The Hadīth of Salamah ibn Sakhr (may Allah be pleased with him) on Zhihār

Salamah ibn Sakhr (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: I was a man more given to sexual intercourse with women than others. When the month of Ramadan came, I feared lest I would have intercourse with my wife, and this would continue till the morning. So I swore that my wife would be as impermissible for me as my mother till the end of Ramadan. One night, however, when she was serving me, something of her was revealed, prompting me to jump upon her right away. In the morning, I went out to my people and informed them about this matter. I said: "Go along with me to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him)." They said: "No, by Allah." So I went to the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and informed him of the matter. He said: "Did you really do it, Salamah?" I said: "I did it twice, O Messenger of Allah, I am content with the judgment of Allah. So take a decision about me as Allah revealed to you." He said: "Free a neck (a slave)." I said: 'By the One Who sent you with truth! I do not possess a neck other than this," striking the surface of my own neck. He said: "Then fast two consecutive months." I said: "Indeed, the very act I committed was because of fasting." He said: "Feed sixty poor people with a Wasq of dates." I said: "By the One Who sent you with truth! We passed the night hungry; there was no food in our house." He said: "Then go to the collector of Zakah of Banu Zurayq, and let him give it to you, and feed sixty poor people with a Wasq of dates, and you and your family eat the remaining dates." I came back to my people and said to them: "I found with you restriction and bad opinion, but I found with the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) spaciousness and wise opinion. He has ordered me – or for me – to be given from your Zakah."

[Good hadith] [Narrated by Ibn Majah - Narrated by At-Termedhy - Narrated by Abu Daoud - Narrated by Ahmad - Ad-Daarimi]

This Companion, Salamah ibn Sakhr (may Allah be pleased with him) wanted to halt copulation with his wife throughout the month of Ramadan given the intensity of his sexual desire. Therefore, out of fear that he might have intercourse with her, which would continue to the time of the Fajr, he took an oath of Zhihār, making her as impermissible for him as his mother until the end of the month. However, one night, he was allured into having sexual intercourse with her, which he did. Thereafter, he felt fearful of the consequences of his sin. So he requested his people to accompany him to the Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) to ask him about the ruling on this issue and beg him for pardon on his behalf, but they refused to go with him. So he went to the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) by himself and related this incident to him. The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) asked him if he was sure that he had actually done this, and Salamah replied in the affirmative. Thereupon, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and

blessings be upon him) informed him of the ruling of Allah in his case; which is that he should free a slave; and if he cannot afford it, he should fast for two consecutive months; and if he is unable to do so, he should feed sixty poor people. However, Salamah (may Allah be pleased with him) informed the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) of his helplessness and poverty, possessing no slave or even food. In response, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) ordered that he should be given dates from the charity of his people so that he could expiate therewith for his oath of Zhihār and take the rest to feed his wife and children.

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