

Refutation of the Claim of Adult Breastfeeding in Islam: A Decisive Scholarly Reading That Exposes Distortion, Dismantles Deception, and Reveals the Intellectual and Legal Collapse in the Discourse of the Detractors

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This article consists of two refutations of the claim that Islam commands women to breastfeed adult men. We will begin with the first, brief refutation, followed by the detailed refutation for those who wish to read further and seek additional details.

The first, summarised refutation

Refutation of the False Claim That Islam Commands the Breastfeeding of Adult Men

First: The claim collapses before the very foundations of Islam itself.

(a) Islam is the religion that commands lowering the gaze as an obligation binding upon both Muslim men and Muslim women.

(b) It is also the religion that prohibits unlawful seclusion between any man and woman who are not married to one another, because Satan is the third

of them, as stated in a hadith from the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

(c) It is likewise the religion that strongly emphasises hijab, modest covering, and chastity for Muslim women.

(d) It is also the religion that forbids the causes of sexual temptation in all their forms, including the prohibition of viewing scenes that arouse sexual desire in any setting.

(e) It is also the religion that forbids softness, seductiveness, and enticement in speech between a man and a woman who are not married to one another.

(f) It is also the religion that differentiates between men and women in many legal rulings.

(g) It is also the religion that commands the separation of children, brothers, and sisters in sleeping arrangements.

So how, after all of this, can anyone come and claim that Islam permits a non-related man to directly approach a woman's breast, or even to look at it or touch it, let alone suckle from it? This is not an understanding of the text.

Rather, it is a lie and a fabrication against Islam. It is a rebellion against the totality of Islamic law. More than that, it is an accusation that the texts contradict one another, and no one says such a thing except one who is ignorant or one who deliberately engages in deception.

Before discussing the story of Salim, it is necessary to begin with the basic legal principle so that the viewer understands the issue correctly from the start.

In Islamic law, breastfeeding can establish a legal foster relationship. When a child receives the breastfeeding that is recognised in Islamic law from a woman, that woman comes to be regarded as his mother from the perspective of Islamic law, and her children become his brothers and sisters from the perspective of Islamic law. As a result, marriage to her or to her children in the future becomes prohibited.

It is very important to understand that this does not require the child to feed directly from the woman's breast. What matters is not the physical act of latching onto the breast in itself. What matters is that the milk actually reaches the child's stomach. If a child were to latch onto a woman's breast many times without any milk reaching his stomach, that would not make her his mother in Islamic law, and it would not make her children his siblings in Islamic law.

By contrast, if the milk reaches the child's stomach in the legally recognised manner, then the legal ruling is established, whether this happens through direct breastfeeding or through the woman expressing her milk into a cup or container and giving it to the child.

This point is essential, because many people discuss this issue while ignoring the most basic legal principle in the matter. The decisive point in Islamic law is the arrival of the milk into the stomach, not the mere outward image of suckling.

Now, with that principle clearly understood, we can turn to the story of Salim.

Salim had been adopted as a son by Sahlah and her husband Abu Hudhayfah before Islam prohibited adoption in its pre-Islamic form. In that earlier custom, an adopted child could be treated legally as though he were the biological son of the adoptive parents. Islam later prohibited this kind of adoption, not because Islam is against caring for children, but because attributing a child to someone other than his real biological father creates serious injustice and confusion. It confuses lineage, affects inheritance rights, harms the rights of biological children, and establishes legal consequences upon something contrary to reality and truth.

At the same time, Islam did not prohibit caring for orphans, showing kindness to children, raising them, supporting them, or honouring them. On the contrary, Islam strongly encourages the care of orphans and vulnerable children. So the prohibition was not against mercy, compassion, or guardianship. Rather, it was against false lineage and the legal consequences built upon it.

After the general prohibition of adoption was established in the Noble Quran, a form of psychological discomfort arose in the household of Abu Hudhayfah and Sahlah. Before that ruling, Salim had been regarded as their son. He had grown up in their home, and the emotional bond between them had already been formed over many years.

But after the legal abolition of adoption in that sense, Abu Hudhayfah no longer regarded Salim as his son from the perspective of Islamic law. That change created hardship, because Salim was no longer treated as a son in

legal terms, yet the emotional reality of the family remained deeply attached to him.

This is where the false claim collapses under the weight of reason.

When Abu Hudhayfah no longer regarded Salim as his son after the general prohibition of adoption, he did not wish Salim to continue seeing Sahlah in the home in the same unrestricted way as before. That is understandable. But it is impossible for any rational person to imagine that Abu Hudhayfah, who was already experiencing discomfort and jealousy because Salim was no longer legally his son, would accept the idea that Salim should directly breastfeed from Sahlah. No rational husband in such a situation would accept that. And Salim himself had grown up seeing Abu Hudhayfah and Sahlah as his parents. The entire setting shows that the vulgar image promoted by the enemies of Islam is irrational, absurd, and completely detached from the reality of the story.

For this reason, Sahlah went to the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and explained the situation. In response, the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a specific and exceptional ruling for Salim in this particular case. He instructed Sahlah to breastfeed Salim so that he would be regarded as her son through breastfeeding, and the discomfort in the household would be removed.

What this means, in light of the legal principle already explained and in light of the way many scholars understood the incident, is not that Salim was to directly suckle from her breast. Rather, the meaning is that milk from Sahlah was to reach Salim in a way that would establish the legal

foster relationship through breastfeeding, and thus the family problem would be resolved. Many scholars explained that this could be done by placing the milk into a cup or container and giving it to him.

This was not a general rule for the Muslim community. It was a specific, exceptional case for Salim alone in the understanding of many scholars. It was an exception connected to a unique family situation during the transitional period after the general prohibition of adoption. It preserved the general law while also addressing the human reality with mercy, wisdom, and compassion.

This is one of the places where the mercy of Islam becomes clear. Islam did not simply abolish a harmful pre-Islamic custom and then ignore the emotional and psychological consequences for families already formed under that custom. Instead, Islam preserved the general rule while making a narrow and specific exception in a highly unusual case, so that bonds of compassion and affection would not be violently severed.

Salim had grown up from childhood seeing Abu Hudhayfah and Sahlah as his parents, and they had long regarded him as their son. The ruling therefore took account of that deep human reality. In this, the mercy of Islam was manifested, and the mercy and wisdom of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, were also clearly manifested.

In addition to that, the false claim also collapses before the wider principles of Islam itself. Islam commands modesty. Islam commands lowering the gaze. Islam prohibits unlawful seclusion between unrelated men and

women. Islam forbids sexual temptation and the causes that lead to it. Islam legislates chastity, dignity, and boundaries between the sexes. So how can anyone honestly claim that Islam, after all of these principles, would suddenly command adult men to directly breastfeed from unrelated women? This is not interpretation. It is distortion.

The false claim also collapses linguistically and legally. In language, breastfeeding can refer either to direct suckling or to the reaching of milk into the stomach. In Islamic law, what matters is the milk reaching the stomach. So even on linguistic and legal grounds, the sensationalist image promoted by critics is not the only meaning, nor is it the correct meaning in this case.

The false claim also collapses in light of the explanations of the scholars, who clarified that the matter was understood as milk from Sahlah reaching Salim in a way that established the legal foster relationship through breastfeeding. Many scholars explained that this case was specific to Salim and should not be treated as a general command.

So, the truth is simple and clear.

Islam does not command the breastfeeding of adult men. The story of Salim was a unique and exceptional case connected to the legal abolition of adoption in its pre-Islamic form. The purpose was to preserve the general law, protect the family from unnecessary hardship, and establish a legal foster relationship through the arrival of milk into the stomach, not through the vulgar and fabricated image imagined by detractors.

What the enemies of Islam do is this: they cut the story out of its context, ignore the legal principle, ignore the language, ignore the wisdom of the ruling, ignore the transitional nature of the case, ignore the mercy involved, and then present the most shocking image possible to mislead people. That is not scholarship. That is not honesty. That is not truth-seeking. That is sensationalism built upon distortion.

The conclusion is decisive: the allegation that Islam commands adult men to breastfeed directly from women is false. It is false rationally, false legally, false linguistically, false contextually, and false morally. The case of Salim was a narrow exceptional ruling rooted in mercy, wisdom, and legal precision, not a general law and certainly not an indecent command.

That is the truth of the matter, and once the issue is explained properly, the allegation collapses completely.

Allah Knows Best.

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The second and detailed refutation:

Among the most frequently repeated claims circulated by the opponents of Islam, and endlessly recycled without knowledge or integrity, is the claim of what they call “the breastfeeding of an adult”. This claim is not of the nature of serious scholarly problems that deserve to be described as a search for truth.

Rather, in its essence, it is a crude model of deliberate distortion and a cheap manufacture of sensationalism, based on fragmenting the text, severing it from its context, imposing an aberrant understanding upon its wording, and then presenting all of that to the public in a shocking form in order to provoke aversion, not in order to reach a correct understanding.

Whoever reads the manner in which this claim is presented quickly notices that it survives only in an environment of ignorance, and thrives only when context is disabled, the rules of language are cancelled, jurisprudence is marginalised, explanatory narrations are excluded, and the text is entirely detached from the universal foundations of the Islamic Sacred Law.

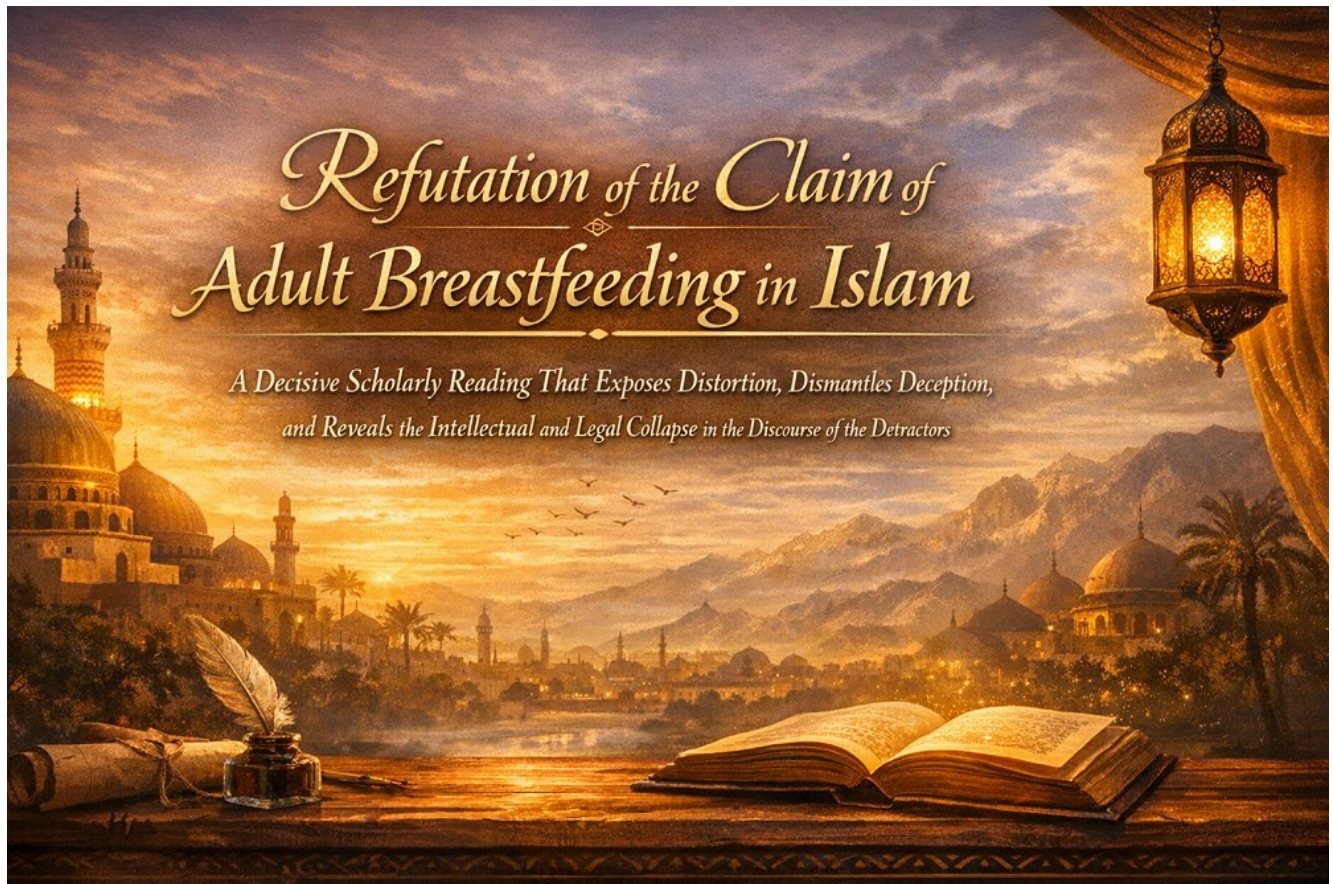
Only then is the claimant able to raise his voice and imagine that he has grasped something of substance. But if the matter is restored to its origin and examined from all its angles, this claim not only collapses, but is transformed into evidence of the ignorance of the one who raises it or his ill intent.

Part of a complete understanding of this matter is that the reader must recognise that the specific ruling in the story of Salim was neither a breach of the general prohibition of adoption, nor a retreat from it. Rather, it was a merciful and wise treatment of the consequences of an earlier situation that had arisen before this legislation reached its completion. Salim was not a strange man who had suddenly entered the household.

Rather, he was a person who had been raised in that home from childhood, whose psychological and familial life had become settled within it, and whose presence had become part of the very structure of the family. So, when Islam abolished adoption in its pre-Islamic sense, it abolished false attribution of lineage, but it did not disregard the human reality that had developed over the years, nor did it handle the legislative transition in a dry manner that would shock souls and destroy homes all at once. Here the wisdom and mercy of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, become evident, for he did not leave the family to be torn apart between a general ruling that had to be implemented and a highly sensitive human reality of a particular kind.

Nor did he leave Salim to face a moral and psychological uprooting from the home in which he had grown up, nor did he leave Abu Hudhayfah and his wife exposed to embarrassment and distress after the ruling had changed. Thus, this specific solution came in order to preserve the foundation of the general legislation while, at the same time, taking into account the human necessity produced by the transition from an old pre-Islamic custom to a final legal ruling.

The wisdom here is therefore evident in combining the establishment of the general truth and the prevention of false lineage attribution with mercy towards a family that had been formed under a previous arrangement, so that the application of the ruling would not become a cause of psychological injustice, family disintegration, or the destruction of what had emerged over many long years of upbringing, familiarity, and attachment. For that reason, the matter was specific to Salim. It was not a nullification of the general ruling, but rather a limited remedial exception necessitated by human need, while the original general rule remained preserved and entirely intact.



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The clear principle here is this:

If Islamic law prohibits the lesser matter, then the greater matter is all the more deserving of prohibition. If unlawful looking is forbidden, then what is greater than looking must certainly be even more forbidden. And if unlawful seclusion between a man and a woman who are not married to one another is forbidden, then what is more serious than that is even more obviously forbidden. This alone is sufficient to demolish this unsound understanding.

Secondly: The Original Account as It Truly Is, Not as the Distorters Mutilate It

The story of what is called “the breastfeeding of an adult” goes back to the Companion Abu Hudhayfah, may Allah be pleased with him, who was married to a woman named Sahlah, may Allah be pleased with her. Before the mission of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they had adopted a young boy named Salim. It is essential here to understand the true nature of adoption as it was known at that time, because many polemicists deliberately skip over this point, even though it is the foundation of the entire issue.

The form of adoption abolished by Islam was not merely the raising of a child, the care of an orphan, or kindness towards a young person who had no guardian. All of these are acts that Islam encouraged, honoured, and made among the means of great reward. The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “I and the one who cares for an orphan are like these two.”

There is therefore no problem in this meaning. On the contrary, it is one of the clear virtues of Islam. What Islam prohibited was that a person should be attributed to someone other than his real father, so that he would be called the son of one who was not his father, and the legal rulings of sonship would be established for him contrary to reality and truth.

Once the ruling was revealed that abolished this type of adoption, Salim was no longer considered the son of Abu Hudhayfah and Sahlah in terms of legal lineage. Rather, from that perspective, he became a non-related adult male in relation to them, even though he had been raised in their home and had grown up with them from childhood. It was at this point that the real difficulty arose, a difficulty that the proponents of this claim do not wish to present honestly to the public, because they

know that setting out this context destroys much of the noise on which they build their claim.

After the abolition of adoption, Abu Hudhayfah, may Allah be pleased with him, began to feel uncomfortable about Salim remaining in the house. A visible change and dislike began to appear on his face regarding this new situation, not because he hated Salim as a person, but because the legal ruling had changed. As a result, the continued presence of a non-related adult male in the home under the previous arrangement became a cause of embarrassment, jealousy, and emotional distress.

Sahlah, may Allah be pleased with her, noticed this and saw the discomfort appearing on her husband's face, so she wanted to find a solution that would remove this hardship while at the same time preserving Salim's place within the household in which he had been raised and in which he had spent his entire life.

So she went to the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to complain of this situation and presented the matter exactly as it was: Abu Hudhayfah was distressed by Salim's presence, and signs of displeasure and jealousy were appearing on him, so what was the solution?

The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, directed her to a solution that would reorder the family situation in such a way that the jealousy would disappear and the legal status of unmarriageability would be established. He instructed her to breastfeed him, that is, so that he would become her son through breastfeeding, and thus Abu Hudhayfah would assume the position of his father through breastfeeding, and the problem would come to an end.

When she mentioned that he was an adult, the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, responded in a way that indicated that he was fully aware of that. It is precisely at this point that the proponents of the claim begin their familiar game. They did not ask: What does breastfeeding mean here? What does the language require? What does jurisprudence determine?

What does the context demand? What is consistent with the foundational principles of Islam? No. Instead, they jumped straight to the most provocative images in the minds of the public, then attributed those images to the text, and then began shouting

as though they had uncovered something grave. This is not interpretation. It is deception.

Third: The interpretation promoted by the detractors is invalid from its very rational foundation, even before any linguistic or juristic examination

The first thing that demolishes this corrupt interpretation is reason itself. The reason why Sahlah came to the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was clear:

Abu Hudhayfah felt jealousy and distress at Salim's presence in the house after Salim had become, in legal terms, a non-mahram outsider.

If the root of the problem was jealousy, then how could it possibly be rational to suggest that its solution was for Salim to have direct contact with his wife's breast?

Would that be a remedy for jealousy, or an explosion of it?

Would it relieve distress, or multiply it many times over?

Any person possessing even the slightest measure of reason would recognise that this interpretation does not solve the problem at all. Rather, it creates a far greater problem beyond comparison.

Indeed, if any rational person were told: a man is jealous of another man's presence in his home, so what is the solution? and someone replied: the solution is for that man to have direct contact with his wife's breast, people would regard such a speaker as either insane or mocking the matter.

So how can something like this be attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him?

And how could any rational person imagine that the Prophet, who was known for wisdom, would address the cause of jealousy by means of something even more provocative to it and even more repugnant to sound human feeling?

This point alone is sufficient to expose the corruption of the interpretation commonly circulated by those who stir mischief and confusion. For they have constructed the claim upon a meaning that does not even accord with the very reason for which the story was narrated. Once the matter reaches this level of contradiction, we are no

longer dealing with an alternative interpretation, but with a collapsed meaning that cannot validly be attributed to the text at all.

Fourth: In linguistic usage, the term breastfeeding is not confined to direct contact with the breast, and this is a central point that they have deliberately concealed.

One of the clearest forms of deception in this claim is that they treat the expression “breastfeed him” as though it can bear only one meaning, namely direct contact with the breast. This is either ignorance of the language or a deliberate disregard for it.

In Arabic linguistic usage, breastfeeding carries two meanings:

The first meaning is the milk reaching the stomach of the one who drinks it.

The second meaning is direct suckling from the breast.

If the term in the language can bear these two meanings, then no one has the right to impose one of them upon the text without any contextual indicator, and then build an entire campaign of denunciation upon that assumption. Rather, what is required is to examine the context, the usages of the Sacred Law, the explanatory narrations, and the general foundations of the religion, so that the intended meaning may be known.

However, the proponents of this claim do not want this scholarly path at all. For if they were to follow it, their game would quickly be exposed. That is why they choose the meaning that provokes the general public, and then treat it as though it were the only possible meaning, even though the language itself refutes them.

Fifth: The recognised legal meaning of breastfeeding in Islamic law is the arrival of milk into the stomach, not merely the outward form of suckling.

Once we move beyond language to jurisprudence and law, the matter becomes clearer and more decisive. This is because the jurists state that the breastfeeding by which the rules of prohibited marriage relationships are established is determined by the arrival of milk into the stomach, not merely by the outward form of suckling. This is a subtle point, but it is extremely decisive in demolishing the claim.

If we were to suppose that a child latched onto a woman's breast many times, fifty times for example, but the milk never reached the child's stomach at all, would that child become her child through breastfeeding?

The answer is no, by the agreement of the scholars. Why? Because although suckling took place, the legally effective basis was absent, namely the arrival of the milk into the child's stomach.

Conversely, if a woman expressed her milk into a vessel, or collected it in some other way, and then a child drank it until it reached the child's stomach and the recognised conditions of breastfeeding were fulfilled, the legal consequences of breastfeeding would be established, even if the child had not latched onto the breast at all. This point alone demonstrates that what matters in legal terms is not direct contact with the breast, but the arrival of milk into the child's stomach.

Here the extent of the ignorance or deception in the discourse of those who promote this claim becomes clear. They build their entire campaign upon a particular mental image, whereas the legal ruling itself does not revolve around that image at all, but around something entirely different, namely the arrival of milk into the child's stomach. Once this is established, the basis upon which they built all their sensationalism collapses.

Sixth: The explanatory narration came and demolished the entire exaggeration at its root.

The matter did not stop at linguistic indication or juristic determination. Rather, an explanatory narration was reported that clarifies how breastfeeding occurred in this incident. Ibn Sa'd narrated in *Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* that Sahlah expressed her milk into a vessel, then Salim drank it, and by that he became her son through breastfeeding.

At this point, the matter is scientifically settled. There was no direct contact with the breast, no vulgar image that the proponents of this claim try to force into people's minds, and none of this manufactured sensationalism. Rather, the matter is exactly as required by jurisprudence, language, and context: milk reached the stomach, the legal rulings of breastfeeding were thereby established, and the issue came to an end.

However, because the opponents of Islam in many of these matters are not seeking the truth, they flee from the explanatory narrations just as they flee from everything

that disperses the smoke of sensationalism on which they survive. They want shock, not knowledge. They want distortion, not understanding. For that reason, they deliberately conceal everything that destroys the interpretation they promote.

Seventh: The claim comes into direct collision with the entire foundations of Islam in the areas of chastity, covering, and lowering the gaze.

Even if no explanatory narration existed at all, and even if, for the sake of argument, we were to set aside much of what has already been discussed, this claim would still collapse of its own accord when measured against the universal foundations of Islam. Islam is the religion that commands men to lower their gaze, and likewise commands women to lower their gaze.

It is the religion that legislated the veil, covering, and outer garment, blocked the causes of temptation, forbade seclusion between a man and a woman, required the safeguarding of private parts, prohibited unlawful looking, forbade softness and allurements in speech, and insisted upon separation between men and women in settings where temptation is feared. Indeed, Islam went so far in blocking the means that lead to temptation that it commanded brothers and sisters to be separated in their sleeping arrangements after a certain age.

What rational mind, after all of this, could accept the claim that Islam, having blocked all of these avenues, would then suddenly permit a non-related man to have direct contact with a woman's breast?

This is not merely an error in understanding. Rather, it is a destruction of the entire logic of Islamic law. It forces the texts to contradict themselves, and no one says such a thing except one who does not understand Islam or one who deliberately lies about it.

Here a great principle of legal interpretation becomes clear: when a text indicates the prohibition of the lesser matter, then what is greater than it is even more deserving of prohibition. Allah, exalted is He, said regarding parents:

“For your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And honour your parents. If one or both of them reach old age in your care, never say to them ‘even’ ‘ugh,’ nor yell at them. Rather, address them respectfully. *Quran (17:23)*

The verse did not explicitly state: and do not strike them. This is not because striking them is permissible, but because the prohibition of the lesser act indicates, with even greater force, the prohibition of the greater act.

Apply the same reasoning here. If Islam has prohibited unlawful looking, then with even greater reason it prohibits what is more serious than looking. If it has prohibited seclusion, then with even greater reason it prohibits what is more serious than that.

And if it has been so strict in matters of covering, chastity, and separation between the sexes, then with even greater reason it does not permit any part of the corrupt interpretation promoted by the advocates of this claim. Whoever asserts this is not merely attacking a single report. In reality, he is claiming that the entire body of Islamic law is contradictory, and that is a false claim that is rejected and turned back upon its author.

Eighth: It was not a general legislative ruling, nor was it a consistently applicable Prophetic practice, but rather a case specific to Salim alone.

One of the strangest features of this claim is that some people speak as though this incident constituted a general legal ruling for all Muslims, or an open practice that anyone may implement. This is compounded ignorance, because the story itself, its context, and the way in which scholars have understood it all indicate that it was a case specific to Salim, may Allah be pleased with him.

Salim was not an ordinary man who had suddenly entered the household. Rather, he was a person who had been raised in that home from childhood, and who spent his life regarding Abu Hudhayfah and Sahlah as occupying the position of parents. Then the legal ruling came abolishing adoption in its pre-Islamic sense, and hardship arose. Had there been no solution that took this specific human and family situation into account, the result could have been severe psychological and familial harm, because this man had grown up in that environment and his entire life had been formed within it.

The solution therefore came in a specific form that addressed this particular case, not as a general door opened to the whole community. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, did not say to the people: do this whenever a similar situation occurs.

Nor did he make it a universally applicable legal rule. Rather, he addressed a specific incident in light of its own unique circumstances and conditions.

Whoever transforms a specific case into a general legal ruling either does not understand the distinction between the general and the specific, the unrestricted and the restricted, and a specific incident and a general ruling, or else understands those distinctions but deliberately seeks to confuse the public. In either case, his words retain no scholarly value.

Ninth: The statements of the scholars are explicit in invalidating this corrupt interpretation, and some of them even transmitted scholarly consensus on the matter.

The scholars did not leave this issue exposed to the whims of those who manipulate it. Rather, they clarified what was intended by it and interpreted the hadith in a manner consistent with language, jurisprudence, and legal principles. Among the most prominent scholars cited in this regard is Imam Ibn Abd al-Barr, who stated that Salim did not suckle directly from Sahlah's breast, and who transmitted scholarly consensus upon the meaning that prevents this imagined interpretation.

His reasoning in this regard is very clear:

If it is not lawful for him even to look at her breast, then how can it be claimed that he physically took it into his mouth? This is an obvious contradiction. Indeed, a man is not permitted to look at the nakedness of a woman who is not lawful for him, so how can it then be alleged that the Sacred Law permitted for him something graver than looking and more severe than that? This is a distortion of jurisprudence, an assault upon the texts, and a contradiction that cannot pass unnoticed by anyone who retains even a measure of reason.

Moreover, the meaning affirmed by the scholars is entirely consistent with the legal principle explained earlier, namely that whatever renders the lesser act unlawful renders the greater act even more deserving of prohibition. So how can Islam prohibit

looking, and then be said to permit something far beyond that? Such a claim can come only from someone who is either ignorant or deceptive.

Some scholars also pointed out that the commentaries and marginal notes in certain editions of Sahih Muslim itself included clarification of this meaning, and recorded the scholars' interpretation of the hadith, namely that Salim did not suckle directly from the breast, but that what was intended was the occurrence of breastfeeding in the form that legally establishes the ruling. All of this makes clear that the problem does not lie in the text itself, but rather in the person who has chosen to tamper with it.

Tenth: Discussion of the moral objection raised concerning the story

Many of those who promote this claim attempt to clothe their objection in the language of “moral jealousy”, arguing that it conflicts with chastity, that lustful looking is reprehensible, or that such a matter is unacceptable to human sensibility. In reality, however, this objection turns against them rather than in their favour, because it is the correct understanding of the story that accords with chastity, accords with the foundations of Islam, and accords with the logic of the Sacred Law. By contrast, the interpretation they promote is the one that collides with all of these.

Put more plainly, appealing to morality here serves only as evidence against their own interpretation, not against the hadith itself. If the hadith is understood in light of what is required by the context, the jurisprudential framework, and the explanatory narration, then that alleged problem does not remain at all. If, however, they insist on imposing upon it a crude meaning that contradicts the foundational principles, then they have not demonstrated any error in the text itself. Rather, they have demonstrated the corruption of their own reading.

For that reason, every attempt to stir people's moral sensibilities against the hadith in this manner is nothing more than an exploitation of their emotions after first distorting the text. They first falsify the meaning, and then appeal to people's revulsion at the ugliness produced by that falsification. This is an exposed polemical device, and it has no validity in the balance of scholarship.

Eleventh: Why do they keep repeating this claim despite its extreme weakness?

The reason is clear. Despite its scholarly weakness, this claim is highly marketable among those who do not read, and among those who are satisfied with a shocking title or an excerpt taken out of context. It is a manufactured claim designed for media spectacle, not for research.

They do not present it in the form of a scholarly question, but rather as a provocative snapshot. Nor do they present all of its relevant elements. Instead, they conceal everything that would dismantle it. Nor do they discuss it in light of the foundational principles of Islamic law. Rather, they isolate it from everything else and then exaggerate it.

This alone reveals that many of those who promote it do not seek fairness. For when a fair-minded person finds an explanatory narration that removes the difficulty, or a jurisprudential principle that settles the meaning, or a historical context that clarifies what is intended, the first thing he does is present that to people. As for burying all of these elements and then shouting at people, “Look at what is in Islam,” that is not discussion. It is ill-intentioned hostility.

The Final Outcome: The Claim Rests upon a Complete Series of Methodological Deviations

After this clarification, it becomes evident that the claim of “adult breastfeeding” rests upon nothing other than a set of clear deviations:

First: severing the story from its familial and historical context.

Second: ignoring the true nature of adoption, which Islam abolished, and conflating it with the care of orphans, which Islam strongly encouraged.

Third: overlooking the cause of the difficulty, namely Abu Hudhayfah’s jealousy over Salim’s presence in the household after the legal ruling had changed.

Fourth: imposing a single meaning upon the term breastfeeding, even though the language allows for another meaning.

Fifth: ignoring the fact that, in Islamic law, the legally recognised form of breastfeeding is the entry of milk into the stomach, not merely direct suckling from the breast.

Sixth: concealing the narration that explains that this occurred through drinking the milk from a vessel.

Seventh: setting the truncated account in direct conflict with Islam's universal principles concerning modesty, covering, lowering the gaze, and seclusion, and then ignoring that conflict instead of revising the interpretation itself.

Eighth: transforming a specific case into a general legal ruling, even though this is among the clearest forms of error.

Ninth: disregarding the statements of the scholars who clarified the intended meaning and invalidated the corrupt interpretation.

At this point, the claim no longer remains a scholarly claim at all. Rather, it becomes a striking example of how deception operates when ignorance is joined to an intent of hostility and dispute.

The Decisive Conclusion

The story of Salim, may Allah be pleased with him, is not a scandal as the misleading attempt to portray it, nor is it an open piece of legislation as the ignorant try to suggest, nor is it a licence for indecency as liars insinuate. Rather, it was a specific case that arose out of a specific family circumstance, following an important legislative transition that abolished a deeply rooted pre-Islamic custom. The prophetic solution therefore came in a wise manner, preserving the cohesion of the family, taking into account the condition of Salim, who had been raised in that household, and realising the ruling of breastfeeding in the form recognised by the law, namely the arrival of the milk, not the crude image imagined by those given to foolishness.

Accordingly, anyone who repeats this claim after this clarification falls into one of only two categories: either an ignorant person who has failed to understand, or a deliberate person who does not wish to understand. As for the fair-minded person, this matter is resolved simply by gathering its elements as they are: the context of the story, the indication of the language, the determinations of jurisprudence, the explanatory narration, the universal principles of the law, and the statements of the scholars. At that point, nothing remains of the claim.

Indeed, the truth is that this issue does not expose the hadith; rather, it exposes the method by which the opponents of Islam deal with texts. They do not discuss the text as it is, but as they want to distort it. They do not read the narration in full, but instead extract from it only what stirs the general public.

They do not return the expressions to their linguistic and legal meanings; rather, they force them into whatever most effectively serves denunciation. They do not gather the evidence; rather, they conceal whatever undermines their argument. Therefore, in the final analysis, the claim of “the breastfeeding of an adult” is not evidence of a problem in Islam, but evidence of a crisis of integrity in those who raise it.

Whoever truly seeks the truth must read before judging, gather before objecting, and understand before attacking. As for the one who has chosen to live by truncation, distortion, and the manufacture of shock, the abundance of shouting will avail him nothing, because shouting does not transform falsehood into truth, does not turn a corrupt understanding into knowledge, and does not make deception into proof.

The unavoidable conclusion is that what is called the claim of “the breastfeeding of an adult” is a bankrupt claim: it collapses linguistically, collapses jurisprudentially, collapses contextually, collapses rationally, collapses before the foundational principles of Islam, and collapses before the statements of the scholars. Nothing remains of it except the noise of those who keep repeating it because they possess nothing else.

And all praise is due to Allah, Lord of all worlds.

Allah Knows Best.

References:

[Refutation of the Claim of Adult Breastfeeding in Islam: A Decisive Scholarly Reading That Exposes Distortion, Dismantles Deception, and Reveals the Intellectual and Legal Collapse in the Discourse of the Detractors](#)