

'Abdullāh said: We were young men with God's Messenger (peace be upon him) and we had nothing. The Prophet said to us:



Young people, whoever of you can meet marriage requirements, should get married. For marriage helps to lower one's gaze and maintain chastity.



Whoever cannot, may resort to fasting, and it will be of help.<sup>(1)</sup>

1 Related by al-Bukhari, ; Muslim, 1200.

#### From the Qur'an

- ﴿Believers, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you, so that you may be God-fearing.﴾ (2: 183)
- ﴿Tell believing men to lower their gaze and to be mindful of their chastity. This is most conducive to their purity. God is certainly aware of all that they do. (30) And tell believing women to lower their gaze and to be mindful of their chastity, and not to display their charms except what may ordinarily appear thereof.﴾ (24: 30-31)
- ﴿As for those who are unable to marry, let them live in continence until God grants them sufficiency out of His bounty.﴾ (24: 33)
- ﴿And among His signs is that He creates for you spouses out of your own kind, so that you might incline towards them, and He engenders love and tenderness between you. In this there are clear signs indeed for people who think.﴾ (30: 21)

#### The Narrator

Abu 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd ibn Ghāfil ibn Ḥabīb who belonged to the Hudhayl tribe was one of the very early companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was the first to recite the Qur'an in public in Makkah. He migrated to Abyssinia, then to Madinah and took part in the Battle of Badr and all other military expeditions with the Prophet. He took care of the Prophet's sandals, helping him to wear them when he moved, and kept them for him when the Prophet took them off as he sat down. He died in Madinah in Year 32 or 33 AH, 654 CE.

#### Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) advises young men to get married, because marriage helps them to lower their gaze at women and helps them to maintain their chastity. The advice to a young man who cannot afford marriage is to fast, because fasting is a great help in keeping a person away from what is forbidden.



# Message and Meaning

1

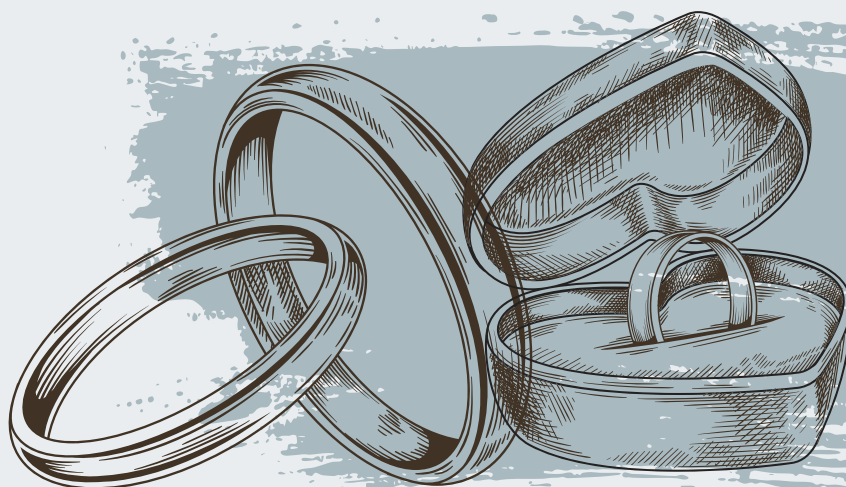
In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) addresses young men and recommends that they get married early, because they are the ones who feel the sexual urge most. The recommendation goes initially to those who are able to afford the costs and can meet the duties attendant on marriage. Marriage helps a young man to lower his gaze so that he does not look at forbidden temptation and forget what benefits him in this life and the life to come. Moreover, it helps him to maintain his chastity and steer away from illegitimate sex.

2

Young men who do not have the means and cannot afford to get married should still maintain their chastity and guard against falling into sin until God gives them what they need. This is in line with what God says: 'As for those who are unable to marry, let them live in continence until God grants them sufficiency out of His bounty'. (24: 33) Perhaps the most helpful way in this regard is fasting, because it suppresses the sexual urge and helps a young man to turn away from what excites it.

Scholars say that 'people may be classified into four groups: 1) Those who have the desire to get married and are able to afford it. These are encouraged to marry; 2) Those who neither find the desire nor are able to afford marriage. For these, marriage is discouraged; 3) Those who have the desire but cannot afford it. Marriage is discouraged for these, and they are recommended to fast in order to keep their desire in check, and 4) Those who can afford marriage but do not have the urge to get married. The view of the Shāfi'ī School is that for such people it is preferable not to marry, but rather to give more time to worship. We may not say that for them marriage is *makrūh*, i.e., reprehensible, but we say non-marriage is preferable'.<sup>(1)</sup>

The Prophet makes his address to young people because they are the main group concerned. The urge to get married is more likely to be stronger among them than older groups. However, the advice applies to older people as well if they feel the same urge.



1 Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Vol. 9, p. 174. English edition, Vol. 8. Book of Marriage, Chapter 1.

# Implementation



Advocates of Islam and educators must give clear attention to the problems and concerns of young people, and guide them to what is best for them.



Helping young people to have the means to get married is one of the more important ways to earn God's pleasure. God orders the Muslim community to attend to this need as He says: 'Marry the single from among you as well as such of your male and female slaves as are virtuous. If they are poor, God will grant them sufficiency out of His bounty. God is munificent, all-knowing'. (24: 32)



Maintaining one's chastity and lowering one's gaze are among the important duties of every Muslim. It is not permissible for a Muslim to go on the loose with looks and action.



One of the best motives to accept religious rulings is that a scholar should explain the reason for that ruling and the benefits it gives. The hadith shows that when the Prophet encouraged young people to get married, he explained that marriage helps them to lower their gaze and maintain their chastity. Therefore, advocates, scholars and muftis should mention the basis of Islamic rulings and their purposes.



The Prophet (peace be upon him) attached a condition for taking the step to get married, which is the ability to meet its requirements. These include the physical ability to have sexual intercourse with one's spouse and the financial ability to establish a family and look after it. A person who does not meet these requirements must not try to get married.



All five rulings may apply to marriage. It may be a duty if one meets the conditions of ability and fears that he may resort to what is sinful if he does not get married. Marriage may be recommended if a person is able to meet the requirements but is able to maintain his chastity. It is certainly discouraged for a person who is in no need of it, such as an elderly person or one who is ill and does not experience the sexual urge.



A person who cannot get married because of poverty must train himself and live in continence, as God says: 'As for those who are unable to marry, let them live in continence until God grants them sufficiency out of His bounty'. (24: 33) God has promised every Muslim to meet the marriage costs. The Prophet says: 'It is an undertaking to which God has committed Himself to help three types of people: a slave who has entered into a contract to buy his own freedom; the one who seeks to get married so as to maintain his chastity and the one who joins jihad for God's cause'.<sup>(1)</sup>

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 1655; al-Nasā'ī, 3120; Ibn Mājah, 2518.

