THE PROPHET'S SIRAH — COMPLETE COLLECTION

VOLUME 5

His Character and Household

Series 31, 32 and 32B



Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

THE PROPHET'S SIRAH — COMPLETE COLLECTION

VOLUME 5

HIS CHARACTER AND HOUSEHOLD

Series 31, 32 and 32B: The Shama'il of the Prophet ﷺ and the Mothers of the Believers, According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

"And indeed, you are of a great moral character."

SURAH AL-QALAM 68:4

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who sent us a Messenger from among ourselves, to whom our hardship is grievous and who is deeply concerned for our good. Blessings and peace be upon our master, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and upon his family and Companions, who witnessed his life and then preserved it and passed it on to us with complete trustworthiness.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

This book gathers Series 31, 32 and 32B of The Prophet's Sirah into one volume: the Shama'il of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ — his appearance, character and daily life — and the Mothers of the Believers, his wives. The references of every series are kept. May this book bring us closer to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and be a continuing charity for all who help, read and share it.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS BOOK

This book's cover does not depict any human being or animal. It shows a row of small rooms with mud-brick walls and palm-frond roofs at dusk: small oil lamps burn at the doorways, a warm yellow light glows from inside the rooms, and date palms stand around them beneath a darkening sky.

These simple rooms recall al-Hujurat, the homes of the wives of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ beside his Mosque — where revelation came down, and where the Mothers of the Believers witnessed and narrated his daily life. The gentle lamplight stands for his character and Sunnah, which shone from those humble homes and still lights the way of the ummah today.

The dark blue band at the bottom, framed by fine gold lines, is where the author's name appears. The titles on all five volumes of this collection share the same style, size and gold colour, so that the five books look like one set when placed together.

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SUPPORT & DONATIONS

Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = note (weak report or further explanation); blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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PART ONE

As If You Could See Him

The Prophet's Sirah — Series 31

The Shama'il of the Prophet ﷺ: His Appearance, Character and Daily Life, According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

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AS IF YOU COULD SEE HIM

Books 1 to 30 followed the ***life journey*** of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from birth to death. This Book 31 takes a different approach: no longer following a timeline, but ***getting to know his person*** — what he looked like, how he walked and spoke, what he ate and wore, how he slept and worshipped, and how he treated his family, servant, children and enemies.

This field is called ***ash-Shama'il*** (qualities and manners). We have no picture of him, and Islam does not portray him in images. Yet the Companions left ***descriptions in words*** so precise that the reader can know him ***as if seeing him***.

We will use ***sahih and hasan*** hadiths, mainly from Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim and Jami' at-Tirmidhi. Famous descriptions with weak chains will be placed in "Sirah Note" boxes.

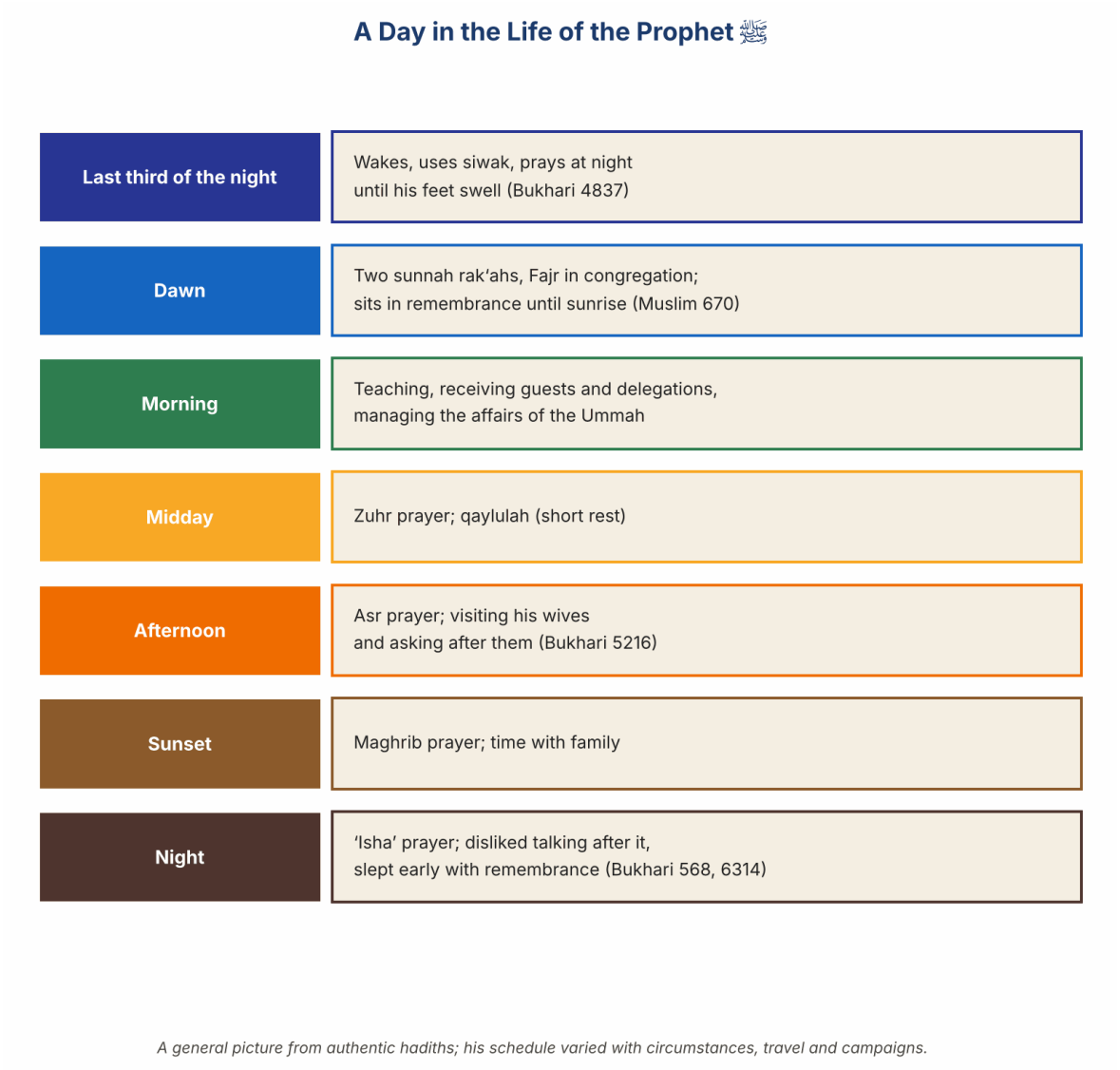


Figure 1: A day in the life of the Prophet ﷺ.

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Note: The Qur'anic translation in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in its box. The physical description of the Prophet ﷺ in this eBook is given in words only, without any drawing, out of respect for him.

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WHAT ARE THE SHAMA'IL?

The most famous book in this field is ***ash-Shama'il al-Muhammadiyyah*** by ***Imam Abu 'Isa at-Tirmidhi*** (d. 279 AH), a student of Imam al-Bukhari. He gathered over 400 narrations on the appearance, clothing, food, worship and character of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in more than 50 chapters.

Why should we know his qualities? First, because ***love requires knowing***; we cannot love someone we do not know. Second, because Allah made him ***an example to follow*** (Al-Ahzab 33:21); we need to know how he lived to follow him. Third, because knowing the perfection of his character ***strengthens faith*** that he truly was the Messenger of Allah.

Scholars also mention that knowing his physical description helps a person ***recognise him in a dream***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever sees me in a dream has truly seen me, for Satan cannot take my form" (Sahih al-Bukhari 110).

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HEIGHT AND BUILD

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه, who served the Messenger of Allah ﷺ for ten years and saw him every day, gives the most complete description:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3547

حَدَّثَنِي ابْنُ بُكَيْرٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ خَالِدٍ، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ أَبِي هِلاَلٍ، عَنْ رَبِيعَةَ بْنِ أَبِي عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَنَسَ بْنَ مَالِكٍ، يَصِفُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ كَانَ رَبْعَةً مِنَ الْقَوْمِ، لَيْسَ بِالطَّوِيلِ وَلاَ بِالْقَصِيرِ، أَزْهَرَ اللَّوْنِ لَيْسَ بِأَبْيَضَ أَمْهَقَ وَلاَ آدَمَ، لَيْسَ بِجَعْدٍ قَطَطٍ وَلاَ سَبْطٍ رَجِلٍ، أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ وَهْوَ ابْنُ أَرْبَعِينَ، فَلَبِثَ بِمَكَّةَ عَشْرَ سِنِينَ يُنْزَلُ عَلَيْهِ وَبِالْمَدِينَةِ عَشْرَ سِنِينَ، وَلَيْسَ فِي رَأْسِهِ وَلِحْيَتِهِ عِشْرُونَ شَعَرَةً بَيْضَاءَ. قَالَ رَبِيعَةُ فَرَأَيْتُ شَعَرًا مِنْ شَعَرِهِ، فَإِذَا هُوَ أَحْمَرُ فَسَأَلْتُ فَقِيلَ احْمَرَّ مِنَ الطِّيبِ.

TRANSLATION:

Rabi'ah ibn Abi 'Abd ar-Rahman said: I heard Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه describe the Prophet ﷺ: ***"He was of medium stature among the people, neither tall nor short. His complexion was radiant, neither pale white nor dark brown. His hair was neither tightly curled nor completely straight.*** Revelation came to him when he was forty. He stayed in Makkah ten years receiving revelation, and in Madinah ten years. ***There were not twenty white hairs in his head and beard."*** Rabi'ah said: I saw one of his hairs, and it was reddish. When I asked, I was told: "It became red from perfume."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Yahya ibn Bukayr, from al-Layth ibn Sa'd, from Khalid ibn Yazid, from Sa'id ibn Abi Hilal, from Rabi'ah ibn Abi 'Abd ar-Rahman (Rabi'at ar-Ra'y), from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Virtues, Chapter: The description of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith No. 3547; also No. 3548, 5900 and Muslim No. 2347.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3547

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The key word in Anas's description is ***"moderate"***: not tall, not short; not too pale, not dark; hair neither curly nor straight. It is as if Allah made his physical form reflect the ***balance*** that underlies his teaching.

SIRAH NOTE: THE FAMOUS DESCRIPTION BY 'ALI

There is a famous long description from ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه: he was neither very tall nor very short, his face was slightly round and fair with a reddish tint, his eyes intensely black with long lashes, his shoulders broad, and when he walked he stepped firmly as if descending a slope. ‘Ali said: “I never saw anyone like him, before or after.”

This long narration (Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi 3638) is graded ***weak*** in its chain. Yet much of its content is supported by other sahih and hasan narrations, such as Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi 3637 (hasan sahih).

REFERENCES:

at-Tirmidhi, ash-Shama’il al-Muhammadiyyah; Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi 3637, 3638. https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:3638

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A FACE LIKE THE MOON

The Companions often described the face of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with the most beautiful words they knew. Al-Bara' ibn 'Azib رضى الله عنه said:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3549

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، حَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ مَنْصُورٍ، حَدَّثَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي إِسْحَاقَ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ الْبَرَاءَ، يَقُولُ كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَحْسَنَ النَّاسِ وَجْهًا وَأَحْسَنَهُ خَلْقًا، لَيْسَ بِالطَّوِيلِ الْبَائِنِ وَلاَ بِالْقَصِيرِ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Ishaq said: I heard al-Bara' رضى الله عنه say: ***"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the most handsome of people in face and the finest in form; he was neither very tall nor short."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ahmad ibn Sa'id Abu 'Abdillah, from Ishaq ibn Mansur, from Ibrahim ibn Yusuf, from his father, Yusuf ibn Ishaq, from Abu Ishaq as-Sabi'i, from al-Bara' ibn 'Azib رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Virtues, Chapter: The description of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith No. 3549; also No. 3551, 3552 and Muslim No. 2337.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3549

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

When someone asked al-Bara': "Was his face like a sword (long and gleaming)?" He said: ***"No, rather like the moon"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3552). Jabir ibn Samurah رضى الله عنه said: ***"No, rather like the sun and the moon, and it was round"*** (Sahih Muslim 2344).

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: ***"I never saw anything more beautiful than the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; it was as if the sun were moving across his face"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3648 — its chain is graded weak, but its meaning is supported by Sahih Muslim 2344). His face also ***shone when he was happy***, as 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها relates: "The lines of his face were glowing" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3555).

Yet the beauty of his face was not for pride. He used to pray: "O Allah, as You have made my form beautiful, make my character beautiful" (Musnad Ahmad — graded sahih by al-Albani). True beauty, according to his teaching, is ***beauty of heart and character***.

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Ka'b ibn Malik رضى الله عنه said: ***"Whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was pleased, his face would shine as if it were a piece of the moon, and we would recognise that in him"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3556). The Companions read his feelings in his face, for he hid nothing harmful in his heart.

The beauty of his face was matched by the beauty of his heart. Those who met him for the first time often felt awe, and those who stayed with him came to love him — for his outward beauty was only a sign of the light of guidance within.

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COMPLEXION, HAIR AND GREY HAIRS

Anas described his complexion as ***azhar al-lawn*** — a radiant, luminous fairness, neither pale nor dark (Sahih al-Bukhari 3547). His hair was ***wavy***, neither curly nor straight. Al-Bara' mentions that his hair ***reached his earlobes*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3551), and in other narrations it reached his shoulders.

At first he let his hair hang forward like the People of the Book, then he ***parted it in the middle*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3558). He took good care of his hair, oiling and combing it, and said: "Whoever has hair, let him honour it" (Sunan Abi Dawud 4163 — hasan sahih).

Though he died at 63, his grey hairs were ***very few — fewer than twenty*** in his head and beard (Sahih al-Bukhari 3547). Jabir ibn Samurah mentions that when he oiled his hair, the grey did not show (Sahih Muslim 2344). He also had ***a thick beard***.

From this we learn that ***caring for one's appearance*** is part of the Sunnah. Islam does not teach dishevelment or dirtiness in the name of asceticism; the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was always neat, clean and fragrant.

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THE SEAL OF PROPHETHOOD

Between the shoulders of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was a mark known as ***the Seal of Prophethood*** (Khatam an-Nubuwwah). As-Sa'ib ibn Yazid رضى الله عنه relates that as a child, his aunt brought him to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ because he was ill. He wiped his head and prayed for him, then made wudu'; as-Sa'ib drank the leftover water, then stood behind him and ***saw the seal between his shoulders*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3541).

Jabir ibn Samurah رضى الله عنه described it: ***"I saw the seal near his shoulder, the size of a pigeon's egg, its colour like that of his body"*** (Sahih Muslim 2344).

This seal was one of ***the signs of prophethood*** mentioned in earlier scriptures. In the story of Salman al-Farisi رضى الله عنه, narrated by Imam Ahmad in al-Musnad, he looked for these signs — including the seal between the shoulders — before embracing Islam. It also reminds us that he is ***the seal of the prophets*** (Al-Ahzab 33:40).

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SOFT HANDS AND FRAGRANT BODY

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه, who was often with him, describes two things he felt:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3561

حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ، حَدَّثَنَا حَمَّادٌ، عَنْ ثَابِتٍ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ مَا مَسِسْتُ حَرِيرًا وَلاَ دِيبَاجًا أَلْيَنَ مِنْ كَفِّ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم، وَلاَ شَمِمْتُ رِيحًا قَطُّ أَوْ عَرْفًا قَطُّ أَطْيَبَ مِنْ رِيحِ أَوْ عَرْفِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم.

TRANSLATION:

Anas رضى الله عنه said: ***"I never touched silk or brocade softer than the palm of the Prophet ﷺ, and I never smelled a scent or fragrance more pleasant than the scent or fragrance of the Prophet ﷺ."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Sulayman ibn Harb, from Hammad ibn Zayd, from Thabit al-Bunani, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Virtues, Chapter: The description of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith No. 3561; also No. 1973 and Muslim No. 2330.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3561

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The hands of a leader who had dug the Trench, carried stones to build the mosque and held a sword in battle, yet ***soft as silk***. And his body was always ***fragrant*** — not only from the perfume he wore, but his own scent.

The Companions mention that ***his sweat was like pearls*** and more fragrant than musk. Umm Sulaym رضى الله عنها once collected his sweat while he slept at her house and mixed it with her perfume (Sahih Muslim 2331).

The softness of his hands also symbolises ***the gentleness of his touch*** towards people: he stroked the heads of orphans, placed his hand on the chest of an anxious Companion, and shook hands warmly, never being the first to let go.

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HOW HE WALKED

'Ali ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه said: ***"When he walked, he leaned forward, as if descending a slope"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3637 — hasan sahih). This describes a stride that was ***firm, energetic and purposeful***, not lazy or arrogant.

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: ***"I never saw anyone walk faster than the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; it was as if the earth were folded up for him. We would exert ourselves (to keep up), while he was not straining"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3648 — its chain is graded weak, but its meaning is supported by the narration of 'Ali above).

His walk reflected the description of the servants of the Most Merciful: ***"And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily"*** (Al-Furqan 25:63) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 25:63.

Walking firmly but not arrogantly, briskly but not hurriedly — this is the ***balance*** he taught. A Muslim walks with purpose, not swaggering or showing off.

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HOW HE SPOKE

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: ***"The Prophet ﷺ spoke in such a way that if someone wanted to count his words, he could"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3567). She rebuked a man who narrated hadith quickly: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not speak rapidly as you do."

In another narration she said: ***"He spoke clearly and distinctly, so that those sitting with him could memorise it"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3639 — sahih). Anas رضى الله عنه also mentions that he ***repeated important words three times*** so they would be understood (Sahih al-Bukhari 95).

He also ***never used foul language***. 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما said: "The Prophet ﷺ was neither obscene nor did he deliberately speak obscenely," and he said: ***"The best of you are those with the best character"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3559).

His manner of speaking is ***a model of effective communication***: measured, clear, repeating important points, and always free of harsh words. Teachers, parents and leaders can learn much from it.

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HIS SMILE AND LAUGHTER

'Abdullah ibn al-Harith ibn Jaz' رضى الله عنه said: ***"I never saw anyone who smiled more than the Messenger of Allah ﷺ"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3641 — hasan). Though he carried the heavy burden of the message, he still met people with ***a pleasant face***.

Yet his laughter was ***moderate***. 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: ***"I never saw the Prophet ﷺ laugh so heartily that his uvula could be seen; he would only smile"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6092). Sometimes he laughed until his molars showed, when something truly delighted him.

He also taught that ***a smile is charity***: "Your smile in the face of your brother is charity" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 1956 — hasan). Jarir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنه said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ never saw me, since I accepted Islam, except that he smiled at me" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3035).

He also ***joked***, but his jokes never contained a lie. An old woman asked whether she would enter Paradise; he replied playfully that old women do not enter Paradise — meaning they will be made young again (ash-Shama'il of at-Tirmidhi — graded hasan by al-Albani). His humour ***delighted without hurting***.

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MORE MODEST THAN A SECLUDED MAIDEN

One of the most prominent qualities of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was ***modesty (haya')***. Abu Sa'id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه describes it:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3562

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، عَنْ شُعْبَةَ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي عُتْبَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَشَدَّ حَيَاءً مِنَ الْعَذْرَاءِ فِي خِدْرِهَا.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه said: ***"The Prophet ﷺ was more modest than a secluded virgin behind her curtain."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Musaddad ibn Musarhad, from Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Qattan, from Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj, from Qatadah ibn Di'amah, from 'Abdullah ibn Abi 'Utbah, from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Virtues, Chapter: The description of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith No. 3562; also No. 6102 and Muslim No. 2320.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3562

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

A secluded maiden in those days was very shy, rarely going out or speaking with strangers. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***was shyer than that***. In the same narration, Abu Sa'id added: ***"When he disliked something, we could tell from his face"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6102) — he did not rebuke harshly in front of people.

This modesty did not stop him from ***speaking the truth firmly*** when Allah's rights were violated. His was a noble modesty: shy of hurting people, shy of shaming people, and shy before Allah. He said: ***"Modesty is part of faith"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 24).

When he needed to correct someone's mistake, he often said: ***"Why do some people do such-and-such?"*** without naming anyone. This is the etiquette of correction that preserves others' dignity.

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Modesty in Islam is not shyness that stops a person from learning or speaking the truth. The Prophet ﷺ was the most modest of people, yet he taught, corrected and spoke firmly when truth required it. True modesty holds a person back from what is shameful, not from what is right.

The Prophet ﷺ said: ***"Modesty brings nothing but good"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6117). In an age that often celebrates boldness without restraint, his example reminds us that modesty in speech, dress and conduct is a strength and a branch of faith.

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HIS CLOTHING

Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها said: ***"The garment most beloved to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the qamis (long shirt)"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 1762 — hasan). The qamis is a long garment that covers the body fully and is easy to wear.

He also encouraged ***white clothing***: "Wear white among your garments, for it is among the best of your garments, and shroud your dead in it" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 994 — hasan). Yet he also wore other colours; al-Bara' رضى الله عنه once saw him in ***a red cloak*** and said: "I never saw anything more beautiful than him" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3551).

His clothing was ***simple and clean***, neither luxurious nor ragged. He forbade men to wear silk and gold, and forbade trailing garments out of arrogance. He also taught a supplication when putting on new clothes, as thanks to Allah.

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RING, SANDALS AND TURBAN

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ wished to write to kings (Book 17), he was told they would not accept a letter without a seal. So he had ***a silver ring*** made, engraved with ***"Muhammad Rasul Allah"***. Anas said: "It is as if I can still see the gleam of that ring on his finger" (Sahih al-Bukhari 5872).

The ring was ***entirely of silver***, including its stone (Sahih al-Bukhari 5870). He did not wear gold rings, and forbade men to wear them. Scholars mention that the engraving was arranged in three lines: "Allah" at the top, "Rasul" in the middle, and "Muhammad" at the bottom, out of reverence for the name of Allah.

His footwear was ***a pair of sandals with two straps*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5857). On the day of the conquest of Makkah, he addressed the people with ***a black turban*** on his head (Sahih Muslim 1359). All this shows he dressed like an ordinary Arab of his time, ***without luxury and without arrogance***.

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PERFUME

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ loved ***perfume***. Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه said: ***"The Prophet ﷺ never refused (a gift of) perfume"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 2582). He wore the best perfume, and 'A'ishah once saw the glint of musk in the parting of his hair.

The Companions could tell which way he had passed because of the ***fragrance*** he left. Jabir ibn Samurah رضى الله عنه relates that the Prophet ﷺ stroked his cheek when he was a child, and he felt his hand cool and fragrant, as if it had just been taken out of a perfumer's bag (Sahih Muslim 2329).

Wearing perfume, especially for the mosque and Friday prayer, is ***Sunnah***. It honours others and makes gatherings more pleasant. For women, however, he forbade wearing perfume that unrelated men could smell when going out.

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"THE TWO BLACK THINGS": HIS FOOD

How did the leader of all Arabia eat? 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها gives a surprising answer:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6459

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الأُوَيْسِيُّ، حَدَّثَنِي ابْنُ أَبِي حَازِمٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ يَزِيدَ بْنِ رُومَانَ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ لِعُرْوَةَ ابْنَ أُخْتِي إِنْ كُنَّا لَنَنْظُرُ إِلَى الْهِلاَلِ ثَلاَثَةَ أَهِلَّةٍ فِي شَهْرَيْنِ، وَمَا أُوقِدَتْ فِي أَبْيَاتِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم نَارٌ. فَقُلْتُ مَا كَانَ يُعِيشُكُمْ قَالَتِ الأَسْوَدَانِ التَّمْرُ وَالْمَاءُ إِلاَّ أَنَّهُ قَدْ كَانَ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم جِيرَانٌ مِنَ الأَنْصَارِ كَانَ لَهُمْ مَنَائِحُ، وَكَانُوا يَمْنَحُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم مِنْ أَبْيَاتِهِمْ، فَيَسْقِينَاهُ.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said to 'Urwah: "O son of my sister, ***we would see the new moon, then the new moon, then the new moon — three new moons in two months — and no fire would be lit in the houses of the Messenger of Allah*** ﷺ." I asked: "What sustained you?" She said: ***"The two black things: dates and water."*** Except that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had neighbours from the Ansar who had milk-camels, and they would send milk to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from their houses, and he would give it to us to drink."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah al-Uwaysi, from 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Abi Hazim, from his father, Abu Hazim Salamah ibn Dinar, from Yazid ibn Ruman, from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'A'ishah, Mother of the Believers رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Softening Hearts, Chapter: How the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions lived, Hadith No. 6459; also No. 2567 and Muslim No. 2972.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6459

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Two months without a fire lit in the kitchen — no bread baked, no meat cooked. Only dates and water. This was not because he could not afford it; great spoils and zakat passed through his hands, but all was distributed to the poor, the Companions and the needs of the Ummah.

'A'ishah also said: ***"The family of Muhammad ﷺ never ate their fill of wheat bread for three consecutive days from the time he came to Madinah until he died"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5416). Yet he

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never complained. Note too how ***the Ansar neighbours*** shared milk with his household — a community that helped one another.

The lesson for us: moderation in eating is not only Sunnah but also ***healthy***. He said: "No human fills a vessel worse than his stomach… a third for food, a third for drink and a third for breath" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 2380 — sahih).

He also taught us to share: ***"The food of two is enough for three, and the food of three is enough for four"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5392). The blessing of food lies not in its quantity, but in ***togetherness and gratitude***.

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TABLE MANNERS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had beautiful table manners. First, he ***never found fault with food***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3563

حَدَّثَنِي عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْجَعْدِ، أَخْبَرَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ أَبِي حَازِمٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ مَا عَابَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم طَعَامًا قَطُّ، إِنِ اشْتَهَاهُ أَكَلَهُ، وَإِلاَّ تَرَكَهُ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: ***"The Prophet ﷺ never found fault with any food. If he liked it, he ate it; otherwise he left it."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Ali ibn al-Ja'd, from Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj, from Sulayman al-A'mash, from Abu Hazim al-Ashja'i, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Virtues, Chapter: The description of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith No. 3563; also No. 5409 and Muslim No. 2064.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3563

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

'Umar ibn Abi Salamah رضى الله عنهما, his stepson, relates that as a boy his hand wandered all over the dish. The Prophet ﷺ corrected him gently: ***"O boy, mention the name of Allah, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is near you"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5376). 'Umar said: "Ever since, that is how I have eaten."

He also said: ***"I do not eat while reclining"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5398) — a sign of humility. He ate with three fingers, licked his fingers after eating, and praised Allah when finished. He also liked ***eating together***, for there is blessing in eating in company.

These manners are very easy to practise, but their effect is great: ***gratitude, respect for provision, and care for the feelings of the cook***. Criticising food can hurt a wife, mother or host who took pains to prepare it.

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FOODS HE LOVED

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: ***"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ loved sweet things and honey"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5431). Anas رضى الله عنه saw him ***picking out pieces of gourd*** from the dish when a tailor invited him to a meal, and said: "Since that day I have loved gourd" (Sahih al-Bukhari 5379).

He also loved ***milk***, ***dates***, ***vinegar*** — he said: "What an excellent condiment vinegar is" (Sahih Muslim 2051) — and ***the foreleg meat***. He broke his fast with fresh dates, or dried dates, or water if there were none.

Notice Anas's attitude: ***out of love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he loved what the Prophet loved***, even gourd. That is true love — not mere words, but a desire to resemble the beloved even in small things.

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HOW HE SLEPT

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***disliked sleeping before 'Isha' and talking after it*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 568).

He slept early so he could rise for night prayer. When going to sleep, he placed his hand under his cheek and said: ***"Bismika Allahumma amutu wa ahya"*** — "In Your name, O Allah, I die and I live" (Sahih al-Bukhari 6314).

He also taught the Companions to make wudu' before sleeping, ***lie on the right side***, and recite the supplication of submission: "O Allah, I submit myself to You…" (Sahih al-Bukhari 6311). On waking, he said: "All praise is for Allah who gave us life after causing us to die, and to Him is the resurrection" (Sahih al-Bukhari 6314).

His bedding was ***very simple***. 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه relates that he slept on a mat until it ***left marks on his side***. When the Companions offered to get him a mattress, he said: ***"What have I to do with this world?"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 2377 — hasan). We will return to this hadith in Chapter 29.

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NIGHT PRAYER: "A GRATEFUL SERVANT"

At night, while people slept, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ rose to commune with his Lord. 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها relates:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4837

حَدَّثَنَا الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يَحْيَى، أَخْبَرَنَا حَيْوَةُ، عَنْ أَبِي الأَسْوَدِ، سَمِعَ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ أَنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم كَانَ يَقُومُ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ حَتَّى تَتَفَطَّرَ قَدَمَاهُ فَقَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ لِمَ تَصْنَعُ هَذَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَكَ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ قَالَ أَفَلاَ أُحِبُّ أَنْ أَكُونَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا. فَلَمَّا كَثُرَ لَحْمُهُ صَلَّى جَالِسًا فَإِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَرْكَعَ قَامَ، فَقَرَأَ ثُمَّ رَكَعَ.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها narrated that the Prophet of Allah ﷺ ***used to stand (in prayer) at night until his feet became cracked (swollen)***. 'A'ishah said: "Why do you do this, O Messenger of Allah, when Allah has forgiven your past and future sins?" He said: ***"Should I not love to be a grateful servant?"*** When he put on weight (in old age), he prayed sitting; when he wished to bow, he stood, recited, then bowed.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Hasan ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, from 'Abdullah ibn Yahya, from Haywah ibn Shurayh, from Abu al-Aswad Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'A'ishah, Mother of the Believers رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Surah al-Fath, Hadith No. 4837; also No. 1130, 4836 and Muslim No. 2820.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4837

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

'A'ishah's question was reasonable: if all sins are forgiven, why such effort? His answer changes how we understand worship: ***worship is not merely atonement for sins, but an expression of gratitude***. The more blessings one receives, the more gratitude one should show.

His night prayer was ***long***: in one rak'ah he once recited al-Baqarah, an-Nisa' and Ali 'Imran (Sahih Muslim 772). Yet when his body grew heavier in old age, he prayed sitting — showing that worship is adapted to one's ability, ***never abandoned***.

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For those of us who are busy and tired, his counsel is: ***the deeds most beloved to Allah are those done consistently, even if small*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6464). Two rak'ahs before sleep or before Fajr, done steadily, are better than a long prayer once in a while.

Night prayer need not be long to be valuable. Even two short rak'ahs before witr, offered sincerely in the quiet of the night, follow his Sunnah and bring the heart closer to Allah.

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REMEMBRANCE AND SEEKING FORGIVENESS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***remembered Allah constantly*** in every state — on waking, sleeping, entering and leaving the house, eating, dressing, riding and travelling. 'A'ishah said: "The Prophet ﷺ remembered Allah at all times" (Sahih Muslim 373).

Though sinless, he ***sought forgiveness more than seventy times a day***. He said: ***"By Allah, I seek Allah's forgiveness and repent to Him more than seventy times a day"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6307).

If the noblest of people sought forgiveness that often, how much more should we, who are full of faults. Istighfar is not only for major sins; it is ***a way of life*** that cleanses the heart, opens doors of provision and draws one near to Allah.

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HIS FASTING

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: ***"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would fast until we said he would not break his fast, and he would not fast until we said he would not fast. I never saw him fast a full month except Ramadan, and I never saw him fast more in any month than in Sha'ban"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 1969).

He also fasted on ***Mondays and Thursdays***, as deeds are presented to Allah on those days, and ***three days each month***. Of Monday he said: "That is the day I was born and the day I was sent" (Sahih Muslim 1162).

Yet he ***forbade excess***. When some Companions wished to fast every day without break, he forbade them, saying that he himself fasted and broke his fast, prayed at night and slept, and married — and whoever turns away from his Sunnah is not of him (Sahih al-Bukhari 5063).

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AT HOME

What was the Messenger of Allah ﷺ like at home? Al-Aswad asked ‘A’ishah رضى الله عنها:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 676

حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا الْحَكَمُ، عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنِ الأَسْوَدِ، قَالَ سَأَلْتُ عَائِشَةَ مَا كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَصْنَعُ فِي بَيْتِهِ قَالَتْ كَانَ يَكُونُ فِي مِهْنَةِ أَهْلِهِ ـ تَعْنِي خِدْمَةَ أَهْلِهِ ـ فَإِذَا حَضَرَتِ الصَّلاَةُ خَرَجَ إِلَى الصَّلاَةِ.

TRANSLATION:

Al-Aswad said: I asked ‘A’ishah رضى الله عنها: “What did the Prophet ﷺ do in his house?” She said: ***“He used to be occupied in the service of his family*** — meaning helping his family — ***and when the time of prayer came, he went out to pray.”***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Adam ibn Abi Iyas, from Shu‘bah ibn al-Hajjaj, from al-Hakam ibn ‘Utaybah, from Ibrahim an-Nakha‘i, from al-Aswad ibn Yazid, from ‘A’ishah, Mother of the Believers رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Call to Prayer, Chapter: One busy with his family when the iqamah is called, Hadith No. 676; also No. 5363, 6039.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:676

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

In another narration, ‘A’ishah mentions that he ***mended his own clothes, repaired his sandals and milked his goat*** (Musnad Ahmad — sahih). Head of state, army commander and Messenger of Allah — yet at home he was ***a husband who helped and did not burden***.

He was also ***affectionate with his wives***: racing ‘A’ishah on foot (Sunan Abi Dawud 2578 — sahih), drinking from where ‘A’ishah had drunk, and listening patiently to her stories. His household was full of ***love, humour and mutual respect***.

For husbands today, the example is clear: ***helping with housework does not lower a man’s dignity***; it follows the Sunnah of the noblest of men. And when the call to prayer came, he left it all for prayer — balancing ***the rights of family and the rights of Allah***.

His home life was also marked by simplicity. ‘A’ishah رضى الله عنها mentioned that a month or two could pass with no fire lit for cooking in the houses of the Prophet ﷺ; they lived on dates and water (Sahih al-Bukhari 2567). Yet his home was never without contentment, remembrance and love.

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For us, this is a reminder that the greatness of a home is not measured by its size or furniture, but by the faith, mercy and good character of those who live in it.

His home was also a place of learning: the Companions, men and women, came to his door to ask about their religion, and his wives transmitted to the Ummah much of what they saw of his life at home.

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WITH HIS SERVANT

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه began serving the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at the age of ten, when his mother Umm Sulaym brought him to the Prophet. After ten years, he gave this testimony:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6038

حَدَّثَنَا مُوسَى بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، سَمِعَ سَلاَّمَ بْنَ مِسْكِينٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ ثَابِتًا، يَقُولُ حَدَّثَنَا أَنَسٌ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ خَدَمْتُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم عَشْرَ سِنِينَ، فَمَا قَالَ لِي أُفٍّ. وَلاَ لِمَ صَنَعْتَ وَلاَ أَلاَّ صَنَعْتَ.

TRANSLATION:

Anas رضى الله عنه said: ***"I served the Prophet ﷺ for ten years, and he never said to me 'uff', nor 'Why did you do that?' nor 'Why did you not do that?'"***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Musa ibn Isma'il, who heard Sallam ibn Miskin, who heard Thabit al-Bunani, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Manners, Chapter: Good character and generosity, Hadith No. 6038; also No. 2768 and Muslim No. 2309.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6038

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Ten years — thousands of days with a child's many mistakes — yet ***not once*** did he say "uff", or ask "why did you do that?" In one narration, Anas was sent on an errand but stopped to play with children in the market. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ came, took hold of the back of his neck while ***smiling***, and asked: "O little Anas, did you go where I told you?" (Sahih Muslim 2310).

Today, many have domestic helpers or employees. The Prophet's ﷺ example teaches: ***be patient with their mistakes***, do not curse or demean them, and treat them like family. He said: "Your brothers (servants) are your responsibility… feed them from what you eat, and clothe them from what you wear" (Sahih al-Bukhari 30).

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WITH CHILDREN

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***loved children dearly***. Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه relates that he kissed his grandson al-Hasan ibn 'Ali in front of al-Aqra' ibn Habis. Al-Aqra' said: "I have ten children and have never kissed any of them." He looked at him and said: ***"Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5997).

He ***greeted children*** when passing by them — Anas رضى الله عنه continued this Sunnah and said: "The Prophet ﷺ used to do so" (Sahih al-Bukhari 6247). He also stroked children's cheeks one by one (Sahih Muslim 2329), and shortened his prayer when he heard a baby cry so its mother would not be distressed (Sahih al-Bukhari 707).

He once prayed ***carrying his granddaughter Umamah***; when he prostrated he put her down, and when he stood he picked her up again (Sahih al-Bukhari 516). Children were not seen as a nuisance, but as ***a beloved trust***.

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MORE GENEROUS THAN THE WIND

Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما said: ***"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the most generous of people, and he was most generous in Ramadan when Jibril met him… The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was more generous in doing good than the blowing wind"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6).

Jabir رضى الله عنه said: ***"The Prophet ﷺ was never asked for anything to which he said 'no'"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6034). If he had nothing, he promised to give later, or prayed well for the one asking. He once gave a man ***a whole valley of sheep***, so that the man returned to his people saying: "Accept Islam, for Muhammad gives like one who does not fear poverty" (Sahih Muslim 2312).

His generosity was not to win praise, but out of ***certainty in Allah's promise***: wealth does not decrease through charity. He lived poor not because he had no wealth, but because ***he gave it all away***.

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HIS COURAGE

Anas رضى الله عنه said: ***"The Prophet ﷺ was the best and bravest of people."*** One night, the people of Madinah were alarmed by a frightening noise. They went out towards it, but ***the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had gone ahead of them***, riding Abu Talhah's horse bareback, with a sword hanging from his neck, saying: "Do not be afraid, do not be afraid" (Sahih al-Bukhari 2908).

'Ali ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه — himself a famous warrior — said: ***"When the fighting grew fierce, we sheltered behind the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; none of us was closer to the enemy than he"*** (Musnad Ahmad — sahih). At Hunayn, when many fled, he stood firm on his mule calling: "I am the Prophet, no lie" (Book 22).

His courage was joined with ***compassion***: he faced danger to protect others, not to show off. A true leader ***is at the front*** in times of danger, not hiding behind.

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CHOOSING THE EASIER, FORGIVING

Two qualities ‘A’ishah رضى الله عنها often paired were ***making things easy*** and ***forgiving***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3560

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَالِكٌ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ بْنِ الزُّبَيْرِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ مَا خُيِّرَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم بَيْنَ أَمْرَيْنِ إِلاَّ أَخَذَ أَيْسَرَهُمَا، مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ إِثْمًا، فَإِنْ كَانَ إِثْمًا كَانَ أَبْعَدَ النَّاسِ مِنْهُ، وَمَا انْتَقَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم لِنَفْسِهِ، إِلاَّ أَنْ تُنْتَهَكَ حُرْمَةُ اللَّهِ فَيَنْتَقِمَ لِلَّهِ بِهَا.

TRANSLATION:

‘A’ishah رضى الله عنها said: ***“Whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was given a choice between two matters, he chose the easier, as long as it was not sinful; if it was sinful, he was the furthest of people from it. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ never took revenge for himself, unless the sanctities of Allah were violated, in which case he took retribution for Allah.”***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from ‘Abdullah ibn Yusuf at-Tinnisi, from Imam Malik ibn Anas, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from ‘A’ishah, Mother of the Believers رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Virtues, Chapter: The description of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith No. 3560; also No. 6126, 6786 and Muslim No. 2327.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3560

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

See how many people hurt him: the people of Ta’if who stoned him (Book 5), Quraysh who expelled and fought him, the Jewish woman who poisoned him (Book 16), the Bedouin who roughly pulled his cloak. Yet he ***never took revenge for himself***. On the day Makkah was opened, he said to his enemies: “Go, you are free” (Book 21).

Yet his forgiveness ***was not weakness***. When Allah’s limits were violated — justice corrupted, the weak oppressed — he acted firmly. A Muslim forgives wrongs against himself, but ***defends the rights of Allah and of others***.

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Anas رضى الله عنه relates that a Bedouin once pulled his cloak so roughly that it left a mark on his neck, and demanded to be given from the wealth of Allah. The Prophet ﷺ turned to him, ***smiled***, and ordered that he be given something (Sahih al-Bukhari 3149).

This is the balance we need today: to be easy-going and forgiving in our personal dealings, while remaining firm in upholding justice and the limits set by Allah.

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"HIS CHARACTER WAS THE QUR'AN"

Allah Himself praised the character of His Messenger: ***"And indeed, you are of a great moral character"*** (Al-Qalam 68:4) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 68:4.

When Sa'd ibn Hisham asked 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها about the character of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, she asked back: "Do you not read the Qur'an?" He said: "Yes." She said: ***"The character of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ was the Qur'an"*** (Sahih Muslim 746).

That is: every command of the Qur'an, he ***practised***; every prohibition, he ***avoided***; every praiseworthy quality the Qur'an praises was found in him. He was ***the Qur'an walking on earth***. To know his character, read the Qur'an; to understand the Qur'an, look at his life.

He himself said: ***"I was sent only to perfect noble character"*** (al-Adab al-Mufrad 273 — sahih). Character is not a mere add-on to religion; it is ***a central purpose*** of his mission.

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GENTLENESS

Allah explains why people were drawn to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: ***"So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you"*** (Ali 'Imran 3:159) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 3:159.

Once a group of Jews came to him and gave a mocking greeting: "As-samu 'alaykum" (death be upon you). 'A'ishah replied angrily. He said: ***"Gently, 'A'ishah. Allah loves gentleness in all matters"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6024). He simply replied: "Wa 'alaykum" (and upon you).

A Bedouin once urinated in the mosque. The Companions rose to scold him, but he said: "Leave him," then had a bucket of water poured over it, and said: ***"You were sent to make things easy, not to make them difficult"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 220). The Bedouin then prayed: "O Allah, have mercy on me and on Muhammad."

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"WHAT HAVE I TO DO WITH THIS WORLD?"

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ slept on a mat and rose with ***its marks on his side***. We said: "O Messenger of Allah, shall we make you a mattress?" He said: ***"What have I to do with this world? I am in this world only like a rider who shades himself under a tree, then moves on and leaves it"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 2377 — hasan sahih).

'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه once entered his room and saw him lying on a bare mat, with a leather pillow stuffed with fibre, and the marks of the mat on his side. 'Umar wept and said: "Chosroes and Caesar live in luxury, while you are the Messenger of Allah!" He said: ***"Are you not content that they have this world and we have the Hereafter?"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 4913).

He also advised Ibn 'Umar: ***"Be in this world as though you were a stranger or a traveller"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 6416). His detachment was not from hatred of blessings, but because ***his heart was tied to the Hereafter***. This world is a brief resting place, not a permanent home.

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A MERCY TO THE WORLDS

Allah sums up the whole mission of His Messenger in one verse: ***"And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds"*** (Al-Anbiya' 21:107) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 21:107.

When asked to curse the idolaters, he said: ***"I was not sent as one who curses; I was sent as a mercy"*** (Sahih Muslim 2599). After being driven out and stoned at Ta'if, when the angel of the mountains offered to crush them, he replied: "Rather, I hope Allah will bring forth from their descendants those who worship Allah alone" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3231).

His mercy extended to ***animals***. He told of a man forgiven for giving water to a thirsty dog (Sahih al-Bukhari 2363), and a woman punished for locking up a cat until it died (Sahih al-Bukhari 3482). Allah also describes him as one to whom "grievous is what you suffer" (At-Tawbah 9:128).

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AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE

Allah made him the model for every believer: ***"There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern"*** (Al-Ahzab 33:21) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:21.

This model can be followed because he was ***a human being***, not an angel. Allah commanded him to say: ***"I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed"*** (Al-Kahf 18:110). He ate, slept, married, fell ill, grieved and rejoiced — so every side of our lives has an example in his.

He said: ***"Pray as you have seen me pray"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 631). The Shama'il are not merely stories to admire, but ***a guide to practise***: how to eat, sleep, speak, dress, live with family and deal with people.

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LOVING HIM

The proof of loving Allah is following His Messenger: ***"If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins"*** (Ali 'Imran 3:31) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 3:31.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"None of you truly believes until I am more beloved to him than his father, his child and all people"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 15).

A man asked him when the Hour would come. He asked: "What have you prepared for it?" The man said: "Nothing, except that I love Allah and His Messenger." He said: ***"You will be with those you love."*** Anas رضى الله عنه said: "We were never so happy with anything as we were with those words" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3688).

Knowing his Shama'il is the path to ***loving*** him; loving him leads to ***following*** him; and following him leads to ***the love of Allah***.

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HIS PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION ACCORDING TO THE NARRATORS

The early chapters of this series described the appearance of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ one feature at a time. This chapter gathers all those descriptions into a single table, together with the Companion who narrated each one and its source, so that the reader can "see" him as a whole — through words, not pictures.

Notice that almost every feature is narrated by more than one Companion. Anas ibn Malik saw him at home for ten years; al-Bara' ibn 'Azib and Jabir ibn Samurah saw him in the mosque and on the road; 'A'ishah saw him as his wife. Their descriptions complete one another and do not conflict.

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	NARRATOR	SOURCE	GRADE
Height	Medium; neither very tall nor short	Anas; al-Bara'	Bukhari 3547, 3549	Sahih
Face	The most beautiful; like the moon; rather round	al-Bara'; Jabir ibn Samurah	Bukhari 3552; Muslim 2344	Sahih
Complexion	Bright and fair (azhar), neither pale white nor dark	Anas	Bukhari 3547; Muslim 2330	Sahih
Mouth, eyes, heels	Wide mouth; reddish streaks in the white of the eyes; little flesh on the heels	Jabir ibn Samurah	Muslim 2339	Sahih
Hair	Wavy; reaching the earlobes, sometimes the shoulders	al-Bara'; Anas	Bukhari 3551, 5903	Sahih
Grey hairs	Fewer than twenty	Anas	Bukhari 3547	Sahih
Beard	Thick	Jabir ibn Samurah	Muslim 2344	Sahih
Shoulders	Broad; a wide space between the shoulders	al-Bara'	Bukhari 3551	Sahih
Hands and feet	Large and sturdy, yet palms softer than silk	Anas	Bukhari 5907, 3561	Sahih
Seal of Prophethood	Between the shoulders; the size of a pigeon's egg	Jabir ibn Samurah; as-Sa'ib ibn Yazid	Muslim 2344; Bukhari 3541	Sahih
Scent	More fragrant than musk and ambergris	Anas	Bukhari 3561; Muslim 2330	Sahih
Sweat	Like pearls; collected by Umm Sulaym as perfume	Anas	Muslim 2330, 2331	Sahih
Walk	Leaning forward, as if descending a slope	'Ali ibn Abi Talib	Tirmidhi 3637	Hasan sahih
Speech	Slow and clear; his words could be counted	'A'ishah	Bukhari 3567	Sahih

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SIRAH NOTE: THE DESCRIPTION OF UMM MA'BAD

The most eloquent description of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is that of Umm Ma'bad al-Khuza'iyyah, the Bedouin woman he met on the journey of the Hijrah (Series 7): "I saw a man of evident beauty, with a radiant face and a fine form…"

The story is narrated by al-Hakim, at-Tabarani and al-Bayhaqi in Dala'il an-Nubuwwah. Hadith scholars differ about its chain; some grade it weak, others hasan because of its many routes. For this reason we place it in a Sirah Note, not in the table above.

References: Sahih Muslim 2339; Sahih al-Bukhari 5907; Sahih al-Bukhari 5903; Sahih Muslim 2330; al-Bayhaqi, Dala'il an-Nubuwwah — the story of Umm Ma'bad.

LESSONS

This table shows how carefully the Companions preserved the description of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ — even the colour of the white of his eyes and the shape of his heels were narrated. They used the same care when narrating his teachings. If his appearance was guarded like this, his Sunnah was guarded even more.

Yet our goal is not merely to know how he looked. Knowing him is the first step towards loving him and following him.

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A DAY WITH THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ

Figure 1 at the start of this eBook summarised a day in the life of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. This chapter explains that figure with its evidence. The table below is not a fixed timetable — he adjusted his day to the needs of the Ummah, travel, battles and guests — but it reflects his habits in Madinah as authentically narrated.

TIME	HIS PRACTICE	SOURCE
Early night	Slept early after 'Isha'; disliked chatting after it	Bukhari 568, 1146
Last part of the night	Woke, used the siwak, prayed the night prayer and witr	Bukhari 245, 1146
Before Fajr	Two light sunnah rak'ahs of Fajr; lay briefly on his right side	Bukhari 1171, 626
Fajr	Led the prayer; sat in his place of prayer until sunrise	Muslim 670
Morning	Listened to the Companions talk; sometimes prayed Duha	Muslim 670, 719
Daytime	Taught, received delegations, settled the affairs of the Ummah and helped his family	Bukhari 676
Midday	A short nap (qaylulah)	Bukhari 6281
After 'Asr	Visited the homes of his wives one by one	Bukhari 5216
Before sleep	Made wudu'; recited al-Mu'awwidhat and wiped over his body; lay on his right side and supplicated	Bukhari 5017, 6311
Weekly	Fasted Mondays and Thursdays	Tirmidhi 745; Muslim 1162

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها described his nights: "He would sleep in the early part of the night and rise in the last part, and pray" (Sahih al-Bukhari 1146). Jabir ibn Samurah رضى الله عنه described his mornings: after Fajr he would not rise from his place of prayer until the sun had risen; the Companions would talk about their days of Jahiliyyah and laugh, and he would smile (Sahih Muslim 670).

Of his afternoons, 'A'ishah said: "When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ finished the 'Asr prayer, he would go in to his wives and draw near to each one of them" (Sahih al-Bukhari 5216). He never let the busy affairs of the Ummah take away the rights of his family.

LESSONS

The day of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was balanced: the night for Allah, the day for people, the afternoon for family, and sleep for the body. No right was neglected. This is what he taught 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr: "Your body has a right over you, your eyes have a right over you, and your wife has a right over you" (Sahih al-Bukhari 1975).

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We need not copy every minute of his day. Begin with one practice — sleeping early, rising before Fajr, or sitting in remembrance after Fajr — and keep it up consistently.

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WITH HIS WIVES, CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN

The chapter "At Home" showed that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ helped with the housework. This chapter looks more closely at his relationship with each member of his family. He himself set the measure of a person's goodness in how he treats his family: "The best of you is the best to his family, and I am the best of you to my family" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3895 — sahih).

WITH HIS WIVES

He never forgot Khadijah رضى الله عنها, even after her death. He said of her: "I was blessed with her love" (Sahih Muslim 2435), and when he slaughtered a sheep he would send portions to Khadijah's friends (Sahih al-Bukhari 3818).

He understood his wife's feelings. He said to 'A'ishah: "I know when you are pleased with me and when you are angry." When pleased she would swear "By the Lord of Muhammad"; when angry, "By the Lord of Ibrahim" (Sahih al-Bukhari 5228). He screened 'A'ishah with his body while she watched the Abyssinians playing with spears in the mosque, until she herself grew tired (Sahih al-Bukhari 454), and he would put his mouth where 'A'ishah had drunk from the same vessel (Sahih Muslim 300).

'A'ishah also testified: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ never struck anything with his hand — neither a woman nor a servant — except when fighting in the path of Allah" (Sahih Muslim 2328).

WITH HIS DAUGHTER FATIMAH

When Fatimah رضى الله عنها came in to him, he would stand to welcome her, take her hand, kiss her and seat her in his own place; and when he came in to her, she would do the same (Sunan Abi Dawud 5217 — sahih). A father honouring his daughter in front of people — at a time when many Arab men were ashamed to have daughters.

WITH HIS GRANDCHILDREN

Al-Bara' رضى الله عنه saw him carrying al-Hasan ibn 'Ali on his shoulder and praying: "O Allah, I love him, so love him" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3749). Once he prolonged a prostration because al-Hasan or al-Husayn had climbed onto his back; after the prayer he said: "My son was riding me, and I did not want to hurry him until he had had enough" (Sunan an-Nasa'i 1141 — sahih).

WHEN HE LOST A CHILD

When his son Ibrahim died in infancy, his tears flowed. 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf asked: "You too, O Messenger of Allah?" He said: "The eye weeps and the heart grieves, but we say only what pleases our Lord. Indeed we are saddened by parting from you, O Ibrahim" (Sahih al-Bukhari 1303). Love for one's family does not contradict contentment with Allah's decree.

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LESSONS

A person's greatness outside the home means little if he is harsh inside it. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ — leader of the Ummah — was an understanding husband, a father who honoured his daughter, and a grandfather who let his grandson play on his back while he prostrated.

For husbands and fathers today the measure is clear: ask our wives and children, not outsiders, about our character.

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WITH NEIGHBOURS, GUESTS AND NON-MUSLIMS

The character of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was not limited to his family and Companions. It embraced neighbours, guests, the weak and also those who were not Muslim. This chapter gathers some authentically narrated examples.

NEIGHBOURS AND GUESTS

He said: "Jibril kept urging me to treat the neighbour well until I thought he would make him an heir" (Sahih al-Bukhari 6014). He also said: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honour his guest" (Sahih al-Bukhari 6018).

He accepted invitations even when the meal was small: "If I were invited to (a meal of) a sheep's trotter, I would accept" (Sahih al-Bukhari 2568). Anas رضى الله عنه said that any slave-girl of Madinah could take the hand of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and lead him wherever she wished for her needs (Sahih al-Bukhari 6072).

WITH NON-MUSLIMS

A Jewish boy who used to serve him fell ill. He visited him, sat by his head and invited him to Islam. The boy looked at his father, who said: "Obey Abu al-Qasim." The boy accepted Islam, and he left saying: "Praise be to Allah who saved him from the Fire" (Sahih al-Bukhari 1356).

When the funeral of a Jew passed by, he stood up. The Companions said: "It is the funeral of a Jew." He said: "Was it not a soul?" (Sahih al-Bukhari 1312). He also traded with Jews; when he died, his armour was still pledged to a Jew as security for thirty sa' of barley (Sahih al-Bukhari 2916).

Thumamah ibn Uthal, chief of Banu Hanifah, was captured and tied in the mosque for three days. Each day he asked after him, then released him without ransom. Thumamah went, bathed, came back and accepted Islam, saying: "By Allah, there was no face on earth more hateful to me than yours; now your face has become the dearest of all faces to me" (Sahih al-Bukhari 4372).

SIRAH NOTE: "GO, YOU ARE ALL FREE"

The words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to the people of Makkah on the day of its conquest — "Go, you are all free" — are very well known in the sirah books (Ibn Ishaq; Ibn Hisham). Hadith scholars grade its chain weak, but its meaning is supported by authentic reports of his general amnesty for the people of Makkah on that day (Series 20 and 21).

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LESSONS

The character of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the most effective da'wah. The Jewish boy, Thumamah and many others embraced Islam not by force, but because they were touched by how he treated them. A Muslim who is good to his neighbours, generous to his guests and just to non-Muslims conveys Islam without saying a word.

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POPULAR REPORTS THAT NEED CHECKING

Out of love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, many stories about his description have spread in lectures, books and social media. Some are authentic, some weak and some baseless. Hadith scholars have examined them one by one, for he said: "Whoever lies about me deliberately, let him take his seat in the Fire" (Sahih al-Bukhari 110).

The table below lists popular reports about his description, with the verdicts of hadith scholars. A weak report is not necessarily fabricated; some have meanings supported by authentic hadith. But we cannot attribute them to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with certainty.

REPORT	GRADE	EXPLANATION
The long description by 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3638)	Da'if (weak)	Its chain is broken; most of its content is supported by Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3637 (hasan sahih)
The long description by Hind ibn Abi Halah (ash-Shama'il of at-Tirmidhi 8)	Da'if (weak)	Contains an unknown narrator; part of its meaning is supported by authentic reports
"As if the sun were moving across his face" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3648)	Da'if (weak)	Its chain is weak; its meaning is supported by Sahih Muslim 2344 ("like the sun and the moon")
"His front teeth were gapped" (ash-Shama'il of at-Tirmidhi)	Da'if (weak)	Narrated from Ibn 'Abbas with a weak chain
He was born already circumcised	Disputed	All its routes are weak; Ibn al-Qayyim discusses the difference of opinion in Tuhfat al-Mawdud
He cast no shadow	No authentic chain	A very weak mursal report; not found in the reliable hadith collections
Flies never landed on his body	Baseless	Not found with a chain in the books of hadith
"The Light of Muhammad was the first creation"	Not authentic	Not found with an authentic chain in the known hadith collections; rejected by many hadith scholars
"Were it not for you, I would not have created the universe"	Fabricated (mawdu')	Graded fabricated by as-Saghani and al-Albani (as-Silsilah ad-Da'ifah 282)
His relics displayed today (hair, footprints and others)	Cannot be verified	The Companions did keep his hair (Sahih al-Bukhari 170, 5896), but most relics today have no chain that can be checked

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SIRAH NOTE: A HUMAN BEING, NOT LIGHT

The Qur'an states: "Say (O Muhammad): I am only a human being like you, to whom it has been revealed…" (Al-Kahf 18:110). He ate, slept, fell ill, sweated and died (Series 30). His honour lies in revelation, prophethood and character — not in extraordinary attributes that are not established.

Allah also describes him as "an illuminating lamp" (Al-Ahzab 33:46), and says that there has come to us "a light and a clear Book" (Al-Ma'idah 5:15). The exegetes explain that this light is the light of guidance he brought.

References: Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3638; Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3648; ash-Shama'il of at-Tirmidhi 8; Sahih al-Bukhari 170; Ibn al-Qayyim, Tuhfat al-Mawdud bi Ahkam al-Mawlud; al-Albani, as-Silsilah ad-Da'ifah, no. 282.

LESSONS

Love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ needs no unauthentic stories. What is established in Sahih al-Bukhari,

Sahih Muslim and the reliable hadith collections is enough to fill the heart with wonder and love.

Before sharing a story about him, ask: who narrated it, and where is its source? This is not a sign of lesser love — it is a sign of true and well-mannered love.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SHAMA'IL

1. WHY DOES ISLAM NOT DEPICT THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ IN PICTURES?

Scholars agree on prohibiting drawings or images of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, to protect his honour and to close the door to excessive veneration. Describing him in words, as the Companions did, is sufficient and more fitting.

2. CAN A PERSON SEE THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ IN A DREAM?

Yes. He said: "Whoever sees me in a dream has truly seen me, for Satan cannot take my form" (Sahih al-Bukhari 110). Muhammad ibn Sirin explained: that is, if he sees him in his true form (quoted by al-Bukhari before hadith 6993). This is why knowing the shama'il matters. Dreams cannot be a source of religious rulings.

3. MUST WE IMITATE EVERY PHYSICAL THING ABOUT HIM?

Scholars distinguish between his actions as worship and law, which we are asked to follow, and matters of custom and human nature (jibilliyyah), such as the kinds of food and the style of clothing of his people. The latter are permissible and good to follow out of love, as Anas came to love gourd (Sahih al-Bukhari 5379), but they are not obligatory.

4. DID HE DYE HIS HAIR?

Anas said his grey hairs were so few that they did not reach the point of needing dye (Sahih al-Bukhari 5895). Umm Salamah kept some of his hairs that were reddish (Sahih al-Bukhari 5896); Rabi'ah mentioned that the colour came from perfume (Sahih al-Bukhari 3547).

5. ON WHICH HAND DID HE WEAR HIS RING?

Both are authentically narrated: on the right hand (Sahih Muslim 2094) and on the little finger of the left hand (Sahih Muslim 2095). So both are permissible for men, with a silver ring.

6. IS IT TRUE THAT HE NEVER LAUGHED?

He laughed, sometimes until his back teeth showed, but mostly he smiled; he did not laugh boisterously (Sahih al-Bukhari 6092; chapter "His Smile and Laughter").

7. HOW LONG WAS HIS HAIR?

It varied over time: sometimes to the earlobes (Sahih al-Bukhari 3551), sometimes to the shoulders (Sahih al-Bukhari 5903). He also shaved his head during Hajj and 'Umrah.

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8. WAS HE AN ORDINARY HUMAN OR A BEING OF LIGHT?

He was a human being (Al-Kahf 18:110) honoured with revelation and prophethood, who brought the light of guidance (Al-Ahzab 33:46). See the chapter "Popular Reports That Need Checking".

9. WHAT ARE THE BEST BOOKS FOR LEARNING THE SHAMA'IL?

Ash-Shama'il al-Muhammadiyyah by at-Tirmidhi, with its commentaries; Mukhtasar ash-Shama'il by al-Albani, which explains the grade of each report; ash-Shifa by al-Qadi 'Iyad; and Zad al-Ma'ad by Ibn al-Qayyim.

10. WHY DID HE LIVE SO SIMPLY WHEN WEALTH WAS PLENTIFUL?

Because he chose the Hereafter: "What have I to do with this world?" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 2377). The wealth that came was distributed to the Ummah, so that when he died his armour was still in pledge (Sahih al-Bukhari 2916).

11. WHAT IS THE EASIEST DEED TO DRAW NEAR TO HIM TODAY?

Sending blessings upon him: "Whoever sends blessings upon me once, Allah sends blessings upon him ten times" (Sahih Muslim 408). Then adopting his character: smiling, gentleness and generosity.

12. WHO WILL BE CLOSEST TO HIM ON THE DAY OF RESURRECTION?

He said: "The dearest of you to me and the closest to me in seating on the Day of Resurrection are those of you with the best character" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 2018 — hasan).

LESSONS

These questions show that knowing the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is a living knowledge. Every answer must return to the Qur'an and authentic hadith, and all knowledge about him must lead to action: sending blessings upon him, good character and following his Sunnah.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

The Companions carefully preserved the image of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ so that we might "see" him.

Among the most important lessons:

LESSON	FROM THIS BOOK
Physical perfection	"Like the moon"; medium height, radiant face
Modesty	More modest than a maiden behind her curtain
Simplicity	A mat, barley bread, "what have I to do with this world"
Worship	Night prayer until his feet swelled; seeking forgiveness 70 times a day
Family and helpers	Helping at home; Anas never rebuked
Generosity and courage	"More generous than the wind"; first towards danger
Forgiveness and gentleness	Never avenging himself
The character of the Qur'an	"His character was the Qur'an"

A MESSAGE FOR US

We never saw his face, but we can ***bring his Sunnah to life*** in our smiles, gentleness, generosity and worship. May knowing him increase our love, and through that love may we be united with him in Paradise — ***"You will be with those you love."*** Allahumma salli 'ala Muhammad.

In sha Allah, the series **The Prophet's Sirah** will continue with ***Book 32 — The Mothers of the Believers***: the wives of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, in two parts, from Khadijah to Maymunah رضى الله عنهن. And Allah knows best.

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PART TWO

Mothers of the Believers (1)

The Prophet's Sirah — Series 32

Ummahat al-Mu'minin (Part 1): Khadijah, Sawdah, 'A'ishah, Hafsah and Zaynab bint Khuzaymah, According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

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MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS

Book 31 helped us know ***the person of the Messenger of Allah*** ﷺ. This Book 32 takes us into ***his home***, to know the women closest to him: his wives, whom Allah named ***Ummahat al-Mu'minin*** — the Mothers of the Believers.

They were not merely the wives of a man. They were ***witnesses to revelation*** that came down in their homes, ***teachers*** who preserved his Sunnah within the home, and ***examples*** for every Muslim woman and family. Much of what we know about married life, purification, night prayer and conduct at home reached us through them.

Because their story is long, this book is divided into ***two parts***. This first part tells of five: ***Khadijah, Sawdah, 'A'ishah, Hafsah and Zaynab bint Khuzaymah*** رضى الله عنهن. The second part (Book 32B) will tell of the other six.

We will use the Qur'an, ***sahih and hasan*** hadiths, and trusted books of sirah. Famous reports with weak chains, or matters disputed among historians, will be placed in "Sirah Note" boxes.

Note: The Qur'anic translation in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in its box. Dates of events are approximate according to the books of sirah, and some are disputed.

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WHO ARE THE MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS?

The title "Mothers of the Believers" comes from Allah Himself: ***"The Prophet is more worthy of the believers than themselves, and his wives are [in the position of] their mothers"*** (Al-Ahzab 33:6) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:6.

Scholars explain that the wives of the Prophet ﷺ are "mothers" in two respects: they ***must be respected and honoured*** as mothers, and ***marrying them after him is forbidden*** (Al-Ahzab 33:53). Yet they are not mahram in the sense of being alone with them or without hijab; the Companions asked them questions from behind a screen.

The wives who lived with him numbered ***eleven***. Two died in his lifetime — ***Khadijah*** and ***Zaynab bint Khuzaymah*** — and nine were alive when he died. The figure in Chapter 4 shows the order of their marriages.

When we mention their names, we pray رضى الله عنها — may Allah be pleased with her. Loving and honouring them is part of ***loving the Messenger of Allah*** ﷺ; insulting them means hurting him.

This title is also ***a reminder*** to every Muslim. Just as a child would not let his mother be insulted, a believer ***defends the honour*** of the Prophet's wives ﷺ, and mentions them only with good.

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HONOUR AND RESPONSIBILITY

Allah placed them in a special position, with heavier responsibility: ***"O wives of the Prophet, you are not like anyone among women. If you fear Allah"*** (Al-Ahzab 33:32) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:32.

The preceding verses explain that ***their reward is doubled*** when they obey, and so is their sin if they do wrong (Al-Ahzab 33:30–31). A high position brings ***a greater trust***, because they are an example watched by the whole Ummah.

Then Allah says: ***"Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you with [extensive] purification"*** (Al-Ahzab 33:33) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:33.

The context of this verse clearly addresses ***the wives of the Prophet*** ﷺ, and in other hadiths he also included 'Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn رضى الله عنهم in the Ahl al-Bayt (Sahih Muslim 2424). So his wives are ***part of the Ahl al-Bayt*** whom Allah purified.

The word "mother" also carries the meaning of ***love and nurture***. Just as a mother raises her children, the wives of the Prophet ﷺ educated the Ummah through the knowledge they narrated. Whenever we practise the Sunnah at home, we are ***learning from our mothers***.

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THE WISDOM OF THE PROPHET'S MARRIAGES

Many wonder why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had several wives. The answer becomes clear when we look at ***the historical facts***: he lived with ***one wife only***, Khadijah, for about 25 years — from the age of 25 to nearly 50, in his youth when desire is strongest.

His other marriages took place ***after the age of 50***, mostly in Madinah during ten years filled with battles and da'wah. And of all his wives, ***only 'A'ishah was a virgin***; the others were widows or divorcees, some older, many having lost husbands to martyrdom or emigration.

Scholars mention several wisdoms: (1) ***educating the Ummah*** — his wives conveyed rulings of home life that men could not convey; (2) ***caring for the widows*** of martyrs and emigrants; (3) ***strengthening ties*** with leading Companions like Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and with Arab tribes, so that many embraced Islam; and (4) ***abolishing pre-Islamic customs***, such as the law of adoption (Book 32B).

For the Ummah, Allah limited the number of wives to four, on condition of justice: ***"But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one"*** (An-Nisa' 4:3) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 4:3.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was given a specific exemption by Allah in this (Al-Ahzab 33:50), yet he was very ***just*** to his wives. When he intended to travel, he drew lots among them, and he allotted each one her day and night (Sahih al-Bukhari 2593).

His justice also covered ***feelings***. Every afternoon after 'Asr he visited his wives one by one, asking after them and sitting with them, then spent the night with the wife whose turn it was (Sahih al-Bukhari 5216). None was neglected.

So whoever judges the Prophet's marriages ﷺ by the measure of ***desire*** is gravely mistaken. His life with his wives was one of ***simplicity, responsibility and worship***: small rooms, little food, and nights spent in prayer.

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A TIMELINE OF HIS MARRIAGES

The figure below shows the order of the Prophet's marriages ﷺ according to the books of sirah. The first five names are the focus of this book; the other six will be told in Book 32B.

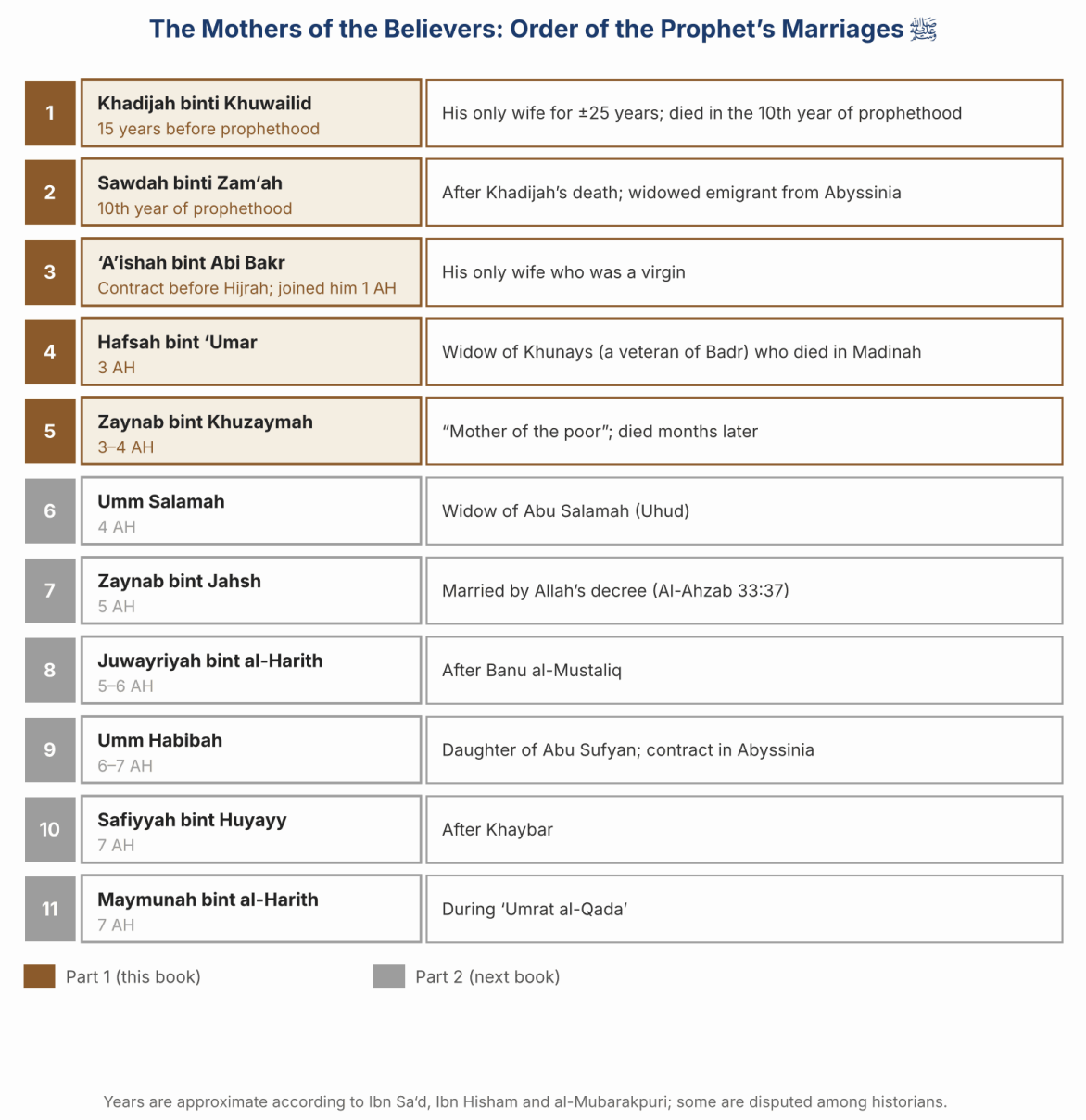


Figure 1: The Mothers of the Believers — the order of the Prophet's marriages ﷺ.

Notice that four of the five wives in this part were married in ***difficult circumstances***: Khadijah before he became a Prophet, Sawdah after the Year of Sorrow, Hafsah and Zaynab bint Khuzaymah after losing their husbands. Each marriage is ***a story of love and care***.

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KHADIJAH: THE PURE LADY OF QURAYSH

Khadijah bint Khuwaylid ibn Asad رضى الله عنها came from a noble line of Quraysh. Her lineage meets that of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at their ancestor Qusayy ibn Kilab. Even in the time of ignorance she was called ***at-Tahirah*** — the pure woman — for her noble character and honour.

She was ***a successful merchant***. She hired men to carry her goods to Syria for a wage or a share of profit. After being twice widowed, many Quraysh nobles wished to marry her, but she declined.

When she heard of ***the honesty of Muhammad*** — whom the people of Makkah called al-Amin — she offered him to take her goods to Syria with her servant ***Maysarah***, for a higher payment than others (Book 2). The trade brought great profit.

Maysarah returned with stories of ***Muhammad's character*** throughout the journey: his trustworthiness, his honesty in trade, and his noble manners. Khadijah, a woman wise in judging people, saw in that young man ***something not found in others***.

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A BLESSED MARRIAGE

Khadijah herself took the first step. She sent her friend ***Nafisah bint Munyah*** to ask Muhammad why he had not married, and whether he would accept if proposed to by a noble, wealthy woman of good lineage. Muhammad agreed, and ***his uncles*** went to ask for Khadijah's hand from her family.

According to Ibn Ishaq, Muhammad was then ***25*** and Khadijah ***40***, and the dowry was twenty young camels. This marriage took place ***15 years before prophethood***.

> **SIRAH NOTE: KHADIJAH'S AGE**
>
> The well-known view is that Khadijah was 40 at her marriage, according to Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Sa'd. But other reports, including one attributed to Ibn 'Abbas, give her age as 28. Scholars mention both views, and no authentic hadith settles the matter.
>
> What is certain: Khadijah bore ***six children*** to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ — al-Qasim, 'Abdullah, Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum and Fatimah — all his children except Ibrahim (son of Mariyah).
>
> **REFERENCES:**
> Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah (from Ibn Ishaq) — chapter on the Prophet's marriages; Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa an-Nihayah; Ibn al-Qayyim, Zad al-Ma'ad.

Their home was full of ***tranquillity and mutual respect***. Khadijah gave her wealth to support her husband, and Muhammad safeguarded his wife's honour. Their two sons died in infancy — a heavy trial they bore together with patience.

In Khadijah's home also grew up ***Zayd ibn Harithah***, the slave Khadijah gave to her husband, whom he freed and adopted. So did ***'Ali ibn Abi Talib***, his cousin who lived with them. That home became the birthplace of Islam's ***first generation***.

Khadijah's marriage was also an example of ***partnership*** between husband and wife. She gave not only wealth but ***wise counsel***; and he respected her opinion. Their relationship was built on ***trust***, not mere need.

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THE FIRST TO BELIEVE

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ returned from the Cave of Hira' with a trembling heart after the first revelation, he said to Khadijah: ***"Cover me, cover me!"*** When calm, he told her what had happened and said: "I fear for myself." (Sahih al-Bukhari 3)

Khadijah's reply became one of the most beautiful sayings in history: ***"Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep ties of kinship, bear the burden of the weak, give to the destitute, honour the guest, and help those struck by misfortune in the cause of right"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3).

Khadijah did not only comfort him. She ***took him*** to her cousin ***Waraqah ibn Nawfal***, a man learned in the earlier scriptures, who confirmed that it was ***the Namus*** (Jibril) who had come to Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ (Book 3).

Scholars agree that ***Khadijah was the first person to believe*** in the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. See how she reasoned: she saw no miracle, but she knew ***her husband's character***. Fifteen years together were enough for her to be certain that Allah would never disgrace such a good man.

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GREETINGS FROM ALLAH

Khadijah's honour was acknowledged from the heavens. Jibril himself came bearing ***greetings from Allah*** to her:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3820

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ فُضَيْلٍ، عَنْ عُمَارَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي زُرْعَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ أَتَى جِبْرِيلُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَذِهِ خَدِيجَةُ قَدْ أَتَتْ مَعَهَا إِنَاءٌ فِيهِ إِدَامٌ أَوْ طَعَامٌ أَوْ شَرَابٌ، فَإِذَا هِيَ أَتَتْكَ فَاقْرَأْ عَلَيْهَا السَّلاَمَ مِنْ رَبِّهَا وَمِنِّي، وَبَشِّرْهَا بِبَيْتٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ مِنْ قَصَبٍ، لاَ صَخَبَ فِيهِ وَلاَ نَصَبَ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: Jibril came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: "O Messenger of Allah, here is Khadijah coming with a vessel containing stew, or food, or drink. ***When she reaches you, convey to her greetings of peace from her Lord and from me, and give her glad tidings of a house in Paradise made of hollow pearl, in which there is neither noise nor fatigue."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Qutaybah ibn Sa'id, from Muhammad ibn Fudayl, from 'Umarah ibn al-Qa'qa', from Abu Zur'ah ibn 'Amr, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, Chapter: The Prophet's marriage to Khadijah and her merit, Hadith No. 3820; also Muslim No. 2432.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3820

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Imagine: ***the Lord of the worlds*** sending greetings of peace to a woman, and Jibril adding his own. Scholars note this is an honour ***rarely given*** to any human being.

Notice too the reward: ***a house with no noise and no fatigue***. Scholars explain that this suits Khadijah's deeds: she never raised her voice or troubled her husband, but relieved his fatigue with calm and support. So Allah rewarded her with ***everlasting peace***.

And she was bringing ***food for her husband*** when the glad tidings came down — a small act full of love. Small deeds at home, if sincere, ***are seen and valued by Allah***.

Scholars mention that Khadijah never ***hurt the feelings*** of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ nor argued with him throughout her life. She was where he returned after every hardship outside — ***home as a shelter***, not a place of added burden.

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A lesson for every wife and husband: calming words, support in hardship, and trust in one's spouse are ***an investment*** whose reward reaches not only this world, but Paradise.

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SACRIFICING WEALTH AND SELF

Khadijah gave ***all her wealth*** to the call to Islam. When Quraysh boycotted Banu Hashim and Banu al-Muttalib in ***the Valley of Abu Talib*** for about three years (Book 5), Khadijah — a woman used to comfort — was confined with her husband, enduring hunger and hardship.

Shortly after the boycott ended, in ***the 10th year of prophethood***, Khadijah died aged about 65, and was buried at ***al-Hajun***, Makkah. That same year his uncle Abu Talib also died. That year became known as ***'Am al-Huzn*** — the Year of Sorrow.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ lost his two main supporters: Abu Talib who protected him from outside, and

Khadijah who comforted him from within. After that, Quraysh's persecution grew heavier, until he went to Ta'if (Book 5).

Khadijah did not live to see Islam's victory, the Hijrah or the opening of Makkah. She saw only ***the hardest years***. Yet that is precisely why her rank is so high: she ***believed when others disbelieved***, and sacrificed when there was no worldly reward.

Her sacrifice also teaches that ***wealth is a means, not an end***. Khadijah could have kept her fortune and lived comfortably; instead she spent it so that the message could survive its hardest years. What she gave away is what remained for her with Allah.

Many Muslim women today support their families and communities quietly — with their wealth, time and patience. Khadijah is their model: her support was ***unseen by most people, yet greeted by Allah from above the heavens***.

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A LOVE THAT NEVER FADED

The Prophet's love for Khadijah ***never faded***, even after her death. 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها, the wife he loved most after that, admitted:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3818

حَدَّثَنِي عُمَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ حَسَنٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي، حَدَّثَنَا حَفْصٌ، عَنْ هِشَامٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ قَالَتْ مَا غِرْتُ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِنْ نِسَاءِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم مَا غِرْتُ عَلَى خَدِيجَةَ، وَمَا رَأَيْتُهَا، وَلَكِنْ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يُكْثِرُ ذِكْرَهَا، وَرُبَّمَا ذَبَحَ الشَّاةَ، ثُمَّ يُقَطِّعُهَا أَعْضَاءً، ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُهَا فِي صَدَائِقِ خَدِيجَةَ، فَرُبَّمَا قُلْتُ لَهُ كَأَنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا امْرَأَةٌ إِلاَّ خَدِيجَةُ. فَيَقُولُ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ وَكَانَتْ، وَكَانَ لِي مِنْهَا وَلَدٌ.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: ***"I was never as jealous of any of the Prophet's wives ﷺ as I was of Khadijah, though I never saw her.*** But the Prophet ﷺ mentioned her often. Sometimes he would slaughter a sheep, cut it into portions and send them to Khadijah's friends. Sometimes I said to him: 'It is as if there were no woman in the world but Khadijah.' He would say: ***'She was such-and-such, and from her I had children.'"***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Umar ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, from Muhammad ibn al-Hasan (his father), from Hafs ibn Ghiyath, from Hisham ibn 'Urwah, from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, Chapter: The Prophet's marriage to Khadijah and her merit, Hadith No. 3818; also No. 3816, 3817 and Muslim No. 2435.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3818

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

He did not merely remember her. He ***honoured Khadijah's friends*** with gifts of meat — loyalty reaching beyond the grave. Scholars note that ***honouring those loved by the one we love*** is a sign of true loyalty.

One day ***Halah bint Khuwaylid***, Khadijah's sister, asked permission to enter. Her voice resembled Khadijah's, and he remembered the way Khadijah used to ask permission, and said with emotion: ***"O Allah, it is Halah!"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3821).

SIRAH NOTE: "ALLAH DID NOT GIVE ME BETTER THAN HER"

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In a narration of Imam Ahmad, when ‘A’ishah said jealously that Allah had given him someone better, he replied: “Allah has not given me anyone better than her. She believed in me when people disbelieved, affirmed me when people denied me, supported me with her wealth when people withheld theirs, and Allah granted me children through her.”

This narration is in Musnad Ahmad (No. 24864). Its chain is discussed by hadith scholars; some grade it hasan due to supporting narrations, and its meaning is supported by the authentic hadiths above.

REFERENCES:

Musnad Ahmad 24864; Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, Kitab Manaqib al-Ansar.

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THE BEST OF WOMEN

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ placed Khadijah among ***the best women of all time***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3432

حَدَّثَنِي أَحْمَدُ بْنُ أَبِي رَجَاءٍ، حَدَّثَنَا النَّضْرُ، عَنْ هِشَامٍ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي أَبِي قَالَ، سَمِعْتُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ جَعْفَرٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ عَلِيًّا ـ رضى الله عنه ـ يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ خَيْرُ نِسَائِهَا مَرْيَمُ ابْنَةُ عِمْرَانَ، وَخَيْرُ نِسَائِهَا خَدِيجَةُ.

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn Ja'far said: I heard 'Ali رضى الله عنه say: I heard the Prophet ﷺ say: ***"The best of its women (in her time) was Maryam daughter of 'Imran, and the best of its women (of this Ummah) is Khadijah."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ahmad ibn Abi Raja', from an-Nadr ibn Shumayl, from Hisham ibn 'Urwah, from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'Abdullah ibn Ja'far, from 'Ali ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets, Chapter: "And when the angels said: O Maryam", Hadith No. 3432; also No. 3815 and Muslim No. 2430.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3432

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Maryam, mentioned with Khadijah in this hadith, is the woman praised by Allah: ***"indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds"*** (Ali 'Imran 3:42) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 3:42.

To be mentioned with Maryam is an immense honour. Both were ***pure women*** who guarded themselves, ***held firm in faith*** through heavy trials, and became mothers of a noble lineage.

From Khadijah came ***Fatimah*** رضى الله عنها, leader of the women of Paradise, and from Fatimah came al-Hasan and al-Husayn. All ***descendants of the Messenger of Allah*** ﷺ today come from Khadijah.

A lesson for us: a woman's honour lies not in her wealth or beauty, but in ***her faith, loyalty and sacrifice***. Khadijah was wealthy, but what made her noble was how she used that wealth.

Khadijah's honour was also recognised by scholars throughout the ages. Some held that Khadijah and 'A'ishah are ***the two most excellent women*** of this Ummah after Fatimah, each with her merit: Khadijah for ***early faith and sacrifice***, 'A'ishah for ***knowledge and spreading the Sunnah***.

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The Prophet ﷺ also named the best women of Paradise: "The best of the women of Paradise are Khadijah daughter of Khuwaylid, Fatimah daughter of Muhammad, Maryam daughter of 'Imran, and Asiyah daughter of Muzahim, wife of Pharaoh" (Musnad Ahmad 2668 — sahih). Khadijah is mentioned first.

These four women lived in very different circumstances — a merchant's home, a humble household, a sanctuary of worship and a tyrant's palace — yet all reached the highest rank. Their path was the same: ***faith, patience and purity***.

So whatever a woman's situation today, the door to that rank is open. Wealth or poverty, ease or hardship — ***faith and patience*** can raise her to the company of the best of women.

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SAWDAH BINT ZAM'AH: EMIGRANT TO ABYSSINIA

Sawdah bint Zam'ah رضى الله عنها of Banu 'Amir ibn Lu'ayy, Quraysh, was among ***the early Muslims*** of Makkah. She and her husband, ***as-Sakran ibn 'Amr***, emigrated to Abyssinia to save their faith from Quraysh's persecution (Book 4).

After returning to Makkah, her husband died, and Sawdah became ***an unprotected widow*** among her still-idolatrous people. Her own father had not yet embraced Islam.

At the same time, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was grieving Khadijah's death, with daughters still needing care. According to sirah reports, ***Khawlah bint Hakim*** رضى الله عنها suggested that he marry Sawdah, and he agreed. The marriage took place in Makkah in ***the 10th year of prophethood***.

This marriage was ***care for an emigrant woman*** who had sacrificed for her faith, and at the same time it gave his home a mother to look after his children. Sawdah was ***the first wife after Khadijah***, and she alone was with him for about three years.

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KEEPING THE PROPHET'S HOME

Sawdah emigrated to Madinah with the Prophet's household, and her room was among ***the first rooms*** built beside the Prophet's Mosque. She managed his household in the difficult early years in Madinah.

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها, who was usually jealous of her co-wives, said of Sawdah: ***"I never saw a woman whom I would rather be in her skin than Sawdah bint Zam'ah"***, though she had a certain sharpness (Sahih Muslim 1463).

These words show ***the good relationship*** between the two. The Prophet's home was not free of human feelings like jealousy, but it was a home where such feelings were ***governed by faith and character***.

Sawdah was also known for ***generosity***. Historians report that she worked with her hands, tanning hides, and gave the earnings in charity. When 'Umar sent her a bag of money during his caliphate, she distributed all of it to the poor.

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A GENEROUS HEART

As Sawdah grew older, she feared being divorced and losing the honour of being the Prophet's wife. She made a decision that showed ***wisdom and generosity***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5212

حَدَّثَنَا مَالِكُ بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلُ، حَدَّثَنَا زُهَيْرٌ، عَنْ هِشَامٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّ سَوْدَةَ بِنْتَ زَمْعَةَ، وَهَبَتْ، يَوْمَهَا لِعَائِشَةَ، وَكَانَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقْسِمُ لِعَائِشَةَ بِيَوْمِهَا وَيَوْمِ سَوْدَةَ.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها narrated: ***"Sawdah daughter of Zam'ah gave her day to 'A'ishah, so the Prophet ﷺ allotted to 'A'ishah her own day and the day of Sawdah."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Malik ibn Isma'il, from Zuhayr ibn Mu'awiyah, from Hisham ibn 'Urwah, from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Marriage, Chapter: A wife giving her day to her co-wife, Hadith No. 5212; also Muslim No. 1463.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5212

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Sawdah chose ***the Hereafter*** over her worldly right. According to Ibn 'Abbas, she said: ***"Do not divorce me; keep me, and give my day to 'A'ishah."*** She willingly gave up her turn so long as she remained the Prophet's wife in this world and the next.

According to a report from Ibn 'Abbas, this event relates to Allah's words in Surah An-Nisa' 4:128 about ***reconciliation between spouses***: "there is no sin upon them if they make terms of settlement between them — and settlement is best" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3040 — sahih). Islam allows a wife to give up part of her rights willingly to preserve the marriage.

Notice too that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***respected Sawdah's decision***, and kept her as his wife until the end of his life. She was not neglected; he still visited her daily like his other wives.

Sawdah's attitude also shows ***maturity***. She understood that 'A'ishah was younger and more beloved to him, so she ***pleased her husband*** by giving her turn to the one he loved. A big heart is not ruled by jealousy.

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SAWDAH REMEMBERED

Several events in Sahih al-Bukhari preserve memories of Sawdah. During the Farewell Pilgrimage, Sawdah — a large woman who moved slowly — asked permission to ***leave Muzdalifah early*** before the crowds, and he permitted her (Sahih al-Bukhari 1680). From this came ***a concession*** for the weak, still practised by pilgrims today.

After the verse of hijab came down, Sawdah went out at night to relieve herself. 'Umar recognised her by her large frame and called out to her. Sawdah returned and complained to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and revelation came: ***"You (women) have been permitted to go out for your needs"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 4795).

This event shows that Islam ***does not imprison women***; hijab is protection, not a prison. And it came from the complaint of a wife of the Prophet ﷺ who was bold enough to ask.

Sawdah رضى الله عنها died in Madinah — by one view at the end of 'Umar's caliphate, by another in 54 AH. She is remembered as ***a loyal, generous and cheerful wife***; historians mention she sometimes made the Messenger of Allah ﷺ smile with her humour.

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'A'ISHAH: DAUGHTER OF AS-SIDDIQ

'A'ishah bint Abi Bakr as-Siddiq رضى الله عنها was born into Islam, in the home of the man who first affirmed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Her mother was Umm Ruman. She never knew idol worship; she said: "I never knew my parents except as followers of this religion."

The choice of 'A'ishah as the Prophet's wife came through ***Allah's guidance***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3895

حَدَّثَنَا مُعَلَّى، حَدَّثَنَا وُهَيْبٌ، عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ لَهَا أُرِيتُكِ فِي الْمَنَامِ مَرَّتَيْنِ، أَرَى أَنَّكِ فِي سَرَقَةٍ مِنْ حَرِيرٍ وَيَقُولُ هَذِهِ امْرَأَتُكَ فَاكْشِفْ عَنْهَا فَإِذَا هِيَ أَنْتِ فَأَقُولُ إِنْ يَكُ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ يُمْضِهِ.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said to her: ***"You were shown to me in a dream twice.*** I saw you in a piece of silk, and (the angel) said: 'This is your wife; uncover her.' When I uncovered it, it was you. I said: ***'If this is from Allah, He will bring it to pass.'"***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Mu'alla ibn Asad, from Wuhayb ibn Khalid, from Hisham ibn 'Urwah, from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, Chapter: The Prophet's marriage to 'A'ishah, Hadith No. 3895; also No. 5125 and Muslim No. 2438.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3895

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The dreams of prophets are revelation. So this marriage was not merely a personal choice, but ***Allah's decree***. And notice his manners: "If this is from Allah, He will bring it to pass" — he did not hasten, but ***left it to Allah***.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave her the kunyah ***Umm 'Abdillah***, after her nephew 'Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, though she had no children (Sunan Abi Dawud 4970 — sahih). 'A'ishah was his only wife who was ***a virgin***.

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'A'ishah also narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to ***sew his clothes and mend his sandals*** (Musnad Ahmad — sahih), and that he would ***help with housework*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 676). Much of what we know of the Prophet's home life comes from 'A'ishah's narrations.

Scholars note that 'A'ishah combined ***knowledge of the Qur'an, hadith, fiqh, poetry and the history of the Arabs***, making her one of the most learned people of her age.

It is reported that az-Zuhri said: "If the knowledge of 'A'ishah were gathered and compared with the knowledge of all the other wives and all other women, 'A'ishah's knowledge would be greater." She was a living library of the Sunnah.

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A HOME FULL OF LOVE

The marriage contract took place in Makkah before the Hijrah, and 'A'ishah began living with him in Madinah in ***Shawwal of the first or second year AH*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5133). 'A'ishah said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ married me in Shawwal and began married life with me in Shawwal; so which of his wives was more fortunate with him than I?" (Sahih Muslim 1423). With this she ***rejected the pre-Islamic superstition*** that Shawwal was an unlucky month for marriage.

SIRAH NOTE: ON 'A'ISHAH'S AGE

Sahih al-Bukhari 5133 and Sahih Muslim 1422 state that 'A'ishah was six at the contract and nine when she began living with him. This is the authentic narration held by the majority of scholars.

In seventh-century Arab society, and in many societies of the world then, ***maturity was measured by puberty***, not by age as today. Not one of Islam's enemies at the time — who searched for any fault in him — used this marriage as criticism, because it was ***normal*** in their society. The regulation of marriage today is subject to public interest and the laws of each country.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, Book of Marriage; an-Nawawi, Sharh Sahih Muslim, Book of Marriage.

Their home was full of ***affection***. 'A'ishah narrated that when she drank from a vessel, he would take it and ***put his mouth where hers had been*** (Sahih Muslim 300). He also raced with her; 'A'ishah won the first time, and he won the second, saying: "This is for that one" (Sunan Abi Dawud 2578 — sahih).

He also ***understood her feelings***. He said to her: "I know when you are pleased with me and when you are angry." Asked how, he said: "When you are pleased, you say: 'No, by the Lord of Muhammad'; and when you are angry, you say: 'No, by the Lord of Ibrahim.'" 'A'ishah replied: ***"Yes, O Messenger of Allah; I only leave out your name"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5228).

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THE MOST BELOVED

'Amr ibn al-'As رضى الله عنه once asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: ***"Who is the most beloved person to you?"*** He said: ***"'A'ishah."*** 'Amr asked: "Among men?" He said: ***"Her father."*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3662).

He was not shy to declare his love for his wife before a Companion. This is an important lesson for husbands: ***love for one's wife is not weakness***, but a noble Sunnah.

He also said: ***"The superiority of 'A'ishah over other women is like the superiority of tharid over other food"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3770). Tharid is bread soaked in meat broth — the most loved and nourishing dish of the Arabs then.

The Companions knew this standing. They deliberately sent gifts to him ***on 'A'ishah's day***, knowing he was happy on that day (Sahih al-Bukhari 2581). And in the end, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ chose to be nursed in 'A'ishah's house, and died ***with his head in her lap*** (Book 30).

When 'A'ishah played with her dolls with her friends, he did not forbid it, but ***let her friends come to play*** with her (Sahih al-Bukhari 6130). He understood the needs of a young wife.

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THE SLANDER (AL-IFK)

Great love is tested with great trials. After the campaign of Banu al-Mustaliq (5 or 6 AH), 'A'ishah was left behind by the caravan while searching for her lost necklace. A Companion, ***Safwan ibn al-Mu'attal***, found her and brought her back on his camel (Sahih al-Bukhari 4750).

The hypocrites, led by ***'Abdullah ibn Ubayy***, spread a vile ***slander*** against 'A'ishah's honour. For a month the slander spread, revelation did not come, and 'A'ishah fell ill without knowing what was being said. When she learned of it, she wept night and day.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked her, 'A'ishah answered with the words of the Prophet Ya'qub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: ***"Beautiful patience; and Allah is the One sought for help against what you describe"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 4750). She did not defend herself with oaths, but ***relied entirely on Allah***.

Then Allah revealed ten verses of Surah An-Nur declaring her innocence from above the seven heavens: ***"Indeed, those who came with falsehood are a group among you. Do not think it bad for you; rather it is good for you"*** (An-Nur 24:11) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 24:11.

This event left ***a great lesson*** for the Ummah: spreading accusations without proof is forbidden, believers must think well of one another (An-Nur 24:12), and Allah defends the wronged. Scholars agree that whoever accuses 'A'ishah after these verses has ***denied the Qur'an***.

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GREETINGS FROM JIBRIL

Just as Khadijah received greetings from Allah, 'A'ishah received ***greetings from Jibril***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3768

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ يُونُسَ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، قَالَ أَبُو سَلَمَةَ إِنَّ عَائِشَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ قَالَتْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَوْمًا يَا عَائِشُ، هَذَا جِبْرِيلُ يُقْرِئُكِ السَّلاَمَ. فَقُلْتُ وَعَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ، تَرَى مَا لاَ أَرَى. تُرِيدُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Salamah narrated that 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: One day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"O 'A'ish, this is Jibril conveying greetings of peace to you."*** I replied: ***"Wa 'alayhis-salam wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh."*** You (O Messenger of Allah) see what I do not see.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Yahya ibn Bukayr, from al-Layth ibn Sa'd, from Yunus ibn Yazid, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from Abu Salamah ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Virtues of the Companions, Chapter: The merit of 'A'ishah, Hadith No. 3768; also Muslim No. 2447.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3768

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Notice his affectionate address: ***"Ya 'A'ish"*** — shortening her name as a sign of love. And notice 'A'ishah's manners: she returned the greeting ***more completely*** ("wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh"), practising Allah's words: "respond with one better than it" (An-Nisa' 4:86).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself explained to Umm Salamah that ***revelation came to him while he was under 'A'ishah's blanket***, a distinction not shared by his other wives (Sahih al-Bukhari 2581). Her home was ***a place where revelation descended***, and finally became his resting place.

'A'ishah herself was very ***humble***. When the verses declaring her innocence came down, her mother told her to get up and thank the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, but she said: ***"By Allah, I will not get up to him, and I praise none but Allah"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 4750).

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This greeting from Jibril also shows ***'A'ishah's standing in the heavens***, just as the verses of An-Nur show her innocence on earth. The angels knew and honoured her, so it is unfitting for a believer to belittle her.

The honour given to 'A'ishah is also honour for every woman who seeks knowledge and guards her faith. Her story shows that ***a woman's voice in knowledge*** was respected by the greatest Companions, who came to her door to learn.

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THE BLESSING OF ABU BAKR'S FAMILY

On one journey, 'A'ishah's necklace was lost again. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Companions stopped to search for it in a place with ***no water***. Prayer time came, and people complained to Abu Bakr, who scolded his daughter for troubling everyone (Sahih al-Bukhari 334).

Then Allah revealed ***the verse of tayammum***. Usayd ibn Hudayr رضى الله عنه said: ***"This is not the first of your blessings, O family of Abu Bakr."*** When 'A'ishah's camel was raised, the necklace was found beneath it (Sahih al-Bukhari 334).

From a small hardship came ***ease for the whole Ummah*** until the Day of Resurrection: whoever finds no water may perform tayammum. This teaches us that behind difficulty, Allah often keeps ***a mercy we did not expect***.

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TEACHER OF THE UMMAH

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها became one of ***the most prolific narrators of hadith*** — over two thousand hadiths are narrated from her. She narrated things only a wife would know: his night prayer, how he bathed, his fasting, and his conduct at home.

Abu Musa al-Ash'ari رضى الله عنه said: ***"Never did we, the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, find a hadith unclear and ask 'A'ishah about it, except that we found she had knowledge of it"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3883 — hasan).

She was also known for ***deep understanding***: she corrected some Companions' understanding of certain hadiths, taught women and men from behind a screen, and lived nearly ***50 years*** after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, passing knowledge to the generation of the Successors.

'A'ishah died in Madinah in ***Ramadan of 57 or 58 AH***, and was buried in al-Baqi'. When she was ill, Ibn 'Abbas visited her and said: "O Mother of the Believers, you are going to truthful forerunners: the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and Abu Bakr" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3771).

Historians also report 'A'ishah's ***generosity***. Once she received a great sum and distributed it all to the poor that same day while she herself was fasting, leaving nothing for her to break her fast. Knowledge and generosity were joined in her.

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HAFSAH BINT 'UMAR

Hafsah bint 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنها was born about five years before prophethood. She married ***Khunays ibn Hudhafah as-Sahmi***, a Companion who emigrated and fought at Badr. Khunays died in Madinah, leaving Hafsah a young widow.

'Umar, as a caring father, sought a good husband for his daughter:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4005

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْيَمَانِ، أَخْبَرَنَا شُعَيْبٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي سَالِمُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عُمَرَ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ يُحَدِّثُ أَنَّ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ حِينَ تَأَيَّمَتْ حَفْصَةُ بِنْتُ عُمَرَ مِنْ خُنَيْسِ بْنِ حُذَافَةَ السَّهْمِيِّ وَكَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَدْ شَهِدَ بَدْرًا تُوُفِّيَ بِالْمَدِينَةِ قَالَ عُمَرُ فَلَقِيتُ عُثْمَانَ بْنَ عَفَّانَ فَعَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ حَفْصَةَ فَقُلْتُ إِنْ شِئْتَ أَنْكَحْتُكَ حَفْصَةَ بِنْتَ عُمَرَ. قَالَ سَأَنْظُرُ فِي أَمْرِي. فَلَبِثْتُ لَيَالِيَ، فَقَالَ قَدْ بَدَا لِي أَنْ لاَ أَتَزَوَّجَ يَوْمِي هَذَا. قَالَ عُمَرُ فَلَقِيتُ أَبَا بَكْرٍ فَقُلْتُ إِنْ شِئْتَ أَنْكَحْتُكَ حَفْصَةَ بِنْتَ عُمَرَ. فَصَمَتَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ، فَلَمْ يَرْجِعْ إِلَىَّ شَيْئًا، فَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِ أَوْجَدَ مِنِّي عَلَى عُثْمَانَ، فَلَبِثْتُ لَيَالِيَ، ثُمَّ خَطَبَهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَأَنْكَحْتُهَا إِيَّاهُ، فَلَقِيَنِي أَبُو بَكْرٍ فَقَالَ لَعَلَّكَ وَجَدْتَ عَلَىَّ حِينَ عَرَضْتَ عَلَىَّ حَفْصَةَ فَلَمْ أَرْجِعْ إِلَيْكَ قُلْتُ نَعَمْ. قَالَ فَإِنَّهُ لَمْ يَمْنَعْنِي أَنْ أَرْجِعَ إِلَيْكَ فِيمَا عَرَضْتَ إِلاَّ أَنِّي قَدْ عَلِمْتُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَدْ ذَكَرَهَا، فَلَمْ أَكُنْ لأُفْشِيَ سِرَّ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم، وَلَوْ تَرَكَهَا لَقَبِلْتُهَا.

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما narrated that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab said: When Hafsah daughter of 'Umar was widowed by the death of Khunays ibn Hudhafah as-Sahmi — a Companion of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who had fought at Badr and died in Madinah — I met 'Uthman ibn 'Affan and offered Hafsah to him. He said: "I will think about it." After some nights he said: "I have decided not to marry at present." Then I met Abu Bakr and offered Hafsah to him, but ***Abu Bakr was silent*** and gave no reply, and I was more upset with him than with 'Uthman. Some nights later, ***the Messenger of Allah ﷺ proposed to her***, and I married her to him. Then Abu Bakr met me and said: "Perhaps you were upset with me?" I said: "Yes." He said: ***"Nothing stopped me from answering your offer except that I knew the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had mentioned***

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her, and I would not reveal the secret of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Had he left her, I would have accepted her."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu al-Yaman al-Hakam ibn Nafi', from Shu'ayb ibn Abi Hamzah, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from Salim ibn 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Military Expeditions, Hadith No. 4005; also No. 5122.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4005

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This hadith is full of lessons. A father ***may offer his daughter*** to a righteous man; this is nothing shameful. And see ***Abu Bakr's trustworthiness***: he accepted being thought badly of by his close friend to keep the secret of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ married Hafsah in ***the third year AH***. Through this marriage he became 'Umar's son-in-law, just as he was Abu Bakr's — ***binding closer ties*** with his two foremost Companions.

Abu Bakr's patience was also ***rewarded***: he did not reveal the secret, and in the end he himself explained to 'Umar. Their friendship endured, and both are buried beside the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

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GUARDIAN OF THE QUR'AN MANUSCRIPT

Hafsah was among the few women of her time who could ***read and write***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ once said to ash-Shifa' bint 'Abdullah: "Why do you not teach her the ruqyah for skin eruptions as you taught her writing?" (Sunan Abi Dawud 3887 — sahih).

This skill and the trust placed in her made Hafsah ***guardian of the Qur'an manuscript***. After many memorisers of the Qur'an were martyred at Yamamah, Abu Bakr ordered Zayd ibn Thabit to compile the Qur'an on sheets (suhuf). (Sahih al-Bukhari 4986)

Zayd said: ***"The sheets remained with Abu Bakr until he died, then with 'Umar during his life, then with Hafsah bint 'Umar"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 4986). When 'Uthman copied the mushaf to send to the provinces of Islam, he borrowed the sheets from Hafsah, then returned them (Sahih al-Bukhari 4987).

Imagine this trust: ***the master copy of the Qur'an*** compiled after the Prophet's death was kept in the home of a woman. Every mushaf we read today has a link to the sheets once guarded by Hafsah رضى الله عنها.

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A WOMAN OF WORSHIP

Hafsah was known for ***abundant worship***: much fasting and much night prayer. Like 'A'ishah, she also had a firmness inherited from her father, and her married life was not free of the ordinary trials between spouses.

SIRAH NOTE: "SHE FASTS MUCH AND PRAYS MUCH AT NIGHT"

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ once divorced Hafsah with a revocable divorce, then took her back (Sunan Abi Dawud 2283 — sahih). In narrations of al-Hakim and at-Tabarani, Jibril said to him: "Take Hafsah back, for she ***fasts much and prays much at night***, and she is ***your wife in Paradise***."

This narration about Jibril is graded ***hasan*** by some scholars, including al-Albani (Sahih al-Jami' 4351), due to its supporting chains. Its meaning agrees with what is known of Hafsah's worship.

REFERENCES:

Sunan Abi Dawud 2283; al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak; al-Albani, Sahih al-Jami' as-Saghir 4351.
https://sunnah.com/abudawud:2283

From this story we learn that ***mistakes and disagreements*** at home do not cancel a person's honour. What matters is ***returning to goodness***, and Allah sees a person's worship as a whole.

Hafsah narrated about ***60 hadiths*** from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and lived until the time of Mu'awiyah.

She died in Madinah in ***41 or 45 AH***, and was buried in al-Baqi'.

Hafsah's story also reminds us that ***private worship*** — voluntary fasting and night prayer — is the true adornment of a believer. People do not see it, but Allah sees it and the angels mention it.

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ZAYNAB BINT KHUZAYMAH: MOTHER OF THE POOR

Zaynab bint Khuzaymah al-Hilaliyyah رضى الله عنها was known since pre-Islamic times by the title ***Umm al-Masakin*** — mother of the poor — because she fed and gave much in charity to those in need.

Her husband was ***martyred at Uhud*** (3 AH). According to the well-known view, he was 'Abdullah ibn Jahsh رضى الله عنه. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then married her as ***care for the widow of a martyr***.

But she lived with him ***only a few months***, then died. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself prayed over her and buried her in al-Baqi'. Apart from Khadijah, she was ***the only wife to die in his lifetime***.

SIRAH NOTE: REPORTS ABOUT ZAYNAB BINT KHUZAYMAH

Information about Zaynab bint Khuzaymah is very scarce because she died early. Historians differ about her previous husband ('Abdullah ibn Jahsh or at-Tufayl ibn al-Harith), the year of her marriage (3 or 4 AH), and how long she was with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (between two and eight months).

What is agreed: she was called ***Umm al-Masakin***, she was the widow of a Muslim who fell or died, and she died in the Prophet's lifetime.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah (from Ibn Ishaq) — chapter on the Prophet's marriages; Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa an-Nihayah; Ibn al-Qayyim, Zad al-Ma'ad.

Though brief, Zaynab's story teaches us that ***a good name is built by deeds***. She narrated no famous hadith and took part in no great event, yet her name endures because of ***her generosity to the poor***.

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THE CHOICE OF THE PROPHET'S WIVES

As life became easier for the Muslims, the wives of the Prophet ﷺ asked for ***more maintenance***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was saddened and kept away from them for a month (Sahih Muslim 1478). Then Allah revealed:

"O Prophet, say to your wives, "If you should desire the worldly life and its adornment, then come, I will provide for you and give you a gracious release" (Al-Ahzab 33:28) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:28.

"But if you should desire Allah and His Messenger and the home of the Hereafter - then indeed, Allah has prepared for the doers of good among you a great reward" (Al-Ahzab 33:29) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:29.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ began with 'A'ishah:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4785

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْيَمَانِ، أَخْبَرَنَا شُعَيْبٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي أَبُو سَلَمَةَ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، أَنَّ عَائِشَةَ، رضى الله عنها زَوْجَ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَخْبَرَتْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم جَاءَهَا حِينَ أَمَرَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَيِّرَ أَزْوَاجَهُ، فَبَدَأَ بِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاكِرٌ لَكِ أَمْرًا فَلاَ عَلَيْكِ أَنْ تَسْتَعْجِلِي حَتَّى تَسْتَأْمِرِي أَبَوَيْكِ، وَقَدْ عَلِمَ أَنَّ أَبَوَىَّ لَمْ يَكُونَا يَأْمُرَانِي بِفِرَاقِهِ، قَالَتْ ثُمَّ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَالَ {يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لأَزْوَاجِكَ}. إِلَى تَمَامِ الآيَتَيْنِ فَقُلْتُ لَهُ فَفِي أَيِّ هَذَا أَسْتَأْمِرُ أَبَوَىَّ فَإِنِّي أُرِيدُ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالدَّارَ الآخِرَةَ.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها, wife of the Prophet ﷺ, narrated: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ came to her when Allah commanded him to give his wives a choice. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ began with me and said: "I am going to mention something to you, so do not hasten (to reply) until you consult your parents." He knew that my parents would never tell me to leave him. Then he recited Allah's words: "O Prophet, say to your wives…" to the end of the two verses. I said: ***"In what of this would I consult my parents? Indeed, I want Allah, His Messenger and the Home of the Hereafter."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu al-Yaman al-Hakam ibn Nafi', from Shu'ayb ibn Abi Hamzah, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from Abu Salamah ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Chapter: "O Prophet, say to your wives", Hadith No. 4785; also Muslim No. 1475.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4785

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LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

'A'ishah did not hesitate for a moment: ***"I want Allah, His Messenger and the Home of the Hereafter."*** Then all his other wives made ***the same choice***. Not one chose this world.

This is the secret of their honour. They lived in small rooms, sometimes without fire for cooking for two months, yet they ***chose to stay***. Their honour was not from wealth, but from ***the choice of the heart***.

Their homes were very simple. 'A'ishah mentioned that two months could pass with no fire lit for cooking in the Prophet's homes ﷺ; they lived on dates and water (Sahih al-Bukhari 2567). Yet they never regretted that choice.

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JEALOUSY IN THE PROPHET'S HOME

The wives of the Prophet ﷺ were noble women, but they were still ***human***. They had feelings, including ***jealousy***. The Qur'an and hadith do not hide this; rather it is told honestly so that we learn how the Messenger of Allah ﷺ handled it.

Anas رضى الله عنه narrated: While the Prophet ﷺ was in the house of one of his wives, another wife sent a dish of food. The wife in whose house he was ***struck the servant's hand***, so the dish fell and broke. The Prophet ﷺ gathered the pieces of the dish, then collected the food onto them, saying: ***"Your mother became jealous."*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 5225).

See his ***calmness***. He did not scold, nor shame his wife in front of others, but ***made an excuse*** for her: "Your mother became jealous." Then he replaced the broken dish with a sound one, so that the right of the wife who sent the food was not lost.

His wives were once divided into ***two groups***, and they sent Umm Salamah, then Fatimah, to ask him for equality regarding people's gifts (Sahih al-Bukhari 2581). He listened patiently, explained the true situation, and was never unjust to anyone.

A lesson for us: jealousy is ***natural***, but it must be ***controlled*** so it does not lead to injustice. And a wise husband handles his wife's feelings with ***gentleness and justice***, not anger.

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BLESSINGS UPON HIS WIVES

Whenever we send blessings on the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, we are also praying for ***his wives***. The Companions asked: "O Messenger of Allah, how shall we send blessings on you?" He said: ***"Say: O Allah, send blessings on Muhammad, his wives and his offspring, as You sent blessings on the family of Ibrahim…"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3369).

This hadith shows that his wives are ***part of the family*** prayed for in the salawat, and it is clear evidence that they are among his ***Ahl al-Bayt***.

So our manners towards them are: ***to mention them well***, to pray for Allah's pleasure upon them, to learn their stories and narrations, and ***to defend their honour*** from any insult. Loving them is part of loving the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Teach our children their names too. A generation that knows ***Khadijah, Sawdah, 'A'ishah, Hafsah*** and the other mothers will grow up with ***role models of women*** far nobler than the entertainment and media figures of today.

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AN EXAMPLE FOR FAMILIES TODAY

Allah promises the same reward to believing men and women: ***"Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women"*** (Al-Ahzab 33:35) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:35.

This verse was revealed when believing women asked why the Qur'an mentions men much but not women — among them ***Umm 'Umarah al-Ansariyyah*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3211 — hasan), and in another report ***Umm Salamah*** رضى الله عنها. The five women in this book give real examples of how believing women ***attain honour*** in various ways:

Khadijah — by ***supporting her husband*** and sacrificing her wealth for da'wah. ***Sawdah*** — by ***generosity*** and putting the Hereafter first. ***'A'ishah*** — by ***knowledge*** and teaching the Ummah. ***Hafsah*** — by ***worship*** and guarding the trust of the Qur'an. ***Zaynab bint Khuzaymah*** — by ***charity*** to the poor.

For husbands, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is the best example: ***loyal*** to a wife who had passed away, ***just*** among his wives, ***affectionate*** and unashamed to show love, ***understanding*** of his wife's feelings, and ***helping*** with housework. He said: "The best of you are those best to their families, and I am the best of you to my family" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3895 — sahih).

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A SUMMARY TABLE OF THE FIVE MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS

The previous chapters told the story of the five Mothers of the Believers one by one. This chapter gathers the basic facts about them into a single table, so that the reader can compare them easily: lineage, situation before marrying the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, year of marriage and year of death.

The years in this table are the well-known opinions in the books of sirah and tabaqat. Some are disputed among historians, and those differences are mentioned in the Sirah Note boxes of the relevant chapters.

MOTHER OF THE BELIEVERS	LINEAGE	BEFORE MARRIAGE	MARRIAGE	DEATH AND BURIAL
Khadijah bint Khuwaylid	Banu Asad, Quraysh	Widow (twice)	15 years before prophethood, in Makkah	10th year of prophethood; al-Hajun, Makkah
Sawdah bint Zam'ah	Banu 'Amir ibn Lu'ayy, Quraysh	Widow; emigrant to Abyssinia	10th year of prophethood, in Makkah	End of 'Umar's caliphate (another view: 54 AH); al-Baqi'
'A'ishah bint Abi Bakr	Banu Taym, Quraysh	Virgin	Contract in Makkah; moved in Shawwal 1 or 2 AH	Ramadan 57 or 58 AH; al-Baqi'
Hafsah bint 'Umar	Banu 'Adi, Quraysh	Widow of Khunays ibn Hudhafah	3 AH, in Madinah	41 or 45 AH; al-Baqi'
Zaynab bint Khuzaymah	Banu Hilal ibn 'Amir	Widow of a martyr	3 or 4 AH, in Madinah	A few months later; al-Baqi'

From this table we see that four of the five wives were from Quraysh, and four of the five were widows. Only 'A'ishah was a virgin. Two died during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ — Khadijah in Makkah and Zaynab bint Khuzaymah in Madinah — and he himself saw to the burial of both.

> **SIRAH NOTE: THE BURIAL OF KHADIJAH**
>
> According to the report of Ibn Sa'd, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself went down into Khadijah's grave at al-Hajun. The funeral prayer had not yet been prescribed at that time, so she was buried without one.
>
> This report comes from the books of sirah and tabaqat, not from the sahih hadith collections. However, it does not conflict with what is known: the funeral prayer was prescribed in Madinah.

References: Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra, vol. 8; adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala', vol. 2; Ibn Hajar, al-Isabah fi Tamyiz as-Sahabah; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa an-Nihayah.

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LESSONS

Our mothers came from different backgrounds: a wealthy merchant, an emigrant who lost her husband, the daughter of his closest Companion, the widow of a hero of Badr, and a woman famed for her charity. The home of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ brought them all together, and each had her honoured place.

This also teaches us that a woman's worth in Islam is not measured by being a virgin or a widow, rich or poor, young or old, but by her faith and her deeds.

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QUR'ANIC VERSES ABOUT THE WIVES OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

No group of women is mentioned in the Qur'an as often as the wives of the Prophet ﷺ. The verses about them are not mere stories; every verse carries rulings and lessons for the whole Ummah. The table below gathers the main verses; some have already been explained in earlier chapters.

VERSE	SUMMARY	LESSON
Al-Ahzab 33:6	The Prophet's wives are the mothers of the believers	They must be honoured; none may marry them after him
Al-Ahzab 33:28–29	The choice between this world and the Hereafter	All chose Allah, His Messenger and the Hereafter (chapter 27)
Al-Ahzab 33:30–31	Reward and punishment doubled	A high station brings a heavy trust
Al-Ahzab 33:32–33	Not like other women; the Ahl al-Bayt purified	Manners of speech, dress and staying at home (chapter 2)
Al-Ahzab 33:34	Remember the verses and wisdom recited in your houses	They were transmitters of the Qur'an and Sunnah
Al-Ahzab 33:50	Marriage rulings specific to the Prophet ﷺ	Particular to him, not to the Ummah
Al-Ahzab 33:51	Latitude in the rota of nights	He remained just even when given latitude
Al-Ahzab 33:52	Forbidden to add or exchange wives	Proof his marriages were not driven by desire
Al-Ahzab 33:53	Ask from behind a screen; none may marry them after him	Explained in Book 32B
An-Nur 24:11–20	'A'ishah's innocence from the slander	Accusing without proof is forbidden (chapter 19)
At-Tahrim 66:1–5	A rebuke to two of the wives	Repentance and returning to what is good

THE HOME AS A SCHOOL: AL-AHZAB 33:34

Allah says to the wives of the Prophet ﷺ: "And remember what is recited in your houses of the verses of Allah and wisdom" (Al-Ahzab 33:34) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:34.

Ibn Kathir reports from Qatadah and the early scholars that "wisdom" in this verse means the Sunnah. So the wives of the Prophet ﷺ were commanded not only to act upon what they heard, but also to remember it and pass it on. Chapter 33 shows how this command was fulfilled.

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WHAT WAS PARTICULAR TO HIM, AND WHAT WAS FORBIDDEN: AL-AHZAB 33:50–52

Allah made lawful for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ marriages not lawful for the Ummah, then stated: "only for you, excluding the [other] believers" (Al-Ahzab 33:50).

The next verse gave him latitude in the rota of nights (Al-Ahzab 33:51). 'A'ishah narrated that even after this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would still ask permission from the wife whose turn it was when he wished to go to another wife (Sahih al-Bukhari 4789). Allah gave him latitude, but he chose justice.

Then Allah said: "Not lawful to you, [O Muhammad], are [any additional] women after [this], nor [is it] for you to exchange them for [other] wives, even if their beauty were to please you" (Al-Ahzab 33:52) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:52. Ibn Kathir mentions that this verse was a reward for his wives, because they had chosen Allah and His Messenger.

THE EPISODE OF SURAH AT-TAHRIM (66:1–5)

Allah says: "O Prophet, why do you prohibit [yourself from] what Allah has made lawful for you, seeking the approval of your wives?" (At-Tahrim 66:1) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 66:1.

'A'ishah herself narrated the occasion of this verse. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to drink honey in the house of Zaynab bint Jahsh and stay there a while. 'A'ishah and Hafsah agreed to say to him when he came in: "I smell maghafir (a strong-smelling gum) on you." So he swore he would not drink that honey again, and this verse was revealed (Sahih al-Bukhari 4912; Sahih Muslim 1474).

Ibn 'Abbas once asked 'Umar about the two wives mentioned in Allah's words "If you two [wives] repent to Allah" (At-Tahrim 66:4). 'Umar replied: "They were 'A'ishah and Hafsah" (Sahih al-Bukhari 4913). This long hadith also tells how the Messenger of Allah ﷺ kept away from his wives for a month, and how 'Umar advised his daughter Hafsah (Sahih al-Bukhari 5191).

> **SIRAH NOTE: ANOTHER REPORT ON THE OCCASION OF THE VERSE**
>
> In another report in Sahih al-Bukhari (5268), the honey was drunk in the house of Hafsah, and those who agreed together were 'A'ishah, Sawdah and Safiyyah. Ibn Hajar in Fath al-Bari prefers the report naming Zaynab bint Jahsh, because it agrees with 'Umar's words that the two were 'A'ishah and Hafsah.
>
> There is also a report in an-Nasa'i (3959) that the verse was revealed concerning Mariyah the Copt. Some scholars, including Ibn Hajar, hold that the verse may have been revealed for both events. What is certain is that Allah did not want His Prophet to forbid what He had made lawful.

The scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah explain that this rebuke does not lessen the honour of 'A'ishah and Hafsah. Allah called them to repent, and they repented; then they chose Allah, His Messenger and the Home of

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the Hereafter (Al-Ahzab 33:29), and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ kept them as his wives until the end of his life.

References: Sahih al-Bukhari 4912; Sahih al-Bukhari 4913; Sahih al-Bukhari 5268; Sahih al-Bukhari 4789; Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim (Al-Ahzab 33:34, 33:50–52; At-Tahrim 66:1–5); Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, Book of Tafsir.

LESSONS

The Qur'an speaks of the wives of the Prophet ﷺ honestly: their honour, their choice, and also their small, human mistakes. This teaches us that honour does not mean infallibility. What distinguishes the honoured is how quickly they repent and return to Allah.

These verses also show that the household of the Prophet ﷺ was guided directly by revelation. Every small event within it became a ruling that guides Muslim households until the Day of Resurrection.

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THEY NARRATED THE SUNNAH

Allah's command in Al-Ahzab 33:34 that the wives of the Prophet ﷺ remember "the verses of Allah and wisdom" was fulfilled in the best way. Through them the Ummah learned things the male Companions did not see: his night prayer, how he bathed and purified himself, his fasting, and his character at home.

MOTHER OF THE BELIEVERS	APPROX. HADITHS	SOME OF HER STUDENTS	EXAMPLE NARRATION
Khadijah	No direct narrations	—	Died before most of the Shari'ah was revealed
Sawdah	About 5	Ibn 'Abbas	The hide of a dead sheep is tanned (Sahih al-Bukhari 6686)
'A'ishah	About 2,210	'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, 'Amrah bint 'Abd ar-Rahman, Masruq	The beginning of revelation, night prayer, ghusl, his character
Hafsah	About 60	'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (her brother), Hamzah ibn 'Abdullah (her nephew)	Two light rak'ahs before Fajr (Sahih al-Bukhari 618)
Zaynab bint Khuzaymah	No known narrations	—	Died a few months after the marriage

The numbers above are estimates that adh-Dhahabi in Siyar A'lam an-Nubala' reports from Baqi ibn Makhlad, counting narrations repeated through different chains. 'A'ishah is the fourth most prolific narrator among the Companions, after Abu Hurayrah, Ibn 'Umar and Anas.

'A'ISHAH: THE TEACHER WHO CORRECTED UNDERSTANDING

'A'ishah's distinction lies not only in the number of her narrations, but in her understanding. She often weighed the hadiths that reached her against the Qur'an. When the report reached her that the dead are punished because of their family's weeping, she explained its true meaning and recited Allah's words: "And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another" (Al-An'am 6:164) (Sahih al-Bukhari 1288).

When Masruq asked whether the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saw his Lord on the night of the Mi'raj, she cited Allah's words: "Vision perceives Him not" (Al-An'am 6:103) (Sahih al-Bukhari 4855). Later scholars gathered her corrections into a book, al-Ijabah li Irad ma Istadrakathu 'A'ishah 'ala as-Sahabah, by az-Zarkashi.

And it was she who gave the most concise description of the character of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When asked about his character, she answered: "His character was the Qur'an" (Sahih Muslim 746).

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SIRAH NOTE: THE SCHOLARS' PRAISE OF 'A'ISHAH'S KNOWLEDGE

Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri said: "If the knowledge of 'A'ishah were gathered together with the knowledge of all the wives of the Prophet ﷺ and of all women, 'A'ishah's knowledge would be greater." This saying is narrated by al-Hakim and at-Tabarani.

'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, her nephew, said that he never saw anyone more knowledgeable in fiqh, medicine and poetry than 'A'ishah. This report is quoted by Abu Nu'aym in Hilyat al-Awliya' and by adh-Dhahabi in the Siyar.

References: Sahih al-Bukhari 1288; Sahih al-Bukhari 4855; Sahih Muslim 746; Sahih al-Bukhari 618; Sahih al-Bukhari 6686; adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'; az-Zarkashi, al-Ijabah.

LESSONS

Half of the life of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was lived at home. Without his wives, half of that Sunnah would have been lost. So every time we practise the Sunnah of the night prayer, the manners of bathing or good character with our families, we are enjoying the fruits of our mothers' knowledge.

The story of 'A'ishah also shows that Islam honours women's knowledge. Senior Companions and Tabi'in sat to learn from her, and her opinions are still referred to in fiqh today.

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ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROPHET'S ﷺ MARRIAGES

The marriages of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ are often made a subject of questions, especially by some Western writers since the time of the orientalists. A Muslim need not be angry or anxious on hearing these questions. It is enough for us to present the historical facts calmly, based on authentic sources, and let the facts speak.

FIRST QUESTION: WAS IT DRIVEN BY DESIRE?

The facts we saw in chapter 3 answer this question. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ lived with one wife only for about 25 years in his youth. After that, of all his wives only one was a virgin; the others were widows, some of them older and with children.

Most of the marriages took place in Madinah, in a ten-year period full of battles, delegations and da'wah. His homes were small rooms where sometimes no fire was lit for cooking for two months (chapter 27). And finally Allah Himself forbade him to add or exchange wives "even if their beauty were to please you" (Al-Ahzab 33:52). A man ruled by desire does not live like this.

SECOND QUESTION: THE AGE OF 'A'ISHAH

The authentic reports state that 'A'ishah was six years old at the marriage contract and nine when she began living with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (Sahih al-Bukhari 5133; Sahih al-Bukhari 3894; Sahih Muslim 1422). A Muslim need not reject these reports or be ashamed of them, but should understand them in the context of their time.

First, in seventh-century Arab society — and in most societies of the world until much later centuries — marriage was measured by maturity and puberty, not by an age fixed by modern law. Second, according to the reports of Ahmad and Ibn Sa'd, 'A'ishah had earlier been sought in marriage by the family of Jubayr ibn Mut'im before the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; this shows that the matter was normal in that society. Third, his enemies — who looked for every fault with which to attack him — never made this marriage a subject of reproach.

Fourth, and most important, 'A'ishah herself remembered her marriage with great joy and pride (Sahih Muslim 1423), and she grew up to become the most learned woman of this Ummah. Her own testimony is worth more than the assumptions of anyone who came fourteen centuries later.

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SIRAH NOTE: AGE CALCULATIONS BY MODERN WRITERS

Some modern writers have tried to recalculate 'A'ishah's age by comparing it with the age of her sister Asma', or with other dates, and conclude that she was between 16 and 19. These calculations rest on estimated dates and historical reports that are not as strong as the narrations of al-Bukhari and Muslim.

The majority of hadith scholars hold to the authentic reports. At the same time, the rulings on marriage today are subject to public interest (maslahah), physical and emotional readiness, and the laws of each country — and Islam itself establishes that marriage must not cause harm ("there is to be no harm and no harming").

THIRD QUESTION: WERE HIS WIVES OPPRESSED?

The Qur'an itself gave them the choice to part from him honourably, and all of them chose to stay (Al-Ahzab 33:28–29). They were free to give their opinions, to ask, even to be upset; 'A'ishah would swear "By the Lord of Ibrahim" when she was angry, and he understood (chapter 17). Umm Salamah gave advice that he followed at al-Hudaybiyah (Book 32B).

'A'ishah also testified: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ never struck anything with his hand — neither a woman nor a servant — except when fighting in the path of Allah" (Sahih Muslim 2328). This is the husband whom Allah made an example for the whole Ummah.

References: Sahih al-Bukhari 5133; Sahih al-Bukhari 3894; Sahih Muslim 1422; Sahih Muslim 1423; Sahih Muslim 2328; Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, Book of Marriage; an-Nawawi, Sharh Sahih Muslim.

LESSONS

Answering questions about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ requires knowledge and good manners. We do not hide authentic reports, and we do not invent reports to please anyone. We present the facts, explain the context, and leave it to the honest mind to judge.

More important than answering is knowing. Whoever truly knows the life of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with his wives — his loyalty, justice and gentleness — will find nothing in it but mercy.

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POPULAR REPORTS THAT NEED CHECKING

Many stories about the wives of the Prophet ﷺ spread in talks and on social media. Some are authentic, some weak, and some fabricated. Out of love for our mothers, we must take care not to attribute to them, or to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, anything that is not true.

REPORT	GRADE	EXPLANATION
"Take half of your religion from this Humayra'"	Fabricated; no basis	Declared false by al-Mizzi, adh-Dhahabi and Ibn Kathir. It is true, however, that 'A'ishah narrated a great deal of knowledge.
Hadiths addressing her as "O Humayra'"	Mostly weak or fabricated	Ibn al-Qayyim said most are lies; a few are authentic, such as an-Nasa'i's report about watching the Abyssinians play.
"This is your wife in this world and the next" (Jibril bringing 'A'ishah's image)	Hasan	Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3880; its meaning is supported by Sahih al-Bukhari 3895.
"The best of the women of the worlds: Maryam, Khadijah, Fatimah and Asiyah"	Sahih	Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3878.
"Allah has not given me anyone better than her" (about Khadijah)	Hasan according to some scholars	Musnad Ahmad 24864; its meaning is supported by authentic hadiths (chapter 10).
Khadijah was 40 when she married	Well known, disputed	Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Sa'd; another view says 28 (chapter 6).
Khadijah spent countless wealth, with specific figures	No authentic figures	Authentic: she supported him with her wealth; the figures quoted in talks have no chain.
The Messenger of Allah ﷺ actually divorced Sawdah, then took her back	Weak (mursal)	Authentic: Sawdah feared divorce and gave her turn to 'A'ishah (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3040).
Jibril: "Take Hafsah back, for she fasts much and prays at night"	Hasan (al-Albani)	Al-Hakim and at-Tabarani; the divorce and taking back are themselves authentic (Sunan Abi Dawud 2283).
How long Zaynab bint Khuzaymah was with him	Disputed	Between two and eight months according to the sirah writers (chapter 26).

SIRAH NOTE: THE TITLE "AL-HUMAYRA'"

Al-Humayra' means "the rosy one", referring to 'A'ishah's fair, rosy complexion. The title does appear in some authentic reports, so there is nothing wrong in using it with full respect.

What must be avoided is attributing to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ unauthentic hadiths that use this title. Ibn al-Qayyim in al-Manar al-Munif lists these reports as examples of hadiths to beware of.

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References: Ibn al-Qayyim, al-Manar al-Munif fi as-Sahih wa ad-Da'if; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa an-Nihayah; Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3880; Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3878; Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3040; Sunan Abi Dawud 2283.

LESSONS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever lies about me deliberately, let him take his seat in the Fire" (Sahih al-Bukhari 110). The honour of his wives is complete with what is authentic; they do not need fabricated reports to honour them.

Before sharing a story, ask: who narrated it, and in which book? This is the manner inherited from 'A'ishah herself, who weighed every report carefully.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS

Here are questions often asked about the wives of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, with brief answers based on the Qur'an, authentic hadith and the views of recognised scholars.

1. WHY DID THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ HAVE MORE THAN FOUR WIVES?

It was a particular allowance that Allah gave to him alone (Al-Ahzab 33:50). Later Allah forbade him to add or exchange wives (Al-Ahzab 33:52). For the Ummah the limit is four, on condition of justice (An-Nisa' 4:3).

2. WHO IS MORE VIRTUOUS, KHADIJAH OR 'A'ISHAH?

The scholars differ. Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim explain that each has her own distinction: Khadijah in early faith, support and sacrifice; 'A'ishah in knowledge and spreading the Sunnah. Both were promised Paradise.

3. WILL THE WIVES OF THE PROPHET ﷺ BE HIS WIVES IN PARADISE?

'Ammar ibn Yasir said of 'A'ishah: "She is the wife of your Prophet in this world and the Hereafter" (Sahih al-Bukhari 7100). Scholars mention that all the wives who died as his wives share in this honour, because they chose Allah, His Messenger and the Home of the Hereafter.

4. DOES THE REBUKE IN SURAH AT-TAHRIM LESSEN THE HONOUR OF 'A'ISHAH AND HAFSAH?

No. They repented and remained his wives until the end of his life. A small human mistake followed by repentance does not erase a person's honour (see chapter 32).

5. WHAT IS THE RULING ON ACCUSING 'A'ISHAH OF WHAT THE QUR'AN CLEARED HER OF?

The scholars agree that whoever accuses 'A'ishah of that from which Allah cleared her in Surah An-Nur has denied the Qur'an. Ibn Kathir mentions this in his commentary on An-Nur 24:23.

6. WHY WAS NO FUNERAL PRAYER OFFERED FOR KHADIJAH?

Because the funeral prayer had not yet been prescribed when she died in Makkah. According to the report of Ibn Sa'd, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself went down into her grave (chapter 31).

7. MAY WE CALL 'A'ISHAH BY THE TITLE AL-HUMAYRA'?

Yes, with respect, because the title occurs in some authentic reports. But most of the hadiths addressing her as "O Humayra'" are not authentic and may not be attributed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (chapter 35).

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8. HOW SHOULD WE EXPLAIN 'A'ISHAH'S AGE TO CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS?

Honestly and calmly: mention the authentic reports, explain that the measure of maturity differs from age to age, and stress that 'A'ishah herself was happy in her marriage and became a teacher to the Ummah. The rulings on marriage today follow public interest and the law (chapter 34).

9. HOW MANY HADITHS DID THE WIVES OF THE PROPHET ﷺ NARRATE?

According to the estimates reported by adh-Dhahabi, 'A'ishah narrated about 2,210 hadiths, Umm Salamah about 378, and Hafsah about 60. The total exceeds 2,800 narrations including repetitions.

10. WHY DID THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ KEEP AWAY FROM HIS WIVES FOR A MONTH?

Because they asked for more provision, and because of the events mentioned in Surah At-Tahrim. After a month the verses of choice were revealed (Al-Ahzab 33:28–29), and they all chose Allah and His Messenger (Sahih al-Bukhari 5191; Sahih Muslim 1478).

11. WHAT ARE THE BEST BOOKS FOR LEARNING THEIR STORIES?

At-Tabaqat al-Kubra by Ibn Sa'd (vol. 8), Siyar A'lam an-Nubala' by adh-Dhahabi, al-Isabah by Ibn Hajar, and the chapters on virtues (manaqib) in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, with their commentaries.

12. HOW DO WE FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE TODAY?

Women follow them in faith, knowledge, worship and charity. Men follow the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in loyalty, justice and gentleness towards their wives. And every Muslim prays for them, studies their narrations and defends their honour.

LESSONS

Every question about the Mothers of the Believers must be answered with knowledge and good manners. They are our mothers; so we speak of them as a good child speaks of his mother — with love, respect and truth.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

The five Mothers of the Believers in this part leave priceless lessons. Among the most important:

MOTHER OF THE BELIEVERS	KEY LESSON
Khadijah	Believing when others disbelieved; comforting and supporting her husband; receiving greetings from Allah
Sawdah	A patient emigrant; giving her turn for the Hereafter; generosity
'A'ishah	The most beloved wife; declared innocent by the Qur'an; teacher of the Ummah
Hafsah	A woman of worship; guardian of the Qur'an sheets; literate
Zaynab bint Khuzaymah	"Mother of the poor"; a good name built by charity
All of them	Choosing Allah, His Messenger and the Hereafter (Al-Ahzab 33:29)

A MESSAGE FOR US

These mothers of ours are not mere names in a history book. They are ***living examples*** of how faith shapes a home. May Allah be pleased with them all, and gather us with them in Paradise.

In sha Allah, the series **The Prophet's Sirah** will continue with ***Book 32B — The Mothers of the Believers (Part 2)***: Umm Salamah, Zaynab bint Jahsh, Juwayriyah, Umm Habibah, Safiyyah and Maymunah رضى الله عنهن, with a note on Mariyah the Copt. And Allah knows best.

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Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra, vol. 8 (biographies of women); adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'.

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PART THREE

Mothers of the Believers (2)

The Prophet's Sirah — Series 32B

Ummahat al-Mu'minin (Part 2): Umm Salamah, Zaynab bint Jahsh, Juwayriyah, Umm Habibah, Safiyyah and Maymunah, According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

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MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS

In Book 32 (Part 1), we came to know five Mothers of the Believers: ***Khadijah, Sawdah, 'A'ishah, Hafsah and Zaynab bint Khuzaymah*** رضى الله عنهن. This Book 32B continues with six more: ***Umm Salamah, Zaynab bint Jahsh, Juwayriyah, Umm Habibah, Safiyyah and Maymunah***, with a note on ***Mariyah the Copt***.

These six women came from ***very different backgrounds***: an emigrant of Banu Makhzum, a cousin of the Prophet from Banu Hashim's kin, the captured daughter of a tribal chief, the daughter of the Quraysh leader who opposed Islam, the daughter of the Jewish chief of Banu an-Nadir, and a woman of Banu Hilal who was aunt to Ibn 'Abbas and Khalid ibn al-Walid.

Yet Islam united them in one home, and Allah honoured them all with the same title: ***Mothers of the Believers***. Their stories show how the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***built bridges*** between tribes, abolished pre-Islamic customs, and cared for women who had lost everything.

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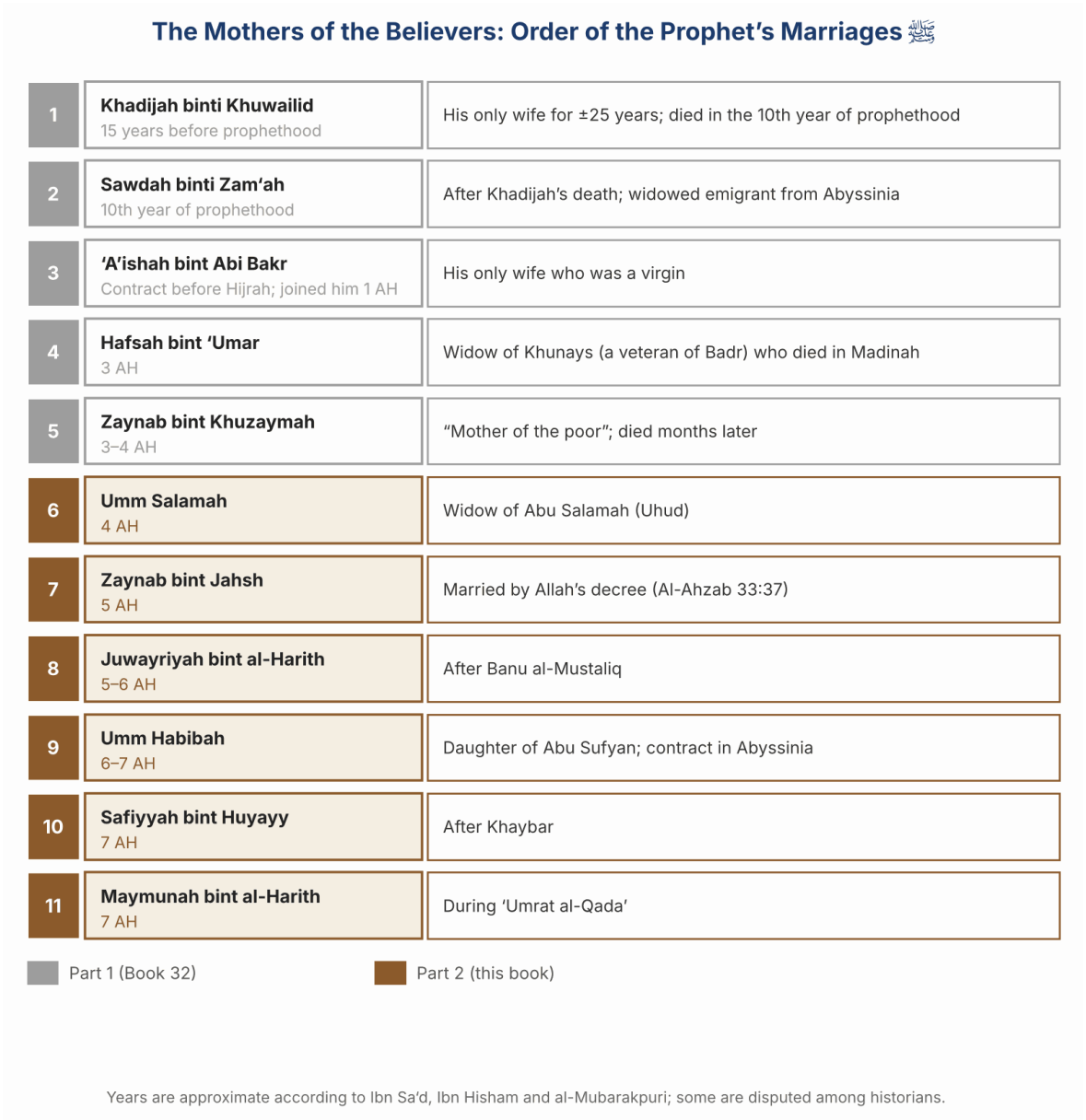


Figure 1: The Mothers of the Believers — the order of the Prophet's marriages ﷺ. Part 2 is marked in brown.

Note: The Qur'anic translation in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in its box. Dates of events are approximate according to the books of sirah, and some are disputed.

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CONTINUING THE STORY OF OUR MOTHERS

Allah reminds the wives of the Prophet ﷺ of the great blessing they had: ***"And remember what is recited in your houses of the verses of Allah and wisdom"*** (Al-Ahzab 33:34) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:34.

Their homes were ***the first school*** in Islam. There the Qur'an was recited and the Sunnah lived every day. This verse was also ***a trust***: what they heard and saw had to be conveyed to the Ummah — and that is what they did all their lives.

The six wives in this part narrated hundreds of hadiths. ***Umm Salamah*** alone narrated nearly 400, making her the second most prolific narrator among his wives after 'A'ishah. Hadiths on the regular sunnah prayers, the bath from janabah, mourning, morning remembrance and the supplication in calamity reached us through them.

As in Part 1, we will use the Qur'an, ***sahih and hasan*** hadiths, and trusted books of sirah. Weak or disputed reports are placed in "Sirah Note" boxes.

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UMM SALAMAH: THE FIRST FAMILY TO EMIGRATE

Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها, whose real name was ***Hind bint Abi Umayyah***, came from Banu Makhzum, one of the leading clans of Quraysh. Her father was known as ***Zad ar-Rakib*** — "the traveller's provision" — because when he travelled, he provided for everyone with him.

Her husband, ***Abu Salamah 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al-Asad***, was a cousin and foster-brother of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and among the early Muslims. The two emigrated to ***Abyssinia***, then returned to Makkah, and later emigrated to Madinah.

> **SIRAH NOTE: UMM SALAMAH'S EMIGRATION**
>
> Ibn Ishaq narrates from Umm Salamah that when they set out to emigrate to Madinah, her clan Banu al-Mughirah held her back, while Abu Salamah's family took her son Salamah. Abu Salamah emigrated alone. For nearly a year, Umm Salamah went out every morning to al-Abtah and wept until evening.
>
> At last her people took pity and let her go, and her son was returned. She set out alone with her son, and ***'Uthman ibn Talhah*** — not yet a Muslim — escorted her with great respect to Quba'. This story is narrated in the books of sirah; it is famous, but scholars discuss its chain.
>
> **REFERENCES:**
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From this story we see ***the price of hijrah***: a family torn apart, a child taken, and a mother weeping for a year. Yet Umm Salamah did not turn back. This steadfastness prepared her to become ***a Mother of the Believers***.

The emigration of Abu Salamah's family also teaches that ***sacrifice for faith*** sometimes means separation from those we love most. Yet Allah did not let that sacrifice go to waste: the separated family was reunited in Madinah, and Umm Salamah was later honoured as a Mother of the Believers.

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A SUPPLICATION IN CALAMITY

Abu Salamah was wounded at Uhud, and a few months later he died in the 4th year AH. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself came, closed his eyes and said: "When the soul is taken, the sight follows it," then prayed for him (Sahih Muslim 920).

Umm Salamah lost the husband she loved, with young children to care for. It was then that she practised the supplication the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had taught:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 918B

وَحَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو أُسَامَةَ، عَنْ سَعْدِ بْنِ سَعِيدٍ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي عُمَرُ بْنُ كَثِيرِ بْنِ أَفْلَحَ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ ابْنَ سَفِينَةَ، يُحَدِّثُ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ أُمَّ سَلَمَةَ، زَوْجَ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم تَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ تُصِيبُهُ مُصِيبَةٌ فَيَقُولُ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ اللَّهُمَّ أْجُرْنِي فِي مُصِيبَتِي وَأَخْلِفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا إِلاَّ أَجَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي مُصِيبَتِهِ وَأَخْلَفَ لَهُ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا. قَالَتْ فَلَمَّا تُوُفِّيَ أَبُو سَلَمَةَ قُلْتُ كَمَا أَمَرَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَأَخْلَفَ اللَّهُ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم.

TRANSLATION:

Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها, wife of the Prophet ﷺ, said: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: ***"No servant is struck by a calamity and says: 'Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un. Allahumma'jurni fi musibati wa akhlif li khayran minha' (We belong to Allah and to Him we return. O Allah, reward me in my calamity and replace it for me with something better), except that Allah rewards him in his calamity and replaces it for him with something better."*** She said: When Abu Salamah died, I said it as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had commanded me, ***and Allah replaced him for me with someone better than him: the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, from Abu Usamah Hammad ibn Usamah, from Sa'd ibn Sa'id, from 'Umar ibn Kathir ibn Aflah, from Ibn Safinah, from Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Funerals, Chapter: What to say at a calamity, Hadith No. 918b.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:918b

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LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The first part of this supplication comes from the Qur'an: ***"Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return"*** (Al-Baqarah 2:156) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 2:156.

In another narration, Umm Salamah said: "Which of the Muslims is better than Abu Salamah, the first household to emigrate to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ?" She could not imagine a better replacement — yet she ***still prayed with certainty***. And Allah replaced him for her with ***the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself***.

A lesson for us: when struck by calamity, do not merely grieve. ***Say this supplication with certainty***, even if our minds cannot imagine how Allah will replace what was lost. Allah's replacement often comes from where we least expect.

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THE PROPHET'S PROPOSAL

After her 'iddah ended, Abu Bakr and 'Umar proposed to her, but she declined. Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent someone to propose. Umm Salamah answered honestly: "Tell the Messenger of Allah that

I am a very jealous woman, ***I have children***, and ***none of my guardians*** is present here" (Sunan an-Nasa'i 3254 — hasan).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ answered each concern gently: as for jealousy, he would pray that Allah remove it; as for her children, they would be cared for; and as for guardians, none of them, present or absent, would object. So she agreed, and the marriage took place in ***the 4th year AH***.

This story shows Umm Salamah's ***honesty*** and the Prophet's ***wisdom***. A woman may state her concerns openly before marriage, and a good man answers them with gentleness, not by belittling them.

Umm Salamah's children — Salamah, 'Umar, Zaynab and Durrah — grew up in the Prophet's home as ***his stepchildren***. 'Umar ibn Abi Salamah narrated the table manners he taught: "O boy, mention Allah's name, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is near you" (Sahih al-Bukhari 5376). Zaynab bint Abi Salamah became a learned woman.

Umm Salamah's honesty is also an example in ***choosing a spouse***. She did not hide her weaknesses, nor pretend. A marriage built on honesty from the start is easier to sustain, because both sides know the true situation.

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SEEING JIBRIL IN THE FORM OF DIHYAH

Umm Salamah was granted an extraordinary experience — she ***saw Jibril***, though she did not realise it at the time:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3634

حَدَّثَنِي عَبَّاسُ بْنُ الْوَلِيدِ النَّرْسِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا مُعْتَمِرٌ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبِي، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عُثْمَانَ، قَالَ أُنْبِئْتُ أَنَّ جِبْرِيلَ ـ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ ـ أَتَى النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ سَلَمَةَ، فَجَعَلَ يُحَدِّثُ ثُمَّ قَامَ، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم لأُمِّ سَلَمَةَ مَنْ هَذَا. أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ. قَالَتْ هَذَا دِحْيَةُ. قَالَتْ أُمُّ سَلَمَةَ ايْمُ اللَّهِ مَا حَسِبْتُهُ إِلاَّ إِيَّاهُ حَتَّى سَمِعْتُ خُطْبَةَ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يُخْبِرُ جِبْرِيلَ أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ. قَالَ فَقُلْتُ لأَبِي عُثْمَانَ مِمَّنْ سَمِعْتَ هَذَا قَالَ مِنْ أُسَامَةَ بْنِ زَيْدٍ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu 'Uthman said: I was told that Jibril عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ came to the Prophet ﷺ while Umm Salamah was with him.

He spoke with him, then got up and left. The Prophet ﷺ asked Umm Salamah: "Who was this?" She said: "This was Dihyah." Umm Salamah said: ***"By Allah, I thought he was none other than Dihyah, until I heard the sermon of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ telling about Jibril."*** (The narrator asked Abu 'Uthman: "From whom did you hear this?" He said: "From Usamah ibn Zayd.")

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abbas ibn al-Walid an-Narsi, from Mu'tamir ibn Sulayman, from Sulayman at-Taymi (his father), from Abu 'Uthman an-Nahdi, from Usamah ibn Zayd رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Virtues, Chapter: Signs of prophethood in Islam, Hadith No. 3634; also No. 4980 and Muslim No. 2451.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3634

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Jibril عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ sometimes came in the form of ***Dihyah al-Kalbi***, a Companion known for his handsome looks. This hadith shows that angels can take human form by Allah's permission, as in the famous hadith of Jibril about Islam, iman and ihsan.

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It also shows that the homes of the Prophet's wives ﷺ were ***places where revelation and angels descended***. Umm Salamah witnessed firsthand how revelation reached him — an honour shared by very few people.

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WISE COUNSEL AT HUDAYBIYAH

In the 6th year AH, Umm Salamah accompanied the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on the journey to Makkah that ended with ***the Treaty of Hudaybiyah*** (Book 15). The terms seemed one-sided, and the Companions were deeply disappointed.

After the treaty was signed, he ordered the Companions to slaughter their sacrifices and shave their heads, but ***no one rose***, though he repeated it three times. He went in to Umm Salamah and told her what had happened (Sahih al-Bukhari 2731).

Umm Salamah gave very wise advice: ***"O Prophet of Allah, do you want this done? Go out, and do not speak a word to any of them until you have slaughtered your camel and called your barber to shave you."*** He did so, and when the Companions saw him, they rushed to slaughter and shave (Sahih al-Bukhari 2731).

Scholars cite this event as proof of ***Umm Salamah's wisdom*** and ***the Prophet's readiness to listen to his wife's view***. She understood human nature: ***example in action is more effective than spoken orders***. It also shows that a wise woman's counsel can resolve a major crisis.

The Hudaybiyah event also shows that ***consulting one's wife*** is a Sunnah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who received revelation from heaven, did not feel it beneath him to seek his wife's view in a crisis. How much more should husbands today.

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THE LAST OF THE WIVES TO DIE

Umm Salamah lived long after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. She became ***a reference of knowledge*** in Madinah, especially in matters concerning women, worship and his home life. Companions and Successors came to ask her from behind a screen.

She was known for ***eloquence, intelligence and composure***. She loved the Ahl al-Bayt dearly, and by the well-known view she died in ***61 or 62 AH*** aged over 80, making her ***the last of the Prophet's wives ﷺ to die***. She was buried in al-Baqi'.

Umm Salamah's life spanned almost the whole early history of Islam: from persecution in Makkah, the emigrations to Abyssinia and Madinah, life with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, to the Umayyad era. She was ***a living witness*** to this Ummah's journey.

Among the hadiths narrated by Umm Salamah is the supplication the Messenger of Allah ﷺ often said: ***"Ya Muqallib al-qulub, thabbit qalbi 'ala dinik"*** — O Turner of hearts, keep my heart firm upon Your religion (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3522 — hasan). She asked why he said it so often, and he explained that human hearts are between the fingers of Allah.

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ZAYNAB BINT JAHSH: COUSIN OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

Zaynab bint Jahsh رضى الله عنها was from Banu Asad ibn Khuzaymah. Her mother was ***Umaymah bint 'Abd al-Muttalib***, the Prophet's aunt, making Zaynab his ***cousin***. Her brother 'Abdullah ibn Jahsh was martyred at Uhud. She was a noble, beautiful woman, devoted in worship and generous.

Before marrying the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he himself proposed Zaynab for ***Zayd ibn Harithah*** رضى الله عنه, the freed slave he had adopted. In Arab custom, the marriage of a noble Qurayshi woman to a former slave was extraordinary. Zaynab and her family were at first reluctant.

According to some exegetes, concerning this event Allah revealed: ***"It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair"*** (Al-Ahzab 33:36) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:36.

Zaynab ***submitted to the decree of Allah and His Messenger*** and married Zayd. This marriage became a lesson that in Islam ***honour is measured by piety***, not lineage. Yet their marriage was not happy, and Zayd came repeatedly to complain to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

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ABOLISHING THE CUSTOM OF ADOPTION

Before Islam, the Arabs treated ***an adopted son exactly like a biological son***: his lineage was attributed to his adoptive father, he inherited, and his former wife was forbidden to the adoptive father. Zayd himself was called ***"Zayd ibn Muhammad"***.

Allah abolished this custom: ***"Call them by [the names of] their fathers; it is more just in the sight of Allah"*** (Al-Ahzab 33:5) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:5.

'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما said: "We used to call Zayd ibn Harithah nothing but Zayd ibn Muhammad, until the verse came down: 'Call them by their fathers'" (Sahih al-Bukhari 4782).

Yet a deep-rooted custom is not easily abolished by words alone. Allah willed ***an example in action*** from His Messenger himself. After Zayd divorced Zaynab, Allah commanded him to marry her — to prove that the former wife of an adopted son ***is not a mahram***.

"So when Zayd had no longer any need for her, We married her to you in order that there not be upon the believers any discomfort concerning the wives of their adopted sons" (Al-Ahzab 33:37) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:37.

And Allah affirms: ***"Muhammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allah and last of the prophets"*** (Al-Ahzab 33:40) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:40.

Islam ***does not forbid caring for an adopted child***; indeed, caring for orphans is a very noble deed. What was abolished is ***changing lineage*** and the rulings tied to it. An adopted child is still loved, but his lineage remains with his biological father.

Zayd ibn Harithah himself remained honoured. He is ***the only Companion*** whose name is mentioned explicitly in the Qur'an (Al-Ahzab 33:37). He later commanded the Muslim army at Mu'tah and was martyred there (Book 19).

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"ALLAH MARRIED ME OFF"

These verses touched the feelings of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself, and he conveyed them without concealing anything:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 7420

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ، حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَبِي بَكْرٍ الْمُقَدَّمِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا حَمَّادُ بْنُ زَيْدٍ، عَنْ ثَابِتٍ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ، قَالَ جَاءَ زَيْدُ بْنُ حَارِثَةَ يَشْكُو فَجَعَلَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ، وَأَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ. قَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ لَوْ كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم كَاتِمًا شَيْئًا لَكَتَمَ هَذِهِ. قَالَ فَكَانَتْ زَيْنَبُ تَفْخَرُ عَلَى أَزْوَاجِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم تَقُولُ زَوَّجَكُنَّ أَهَالِيكُنَّ، وَزَوَّجَنِي اللَّهُ تَعَالَى مِنْ فَوْقِ سَبْعِ سَمَوَاتٍ. وَعَنْ ثَابِتٍ {وَتُخْفِي فِي نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ وَتَخْشَى النَّاسَ} نَزَلَتْ فِي شَأْنِ زَيْنَبَ وَزَيْدِ بْنِ حَارِثَةَ.

TRANSLATION:

Anas رضى الله عنه said: Zayd ibn Harithah came complaining (about his wife), and the Prophet ﷺ kept saying: "Fear Allah, and keep your wife." 'A'ishah said: ***"If the Messenger of Allah ﷺ were to conceal anything (of revelation), he would have concealed this verse."*** Anas said: ***Zaynab used to take pride before the other wives of the Prophet ﷺ, saying: "Your families married you off, while Allah the Exalted married me from above seven heavens."*** And from Thabit: the verse "and you concealed within yourself that which Allah is to disclose, and you feared the people" was revealed concerning Zaynab and Zayd ibn Harithah.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ahmad (ibn Sayyar), from Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr al-Muqaddami, from Hammad ibn Zayd, from Thabit al-Bunani, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tawhid, Chapter: "And His Throne was upon the water", Hadith No. 7420.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7420

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

'A'ishah's words are very important: ***if the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had concealed anything of revelation***, he would surely have concealed this verse that admonished him. But he conveyed it in full. This proves his ***trustworthiness*** in conveying the message.

Scholars explain that "what he concealed within himself" was ***knowledge from Allah*** that Zaynab would become his wife, and he feared people would say: "Muhammad has married his son's former wife." This

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is the sound interpretation according to exegetes such as Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi, not the weak stories that circulated.

SIRAH NOTE: A REPORT THAT IS NOT AUTHENTIC

There are weak and fabricated reports claiming that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ glimpsed Zaynab and was attracted to her while she was still Zayd's wife. Hadith scholars and exegetes — including Ibn Kathir, Ibn Hajar and Ibn al-'Arabi — ***reject these reports***. Zaynab was his cousin, known to him since childhood; had he wanted her, he could have married her from the start, rather than proposing her for Zayd.

What is authentic is what the Qur'an and Sahih al-Bukhari state: this marriage was ***Allah's decree*** to abolish a pre-Islamic custom.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, Al-Ahzab 33:37; Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, Book of Tafsir. https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/33/37

And Zaynab took pride in this honour: ***"I was married off by Allah from above seven heavens."*** Her marriage needed no guardian on earth, for Allah Himself decreed it in the Qur'an.

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THE WEDDING FEAST AND THE VERSE OF HIJAB

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ held ***a wedding feast*** for this marriage. Anas رضى الله عنه said: "I never saw the Prophet ﷺ hold a better feast for any of his wives than the one for Zaynab; he slaughtered a sheep" (Sahih al-Bukhari 5168). He invited people, and they ate their fill.

After the meal, some people ***kept sitting and chatting*** in the house. He got up and went out several times as if signalling them to leave, but they did not notice. He was too shy to tell them to go (Sahih al-Bukhari 4791).

Then Allah revealed ***the verse of hijab***: ***"And when you ask [his wives] for something, ask them from behind a partition. That is purer for your hearts and their hearts"*** (Al-Ahzab 33:53) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:53.

Anas said: "I know best about this verse of hijab" (Sahih al-Bukhari 4792). This verse teaches two manners: ***the etiquette of visiting*** — come when invited and leave after eating — and ***guarding the honour*** of the Prophet's household ﷺ. From then on, the Companions spoke to his wives from behind a screen.

Notice too the Prophet's ***modesty*** ﷺ: he could not bring himself to ask his guests to leave though he was troubled. So Allah Himself stated the truth: "But Allah is not shy of the truth."

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"THE ONE WITH THE LONGEST HAND"

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ once said to his wives: ***"The first of you to join me (after my death) will be the one with the longest hand."*** So they measured their hands to see whose was longest (Sahih Muslim 2452).

'A'ishah said: ***"The one among us with the longest hand was Zaynab, because she worked with her own hands and gave in charity."*** "Long hand" meant ***giving much in charity***. Zaynab tanned hides and sewed, then gave the earnings to the poor.

His words came true: Zaynab was ***the first wife to die after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ***, in ***20 AH*** during 'Umar's caliphate. 'Umar himself led her funeral prayer, and she was buried in al-Baqi'.

'A'ishah, who often rivalled her, praised her honestly: ***"I never saw a woman better in religion than Zaynab, more God-fearing, more truthful in speech, more devoted to ties of kinship, or more charitable"*** (Sahih Muslim 2442). During the slander, Zaynab was asked about 'A'ishah, and she replied: "I guard my hearing and my sight; I know nothing of her but good." 'A'ishah said: "Allah protected her through her piety" (Sahih al-Bukhari 4750).

Zaynab's generosity is also an example for women who ***work and earn***. Islam does not prevent women from working honourably, and the fruits of their effort can become a source of charity with great reward.

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JUWAYRIYAH: DAUGHTER OF THE CHIEF OF BANU AL-MUSTALIQ

Juwayriyah bint al-Harith رضى الله عنها was the daughter of ***al-Harith ibn Abi Dirar***, chief of the tribe of ***Banu al-Mustaliq*** of Khuza'ah. Her original name was ***Barrah***, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ changed it to Juwayriyah (Sahih Muslim 2140).

Banu al-Mustaliq were preparing to attack Madinah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ forestalled them at the well of al-Muraysi' in the 5th or 6th year AH. Their men were defeated, and many women and children were taken captive (Sahih al-Bukhari 2541). The slander also took place on the way back from this campaign (Book 14).

Juwayriyah, the daughter of a chief, suddenly became ***a captive***. She fell to the share of Thabit ibn Qays ibn Shammas, and made ***a contract of manumission*** — to buy her freedom for an agreed sum. She came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asking for help to pay it.

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A MARRIAGE THAT FREED A PEOPLE

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ offered something better: he would ***pay her ransom and marry her***. Juwayriyah agreed (Sunan Abi Dawud 3931 — hasan).

When the news spread, the Companions said: ***"They (Banu al-Mustaliq) are now the in-laws of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ!"*** And they ***freed all the captives*** in their hands. 'A'ishah said: ***"I know of no woman who was a greater blessing to her people than Juwayriyah; a hundred households of Banu al-Mustaliq were freed because of her"*** (Sunan Abi Dawud 3931 — hasan).

This is ***the political and humane wisdom*** of the Prophet's marriages. Through one marriage, a hostile tribe became kin; captives were freed willingly; and many of them later embraced Islam.

The Companions also showed ***great manners***: they could not bear to own the Prophet's relatives as slaves. Respect for him was translated into real action that freed hundreds of people.

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WORDS THAT WEIGH MORE

Juwayriyah was known as ***a woman of worship***. From her came one of the most beautiful remembrances in Islam:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2726

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، وَعَمْرٌو النَّاقِدُ، وَابْنُ أَبِي عُمَرَ، - وَاللَّفْظُ لاِبْنِ أَبِي عُمَرَ - قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، مَوْلَى آلِ طَلْحَةَ عَنْ كُرَيْبٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، عَنْ جُوَيْرِيَةَ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم خَرَجَ مِنْ عِنْدِهَا بُكْرَةً حِينَ صَلَّى الصُّبْحَ وَهِيَ فِي مَسْجِدِهَا ثُمَّ رَجَعَ بَعْدَ أَنْ أَضْحَى وَهِيَ جَالِسَةٌ فَقَالَ مَا زِلْتِ عَلَى الْحَالِ الَّتِي فَارَقْتُكِ عَلَيْهَا. قَالَتْ نَعَمْ. قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم لَقَدْ قُلْتُ بَعْدَكِ أَرْبَعَ كَلِمَاتٍ ثَلاَثَ مَرَّاتٍ لَوْ وُزِنَتْ بِمَا قُلْتِ مُنْذُ الْيَوْمِ لَوَزَنَتْهُنَّ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ عَدَدَ خَلْقِهِ وَرِضَا نَفْسِهِ وَزِنَةَ عَرْشِهِ وَمِدَادَ كَلِمَاتِهِ.

TRANSLATION:

Juwayriyah رضى الله عنها narrated that the Prophet ﷺ left her early in the morning after praying Fajr, while she was sitting in her place of prayer. Then he returned after the forenoon, and she was still sitting there. He said: "Are you still in the same state as when I left you?" She said: "Yes." The Prophet ﷺ said: ***"After leaving you I said four phrases three times; if they were weighed against all you have said since this morning, they would outweigh it: Subhanallahi wa bihamdihi, 'adada khalqihi, wa rida nafsihi, wa zinata 'arshihi, wa midada kalimatihi"*** (Glory and praise be to Allah, as many times as the number of His creation, as much as pleases Him, as much as the weight of His Throne, and as much as the ink of His words).

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Qutaybah ibn Sa'id, 'Amr an-Naqid and Ibn Abi 'Umar, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, client of the family of Talhah, from Kurayb, from Ibn 'Abbas, from Juwayriyah bint al-Harith رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Remembrance and Supplication, Chapter: Glorification at the start of the day and at bedtime, Hadith No. 2726.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2726

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This hadith teaches that ***the quality of remembrance*** matters more than its quantity. Four meaningful phrases, said three times, outweigh hours of remembrance. It also shows his ***love*** for his wife: he wanted to make her worship easier and increase her reward.

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This remembrance is well suited to be practised after the Fajr prayer, especially for busy people. Juwayriyah lived until the time of Mu'awiyah and died in Madinah in ***50 AH*** (or 56 AH by another view), and was buried in al-Baqi'.

Juwayriyah was also known for ***voluntary fasting***. Once the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came to her on a Friday while she was fasting, and asked whether she had fasted the day before or would fast the next day. When she said no, he told her to break her fast, because Friday should not be singled out alone for fasting (Sahih al-Bukhari 1986).

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UMM HABIBAH: STEADFAST IN A FOREIGN LAND

Umm Habibah رضى الله عنها, whose real name was ***Ramlah bint Abi Sufyan***, was the daughter of ***Abu Sufyan ibn Harb***, the Quraysh leader who opposed Islam the longest. Yet Ramlah embraced Islam early, against her father's will.

She emigrated to ***Abyssinia*** with her husband, ***'Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh***, and there bore their daughter Habibah — hence she was known as Umm Habibah. Living in a foreign land, far from family, to save one's faith, was a very heavy trial.

> **SIRAH NOTE: A HUSBAND WHO LEFT ISLAM**
>
> According to the books of sirah (Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Sa'd), 'Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh became a Christian in Abyssinia and died there. Umm Habibah ***remained firm in Islam*** though left alone with a small child, in a foreign land, with a father hostile to her faith in Makkah.
>
> In the narration of Sunan Abi Dawud 2107, her husband is named 'Abdullah ibn Jahsh; scholars explain that 'Ubaydullah is meant, since 'Abdullah was martyred at Uhud.
>
> **REFERENCES:**
> Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah (from Ibn Ishaq) — chapter on the Prophet's marriages; Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa an-Nihayah; Ibn al-Qayyim, Zad al-Ma'ad.

Umm Habibah's steadfastness teaches us that faith is ***a personal choice*** that does not depend on father or husband. When those closest turn away, a believer still stands on the truth.

Her story also reminds us that ***guidance is a gift from Allah***, not a family inheritance. Umm Habibah was the daughter of the idolaters' leader, yet she preceded her father into Islam by many years. Her husband, who had once emigrated for Islam, eventually turned away. So we always pray that Allah keeps our hearts firm.

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MARRIED BY THE NEGUS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ heard of Umm Habibah's situation and proposed to her through ***the Negus***, the just king of Abyssinia (Book 4). The Negus himself married her to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and ***paid her dowry of four thousand dirhams*** on his behalf, then sent her to Madinah with Shurahbil ibn Hasanah (Sunan Abi Dawud 2107 — sahih).

This marriage took place around ***the 6th or 7th year AH***. It was the only marriage of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ contracted ***outside Arabia***, by a king, with the highest dowry among his wives.

See how Allah rewarded Umm Habibah's patience. She lost her husband and was alone in a foreign land, but Allah replaced him with ***the best of husbands***, and made her ***a Mother of the Believers***. This reminds us of Umm Salamah's supplication in Chapter 3.

Historians also mention that this marriage ***softened Abu Sufyan's heart***. When he heard the news, he spoke of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with respect. A few years later, at the opening of Makkah, Abu Sufyan embraced Islam (Book 20).

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FAITH BEFORE FATHER

SIRAH NOTE: THE PROPHET'S MAT ﷺ

Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Sa'd narrate that before the opening of Makkah, Abu Sufyan came to Madinah to renew the Hudaybiyah treaty, and entered the house of his daughter, Umm Habibah. When he was about to sit on the mat of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, Umm Habibah quickly ***folded the mat away***.

Abu Sufyan asked: "My daughter, do you think the mat too good for me, or me too good for the mat?" She said: ***"This is the mat of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and you are an impure idolater; I do not want you sitting on the mat of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ."*** This story is famous in the books of sirah, but it is not found in the authentic hadith collections.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah (from Ibn Ishaq) — chapter on the Prophet's marriages; Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa an-Nihayah; Ibn al-Qayyim, Zad al-Ma'ad.

Though this report is from the books of sirah, its meaning accords with the Qur'an: ***love for Allah and His Messenger must come first***, before love for father, children and family (At-Tawbah 9:24). Yet Umm Habibah still respected her father in a way that did not compromise her principles.

Umm Habibah also narrated the hadith on ***the regular sunnah prayers***: "Whoever prays twelve rak'ahs in a day and night, a house will be built for him in Paradise." She said: ***"I have never abandoned them since I heard it from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ"*** (Sahih Muslim 728).

This is the attitude of a Mother of the Believers: ***to hear, then practise without stopping***. One hadith practised consistently is worth more than a thousand merely memorised.

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MOURNING FOR THREE DAYS

Abu Sufyan died during 'Uthman's caliphate. When news of his death came, Umm Habibah showed how a believing child ***balances love for a father with obedience to the Shari'ah***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1280

حَدَّثَنَا الْحُمَيْدِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، حَدَّثَنَا أَيُّوبُ بْنُ مُوسَى، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي حُمَيْدُ بْنُ نَافِعٍ، عَنْ زَيْنَبَ ابْنَةِ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ، قَالَتْ لَمَّا جَاءَ نَعْيُ أَبِي سُفْيَانَ مِنَ الشَّأْمِ دَعَتْ أُمُّ حَبِيبَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ بِصُفْرَةٍ فِي الْيَوْمِ الثَّالِثِ، فَمَسَحَتْ عَارِضَيْهَا وَذِرَاعَيْهَا وَقَالَتْ إِنِّي كُنْتُ عَنْ هَذَا لَغَنِيَّةً، لَوْلاَ أَنِّي سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ لاَ يَحِلُّ لاِمْرَأَةٍ تُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ أَنْ تُحِدَّ عَلَى مَيِّتٍ فَوْقَ ثَلاَثٍ، إِلاَّ عَلَى زَوْجٍ، فَإِنَّهَا تُحِدُّ عَلَيْهِ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا.

TRANSLATION:

Zaynab bint Abi Salamah said: When news of Abu Sufyan's death came from Syria, Umm Habibah رضى الله عنها called for yellow perfume on the third day, wiped her cheeks and forearms with it, and said: ***"I had no need of this, were it not that I heard the Prophet ﷺ say: 'It is not lawful for a woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day to mourn for anyone who dies more than three days, except for a husband, for whom she mourns four months and ten days.'"***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Humaydi, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from Ayyub ibn Musa, from Humayd ibn Nafi', from Zaynab bint Abi Salamah, from Umm Habibah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Funerals, Chapter: A woman mourning for someone other than her husband, Hadith No. 1280; also No. 5334 and Muslim No. 1486.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1280

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Umm Habibah mourned her father for three days, then ***deliberately applied perfume*** to show that the mourning period was over. She had no need of the perfume, but she wanted to ***teach*** the Ummah this ruling through action.

This hadith became the basis of the ruling on ***ihdad*** (mourning) in Islam: three days for the death of a relative, and four months and ten days for a widow. Islam allows grief, but ***regulates it*** so it does not drag on and halt life.

Umm Habibah died in Madinah in ***44 AH***, during the reign of her brother Mu'awiyah, and was buried in al-Baqi'.

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Her action also shows the ***balance of a believing daughter***: she loved her father and grieved for him, yet she would not let that love lead her beyond the limits set by Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. True love for family is shown within the bounds of the Shari'ah.

For us today, this hadith is a gentle reminder in times of loss: grief is natural and permitted, but life must continue, duties must be resumed, and the heart returns to remembrance of Allah, to whom we all belong and to whom we shall return.

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SAFIYYAH BINT HUYAYY: DESCENDANT OF HARUN عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

Safiyyah bint Huyayy ibn Akhtab رضى الله عنها was the daughter of the chief of the Jewish tribe of ***Banu an-Nadir***, a descendant of ***the Prophet Harun*** عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, brother of the Prophet Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. Her father was among Islam's fiercest enemies; he helped rally the Arab tribes at the Battle of the Trench (Book 12) and was executed after the treachery of Banu Qurayzah (Book 13).

After Banu an-Nadir were expelled from Madinah, they settled in ***Khaybar***. Safiyyah married Kinanah ibn ar-Rabi', one of Khaybar's leaders. In the 7th year AH, Khaybar was opened by the Muslim army (Book 16), and her husband was killed.

In an instant, Safiyyah lost ***her father, her husband and her people***. She became a captive, a young woman of about 17. How would the Messenger of Allah ﷺ treat the daughter of his fiercest enemy?

Safiyyah's story also shows that ***a father's sins are not borne by his child***. Allah says: "And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another" (Al-An'am 6:164). Huyayy fought Islam, but his daughter was fully honoured.

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FREED AND MARRIED

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ chose Safiyyah for himself, offered her Islam, and she embraced it. Then he ***set her free***:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5086

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا حَمَّادٌ، عَنْ ثَابِتٍ، وَشُعَيْبِ بْنِ الْحَبْحَابِ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَعْتَقَ صَفِيَّةَ، وَجَعَلَ عِتْقَهَا صَدَاقَهَا.

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه narrated: ***"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ freed Safiyyah, and made her freedom her dowry."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Qutaybah ibn Sa'id, from Hammad ibn Zayd, from Thabit al-Bunani and Shu'ayb ibn al-Habhab, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Marriage, Chapter: Freeing a slave woman as her dowry, Hadith No. 5086; also No. 371, 4200 and Muslim No. 1365.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5086

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

He did not make her a slave, but ***a free wife*** with full honour. Her freedom itself became her dowry — ***the most precious gift*** that could be given to a captive.

Anas رضى الله عنه narrated that on the journey back, ***the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sat beside his camel and placed his knee***, and Safiyyah stepped on his knee to mount (Sahih al-Bukhari 4211). He also covered her with a cloth while riding, as a sign that she was his wife, not a slave.

Imagine Safiyyah's feelings: the man her people had taught her to hate now ***lowered his knee*** to help her. It was this gentleness that changed hearts. Safiyyah went on to become a believer who loved the Messenger of Allah ﷺ deeply.

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"YOU ARE THE DAUGHTER OF A PROPHET"

As a woman of Jewish descent, Safiyyah was sometimes ***taunted*** by her co-wives. Anas رضى الله عنه narrated that it reached Safiyyah that Hafsah had said: "The daughter of a Jew," and she wept. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ came in and asked why she was crying.

He said: ***"You are the daughter of a Prophet, your uncle is a Prophet, and you are the wife of a Prophet. So what can she boast over you?"*** Then he said to Hafsah: "Fear Allah, O Hafsah" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3894 — sahih).

See his wisdom: he did not deny Safiyyah's origins, but ***changed the way she saw them***. Her Jewish descent was no disgrace — it linked her to ***the Prophets Harun and Musa*** عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. Islam honours the prophets of the Children of Israel, and mocks no one for their origins.

This is also a lesson about ***racism***: insulting someone for their race or ancestry is a trait of ignorance. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ promptly corrected his own wife when it happened, though Hafsah was the daughter of his close friend.

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VISITING HIM IN THE MOSQUE

Safiyyah loved the Messenger of Allah ﷺ dearly, and he returned that love with full attention. An event during his i'tikaf shows this:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 2035

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْيَمَانِ، أَخْبَرَنَا شُعَيْبٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْحُسَيْنِ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ أَنَّ صَفِيَّةَ، زَوْجَ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَخْبَرَتْهُ أَنَّهَا جَاءَتْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم تَزُورُهُ فِي اعْتِكَافِهِ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ، فِي الْعَشْرِ الأَوَاخِرِ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ، فَتَحَدَّثَتْ عِنْدَهُ سَاعَةً، ثُمَّ قَامَتْ تَنْقَلِبُ، فَقَامَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم مَعَهَا يَقْلِبُهَا، حَتَّى إِذَا بَلَغَتْ بَابَ الْمَسْجِدِ عِنْدَ بَابِ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ مَرَّ رَجُلاَنِ مِنَ الأَنْصَارِ، فَسَلَّمَا عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ لَهُمَا النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم عَلَى رِسْلِكُمَا إِنَّمَا هِيَ صَفِيَّةُ بِنْتُ حُيَيٍّ. فَقَالاَ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. وَكَبُرَ عَلَيْهِمَا. فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَبْلُغُ مِنَ الإِنْسَانِ مَبْلَغَ الدَّمِ، وَإِنِّي خَشِيتُ أَنْ يَقْذِفَ فِي قُلُوبِكُمَا شَيْئًا.

TRANSLATION:

'Ali ibn al-Husayn narrated that Safiyyah رضى الله عنها, wife of the Prophet ﷺ, told him that she came to visit the Messenger of Allah ﷺ while he was in i'tikaf in the mosque in the last ten nights of Ramadan. She talked with him for a while, then rose to return. ***The Prophet ﷺ rose with her to see her off.*** When they reached the mosque door near Umm Salamah's door, two men of the Ansar passed and greeted the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ said to them: ***"Wait, this is Safiyyah bint Huyayy."*** They said: "Subhan Allah, O Messenger of Allah!" and it weighed on them. The Prophet ﷺ said: ***"Satan circulates in a person like blood, and I feared he might cast something (an evil thought) into your hearts."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu al-Yaman al-Hakam ibn Nafi', from Shu'ayb ibn Abi Hamzah, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (Zayn al-'Abidin), from Safiyyah bint Huyayy رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of I'tikaf, Chapter: The one in i'tikaf going to the mosque door, Hadith No. 2035; also Muslim No. 2175.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2035

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LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This hadith contains a great lesson: ***avoid situations that invite suspicion***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the purest of people, still clarified the situation so that the two Companions would not be influenced by Satan. All the more must we guard ourselves from suspicion.

It also shows his ***affection***: even while in i'tikaf in the last ten nights of Ramadan, he ***got up to walk his wife*** to the door. Worship did not stop him from fulfilling his family's rights.

Safiyyah died in Madinah in ***50 AH*** (or 52 AH by another view) in the time of Mu'awiyah, and was buried in al-Baqi'.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was gravely ill, Safiyyah showed her love by saying — according to Ibn Sa'd's report — "By Allah, O Prophet of Allah, I wish what you suffer were upon me." When the other wives looked askance, he said: "By Allah, she is truthful." Safiyyah's loyalty was affirmed by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself.

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MAYMUNAH BINT AL-HARITH: THE LAST WIFE

Maymunah bint al-Harith al-Hilaliyyah رضى الله عنها was ***the last wife*** the Messenger of Allah ﷺ married. Her original name was also ***Barrah***, and he changed it to Maymunah — meaning "the blessed one". She was the sister of Umm al-Fadl, wife of al-'Abbas, making her ***the aunt*** of 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas and Khalid ibn al-Walid.

This marriage took place in ***the 7th year AH***, during ***'Umrat al-Qada'*** (Book 18), and married life began at ***Sarif***, a place about ten miles from Makkah, on the way back to Madinah.

SIRAH NOTE: WAS HE IN IHRAM?

Ibn 'Abbas narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ married Maymunah while in ihram (Sahih al-Bukhari 1837). But Maymunah herself said he married her ***while not in ihram*** (Sahih Muslim 1411), and Abu Rafi', the messenger in that marriage, said the same.

The majority of scholars give precedence to the reports of Maymunah and Abu Rafi' because they were ***directly involved***, and because the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "One in ihram may not marry nor give in marriage" (Sahih Muslim 1409).

REFERENCES:
Sahih al-Bukhari 1837; Sahih Muslim 1409, 1411; Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari. https://sunnah.com/muslim:1411

Through this marriage, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ strengthened ties with ***Banu Hilal*** and the family of al-'Abbas. Soon after, Khalid ibn al-Walid — Maymunah's nephew — embraced Islam and became "the Sword of Allah" (Book 19).

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TEACHER OF PURIFICATION

Maymunah narrated many hadiths about the Prophet's ***private life*** ﷺ, especially how he purified himself:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 249

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ سَالِمِ بْنِ أَبِي الْجَعْدِ، عَنْ كُرَيْبٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، عَنْ مَيْمُونَةَ، زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَتْ تَوَضَّأَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وُضُوءَهُ لِلصَّلاَةِ غَيْرَ رِجْلَيْهِ، وَغَسَلَ فَرْجَهُ، وَمَا أَصَابَهُ مِنَ الأَذَى، ثُمَّ أَفَاضَ عَلَيْهِ الْمَاءَ، ثُمَّ نَحَّى رِجْلَيْهِ فَغَسَلَهُمَا، هَذِهِ غُسْلُهُ مِنَ الْجَنَابَةِ.

TRANSLATION:

Maymunah رضى الله عنها, wife of the Prophet ﷺ, said: ***"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ performed ablution as for prayer except for his feet, washed his private parts and whatever impurity was on him, then poured water over his body, then moved his feet aside and washed them. This was his bath from janabah."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Firyabi, from Sufyan ath-Thawri, from al-A'mash, from Salim ibn Abi al-Ja'd, from Kurayb, from Ibn 'Abbas, from Maymunah bint al-Harith رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Ghusl, Chapter: Ablution before the bath, Hadith No. 249; also No. 257, 265 and Muslim No. 317.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:249

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This hadith became ***a principal reference*** for jurists on the complete bath from janabah. Such knowledge could only be conveyed by a wife — and Maymunah conveyed it clearly and in detail, without shyness that blocks knowledge.

Maymunah's home was also where ***Ibn 'Abbas learned***. He once spent the night at his aunt's house to watch how the Messenger of Allah ﷺ prayed at night, and the Prophet adjusted his position in the prayer (Sahih al-Bukhari 183). The boy who learned in Maymunah's house later became ***Turjuman al-Qur'an*** — the foremost interpreter of the Qur'an.

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DEATH AT SARIF

Maymunah lived about 40 years after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Feeling her end was near, she asked to be taken out of Makkah. She died at ***Sarif***, the very place where she had begun her life with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, in ***51 AH***, and was buried there.

SIRAH NOTE: 'A'ISHAH'S PRAISE OF MAYMUNAH

Al-Hakim narrates that 'A'ishah said of Maymunah: "By Allah, she was among the most God-fearing of us, and the most devoted to ties of kinship." Al-Hakim and adh-Dhahabi graded its chain sahih. Ibn 'Abbas himself led the funeral prayer for his aunt.

REFERENCES:

al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak; Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra.

This story is very moving: the place of her beginning and her end ***was the same***. It is as if Maymunah wished to return to the most beautiful memory of her life — the day she became the wife of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Maymunah also narrated hadiths on ***women's purity*** and how the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not keep away from his wife during menstruation — Maymunah sat beside his place of prayer, and his garment touched her when he prostrated (Sahih al-Bukhari 333). This teaching rejects the practice of some societies of isolating menstruating women completely.

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NOTE: MARIYAH THE COPT

Besides the eleven wives, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ also had ***a slave woman*** who bore him a child: ***Mariyah the Copt*** رضى الله عنها. She came from Egypt, and was sent to him as a gift by ***al-Muqawqis***, ruler of Egypt, in reply to his letter inviting to Islam (Book 17).

SIRAH NOTE: MARIYAH'S STATUS

The majority of scholars hold that Mariyah was an ***umm walad*** (a slave woman who bore her master's child), not a married wife. So she is ***not counted*** among the Mothers of the Believers in the specific sense of the title, though she is honoured as the mother of the Prophet's son.

A minority held that he freed and married her, but this view is not well known. Mariyah embraced Islam, lived in Madinah, and died in ***16 AH*** during 'Umar's caliphate; he led her funeral prayer.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah (from Ibn Ishaq) — chapter on the Prophet's marriages; Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa an-Nihayah; Ibn al-Qayyim, Zad al-Ma'ad.

In ***the 8th year AH***, Mariyah gave birth to a son named ***Ibrahim***, after the Prophet Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was overjoyed; Ibrahim was his only child not born to Khadijah. He gave him to a wet-nurse on the outskirts of Madinah, and visited him often.

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"THE EYE WEEPS, THE HEART GRIEVES"

But Ibrahim lived only about ***16 to 18 months***. Anas رضى الله عنه relates that they went with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to the house of Abu Sayf, husband of Ibrahim's wet-nurse, while Ibrahim was dying. Tears flowed from his eyes. 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf asked: "You too (weep), O Messenger of Allah?" (Sahih al-Bukhari 1303)

He said: ***"O Ibn 'Awf, this is mercy."*** Then he said: ***"The eye weeps and the heart grieves, but we say only what pleases our Lord. And we are deeply saddened by your parting, O Ibrahim"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 1303).

On the day Ibrahim died, there was ***a solar eclipse***. People said the eclipse happened because of Ibrahim's death. He immediately corrected them: ***"The sun and the moon do not eclipse for the death or life of anyone"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 1043). Even in grief, he ***protected the creed*** of the Ummah from superstition.

He also said: "He (Ibrahim) has a wet-nurse in Paradise" (Sahih al-Bukhari 1382). From this story we learn that ***weeping at death*** does not contradict patience; what is forbidden is wailing and saying words that displease Allah.

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OUR MOTHERS AFTER THE PROPHET ﷺ

After the death of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, nine of his wives were still alive. Allah had decreed that they ***could never be married*** after him (Al-Ahzab 33:53). They remained in their homes beside the Prophet's Mosque, as mothers to the whole Ummah.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ once said to them: ***"Your affair is among what concerns me after I am gone, and none will be patient in caring for you except the patient and truthful"*** (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3749 — hasan).

The caliphs fulfilled this trust. Abu Bakr and 'Umar رضى الله عنهما honoured them, and 'Umar set ***the highest annual stipends*** from the treasury for the Prophet's wives ﷺ. Yet most of them gave those stipends away to the poor.

Their homes became ***centres of knowledge***. Companions and Successors came to ask about the Sunnah, and they answered from behind a screen. Without them, much of the knowledge about the ***private life*** of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would have been lost.

The wives of the Prophet ﷺ were also ***united in great matters***, despite jealousy among themselves.

When strife and political disputes arose after 'Uthman's time, they advised the Ummah to protect Muslim blood and return to the Qur'an and Sunnah.

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MANY BACKGROUNDS, ONE HOME

If we lay out the lineages of the Prophet's eleven wives ﷺ, we see ***a map of Arab society*** at the time.

Through these marriages he was linked to the families of Abu Bakr (Banu Taym), 'Umar (Banu 'Adi), Abu Sufyan (Banu Umayyah), Banu Makhzum, Banu Asad, Banu 'Amir, Banu Hilal, Banu al-Mustaliq and Banu an-Nadir.

In tribal society, marriage was ***the strongest bond*** between families. In-law ties turned yesterday's enemies into today's kin, and opened hearts to the message. Banu al-Mustaliq were freed because of Juwayriyah; Abu Sufyan's heart softened through Umm Habibah; Banu Hilal were drawn near through Maymunah.

Yet what united them all was not lineage, but ***piety***. Allah says: ***"Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you"*** (Al-Hujurat 49:13) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 49:13.

In one home lived the daughter of Abu Bakr and the daughter of Abu Sufyan, the daughter of a Jewish chief and the cousin of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, a former captive and a noblewoman of Quraysh. They competed, sometimes felt jealous, yet in the end ***chose Allah and His Messenger*** together (Al-Ahzab 33:29).

A lesson for today's multi-ethnic societies: differences of origin ***are no barrier*** to unity. When faith is the foundation, homes, mosques and nations can bring together people of many backgrounds in love.

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OUR MANNERS TOWARDS THE MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS

The wives of the Prophet ﷺ are ***among his Companions***, indeed the closest to him. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"Do not revile my Companions; if one of you spent gold equal to Mount Uhud, it would not equal a handful spent by one of them, nor even half of it"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3673).

So a Muslim's manners towards the Mothers of the Believers are: (1) ***to love and honour*** all of them without distinction; (2) ***to pray*** for them, including in the salawat — "O Allah, send blessings on Muhammad, his wives and his offspring" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3369); and (3) ***to defend their honour*** from any insult.

We also ***study their narrations***. Whenever we perform wudu', bathe, pray at night, fast voluntarily or say the supplication in calamity correctly, we are practising knowledge conveyed by our mothers. They are ***our teachers***, though we never met them.

Finally, we ***follow their example*** in life: Khadijah's loyalty, the generosity of Sawdah and Zaynab, the knowledge of 'A'ishah and Umm Salamah, the worship of Hafsah and Juwayriyah, Umm Habibah's steadfastness, Safiyyah's resilience, and Maymunah's love of knowledge. Every woman — and every man — can find a model in them.

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A SUMMARY TABLE OF THE SIX MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS

The previous chapters told the story of the six Mothers of the Believers in this part one by one. This chapter gathers the basic facts about them into a single table, as was done for the five mothers in Part 1 (Book 32).

The years in this table are the well-known opinions in the books of sirah and tabaqat. Some are disputed among historians, and other opinions are given in brackets.

MOTHER OF THE BELIEVERS	LINEAGE	BEFORE MARRIAGE	MARRIAGE	DEATH AND BURIAL
Umm Salamah (Hind bint Abi Umayyah)	Banu Makhzum, Quraysh	Widow of Abu Salamah, who died of a wound from Uhud	4 AH, in Madinah	61 or 62 AH; al-Baqi‘
Zaynab bint Jahsh	Banu Asad ibn Khuzaymah; her mother was Umaymah bint ‘Abd al-Muttalib	Divorced by Zayd ibn Harithah	5 AH (another view: 4 AH), in Madinah	20 AH, in ‘Umar’s time; al-Baqi‘
Juwayriyah bint al-Harith	Banu al-Mustaliq, Khuza‘ah	Widow; taken captive in the campaign of al-Muraysi‘	5 or 6 AH, in Madinah	50 AH (another view: 56 AH); al-Baqi‘
Umm Habibah (Ramlah bint Abi Sufyan)	Banu Umayyah, Quraysh	Widow of ‘Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh; emigrant in Abyssinia	6 or 7 AH; contract concluded in Abyssinia	44 AH, in Mu‘awiyah’s time; al-Baqi‘
Safiyyah bint Huyayy	Banu an-Nadir; descended from Prophet Harun عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Widow of Kinanah ibn ar-Rabi‘; captive of Khaybar	7 AH, after the conquest of Khaybar	50 AH (another view: 52 AH); al-Baqi‘
Maymunah bint al-Harith	Banu Hilal ibn ‘Amir	Widow	7 AH, during the Compensatory ‘Umrah	51 AH; Sarif, near Makkah

From this table we see that all six were widows. Three were from Quraysh, and three from other tribes: Banu al-Mustaliq, Banu an-Nadir and Banu Hilal. All these marriages took place in Madinah between the 4th and 7th years of the Hijrah — the busiest period of battles, treaties and da‘wah.

Five of them are buried in al-Baqi‘, beside the Prophet’s Mosque. Only Maymunah was buried at Sarif, the place where she had begun her life with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (chapter 26). Taken together with Part 1, only two wives are not buried in al-Baqi‘: Khadijah at al-Hajun in Makkah, and Maymunah at Sarif.

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SIRAH NOTE: THE NUMBER OF THE PROPHET'S ﷺ WIVES

The scholars of sirah state that the wives whom the Messenger of Allah ﷺ married and lived with numbered eleven: five in Part 1 and six in Part 2. Two died during his lifetime (Khadijah and Zaynab bint Khuzaymah), and nine were alive when he passed away.

Some other names appear in the books of sirah — women with whom a contract was made but who did not live with him, or who were proposed to but not married — and the information about them is disputed. Rayhanah bint Zayd is described by Ibn Ishaq as a bondwoman of his, while Ibn Sa'd describes her as a freed wife. For this reason, most scholars hold to the number eleven.

References: Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra, vol. 8; adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala', vol. 2; Ibn Hajar, al-Isabah fi Tamyiz as-Sahabah; Ibn al-Qayyim, Zad al-Ma'ad, section on the wives of the Prophet ﷺ; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wa an-Nihayah.

LESSONS

These six mothers came to the home of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ by different paths: the loss of a husband, the decree of revelation, captivity in war, emigration to a foreign land, and the treaty of an 'umrah. Yet every path ended in the same place: the honour of being a Mother of the Believers.

This teaches us that Allah can open the door of good through circumstances that seem bitter on the surface. Loss, captivity and exile became the beginning of an honour that will last until the Day of Resurrection.

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THE WISDOM BEHIND THESE MARRIAGES

Chapter 34 of Part 1 answered the question of whether the marriages of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ were driven by desire. In this part we look at another side: every marriage carried a clear wisdom — establishing a ruling of the Shari'ah, protecting a wronged woman, or uniting tribes with Islam.

MOTHER OF THE BELIEVERS	MAIN WISDOM	EFFECT
Umm Salamah	Protecting the widow of an emigrant and hero of Badr, together with her orphaned children	Her children grew up in the Prophet's ﷺ home; she became a reference of knowledge (chapters 4, 7)
Zaynab bint Jahsh	Abolishing the pre-Islamic ruling on adopted sons (Al-Ahzab 33:37)	An adopted child keeps the lineage of his real father; his former wife is not a mahram (chapter 9)
Juwayriyah	Uniting Banu al-Mustaliq with the Muslims	A hundred families freed; many embraced Islam (chapter 14)
Umm Habibah	Protecting an emigrant woman abandoned by her husband in a foreign land	Softening the hearts of Banu Umayyah and Abu Sufyan (chapter 17)
Safiyyah	Honouring the daughter of an enemy chief who had lost her father, husband and people	An example of treating captives; a rejection of racism (chapters 21, 22)
Maymunah	Strengthening ties with Banu Hilal and the family of al-'Abbas	Her home became the school of Ibn 'Abbas (chapter 25)

A RULING ESTABLISHED BY DEED

The marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh is the clearest example. Allah Himself states its purpose: "We married her to you so that there would be no blame upon the believers concerning the wives of their adopted sons" (Al-Ahzab 33:37) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 33:37.

A custom rooted for centuries is not easily removed by words. It needs an example from the most respected of people. So Allah made His own Messenger the first to carry out this new ruling, even though he knew that people would talk (chapter 10).

A BRIDGE BETWEEN TRIBES

In Arab society, ties by marriage were very strong bonds. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ married Juwayriyah, the Companions said, "They are now the in-laws of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ," and freed all the captives of Banu al-Mustaliq. 'A'ishah said that she knew of no woman who was a greater blessing to her people than Juwayriyah (Sunan Abi Dawud 3931).

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The marriage to Umm Habibah linked him to Abu Sufyan, the leader of Quraysh at that time. The marriage to Safiyyah showed the Jews that Islam does not take revenge on the children of its enemies. And the marriage to Maymunah strengthened ties with the family of al-'Abbas and Banu Hilal; not long afterwards, her nephew Khalid ibn al-Walid embraced Islam.

SIRAH NOTE: THE WORDS OF ABU SUFYAN

Ibn Sa'd and some historians report that when Abu Sufyan heard that his daughter had been married to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he praised him as a noble man who could not be refused. This report is found in the books of sirah and has no authentic chain.

What is certain is that Abu Sufyan embraced Islam at the conquest of Makkah in 8 AH (Book 20), and died a Muslim in the time of 'Uthman. Umm Habibah mourned him for three days (chapter 19).

References: Sunan Abi Dawud 3931; Sunan Abi Dawud 2107; Sahih al-Bukhari 5086; Sahih Muslim 1411; Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim (Al-Ahzab 33:37); Ibn al-Qayyim, Zad al-Ma'ad.

LESSONS

Every marriage of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was part of the message. He did not only teach rulings by word, but also through his own household life. So to study his household is to study how Islam protects women, abolishes unjust customs and unites people.

This wisdom also reminds us to judge a historical event in its full context. When that context is understood, what at first looked like a question becomes evidence of wisdom and mercy.

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JUSTICE IN A LARGE HOUSEHOLD

How did the Messenger of Allah ﷺ manage a household with nine wives at one time? The authentic hadiths give a clear picture: he was very careful to be just in everything within his control, even though Allah had given him latitude (Al-Ahzab 33:51; chapter 32 of Part 1).

AN ORDERLY ROTA

Each wife had her turn. When Sawdah bint Zam'ah grew old, she willingly gave her turn to 'A'ishah, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ accepted the gift, giving 'A'ishah two days: her own day and Sawdah's (Sahih al-Bukhari 5212; Sahih Muslim 1463).

Even so, he did not neglect his other wives on days that were not their turn. 'A'ishah narrated that when he finished the 'Asr prayer, he would visit his wives and come close to each of them (Sahih al-Bukhari 5216). It was from this habit that the honey episode in the house of Zaynab bint Jahsh occurred, which became the occasion of Surah At-Tahrim (chapter 32 of Part 1).

DRAWING LOTS FOR JOURNEYS

When he wished to travel, he would draw lots among his wives, and whoever's name came out would accompany him (Sahih al-Bukhari 2593). In this way no one felt left out. It was such a draw that took 'A'ishah on the journey of Banu al-Mustaliq (Sahih al-Bukhari 2661; Book 14).

ASKING PERMISSION DURING ILLNESS

During his final illness, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ kept asking, "Where am I tomorrow? Where am I tomorrow?" — because he wished to be in 'A'ishah's house. So his wives allowed him to stay wherever he wished, and he was nursed in 'A'ishah's house until he passed away (Sahih al-Bukhari 4450; Book 30). Even when gravely ill, he did not move without their permission.

JUSTICE AND THE LOVE OF THE HEART

Allah says: "And you will never be able to be equal between wives, even if you should strive to do so. So do not incline completely towards one and leave another hanging" (An-Nisa' 4:129) — Tafsir Ibn Kathir 4:129.

Ibn Kathir explains that the equality that cannot be achieved is equality of love and the inclination of the heart, since the heart is beyond a person's control. What is obligatory is justice in outward matters: the rota, maintenance, housing and treatment. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also warned: "Whoever has two wives and inclines towards one of them will come on the Day of Resurrection with one side of his body leaning" (Sunan Abi Dawud 2133 — sahih).

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SIRAH NOTE: THE SUPPLICATION "THIS IS MY DIVISION"

There is a report that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would divide the turns justly and then supplicate: "O Allah, this is my division in what I control, so do not blame me for what You control and I do not" (Sunan Abi Dawud 2134).

At-Tirmidhi mentions that this report is more correctly mursal, and many hadith scholars, among them al-Albani, graded its chain weak. Yet its meaning agrees with An-Nisa' 4:129: one is not held accountable for the love of the heart, but outward conduct must be just.

References: Sahih al-Bukhari 5212; Sahih al-Bukhari 5216; Sahih al-Bukhari 2593; Sahih al-Bukhari 4450; Sunan Abi Dawud 2133; Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim (An-Nisa' 4:129); an-Nawawi, Sharh Sahih Muslim, Book of Suckling.

LESSONS

The justice of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was not just dividing days. It included daily visits, transparent lots, asking permission, and honouring one wife's gift to another. This is a high standard for every husband with more than one wife — and also for every parent with more than one child.

These events also show that the Prophet's ﷺ household was a human home, with human jealousy and feelings. What makes it an example is not the absence of problems, but the way problems were handled: justly, gently and guided by revelation.

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THE KNOWLEDGE OUR MOTHERS BEQUEATHED

Chapter 33 of Part 1 showed how 'A'ishah and the other wives carried out Allah's command to remember "the verses of Allah and wisdom" (Al-Ahzab 33:34). The six mothers in this part also left a great legacy of knowledge, and some of it we practise every day without realising.

MOTHER OF THE BELIEVERS	ESTIMATED HADITHS	AMONG HER STUDENTS	EXAMPLE NARRATION
Umm Salamah	About 378	Her children 'Umar and Zaynab, Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib, 'Abdullah ibn Rafi' (her freed slave)	Supplication in calamity (Sahih Muslim 918); bathing for a woman with braided hair (Sahih Muslim 330)
Maymunah	About 76	Ibn 'Abbas, Kurayb, Yazid ibn al-Asamm (her nephew)	How to perform ghusl (Sahih al-Bukhari 249)
Umm Habibah	About 65	Zaynab bint Abi Salamah, 'Anbasah ibn Abi Sufyan (her brother)	Twelve regular sunnah rak'ahs (Sahih Muslim 728); mourning (Sahih al-Bukhari 1280)
Zaynab bint Jahsh	About 11	Zaynab bint Abi Salamah, Umm Habibah	Warning of the trials of the end times (Sahih al-Bukhari 3346)
Safiyyah	About 10	'Ali ibn al-Husayn (Zayn al-'Abidin)	Avoiding places of suspicion (Sahih al-Bukhari 2035)
Juwayriyah	About 7	Ibn 'Abbas, Abu Ayyub al-Maraghi	Dhikr after Fajr (Sahih Muslim 2726); fasting on Friday (Sahih al-Bukhari 1986)

The numbers above are estimates reported by adh-Dhahabi in Siyar A'lam an-Nubala' from Baqi ibn Makhlad, including narrations repeated through different chains. Umm Salamah is the second most prolific narrator among the wives of the Prophet ﷺ after 'A'ishah.

UMM SALAMAH: ASKING WITHOUT SHYNESS

Umm Salamah once asked: "O Messenger of Allah, I am a woman who braids my hair tightly; must I undo it for the bath of janabah?" He replied: "No, it is enough for you to pour water over your head three times, then pour water over the rest of your body, and you are purified" (Sahih Muslim 330).

A question that many might feel shy to ask became a ruling that eases the lives of millions of women to this day. 'A'ishah herself praised this attitude: "The best of women are the women of the Ansar; shyness did not prevent them from gaining understanding of the religion" (Sahih Muslim 332).

ZAYNAB BINT JAHSH: A WARNING ABOUT CORRUPTION

Zaynab narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ woke from sleep alarmed and said: "There is no god but Allah! Woe to the Arabs from an evil that has drawn near." Zaynab asked: "O Messenger of Allah, shall

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we be destroyed while there are righteous people among us?" He replied: "Yes, when wickedness becomes widespread" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3346).

Zaynab's question was very sharp, and his answer became an important principle: the presence of righteous people alone is not enough to save a society if evil is left to spread unchecked.

SIRAH NOTE: AL-HASAN AL-BASRI IN THE HOUSE OF UMM SALAMAH

The mother of al-Hasan al-Basri, Khayrah, was a freed slave (mawlah) of Umm Salamah. Historians mention that al-Hasan grew up in the house of Umm Salamah, and that she would sometimes nurse him when his mother went out. This is mentioned by Ibn Sa'd and adh-Dhahabi.

Al-Hasan later became one of the most learned and ascetic of the Tabi'in. Just like Ibn 'Abbas in the house of Maymunah, the homes of the Mothers of the Believers became the birthplace of great scholars of this Ummah.

References: Sahih Muslim 330; Sahih Muslim 332; Sahih al-Bukhari 3346; Sahih Muslim 728; Sahih al-Bukhari 249; adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'; Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra.

LESSONS

The supplication in calamity, the method of ghusl, the regular sunnah prayers, dhikr after Fajr, the rulings of mourning — all of these reached us through the mothers in this part. Every time we practise them, reward flows to them as knowledge that benefits.

They also taught the manners of seeking knowledge: asking boldly but politely, acting on what one hears, and passing it on to the next generation.

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POPULAR REPORTS THAT NEED CHECKING (PART 2)

As in Part 1, there are stories about these six Mothers of the Believers that are widely spread but not all authentic. The table below gathers reports that are often mentioned, together with their grading.

REPORT	GRADE	EXPLANATION
The Messenger of Allah ﷺ caught sight of Zaynab while she was still Zayd's wife and was attracted to her	False; rejected by scholars	Rejected by Ibn Kathir, Ibn Hajar and Ibn al-'Arabi. The authentic account is Sahih al-Bukhari 7420 (chapter 10).
"The first of you to join me will be the one with the longest hand" — referring to Sawdah	A narrator's confusion	The wording of Sahih al-Bukhari 1420 seems to point to Sawdah, but Ibn Hajar explains that the correct view is Zaynab, as in Sahih Muslim 2452 (chapter 12).
The supplication "O Allah, this is my division in what I control…"	Weak (more correctly mursal)	Sunan Abi Dawud 2134; its meaning is true (chapter 34).
Umm Habibah folding away the Messenger's ﷺ mat from her father	Sirah report	Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Sa'd; not found in the authentic hadith collections (chapter 18).
Abu Sufyan's words praising the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on hearing of his daughter's marriage	Sirah report without an authentic chain	Ibn Sa'd (chapter 33).
Safiyyah's dream that the moon fell into her lap, and her husband striking her	Well-known; chain disputed	Reported by Ibn Ishaq and some hadith books; some scholars accept it and others weaken it.
The Messenger of Allah ﷺ married Maymunah while in ihram	Disputed; rejected by the majority	Sahih al-Bukhari 1837 versus Sahih Muslim 1411 and the report of Abu Rafi' (chapter 24).
Mariyah the Copt was freed and married as a wife	A minority opinion	The majority of scholars: she was an umm walad, not a married wife (chapter 27).
Rayhanah bint Zayd as his wife	Disputed	Ibn Ishaq: a bondwoman; Ibn Sa'd: a freed wife (chapter 32).
Umm Salamah was the last of the wives to die	The well-known view	Died 61 or 62 AH; some historians give an earlier year (chapter 7).

SIRAH NOTE: WHY ARE SIRAH REPORTS STILL MENTIONED?

Books of sirah such as the Sirah of Ibn Ishaq and the Tabaqat of Ibn Sa'd contain historical information not found in the hadith collections. Scholars accept sirah reports in general historical matters as long as they do not contradict authentic narrations and do not touch on creed or rulings.

That is why this eBook mentions sirah reports in Sirah Note boxes, stating their grade, so that the reader can distinguish between what is certain and what is still discussed.

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References: Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari (Book of Zakah, hadith 1420; Book of Tafsir, Al-Ahzab 33:37); Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim; Sahih al-Bukhari 1420; Sahih Muslim 2452; Sunan Abi Dawud 2134.

LESSONS

The hadith scholars did not leave reports about the wives of the Prophet ﷺ unexamined, whether in praise or in blame. They weighed every chain fairly. So we too must be fair: we do not accept false reports that stain the honour of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, nor do we invent stories to glorify anyone.

The honour of our mothers is already established by the Qur'an and authentic hadith. That is more than enough.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (PART 2)

Below are questions often asked about the six Mothers of the Believers in this part, and about the household of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in general. Questions about Part 1 were answered in chapter 36 of Book 32.

1. HOW MANY WIVES DID THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ HAVE?

According to the well-known view, eleven wives whom he married and lived with. Two died during his lifetime, and nine were alive when he passed away (chapter 32).

2. IS MARIYAH THE COPT COUNTED AMONG THE MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS?

The majority of scholars hold that she was an umm walad, not a married wife, so she is not included in the specific title Ummahat al-Mu'minin. Yet she is still honoured as the mother of Ibrahim, the son of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (chapter 27).

3. WHY DID THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ MARRY ZAYD'S FORMER WIFE?

Because Allah commanded it in order to abolish the pre-Islamic ruling that treated an adopted son like a biological son. Allah Himself states the purpose in Al-Ahzab 33:37 (chapters 9, 10 and 33).

4. MAY WE ADOPT CHILDREN TODAY?

Yes — indeed, caring for orphans and children in need is a very noble deed. What is forbidden is changing the child's lineage to the adoptive father. The child keeps the name of his biological father, and the rules of 'awrah and mixing with him follow the Shari'ah (Al-Ahzab 33:5).

5. WHEN DID THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ BEGIN LIVING WITH SAFIYYAH?

After the period of istibra' (waiting to establish that the womb is clear) was complete. Anas narrated that he waited until they reached Sadd ar-Rawha', when Safiyyah had become pure, and only then did he live with her (Sahih al-Bukhari 4211). The rulings of the Shari'ah were fully observed.

6. WHAT IS THE RULING ON MARRYING WHILE IN IHRAM?

The majority of scholars (the Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali schools) hold that a marriage contract made in ihram is invalid, based on his saying: "The one in ihram may not marry, nor give in marriage" (Sahih Muslim 1409). The Hanafi school holds that it is valid, based on Ibn 'Abbas's report about Maymunah (chapter 24).

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7. HOW LONG IS A WOMAN'S PERIOD OF MOURNING?

Three days for the death of a relative other than her husband, and four months and ten days for a wife whose husband has died, based on the hadith of Umm Habibah (Sahih al-Bukhari 1280; chapter 19).

8. DID THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ LOVE ALL HIS WIVES EQUALLY?

The love of the heart is not within human control, and he loved 'A'ishah most. Yet he was just in all outward matters: the rota, maintenance, visits and the drawing of lots (An-Nisa' 4:129; chapter 34).

9. WHICH OF THE WIVES OF THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ DIED LAST?

According to the well-known view, Umm Salamah, in 61 or 62 AH, at an age of over 80 (chapter 7).

10. WHERE ARE THE MOTHERS OF THE BELIEVERS BURIED?

All of them in al-Baqi', Madinah, except Khadijah at al-Hajun in Makkah, and Maymunah at Sarif (chapter 32).

11. MAY A WOMAN ASK RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS THAT FEEL EMBARRASSING?

Yes — and she is praised for it. Umm Salamah asked about ghusl for a woman with braided hair, and 'A'ishah praised the women of the Ansar because shyness did not stop them from gaining understanding of the religion (Sahih Muslim 332; chapter 35).

12. WHAT SHOULD ONE READ AFTER THIS SERIES?

The series The Prophet's Sirah ends with this book. The life of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ can be known more closely through the series The Shama'il of the Prophet ﷺ, which describes his features, character and daily habits.

LESSONS

Every answer in this chapter returns to one principle: the household of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was built on revelation, justice and mercy. When we understand this principle, many questions answer themselves.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

With this Part 2, the story of ***the eleven Mothers of the Believers*** is complete. Each has her own distinction and lesson:

MOTHER OF THE BELIEVERS	KEY LESSON
Khadijah	Early faith and sacrifice; greetings from Allah
Sawdah	Generosity; putting the Hereafter first
'A'ishah	Knowledge; declared innocent by the Qur'an
Hafsah	Worship; guardian of the Qur'an sheets
Zaynab bint Khuzaymah	"Mother of the poor"
Umm Salamah	Supplication in calamity; wise counsel at Hudaybiyah
Zaynab bint Jahsh	Submitting to Allah's decree; "the longest hand"
Juwayriyah	A blessing to her people; words that weigh more
Umm Habibah	Steadfast abroad; constancy in the regular sunnah prayers
Safiyyah	"Daughter of a Prophet"; Islam abolishes racism
Maymunah	Teacher of purification; the home where Ibn 'Abbas learned

A MESSAGE FOR US

Our mothers came from different backgrounds — rich and poor, Quraysh and non-Quraysh, Arab and of Israelite descent, widowed and unmarried — yet they were ***united by faith***. This is the beauty of Islam: honour is measured not by lineage, but by ***piety and deeds***. May Allah be pleased with them all, and gather us with them in Paradise.

With this book, the series **The Prophet's Sirah** comes to an end. Alhamdulillah. In sha Allah, our journey with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ will continue with a new series, ***The Shama'il of the Prophet*** ﷺ, following the chapter order of Imam at-Tirmidhi's ***ash-Shama'il al-Muhammadiyyah***. And Allah knows best.

To every reader who has followed this journey from Book 1 to Book 32B — from the birth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ until he returned to the Highest Companion, and to the Mothers of the Believers who carried on his legacy — the author offers his deepest thanks. All the good in this series comes from Allah, and every shortcoming comes from the author's own weakness. Please forgive him, and kindly point out any mistakes you find.

O Allah, accept this small effort, and make it beneficial knowledge and an ongoing charity for the author, his family and everyone who reads and shares it. Plant in our hearts love for Your Prophet Muhammad

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ﷺ, for his family and his wives, and for his Companions. Gather us with them in Your Paradise, and let us drink from the Pool of Your Prophet from his noble hand, one sip after which we shall never thirst again. Amin, O Lord of the worlds.

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

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CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

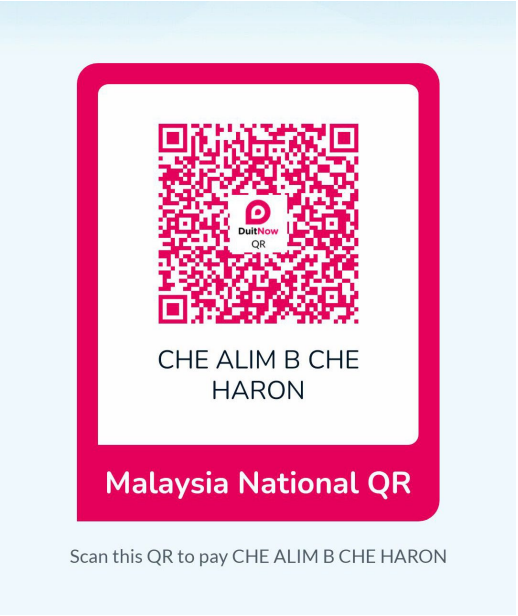
REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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