

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## Hadith Umm Zar'

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Session 3

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## Why study Hadith Umm Zar'

The *hadith* has been mentioned in Bukhari, Muslim, Bayhaqi (*Sunan Kubra*), Tirmidhi (*Shamail* not *Sunan*).

The complexity of the language in this *hadith* can't be appreciated in the English, because it has been simplified. However, it has many lessons and reveals the historical culture pre-Islam, which is still relevant today.

It enables us to appreciate the favours and grace of Allah Almighty.

## Ihsan to your spouse

Imam Bukhari in *Sahih* placed this *hadith* in the chapter called *Babu husnil muashrah ma'al ahl* (Good Relationship with the Spouse), which reflects that he understood from the *hadith* that it is about treating the spouse with *ihsan* (excellence). In another chapter, *Kufratul asheer*, Bukhari mentions ingratitude towards the husband.

Imam Nasai' mentioned that women show gratitude as well as well as ingratitude in his *Sunan al Kubra*, which is bigger than *Sunan Sughra* (known as *Al Mujtaba* and more famous), placed it in a different chapter called *shukr al marati li zawjiha* (The Gratitude of the Wife to her Husband).

When emotions control someone, they cannot see beyond their emotions. This is why imam Nasai put this *hadith* under this title.

## Impermissibility of gossiping

The *hadith* begins:

*Narrated 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her): Eleven women sat (at a place) and promised and contracted that they would not conceal anything of the news of their husbands.*

These women were having a gossiping session, a long time before Islam, during *Jahiliya*. According to the majority of narrations it took place in a particular village in Yemen. From an Islamic point of view, it is not permissible to engage in backbiting (*ghiba*) or gossiping (*namima*). Allah Almighty mentioned in the Quran:

*God does not like the public uttering of bad language, unless someone was wronged..  
God is Hearing and Knowing. (4:148)*

## A couple's relationship is their own business

Do not publicise the private details of any discussion and in particular your marital relationship.

When new couples embark on their married life together, they must be careful to keep what is between them and their spouse private. Do not spread your secrets outside your room or your home. You cannot control them once they have been divulged.

Allah Almighty has taught us not to publicise our private lives, unless there is a need, such as a court case where you are asked to specify the details.

Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah that the Prophet (peace be on him) said:

*Meetings are confidential except three: those for the purpose of shedding blood unlawfully, or committing fornication, or acquiring property unjustly. (Abu Dawoud)*

Parents and friends do not need to know the particulars of your relationship with your spouse. Once it has been divulged, you cannot control its spread or effect.

You may be upset by your spouse one day, but if you tell your mother, she will become angry towards your spouse, and even after you have become reconciled, her anger towards your spouse will linger.

### Intimacy is strictly private

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be on him) said:

*Is there any man among you who approaches his wife, closes the door, covers himself with a curtain, and he is concealed with the veil of Allah?*

*They replied: Yes. He said: Later he sits and says: I did so-and-so; I did so-and-so. The people kept silent. He then turned to the women and said (to them): Is there any woman among you who narrates it? They kept silent. Then a girl fell on one of her knees. She raised her head before the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) so that he could see her and listen to her.*

*She said: Messenger of Allah, they (the men) describe the secrets (of intercourse) and they (the women) also describe the secrets (of intercourse) to the people.*

*He said: Do you know what the similitude is? He said: The likeness of this act is the likeness of a female Satan who meets the male Satan on the roadside; he fulfils his desire with her while the people are looking at him. (Abu Dawoud)*

When the Prophet (peace be on him) asked the men and women if they discussed the intimacy with their spouse with others, they remained silent, however one bold girl confessed that this is exactly what was commonly happening, even though the people would not admit it.

Through this *hadith* we see that discussing intimacy with one's spouse is as shameful as a *shaytanic* couple being intimate by the roadside in public. This is how terrible this is.

This was common place at the time, because people were ignorant and newly learning what was *halal* and what wasn't and where the boundaries were. For them at that time it was not obvious that this was wrong, and rulings had not become clear for many of them. Therefore the Prophet (peace be on him) was teaching them to be discreet. Allah Almighty veiled the relationship, so do not unveil it. This applies not just to intimate details, but also any secrets within the home. The concept of veiling secrets is an important concept in our religion.

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said:

*Every one of my followers will be forgiven except those who expose (openly) their wrongdoings. An example of this is that of a man who commits a sin at night which Allah has covered for him, and in the morning, he would say (to people): 'I committed such and*

*such sin last night,' while Allah had kept it a secret. During the night Allah has covered it up but in the morning he tears up the cover provided by Allah Himself. (Bukhari and Muslim)*

### Do not backbite your spouse

Do not talk disparagingly about your husband in public – e.g. complain that he is lazy, or that he doesn't do this or that... You can say some husbands are like this or that in general, but do not name your husband, or make it clear from the description that you are referring to him.

The Prophet (peace be on him said):

*Meetings are confidential except three: those for the purpose of shedding blood unlawfully, or committing fornication, or acquiring property unjustly. (Abu Dawoud).*

This applies to all gatherings, without it having to be said, whatever is discussed in the gathering is not meant to be revealed to those who were not present. They are meetings of *amanah*.

### Lady 1 - The Camel

*The first one said, 'My husband is like the meat of a lean, weak camel which is kept on the top of a mountain which is neither easy to climb, nor is the meat fat, so that one might put up with the trouble of fetching it.'*

The first unnamed lady is describing her husband as bad meat. Unappetizing, smelly and foul. This husband is disgusting for his wife. Moreover, in addition to these unattractive features, he is at the top of a mountain, hard to reach, and when you finally get there, he is skinny, so not even worth the struggle.

### Four flaws

Her audience would have understood what she meant, which is that her husband is a miser. She cannot get anything from him. She cannot converse with him. The relationship is difficult. The communication is zero. And he is arrogant – he looks down on her, and treats her as a second class citizen.

He possesses four critical flaws:

- Miserliness
- Bad character
- Arrogance
- No communication

Any of these four is enough to destroy a marriage.

### Engagement period (*khitbah*)

Test your potential spouse in main qualities.

Observe if they are generous, miserly or wasteful in how they spend their money. It is important to test them. One couple were engaged but the fiancée called it off when the fiancé split the restaurant bill between them.

## Miserliness

There are two ways to combat miserliness:

- Make *dua* – ‘Ya Allah help me to get rid of this bad habit; help me to be a person of generosity as your Prophet (peace be on him) was. Help me to follow his footsteps.’
- You can reduce miserliness through training. Train yourself to spend and give in charity. Every week give away some money.

## Communication problems

Many of the 11 women make the same complaint about lack of communication in their marriage. They have zero communication with their spouse and they are left alone, inside their four walls. The inability to communicate could be a common feature in their family, which they have inherited behaviour from their parents. If the woman stays in such a marriage, the children will inherit this pattern of behaviour.

Having no communication is key issue. Your spouse is your partner and your support to *Jannah*, so you need to be able to communicate what troubles you, what pleases you, what you like and vice versa, so that you can understand each other and support each other.

## Bad character

The wife felt her husband had bad character, which meant he was probably moody and had bad *tarbiyya* (upbringing).

## Arrogance

This trait can be inherited.

How do you identify these bad traits within yourself? You might be aware that deep down you find it hard to spend money, or that you like to hoard.

Allah Almighty never forgives the one who dies with *shirk* (polytheism) and *kibr* (arrogance).

*Shaytan* says ‘I am better than him’. This is a very serious flaw, so be watchful against it.

## Blind spot

You might have arrogance but not be able to see it. Ask those whom you trust to tell you. Seek the support of trusted people.

## How can you improve your character

Read about the character of the Prophet (peace be on him) and his kindness, gentleness and humility and try to follow his footsteps.

## The man’s side of the story

It might be that she is very accurate and is telling the story as it is, or it could be that she is telling half the story

It is likely that the man’s wife has a problem with communication too.

She might not have been creative in pulling her husband out of his cave.

She might have done something that drove him into his cave and shut her out.

Usually we don't talk about our mistakes. We say, 'Look what he did to me'. Not 'Look what I did to him'.

In general men hate women who are very loud.

She might have been demanding and when he refused, she considered him to be stingy. He might be or he might not. Her judgement may or may not be accurate, and she may or may not have a legitimate reason to complain.

### Two sides to every story

We all do this- we tell our side but not the other side. Don't just judge based on one side of a story. In the story of Dawood (peace be on him) Dawood believed the brother who had 1 goat, without listening to the story from his brother who had 99 goats. When you hear the other side of the story it gives a different perspective. In the Quran, it says:

*This brother of mine has ninety nine ewes, and I have one ewe, and he said, 'Entrust it to me,' and he pressured me with words. (38:23)*

*He said, 'He has done you wrong by asking your ewe in addition to his ewes. Many partners take advantage of one another, except those who believe and do good deeds, but these are so few.' David realized that We were testing him, so he sought forgiveness from his Lord, and fell down to his knees, and repented. (38:24)*

Don't believe everything you hear 100%. Explore beyond this. Though there are many women who are victims, there are many men who are victims in marriage too. We can't just be feminist about this and go with the trend.

If the *hadith* had been about a session between the 11 husbands, the story would be completely different from their sides. It cannot be that the women were flawless.

From the story, we can see that there are issues on both sides, but only one side is telling the story. In *Jannah* spouses are purified and perfect but in the *dunya* men and women both have plenty of issues.

*And they will have pure spouses therein, and they will abide therein forever. (2:25)*

### Why are you in this marriage?

In the *hadith*, the wife is willing to tolerate the hardship (climb the mountain) to reach something good, and yet she doesn't think he is worth it. This begs the question: If this is the case, why is she in this marriage? She was not parachuted down on him. Did she not see him and speak to him first?

We need to do our homework before we get married to ensure we are making the right choice. Don't go into a marriage blindfolded.

If it happens that you get married to the wrong person, try to see the good in it and make it work.

If the relationship is not working and she is so unhappy, why is she still in this marriage? Probably because she has children or is financially dependant on him. These might be keeping her stuck in this marriage and leave for her health, sanity and well-being.

We will cover the next story in the next session and analyse the second couple. And we will take a deeper look at how to improve our character and communication, avoid arrogance and work on our self, be more gently and kind to our spouse.

May Allah Almighty enable us to be better and in line with the character of the Prophet (peace be on him) *Ameen*.