

الأربعين في ضحك الصادق الأمين

The Forty Hadiths

*On the Laughter of the Truthful
and Trustworthy One*

Compiled by

Muhammad ibn Shams al-Din

Translated by

Taim Otah Bashi

Introduction

In the name of Allah. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah.

One of the things that brings joy to believers is hearing about the smile of the one they love most. He is the comfort of their eyes, their guide by Allah's permission, and their intercessor by Allah's mercy.^[T1]

I have therefore gathered this collection, asking my Generous Lord to unite us with His trustworthy Messenger and to bring joy to our eyes by allowing us to see him smiling at us, peace and blessings be upon him.

Translator's note on divine attributes

Expressions about Allah's attributes are translated as they appear in the Arabic source. They are accepted without comparing Allah to His creation and without trying to describe how they are.

Muhammad ibn Shams al-Din

1

His face lit up with happiness

Narrated by Ka'b ibn Malik

When I greeted the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, his face lit up with happiness. Whenever the Messenger of Allah was pleased, his face would brighten until it looked like a piece of the moon. We knew he was pleased by this.^[1]

[T1] Translator's note: An intercessor is someone who speaks to Allah on another person's behalf, with Allah's permission.

[1] Ahmad (15789); al-Bukhari (3556); Muslim (2769, report 53); al-Hakim (4193).

2 His laughter was a smile

Narrated by Abd Allah ibn al-Harith ibn Jaz'

The laughter of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, was no more than a smile.^{[T2][2]}

3 The man who broke his fast and could not make up for it

Narrated by Abu Hurayrah

While we were sitting with the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, a man came and said, "Messenger of Allah, I am ruined." He asked, "What happened?" The man said, "I had intercourse with my wife while I was fasting."

The Messenger of Allah asked, "Can you find a slave to set free?" He said, "No." He asked, "Can you fast for two months in a row?" He said, "No." He asked, "Can you feed sixty poor people?" He said, "No."

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, remained silent. While we were waiting, a large basket of dates was brought to him. He asked, "Where is the man who asked the question?" The man said, "Here I am." He said, "Take this and give it in charity."

The man said, "To someone poorer than me, Messenger of Allah? By Allah, between the two lava fields of Madinah there is no family poorer than mine." The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, laughed until his canine teeth showed. He then said, "Feed it to your family."^{[T3][3]}

[T2] Translator's note: This means that the Prophet did not laugh loudly or wildly in a way that took away from his dignity. His smile could still become broad enough for his back teeth to show, as later reports state.

[2] Al-Tirmidhi (3642).

[T3] Translator's note: These were the three ways to make up for intercourse during a Ramadan fast. "The two lava fields" means the two areas of dark volcanic rock on either side of Madinah. The man meant that no family in the city was poorer than his.

[3] Ahmad (7290); al-Bukhari (1834); Muslim (1111, report 81); Abu Dawud (2390); al-Tirmidhi (724); Ibn Khuzaymah (1944); Ibn Hibban (1093).

4

The healing recitation and the flock of sheep

Narrated by Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri

A group of the Prophet's Companions came to an Arab settlement, but the people did not welcome them as guests. While they were there, the chief was bitten by a poisonous creature. The people asked, "Do you have any medicine, or anyone who can recite something for healing?"

The Companions replied, "You did not welcome us as guests, so we will not help unless you give us something in return." The people agreed to give them a flock of sheep. One of the Companions recited the Opening Chapter of the Qur'an, gathered his saliva, and spat or blew lightly upon the chief. The chief recovered, and the people brought the sheep.

The Companions said, "We will not take them until we ask the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him." When they asked him, he **laughed** and said, "How did you know that this chapter can be used for healing? Take the sheep, and give me a share."^{[T4][4]}

[T4] Translator's note: By asking for a share, the Prophet showed that accepting the agreed payment was allowed.

[4] Ahmad (10985); al-Bukhari (5404).

5

The farmer in Paradise

Narrated by Abu Hurayrah

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was speaking one day while a Bedouin was present. He said:

A man from the people of Paradise will ask his Lord for permission to farm. Allah will say, "Do you not already have everything you want?" He will say, "Yes, but I love farming."

He will scatter the seed, and in the blink of an eye the plants will grow, ripen, and be harvested. The crop will be like mountains. Allah will say, "Here you are, son of Adam. Nothing ever satisfies you."

The Bedouin said, "By Allah, that man must be either a Qurashi or an Ansari, because they are farmers. We are not farmers." The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, laughed.^[5]

[5] Ahmad (10642); al-Bukhari (2221).

6

Jabir's dates and his father's debt

Narrated by Jabir ibn Abd Allah

My father died while owing money. I offered his creditors the dates from his orchard, but they refused because they did not think the crop would cover the debt.

I went to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and told him what had happened. He said, "When you have harvested the dates and laid them out to dry, tell the Messenger of Allah."

He came with Abu Bakr and Umar, sat beside the dates, and asked Allah to bless them. He then said, "Call your father's creditors and pay them." I paid everyone to whom my father owed money. Thirteen wasqs of dates remained: seven of the ajwah variety and six of another variety, or six ajwah and seven of the other variety.^[T5]

I attended the sunset prayer with the Messenger of Allah and told him what had happened. He laughed and said, "Go to Abu Bakr and Umar and tell them." They said, "We knew this would happen when the Messenger of Allah did what he did."^[6]

[T5] Translator's note: A wasq was a large traditional measure. Thirteen wasqs may have been around 2 tonnes of dates, roughly the yearly crop of 30 date palms.

[6] Al-Bukhari (2562); al-Nasa'i (3640); Ibn Hibban (3475).

7 Umm Haram and the people who sailed the sea

Narrated by Anas ibn Malik, reporting from Umm Haram

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, rested in her house one day. He woke up laughing. She asked, “Messenger of Allah, what made you laugh?”

He said, “I was amazed at people from my nation sailing on the sea like kings seated on thrones.” She said, “Messenger of Allah, ask Allah to make me one of them.” He said, “You are among them.”

He slept again and woke up laughing. He repeated the same words two or three times. She said, “Messenger of Allah, ask Allah to make me one of them.” He said, “You are among the first of them.”

Umm Haram later married Ubadah ibn al-Samit, who took her with him on a military journey. On their return, an animal was brought for her to ride. She fell from it and broke her neck.^[7]

8 The Bedouin who pulled the Prophet's cloak

Narrated by Anas ibn Malik

I was walking with the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. He was wearing a cloak from Najran with a thick, rough edge. A Bedouin caught up with him and pulled the cloak so hard that I saw its edge leave a mark on the side of the Prophet's shoulder.

The man said, “Order that I be given some of the wealth of Allah that you have.” The Prophet turned towards him, laughed, and ordered that he be given something.^{[76][8]}

[7] Ahmad (13790); al-Bukhari (2722); al-Tirmidhi (2253); al-Nasa'i (3171).

[76] Translator's note: Here “Bedouin” means a person who lived in the desert. Some desert-dwellers had little access to teachers of good manners, so they could sometimes speak or act roughly. This does not describe every Bedouin. The report also shows the Prophet's patience and forgiving nature: although the man pulled his cloak hard and spoke bluntly, the Prophet laughed and ordered that he be given something.

[8] Ahmad (12548); al-Tirmidhi (677); al-Bukhari (2980); Muslim (1057, report 128).

9 The Prophet always smiled at Jarir

Narrated by Jarir ibn Abd Allah

From the time I accepted Islam, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, never turned me away when I asked to see him. Whenever he saw me, he **smiled at me**.^[9]

10 Umar and the Qurashi women

Narrated by Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas

Umar asked permission to see the Prophet while some Qurashi women were speaking with the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. They were making many requests of him and raising their voices above his. When Umar asked permission, they hurried behind the curtain.

The Messenger of Allah let him in while he **was laughing**. Umar said, "May Allah keep you smiling, Messenger of Allah." He said, "I was surprised by these women who were with me. As soon as they heard your voice, they rushed behind the curtain."

Umar said, "Messenger of Allah, it is more fitting that they should fear you." He then said to the women, "You are your own enemies! Do you fear me but not the Messenger of Allah?" They replied, "Yes. You are harsher and stricter than the Messenger of Allah."^[7]

The Messenger of Allah said, "By the One in whose hand is my soul, whenever Satan meets you on a path, he takes a different path."^[10]

[9] Ahmad (19179); al-Bukhari (2871); Muslim (2475, report 135); Ibn Majah (159); al-Tirmidhi (3821).

[7] Translator's note: "Harsher and stricter" is a comparison. The women were not saying that the Prophet was harsh.

[10] Ahmad (1581); al-Bukhari (3480); Muslim (2397, report 22).

11 The Jewish scholar's description

Narrated by Abd Allah ibn Masud

A learned Jewish man came to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, and said, "Muhammad, we find that Allah will place the heavens on one finger, the earths on one finger, the trees on one finger, the water and soil on one finger, and all other created beings on one finger. He will then say, 'I am the King.'"

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, laughed until his back teeth showed, confirming what the scholar had said. The Messenger of Allah then recited: "They did not recognise Allah as He deserves to be recognised. The whole earth will be in His grasp on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens will be folded in His right hand. Glory be to Him, and He is far above what they associate with Him." [al-Zumar 39:67]^[11]

[11] Ahmad (4087); al-Bukhari (4533); Muslim (2786, report 19); al-Tirmidhi (3238); Ibn Hibban (4707).

12 The food served to the people of Paradise

Narrated by Abu Sa'id al-Khudri

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

On the Day of Resurrection, the earth will become one loaf of bread. Allah, the Almighty, will turn it in His hand as one of you turns a loaf over in his hands while travelling. It will be served to the people of Paradise.

[T8]

A Jewish man came and said, "May the Most Compassionate bless you, Abu al-Qasim. Shall I tell you what the people of Paradise will be served on the Day of Resurrection?" He said, "Yes." The man said, "The earth will become one loaf," just as the Prophet had said.

The Prophet looked towards us and laughed until his back teeth showed. He then said, "Shall I tell you what will be served with it? The food served with the bread will be balam and nun." They asked, "What are those?" He said, "An ox and a fish. Seventy thousand people will eat from the small extra part of their livers."^[12]

[T8] Translator's note: Abu al-Qasim was a name used for the Prophet.

[12] Al-Bukhari (6155); Muslim (2792, report 30).

13 The last person to enter Paradise

Narrated by Abd Allah ibn Masud

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

The last person to enter Paradise will walk for a while, fall on his face for a while, and be scorched by the Fire for a while. When he has passed it, he will turn towards it and say, "Blessed is the One who saved me from you. Allah has given me something He gave to no one among the first or the last."

A tree will be raised for him. He will say, "My Lord, bring me near this tree so that I can rest in its shade and drink from its water." Allah will say, "Son of Adam, perhaps if I give you this, you will ask Me for something else." He will say, "No, my Lord," and promise not to ask for anything else. His Lord will excuse him, because He knows that the man cannot resist what he sees. Allah will bring him near the tree, and he will rest in its shade and drink from its water.

A second tree, more beautiful than the first, will be raised for him. He will say, "My Lord, bring me near this tree so that I can drink from its water and rest in its shade. I will ask You for nothing else." Allah will say, "Son of Adam, did you not promise that you would ask Me for nothing else? Perhaps if I bring you near it, you will ask Me for more." He will promise not to ask for anything else. His Lord will excuse him, because He knows that the man cannot resist what he sees. Allah will bring him near it, and he will rest in its shade and drink from its water.

A third tree, more beautiful than the first two, will be raised at the gate of Paradise. He will say, "My Lord, bring me near this tree so that I can rest in its shade and drink from its water. I will ask You for nothing else." Allah will say, "Son of Adam, did you not promise that you would ask Me for nothing else?" He will say, "Yes, my Lord. Only this, and I will ask You for nothing else." His Lord will excuse him, because He knows that the man cannot resist what he sees. Allah will bring him near it.

When he is brought near, he will hear the people of Paradise and say, “My Lord, let me enter it.” Allah will say, “Son of Adam, what will make you stop asking Me? Would you be satisfied if I gave you the world and another world like it?” He will say, “My Lord, are You mocking me when You are the Lord of all worlds?”

Ibn Masud laughed and said, “Will you not ask me why I am laughing?” They asked, “Why are you laughing?” He said, “This is how the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, laughed.” They asked him, “Why are you laughing, Messenger of Allah?”

He said, “Because the Lord of all worlds laughs when the man says, ‘Are You mocking me when You are the Lord of all worlds?’ Allah will say, ‘I am not mocking you. I can do whatever I wish.’”^[13]

14

Salamah's offer to pursue the enemy

Narrated by Salamah ibn al-Akwa'

I said to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, “Messenger of Allah, allow me to choose one hundred of your Companions. I will pursue the enemy in the darkness and leave no one alive to carry news.”

He asked, “Would you really do that, Salamah?” I replied, “Yes, by the One who has honoured your face.” The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, laughed until I could see his back teeth in the firelight. This happened within a longer report.^[14]

[13] Ahmad (3899); Muslim (187, report 310); a similar report is found in al-Bukhari (6204).

[14] Ahmad (16539); Ibn Hibban (3508).

15 The Prophet's wives ask for more money

Narrated by Jabir ibn Abd Allah

Abu Bakr came and asked permission to see the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. He found people sitting at the door, but none had been allowed in. Abu Bakr was given permission and entered. Umar then came, asked permission, and entered.

They found the Prophet sitting with his wives around him. He was silent and upset. Abu Bakr thought, "I will say something to make the Prophet laugh." He said, "Messenger of Allah, if you had seen the daughter of Kharijah asking me for spending money! I stood up and struck her on the neck."

The Messenger of Allah laughed and said, "These women around me, as you can see, are asking me for spending money." Abu Bakr went to strike or push A'ishah, and Umar went to strike or push Hafsah. Each said to his daughter, "Do you ask the Messenger of Allah for something he does not have?" The women said, "By Allah, we will never again ask the Messenger of Allah for something he does not have."^[T9]

The Prophet then stayed apart from them for a month, or twenty-nine days, until these verses were revealed:

O Prophet, say to your wives: If you want the life of this world and its beauty, then come: I will provide for you and let you go in a good way. But if you want Allah, His Messenger, and the home of the Hereafter, then Allah has prepared a great reward for those among you who do good. [al-Ahzab 33:28-29]

He began with A'ishah and said, "A'ishah, I want to put a matter before you. I would prefer that you do not hurry until you have spoken to your parents." She asked, "What is it, Messenger of Allah?" He recited the verses to her.

She said, "Am I to speak to my parents about choosing you, Messenger of Allah? No. I choose Allah, His Messenger, and the home of the Hereafter. I ask you not to tell your other wives what I have said."

[T9] Translator's note: The Arabic expression is explained as a light push or cuff with the closed hand towards the chest or neck, not a severe blow.

He replied, “Any one of them who asks me will be told. Allah did not send me to cause hardship or make things difficult for people. He sent me as a teacher who makes things easy.”^[15]

16 Umm Sulaym's dagger

Narrated by Anas ibn Malik

Umm Sulaym carried a dagger on the day of Hunayn. Abu Talhah saw her and said, “Messenger of Allah, Umm Sulaym has a dagger.” The Messenger of Allah asked her, “What is this dagger for?”

She replied, “I brought it so that, if any of the polytheists comes near me, I can cut open his belly.” The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, began to laugh.^[16]

17 The dream of a severed head

Narrated by Jabir ibn Abd Allah

A man came to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and said, “Messenger of Allah, in a dream I saw my head cut off.” The Prophet laughed and said, “When Satan plays tricks on one of you in a dream, he should not tell people about it.”^[17]

[15] Ahmad (14515); Muslim (1478, report 29).

[16] Ahmad (13042); Muslim (1809, report 134).

[17] Muslim (2268, report 16).

18 Dear little Anas and the unfinished task

Narrated by Anas ibn Malik

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, had the best character of all people. One day he sent me to do something. I said, "By Allah, I will not go," although inside I intended to go and do what the Prophet of Allah had told me to do.

I went out and passed some boys playing in the market. Suddenly, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, took hold of the back of my neck from behind. I looked at him and he was laughing. He said, "Dear little Anas, did you go where I told you?" I said, "Yes, Messenger of Allah. I am going now."^[T10]

By Allah, I served him for nine years, and I never heard him say about something I did, "Why did you do that?" or about something I left undone, "Why did you not do that?"^[18]

19 Sa'd's arrow at Uhud

Narrated by Umar ibn Sa'd, reporting from his father, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas

On the day of Uhud, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said to Sa'd, "Shoot. May my father and mother be sacrificed for you."^[T11]

Sa'd said: A man from the enemy had been causing serious harm to the Muslims. I drew an arrow without an arrowhead and shot him. It struck his side, and he fell so that his private parts became exposed. The Messenger of Allah laughed until I could see his back teeth.^{[T12][19]}

^[T10] Translator's note: The meeting was playful and affectionate. Unays is an affectionate form of Anas, which is why it is translated as "dear little Anas."

^[18] Muslim (2310, report 54); Abu Dawud (4773).

^[T11] Translator's note: "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you" is an Arabic expression of exceptional encouragement and honour. It is not a literal instruction to sacrifice one's parents.

^[T12] Translator's note: The man was an enemy fighter who had been seriously harming the Muslims. The laughter concerned his sudden fall and humiliation in battle.

^[19] Muslim (2412, report 42).

20 The servant who argues with his Lord

Narrated by Anas ibn Malik

We were with the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, when he laughed and asked, “Do you know what made me laugh?” We said, “Allah and His Messenger know best.”

He said:

What made me laugh was the way the servant argued with his Lord. He will say, “My Lord, did You not promise to protect me from injustice?” Allah will say, “Yes.” The servant will say, “Then I will accept no witness against myself except one from myself.” Allah will say, “Today you are enough as a witness against yourself, and the noble recording angels are enough as witnesses.”

His mouth will be sealed, and his limbs will be told, “Speak.” They will speak about his deeds. He will then be allowed to answer them and will say, “Away with you! May you be ruined! I was arguing only to protect you.”^[20]

[20] Muslim (2969, report 17); Ibn Hibban (5097).

21 Uthman's ablution

Narrated by Uthman ibn Affan

Uthman ibn Affan called for water. He performed ablution: he rinsed his mouth and nose, washed his face three times, washed each arm three times, and wiped his head and the tops of his feet. He then **laughed** and said to his companions, "Will you not ask what made me laugh?"

They asked, "What made you laugh, Commander of the Believers?"

He said: "I saw the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, call for water near this very place. He performed ablution as I have done, then **laughed** and said, 'Will you not ask what made me laugh?' They asked, 'What made you laugh, Messenger of Allah?'"

"He said, 'When a servant calls for water for ablution and washes his face, Allah removes every sin he committed with his face. When he washes his arms, the same happens. When he wipes his head, the same happens. When he wipes his feet, the same happens.'" ^[21]

[21] Ahmad (415).

22 Ali's words when mounting an animal

Narrated by Ali ibn Rabi'ah

I saw a riding animal brought to Ali. When he placed his foot in the stirrup, he said, "In the name of Allah." When he settled on it, he said, "Praise belongs to Allah. Glory be to the One who has placed this under our control, though we could not have controlled it by ourselves. We will surely return to our Lord." [al-Zukhruf 43:13-14] He then praised Allah three times, declared Allah's greatness three times, and said, "Glory be to You. There is no god except You. I have wronged myself, so forgive me." He then laughed.

I asked, "What made you laugh, Commander of the Believers?" He said, "I saw the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, do as I have done and then laugh. I asked, 'What made you laugh, Messenger of Allah?' He said, 'The Lord is amazed by His servant when he says, "My Lord, forgive me," and He says, "My servant knows that no one but Me forgives sins."'" [22]

[22] Ahmad (753); Abu Dawud (2602); al-Tirmidhi (3446); Ibn Hibban (6679).

23

Allah declares A'ishah innocent

Narrated by A'ishah

Regarding the false accusation made against me, I hoped that Allah would declare me innocent. But by Allah, I never thought that revelation would be sent about me. I felt too unimportant for Allah to speak about my case in the Qur'an. I only hoped that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, might see a dream in which Allah declared me innocent.

By Allah, the Messenger of Allah did not leave his place, and no one in the house left, until revelation came to him. When revelation came, the intense state that usually affected him came over him, and beads of sweat like pearls ran down him, even though it was a cold winter day.

When the revelation ended, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, was smiling. The first words he said to me were, "A'ishah, praise Allah, for Allah has declared you innocent."^[23]

[23] Ahmad (25623); al-Bukhari (2661); Muslim (2770, report 56); Ibn Hibban (3436).

24 The white and black threads

Narrated by Adi ibn Hatim

When the verse was revealed, “until the white thread becomes clear to you from the black thread” [al-Baqarah 2:187], I took two ropes of the kind used to tie a camel’s leg, one white and one black, and placed them beneath my pillow. I looked at them, but I could not tell them apart.

I mentioned this to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, and he **laughed**. He said, “Then your pillow must be very long and broad! The verse means only the darkness of night and the light of day.”^{[T13][24]}

25 The man whose bad deeds become good deeds

Narrated by Abu Dharr

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

A man will be brought on the Day of Resurrection. It will be said, “Show him his smaller sins and hide his major sins from him.”

His smaller sins will be shown to him. It will be said, “On this day you did this, and on that day you did that.” He will admit to them and will not deny them, while still fearing that his major sins will be shown.

It will then be said, “For every bad deed he committed, give him a good deed in its place.” He will say, “I have other sins that I do not see here!”

Abu Dharr said: I saw the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, laugh until his back teeth showed.^{[T14][25]}

[T13] Translator’s note: The joke means that, if the white and black “threads” were literal, his pillow would have to stretch across the horizon.

[24] Ahmad (19374); Abu Dawud (2349).

[T14] Translator’s note: This concerns a person whom Allah has chosen to forgive, one who meets Allah with repentance and good deeds. It is not a general promise that wrongdoing without repentance will become good deeds.

[25] Ahmad (21393); Muslim (190, report 314); al-Tirmidhi (2596).

26 Everything can be good for a believer

Narrated by Suhayb

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, was sitting with his Companions when he laughed. He asked, "Will you not ask what made me laugh?" They said, "Messenger of Allah, what made you laugh?"

He said, "I am amazed by the believer's situation. Everything that happens to him can be good. If something pleasing happens, he thanks Allah and it is good for him. If something he dislikes happens, he is patient and it is good for him. This is true of no one except the believer."^[26]

27 A'ishah races the Prophet

Narrated by A'ishah

I went out with the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, on one of his journeys while I was still a young girl and had not yet put on weight. He told the people, "Go on ahead," and they went ahead. He then said to me, "Come, let us race." I raced him and beat him.

Later, after I had put on weight and forgotten the first race, I went with him on another journey. He told the people, "Go on ahead," and they went ahead. He then said, "Come, let us race." I raced him, and he beat me. He began laughing and said, "This makes us even."^[27]

^[26] Ahmad (23530).

^[27] Ahmad (26277).

28 Salma and Abu Rafi'

Narrated by A'ishah

Salma, a woman whom the Messenger of Allah had freed, or the wife of Abu Rafi', a man whom he had freed, came to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, asking him to judge between her and Abu Rafi', who had struck her.

The Messenger of Allah asked Abu Rafi', "What happened between you and her, Abu Rafi'?" He said, "She has been bothering me, Messenger of Allah." The Messenger of Allah asked, "What did you do to bother him, Salma?"

She said, "Messenger of Allah, I did not do anything to bother him. He passed wind while praying, so I said, 'The Messenger of Allah has told the Muslims that, when one of them passes wind, he should perform ablution.' He then stood up and struck me."

The Messenger of Allah laughed and said, "Abu Rafi', she only gave you good advice."^{[T15][28]}

[T15] Translator's note: Salma's correction embarrassed Abu Rafi' because it concerned his passing wind during prayer, and he reacted by hitting her. The lecturer explains that he hit her with something light, not as a severe beating. The Prophet did not approve his reaction; he told him that she had only given him correct religious advice.

[28] Ahmad (26339).

29 A'ishah's winged horse

Narrated by A'ishah

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, returned from the expedition to Tabuk, or perhaps Khaybar. A curtain covered a shelf in my room. The wind lifted one side of the curtain and revealed my dolls.

He asked, "What is this, A'ishah?" I said, "My dolls." Among them he saw a horse whose two wings were made from pieces of cloth. He asked, "What is that among them?" I said, "A horse." He asked, "What is on it?" I said, "Two wings." He said, "A horse with two wings?"

I replied, "Have you not heard that Solomon had horses with wings?" He laughed until I could see his back teeth.^{[T16][29]}

[T16] Translator's note: The lecturer explains that the Prophet knew that Solomon had such horses. The humour is that A'ishah, because she was young, replied as though she were telling him something he did not know. His question was playful.

[29] Abu Dawud (4932).

30 Suwaybit sells Nu'ayman

Narrated by Umm Salamah

One year before the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, died, Abu Bakr travelled to Busra for trade. Nu'ayman and Suwaybit ibn Harmalah went with him. Both had taken part in the Battle of Badr.

Nu'ayman was responsible for the food, and Suwaybit liked to joke. Suwaybit said to Nu'ayman, "Feed me." Nu'ayman replied, "Wait until Abu Bakr comes." Suwaybit said, "I'll get you back for that."

They passed a group of people. Suwaybit asked them, "Would you like to buy a slave from me?" They said, "Yes." He said, "He will tell you, 'I am a free man.' If you are going to let him go when he says that, then do not buy him from me." They replied, "No, we will buy him from you."

They bought Nu'ayman from Suwaybit for ten young she-camels. They came to him and put a turban, or perhaps a rope, around his neck. Nu'ayman said, "This man is fooling you. I am a free man, not a slave." They replied, "He already told us what you would say," and led him away.

Abu Bakr returned and was told what had happened. He followed the people, returned their young camels, and brought Nu'ayman back.^[T17]

When they returned to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and told him what had happened, the incident remained a source of laughter for the Prophet and his Companions whenever it was recalled during the following year.^[30]

[T17] Translator's note: Abu Bakr immediately returned the payment and brought Nu'ayman back. The report describes a practical joke and does not suggest that a free person could lawfully be sold.

[30] Ahmad (26687); Ibn Majah (3719).

31 The Prophet plays with Husayn

Narrated by Ya'la ibn Murrah

We went out with the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and were invited to a meal. Husayn was playing in the road. The Prophet went ahead of the people and held out his hands to him.

The child ran this way and that. The Prophet played with him until he caught him. He placed one hand beneath his chin and the other on his head, held him close, and kissed him.

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, then said, "Husayn is from me, and I am from him. May Allah love whoever loves al-Hasan and al-Husayn. They are two of my grandsons."^[31]

32 A'ishah and Sawdah's food fight

Narrated by A'ishah

I made a dish of flour cooked with milk, called harirah, while Sawdah bint Zam'ah was sitting with me. I said to her, "Eat." She replied, "I do not want to." I said, "Either you eat, or I will smear it on your face." She refused, so I smeared her face with it. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, was sitting between us and laughed.

Sawdah took some of the food and smeared my face with it, while the Messenger of Allah continued laughing.^[32]

[31] Al-Adab al-Mufrad (364); Ahmad (17561); Ibn Hibban (3308); al-Hakim (4820).

[32] Fada'il al-Sahabah by Ahmad ibn Hanbal (504, among the additions of al-Qati'i). Al-Wadi'i wrote: "This is a good (hasan) report." Al-Jami' al-Sahih mimma laysa fi al-Sahihayn, 3:112.

33 Abu Bakr helps them make peace

Narrated by Al-Nu'man ibn Bashir

Abu Bakr came and asked permission to see the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. He heard A'ishah raising her voice above the Prophet's. Permission was given, and he entered.

He said, "Daughter of Umm Ruman, do you raise your voice above the Messenger of Allah?" He went to strike her, but the Prophet came between them.

After Abu Bakr left, the Prophet tried to calm and please A'ishah. He said, "Did you not see how I came between you and the man?"

Abu Bakr later asked permission to see the Prophet again. He found the Prophet laughing and joking with A'ishah. He was allowed in and said, "Messenger of Allah, let me join you now that you have made peace, just as you involved me when you were arguing."^{[T18][33]}

[T18] Translator's note: Umm Ruman was A'ishah's mother. "The man" is a playful reference to Abu Bakr after the Prophet had protected A'ishah from him.

[33] Ahmad (18394).

34 Umar speaks until the Prophet laughs

Narrated by Umar ibn al-Khattab

When the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, stayed apart from his wives, I entered the mosque. The people were moving the pebbles on the ground and saying, "The Messenger of Allah has divorced his wives."

I asked, "Messenger of Allah, have you divorced them?" He said, "No." I said, "Messenger of Allah, I entered the mosque and found the Muslims moving the pebbles and saying, 'The Messenger of Allah has divorced his wives.' May I go and tell them that you have not divorced them?" He said, "Yes, if you wish."^[T19]

I continued speaking to him until I saw the anger leave his face and until he smiled and laughed. He had the most beautiful smile of anyone.^[34]

[T19] Translator's note: Moving or scratching at the pebbles was a sign of worry.

[34] Muslim (1479, report 30); Ibn Hibban (6498).

35 The Prophet's final smile

Narrated by Anas ibn Malik

The Muslims were performing the dawn prayer on Monday, with Abu Bakr leading them. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, suddenly lifted the curtain of A'ishah's room and looked at them standing in rows. He smiled and laughed.

Abu Bakr stepped backwards, thinking that the Messenger of Allah wished to come out for the prayer. The Muslims nearly lost focus in their prayer because of their joy when they saw the Prophet. He gestured with his hand, telling them, "Complete your prayer." He then entered the room, lowered the curtain, and died later that day.^[35]

[35] Al-Bukhari (721); Ibn Hibban (7386).

A Chapter on His Joking

36 He joked, but spoke only the truth

Narrated by Abu Hurayrah

The Companions said, “Messenger of Allah, you joke with us.” He replied, “I only speak the truth.”^[36]

37 The elderly woman who wished to enter Paradise

Narrated by Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib

He was asked, “Did the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, ever joke?” He replied: Yes. An elderly woman from the Ansar came to him and said, “Ask your Lord to allow me into Paradise.” The Messenger of Allah said, “No old woman will enter it.”

The woman went away deeply upset. The Messenger of Allah later went to A'ishah, who said, “Messenger of Allah, your words have caused your aunt great distress.” He replied, “It is as I said. If Allah wills, when Allah, Blessed and Most High, allows older women into Paradise, He will make them young again.”^{[T20][37]}

[36] Ahmad (8481); al-Tirmidhi (1990).

[T20] Translator's note: The Arabic wording literally says that Allah will make them young virgins. The point of the joke is that they will not enter Paradise while remaining old. “Aunt” is used as a respectful and affectionate way of speaking to an older woman; she was not necessarily A'ishah's actual aunt.

[37] Al-Zuhd by Hannad ibn al-Sari, 1:58, through its chain to Sa'id ibn Jubayr as a mursal report. The compiler states that this is the strongest chain for this narration. A mursal report is one in which the Companion is not named in the chain.

38 Abu Umayr and the little bird

Narrated by Anas ibn Malik

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, had the best character of all people. I had a young brother called Abu Umayr. I think he had only recently stopped breastfeeding. Whenever the Prophet came, he would say, “Abu Umayr, what happened to the little nughayr?” The child had been playing with a small bird.^[T21]

Sometimes it would be time for prayer while the Prophet was in our house. He would order that the mat beneath him be swept and sprinkled with water. He would then stand, we would stand behind him, and he would lead us in prayer.

[38]

39 You who have two ears!

Narrated by Anas ibn Malik

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, would sometimes say to me, “You who have two ears!” Abu Usamah explained that he meant this as a joke.

[T22][39]

[T21] Translator's note: Abu Umayr and nughayr rhyme in Arabic, which gives the words their playful sound.

[38] Ahmad (12199); al-Bukhari (5850); Muslim (2150, report 30); Ibn Majah (3720); Abu Dawud (4969); al-Tirmidhi (333).

[T22] Translator's note: Jokes about a person's features depend on the person and the relationship. Some people may find them playful, while others may find them rude. They should be used only when it is known that the person will take them kindly. The Arabic here simply means “you who have two ears”; it does not say that Anas had unusually large ears.

[39] Ahmad (12164); Abu Dawud (5002); al-Tirmidhi (1992).

40 A young camel to ride?

Narrated by Anas ibn Malik

A man came to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and said, "Messenger of Allah, give me an animal to ride."

The Prophet said, "We will carry you on a young camel." The man said, "What use would a young camel be to me?"

The Prophet replied, "Are camels born from anything other than she-camels?"^[40]

41 Who will buy this slave?

Narrated by Anas ibn Malik

A man from the desert named Zahir ibn Haram used to bring gifts from the desert to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. When Zahir was ready to leave, the Prophet would prepare supplies for him. The Messenger of Allah said, "Zahir looks after our needs in the desert, and we look after his needs in the town."

The Prophet loved him, and Zahir was not handsome. One day the Prophet came upon him while he was selling his goods. He held him from behind so that Zahir could not see him. Zahir said, "Let me go! Who is this?" He turned and, when he recognised the Prophet, began pressing his back against the Prophet's chest.

The Messenger of Allah said, "Who will buy this slave?" Zahir replied, "Messenger of Allah, you will find that no one wants to buy me." He said, "But you are valuable to Allah."^{[T23][41]}

[40] Ahmad (13817); Abu Dawud (4998); al-Tirmidhi (1991).

[T23] Translator's note: Zahir was a free man. The Prophet's words were playful and may also be understood in the general sense that every human being is a servant of Allah. He was not truly offering Zahir for sale.

[41] Al-Shama'il (229); Ibn Hibban (5735).

42 All of me?

Narrated by Awf ibn Malik al-Ashja'i

I came to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, during the journey to Tabuk while he was in a small leather tent. I greeted him, and he returned my greeting and said, "Come in."

I asked, "All of me, Messenger of Allah?" He replied, "All of you," so I went in. Uthman ibn Abi al-Atikah explained that Awf asked this because the tent was so small.^[42]

[42] Abu Dawud (5000).