

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Hadith Umm Zar'

Living Quran – July 2019

Session 5

Wife 4

The Moderate Marriage – Night of Tihama

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Recap of last session

We are still reflecting on the *Hadith of Umm Zar*, trying to learn some lessons and see how we can improve the relationship between husband and wife from these eleven women.

Last time we covered the second and third women who were talking about their husbands. We talked about fear and respect, and secrets and public issues. What is secret shouldn't be public and what is public is not a secret. We tried to analyse the wife's character as well, to see the story from the man's side if possible. And we talked about a common issue, as wife 3 has the issue of fear: she fears her husband rather than feeling respect for him. We heard about the oppression which these wives have had to deal with (of course according to what we hear from them), that their community and culture exerting on them, and the fact that they cannot get out of these very unhealthy relationships and are paying a hefty price for it.

We also talked about how wife 3 is not willing to get out of this marriage because she fears that it might affect her children, or her children might be taken away from her, so she's sacrificing her life for the children. And we said this is not healthy, instead she should seek a way out and see what is possible that will be better. And we should draw the line between sacrifices, which are required in any relationship, and suicide, which is *haram*.

The last thing we talked about is psychological problems, that either the husband or the wife have, which require help from a specialist. We need to seek support from those who specialise in this field. And sometimes, if it's not working, then divorce should be part of a solution.

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

Wife 4

Today we'll talk about wife 4, she says: 'my husband is a moderate person like the night of *Tihama*, which is neither hot nor cool.' And in some narrations she also says 'And he is like the rain of a cloud – I'm neither afraid of him nor am I discontented with him.' Here we start seeing some light at the end of the tunnel, this is the first one who is praising her husband! Wives 1, 2 and 3 are just brutally critical of their husbands, and I believe that if their husbands were to have the chance to talk about their wives, they would have been brutally critical too. He might say, 'She doesn't care' she is very loud, she is always criticising, she is mocking me, I cannot speak to her, there is no communication between us...'

The significance of night

Woman 4 is praising her husband and says, 'My husband is like the night of *Tihama*', which is a very deep expression. She has chosen the word 'night' – the first thing that this evokes, apart from darkness, is tranquillity. Everything is calm during the night, with no noises or distractions. Even the sunlight and the heat of the day disappears. What does it mean? It means it's very tranquil and calm. Allah Almighty mentions the *layl* many times in the Quran: 'The night is like a dress which covers the day' (39:5) and 'He made the night for you to dwell in tranquillity' (40:61), so the moment she uses the word *layl*, it means she's satisfied.

Tranquility, luxury, harmony and safety

In Surah ArRum Allah Almighty says, 'He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them' (30:21), so the connection between night and *sukoon* is a very strong connection. This is one of the fundamental verses about marriage. When this wife talks about *layl* this is what comes to my mind, that theirs is a beautifully described and a good relationship. What is *Tihama*? *Tihama* is Makkah and the surroundings of Makkah. When you say 'the night of *Tihama*' to an Arab at that time they would know what you meant – it's an example of harmony and good weather, and also luxury. And probably, as some commentators have said, she's referring to *Tihama* because it has plenty of mountains which give security for those living on the mountains; they do not fear any invasion – we'll come back to this later.

Moderation

This woman is living in tranquillity and also moderation i.e. the night is temperate – not too cold and not too hot. This is exactly what you would want. When Allah Almighty described the *ummah* He said, 'We have made you a moderate *ummah*', so moderation is balance and the best of two extremes. Overall she

is describing her husband as a person of good character. Moderate character. He is not very angry, but he still cares about things. Not very emotional, but not without emotion, and so on.

Refreshing

And the second thing she mentions in the additional narrations, 'He's like the rain of a cloud'. Not too much, not too little. It's refreshing. Again, think of the context – you are talking about people living in the desert. For them, rain means a lot. In that environment, what does it mean if you have a cloud coming with rain and just pouring on you? It's very refreshing and rejuvenating and it's something you need.

Generosity

The rain is also a symbol of generosity. My husband is like that cloud, like that very rain. i.e. He is very generous and very useful to me, like the rain, and very refreshing. Thus in just a few, limited words, every single word is full of meaning. She's very articulate and precise, and very deep in her description. And very smart, too, since this is her way of utilising her vocabulary.

'My husband is generous' is an important statement, as one's attitude towards spending can make or break many marriages. If someone's a miser, he breaks the marriage. Hind (may Allah Almighty be pleased with her) came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said that Abu Sufyan was a miser, who would not give her money, which she needed herself and her children. The Prophet (peace be upon him) knew she was not making this up. She was one of the respected companions, and he told her to take what was sufficient for her and her children in a moderate way. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated:

Hind (bint `Utba) said to the Prophet (peace be on him) 'Abu Sufyan is a miserly man and I need to take some money of his wealth.' The Prophet (peace be on him) said, 'Take reasonably what is sufficient for you and your children.' (Bukhari)

This means one cannot take too much money and not too little, just what is sufficient for one's needs. Miserliness is a problem, it destroys good relationships and tranquillity, which is required between husband and wife.

Temperate mood

When the woman says her husband is 'moderate, neither hot nor cold' what does it mean here? As stated earlier, it means he's moderate in his mood, in his dealings, in his jealousy, in his way of thinking and so on - it's a generous statement. And you can also understand from this that he doesn't harm her.

So, bottom line is that he has a good character. She says she has no fear and no discontentment. No fear. We came across this with the previous women (2 and 3) – they are terrified of their husbands. This is a common issue – commonly, a wife doesn't want anyone to tell her husband that she's seeking help, she is scared what he will do to her. Fear is an emotion which can also make or break a marriage. Marriage is built on respect, not fear. It's not a proof of masculinity that a wife fears her husband, it's a proof of a misunderstanding of how the relationship should be. The relationship has to be built on respect. The wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) never said they feared him – they respected and loved him.

Security

Or it might be that the word fear is linked to *Tihama*. Those who are living in *Tihama* have no fear of invasion, so they sleep well, they don't need to guard their fortresses. It means he's so strong he protects

his house and his family, which again is another feature of a good husband. As Allah Almighty stated in the Quran, 'men are guardians or protectors of women' (4:34), and the wife has mentioned this too by the cloud of rain which is protecting.

Communication, companionship and friendship

When wife 4 says, 'nor am I discontented with him', translated literally means, 'I'm not bored of him'. He entertains her, she entertains him; they have mutual respect and support, which is a perfect relationship. This is the first time out of these four women that one of them has praised her husband. He probably has a good sense of humour and conversation. He's open to listening and conversing with her, which is one of the main ingredients of a good relationship between humans, let alone between husband and wife.

As we've seen in the previous testimonies, a relationship between husband and wife with zero or very limited communication is hell. It causes suffering and drives him and her out of this relationship. So we need to be careful. It could be that he doesn't know how to communicate with her, or vice versa, because in his family no one had conversations. Everyone was preoccupied or concerned with their own business, and no one talked to each other except about the certain issues. It might not be that he's a bad person, but he's not been trained enough and he's not a very social person, so you need to be careful. When you are introduced to somebody, you need to check if they're a social person, if they're open for discussion, if they're not a mute person.

Wife 4 is saying she is very satisfied with her relationship, and her husband. He has a good character; he's generous. He doesn't harm her. She lives in safety, security and peace. She feels very contented. She has self-confidence, good communication with him, and he's a very moderate person. And it is very likely that she loves him. All of this fosters more love between them.

In the bedroom

Some commentators have said that she's also referring to the intimate relationship. He's moderate in this as well. This can also be a make or break in the relationship. If he's a cold person in this relationship it's not healthy, and vice versa.

Husband's perspective

Now, if the husband was given the chance to talk about his wife, what would he say? Probably the husband would say she's a very nice and kind person and they have mutual understanding and respect. She's a very soft and caring person and he loves her and feels that she's respectful. She has a good character and they are getting along. She's good to him and he's good to her. Of course I'm not saying they have no challenges, or that they have no conflicts sometimes. Of course they do. But she's giving an honest overview of her relationship and I believe that in his statement he would also give an honest overview. And if you look at these statements, these are the main ingredients for a successful, good relationship. This is what we need to emphasise and nurture.

Forgiveness

Of course they have mistakes and problems and such, but the way they keep this relationship good is that they learn to forgive one another. This is another crucial issue in a relationship.

As Allah Almighty stated in the Quran, 'repel evil with what is good' (41:34), so if something bad happens, don't return bad with bad. When you return with good, then good will come to you *inshAllah* Almighty.

This is what we need to understand, and Allah Almighty mentioned that forgiveness is important many times, because we are not angels at the end of the day.

When someone makes a mistake, regret is required, and forgiveness from the other person; then learn your lesson, move on, and never come back to this again. It's unhealthy to retrieve the old files and remind each other about past mistakes when you've moved on – this is a destroyer of relationships. This is common in women, I've rarely seen it in men (I'm not saying it's not in existence, but it's a low percentage), and we need to have control over it otherwise it's a recipe for disaster.

We ask Allah Almighty to enable us to forgive and forget. Carrying this luggage around just hurts us; just let it heal. If you want Allah Almighty to forgive you, then forgive others.

Mirror

The summary of the relationship between wife 4 and her husband in one word is: moderation. They mirror each other in their goodness. She's a mirror to him and he's a mirror to her. This does not mean that they are carbon copies of each other, rather they complement and complete each other. They balance out their personality traits and have a good understanding of each other. They are most likely best friends, supportive of each other emotionally and physically. While the husband is easy going, and, within reason, allows his wife the space to fulfil her needs and interests, he does not feel pressured, harassed or nagged by her, and his trust and leniency is not abused by her. In matters relating to their home, they seek and respect each other's opinion, consider each other's alternative viewpoint and make decisions collectively, but ultimately, the wife allows her husband to have the authority in the home to take the final decision. They are expressive of their love for each other, considerate of each other's feelings, and find each other attractive, taking care of their physical appearance for each other. Overall this is a tranquil home, in which the children feel secure, mirror their parents and respect their parents' authority.