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In this paperwork we shall discuss the next hadith:

It is reported on the authority of Anas that he said: One of the families of the Ansar had a camel which began to act difficult with them and not let them ride him. They came to the Prophet [upon him blessings and peace] and said: "We have a camel that is being recalcitrant and prevents us from riding him, and we need to water the date-trees and the plantations." The Prophet said to the Companions: Let us go. They went and entered the enclosure where the camel was. The Prophet [upon him blessings and peace] walked towards it and the Ansar exclaimed: "Ya Rasul Allah ! He acts like a [wild] dog and we are afraid for you lest he act violent !" The Prophet replied: "He has no grudge against me." When the camel saw the Prophet it came towards him and fell prostrate in front of him. The Prophet took its forelock and there was nothing more docile than that camel. Then he took it to work. The Companions said: "Ya Rasul Allah ! This is a brute beast and it prostrates to you ! We, who are rational, ought all the more to prostrate to you." He said: "...It is not right that any human being should prostrate to another human being, and if it were right for a human being to prostrate to another human being I would have ordered the women to prostrate to her husband due to the greatness of this right upon her. By Him in whose Hand is my soul, if from his foot to the crown of his head there was a wound pouring forth pus, and she (the wife) came and licked that, then she would still not have fulfilled his right..." [Ahmad 3/159. Its chain of narration is declared to be good by al-Mundhiree in at-Targheeb wat-Tarheeb 3/75]

According to the source above the hadith was classified as sahih by al-Mundhiree in at-Targheeb wat-Tarheeb. al-Albani also accepted the complete hadith as authentic [sahih]. _ Others scholars however disagree with this view. They point out that the last segment of the hadith in question that reads: "...By the One in Whose Hand is my soul ! If the husband were from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head one big wound oozing with pus and matter , and she were to receive him and lick him, she still would not be repaying him his right in full.." is in-authentic [da'ef].

Shu`ayb al-Arna'ût, in his marginal notes on Musnad Ahmad considers the addition about pus to be inauthentic. He writes: "...This phrase is narrated only by Husayn al-Marrûdhî from Khalaf b. Khalîfah. Khalaf was a narrator *who tended to mix up his narrations* before the time of his death ." _

al-Albani included this hadith in Sahih al-Jami. He also includes it in Sahih al-Targhib wal-Tarhib, where he declares it "authentic on account of other narrations" [sahih li-ghayrihi]. This means that its chain of transmission is not authentic on its own, but al-Albani accepted it on account of other narrations. Other scholars however disagree with this view and consider the text "if from his foot to the crown of his head there was a wound pouring forth pus, and she [the wife] came and licked that, then she would still not have fulfilled his right" to be in-authentic. In this paperwork we shall analyze and discuss the text and chains of the other narrations in order to see which view is correct and to arrive at a correct conclusion. See Shaykh Shu`ayb al-Arna'ut's edition of Imam Ahmad's Musnad [20/65]

Shayk G.F. Haddad states:

As for the hadith cited in the question, it is narrated by Imam Ahmad, al-Bazzar, and al-Nasai thus: "One of the families of the Ansar had a camel which began to act difficult with them and not let them ride him. They came to the Prophet [upon him blessings and peace] and said: "We have a camel that is being recalcitrant and prevents us from riding him, and we need to water the date-trees and the plantations." The Prophet said to the Companions: Let us go. They went and entered the enclosure where the camel was. The Prophet [upon him blessings and peace] walked towards it and the Ansar exclaimed: "Ya Rasul Allah ! He acts like a [wild] dog and we are afraid for you lest he act violent !" The Prophet replied: "He has no grudge against me." When the camel saw the Prophet it came towards him and fell prostrate in front of him. The Prophet [upon him blessings and peace] took its forelock and there was nothing more docile than that camel. Then he took it to work. The Companions said: "Ya Rasul Allah ! This is a brute beast and it prostrates to you ! We, who are rational, ought all the more to prostrate to you." He said: "It is not fitting that any human being should prostrate to another human being and if it were, I would order woman to prostrate to her husband due to the greatness of his right over her." The hadith is sahih "to this point" by the criteria of al-Bukhari and Muslim but "not" its continuation: "...By the One in Whose Hand is my soul ! If the husband were from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head one big wound oozing with pus and matter , and she were to receive him and lick him, she still would not be repaying him his right in full..." So the segment, "...if from his foot to the crown of his head there was a wound pouring forth pus etc." is weak or very weak as shown by Shaykh Shu`ayb al-Arna'ut in his marginalia on the Musnad of Imam Ahmad [20:64-66] _

It is reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah that he said: "A Woman came to God's Prophet, may God's blessing and salvation be upon him. She said: "I am so-and-so the daughter of so-and-so". He said: "I know you. What is your problem.". She said: "my problem concerns my devout paternal cousin, so-and-so". He said: "I know him." She said: "He has asked for my hand and informed me what the right of a husband in relation to his wife is. If it is something I am capable of, I shall marry with him". He said: "His right is such that if blood and pus were streaming from his nostrils and she should lick it up with her tongue, she would not [yet] have given him his due. If it were befitting for a human being that he prostrated oneself before [another] human being, I would have ordered the woman that she prostrated herself before her husband when consummates his marriage because of the privilege He has bestowed upon him in relation to her". She said: "By him who has sent you with the truth, I shall not marry as long as the world remaind." [this narration was collected by al-Bazzar and al-Hakim]

Shayk G.F. Haddad comments: "...As for the gharib chain from Abu Hurayra [ra] in al-Bazzar and al-Hakim it is terminally flimsy and very weak [da`if jiddan] due to Sulayman ibn Dawud al-Yamami as stated by Ibn Adi in al- Kamil, al-Dhahabi in Talkhis al-Mustadrak and Hafiz Ibn Hajar in his marginalia on al-Tarhib. Al-Bukhari and Abu Hatim criticized this Sulayman severely and the latter said he did not know a single narration of his to be authentic. As you know the da`if jiddan cannot be used to strengthen other chains and cannot be strengthened by them either..." _

Another version, similar in text to the one reported on the authority of Abu Huraira is reported by Abu Umamah. It's chain if narrators however contains Abd al-Nur ibn Abd Allah who is a "liar" _

See: Livingislam.org

Taken from Sunniforum.com

As mentioned by al-Haythami in: "Majma al-Zawa'id"

Another different narration reads:

It is reported on the authority of Abu Sa`id al-Khudrir that the Prophet said: "...A husband's right upon his wife is such that if there was a mouth-sore in him and she licked him [= and she still kissed him passionately] , she would still be in his debt.." [al-Hakim and Ibn Hibban, see also Sahih al-Jami' 3148]

Shayk G.F. Haddad comments:

The correct grading of the chain for the hadith of Abu Sa`id al-Khudrir [ra] is "gharib, jayyid" _ [while al-Dhahabi's rather radical verdict for the hadith itself is '*munkar*' because of Rabi'a ibn `Uthman al-Madani] as narrated by al-Nasa'i in al-Kubra, Ibn Hibban, al-Hakim and al-Bayhaqi in al-Kubra and its wording [about the woman who asked the question and then swore she would never marry] is minimal. The wording simply states: "...If there was a mouth-sore in him [qurhatun] and she licked him [= 'and she still kissed him passionately'] , she would still be in his debt..." There was no mention of "...from head to feet.." or "...pus and blood.." or "...oozing from his nose.." or "leprosy".

Now, al-Bazzar , Ibn Abi Shayba, and al-Daraqutni in his Sunan narrate it through the same gharib chain [which al-Mundhiri said was good] from Abu Sa`id through Rabi'a but with "*various*" additional wordings adding oozing from the nose, pus, blood and / or swallowing ! This additional wording is most probably a mix-up with some other narration. Indeed, Imam Ahmad also narrates with a hasan to weak chain in the Musnad that it is Mu`adh *himself* who said in answer to a woman in Yemen: "...If you were to return to him [your husband] and find that leprosy had broken through his flesh and perforated his nostrils and found his nostrils oozing with pus and blood then licked and swallowed them up, you would not have repaid your debt to him. You can never repay it !.." This is mawquf. _

As for the wording from Anas in Imam Ahmad's Musnad it is about the story of the rebarbative camel which is definitely authentic and even mutawatir according to Qadi `Iyad. Also mutawatir according to Imam al-Tirmidhi is the segment "Were I to order anyone to prostrate to someone else, I would order wives to prostrate to their husbands due to the debt they owe them" The rest, namely the pus segment, is not authentic with this chain, as pointed out by al-Arna'ut. Rather, it is probably also an extraneous import and concatenation, due perhaps to Khalaf ibn Khalifa who turned senile in his old age since only Husayn al-Marrudhi reports this addition from him while other students of Khalaf narrate the same hadith without it. As for the gharib chain from Abu Hurayra [ra] in al-Bazzar [cf. Kashf al-Astar 2:178 no. 1466] and al-Hakim it is terminally flimsy [wahin] and very weak [da`if jiddan] due to Sulayman ibn Dawud al-Yamami as stated by Ibn Adi in al-Kamil, al-Dhahabi in Talkhis al-Mustadrak and Hafiz Ibn Hajar in his marginalia on al-Targhib. Al-Bukhari and Abu Hatim criticized this Sulayman severely and the latter said he did not know a single narration of his to be authentic. As you know the da`if jiddan cannot be used to strengthen other chains and cannot be strengthened by them either.

There is another unusable chain in al-Tabarani from Abu Umama al-Bahili [ra] since it contains the arch-liar Abd al-Nur ibn Abd Allah as stated by al-Haythami in Majma al-Zawa'id. Al-Harith does not narrate it but rather he mentions that al-A`mash related from Ibrahim al-Nakha'i: "...It used to be said that if a woman licked her husband's leprosy nose she would still not be repaying her debt to him..." _

Jayyid means: good or strong chain of narrators

Mawquf [stopped]: a narration from a companion only, that is, his own statement.

As demonstrated the strong narration does not mention anything of “blood, suppuration, pus or leprosy”. Nor does it use expressions like “...if from his foot to the crown of his head there was a wound pouring forth pus..”etc. In regards to the strong narration Shayk G.F. Haddad wrote:

it's wording is minimum. The wording simply states: "...If there was a mouth-sore in him [qurhatun] and she licked him [= 'and she still kissed him passionately'] , she would still be in his debt..." There was no mention of "...from head to feet.." or "...pus and blood.." or "...oozing from his nose.." or "leprosy" . _

Therefore the next hadith will only need to be explained:

It is reported on the authority of Abu Sa`id al-Khudrir that the Prophet said: "...A husband's right upon his wife is such that if there was a mouth-sore in him and she licked him [= and she still kissed him passionately] , she would still be in his debt.." [al-Hakim and Ibn Hibban, see Sahih al-Jami' 3148]

First of all hadith in question is a hyperbole _ . The statement of the prophet [saw] is a metaphor to highlight the right of the husband. The statement was *not* ment literal, *nor* did the prophet [saw] issue any order here since the text clearly states "...if there was..". _ Now why did the prophet state that even when a wife kissed her husband passionately __ when he has a mouth-sore, she still would have not fulfilled his right ? In other words why is the right of a husband upon his wife so great ? The answer to this question becomes clear when we read in the Holy Qur'an that: "...Men are the protectors and maintainers of women..." [4:34] __ . The Arabic word that we are translating as "protectors and maintainers" is "*qawwamun*" the plural of "*qawwam*". Muhammad Asad states:

qawwam is an intensive form of qa'im ["one who is responsible for" or "takes care of" a thing or a person]. Thus, "qama 'ala 'l-mar'ah" signifies "he undertook the maintenance of the woman" or "he maintained her" [see Lane VIII, 2995]. The grammatical form qawwam is more comprehensive than qa'im, and combines the concepts of physical maintenance and protection as well as of moral responsibility: and it is because of the last-named factor that I have rendered this phrase as "*men shall take full care of women*" _

When Allah says: "...Men are the protectors and maintainers of women..." it means that men are held liable for handling the affairs of women and are responsible for the women under their care. A husband, therefore, has the major responsibility of taking care of his wife, protecting her, defending her honor, and fulfilling her needs regarding her religion and her worldly life. Protection moreover is a general term that covers "physical", "emotional", and other forms of well being. The husband

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Hyperbole: a figure of speech in which exaggeration is used for emphasis or effect, as in "...I could sleep for a year" or "...this book weighs a ton..."

It is clear that a woman is prohibited in Islam from prostrating to her husband. In the same way Islam does not order a woman to kiss her husband passionately when he has a mouth-sore.

Meaning: she would still tongue kiss him ["lick him"].

For a detailed explanation of the verse, see: http://islamic-answers.com/commentary_verse_4_34

Muhammad Asad, "The Message of The Quran" [Gibraltar, 1980], p. 109, Note 42

further bears all economic responsibility. It is his duty to support his family completely even if his wife is rich and despite the fact that she is economically independent. The wife does not have to worry about earning a living. Due to her husband's sacrifices she can take refuge from social and economic pressures. In other words the necessity of having to find a job at all costs and having to bear the economic pressure of life is lifted from the shoulders of women. The husband is further required to provide his wife with enough food, clothing ___ and a reasonable accommodation. ___ In other words Allah has put a lot of burdens on the shoulders of the husband. Islam requires him to make a lot of sacrifices for his wife since he must protect, guide, defend, cloth, feed, accommodate and help her in religious and worldly matters. ___ It is because of these things [the major responsibilities a husband must fulfill towards his wife and the many sacrifices he has to make for her] that the Prophet said: "...A husband's right upon his wife is such that if there was a mouth-sore in him and she licked him [= 'and she still kissed him passionately'], she would still be in his debt.." ___ In other words the Prophet used this hyperbole simply to point out that a wife can never pay back her husband in full because of the many sacrifices he makes for her and the major responsibilities he has to fulfill towards her. ___ In the same way another narration states that a son can never pay back his mother in full because she bore him in weakness and hardship, always took care of him, made many sacrifices for him, nursed him and protected him etc. The narration reads:

It is stated that a man brought his old mother to the Haram [the Holy Mosque in Mecca] . He put her on his back and started circling around the Kaaba. He saw Rasoolullah and asked him: Have I now completed my duty towards my mother ? Rasoolullah answered him: You have not fulfilled the right equal to one breath of your mother. [Commentary of the Quran by Ibn Katheer Volume: 3] ___

The wife has the right to be clothed, fed, and cared for by the husband, in accordance with his means and her style of life. Mu'aawiyah ibn Haydah said: "...I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, what is the right of the wife of any one of us over us ?' He said: 'That you should feed her as you feed yourself and clothe her as you clothe yourself, that you should not say to her 'May Allah make your face ugly !' and that you should not beat her.'" [Abu Dawood 2/244 ; Ibn Maajah 1850]. Wahb said: "...A freed slave of Abd-Allaah ibn Amr said to him: 'I want to spend this month here in Bayt al-Maqdis'. He said, 'Have you left your family anything for their provisions during this month ? '. He said, 'No'. He said, 'Then go back to your family and leave them something for their provisions, for I heard the Messenger of Allah saying, 'It is enough sin for a man to neglect those he is responsible to feed' [Ahmad 2/160 ; Abu Dawood 1692]. In another hadith we read that the Prophet said "...Allah will ask every responsible person about those for whom he was responsible, whether he took care of them or not, and He will even ask a man about the members of his household.." [Saheeh al-Jaami 1774]. Al-Haafiz ibn Hajar said in al-Fath: "...Spending on one's wife is obligatory according to consensus.." [al-Fath 9/498].

Allah says: "...Lodge them [the divorced] according to what you reside out of your means, and do not harass them in order to make life difficult for them..." [At-Talaq 65:6]. Shayk Muhammad al-Jibaly comments on this verse: "...Even though this ayah directly applies to the divorced women during their waiting period, its meaning is more general. It also applies to all those for whom a man is responsible ; most importantly: his wife and children..." [Source: Shayk Muhammad al-Jibaly, "The Fragile Vessels", Al-Kitaab & as-Sunnah Publishing 2005 , p. 38].

In addition we would like to mention that Holy Qur'an in Surah An-Nisa [4:19] also clearly states that the husband is required to render his wife kind treatment and compassion. Shayk Muhammad al-Jibaly comments: "...The wife has the right to be respected and treated kindly. This is not an optional favor from her husband. It is an obligation established through a divine command. What a man cannot control (the heart's inclination) must not affect the way he treats his wife. Allah commands: 'Live with them (your wives) in kindness ; even if you dislike them, perhaps you dislike something in which Allah has placed much good'.." [al-Jibaly, "The Fragile Vessels", Al-Kitaab & as-Sunnah Publishing 2005, p. 39] Reported by al-Hakim and Ibn Hibban, see Sahih al-Jami' 3148

In addition it is therefore important to point out that the hadith in question refers only to a man who fulfills all of his responsibilities as husband. He constantly offers to his wife protection, support and so on. Neglecting any of that would proportionally reduce his rights upon his wife.

Mufti M. Mukarram Ahmed, "Encyclopaedia of Islam", Volume 3: Obligations in Islam [Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd. , 2005], p. 48

And finally, it is important to point out that the hadith in question does not mean or indicate that it is almost impossible or extremely difficult for a woman to gain paradise since she can never pay back her husband in full. ___ The hadith in question should be read and interpreted in the context of general rulings, for affirming one matter does not entail negating another. ___ Allah does not require a wife to fulfill "all" of the rights she owes to her husband. The Holy Qur'an clearly states: "...Allah does not burden any soul with more than it can bear..." ___ To expect or demand that a wife should fulfill all of the rights she owes to her husband would be in contradiction with this quranic verse. Further in another reliable narration it is narrated that the Prophet said:

If a woman prays her five daily prayers, fasts her month of Ramadhan, guards her chastity and obeys her husband __, it will be said to her: Enter Paradise by whichever of the gates of Paradise you wish. ___

This refers to obedience in goodness and reasonable requests. The prophet said: "There is no obedience if it involves disobedience towards Allaah ; obedience is only in that which is right and proper" [Muslim 1840]

Notice how easily paradise can be gained by women provided they only keep Salat, fast the month of Ramadan, guard their chastity and obey their husbands in what is right and proper whereas men have many more responsibilities. Therefore it is incorrect to think or argue that a wife in Islam is required to fulfill all of the rights she owes to her husband in order to gain paradise. Such a view is clearly rejected and refuted by the words of Allah Almighty in the Holy Quran [v. 2:286] and the authentic sayings of our beloved Prophet Muhammad [see: Ahmad 1664]. Another verse in the Holy Qur'an further states that women have rights similar to the rights against them. The verse reads: "...And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable; but men have a degree [daraja] over them..." [v. 2:228]. In this passage the Holy Qur'an not only creates a belief about the rights of women but it also clearly declares that they are equal to men in matters of rights. The second part this passage further states, "but men have a degree over them". This refers to a heightened duty [extra degree of responsibility] as pointed out by al-Tabari in his Tafsir. ___ Moreover it is reported that a man called Bishr ibn al-Harth, who lived in the early period of Islam, refused to marry for fear of not being able to live up to this verse, see:

Bishr b. al-Harith said, "Ahmad b. Hanbal was preferred over me on three accounts: for seeking what is lawful for himself and others, while I seek it for myself only; for his ability to get married in contrast to my inability; and for being appointed an imam for the common people."As for Bishr, when it was said to him, "People have been talking about you because you have refrained from marriage, saying, 'He has forsaken the sunna,'" He replied, "Tell them that religious duties preoccupy him, leaving no time for the sunna." He was blamed on another occasion, so he replied, "Nothing keeps me from marrying except the words of the Almighty [Qur'an 2:228]: 'And they [the women] have rights similar to those [of men] over them in equity.' That was mentioned to Ahmad, who declared, "And where is the like of Bishr ?" ___

Or in other words: "fulfill his right in full"

Muslims should take the principle of Ahl as sunnah wal jama'ah that when we derive an understanding from the texts we look at all of the texts.

Al-Baqara [2:286].

Ahmad 1664 ; classed as hasan [good] by al-Albaani because of another report in Saheeh al-Targheeb, as stated by al-Arna'oot in Takhreej al-Musnad.

Al-Tabari, Jami'al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, vol. 2, p. 275

Madelain Farah , "Marriage and Sexuality in Islam: A Translation of Al-Ghazali's Book on the Etiquette of Marriage from the Ihya" [University of Utah Press, 1984] , p. 51

Al-Tabari further argued that the degree referred to in the verse [v. 2:228] exhorts men to treat their wives better than they expect to be treated; in other words, the husband should not require his wife to fulfill all of her obligations to him, but he should still fulfill all of his obligations to her. ___

When we take a look at all the texts related to the topic under discussion it becomes clear that Allah has put a lot of heavy burdens on the shoulders of the husband. Islam requires him to make a lot of sacrifices for his wife since he must protect, guide, defend, cloth, feed, accommodate and help her in religious and worldly matters. It is because of these things [the major responsibilities a husband must fulfill towards his wife and the many sacrifices he has to make for her as long as he lives] that the Prophet said: "...A husband's right upon his wife is such that if there was a mouth-sore in him and she licked him [= 'and she still kissed him passionately'], she would still be in his debt." ___ In other words the Prophet used this hyperbole simply to point out that a wife can never pay back her husband in full because of the many sacrifices he makes for her and the major responsibilities he has to fulfill towards her. ___ The greatness of a husband's right upon his wife is counter balanced by the fact that the husband has an extra "degree of responsibility" over his wife [v. 2:228]. Imam al-Tabari pointed out that this extra degree of responsibility means that a husband should not require his wife to fulfill all of her obligations to him, but he should still fulfill all of his obligations to her. ___ In other words the marital rights of men and women are equally balanced in the Qur'an and the authentic sunnah of our Prophet. There is complete justice here. The hadith [hyperbole] discussed in this commentary does clearly "not" discriminate against women.

M.H. Sherif, "The Muslim Woman Between the Truth of Sharia and the Fallacy of Falsification" [Dar al-Marifa al-Jamiyya, 1987], p. 141

Reported by al-Hakim and Ibn Hibban

For similar reasons we read in another hadith that a son can never pay back his mother in full because of the many sacrifices she made for him.

To expect that a wife should fulfill all of the rights she owes to her husband would moreover be in contradiction with the next verse: "Allah does not burden any soul with more than it can bear" [v. 2:286]