



## Fiqh of Marriage: Class Four

الحمد لله و الصلاة و السلام على رسول الله و بعد:

### The Hadith:

827. Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, “A woman may be married for four qualities, for her property, her rank, her beauty, and her religion; so get the religious one and prosper.” Agreed upon.

### The Explanation:

We come to this new and well-known hadith that contains guidance and a recommendation. A woman is married for four things, her property, rank, beauty, and religion.

And the reason behind this hadith is the narration of Jabir, when the Prophet asked him, did you get married? He said, ‘Yes.’ The Prophet said, who did you marry? He replied, an older previously married woman.

The Prophet said, why not a virgin that you may be playful (tula’ib) with her and she will be playful with you? He said, “Oh Messenger of Allah my father passed away and left 7 daughters, and in another narration, 9 daughters, and I hated to come to them with a foolish

girl, in their age, but I wanted to marry an older wise woman who can comb their hair and take care of them.” The Prophet said, “You have done well,” and in a narration, “May Allah bless you.”

Then the Prophet mentioned these four qualities for which a woman is married, and in some narrations he added that “a dark slave girl who is religious is good for you.” So it is not necessary to be a virgin girl that they can ‘tula’ib’, to be playful, and what is meant by (tula’ib) is that each longs for the other.

In some hadith it mentions that it is disliked to stay up after Isha except for a man with his wife, or a man tending to his horses.

The word tula’ib, in addition to being playful, and the scholars of hadith were not shy about this, can also be derived from the word (lu’aab) which means saliva. This is a reference to the great amount of love that comes between a husband and a wife to the extent that they enjoy each others’ saliva. And it also means being playful with the hand and the rest of the body.

Some scholars said this hadith is encouragement to marry a virgin, since she will be more satisfied with her husband, and closer to him, and the husband will be able to convince her of his desires easier, and not have to change her after she has already become accustomed to the desires of another man.

This hadith was narrated in response to Jabir’s marriage to the older woman, and this was a praiseworthy act on his part, since his reasoning overcame his emotions.

Shaikh Abu Hasan an Nadawi said: A person might come to defining moments in his life, where he is ambivalent between his side of reasoning, and his emotions. From these situations is what Jaber was experiencing.

The emotions desire the ‘mula’bah’ and playfulness, which would be found in a virgin, since she would have more longing for her husband, and be quicker to respond to him.

Yet the voice of reason says, "9 sisters, who need someone to take care of them."  
And they did not have babysitters in those days.

So the voice of reason says, marry a woman who has experience in raising children,  
so she can take care of them.

Did Jaber marry according to his intellect and reason, or because of his emotions?  
His reason. And which is like that?

Anyone else might say, it is not my responsibility. I will marry whomever I like. No,  
a person who lives for selfish reasons does not deserve to be born. But a noble person lives  
for others, and prefers others to himself. This is what some of the wise people say.

He thought, and compared, between fulfilling his desires, and following his reason,  
and he gave precedence to the voice of reason over his emotions. And this is not done  
except the most honorable and righteous of men, who think like this.

When the Prophet heard of his circumstances, he said, "You did well." He agreed  
with his choice, so marrying a virgin is not something required. There are some who may  
misinterpret this hadith. The Prophet married ten women, and how many of them were  
virgins? One.

And Allah says, "Assa rabuhu in talaqakunna an yuzajjahu khairan min kunna  
muminaat muslimaat thayibaatin wa abkaarah."

In eloquence, you give precedence in order to words for a reason, and Allah  
mentioned the thayibaat (previously married women) before the abkaara (virgins). What is  
the special quality of the thayibaat?

Since the Prophets wives were Thayibaat, Allah could replace them with those who  
are better, in terms of obedience, and gratefulness. They would have more beauty and  
contentment and obedience, even though they were not virgins. If virgins were mentioned  
first, one may think that these women would be better since they were virgin.

Let us go back to the hadith. A woman too would like to marry a virgin man, since he would be innocent and pleased with her.

Likewise, a man wants a virgin woman since she will be innocent and content with him. She did not become accustomed to married life, and then she finds less with her second husband, such as spending, or cohabitation, or in terms of her rights.

It is mentioned that once an older man went to propose to a previously married woman. She was wise and beautiful, and he found out that a young man had come on the same day to propose to her. And the older man knew that the woman would listen to the conversation between him and the younger man, and see what she could learn about them.

So he told the young man, while she was listening, "If she is pleased with you and accepts you in marriage, how will you spend on her and give her money, and take care of her needs, and if she asks you for money what would you do?" He replied, "Me, I will not give her anything except I will keep account of everything, so that she knows I am the master of the house." He was taken by youthful zeal.

The older man said, "As for me, if she is pleased with me, I will open the doors for her to my wealth, and let her spend as she pleases, and I will not ask her about what she spent, and on what, and I will not be harsh to her if she makes mistakes..."

At first, the woman was inclined to the young man, but when she heard that the older man was easy going and flexible, she chose him.

As it is said, a man is an ocean, and the woman is the coast, and if the coast is not strong, the water will overflow its boundaries and cause a flood, and people will drown, and the ocean will not be of any benefit.

In this hadith, Jabir had special circumstances that led him to marry a previously married woman. And if we look to the marriages of the Prophet, we see that many books have been written about each of his wives and the specific reasons why he married each and every wife.

And he did not marry any woman except for a reason and for particular circumstances. It was not out of personal desire, or lustful passions, or seeking the worldly pleasures. How many years was he married to Khadija? More than 20 years. And how much older than him was she? 15 years.

Thus, we see such a large difference in age, and yet the Prophet did not marry anyone else, and they were the happiest couple to ever live, and he was loyal to her even after her death. He used to remember her and give gifts to her friends and family in Madinah. So we see the importance of good treatment of one's wife, and dealing with them kindly.

Some social scientists may discourage a man marrying an older woman for health reasons, and they say the rule of thumb is that a woman should be half the age of the man plus 6 years. So if a man is 20 years old, the perfect wife for him would be 16. If a person is 50 years old, the most appropriate wife for him is 31 years old.

We do not say that this rule of thumb is correct, nor the other. The difference in age is not the primary determinant in the success in marriage, but it does have an effect.

The real determining factor is the individual himself, his personality, his religion, his behavior, and his kindness.

There was a Shaikh who was very serious, who was over 50 and he married a younger woman. A friend of his came by before the wedding night, and said to him, when you deal with your wife, put your knowledge and thinking aside, and listen to your wife. When you come out of the house, you can go back to being serious.

Why, since this is being kind and playful and being polite with one's spouse. This is kind treatment.

It is said that the Messenger of Allah mentioned these qualities that drive people to get married, wealth, rank, beauty, and religion, because most people give priority to the first

three qualities, the beauty, wealth, and rank, and they make religion the last of their priorities.

He did not forbid searching for these qualities, a man can search for beauty, for a woman of wealth, who is independent, who does not seek from others, and for her rank, like a woman who grew up on good akhlaaq, in a good family, and her family guided her and showed her the right way. If she makes a mistake with her husband, her family would correct her.

These are the factors that drive a person to marry, and the Prophet acknowledged them, but he guided us to another quality, the religion.

Beauty, wealth, rank, these are all qualities that fulfill personal desire, but, he said, look for the woman of religion. He said, “Fadhfar dhat ad deen”, seize the religious woman, and the word ‘dhafar’ in Arabic means seizing something rare that is hard to find. She is rare.

Here, ‘fadhfar’ means gaining something rare, and it is derived from the word ‘dhafar,’ which means fingernail. Imagine a diamond or jewel lost in the dirt, and you are searching for it. Do you use an axe to find it? It may break. But you use your nails, so that you can find it and not damage it or lose it, since it is so valuable.

So the Prophet is saying, she is rare, not so common, but you have to search for her, and with your nails, not with a pick and axe. Searching for her is not easy, and you have no tools, but you can asking righteous women to help you.

So we see that this hadith describes the driving factor in marrying, and he did not reject any of these factors, yet he guided us to the one quality that is most important.

When you ask about a woman, you should seek the qualities that you want in a woman, from beauty, lineage, and wealth, but then make the determining factor her religion. If her religion is good, accept her, but if it is short, then reject her. Let religion be the determining factor.

Do not ask only for religion, she memorizes the Quran. A tape recorder can play the Quran, but does she act according to the Quran?

In Nayl al Awtar Imam Shawkani mentions: Do not marry a woman for her beauty, for she will be conceited, and spend three fourths of her time between doing her hair and in front of the mirror. A person who marries only for beauty, this is animal instinct. He does not look for other qualities.

And as for marrying for wealth alone, she will be arrogant, and think lowly of her husband, who is of modest wealth. He fulfills her needs, but she has so much wealth, and she buys whatever she likes, and this wealth makes her feel greater than her husband. Marrying her for wealth alone is again like an animal, seeking only to fulfill its base desires.

End of Class Four