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Home > Sexual problems of Youths > A problem called marriage > Paper marriages!

A problem called marriage

Barriers to spouse selection

In the name of God

Every youth faces these barriers

Statistics indicate that marriage (particularly in recent years) has considerably decreased, and in contrary, marriage age (especially in big cities and places nearer to civilization) has increased so that youth marry at ages when "enthusiasm" and "vivacity" has nearly faded, and the prime time of marriage has ended.

Of course, this is caused by various factors, the most important of which are:

- 1- Extended period of education
- 2- Possibility of illegal relations
- 3- Unavailability of needs of life (as desired) and heavy expenditures for marriage
- 4- Distrust between young boys and girls.

Here, we will study in details the first two parts which enjoy more significance:

Some social planners have proposed the plan of "Compulsory marriage" without making any effort and endeavour to study about the causes of this danger and the way to encounter it. That is, for instance to impose a kind of special tax on "singleness" to force the youth to accept family life; or to deny single youths employment in different institutions; or to consider other severe punishments for these youths!

Some youths ask us: What is your idea about this plan? Do you think it is an effective and proper solution?

We believe that if "compulsory marriage" implies application of some ways, like denying to single youths employment in different institutions, it may be slightly and temporarily effective in the current situation, but it would never be a final solution for the "dangerous event of decrease in matrimony". Rather, it may even create undesirable reactions.

Basically, "marriage" and "compulsion" are two contrary terms that are never compatible with each other. Compulsory marriage is like "compulsory friendship and affection"!

Is it possible to inspire affection and amity between two individuals compulsorily and forced by law?!

Marriage, in its proper concept, is a kind of spiritual and corporeal relationship for a peaceful common life in prosperity and sincerity. On this account, it shall be established in a free and optional condition, void of any imposition. Therefore, any marriage contract concluded without full satisfaction of both parties is repudiated by Islam.

Marriage is not like "military service" to dispatch one to the garrison and force one to learn military techniques under particular control.

It is strange that "planners" try to reform the present condition, which is the result of a series of social abnormalities without paying least attention to the causes of its occurrence.

We believe that even if such plans are practical, they are only considered as a sedative medicine, while "the main causes" of this event and "the causes of its causes" shall be found and eradicated.

Then, the present abnormal, illogical and undesirable situation of marriage would be automatically corrected.

Therefore, we have better to study each of the above four factors as the main causes of decrease in marriage independently.

Extended duration of education, the first great barrier to marriage of the youth

Although, we know that not all of those who escape the critical issue of marriage have the excuse of being engaged in education, but there are many who remain single even for several years after their graduation.

However, it is undeniable that the extended duration of education is a "big and important barrier" to marriage of many of the youth.

The educational period for most majors is more or less 18 years. So, when a youth graduates, he or she is about 25 years and is still "a youth seeking a job" (if we can apply the term "youth" in its real sense,

because he/she has passed the major part of his/her youth, and just a margin remains!).

It seems that in the future world, which is the world of expertise, this age may prolong and may even increase to 35 years!

Now, the question is whether "marriage" should certainly depend on "graduation" even if it is prolonged and extended more? Or this dependency, which is believed by some to be indispensable, shall be eliminated, and the youth shall be relieved from this very troublesome requisite?

On the other hand, how could a young student (who is a "consumption system" spending money and not a "productive system" having income) think of marriage with such heavy and excessive expenses? How can we deny the relationship of marriage to graduation?

We believe that if we think openly and avoid wrong imitations, solving this problem is not too difficult, and there is a clear plan for it, that is:

What is the problem if youths select their partners through consultation with parents and considerate friends during their education period (when they are at ages appropriate for marriage)? Then, a sort of legal engagement (conclusion of marriage contract as well as religious and legal formalities, exclusive of wedding ceremonies), not requiring luxuries and expensive costs could be arranged between them, so that the boy and girl know that they belong to each other and will be partners to each other in the future life.

Later, after preparation of facilities, they may accomplish the remaining marriage and wedding ceremonies in a simple and reputable form. The first advantage of this plan is that the youth may find a spiritual tranquillity and hope, and are saved from the dreadful monster of a vague future bothering many single youths.

On the other hand, it insures them against many moral aberrations and relieves them from wasting too much time in finding a suitable spouse when facilities for starting a joint life are provided.

It is possible for most youths to act according to this plan. If the parents are observant, the youth think properly and this plan is followed, a considerable part of their problems in this respect will be solved.

In summary, the legal engagement (conclusion of marriage contract) and nomination of a boy and girl to each other, enables the youth to satisfy a considerable part of their sexual needs in this way. The engagement period involves many advantages of marriage, and compensates a major part of sexual deprivation of the youth.

Thereby, the youth are secured from indecency and sexual perversions, without imposition of extra expenses on the girl's or boy's family, and free from the issue of pregnancy or any other problem for continuation of their education.

The other alternative is official marriage up to the last stage, that is, wedding ceremonies, but preventing conception through numerous available ways (most of which are lawful). The major problem of marriage for young spouses is conception, which is very troublesome for the youth when they are educating. However, all these plans are only practicable if marriage ceremony is celebrated in a simple form, without extra formalities, but not the present rituals and expensive marriage ceremonies for which there is not any logical justification.

This is the solution if parents and youth are really seeking prosperity. Waiting for graduation, then finding a suitable, honourable and profitable job, and provision of house, car and other equipment, and affording the high costs of luxurious marriage ceremonies results in the youth being tainted with thousands of perversions, as well as marriage at the age of 35 to 40, when one is nearer to the retirement period! This sort of marriage is exactly abnormal, lacking spirit and nobility, and it is not in harmony with the systems of man's existence and the times determined by natural instincts for marriage.

Decrease in matrimony, A great social tragedy

Decrease in matrimony, reluctance of the youth to marry and preferring the abnormal life of singleness, and more accurately what could not be called life at all, is a great tragedy for humanity, which has involved man of our age along with other negative impacts of automation life.

Decrease in matrimony is not tragic just for resulting in extinction or low generation, and we cannot reason that it is not a problem at present and perhaps within the next years, and on the contrary, increase in population is now a cause of concern (of course in the non-industrial countries, but not the industrial ones where population is extremely controlled)!

Its major disadvantage is that unmarried individuals lag behind others in view of feeling social responsibility. They do not belong to any society, and resemble those suspending and wandering in the immense space among the spheres in weightlessness!

They may forget their homeland for a little purpose, and immediately fly to another part, or even commit suicide when facing problems.

According to statistics, suicide occurs much more among the single than married people.

Brain drain is seen much more among singles that have not made any marriage contract with the society of their home country.

Most criminals are either single or live alone. In fact, matrimony prevents man from thinking that he belongs to himself and making improper decision about himself and his future, because he feels responsibility against the small society called "family".

"Lack of feeling responsibility" and "lack of social relation" have other evil consequences, the most

important of which is non-utilization and non-mobilization of all powers and forces for improvement and development in life. Not too much power is required for earning livelihood of one for whom there is no problem how to spend his life,!

This is the reason why the life of single individuals is mixed with depression, laziness, indifference towards obtaining and preserving life facilities, and activation of their genius.

Many weak-kneed and infirm who are unable to earn their own livelihood and live as burdens for the society when they are single, change to decisive, serious, firm, agile and observant persons after marriage. All these are miracles of feeling responsibility!

Emphasis made in "Islamic resources" indicating that "Wife is accompanied with sustenance" may refer to the same concept.

In this respect, we can compare the single to the "wandering nomads" who have never tried to improve the lands where they live temporarily and easily immigrate to another place.

From the moral point of view, the single will never be "Perfect Men", because many moral aspects, such as loyalty, forgiveness, manliness, affection, kindness, dedication and gratitude are realized in the family and joint life of the spouses and children. Those who have not experienced this situation are less familiar with these concepts.

It is true that undertaking the responsibility of joint life after marriage is accompanied with many problems and obligations for man, but is it possible for one to find perfection without facing problems and discharging responsibilities?!

The issue of responding to the natural needs of body and spirit, and the unfavourable mental and corporeal reactions caused by saying no to this need, is definite and certain.

Taking into account these undeniable realities, we have not exaggerated if we call tendency to "singleness" and continuous decrease in marriage a social tragedy.

On the other hand, the question is how we shall deal with the stalemates and strenuous problems that youths may have for fulfilment of this "natural and social obligation"? Is it still possible to fulfil this great and sacred obligation on time even in the present conditions of machine life, undue expectations, disagreement between parents and youth, educational conditions, unemployment and distrust of youths on each other?

These points shall be carefully examined, and the final resolution of this social dilemma is impossible without solving them.

The point that shall be necessarily taken into consideration here is that the current messy situation of marriage and its concerned problems are in fact what we and our society have created and imposed on

ourselves.

It has not rained from the sky or sprouted from the earth. We have established it as a result of competition, ignorance, improper pre–judgments, wrong calculations and involvement in a series of harmful habits, customs and blindly imitations.

Therefore, if we decide, we can change this situation, and establish a new plan based on realities and noble concepts of life, not based on imaginations, conjecture and wrong imitations.

There is no stalemate, no miracle is required, and correction of the current situation is not impossible.

Possibility of illegal relations is an important factor for decrease in marriage

Today, social life is not in a normal and proper form in most parts of the world, one example of which is decrease in marriage and preference of abnormal life of "singleness" by the youth.

As we have already explained, in addition to decrease in matrimony and expansion of singleness in the human generation, it is deemed a great disaster for human society in view of creation of a sort of life system without feeling responsibility, cut off from social relations, indifference to social events which are definite results of a single life.

If we add the moral aberrations in which many singles are engaged, the significance of this social problem will become more evident.

Now, let us study the main causes of this dangerous social event:

Undoubtedly, this abnormal situation is not the effect of one or two causes. However, some main causes attract more attention, one of which is the issue of "proliferation of illegal relations".

On one side, due to the facility of these relations for many youths, "a woman" has been changed to a mean, cheap and even "free of charge"! being who is easily accessible.

In this way, she has lost the value, significance and prestige previously rendered to her in the society, and she is not a precious and dreamy being attracting the youth to her anymore.

Women's increasing nudity in the modern world has contributed to her raunchiness. Although it may be a transient cause for attraction of the capricious men at the beginning, but it finally results in the raunchiness and cheapness, while this is in contrary to what these women expect!

On this account, in the current societies there is no trace of those pure, sincere and passionate loves which existed in the past, because man always finds fervent love to what is not easily accessible, and it is nonsense to love a mean, cheap and free of charge being, what to say about fervent and fiery love!

On the other hand, many licentious men may ask why they should undertake so many "terms" and "responsibilities" of marriage to gain access to a woman, while many of them are accessible without acceptance of any term or responsibility?!

Hence, since they are not familiar with the ominous consequences of sexual and moral licentiousness and see woman merely as a means of satiation of sexual desire, basically they consider acceptance of marriage and so many terms and responsibilities, a silly decision! and spend all or a major part of their life being single.

Taking into account these facts, the effect of "possibility and facility of illegal relations" on decrease in marriage is exactly clarified. In western societies, where this freedom and laxity is more, matrimony has decreased further. They marry when they are aged, and even these marriages are so weak and short–lived that it often dissolves for small and sometimes ridiculous reasons!

Victims of these shameful relations

In addition to what was explained above, there are always filthy and dirty elements in such societies, who prefer being single to a life of matrimony, called "centres of prostitution" that are an important factor for decrease in marriage as well as dissolution of families.

These filthy centres which are necessarily besides present unhealthy societies are a clear proof for abnormal temper and condition of these societies.

Prostitution and its centres shall not be discussed only in view of being a centre for expansion of immorality and spread of various types of corporeal and mental microbes.

Neither shall it be discussed in view of its effect on the marriage and tendency to singleness, although these aspects require precise discussion and study.

Rather, it shall be also discussed in view of the floozies who gather and prostitute in these centres.

Those who have had precise studies in this regard and have written books after extensive researches, confess that the situation of this group of prostitutes represents the most painful and grievous types of slavery in the middles ages.

They are excluded, forlorn and really helpless women, who are always indebted and burn day and night like a candle to illuminate parties of lust and sensualism, and finally die forsaken in the worst condition, and there is no one even for their burial.

Which conscience authorizes existence of such helpless slaves in the society when it claims to have abolished slavery?!

We shall not forget this pitiful slavery that has been regretfully recognized and affirmed by many modern

societies, is the result of facility of illegal relations.

Women bogged down in these fetid swamps of society are often the same victims of illegal relations, who are gradually led to these centres. The story of these women mentioned in some books is undoubtedly one of the most grievous tragedies and a blemish for modern societies, but unfortunately, it is less studied and discussed.

Therefore, for prevention of dissolution of families, fall and decrease in matrimony, and delivering these helpless slaves, this sort of freedom, licentiousness and possibility of illegal relations shall be prohibited. This is not possible save with provision of a proper program.

Considering the above facts, the dear youths shall care more for themselves and their friends, and pay no heed to the well-worn deceptive phrases uttered by unclean individuals for drawing them to these types of licentiousness.

Those who introduce this situation and these centres as a social necessity, and are going to reduce the obscenity and ugliness of prostitution, and rather call this illegitimate action a means of guarding the chastity of families!! and health of youths!!, are really wrong.

Is existence of a fetid swamp resulting in expansion of immorality and even corporeal diseases which are separated from the societies to prevent transmission of taint to the families, a social necessity?

Shackles for the youth

- It is true that ages have passed from the normal time of our marriage, but how can we marry while:
 - We do not yet have a car!
 - We do not yet have a job!
 - We have not yet saved enough money to cover the heavy costs of marriage, gifts for bride!
 - We have not provided a good place for our marriage ceremonies yet, and ... yet, and ... yet!
- How we can agree to the marriage of our daughter while:
- An ideal husband with sufficient income, honourable job, good position, house, ..., has not proposed marriage with her, and those who have proposed lacked one or two of these conditions!?
- Moreover, we have not provided required home appliances for her yet, and two or three of them, such as carpet, furniture, refrigerator, washing machine, iron, vacuum cleaner, sewing machine, are not provided yet!
 - Of course, in this situation, marriage of a girl is nothing save disgrace! God may not forgive our

society that has chained us so ...! What we can do when the troublesome and disturbing conditions in the society do not let us to act in a proper way?!

These are the confab or more proper to say that unreasonable pretexts and excuses of a number of youths (girls and boys) and parents for avoiding the critical issue of marriage. A scientist says: Life has two parts: First part is spent with hope for the second part, and the second part with sigh for the first!

It is better to apply the term "dream" instead of "hope", and say: The first part of life is spent dreaming about the second part, and the second part sighing for the first!

The clear example is the issue of marriage of many of our youths. They waste half their life finding an ideal spouse, and the other half sighing at the mistakes they committed in the first part. However, these youths and those parents that these shackles and false hindrances are established by no one save you!

You have established a vain and entirely illusory concept for conjugal life, and lost the "real" happiness and felicity for achieving an "illusory" one.

Be sure that as all experiments and experiences have proved, the boundaries and lines which you have drawn for felicity will never make you happy.

These competitions, blindly imitations, rendering authenticity to inauthentic affairs, glasses deviating proper vision to life, endless expectations, false dreams and deceptive mirages, all have shackled you and hinder you from accomplishment of the most essential task for a youth.

Should the youth and parents be decisive and brave enough to cut the chains of captivity in the claws of delusion, fancy, and dream, and break these idols, then they would find that they have achieved freedom of spirit and easiness, and how prosperous and happy they have become.

Can you find someone owning house, car and everything at his youth? Then, why do you expect yourself or your spouse to be so? That is right; there are some whose forefathers have been rich and they have inherited from them. However, since they have not taken efforts for gaining their wealth, fortunately or unfortunately, they will not be able to keep it.

Take it easy, and when the simple and reasonable requisites are provided, take action for marriage. We believe that marriage with simple ceremonies is easy and do not be surprised, even compatible with education, provided both parties understand the proper concept of marriage. They shall also understand that everything in the world of creation is gradual, and better conditions for life are provided little by little. Expectations shall always be in the frame of facilities.

It seems that the youth wandering in the byways of these dreams have forgotten that what is essential in marriage is existence of "two persons" understanding each other and the proper concept of life, and loving it.

Existence of the two basic factors, that is, two persons with proper understanding is essential. Otherwise, the other requisites and facilities would not bring happiness.

On this basis, our high religious instructions have not defined any condition for accomplishment of a proper marriage save existence of two sane persons (the spouses) willing to have a joint conjugal life, while you can see this simple task has been changed into such a complicated problem!

The other remarkable point is that the simple life of seminary students could be an evident practical example for the other youths. (Pay attention)

Around 99 percent of seminary students marry while undergoing studies, and although their courses at the seminary are very heavy and difficult and they are engaged in it full time, they can live in utmost purity and simplicity with the meagre allowance paid by seminary treasuries, or through agriculture or a simple job during summer, without facing with fateful consequences of loneliness, while they feel tranquillity and happiness in this respect.

Seven adventures of matrimony

- Many issues known to us as "unpleasant but meantime inevitable necessities" of life are the products of our illogical deeds and are often avoidable!
- Many snares which we suppose destiny has imposed for us are the same chains that we have made by our own hands.
- A major part of problems in our life is indeed obstructions, excuses, obstinacies, and even inflexibilities exhibited by us when facing events, but not real problems!

It is said that once Rostam, the Iranian epical hero, decided to conquer some parts of Iran that no preceding gallant conquerors had succeeded in.

During his journey towards the heart of this region, he faced "seven great obstacles" each of which was more terrible than the other. Once he faced the white demon, and once the giant dragon, and once the dangerous magicians. Finally, he passed them one by one with his strength and skills. He passed the seven stages (seven adventures) and overcame them. Ferdowsi, the Iranian epic poet has described and versified the story in *Shahnameh* with attractive delicacies.

The legend is a romantic representation of the mass of problems in a man's life, their abundance and intensity, and a plan for showing ways of overcoming these problems.

Nowadays, the issue of marriage and passing its obstacles is not easier than what Rostam did when passing the "seven legendary adventures". The only difference is that neither all youths possess the bravery and power which Rostam had for passing the seven adventures, nor basically they are so

decisive and determined!

As mentioned, no other social issue has so deviated from its original and normal form (with such harmful and disturbing embellishments) like marriage.

The groans, complaints and clamours of the youth and parents for the huge costs of marriage are mostly for these additional formalities. Otherwise, the basis of marriage is too simple, pure and sacred to cause so many problems and troubles.

At present, for many people, marriage is like mining "gold" from the mines which is mixed with impurity that it is not economical and does not worth such a trouble!

Impurities of marriage are the very competitions, wrong customs, transient humours and fancies, achieving unreal honour, prestige and personality.

Marriage has lost its main visage among the mass of problems. It is transformed to a "horrible monster" that not all individuals could bear.

Worse is that a few people dare to challenge these embellishments and impurities. In this respect, the educated are worse than the illiterate. Now, people are weaker and more disabled in this challenge as compared to the past.

Many people satisfy themselves with a wrong reasoning that "a man marries once during his or her lifetime, and could not celebrate it simply", or "let us realize our last desires, whims and internal tendencies"!

They ignore that when this wrong reasoning becomes popular, it changes into the greatest hindrance for felicity and happiness of the youth.

The youth shall pass the seven adventures of this long way just with their heroism, like Rostam, and break these magic spells. This involves seven adventures, including:

- 1– Unlimited and dreamy expectations; the expectations of girls from boys, and boys from girls, and parents from both of them
- 2- Raising undue embarrassments; by many of the parents, families, relatives and friends
- 3- Heavy dower sum
- 4– Extra formalities; for wedding ceremonies and the dangerous competitions
- 5- Petulance for being in the same and equal position and rank by two families
- 6- Fiery loves; which are uncontrollable and at the same time unconsidered

7- Excessive obsession; and lack of confidence and trust on each other in the future

When we reflect on these seven problems, we see that most of them are not concerned with the issue of marriage, but to its embellishments.

For instance, consider the issue of "matching and being equal in rank", which is a great hindrance for marriage of many youths, while it is only a mirage.

A 30 years old man who introduced himself as an "Oil Engineer", and agreed that he has a good salary, complained and groaned for failing to marry yet.

He said: I cannot select a wife from any family, because I shall find an honourable and prestigious family in the equal rank with me.

However, when I find such a family, they propose such terms, conditions and expenses for marriage that just an "electronic brain" can calculate it! ...

I asked: If you mean sufficient education and knowledge by "prestige, honour, ...", I can introduce you to many families having educated and able girls, ready to marry with those like you. If you mean having high human attributes, moral values and or interesting in physical and corporeal privileges, still there are many of such girls among the middle class but noble and honest families.

But I do not think you mean any of them. By an honourable and esteemed family, you may mean that her uncle shall be a general director or general manager, and her parents shall be rich, and have an expensive house and car! Is it true? ... I found that he meant the same.

I said: Then, making such a big mistake for evaluating prestige based on these affairs, and not human's actual privileges, it is not a surprise if you are in such a trouble!

It is interesting that in our Islamic traditions, "being equal in rank" with the wrong concept prevailed at that time among tribes and social societies, has been strongly condemned, and Islam has introduced faithful women and men, girls and boys in the same and equal rank.

We read in Islamic traditions:

A believer from any family, race and social class is in the same rank and position as the other believer.

Therefore, if the delusive ideas about class life and social ranking are eliminated, and both parties like each other for what has a human, logical and rational value, not for the positions of uncles and families, wealth, car and property of aunts, the problem will be surely solved. This applies to many other hindrances for marriage as well.

Strict Parents

These parents endanger the future of their darling children seriously!

Many parents who have spent their own youth with all its problems and troubles and are unaware of the storm existing in hearts of the youth (both girls and boys) for proper satiation of their sexual instincts, are very 'cool' and or 'strict' for the marriage of their sons and daughters.

Their 'coolness' and 'strictness', both branching from a single mental origin, are sometimes so that they call one year and five years delay 'a simple event and short term'.

They ignore that even a month or several days of delay in critical situations may change the fate of a youth.

It is not clear why these parents do not remember their youth?

Why they have forgotten so soon the storms and passion of youth before their own marriage? Why they do not suppose themselves instead of their young children?!

However, their self-comparison (assuming the youth as cool as themselves) is very dangerous and even costs too much and sometimes leads to insanity.

One of the major causes of escape of the youth from family, suicides, perversions and diseases is lack of attention to this reality. It is particularly true for the virtuous, chaste and faithful youth.

Parents' negligence of such youth is unfair and far from realism and farsightedness.

Indeed, the problems of marriage and its concerned responsibilities often cause parents to unknowingly ignore their understanding about the situation of youth and the crisis of their sexual instinct, or persuade themselves that its time has not come yet.

Sometimes, the painful consequences of this negligence will entangle them for the whole of their life, when there is no way for compensation and remedy.

The strictness of parents in selection of spouse for their children, their baseless and sometimes ridiculous terms and conditions for their marriage, originate from lack of recognition of necessity.

When one recognizes the necessity of something, he imposes lesser terms and conditions for it, and chooses principle of forbearance and connivance as the basis of all discussions and decisions. On the contrary, lack of recognition of necessity makes one inflexible and choosy.

I read in an article that some of the strict and fussy individuals even smell a car like meat or vegetables when buying! When they smell a car for buying, what would they do in selecting spouse for their daughter and son?

It is surprising that most often such parents are trapped in such problems they never expect.

The psychological reason is that only dishonest and ostentatious individuals can attract their attention through show off and boasting. Otherwise, healthy and normal people can never be so, and they can never win their hearts.

It is true that one should select his or her spouse carefully, and selection of a life partner is not like buying a cloth. However, there is a big difference between carefulness and strictness and obsession. When it seems that the other party is qualified for marriage, and investigation of the informed individuals confirms this reality, one should take action without any doubt, and just seek assistance from God. Then, the result will certainly be good.

According to the emphatic Islamic instructions for early marriage, as well as the command of intellect and extensive experiments of the informed, all parents are advised to avoid coolness and undue strictness, not to neglect the dangers caused by their strictness and coolness, and not to endanger the future of their dear children.

It should be remembered that the sexual instinct of youth is so powerful that negligence and carelessness about it may result in any sort of explosion.

Man's history and the daily life of men indicate that dangers caused by explosion of this instinct are unique and the most important and deep-rooted.

Who should select: The youth or parents?

This was my selection and that was my parents' selection!

This strange story was published in newspapers, while there are so many similar cases:

An 18-year-old bride who took off her bridal dress a few minutes before conclusion of marriage contract and after wearing a man's dress, she jumped from the window to the yard and escaped. Then, she went to a bathhouse in Narmak area, and cut her vein, but soon she was transferred to a clinic and was saved from death.

Later, she explained her story to police as follows:

I was studying in the high school last year, and was engaged to a young man whom I had selected. Last year, while reading the newspaper, I saw his photo and learnt that he was arrested for stealing jewels. I called his home, and after investigation, I found it to be true!

A month ago, one of my father's friends proposed marriage to me. He was a rich man of forty whose wife had recently died.

I had no interest in him, and expressed my view several times, but no one listened to me and my father

still insisted. Once I found that invitation cards for the wedding have been distributed I had no other alternative other than 'escape' and committing suicide.

There are two contradictory attitudes if marriage shall be approved by parents and the elders of family or this critical issue shall be left only to the tendencies of the youth, without any intervention

Let us first become familiar with both groups, and then find a proper way through inspection and study:

One group of youths says: Do our parents want to select a spouse for themselves that they should approve it? Everyone should select his or her own partner in life. Supposing that a girl is a heavenly angel in view of our parents, but she is worse than a monster if we do not like her!

Studies conducted by many social scientists and judicial authorities indicate that most marriages that end in divorce are those made in young ages, when choice of parents had been the only criterion.

Basically, an adult does not need any 'custodian' or 'administrator'. Suicide and running away of many girls and boys from the family is the result of this big mistake of parents, the example of which could be always found in newspapers.

If the youths were unable to distinguish right and wrong in the past and could not recognize what is expedient for them, today it is not so, and all of them know everything before maturity!

The mentality of parents is often out-dated, and not compatible with the spirit of time, and thereby, they cannot understand the preferences of a young girl or boy.

In brief, the parents should not intervene in this critical issue, and they should leave it to the taste, creativity and idea of their children.

On the other hand, parents say:

Even Plato and Avicenna were not perfect in their youth. That is to say, the youths are so optimist and simple-minded that they are easily deceived by elegant and self-righteous faces due to their innocence and sincerity. They do not know what devils are hidden behind these deceitful faces.

There are many perverted individuals who memorize the most beautiful phrases and the most enchanting and literary clichés, and repeat them with extremely masterful way to allure young boys and girls, and so-called 'spouse hunters', but when everything is over, they show their real faces.

Even the clever youths need a guide for marriage, because it is the first time they are experiencing it. They shall seek help of those who have traversed this path as it is dark and one should fear the risk of aberration.

Furthermore, parents are never enemies of their children. They consider their real expediencies, because they love them even more than themselves.

Even illiterate and uninformed parents are experienced and familiar with advantages affecting the future of matrimony, and are able to distinguish 'realities' from 'imaginations and delusions'.

Moreover, it is very shameful from the moral point of view if a youth totally disregards one who has devoted his or her power, alacrity and strength to him (and to whom he is indebted for his life) in such critical issue and pay no heed to their pure feelings at all. He should not just think of satisfying of his desires and select his spouse without parents' consent, and forget all his debts to them. This is not compatible with any 'human principle'.

However, we believe that none of these two views are fully realistic.

Neither the parents have any right to impose their idea on the youth in spouse selection, nor is it advisable for the youth to make this critical selection alone.

Rather, the proper way is to arrange and accomplish this critical issue through assistance consultation and exchange of views.

The parents shall consider the reality that selection of spouse is not just based on logic and reasoning. Rather, the main factor for this selection is a matter of taste, and certainly the tastes of two individuals, even two brothers, are very different.

An imposed marriage is unlikely to last long. Sooner or later, it ends in divorce. The worst and most dangerous case is when parents consider their personal interests in selecting the spouse of their children. Such people are absolutely wrong.

On the other hand, the youth should know that the fervour of youth casts blinds his vision, and he sees nothing except 'goodness' in that situation and ignores all 'faults'. The sympathetic parents and well–informed friends would help them with their intellectual contributions in this critical selection.

Even the powerful youths are not needless of the assistance of their friends, relatives and parents in the crises and events of life.

If they disregard this vital issue, they cannot enjoy their support and backing in future problems. So, it is necessary for them to earn their trust and confidence.

From ethical point of view also, they should obtain the consent of their sympathetic and kind parents. Islamic laws instruct (particularly the virgin girls), to first obtain their parents' satisfaction (father as an obligation). Of course, there are exceptional cases when the father wants to arrange a marriage against interests of his child for his personal interests, or when the marriage is in accordance with the child's interests, but the father intentionally obstructs it. In none of these cases, his opinion is valid, and it is not obligatory to obey him.

Fiery Loves

A danger in the youth's life

Many words have been expressed for love, magnificence and splendour of love, or insanity and disease of love, describing it with different and contradictory phrases.

Some great writers have eulogized it saying:

"Love" is the officer of life and eternal felicity. (German Goethe)

"Love" is the architect of the world. (Hezieh)

Toman Man speaks about the miraculous effect of love, and believes: "Love strengthens spirit and keeps man cheerful".

A number of great eastern philosophers have transcended others and believe: Any movement and motion, even the motion of cosmos and spheres in the transcendental world is caused by a sort of love!

If we interpret this term, in its extensive and general sense, that is, any sort of extra affinity and attraction, we shall approve their sayings!

Contrary to so many interesting interpretations and explanations, another group of writers and philosophers have applied the most offensive attacks and accusations for "love", and have reviled it at the level of a hateful disease.

One of the well-known eastern writers says: Love is a chronic disease like tuberculosis, cancer and gout, which a wise man should avoid!

Others, like the famous astronomer, Copernicus has said: If we do not call love a sort of insanity, at least we can say that it is an extract of disabled brains!

Finally, some like Carlyle have rushed on love heedlessly, and believe: Love is not only a sort of insanity, but also a combination of several sorts of insanity!

These contradictory descriptions for the term, which is one of the most popular in literature and poetry, and even ordinary utterances, should not be accounted for contradiction in judgment about a particular reality. Rather, the dissidence actually originates from the difference in the point of view of the judges.

In other words, each of these writers and scientists has discussed one of the facets of love which they have encountered more in their life. Therefore, we shall confess that:

If by love, we mean a powerful and extraordinary attraction between two individuals or in general between two creatures (such as human, animal, plant and lifeless thing) in the direction of a superior

objective, is it possible to imagine something higher than it'?!

Its power of creativity is so wonderful that it can leap over any hindrance, and pass any obstacle in the path of perfection and development.

They have admired love for such creativity and its great and unique power, as we know that many of the best literary, architecture and aesthetic masterstrokes were created under the influence of this emotion.

On the other hand, if by love we mean the powerful attraction leading two individuals to sin, stain, and fall into the marsh of vice and prostitution, it is really shameful and blameworthy, because removing its stains is not an easy task!

If by love, we mean the crazy attraction which completely destroys intellect and wisdom, it is really worthy of scorn.

Finally, love has different facets from various points of view. So, both its admiration and scorn could be appropriate and applicable.

Under the romantic covering of "love"

It is noteworthy for all sincere youths to know that nowadays, so many crimes and evils are committed under the pretty and romantic mask of "love"!

Any capricious, lustful and impure person may pretend to be a truthful lover. Any deceitful and two-faced monster having no purpose except satiation of his wild animal lusts may realize his satanic and evil purposes under this "veil" by applying romantic descriptions of this "term".

On this account, after realization of his dirty purposes, his real face is unveiled. He forgets what all he had said. There doesn't even remains any drop of those pure sentiments and fiery loves, just like a big vessel full of water which is overturned at once. There remains no trace of the heart full of affection, sick eyes with love, and thousands other claims. There remains only a deceived and regretful beloved with a world of sigh, grief and sorrow!

The youth should watch carefully for "false pretenders of love", who have no capital except lies, deception and tricks. They must note that there are many such people in the society, who copy a single letter full of lies and send it to several girls at the same time.

Not only girls, but the boys should also watch for various traps, where there is no way of deliverance, and it is possible to regret all life for one moment of negligence, undue optimism and submission to vain and false phrases. Those who are deprived of affection, submit themselves to such expressions of love very soon, and are thereby deceived and entrapped easily. They should watch out more than others.

In the next chapter, titled "Pitfalls of love", we will discuss additiona1 issues complementary to our present discussion.

Pitfalls of love

As we have already said, "love" means "a powerful extraordinary attraction" between two individuals, or generally between two creatures to achieve a pure objective. It is one of the glorious appearances of human spirit, and the most excellent masterstrokes of creation.

When marriage of two individuals is based on such fondness and affection; but a real and deep one and not a false and surface one, it will certainly remain steady. Such foundation is full of affection and pure love, and such marriages are fruitful, useful, reliable and comforting.

However, it differs with false and artificial love (which is apparently fiery) and the transient caprices, the final aim of which is illegitimate satiation of desires, and then forgetting everything.

Even in real love and pure fondness, there are great pitfalls, which should never be overlooked!

First pitfall

Ordinary affections have a powerful "whitewash" and cover-up effect, what to say about extreme and extraordinary interests!

That is, if we assume that man has two eyes of "satisfaction" and "hate", the latter is totally closed for one in love so that he (she) may explain the worst "faults" as the best "merits" through strange justifications and interpretations.

One who gives the least advice to these "restless lovers", will face a harsh reaction, because the lover thinks and believes that he has no purpose other than enmity, envy, meanness, ..., and so he opposes the other party.

The lovers usually think that they have found such perception under the grace of love, that the others do not have, and therefore, judgments and advices of others are the result of their unawareness and improper understanding as well as their wrong evaluation of the realities of life. Here, giving advice to such a lover is not fruitful and sometimes it is very dangerous.

When these 'fiery but baseless loves" are extinguished through sexual intercourse, the veils are drawn aside, and the eye of realism opens. It seems that the restless lover has awaked from a long deep and delightful dream.

The merits have been changed and everything has lost its previous pleasant and faultless appearance!

Then, an ineffable penitence and depression casts its heavy and disastrous shade on him/her. A choking

darkness and obscurity covers his/her spirit. Sometimes, the distance between these two states is so much that his/her whole life is buried therein, and one is so fearful that may commit suicide.

It is not easy to prevent this state and its side effects, and the restless lovers do not accept any advice. Intellectual reasoning is of no use to them, because their logic differs with that of the others, and the distance of their world with the others is so much that basically, no common language is found between them to understand others!

They only deal with the language of love, and others with the language of logic and intellect, while there is a big distance between the two.

However, their friends shall penetrate into their mind carefully and elegantly, without bruising their feelings, which is very dangerous. They shall discuss the issues with them indirectly, and mention the realities, problems and their mistakes in form of questions. We shall let the restless lover (engaged in his love wrongly) to return step by step from the path he/she has already trodden and let them think that they themselves have perceived the reality, and has come to know their mistakes, and return with their own will, not through the advice of others.

The youths too shall suggest to themselves the possibility of this great danger in the normal states to be settled in their unconscious decisively. Since the powerful waves of the unconscious mind do not stop in such critical states, when logic and conscious system fail to operate, it can help such people greatly, and deliver them from the danger of love. The youths shall suggest to themselves that they always respect the utterances of others (the sane and informed people), and rely on them in such cases.

Implicit agreements with such restless lovers and counting the positive points of their beloved, and confessing that they are not totally mistaken in their recognition, are very effective in attraction their confidence, so that they may respect the thoughts of their advisor and pay attention to his advices.

It must be kept in mind that humiliation and blame of such individuals has a very undesirable effect, and it should be strictly avoided. Moreover, it is ungenerous and unfair to blame and rebuke those involved in such a dangerous situation.

Wild love!

"Love" was wild and bloody from the beginning ...

Writers and poets have always called Love 'wild'.

Love, particularly a fiery one (it may not be called love if not fiery) does not recognize any limit or boundary. It transgresses social obligations, disregards moral concerns and is never compatible with prudence and advice.

That is why it is said: When love enters from one door, wisdom escapes from the other!

We have often found the story of "love" and "wisdom" and their conflicts in literary works.

That is why Carlyle, the famous British philosopher, rushes on love carelessly and calls it a sort of insanity or a combination of several types of insanity.

Otherwise, the magnificence and splendour of love, when it is applied as a powerful and creative factor, in the proper and legitimate way, is undeniable.

"Love" is known to be accompanied with "infamy" from the past, and there are popular stories about infamy of the "lovelorn lovers" among the past and present people.

Here, it would be better to have a short discussion about the mental causes of this issue, and find the source of this particular mental state, which is one of the requisites of love.

Love is like a fire which kindles the entire being of the lover, and changes all to its tint, that is the colour of fire. As if all faculties of the lover's being are transformed into a single power, that is, the power of love.

In fact, the power of love is indebted to general mobilization of all powers and their focus on one point. Man's various intellectual, emotional and instinctive powers originating from his being are like tributaries of a big river flowing in courses by virtue of the requirements of different lands. Obviously, if all the streams joined in one single course, the other lands dry up, and the single course floods!

On this account, the "restless lover" has no feeling and thought except the hot and fiery emotion of love. He always talks about the beloved. He seeks the beloved with all particles of his being, and any event with the least relation links him with the beloved in the form of a powerful association.

The dangerous stage starts from here when love does not accept any control, and the lover's being surrenders quickly and entirely to a powerful and plunderer host like a vulnerable and defenceless city.

At this time, if sympathetic individuals do not help and support him, and do not guide him to the proper and legitimate way, he may take any action, because he is indifferent to everything (infamy and fame, sin and purity) except the attainment of the beloved.

He neither thinks of the morrow nor his reputation, or friends, relatives, or the social and moral obligations and customs.

Of course, he is attracted to everything unaware and without any "ill-will". Even though he may lose the result of his past life or the entire future product in this transaction!

When he wakens (for impulsive loves, it happens shortly after sexual intercourse), he feels a rush of grief and sorrow for what he has lost and what he has done.

The dreadful regret for the past weighs on his mind and heart, but unfortunately, it is often too late and of no use.

The regret and awareness may be felt in the prison after committing a crime, or cutting off social relations and escape from home, parents and friends, living in solitude and or resorting to the centres of corruption and addiction,

The youths should beware of this big danger, which can begin with a glance. They should control themselves in the primary stages when it is controllable, and avoid the risky area.

They may forget the beloved through choosing healthy entertainments and hobbies, full time engagements in various educational, sports and similar activities, and should avoid associating with the ignorant and aberrant friends who kindle this fire, and think upon the evil consequences of this process.

They should keep the vacuum existing in their heart for a pure and sacred love to their future spouse, and absolutely avoid impulsive love affairs posing as sacred ones.

At this stage, their friends have an important responsibility to awaken them through friendly, endearing and empathetic ways before losing the opportunity of acceptance of advice and admonition.

"Love and fancy"

Many cases of running away from home, divorce and suicide are caused by inconformity of the lovely fancies with the future real life.

Any youth is subject to the danger of being involved in an unholy and indecisive fiery love, and may lose some of his distant and near relatives unknowingly because of it.

Therefore, all youths and parents should be warned against this danger to prevent it when it is possible.

Contrary to other seedlings, "love" grows and yields very soon. As we already mentioned, sometimes for those susceptible to it, a seed is changed to a strong tree only in an instant and just with a glance.

The particular quality of this spiritual event necessitates more investigation and watching carefully its dangers. Hereunder, we will study additional pitfalls of love.

Love and dream!

Nothing is as dreamy as love. Relationship between the two has been recognized from times immemorial.

Those involved in this trap are always living in a dreamy world, where everything differs from what exists in this world.

Its criteria differ with those of ordinary world, and its events and appearances shall be seen, not heard. However, the terms applied for normal life are not capable of describing the lovers' life. So many dreams of the "poets" and striking delicacies of their poems are indebted to the fancies of their real or unreal loves.

On the other hand, when they attain the beloved and see no trace of those sweet dreams, they understand that everything is at the real level or a little higher. They find remarkable realities, but nothing comparable with their dreams!

Then, they are overcome by fear.

A sorrowful coolness replaces the ardent fire of past love and squeezes their heart. They find themselves bankrupt in this transaction. Sometimes they think that they are deceived or mysterious spirits are fighting them directly or with the help of competitors and the envious.

At this time, they display drastic reactions, the severity of which is proportionate to the distance of that dream with this reality: running away from home, divorce, suicide or other acute reactions.

Love and expectation

Usually, the restless lovers spare no effort for their beloveds or at least are ready for it.

That is why when the fire of love is quenched, it is replaced by strange expectations, and since these expectations are never satiated, the lover complains and this changes their future life to a hell.

Love and revenge

One of the other great dangers of love is inflammation of severe and dangerous sense of revenge for desperation of attainment of the beloved.

There are many cases in the contemporary and past history in which lovers have committed slaughters, and the slain was none except the ex-beloved.

Turbulent love makes one worship the beloved as far as there is even a thin hope of obtaining the sweetheart. When he feels despair, and considering that it is not possible to extinguish this great power immediately, it is transformed to a severe stroke power (like a ball striking an obstacle and rebounding).

As he saw everything little and tolerable with the hope of attainment of his sweetheart, he does not fear anything in taking revenge from her in despair. Mostly, he does not rest without reacting. When he does not feel such power in himself, he may react through suicide. Thereby, he seeks revenge on either his beloved or himself.

These are some of the pitfalls of fiery, impulsive and indecisive love affairs.

Mercantile marriages

We were talking about marriage, the most difficult and tortuous stage in the life of youth, following by a discussion about love and its pitfalls. Now we continue the previous important subject.

It should not surprise you that there are several types of marriages: Mercantile marriages, impulsive marriages and paper marriages, etc.

Each of these has particular features based on which it could be easily and exactly recognized.

Symptoms of mercantile marriages are heavy marriage portions, rich dowry, water, property, house, real estate, other huge sums of money received as bride price (while from the Islamic point of view, bride price is basically senseless), or other things. Usually, two types of wealth and capital are exchanged in mercantile marriages.

- 1- Visible wealth
- 2- Invisible wealth

Visible wealth refers to the precise calculation of wealth of man or woman, and the near relatives like father, mother, brother, and in brief all of those from whom the bride and groom inherit!

In mercantile marriages, the wealth of these people are studied and calculated, and of course, after this transaction, the bride and groom wait for the properties of others like parents and brothers, and actually await their death.

On the other hand, invisible wealth refers to the social capabilities and various positions of the near and distant relatives of both parties which could be used as a means of progress in the society!

The value of invisible wealth is sometimes much more than the visible, but in this type of transaction, the bride and groom shall always pray for their relatives so that they can enjoy their support and recommendation when required.

It goes without saying that in this sort of marriage, humanistic attributes of both parties, their knowledge, and other things are not taken into account. Rather, all discussions are based on the assets and visible and invisible capital of both parties (particularly woman).

In mercantile marriages, the woman's personality falls to the level of a usual merchandise, and is transacted just like a commodity. Unfortunately, this sort of marriage is very common in our society, and many parents and some youths believe in it.

The other big problem with such marriages is that the reason for their survival is the same as that of their occurrence, and when the man or woman finds himself or herself needless of the other, or takes

possession of the desired wealth, the situation is immediately changed. Many cases are seen where men suck the spouse like a juicy fruit, and throw away the residue.

Sacred affinity and love that guarantees survival of matrimony is never meaningful to them, and both parties look upon each other as an expensive car or a luxurious apartment!

Such women have expectations proportionate to their wealth, position, and facilities of their relatives, and dowry. This is a great blight for survival of matrimony.

High frequency of such marriage has caused many youths to introduce themselves falsely as owners of expensive cars, houses, flats, etc. When, after marriage, it is revealed that he doesn't even own a star in the seven heavens, challenges and arguments begin.

This issue has been particularly taken into account in our religious teachings, and Moslems are strictly forbidden such marriages.

Our great leaders have denounced those marrying for wealth and property of the other party, and have called a heavy marriage portion as an ominous sign of marriage. They were satisfied with marriage of their daughters with materially poor but spiritually rich individuals and by setting little marriage portions they set an example for all of us.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.) says:

"One who marries a woman only for her beauty, he does not achieve his purpose, and one who marries a woman only for her wealth, God leaves him alone. Try to marry faithful and pure women." (Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, 3:6)

Whimsical marriages

Whim is one of the most important and at the same time most dangerous bases of marriage.

Whim should not be confused with legitimate sexual pleasure as the instinctive motive of marriage.

There is no doubt that most youths seek "sexual pleasure" in marriage, and based on the nature that has created such a powerful instinct in them, they are authorized to look for it.

However whim is something else. It refers to a series of wishful fancies and wrong and unwise calculations mixed with irregular fluctuations or abnormal and animal enjoyments.

Whim is based on the transient, unstable and even childish or foolish values.

The whimsical marriages often end up in divorce, because the guarantee for its survival is sometimes as unstable as a bubble!

There are many symptoms for impulsive marriages:

Whimsical magazines are full of this sort of marriages. Their pattern is sometimes cinema and films and sometimes marriages and divorces of singers and actors, while we know that cinema scenes and characters are nothing except unreal and made up and reality is something else.

But the capricious individuals take all of them seriously and base their life on these mirages and bubbles, and cause sufferings, discomforts and teasing others as atonement for these transient caprices.

Marriage with football!

Recently, there was an interesting and at the same time regrettable news in the dailies. A woman had filed a case against her husband. She complained that her husband loved football, and he attended all soccer matches. If unable to get a ticket he shall definitely watch it on TV or listen to the radio. When watching football on TV, he forgets everything; even his dinner, sleep, wife and child.

All the time he likes to talk about football, and nothing else: "He should have married football, instead me! I am tired of my life."

However, this lady who is the mother of one, does not know that her husband has married her for football! As she confesses, when she had gone to watch a soccer match, she saw him cheering the same team as her. Later they got to know each other more and then finally married. It seems that their spiritual common point was just cheering the same team!

Do you know what was the reply of her husband against this complaint? He said: "I am thus. You can stay and tolerate it, or take divorce and leave me!"

Paper marriages!

Another sample of whimsical marriages is that which begins from magazines and dailies. For instance, one may read in a daily: I am a 29-year-old lady. I am ...cm tall, ...cm at the waist, ... dollars of monthly income, interested in music, dancing, sport, picnic? I am willing to marry a black man with ... cm tall, handsome,

This advertisement may attract his attention and since he finds himself and the lady eligible, he contacts her through the magazine, and they marry.

Soon they would begin to think why they contented just with physical specifications, and neglected the humanistic attributes which are the main guarantees for fidelity and continuation of marriage.

Some marriages are a mixture of "impulsion" and "trade", and naturally include the problems and faults of both kinds. There is also a sort of political marriage, but we would be better to leave it unexplained.

Our great leaders have stressed on the spiritual, mental and moral privileges of the spouses, and

thereby called family training, nobility, spirit of dedication, kindness, sincerity, chastity, virtue, and faith, as the most important factors.

Once our holy Prophet told his companions: "Avoid the beautiful plants growing in the contaminated and foul lands!"

The companions asked: "What do you mean by these plants?"

He answered: "I mean those beautiful women trained in impure environments and tainted families (and lacking moral privileges and merits)."

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