



Ponder on a Hadith

Fourth Hadith

(A Tree Resembling the Muslim)

Part One

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Fourth Hadith

'Abdullah b. Umar reported: I was at the Prophet's while He was eating jummar (the heart of the palm tree), Allah's Messenger

(ﷺ) said:

“There is a tree amongst trees, the leaves of which do not wither and that is like a Muslim; if you take any part of it, it benefits you. Tell me which that (tree) can be?” Ibn Umar said: “The people began to think of the trees of the forest. I saw Abu Bakr and Umar silent, I thought that it could be the date-palm tree, but I felt hesitant (to say that) as I was the youngest among them.” They (the Companions) then said: Allah's Messenger, (kindly) tell us which that can be? Thereupon he said: It is the date-palm tree. Ibn Umar said: “When we left, I said to Umar: Father, by Allah, I thought it could be the date-palm tree. He said: Why haven't you spoken? I said: I saw all of you silent, so I was hesitant to talk. Whereupon Umar said: Had you said that it meant the date-palm tree, this statement of yours (would have been dearer to me) than such and such things. Narrated by Bukhari, Muslim and Tabarani, the narration is combined from the three.



The Values (50)

Why does the date-palm tree resemble the believer?

- 01** In the hadith, the tree resembles the believer, not the other way around and that reflects the great status of the believer as he is the source of the resemblance; the palm tree is assimilated to him.
- 02** The hadith implies that it is permissible to liken humans to inanimate objects, if the resemblance exists and they are similar in some aspects, but not necessarily everything.
- 03** The believer is useful throughout his life, in his sayings, deeds and manners. He is useful to himself and those around him, he is useful even after his death leaving a good righteous offspring, knowledge or endowment made to a religious, educational, or charitable cause. The entire date-palm tree is useful, such as the believer, and everything could be used of this tree, nothing is wasted.

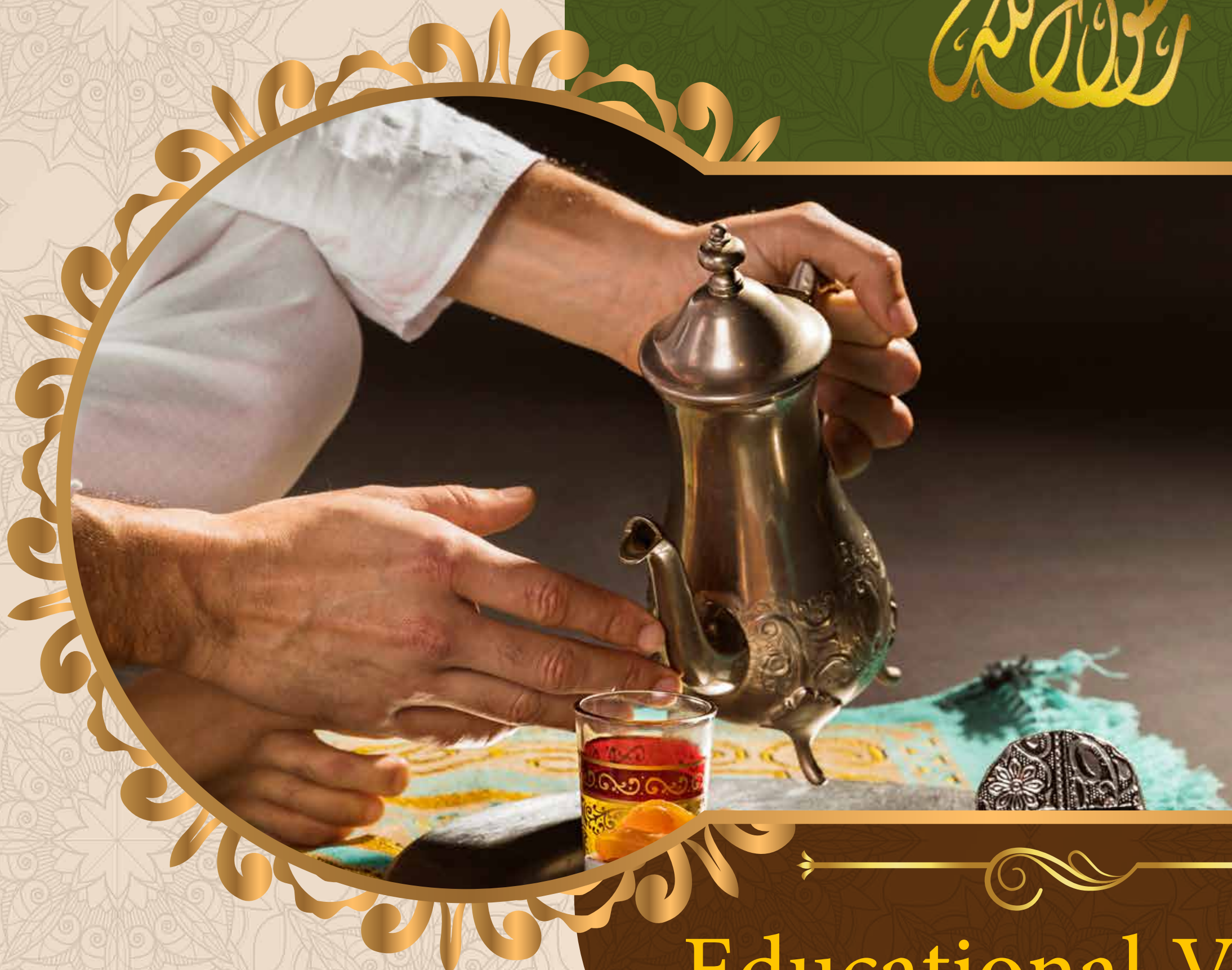


- 04** Usefulness does not have to be existent every hour or every day, it could be every now and then.
- 05** The benefit of the date-palm tree is not only limited to its fruits, it is useful in other matters and has other uses.
- 06** The firmness of the date-palm tree is like the firmness of the Muslim's belief.
- 07** The supplication of the believer does not fall, and the leaves of the date-palm tree do not fall.
- 08** The date-palm tree is useful in every aspect, just like you 'believer' so try to find the goodness in you and bring it out to the people, and do not hold it.



Fiqh Values:

- 01** Following logical inference: Ibn Umar concluded that the Prophet (ﷺ) meant the date-palm tree based on seeing him eating jummar, i.e. the heart of the palm.
- 02** It is permissible if a person eats alone among others, the Prophet (ﷺ) was eating and it is narrated that His companions were eating with him.
- 03** It is permissible to swear by Allah (take an oath) , without being asked, “By Allah, I thought it could be the date-palm tree.”
- 04** It is permissible to talk while eating.
- 05** It is permissible to take the heart of the palm tree, i.e. the inner core.
- 06** It is permissible to sell the jummar of the palm trees, because whatever is permissible to be eaten, is permissible also to be sold.



Educational Values:

- 01 Understanding is a provision, not everybody is blessed with it, it is a blessing from Allah according to His wisdom and decree, exactly like other kinds of provision.
- 02 This hadith is a practical explanation of the hadith by the Prophet (Peace Be upon Him): “I am only the distributor while Allah is the Bestower (He gives insight in religion), that means the Prophet (ﷺ) explains the religion, but Allah blesses people with different levels of understanding, He might give someone higher level of insight than another.
- 03 It implies the meaning in the saying by Almighty Allah: “but over every possessor of knowledge is one [more] knowing.” The young boy realized and guessed what the elders could not guess.
- 04 The Prophet (Peace Be upon Him) used the question method to make them think and work their brains.
- 05 Using things in the surrounding environment as examples helps in making information accessible and easy to be understood.
- 06 Being shy while learning is not a good quality, Ibn Umar remained silent because of being shy and his father criticized him for that.



- 07** If the student is shy to answer or ask a question because of respecting people older than him, he may tell another person so he could speak on his behalf, this combines two benefits (learning and respecting the elders). This is why Bukhari followed this with a chapter titled “Chapter: Whosoever felt shy (to ask something) and then requested another person to ask on his behalf.”
- 08** The talk is not only addressed to the learners or the people of knowledge, it is for everybody. Something a regular person understands or realizes might be missed or misunderstood by a scholar.
- 09** Activating the role of the learner to recall his knowledge and experience on the matter, and use them to answer the questions. The teacher should inspire the learner to deduce and think thoroughly, not to introduce the information directly to those who learn.
- 10** When the teacher eats in front of his students, it implies humbleness and closeness so that they do not feel hesitant to ask.
- 11** Students should respect their teacher and revere him, even if he is humble and close to them.
- 12** The elders should continue to learn, this does not decrease their status. The saying by Umar bin al-Khattab “Learn before you reach a position of prominence.” is misunderstood.
- 13** When the teacher asks a question, it should not be too strange or difficult because the point is to educate not debilitate students.



Educational Values:

- 01** Fathers should take their children to the knowledge sessions, children should sit with the elders to learn conduct and manners from them.
- 02** We should follow good manners especially with the older people, and we should not speak before we give them a chance to talk.
- 03** Remaining silent in case of not knowing is a quality of the wise and benevolent people.
This is what Abu Bakr and Umar did by not answering that which they did not know.
- 04** The father is joyful because of his son's smartness, because the son is like a branch of him, he is an extension of the father.
- 05** The importance of talking with children and explaining and analyzing things with them.
- 06** "Father" is a way of addressing which implies endearment, closeness and good manners, which reflects the strong relationship between the two of them, the father and the son.



Dawah Values:

- 01** The Prophet (Peace Be upon Him) was keen to use different methods to educate and deliver the message or meaning. He used the direct speech, asking questions, riddles, etc.
- 02** The Prophet (PBUH) also used quotes from the Quran to get the attention of the listeners.



Generic Values:

- 01** The humbleness and ascetic attitude of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him) is quite clear in eating the available food, even if it was simple such as jummar.
- 02** The spiritual gain might be more appreciated to the person than the material gain “this statement of yours (would have been dearer to me) than such and such things.”
- 03** Abdullah ibn Umar’s virtues, smartness and good understanding of things is quite clear in this hadith.
- 04** It is nice and recommended to discuss general topics in the form of riddles even if they were not about the lawful and unlawful things, this occupies the time with mubah (permitted) activities not forbidden ones. This also enriches one’s knowledge.
- 05** “Allah’s Messenger, (kindly) tell us which that can be”: Using titles shows respect and appreciation of the virtuous people. They respect each other in their talks.
- 06** “When we left, I said to Umar”: Keep your thoughts to yourself till the gathering is over, and do not say it secretly to someone while others are sitting, even if that someone was your father or brother. This is such good manners.



- 07** Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, felt displeased that his son did not answer the question because if he did, his smartness would have been quite clear to the Prophet, Peace Be upon Him, and He would have kept him close and pray for him to be blessed.
- 08** The man should empower his son and show his good qualities to the people of knowledge and wisdom to learn from them.
- 09** The worldly life is trivial for Uman, because he expressed his gratitude that his son understood something and put that above any worldly gain even if it was red camels (very expensive camels as mentioned in ibn Haban's narration).
- 10** The thoughts that cross someone's mind such as appreciating praise are not disapproved or criticized if they are sincerely for Allah. This can be understood from the mentioned wish of Umar.
- 11** Maybe what you are looking for is right in front of your eyes, and you are looking away. Jummar was right in front of them, yet they thought of the forest trees.
- 12** If a big number of people are taking a certain path or method, this does not necessarily mean that this path is right.
- 13** Scientific and Juristic topics and branches are many and vast, if a scholar misses some of them this does not discredit him.



Linguistic Values:

01 “The people began to think”: the word people could be used for a few number, it might even be used for one person as mentioned in Allah’s saying in the Qur’an: “Those to whom people [i.e., hypocrites] said, "Indeed, the people have gathered against you, so fear them..." (Quran: 3: 173) The speaker was a Bedouin from the tribe of Khuzah.

02 The verb ‘was’ indicates it happened repetitively at the past, but this incident only happened once, yet Ibn Umar said “I was at the Prophet’s while He was eating jummar”. It is not necessary that Allah’s Messenger ate jummar several times in the presence of the companions