93112 - How sound is the report which says “Choose for your daughters what you choose for your sons”?

the question

I heard one of the imams at the mosque say: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Choose for your daughters what you choose for your sons”. I have looked in all the references and I could not find any report of this hadeeth as the imam said it. I think that it may be a report from the Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them). Please tell us. May Allaah reward you with all good.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Daughters are a trust which has been placed with the father. Allaah commands the father to take care of this trust and look after it. Undoubtedly choosing a righteous husband for her is one of the greatest means by which a father may protect his daughter, because marriage is a major move in a person’s life towards peace, tranquility and happiness, so it is essential to make the right choice in order to achieve these hopes.

The wise father is the one who strives to achieve this great aim for his daughter, and does not feel at ease until he finds her a husband who is of good character and religiously committed, who will look after her and take care of her. When he finds him, he does not hesitate to offer his daughter to him in marriage, because he sees that that is in her best interests.

In the Qur'aan and Sunnah there are noble examples of guardians who chose husbands for their daughters and sisters, and who were a means of bringing them happiness, and they avoided waiting for too long.

Allaah tells us the story of Moosa (peace be upon him), when he came to the well of Madyan and drew water for the two women out of compassion towards them. When their father came to know

of the trustworthiness and strength of Moosa – which was before his mission began – he offered one of his daughters in marriage to him. Allaah says, telling us of that (interpretation of the meaning):

“He said: ‘I intend to wed one of these two daughters of mine to you, on condition that you serve me for eight years; but if you complete ten years, it will be (a favour) from you. But I intend not to place you under a difficulty. If Allaah wills, you will find me one of the righteous’”

[al-Qasas 28:27]

In the Sunnah we have another example that was narrated by Imam al-Bukhaari (5122) in a chapter entitled “A man offering his daughter or sister in marriage to good people.” And al-Nasaa’i (3248) narrated it in a chapter entitled “A man offering his daughter in marriage to one with whom he is pleased.”

It was narrated from Ibn ‘Umar that ‘Umar said:

Hafsah’s husband Khunays ibn Hudhaafah, who was one of the companions of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and had been present at Badr, died in Madeenah. I met ‘Uthmaan ibn ‘Affaan and offered Hafsah to him in marriage. I said: If you wish, I will marry Hafsah bint ‘Umar to you. He said: I will think about it. Several nights passed, then he said: I think that I do not want to get married at this time. ‘Umar said: Then I met Abu Bakr and I said: If you wish, I will marry Hafsah bint ‘Umar to you. Abu Bakr kept quiet and did not give me any response. I was more upset about him than about ‘Uthmaan. Several nights passed, then the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) proposed to her and I married her to him. Then Abu Bakr met me and said: Perhaps you felt upset when you offered Hafsah in marriage to me and I did not reply? I said: Yes. He said: Nothing prevented me from responding to your offer but the fact that I knew that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had mentioned her, and I did not want to disclose the secret of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). If he had decided not to marry her, I would have accepted your offer.

Al-Haafiz ibn Hajar said, listing the things that we learn from this hadeeth in Fath al-Baari (9/222):

From it we learn that a man may offer his daughter or other female relative under his guardianship in marriage to one who he thinks is good or suitable, because of the benefit that this will bring to the woman who is offered in marriage, and there should be no embarrassment in that. End quote.

There are many examples in history, among the best of which is that which is mentioned by al-Dhahabi in Siyar A'lam al-Nubala' (4/233) about Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyab marrying his daughter to his student Katheer ibn al-Muttalib, in which he says:

I used to sit with Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyab, and I was absent for a few days. When I came to him he said: Where were you? I said: My wife died and I was busy with her (funeral arrangements). He said: Why didn't you tell us so that we could have attended (her funeral)? Then he said: Have you found a new wife? I said: May Allaah have mercy on you; who would marry me when I have no more than two or three dirhams? He said: I will (give you my daughter in marriage). I said: Would you do that? He said: Yes, then he praised Allaah and sent blessings on the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and he gave me his daughter in marriage for two dirhams – or he said, three – and I got up and I did not know what to do out of joy. Then I went home and started to think about where to borrow money from.

I prayed Maghrib, then I went back home, and I was fasting by myself. I prepared my supper and I broke my fast, with bread and olive oil. Then there was a knock at the door and I said: Who is it? He said: Sa'eed. I thought of everyone whose name was Sa'eed except Ibn al-Musayyab, for he had not been seen for forty years anywhere except his home and the mosque. I went out and there was Sa'eed, and I thought that he had changed his mind. I said: O Abu Muhammad, why didn't you send for me so that I would come to you? He said: No, you have more right that I should come to you, for you were a single man then you got married, and I would not like for you to spend the night alone. Here is your wife. And she was standing behind him and was as tall as him. Then he took her by the hand and pushed her towards the door, and closed the door. The woman fell down out of shyness, and news of that reached my mother, so she came and said: I will never speak to you if you touch her before I have prepared her in three days. So I waited for three days,

then I consummated the marriage with her, and she is one of the most beautiful of people, and has memorized the Book of Allaah, and is one of the most knowledgeable about the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and about the rights of the husband. End quote.

Homes filled with religious commitment, knowledge, etiquette and happiness have been built in this way, and shyness did not prevent anyone from acquiring a righteous husband for his daughter or sister. Their attitude was one of humility, generosity and sincerity.

Perhaps the examples mentioned above will provide a good example for people of our own time, and Allaah is the One Whose help we seek.

Secondly:

As for the hadeeth quoted by this khateeb, in which it says “Choose for your daughters what you choose for your sons,” this is not a hadeeth from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and I did not find anything like this narrated from any of the Sahaabah or Taabi’een. Rather it is a proverb or saying that people use among themselves. Attributing it to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is a serious and grievous mistake which oversteps the limit by telling a lie about the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who said: “Whoever tells a lie about me deliberately, let him take his place in Hell.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (110) and Muslim (3).

And Allaah knows best.