

Chapter 28: The Events of the Second Year of Migration

Sexual inclinations appear in every individual at a particular stage of life and at times it so happens that due to lack of proper training and because of the availability of means to satisfy sexual appetite a young person finds himself at the edge of a precipice. At this stage there happen such things as ought not to happen.

Marriage is the best means for the protection of our chastity. In conformity with the law of nature Islam has also made men and women responsible to marry in specified conditions and has given various directions in this behalf.

The Holy Qur'an says:

Women and men should marry, and the fear of poverty and indigence should not stop them from performing this ceremony: Allah will make them rich. (Surah al-Nur, 24:23)

The Prophet says: "He who wishes to appear before Allah with a pure soul should marry".¹

He has also said: "I shall pride myself on the Day of Judgement over other communities on account of the excessive number of my followers".

Difficulties Of Marriage During The Present Age

Difficulties of marriage during our age are not a few. Men and women of modern times are not prepared to marry on account of unfavourable circumstances and adverse conditions. The national publications point out a number of problems in the frame-work of the family, but most of the difficulties revolve on this point that the men and women of our society do not intend to set up a family which should ensure their real prosperity.

Some persons wish to acquire high public offices and wealth by means of marriage. The thing to which

least attention is paid in these days is chastity and modesty, and though it may at times be taken into consideration, usually no importance is given to it.

The proof of this is that men are very fond of those girls, who belong to high families, although they may not at all be praiseworthy from the moral point of view, and many virtuous and pious girls live in extreme poverty in some corners of the society and no one cares for them.

Above all, there are the ceremonies of marriage which are a great source of harassment for the bridegroom and also for the parents of the bride. Another great difficulty is the question of dowry. Owing to these problems there are many persons who avoid marriage and satisfy their sexual appetite by unlawful means.

The Prophet Campaigned Practically Against These Difficulties

These are some of the social problems which exist to a considerable extent in every society and the period of the Prophet was also not free from them. The nobles of Arabia gave their daughters in marriage to those persons who were their equals in regard to pedigree, strength and wealth, and they rejected other suitors.

On account of this old custom the members of noble families were desirous of marrying Fatimah, the dear daughter of the Prophet. They were under the impression that the Prophet would not be severe in the matter of the marriage of his daughter, because, according to their own thinking, they possessed everything which could attract a bride and her father, and then the Prophet had not been severe with regard to the marriages of his other daughters (Ruqayyah, Zaynab etc.).

They were, however, oblivious of the fact that this daughter of the Prophet was different from others. She was the daughter who enjoyed a high position in the light of the verse (of Surah Ale Imran, 3:61) pertaining to 'Mubahilah' (contest with the Christians).

The suitors were mistaken in their thoughts, because they did not understand that only that person who was like her in the matter of piety and faith could be her equal and a match for her. As according to the verse of 'Tathir' (purification) Fatimah had been declared to be free from all sins, hence, her husband must also be masum (free from sins).

Wealth and material manifestations are not the standard of equality. Although Islam recommends that daughters should be given in marriage to their equals, but it also explains that their equality, should be in the matter of faith and Islam.

The Prophet had been directed by Allah to tell the suitors that the marriage of Fatimah would take place according to Divine orders and in offering this apology he removed, to some extent, their misunderstandings. The companions of the Prophet realized that the marriage of Fatimah was not a simple matter and none could marry her on account of his affluence.

They also became aware that her husband could be only that person who was next to the Prophet in the matter of truthfulness, faith, spiritual merit and moral excellence and such a person could be none but Ali. To put the matter to a test they encouraged Ali to ask for the hand of the Prophet's daughter. Ali also desired this and was only waiting to fulfil the necessary conditions before he made such a request.

The Commander of the Faithful went before the Prophet personally. Modesty and shyness had overpowered him. He had cast his head down and it seemed that he wanted to say something but was feeling shy. The Prophet encouraged him to speak and he made his purpose known in a few sentences. This type of suit is a sign of sincerity. However, our training institutions have not yet been able to teach the prospective suitors such freedom coupled with piety, faith and sincerity.

The Prophet agreed to meet the request of Ali and said: "You should wait a little so that I may mention the matter to my daughter". When he spoke about it to Fatimah she remained absolutely quiet. The Prophet then said: "Allah is Great! Silence means consent". In those days, however, Ali owned nothing except a sword and a coat-of-mail. He was advised by the Prophet to sell the coat-of-mail to meet the expenses of marriage. He gladly sold his coat-of-mail and brought the proceeds of sale to the Prophet.

The Prophet gave a handful of the money to Bilal, without counting it, to purchase some scent for Zahrah. He entrusted the remaining amount to Abu Bakr and Ammar to procure, from the bazaar of Madina, the necessities of life for the couple. They got up as ordered by the Prophet and purchased the following things (which were in fact the dowry of Zahrah) and brought them to the Prophet.

The Dowry Of The Prophet's Daughter

A shirt which was purchased for seven dirhams; a head-dress costing one dirham; a black bath-robe which did not suffice the entire body; a bed which was made of wood and date-palm fibre; two mattresses of Egyptian linen, one of which was woolen and the other was made of date-palm fibre; four pillows out of which two were made of wool and the other two of date-palm fibre; a curtain; a hajri mat; a pair of millstones; a water-skin; a wooden bowl for milk; a skin container for water; a green pitcher, some jars; two silver armlets; and one copper vessel.

When the eyes of the Prophet fell on these articles, he said: "O Lord! Bless the lives of those whose utensils are mostly earthen".²

The dowry of the Prophet's daughter deserves consideration. Her dowry did not exceed 'Mehrus Sunnah' which is five hundred dirhams.³ In fact it was an example for others i.e. for the girls and boys, who cry under the heavy burden of dowry and at times shun the obligation of marriage on this account.

The matrimonial life should basically become agreeable and pleasant by means of sincerity and love, for, otherwise, heavy dowry do not provide any brightness to life.

Nowadays the guardians of the bride subject the son-in-law to a heavy burden of dowry to strengthen

the position of the girl so that he may not on one day resort to divorce on account of his greed.

This action does not, however, provide total guarantee for the achievement of the said purpose and the real and true treatment of this malady is the reformation of the moral conditions of men. Our cultural and social environments should be such that thoughts of this kind do not take root in the brains of men. Otherwise, it so happens at times that the girl agrees to forego her dowry to get rid of her husband.

The Ceremonies Of The Marriage

A number of persons were invited from the sides of the bridegroom and the bride and Ali arranged a feast (walimah) in honour of his dear spouse. After the feast was over the Prophet called for Fatimah. She came before the Prophet feeling very shy. When her eyes fell on the Prophet her foot slipped and she was about to fall on the ground. The Prophet held his dear daughter by the hand and prayed for her saying: "May Allah protect you from all slips".

That night the Prophet displayed such devotion and sincerity, as is not displayed in the present societies in spite of their growth and evolution. Holding the hand of his daughter he gave it in the hand of Ali and informed her of the virtues of her husband.

He also made a mention of the sublime personality of his daughter and said that if Ali had not been born there was none else to match her. Then he divided the domestic affairs and the duties of life between them. He entrusted the household affairs to Fatimah and made Ali responsible for outdoor duties. The marriage took place after the Battle of Badr.⁴

According to some narratives the Prophet then asked the Muhajir and the Ansar women to encircle the she-camel of his daughter and take her to her husband's house and with this the marriage ceremonies of the greatest woman of the world came to an end.

We reproduce below a tradition which gives an idea of the high position enjoyed by the daughter of the Prophet.

Ans bin Malik says: "For a period of six months the Prophet used to come out from his house at the time of Fajar (dawn) and proceeded to the mosque and regularly stopped at that time in front of the house of Fatimah and said: "O people of my household! Attend to prayers. Allah desires to keep every sort of uncleanness away from you Ahlal Bayt (People of the Household)".⁵

¹. Man la Yahduruhul Faqih, page 410.

². Biharul Anwar, vol. XLIII, page 94, and Kashful Ghumah, vol. I, p. 359.

³. Wasa'ilush Shi'ah, vol. XV, page 8.

⁴. Biharul Anwar, vol. XLIII, pp. 79 and III.

⁵. Musnad Ahmad, vol. II, page 259.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/message-jafar-subhani/chapter-28-events-second-year-migration#comment-0>