

The Prophet's ﷺ Conduct with his Wives

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وَعَالِيَهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

“And live with them (wives) in kindness.”

(Surah an-Nisaa, 19)

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا، قَالَتْ: مَا ضَرَبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ خَادِمًا وَلَا امْرَأَةً قَطُّ.

Sayyidah Aishah رضي الله عنها narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ never hit a servant or a woman. (Sunan Abi Dawud, 4686)

The Noble Prophet ﷺ had eleven wives. Not a single wife suffered from physical, emotional, or psychological abuse. He first married at the age of twenty-five, and he departed for the next world at the age of sixty-three. For thirty-eight years, he never mistreated his wives. Physical abuse is “any act that causes injury or trauma by way of bodily contact.” This includes but is not limited to the following: hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, etc. (“Types of Abuse”). Emotional/verbal/psychological abuse is “subjecting the victim to behaviour that can result in psychological trauma.” Examples include constant criticism, belittling, and threats, etc. (“Types of Abuse”).

Spousal abuse is an epidemic that has permeated societies around the globe. No faith or ethnic group is immune from it; unfortunately, Muslims are no exception. The drive behind this behaviour is the desire to dominate and exercise power and control over the partner. Spousal abuse can take many forms. Physical beating is the most well-known, but sometimes, a sharp tongue can pierce the heart to its core and shatter it. Constantly criticizing, humiliating, excessively controlling, name-calling, gas-lighting, isolating the spouse from family and friends, and withholding money are all forms of abuse. In the majority of cases, the husband is the abuser, but there are also cases where the wife is the perpetrator. Due to the dominant and intimidating behaviour of the abuser and the humiliation being endured by the victim, spousal abuse is underreported. In the end, the victim continues to suffer in silence.

Emulating the prophetic model in marital life will eradicate this evil practice. In the above hadith, Sayyidah Aishah رضي الله عنها was explicit in her description of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. He never hit a woman. In another narration, she reports:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِهِ وَأَنَا خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِي وَإِذَا مَاتَ صَاحِبُكُمْ فَدَعُوهُ.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “The best of you is the best to his family, and I am the best of you towards my family, and when your companion dies, leave him alone.” (Jami’ at-Tirmidhi,

3895)

Commented [1]: cannot get praise to be added

Another hadith mentions:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ زَمْعَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَا يَجْلِدُ أَحَدُكُمْ امْرَأَتَهُ جَلْدَ الْعَبْدِ، ثُمَّ يَجَامِعُهَا فِي آخِرِ الْيَوْمِ.

Sayyiduna Abdullah ibn Zam'ah رضى الله عنه narrates that the Noble Prophet ﷺ said: "None of you should beat his wife as he would beat a slave and then make love with her at the end of the day." (Sahih al-Bukhari, 5204)

A group of women came complaining to the Noble Prophet ﷺ, so the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Many women have circled Muhammad's family complaining against their husbands. They (such husbands) are not the best among you" (Sunan Abi Dawud, 2146).

Spousal abuse is a form of oppression. The path of redemption from this major sin requires the perpetrator to seek forgiveness from his/her victim, followed by *tawbah* (repentance). If the abuser has not been forgiven, then Allah will settle all accounts of abuse on Judgment Day. The Noble Prophet ﷺ has depicted the settling of accounts in the following hadith:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: أَتَذَرُونَ مَا الْمُفْلِسُ؟ قَالُوا: الْمُفْلِسُ فِينَا مَنْ لَا دِرْهَمَ لَهُ وَلَا مَتَاعَ. فَقَالَ: إِنَّ الْمُفْلِسَ مِنْ أُمَّتِي يَأْتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِصَلَاةٍ وَصِيَامٍ وَزَكَاةٍ وَيَأْتِي قَدْ شَتَمَ هَذَا وَقَذَفَ هَذَا وَأَكَلَ مَالَ هَذَا وَسَفَكَ دَمَ هَذَا وَضَرَبَ هَذَا فَيُعْطَى هَذَا مِنْ حَسَنَاتِهِ وَهَذَا مِنْ حَسَنَاتِهِ فَإِنْ فَنِيَتْ حَسَنَاتُهُ قِيلَ أَنْ يُقْضَى مَا عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ مِنْ خَطَايَاهُمْ فُطِرَتْ عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ طُرِحَ فِي النَّارِ

Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Do you know who the destitute are? They (the Sahaabah) said: "The destitute amongst us is one who has no dirham with him nor wealth." He (Prophet ﷺ) said: "The destitute of my ummah will be he who will come on the Day of Resurrection with salah and fasts and zakah but he verbally abused this (person), slandered this (person) and unlawfully consumed the wealth of this (person) and shed the blood of this (person) and beat this (person). This one (victim) would be credited with his (the perpetrator's) good deeds, and (also) this (victim) with his (perpetrator's) good deeds. If his good deeds fall short to clear the account, then their (all the victims') sins would be upon him; then he would be thrown into the Hell-Fire." (Sahih Muslim, 2581)

Our role model is the Beloved Prophet ﷺ. Mother of the Faithful, Sayyidah Aishah رضى الله عنها describes him as someone who was never rude or obscene (Jami' at-Tirmidhi, 2016). He would praise Sayyidah Safiyyah's رضى الله عنها cooking (Akhtar Nadwi 249). Once, while on a journey, he sat beside his camel and placed his knee to support her in mounting the camel. Sayyiduna Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه reports: "He then sat beside his camel and put his knee down for Safiyyah so she could put her foot on it to mount" (Sahih al-Bukhari, 4211).

When drinking water from a bowl, he would place his blessed mouth on the same spot Sayyidah Aishah رضى الله عنها had put her mouth (*Sunan an-Nasa'i*, 279). Sayyidah Aishah رضى الله عنها says: “The Prophet ﷺ never filled his stomach. When he was with his family, he did not ask them for food or desire it. If they fed it to him, he ate. He accepted whatever they served him and drank whatever they gave him to drink” (Iyaadh 74).

Following the Sunnah is the key to a harmonious and healthy marriage. The prophetic character is the model to follow for every couple, and this applies equally to husband and wife. When the couple inculcate the prophetic traits of mercy, love, gentleness, respect, etc., towards each other, they will taste the true sweetness of marriage.

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