

The contention is on the following Ahadeeth:

"Were it not for Bani Israel, meat would not decay; **and were it not for Eve, no woman would ever betray her husband.**"

(Bukhari 60/72)

Hammam b. Munabbih said: These are some of the ahadith which Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) narrated to us from Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), and one of these (this one): Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Had it not been for Bani Isra'il, food would not have become stale, and meat would not have gone bad; **and had it not been for Eve, a woman would never have acted unfaithfully toward her husband.**

(Muslim 17/84)

The explanation of the former part of the Ahadeeth can be found in *Scientific Arguments*.

There are a few claims here, and we will tackle each of them appropriately.

An-Nawawi said in his Sharh of Muslim: "Had it not been for Hawaaa' (Eve), women would never betray their husbands." Al-Qaadhi said: "The meaning of this Hadeeth is that she was the mother of the daughters of Aadam; so they resembled her, and they inherited from her what happened to her in the account of the tree with Iblees (Satan) - he seduced her into eating from the tree and lured her, so she told Aadam about the tree and, as a result, he ate from it" ↓

ومعنى هذا الحديث أنها أم بنات آدم فأشبهنها ونزع العرق لما جرى في قصة الشجرة مع إبليس فزين لها أكل الشجرة فأغواها فأخبرت آدم بالشجرة فأكل منها .

Ibn Hajar writes:

وَلَيْسَ الْمُرَادُ بِالْخِيَانَةِ هُنَا ارْتِكَابَ الْفَوَاحِشِ حَاشَا وَكَلَّا وَلَكِنْ لَمَّا مَالَتْ إِلَى شَهْوَةِ النَّفْسِ مِنْ أَكْلِ الشَّجَرَةِ وَحَسَنَتْ ذَلِكَ لِأَدَمَ عُدَّ ذَلِكَ خِيَانَةً لَهُ وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَ بَعْدَهَا مِنَ النِّسَاءِ فَخِيَانَتُهُ كُلُّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِنْهُنَّ بِحَسَبِهَا

"The meaning of 'betrayal' here is not that she committed infidelity, certainly not! Rather, when she inclined to the desire of her soul to eat from the tree and she beautified that for Adam, it was considered a betrayal of him. As for women who came after her, the betrayal of each of them is on account of her deed (that she initiated)."

Source: Fath al-Bārī 3152

The sin of Eve was that she gave into the lower animalistic nature of her soul, which exists within every male or female human being, and she successfully tempted her husband with her desires. **For this reason, every woman after her who commits a similar sin is simply following a pattern set by Eve.**

This is **not to say that women are uniquely evil compared to men**, as the story has been interpreted in other religions. On the contrary, this is similar to what occurred with the first son of Adam, Cain, who killed his brother due to jealousy and anger. Every person after him who murders another person is simply following a pattern set by him.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

لَا تُقْتَلُ نَفْسٌ ظُلْمًا إِلَّا كَانَ عَلَى ابْنِ آدَمَ الْأَوَّلِ كِفْلٌ مِنْ دِمَهِهَا لِأَنَّهُ أَوَّلُ مَنْ سَنَّ الْقَتْلَ

“No soul is wrongfully killed but that some responsibility for its blood is upon the first son of Adam, for he was the first to set the precedent of murder.”

Source: Şahīḥ al-Bukhārī 3158, Grade: Muttafaqun Alayhi

That Cain bears some responsibility for all murders after him does not mean he is being punished for the actions of others, but rather he is being punished for leading others into sin, which is a separate deed in itself.

Whoever leads others to righteousness or sin is recompensed for that particular act of guiding or misguiding, not for the actual deeds of those they influenced.

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

مَنْ سَنَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةً حَسَنَةً كَانَ لَهُ أَجْرُهَا وَأَجْرُ مَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يُنْتَقَصَ مِنْ أَجُورِهِمْ شَيْءٌ وَمَنْ سَنَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةً سَيِّئَةً كَانَ عَلَيْهِ وِزْرُهَا وَوِزْرُ مَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يُنْتَقَصَ مِنْ أَوْزَارِهِمْ شَيْءٌ

Whoever institutes a good practice in Islam will have its reward and the reward of whoever acts upon it without detracting from their rewards in the slightest, and whoever institutes an evil practice in Islam will have its sin and the sin of those who act upon it without detracting from their sins in the slightest.

Source: Şahīḥ Muslim 1017, Source: Sahih

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

مَنْ دَعَا إِلَى هُدًى كَانَ لَهُ مِنَ الْأَجْرِ مِثْلُ أُجُورِ مَنْ تَبِعَهُ لَا يَنْقُصُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ أُجُورِهِمْ شَيْئًا وَمَنْ دَعَا إِلَى ضَلَالَةٍ كَانَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ مِثْلُ آثَامِ مَنْ تَبِعَهُ لَا يَنْقُصُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ آثَامِهِمْ شَيْئًا

Whoever calls to guidance will have a reward similar to those who follow him, without detracting from their reward at all. Whoever calls to misguidance will have sin upon him similar to those who follow him, without detracting from their sins at all.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2674, Grade: Sahih

Hence, the lesson of the tradition is that women, like men, have a lower nature which tempts them follow the harmful desires in their souls. They must struggle against such desires, to wage a spiritual jihad against them, in order to fulfill their higher nature, to protect themselves, their husbands, and their families.

Ibn Hajar writes:

بَلْ يَضْبِطُنَّ أَنْفُسَهُنَّ وَيُجَاهِدْنَ هَوَاهُنَّ

Rather, women should control themselves and strive against their desires.

Source: Faṭḥ al-Bārī 3152

This hadith is **not** an attack on women as it is sometimes misconstrued - rather, just like Cain was the first to kill another, setting a precedent, Eve was the first to betray her husband, being the first doer of that particular action.

This is not a way of labeling women as essentially wrong or morally weak. The fact that the Quran praises religious women in general and speaks of certain pious females, in particular, is sufficient evidence.

In Sahih Muslim, the hadith comes directly after the chapter on getting on well with one's wife by acknowledging the differences between men and women and not trying to change them. It is then followed immediately by the chapter on divorce. Read in context - it is as though the message is that men should not overreact if they should happen to see certain traits in their wives that might alarm them. Still, they should know that just as men have a certain tendency to have certain vices, so do women have certain tendencies to have others.

After all, the husband-and-wife communion is there to cover each other's faults: "They are a garment for you, and you a garment for them." [Quran, 2: 187]

The hadith is not saying that Eve is to blame if ever a woman cheats on her husband.

Addressing more contentions [↓](#)

Does this Hadith imply the blame rests on Eve alone?

Not at all, because the sin was committed by both and Islam holds that both of them were basically seduced by the Devil. In fact, Islamic sources explicitly state that Devil seduced them both. In Qur'an 20: 120 it is mentioned that the Devil seduced Adam –may Allah bless him. This Hadith suggests Devil first spoke to Eve –may Allah bless her- and Qur'an (7:20) plainly says that Devil seduced them both. So, clearly the Islamic standpoint is that both of them made the mistake. The betrayal referred to in this particular Hadith is about Eve speaking to Adam –may Allah bless them both- about the forbidden tree. Eve having been deceived spoke to Adam but Devil himself also convinced Adam as clear from Qur'an 20: 120.

The story of Adam and Eve and their disobedience to Allah is an archetype for the human race as a whole, both men and women. It was not only Eve who sinned. They both committed sin, as every human being has the capacity to commit sin.

Allah said:

فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ

Satan caused them both to slip out of it and removed them from that (garden) in which they had been.

Surah al-Baqarah 2:35

At the same time, they were both forgiven for their sin, as every human being has the potential to be forgiven.

Why specifically mention of Eve here?

As clear from Qur'anic references cited above Devil seduced both Adam and Eve and as Qur'an says they both prayed to Allah for forgiveness after the whole thing took place. See Qur'an 7: 22-23.

Eve is mentioned here as she is the originator of this particular example of an action, that is, a woman betraying her husband.

One should also not imagine that the tradition is demeaning to Eve, or women, in any way. In fact, some scholars say that she is called 'Eve' (Hawa') because it is linguistically related to 'life' (hayy), as she is the mother of all human beings.

Ibn Hajar writes:

قِيلَ سُمِّيَتْ بِذَلِكَ لِأَنَّهَا أُمُّ كُلِّ حَيٍّ

“It is said that she is called 'Eve' because she is the mother of all life.”

Source: Fath al-Bārī 3152

Is it about Original Sin?

Next question is if the Hadith supports the Christian doctrine of original sin?

It does not because in Islam the issue of falling from heavens was a specific incident related to two individuals and their progeny is not to bear the brunt for it. The idea is simply that capacity to err and sin is in the genes of humankind. Man and woman have the innate weakness and characteristics as such which were made evident in the lives of the first humans.

Qur'an refers to this fact often;

“And man is created weak.” (4: 28)

“Surely man is created of a hasty temperament.” (70:19)

“Truly man is, to his Lord, ungrateful; And to that (fact) he bears witness (by his deeds);” (100: 6-7)

And a Hadith substantiates it and kills the notion of Original Sin and deliverance from it through vicarious atonement;

The Prophet –may Allah bless him- said, “Every son of Adam commits sin but the best of those who sin are those who repent.” (Jami' Tirmidhi, Hadith 2499. Classified as Hasan by Albani)

Certainly the idea of mankind as being sinful in nature, and that of a person being held responsible for the sins of his ancestors, are not even remotely related. Also the fact that it is mentioned along with the issue about the People of Israel, leads us to maintain that it is not a concept related to Christian dogma of original sin.

Conclusion

The blame of that particular action does **not** lie on Eve, nor does it entail the concept of original sin. It merely mentions Eve as the first to do that action, and women betraying their husbands are compelled to do so by Eve's doing but rather following what she had done **if they do betray their husbands**. This Hadeeth is clearly in reference to the woman who betrays her husband.