِنْتُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ طَوَّعُ أَبِيهَا، وَطَوَّعُ أُمِّهَا، وَمِلءُ كِسَائِهَا، وَغَيْظُ
جَارَتِهَا

As for the daughter of Abū Zar’, what may one say of the daughter of

Abū Zar’? She is obedient to her father and to her mother. She has a fat well-built body and that arouses the jealousy of her husband’s other wife.

As for the daughter of Abū Zar’, then she described her with the best of characteristics and traits.

She is obedient to her father and to her mother. There are many texts from the *Qur’ān* and *Sunnah* about being obedient to the parents...

She also described her as having a fat, well-built body that arouses the jealousy of her husband’s other wife. Having a plump body is something praiseworthy amongst the ‘Arabs and shows that she is cared for, fed well, and spoiled, contrary to men who are fat. Here, she describes the other wife of the husband of the daughter of Abū Zar’ with the word, *jārah*. She says that the second wife used to be jealous of the daughter of Abū Zar’ because her husband feeds her well, which made her plump and heavy. She is also jealous of her because of her beauty and her good manners.

She referred to the second wife as a *jārah* [جَارَةٌ]. What does she intend here by this word? Is it the normal usage, which means a neighbors, or was she referring to someone or something else? As we know, the ‘Arabs were the most eloquent of speakers. So, when she said *jārah* [جَارَةٌ], she was actually intending the other wife of the husband of the daughter of Abū Zar’. This wording is more respectable than referring to the second wife as a *ḍarrah* [ضَرَّةٌ], which is the customary term that is used in our days and times. Referring to the second wife as *jārah* [جَارَةٌ] is a word that is more respectable and more dignifying.

Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) used to dislike calling the second wife a *ḍarrah* [ضَرَّةٌ]. Rather, referring to her as a *jārah* [جَارَةٌ] is better, showing good etiquettes and manners. This is the type of manners that ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) used to be upon, as it came in the long *ḥadīth* of Ibn ‘Abbās (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* when he asked ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ):

“Who are the two women about whom Allāh said in the *Qur’ān*:

﴿ إِنَّ تَتُوبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا ﴾

“If you two [wives of the Prophet (ﷺ)], namely ‘Ā’ishah and Ḥaḥṣah (رضي الله عنهما)] turn in repentance to Allāh, (it will be better for you), your hearts are indeed so inclined (to oppose what the Prophet (ﷺ) likes).” (at-Taḥrīm, 66:4)

So, he said: *“I’m surprised that you asked, Ibn ‘Abbās. It is ‘Ā’ishah and Ḥaḥṣah...”* and he mentioned the rest of the *ḥadīth*. However, in the *ḥadīth* ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) had mentioned referring to ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) and his daughter Ḥaḥṣah (رضي الله عنها), since they were both the wives of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ):

لَا يُعْرَنُكَ أَنْ كَانَتْ جَارَتُكَ هِيَ أَوْسَمُ مِنْكَ وَأَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (ﷺ) مِنْكَ.

“And do not be tempted by the behavior of your jārah [‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها)], for she is more beautiful than you, and more loved by the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ).”

He was telling his daughter: “Do not be sad or misled if ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) is more beloved to Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) than you; she is spoiled and respected to the highest level. Don’t try to imitate what ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) does, because you and her are different and your positions with the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) are different as well.” Thus, the point that we are making is that ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) referred to the second wife as *jārah* [جَارَةٌ] and not *ḍarrah* [ضَرَّةٌ] because it is an unacceptable and ugly word. This is due to the fact that its root comes from *aḍ-Durr*, which means harm. That is in contrast to the word *jārah* [جَارَةٌ], which comes from the same root as *al-Jiwār*, meaning next to or neighbor, and the neighbor, in *al-Islām*, has their rights, respect, and honor.

Description of the (Maid) Slave Girl of Abū Zar’

جَارِيَةُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ، فَمَا جَارِيَةُ أَبِي زَرْعٍ لَا تَبْتُ حَدِيثَنَا تَبِيثًا، وَلَا تُتَقُّ مِيرَتَنَا تَنْقِيثًا،
وَلَا تَمَلُّ يَبِينًا تَعْشِيثًا

As for the (maid) slave girl of Abū Zar’, what may one say of the (maid)

slave girl of Abū Zar'? She does not disclose our secrets to others (outside the house) but keeps them, and does not waste our provisions and does not leave the rubbish scattered everywhere in our house.

The woman, from her extreme love for her husband, mentions everything about her husband – even his maid servant. She highlights the fact that, no matter what happens in the house, no one knows about it or hears about it outside. This is due to the trustworthiness of the maid servant, who does not spread the secrets of the household. She does not waste food, either by dropping rice on the floor or otherwise, so she is an organized and very neat woman. She fears Allāh and fears wasting the money of her master. The house is clean and it is not filled with rubbish, like a bird's nest filled with feathers, twigs, sticks, and grass. It is a very clean house.

قَالَتْ خَرَجَ أَبُو زَرِّعٍ وَالْأَوْطَابُ تُمْنَحَضُ

The eleventh woman added, 'One day it so happened that Abū Zar' went out at the time when the milk was being milked from the animals

In this section, she was describing her husband going out one day in the springtime, which is when the animals produced lots of milk because of the frequent grazing and rainfall, and everyone would come to milk the animals. This is known by her saying, *wal-awṭābu tumkhaḍu* [وَالْأَوْطَابُ وَتُمْنَحَضُ], which tells us that he left out in the springtime when the land and animals were full of life and very fertile, so there was much provision and *rizq* in the lands. *al-Awṭāb* are the skins or containers that stored the milk [الْأَوْطَابُ: وَعَاءُ اللَّبَنِ]. This word being in the plural form tells us that there were many kinds of milk from all of the different animals so, there were many skins and containers filled with the different types of milk.

The word, *tumkhaḍu* [تُمْنَحَضُ], in the *majhūl* form, tells us that there were many servants and maids milking the animals; and many maids and servants is proof that they were living a luxurious life. So, it was as if Umm Zar' was upset and dispraising her husband for leaving her at that time of the morning, when they were milking the animals, as though she was worried and scared that he was leaving out at that time to tend to something important.

فَلَقِي امْرَأَةً مَعَهَا وَلَدَانِ لَهَا كَالْفَهْدَيْنِ يَلْعَبَانِ مِنْ تَحْتِ خَصْرِهَا بِرُمَّانَتَيْنِ، فَطَلَّقَنِي
وَنَكَحَهَا

and he saw a woman who had two sons like two leopards playing with her two breasts. (On seeing her) he divorced me and married her.

Thus, her intuition was correct, because when Abū Zar' left out in the morning that day, he saw another woman who was breastfeeding two of her children and became attracted to her, so he ended up marrying her. Thus, it occurred on this occasion that Abū Zar' went out and saw a woman who was breastfeeding two very skinny babies and he saw how they were playing, so he was attracted to her. As a result, he decided to take her as a wife and divorce Umm Zar'.

Umm Zar' described this woman very clearly and one of the things she described, which was most likely the reason for Abū Zar' for marrying her, was that she had two young boys. The 'Arabs were known to love to marry woman that are known to have lots of children, especially male children.

The beauty of those two young boys came from the beauty of their mother and Umm Zar' said about her beauty: [رُمَّانَتَيْنِ] (two pomegranates), which tells us that the woman was young, evident by the fact that her breasts were ripe or plump which shows that she was still young and they didn't start sagging yet from old age or having a lot of children. Then, she goes on to say that this is what led Abū Zar' to divorce her.

فَنَكَحْتُ بَعْدَهُ رَجُلًا سَرِيًّا، رَكِيبَ شَرِيًّا، وَأَخَذَ خَطِيًّا

Thereafter, I married a noble man who used to ride a fast, tireless horse and keep a spear in his hand.

Subsequently, she goes on to describe her next husband, who she married after being divorced by Abū Zar', saying: "Then I married a noble man, who was very rich and highly respected. He had the most noblest kinds of horses and he used to have a staff that he would place under his arm while riding on the horse, showing his nobility and richness."

إِنْتِقَالُ صِفَاتِ الْمَرْكُوبِ لِلرَّاكِبِ

As for the one who rides horses often, you'll find that the traits and characteristics of the horse will start to transfer to the rider and the owner of the horse himself. From these traits are arrogance and pride, as it came in the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ)، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) قَالَ
«رَأْسُ الْكُفْرِ نَحْوَ الْمَشْرِقِ، وَالْفَخْرُ وَالْخَيْلَاءُ فِي أَهْلِ الْخَيْلِ وَالْإِبِلِ الْفَدَّادِينَ أَهْلِ
الْوَبْرِ وَالسَّكِينَةَ فِي أَهْلِ الْغَنَمِ»

*Narrated Abū Hurayrah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ): Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, "The head (or summit) of disbelief lies towards the east; pride and arrogance lie in of the owners of horses and camels, the Bedouins who are rude and uncivil (busy with their camels and pay no attention to Religion); and tranquility (modesty and gentleness) lies in people who are the owners of sheep."*³²

Thus, as for those who frequently ride and raise horses, most of the time, you find them full of arrogance and pride. Sheep always have their heads down towards the ground, humbly grazing upon the grass. Therefore, people who raise and spend time with certain animals normally take on their characteristics and traits. This is why you normally find that those who raise sheep are calm, peaceful, and humble. As for those who ride and raise horses that jump, have their heads high, dance, etc..., you find that, most of the time, they have the same traits. Take, for example, many of those in our times who have very expensive cars; how do they act compared to those who have less expensive cars? Some people even say: "when I drive an expensive car, I feel as though I'm as valuable, fast, and strong as my car." This is usually evident in the way some of them drive.

The Appreciation and Loyalty of Umm Zar' to Abū Zar'

وَأَرَاخَ عَلَيَّ نَعْمًا ثَرِيًّا، وَأَعْطَانِي مِنْ كُلِّ رَائِحَةٍ زَوْجًا، وَقَالَ: كَلْبِي أُمَّ زَرْعٍ، وَمِيرِي

³²

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (52)

أَهْلَكَ. قَالَتْ فَلَوْ جَمَعْتُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَعْطَانِيهِ، مَا بَلَغَ أَصْغَرَ آيَةِ أَبِي زَرِّعٍ.

He gave me many things, and also a pair of every kind of livestock and said, ‘Eat (of this), O Umm Zar’, and give provision to your relatives.’ She added, ‘Yet, all those things which my second husband gave me could not fill the smallest utensil of Abū Zar’.’

Although, this man that she is describing has no defects or deficiencies in him according to Umm Zar’, she says: “Yet, all those things which my second husband gave me could not fill the smallest utensil of Abū Zar’.”

Observe this loyalty of Umm Zar’, even though she was divorced from Abū Zar’, and very rarely do you find a divorced woman mention her previous husband in a good way. And her second husband was not neglectful of her at all, as we can see that he used to give her money and her family as well. Regardless of all that, she said: “if I was to gather everything that my second husband gave me, it would not even fill the smallest cup of what Abū Zar’ gave me.”

So, what was the difference between this second husband and Abū Zar’? It was love, affection, and compassion. She didn’t feel as loved with her second husband as she did with her first husband, Abū Zar’. For this reason, you cannot buy or purchase a woman’s heart with money and wealth, no matter how many mansions, cars, or piles of gold and silver you have...

A woman does not want or desire anything except for her husband’s love, affection, attention, and speaking to her in a respectful manner. It doesn’t matter if a husband always brings his wife all of the expensive things and delicious food that everyone wants to eat if he comes home yelling, screaming, and acting harshly or rudely with his wife... All of that money which he spent on the food and gifts would blow away like dust in the wind, with no benefit to anyone, solely because of his behavior and words.

Rather, if he entered the house with some regular food and said: “If I was able to bring you milk from a sparrow, I would do so and wouldn’t hesitate. You definitely deserve more than what I’ve brought, al-Ḥamdu-lillāh, you all are so patient with me. May Allāh grant us paradise...” If you said something like this, even if you came home with nothing, it

would suffice, because a woman wants love, affection, compassion and warmth. Thus, this is the difference between the second husband and Abū Zar’.

Then, this *ḥadīth* concludes with the most wonderful part when ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) said: *“Allāh’s Apostle (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said to me, ‘I am to you as Abū Zar’ was to his wife Umm Zar’.”*

In reality, the love of Abū Zar’ for Umm Zar’ and the love of Umm Zar’ for Abū Zar’ cannot come close to the love of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) for ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) and the love of ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) for the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

Benefits of Marrying Virgins

Furthermore, Abū Zar’ was the first man in her life, which has a big affect on a woman. If she married someone from the beginning and loved him, then his love for her is engraved in stone. This is why the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) encouraged marrying virgins as it came in a *ḥadīth*:

عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ سَالِمِ بْنِ عُثْبَةَ بْنِ عُؤَيْمِ بْنِ سَاعِدَةَ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ
جَدِّهِ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):

« عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْأَبْكَارِ فَإِنَّهُنَّ أَغْدَبُ أَفْوَاهًا وَأَنْتَقُ أَرْحَامًا وَأَرْضَى بِالْيَسِيرِ »

*It was narrated from ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn Sālim ibn ‘Utbah ibn ‘Uwaym ibn Sā’idah al-Anṣārī, from his father that his grandfather said: “The Messenger of Allāh said: ‘You should marry virgins, for their mouths are sweeter, their wombs are more prolific, and they are satisfied with less.’”*³³

When Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh al-Anṣārī (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) came back from the battle of Uḥud, he said:

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا) قَالَ: هَلَكَ أَبِي وَتَرَكَ سَبْعَ بَنَاتٍ - أَوْ تَسَعَ بَنَاتٍ -
فَتَزَوَّجْتُ امْرَأَةً نَيْبًا، فَقَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):

³³

Sunan Ibn Mājah (1861); authenticated by al-Albānī.

« تَزَوَّجْتَ يَا جَابِرُ ». فَقُلْتُ نَعَمْ. فَقَالَ: « بَكْرًا أَمْ ثَيِّبًا ». قُلْتُ بَلْ ثَيِّبًا.
 قَالَ: « فَهَلَا جَارِيَةً تُلَاعِبُهَا وَتُلَاعِبُكَ، وَتَضَاحِكُهَا وَتَضَاحِكُكَ ». «
 قَالَ فَقُلْتُ لَهُ إِنَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ هَلَكَ وَتَرَكَ بَنَاتٍ، وَإِنِّي كَرِهْتُ أَنْ أَجِئَهُنَّ بِمِثْلِهِنَّ،
 فَتَزَوَّجْتُ امْرَأَةً تَقُومُ عَلَيْهِنَّ وَتُصَلِّحُهُنَّ.
 فَقَالَ: « بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لَكَ ». أَوْ قَالَ: « خَيْرًا ».

Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) reported: “My father (‘Abdullāh ibn Ḥarām) died in the battle of Uḥud... and he left (behind him) seven or nine daughters. So, I married a woman who had been previously married. Allāh’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said to me: ‘O Jābir! Have you married?’ I said: ‘Yes.’ He said: ‘A virgin or one previously married?’ I replied, ‘Rather, one who was previously married.’ Whereupon, he said: ‘Why not a virgin, so that you might play with her and she might play with you, and you might amuse her and she might amuse you?’ I said, ‘(My father,) ‘Abdullāh died (he fell as martyr in Uḥud) and left daughters behind him, and I dislike to marry a girl like them, so I married a lady (matron) so that she may look after them and teach them good manners.’ On that he said: ‘May Allāh bless you,’ or ‘That is good.’”³⁴

Jābir (رضي الله عنه) was the only son with seven or nine sisters, and his father (رضي الله عنه) was the first one killed in the battle of Uḥud. Therefore, Jābir was now responsible for taking care of his sisters, who were still very immature and childish. Due to this, Jābir (رضي الله عنه), not wanting to bring another immature and childish woman to help in raising them, married an older, more experienced woman. Thereupon, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) praised him for that.

Benefits from the Ḥadīth

Fundamental Issues and Islāmic Principles Taken from this Ḥadīth³⁵

- ☪ The etiquette of a man listening to his wife without interrupting her speech. The Prophet (ﷺ) listened to ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) without cutting her off while she was talking.
- ☪ The superiority of ‘Ā’ishah’s (رضي الله عنها) knowledge, comprehension, and preservation of the *Shari’ah*.
- ☪ Having nightly or evening chats with one’s family are from the *Sunnah*.
- ☪ This *ḥadīth* shows that the Prophet (ﷺ) had excellent character.
- ☪ This *ḥadīth* details the moral excellence of the Prophet (ﷺ). Whenever he was asked for something, he never said: “No.” ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about this *ḥadīth* and he narrated to her word for word.
- ☪ It is recommended for a scholar to make things easy to understand when asked about general issues. The Prophet (ﷺ) would often repeat his statements thrice, so that it could be understood.
- ☪ It is recommended to ask questions in order to learn about the religion. ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about the *Ḥadīth* of Umm Zar’.
- ☪ Indirect expressions for divorce are invalid unless accompanied with the intention for divorce. Abū Zar’ divorced Umm Zar’ and the Prophet (ﷺ) told ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), **“I am to you as Abū Zar’ was to his wife Umm Zar’.”**
- ☪ Just because someone or something resembles a person or thing, it does not necessarily carry the same verdict. The Prophet (ﷺ) compared himself to Abū Zar’, who divorced his wife and the Prophet (ﷺ) didn’t divorce ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) based on this resemblance.
- ☪ It is permissible for the man to remind his wife about his kind treatment towards her in order to strengthen the bond of love.

³⁵ This section on Benefits was taken from Brother Abū Āliyah’s essay entitled: *The Ḥadīth of Umm Zar’ – Spouse Interaction*. <https://www.abuaaliyah.com/2015/04/16/the-hadith-of-um-zara-spouse-interaction/?print=print>.

- ☞ It is allowed for a man to address some of his family in the presence of others. In one narration, ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) mentioned that there were other women with her, and the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **“I am to you as Abū Zar’ was to his wife Umm Zar’.”**
- ☞ It is recommended for a man to do things to make his wife happy through his speech or actions.
- ☞ There is no harm for the man to remind his wife of his kindness towards her in order to avoid ungratefulness.
- ☞ If a man loves one of his wives more than others, there is no blame on his behalf for that feeling. This *ḥadīth* clearly shows the love the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) had for ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا).
- ☞ It is permissible to praise yourself if that praise brings about goodness in religious and worldly affairs. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **“I am to you as Abū Zar’ was to his wife Umm Zar’.”**
- ☞ It is permissible to praise a man in his face if that praise does not corrupt his sense of self. ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) told the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) **“You are better to me than Abū Zar’ towards his wife Umm Zar’.”** [collected in *Musnad Abī Ishāq* 2/237 with a sound *isnād*]
- ☞ It is permissible to narrate authentic stories from the previous nations. In some narrations, it mentioned that these eleven women were in *Jāhiliyyah*.
- ☞ It is permissible to joke with your family from time to time.
- ☞ It is permissible to mention some beautiful descriptions of unknown women to other men or women. This is established in this *ḥadīth*. It is not allowed to mention a known woman’s description to others; as this might entice the listener to desire her (i.e. my friend’s wife should not be described to me).
- ☞ This *ḥadīth* shows that a man can have the same *kunyah* as his wife.
- ☞ This *ḥadīth* shows that whenever women get together in most times and chat, they talk about men or just gossip.

May Allāh accept this work and place it on our scale of good deeds on the Day of Resurrection.

Explanation of *The Hadith of Umm Zar'*

The Story of Eleven Women
& Their Husbands

This is an explanation of a ḥadīth narrated by 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) in the house of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). Within it, she tells the story of eleven women speaking to each other about the characteristics and behaviors of their respective husbands, both good and bad. There are a number of benefits derived from this narration in terms of the relationship between a husband and wife, especially from the example of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and 'Ā'ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) themselves.



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455 West Washington St

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