



Husbands be not harsh to your wives

Written by Kevin Abdullah Kareem
islamic-answers.com

It is narrated that Umar ibn al-Khattaab said to the Prophet:

"....We Quraysh used to control our women, but when we came to the Ansaar we found that they were a people who were controlled by their women. So our women started to adopt the ways of the Ansaari women. I got angry with my wife and she argued with me and I did not like her arguing with me. She said, "Why do you object to me arguing with you ? By Allaah, the wives of the Prophet argue with him....." [1](#)

Ibn Hajar said [discussing the lessons to be learned from this hadeeth] :

".....This indicates that being harsh with women is something blameworthy, because the Prophet [peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him] adopted the way of the Ansaar with their women and forsook the way of his.people...." [2](#)

The Quraysh used to be harsh towards their wives, nor did they give their women much rights or freedom. The Prophet did "not" approve of this behaviour and adopted the way of the Ansaar, in which women were treated kindly and enjoyed more liberty. Allah, the Most Kind, loves kindness and rewards generously for it. Whenever kindness is employed in a situation, it improves and helps it - contrary to harshness. Aishah [ra] reported that Allah's Messenger [saaw] said to her

".....O Aishah ! Indeed, Allah is Kind, and loves kindness in all affairs. He grants for kindness things that he would not grant for harshness or any other thing. O Aisha ! Employ taqwa of Allah and kindness, for indeed, kindness was never in a thing but it adorned it, and never was it removed from a thing but it disgraced it....." [3](#)

An-Nawawi comments on the above hadith: "...this hadeeth points to the virtue of kindness and encourages us to adopt this attitude; and it condemns harshness. Kindness is the cause of all goodness.." [4](#)

1: Narrated by al-Bukhaari 4895 ; Muslim 1479.

2: Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, " *Fath al-Baari*" , 9 / 291

3: Sahih ul-Jami no. 7920, 7921, and 7927

4: See Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah, 17 / 66

How can a husband treat his wife harsh when Allah condemns harshness ? Rendering kindness to the wife is a sign of good nature and righteousness. Abu Hurayrah reported that the Prophet said

“...The believers who are most complete in faith are those of best manners; and the best among them are those who are best [in treatment] to their women....” [5](#)

Umar Ibn Khattab took the Prophet's words and orders very seriously. He completely changed his attitude towards women. Later on in his life he also adopted the way of the Ansar [in the footsteps of our beloved Prophet Muhammad]. Afzular Rahman in his popular book "Role of Muslim Women in Society" narrates us the next incident from his life:

"...Umar ibn al-Khattab said that a man came to his house to complain about his wife. On reaching the door of his house, he hears Umar's wife shouting at him and reviling him. Seeing this, he was about to go back, thinking that Umar himself was in the same position and, therefore, could hardly suggest any solution for his problem. Umar saw the man turn back, so he called him and enquired about the purpose of his visit. He said that he had come with a complaint against his wife, but turned back on seeing the Caliph in the same position. Umar told him that he tolerated the excesses of his wife for she had certain rights against him. He said, "Is it not true that she prepares food for me, washes clothes for me and suckles my children, thus saving me the expense of employing a cook, a washerman and a nurse, though she is not legally obliged in any way to do any of these things ? Besides, I enjoy peace of mind because of her and am kept away from indecent acts on account of her. I therefore tolerate all her excesses on account of these benefits. It is right that you should also adopt the same attitude..." [6](#)

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. Allah commands in the Quran:

".....Live with them [your wives] **in kindness** ; even if you dislike them, perhaps you dislike something in which Allah has placed much good...." [Qur'an 4:19].

Hadith on the Prophet's Love for the Ansar:

"...there is good in all the families [houses] of the Ansar .." [7](#)

In another hadith we read that the Prophet [peace and blessings be upon him] saw the women and children of the Ansar coming forward. The Prophet stood up and said thrice:

"....By Allah ! You are from the most beloved people to me..." [8](#)

[5:](#) Al-Tirmidhi 1 / 217 , Verified to be authentic by al-Albani, Al-Silsilat al-Saheehah no. 284

[6:](#) Afzular Rahman , "Role of Muslim Women in Society" , p. 149

[7:](#) Bukhari, volume 5, book 58, nr. 133

[8:](#) Bukhari, volume 5, book 58, nr. 129