226616 - Commentary on the words of Anas ibn Malik: “One of the slave women of Madinah would take the Messenger of Allah by the hand and lead him wherever she wished”

the question

There are many hadiths which state that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not shake hands with women, and he never put his hand in theirs, but I read a report one time which says that a woman took the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) by the hand… and so on. How are we to understand this report?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

For a man to shake hands with a woman who is not his mahram or to touch her is haram and is not permissible.

There is no differentiation in that regard between a young woman and an old woman.

In the case of a young girl who is not regarded as desirable, one who is below the age of seven years, there is nothing wrong with looking at her and shaking hands with her.

Please see questions no. 2459 and 69824 .

Secondly:

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not shake hands with women, and his hand never touched the hand of a non-mahram woman.

When the women wanted to swear allegiance to the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) by shaking hands, he accepted their verbal oath of allegiance and said to them: “I do not shake hands with women; rather my words to one hundred women are like my words to one woman.” Narrated by an-Nasa’i (4181); also narrated by Ibn Majah (2874) and Ahmad (27006). Classed as sahih by al-Albani in *Sahih an-Nasa’i*.

‘A’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to them [the women]: “You may leave, for I have accepted your oath of allegiance.” No, by Allah, the hand of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) never touched the hand of a woman; rather he accepted their oath of allegiance verbally.” Narrated by al-Bukhari (4891) and Muslim (1866).

According to a report narrated by al-Bukhari (7214): The hand of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) never touched the hand of a woman, except his wives and concubines.

Wali ad-Din al-Iraqi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This indicates that the hand of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) never touched the hand of any woman except his wives and concubines, whether that was at the time of accepting the oath of allegiance or otherwise. If he did not do that despite the fact that he was infallible and there could be no suspicion in his case, then it is more appropriate that other others should be more cautious in this regard.

What appears to be the case is that he refrained from doing that because it was forbidden to him, and no exemption in that regard was granted to him."(*Tarh at-Tathrib* 7/44, 45).

With regard to the report narrated by al-Bukhari (6072) from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), according to which he said: “One of the slave women of Madinah would take the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) by the hand and lead him wherever she wished,”

the scholars have interpreted this hadith as referring to the good attitude of the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and his following that slave woman and being easy-going with her until he met her need.

They did not interpret the taking of his hand that is mentioned in this hadith in terms of the apparent meaning of holding his hand. This is a well-known figure of speech in Arabic, as in the supplication "*Allahumma khudh bi aydina ilayka*" (lit. "O Allah, take us by the hand and lead us to You"), which means: Enable us to submit to You – because when someone takes you by the hand, you have submitted to him.

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *al-Fath* (10/490):

What is meant by being taken by the hand is that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was gentle with that slave woman and went along with her. End quote.

Al-'Ayni (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *'Umdat al-Qari* (22/141):

What is meant by being taken by the hand is that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was gentle with that slave woman and went along with her. What this means is that the attitude of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was of such a high level of kindness and gentleness that if a slave woman needed him to go with her to some place in Madinah to meet her need, and she sought his help in that matter and needed him to go with her to meet her need, he would not refrain from going with her so that he could help her in that. End quote.

See: *Irshad as-Sari* (9/51); *Mirqaat al-Mafatih* (9/3713).

Thabit al-Bunani explained the meaning of this hadith in his report from Anas. Ibn Hibban narrated in his *Sahih* (4527) via Thabit from Anas ibn Malik: There was a woman who was somewhat mentally unstable. She said: O Messenger of Allah, I need your help.

The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "O Mother of So-and-so, choose whichever road you would like, and wait there so that I can come and see what you need."

The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) stood with her, conversing with her, until her need was met.

This was classed as sahih by Shaykh Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut in his commentary on *Sahih Ibn Hibban*.

There is no clear mention of touching the hand in this hadith, and it is not contrary to what 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) stated about the hand of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) never touching the hand of any woman.

With regard to what is mentioned in some versions of the hadith that were narrated by Ibn Majah (417) and Ahmad (12780) via 'Ali ibn Zayd, from Anas ibn Malik, who said: A slave woman of the people of Madinah would take the hand of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and he would not pull his hand away from her hand until she took him wherever she wanted in Madinah to meet her need,

the hadith with this addition is da'if (weak) and is not sahih, because it is narrated only by 'Ali ibn Zayd, who is da'if (weak) in narrating hadiths. He was classed as da'if by Hammad ibn Zayd, Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, Ahmad, Yahya, al-Bukhari, Ibn Khuzaymah and others. They described him as confused and having a poor memory.

See: *Mizan al-I'tidal* (3/127); *Tahdhib at-Tahdhib* (7/283).

Al-Busayri said in *az-Zawa'id* (4/230):

This is a da'if isnad, because 'Ali ibn Zayd ibn Jud'an is da'if. He was classed as da'if by the commentators on *Musnad al-Imam Ahmad*.

And Allah knows best.