

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

SUNNAH OF HUMOUR

O Allah (The Exalted), Lord of the Haram, Lord of the Sanctuary, Lord of the Sacred House, and Lord of the Corner and Station of Abraham (these are all places connected with pilgrimage of Mecca). Send peace from us to our liege-lord and master Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).

When the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) used humour, it would always be the truth. He would call someone by saying, *“O you with the two ears.”* Also pointing out with the fact that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) when joking would not offend anybody. Let us learn more about the humour of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reports that, *“The companions asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) you joke with us?’ The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied, ‘Yes, I do not say but the truth.’”*ⁱ

Islam does not forbid a person from joking, however, we have to make sure we do not joke all the time. When joking always speak the truth and do not hurt anybody’s feelings. The pious people would not joke or laugh due to their worship and fear of Allah (The Exalted), Imam-e-Azam Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy upon him) laughed once in his lifetime and he regretted even that one moment. *Allahu Akbar!*

HUMOUR WITH A COMPANION

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) had a friend called Zahir (may Allah be pleased with him) who would often send him presents. One day Zahir (may Allah be pleased with him) was selling his goods in the market. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) came from behind and embracing him by humour calling out, *“Is they’re anybody to purchase this slave?”* Zahir (may Allah be pleased with him) said, *“Let me go, Who is this?”* When he turned round he recognised the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and said, *“O Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)! Whoever will purchase a slave like me, will be purchasing worthless goods!”* The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, *“No, you are not defective in the sight of Allah (The Exalted), but more valuable.”*ⁱⁱ *Subhanallah!*

CHEERFUL

‘Abd-Allah Ibn Haarith (may Allah be pleased with him) said that, *“I have not seen anyone who makes a person more cheerful than the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).”* The reason being that the cheerful nature of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was more of a source of happiness than sadness.ⁱⁱⁱ *Subhanallah!*

TWO EARED ONE

Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) relates that, *“The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) once told him jokingly, ‘Ya dhal udhu-nayn’ (O two eared one).”*^{iv}

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would address people with this type of humour that didn’t offend anyone. However, one should also be careful even if this type of humour is used it could also offend a person with big ears. When using humour, think before as humour when not used at the right moment could have an unexpected reaction.

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) says that, *“The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would associate with us and joke. I had a younger brother. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said to him, ‘Aba Umayr, what did the Nughayr do?’”*^v

Nughayr is a type of bird. The Scholars have translated it as a white tailed red Pigeon. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) addressed this child by his kuniyyat (patronymic name). The animal had died, as a reason the child became grieved. In order to cheer him up the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) asked him, ‘What did the Nughayr do?’ or ‘What happened to the Nughayr?’ The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) knew that the animal had died.

THE BABY OF A CAMEL

Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) relates that a person requested to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) that he be given a conveyance. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied, *"The baby of a camel shall be given to you."* The person said, *"What shall I do with the baby of a camel O Messenger of Allah?" (I want one for a conveyance).*

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied, *"Every camel is the baby of a camel."*^{vi}

The person thought that he would be given a baby camel unfit for riding. In this hadith, besides joking it also points to the fact that a person should listen carefully and understand what the other person is saying.

WILL I ENTER PARADISE?

Hasan Basri (may Allah be pleased with him) says that an old woman came to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and made a request, *"O Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) make supplication that Allah (The Exalted) grants me entrance into Jannah."*

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied, *"O Mother, an old woman cannot enter Jannah."* That woman started crying and began to leave. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, *"Say to the woman that one will not enter in a state of old age, but Allah (The Exalted) will make all the women of Jannah young virgins."*^{vii}

LAUGHING THE SUNNAH WAY

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) never laughed aloud and those who did were told 'if you remembered your death you would not laugh like this.' The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) never made a noise when laughing but his beautiful white teeth and a bright light appeared upon his blessed face.

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said that, "I came to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) with a dish made with flour and milk that I had cooked for him, and told Sawdah (may Allah be pleased with her) as the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was sitting between me and her 'Eat'. She refused, so I said, 'Either you eat, or I will fill your face!' She still refused, so I put my hand in the dish and daubed her face with it. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) laughed, put some in her hand, and told her: 'Do the same to her!'"

In another report: *"He lowered his knee (moved out of the way) so that she could get her own back on me, then she took some from the plate and wiped my face with it, and the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) smiled."*^{viii}

JOKING HAS A LIMIT

Someone told Sufyan Ibn Uyaynah¹ (may Allah have mercy upon him) *"Joking is also a calamity."* He replied, *"It is a Sunnah, only for those who know its bounds and also know how to joke in the appropriate manner."*^{ix}

Those who have a habit of joking should take a lesson from this. People joke and could indirectly hurt another person although they may laugh it off and not show it.

EXCESSIVE LAUGHTER KILLS THE HEART

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates from the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) that, *"Do not laugh too much, for verily excessive laughter kills the heart."*^x

REMEMBER DEATH

Once the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) came to the Mosque for Salaah, where he noticed some people laughing. He remarked: "If you remembered your death, I would not see you like this. Think of your death often, not a single day passes when the grave does not call out *'I am a place of dust; I am a place of worms'*. When a Mu'min (believer) is laid in the grave, it says; *'Welcome to you. It is good of you to have come into me. Of all the people walking on the earth, I like you most. Now you have come into me, you will see how I entertain you'*. It then expands as far as the occupant can see. A door from Paradise is opened for him in the grave and, through this door; he receives the freshness and fragrance of Paradise. However, when an evil person is laid in the grave it says; *'No word of welcome for you. Of all the people walking on earth, I dislike you the most. Now that you have been made over to me, you will see how*

¹ Who was a great Muhaddith.

I treat you! 'It then closes upon him so much that his rib of one side is squeezed into the rib of the other. As many as seventy serpents are then set upon him, to hurt him until the day of resurrection. These serpents are so venomous that if one of them happened to spurt its venom upon the earth, not a single blade of grass would ever grow.' The grave is therefore either a garden of Paradise or a pit of Hell. *Allahu Akbar!*

Bakr Ibn 'Abd-Allah (may Allah be pleased with him) states that, "*The companions of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would throw melon-rinds at one another, but when the matter was serious, they were the only true men.*"^{xi}

Meaning when they joked they joked within the bounds but were serious men.

SMILING

'Abd-Allah Ibn Haarith (may Allah be pleased with him) reports that, "*I did not see anyone who smiled more than the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).*"^{xii}

'Abd-Allah Ibn Haarith (may Allah be pleased with him) relates that, "*The laugh of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was but a smile.*"^{xiii}

Jabir Ibn 'Abd-Allah (may Allah be pleased with him) says that, "*After I accepted Islam, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) never prohibited me from attending his assemblies. Whenever he saw me he smiled.*"^{xiv}

Supplication when you see a Muslim smiling

'Ad-Hakallahu Sinnaka'

'May Allah (The Exalted) keep you smiling'^{xv}

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) states that, "*Do not think little of any good deed, even if it is merely meeting your brother with a cheerful countenance.*"^{xvi}

Remember this does not mean to laugh aloud as this is disliked (Makrooh).^{xvii}

Manners of using humour

1. Do not joke at all times.
2. Joke with the intention that it is the Sunnah.
3. Do not offend anyone whilst joking.
4. Do not remark on someone's physical appearance (i.e. height) as this falls in the category of backbiting. Be it in front or behind one's back.
5. Always remember that there is a limit to humour.
6. It occurs in a tradition that smiling upon seeing a Muslim is also Sadaqah (charity).^{xviii}
7. Always tell the truth. Once a person was eating with his left hand, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said to eat with his right. Jokingly he said that my right hand is disabled, from that day onwards he was unable to use his right hand.^{xix}

May Allah (The Exalted) give us all the ability to joke according to the Sunnah and take life seriously too, Ameen.

ⁱ Bukhari & Shamail-e-Tirmidhi, Chapter on humour, p. 225

ⁱⁱ Shamail-e-Tirmidhi, Chapter on humour, p. 226

ⁱⁱⁱ ibid

^{iv} ibid p. 224

^v ibid p. 224

^{vi} ibid

^{vii} ibid p. 227

^{viii} Kanz al-'Ummal Vol: 7, p393 , Al-Haythami, Vol: 4, p. 316 & al-Muntakhab, Vol: 4, p. 393

^{ix} Shamail-e-Tirmidhi

^x Ibn Majah

^{xi} Bukhari

^{xii} Shamail-e-Tirmidhi, , Chapter on laughing, p. 216

^{xiii} ibid

^{xiv} ibid p. 217

^{xv} Bukhari in Manners.

^{xvi} Muslim

^{xvii} Khazeenah Rahmah, p. 34

^{xviii} Ahmad

^{xix} Muslim