112907 - The one who has been away from his wife for a long time is told not to come to her suddenly

the question

How sound is the hadeeth “Let not one of you come to his wife at night lest he find something he dislikes, and if he finds something he dislikes, let him bring four to bear witness…”?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

This hadeeth was not narrated in these words, as far as we know, but it was proven that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade the one who has been absent for a long time from coming suddenly, and two reasons are given for this ruling:

1 –

So that the wife can prepare herself by cleaning and adorning herself to receive her husband after his lengthy absence.

It was narrated that Jaabir ibn ‘Abd-Allaah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: We were with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) on a journey, and when we came to Madeenah we went to enter (the city), but he said: “Slow down. We will enter in the evening so that the one who is dishevelled may comb her hair and the one whose husband is away may shave her pubes.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (5079) and Muslim (715).

[omit explanation]

2 –

So that a man will not destroy his household by accusing his wife.

It was narrated that Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade a man to come to his family at night lest he appear to be showing distrust or seeking to catch them unawares (doing something wrong). Narrated by al-Bukhaari (5243) and Muslim (715).

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar said in Fath al-Baari (9/123):

The one who comes suddenly after a lengthy absence usually finds something he dislikes. Either he finds that his wife is not in the state of cleanliness and adornment that is required of a woman, so that causes alienation between them, and this was referred to in the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in the hadeeth, “so that the woman whose husband has been absent may shave her pubes and the one who is dishevelled may comb her hair”;

Or he finds her in a state that is displeasing. Islam encourages concealment of faults, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) referred to that when he said: “lest he appear to be showing distrust or seeking to catch them unawares (doing something wrong)”

Ibn Abi Hamzah said: This indicates that it is not allowed for a traveller to come suddenly to his family at night, without any prior notification of his arrival. The reason for that is what is referred to in the hadeeth: One of them went against that and saw a man with his wife, so he was punished with that for going against this order.

Al-Haafiz said: That is also indicated by a hadeeth that was narrated by Ibn Khuzaymah from Ibn ‘Umar who said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade disturbing women at night. Two men did that and they both found something with their wives that they disliked.

He also narrated a similar report from Ibn ‘Abbaas, in which it says: Each of them found a man with his wife. End quote.

Ibn al-‘Arabi (may Allaah have mercy on him) denied that the reason for this prohibition was so that one would not find a man with one’s wife, and he regarded the reports that had been narrated

concerning that as da’eef (weak). He (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

I have heard from some ignorant people – may Allaah forgive you for it and conceal it for you – that the reason why the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade them was lest the women be exposed, as happened to those who went against the orders of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). What has been narrated cannot be sound at all, and even if it was sound, it could not indicate that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was pointing to this meaning.

It is not proper for anyone who has any knowledge of the aims of sharee’ah and the status of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) to regard that as sound. End quote.

‘Aaridah al-Ahwadhi (5/365)

And Allaah knows best.