191429 - The attitudes of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) towards his wives and his good treatment of them

the question

It was narrated from Sayyidah ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) came to me when it was not my day. He knocked at the door and I heard his knock, then I went out and opened the door for him, and he said: “Did you not hear me knock?” I said: Yes, but I wanted the other wives to know that you came to me on a day other than my day. Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah narrated to us: Shabaabah ibn Siwaar narrated to us: Sulaymaan ibn al-Mugheerah narrated to us, from Thaabit, from Anas, who said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) had nine wives, and when he divided his time among them, he did not come back to the first one until the ninth day. Every night they used to gather in the house of the one whose night it was. He was in ‘Aa’ishah’s house, and Zaynab came and he reached out his hand towards her. ‘Aa’ishah said: This is Zaynab, and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) withdrew his hand.
My question is: why did the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) come to Sayyidah ‘Aa’ishah when it was not her day, whereas in the second hadith it says that he did not shake hands with Sayyidah Zaynab so as to please Sayyidah ‘Aa’ishah because it was her day? It was narrated that ‘Aa’ishah said: The wives of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) sent his daughter Faatimah to him. She asked for permission to enter upon him when he was lying down with me under my cover, and he gave her permission. She said: O Messenger of Allah, your wives have sent me to you to ask you to be just with regard to the daughter of Abu Quhaafah (i.e., Abu Bakr). I [‘Aa’ishah] kept quiet. The Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to her: “O my daughter, do you not love that which I love?” She said: Of course. He said: “Then love this one” – i.e., ‘Aa’ishah. Faatimah got up when she heard that from her father, and she went back to the wives of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and told them what the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) had said to her. They said to her: We do not think that you have helped us in any way. Go back to the Messenger of Allah and say to him: Your wives adjure you to be just with regard to the daughter of Abu

Quhaafah. Faatimah said: By Allah, I will never speak to him about her. Then the wives of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) sent Zaynab bint Jahsh – who was the one who was the closest of them to me in status, i.e., in terms of beauty and the love of the Messenger for her. She asked permission to enter upon the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) when the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was with ‘Aa’ishah beneath her cover, as he was when Faatimah had come in. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) gave her permission and she said: O Messenger of Allah, your wives have sent me to you to ask you to be just with regard to the daughter of Abu Quhaafah. … ‘Aa’ishah said: Then she showed harshness towards me and insulted me, and I was watching the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to see if he would allow me to respond. This went on until I realized that the Messenger would not object if I responded. When I started responding, I answered back to everything that she had said, until I got the upper hand. And the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said, smiling, “She is the daughter of Abu Bakr.”
My question is: I know that what is meant by their asking for justice was justice with regard to emotion, but that was beyond the control of the Messenger; rather that was in the hand of Allah, may He be glorified… But why did the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) take the side of Sayyidah ‘Aa’ishah instead of trying to reassure his other wives?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) treated his wives well, give them good company and was dignified. He used to sit with them, keep them company, talk to them, chat with them at night and treat them fairly in every way he could.

There happened between his wives, who were the mothers of the believers (may Allah be pleased with them), that which usually happens between co-wives, but nevertheless they would soon calm

down and go back to their usual way of conduct, which was based on faith, restraint, dignity and religious commitment.

What a believing woman may say or do out of jealousy may be tolerated, in contrast to others, because of her faith and because she will go back to her original way of good character and religious commitment.

In fact, when the believer who is pious and pure of heart reads the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “The Prophet is closer to the believers than their ownselves, and his wives are their (believers’) mothers” [al-Ahzaab 33:6], he will adhere to proper etiquette and protect his inner thoughts lest they be overtaken by insinuating thoughts and bad ideas. Do you not see how a man behaves with his mother, compromising a great deal, overlooking a great deal, and not picking on every word she says and every action she does? The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and the members of his household are more deserving of all respect and veneration, and are deserving of all good treatment and attitudes.

Secondly:

With regard to the hadith narrated from ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), according to which she said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) came to me when it was not my day. He knocked at the door and I heard his knock, then I went out and opened the door for him, and he said: “Did you not hear me knock?” I said: Yes, but I wanted the other wives to know that you came to me on a day other than my day,

This hadith was quoted by adh-Dhahabi in Siyar A‘laam an-Nubala’ (2/174) via Ahmad ibn ‘Ubaydullah an-Nursi: Yahya al-Khawwaas narrated to us: Muhaadir narrated to us, from Hishaam ibn ‘Urwah, from his father, from ‘Aa’ishah.

This is a da‘eef isnaad and cannot be used as evidence.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qaadir al-Arna’oot (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his commentary on as-

Siyar:

Yahya al-Qawwaas: I did not find any biography for him. Muhaadir is Ibn al-Moori‘. Abu Haatim said concerning him: He is not strong. Imam Ahmad said: He was very naïve. End quote.

Such a report is not reliable and cannot be quoted as evidence.

With regard to the second hadith, it was narrated by Muslim (1462) from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) had nine wives, and when he divided his time among them, he did not come back to the first one until the ninth day. Every night they used to gather in the house of the one whose night it was. He was in ‘Aa’ishah’s house, and Zaynab came and he reached out his hand towards her. ‘Aa’ishah said: This is Zaynab, and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) withdrew his hand. They argued and raised their voices, and the iqaamah for prayer was given. Abu Bakr came past at that point and heard their voices, so he said: Come out for the prayer, O Messenger of Allah, and throw dust in their mouths. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) came out, and ‘Aa’ishah said: Now the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) will finish his prayer and come, and Abu Bakr will come and do such and such to me. When the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) had finished his prayer, Abu Bakr came to her and spoke sternly to her, and said: Do you behave like this?

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This gathering took place with their consent.

With regard to him reaching out his hand towards Zaynab, and ‘Aa’ishah saying: This is Zaynab, it was said that this action was not deliberate; rather he thought that she was ‘Aa’ishah, whose turn it was, because that was at night and there were no lamps in the houses. And it was suggested that that was with their consent.

In this hadith we see the good conduct of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and his gentleness towards all.

Al-Bukhaari (2581) and Muslim (2442) narrated from ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she said: The wives of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) sent Faatimah the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). She asked permission to enter when he was lying down with me under my cover, and he gave her permission. She said: O Messenger of Allah, your wives have sent me to you to ask you to be just with regard to the daughter of Abu Quhaafah.

I [‘Aa’ishah] kept quiet.

The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to her: “O my daughter, do you not love that which I love?”

She said: Of course.

He said: “Then love this one.”

Faatimah got up when she heard that from the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and she went back to the wives of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and told them what she had said and what the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) had said to her. They said to her: You have been of no avail for us. Go back to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and say to him: Your wives adjure you to be just with regard to the daughter of Abu Quhaafah.

Faatimah said: By Allah, I will never speak to him about her.

‘Aa’ishah said: The wives of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) sent Zaynab bint Jahsh, the wife of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), who was the one who was the closest of them to me in status before the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). I have never seen any woman who was better in religious commitment than Zaynab, more fearing of Allah, more truthful in speech, more keen to uphold family ties, more generous in giving charity, or more keen to draw close to Allah, but she had a quick temper,

although she would calm down quickly.

She asked permission to enter upon the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) when the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was with ‘Aa’ishah beneath her cover, as he was when Faatimah had come in. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) gave her permission and she said: O Messenger of Allah, your wives have sent me to you to ask you to be just with regard to the daughter of Abu Quhaafah.

Then she showed harshness towards me and insulted me, and I was watching the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to see if he would allow me to respond.

Zaynab kept going until I realized that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would not object if I responded.

When I started responding, I answered back to everything that she had said.

And the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said, smiling, “She is the daughter of Abu Bakr.”

The questioner asked: But why did the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) take the side of Sayyidah ‘Aa’ishah instead of trying to reassure his other wives?

The answer is:

Because she had not done anything or initiated anything; and he was in her house, under her cover, on her day; and he knew that the reason for this was no more than jealousy. Because of his good attitude and kind treatment, he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) put up with that from them.

What was meant by his words, “She is the daughter of Abu Bakr” when he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was smiling, was that she was his daughter and resembled him in strength of character and mature thinking. Al-Haafiz said: That is, she was dignified, intelligent and wise, like her father.

End quote from Fath al-Baari (5/207).

An-Nawawi said:

This was a reference to her perfect understanding and good insight.

End quote from Sharh an-Nawawi ‘ala Muslim (15/207)

She did not start to answer back her sister until after she ascertained that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would not be upset by that.

As Zaynab (may Allah be pleased with her) was the one who had started it, the fact that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) gave ‘Aa’ishah permission to answer back was the means of achieving justice between his wives. If he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) had not allowed her to answer her sister back, soon the ignorant would have said: This is not fair! Why did he not let her answer her back?

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This indicates that she stood up for herself and answered back, and he did not tell her not to do that.

End quote from Sharh an-Nawawi ‘ala Muslim (15/207)

Al-Haafiz ibn Hajar said:

An-Nasaa’i and Ibn Maajah narrated with a hasan isnaad via at-Taymi from ‘Urwah that ‘Aa’ishah said:

Zaynab bint Jahsh entered upon me and reviled me, and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) told her to stop, but she refused. So he said to me: “Revile her.” So I reviled her.

End quote from Fath al-Baari (5/99)

Conclusion:

The questioner and others should understand that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was the best and kindest of people towards his family, and the closest of people to justice and fairness in all things, both minor and major. Think about his response (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to that ill-mannered hypocrite, when he objected to the way in which the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) had shared out some wealth, and he said to him: O Messenger of Allah, be just! He (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Woe to you! who will be just if I am not just? You would be lost and doomed if I was not just.”

Once the questioner has understood something of what the scholars said, explaining the good conduct and good attitude of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and his good treatment of others, what he must now do is avoid overstepping the mark, failing to see the beautiful conduct of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and opening the door to suspicion and speculation.

If he does not understand something or it is not clear to him, then he should bear a general principle in mind: Woe to you! Who will be just, if the Messenger of Allah was not just?!

Who is closer to doing what is right, if not the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)?!

Please see also the answers to questions no. 7878 and 34701

And Allah knows best.