

Abu Hurayrah narrated:



that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: A woman is sought in marriage for four things: her wealth, family lineage, beauty and faith. Make sure to have the religious one, [for if you do not] you end up the poorer. ⁽¹⁾

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5090; Muslim, 1466.

From the Qur'an

- ﴿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)
- ﴿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)
- ﴿Mankind! We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another. Truly, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most genuinely God-fearing. God is all-knowing, all-aware.﴾ (48: 13)

The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and accompanied the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers of the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) states the fact that people choose their wives for one or more of four reasons: her wealth, family lineage, beauty and faith. He advises everyone who wants to get married to choose the woman with faith, because this is best for him.



Message and Meaning

1

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that in the majority of cases men choose their wives for one of four reasons. Some choose a rich woman so that he and his children will have a comfortable life. Moreover, a rich woman does not burden her husband with her expenses. Some look for a woman with a good family descent, hoping to raise his own social status through connection with her close relatives. There are men who look for beauty as the main consideration in their choice of wives. Such a person wants a woman whom he will feel pleased to look at. And there are people who prefer a religious woman who will look after him and their family. The Prophet then gives his sound advice telling us that the religious woman is the best to choose. In the case of one who does not take his advice, the Prophet uses an old Arabic expression which literally means: 'If you do not, your hands will stick to dust'. This is not understood literally, but the Prophet's advice means that the one who does not choose the religious woman exposes himself to failure and disappointment.

2

This does not mean that a Muslim must choose a religious woman who is poor, or ugly or of low family status. What it means is that the first consideration in his choice should be the woman's faith. If one manages to find a religious, pretty woman who belongs to a distinguished family, he will have the best of women. However, a religious poor woman is better than a rich woman who is not religious; a religious woman belonging to a family of low social status is better than a daughter of a high class family but irreligious; and a religious woman who is deprived of beauty is better than a very pretty woman without faith.

3

Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) encourages Muslims to marry good religious women. He said: 'The life of this world is a brief enjoyment, and the best comfort in this world is a goodly wife'.⁽¹⁾ The Prophet was asked: Which is the best of women? He said: 'The one who pleases her husband when he looks at her, obeys his order, and does not do with herself and her property what he dislikes'.⁽²⁾

A goodly wife pleases her husband and fears God in how she treats him. She protects his honour and takes good care of their children. She is considerate and God-fearing in her dealings with his family and property, and helps him to do what pleases God.

1 Related by Muslim, 1467.

2 Related by al-Nasā'i, 3131.

Implementation

1

A Muslim should choose a wife who is religious, because she is obedient, easy to deal with and she helps him to earn God's pleasure. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Four things contribute to happiness: a goodly wife, a spacious home of residence, a good neighbour and a comfortable means of transport. Four things contribute to unhappiness: a bad neighbour, a bad woman, a small home and uncomfortable transport'.⁽¹⁾

2

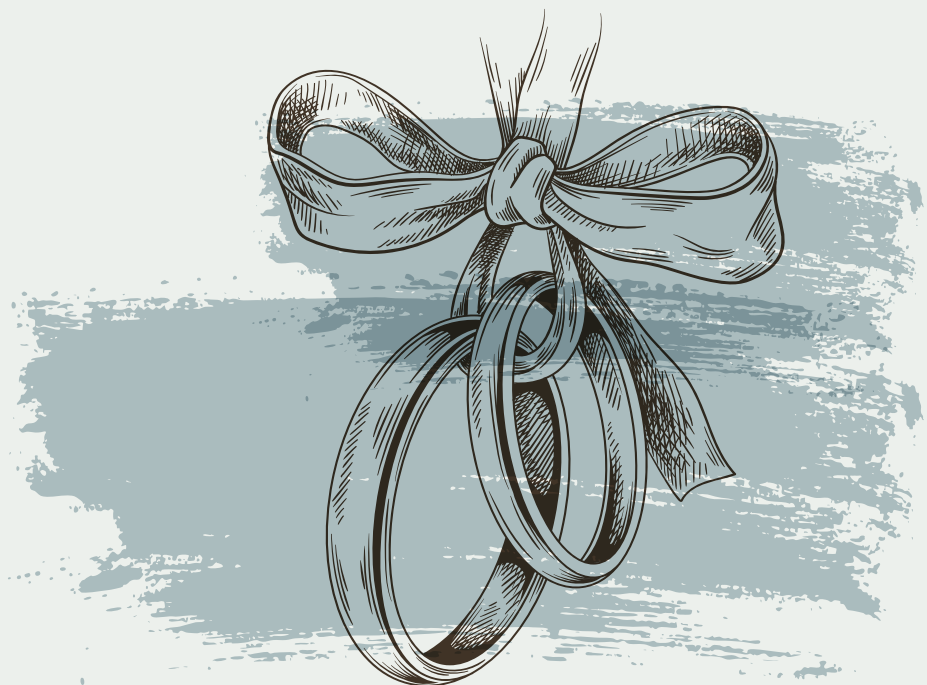
Every woman should endeavour to be a good wife, fearing God in how she treats her husband and his family. The Prophet said: 'If a woman attends to her five obligatory prayers, fasts her month [of Ramadan], maintains her chastity and obeys her husband, she is told: Enter Heaven through any of its gates you choose'.⁽²⁾

3

The hadith urges that we seek to associate with religious people in whatever we do, because their association will benefit us as we learn from their manner, morality and good ways, benefit by their blessing, and fear no evil from their side.

4

The Prophet (peace be upon him) points out the advantage of choosing a goodly wife. He also advises Muslim families to facilitate the marriage of a goodly man, even though he may be poor and belong to a family with low social status. The Prophet says: 'If a man whom you find acceptable in as far as his manners and religion are concerned comes to you with a marriage proposal, accept his proposal. Unless you do, there will be oppression on earth and much corruption'.⁽³⁾



1 Related by Ibn Hibbān in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* anthology, 1232.

2 Related by Ahmad, 1664.

3 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 1084; Ibn Mājah, 1967.

