

Chapter Five: Criteria of Spouse Selection

Whom May We Select As A Spouse?

Now we have reached the most sensitive and important point of our discussions! Whatever we have discussed so far was a prelude and prefix to this chapter. That is to say, whom may we select as a spouse? With what sort of qualities, peculiarities, standards and criterions, so that we may lead a prosperous life with each other, and be the cause of each other's progress, completion, and comfort?

This is the real stimulant and aim of our discussion. All our pursuits in these topics and discussions is that the youth (girls and boys) may select spouses in a way to be equal, well-matched and proportional to each other, and conventionally speaking they must go together well. If this condition is procured and secured, and this co-ordination and balance is realized, then the other matters and difficulties are comfortably solvable. If they do not slip at this stage crossing and traversing, then the other phases would be easy.

We can say boldly and daringly that most of the difficulties which appear in the family life” are due to the fact that the boy and the girl have made a mistake here and have not selected a spouse well-matched to themselves. Many spouses have been seen to be pushed into a state of misery and destruction due to an imbalance and lack of homogeneity. Most of the difficulties, controversies and conflicts in the selection of the wrong spouse.

Subtlety!

Brother, sister! As you intend to select someone to be beside you for the whole of your life, observe minutely whom you are going to select. No selection, in human life, after the selection and choosing of belief and school of thought, can reach and match the spouse selection in its importance and sensitiveness. This selection has a basic and fundamental role in your success and prosperity or misery and misfortune!!!

Do care, check, examine, and seek advice as much as you can. Be cautious and careful not to make a mistake. Beware not to take a sentimental decision. Be careful not to be subjected and affected by digressive factors. It would be very difficult for you to cope and deal with an unsuitable, unequal and heterogeneous, and inconsistent spouse. Do not ever tell yourself: “For now, let us marry! If we cannot live together in the days to come, we can divorce and separate!”

Drive such an idea totally out of your mind. Divorce is a very difficult thing and sometimes even impossible, particularly when there are children.

Encourage and uphold the idea that I want to choose a spouse with whom I intend to spend a prosperous and happy life.” You must burn your boats and accumulate and concentrate all your sense to choose a permanent and life long partner. Exercise extreme care!!!

As far as the recommendations about a quick and swift marriage, are concerned, which we discussed in the previous chapters, it does not mean haste, disregard and neglect. Instead, speed must be with precision, accuracy, and carefulness.

And these two (speed and accuracy) are not contradictions to each other; instead, it is haste which is in contrast to precision.

Subtlety in Selection, Smoothness In Marriage

When we consider the collection of laws of Islam with regard to marriage, we conclude that:

Islam has commanded to be easy, lenient, indulgent and simple most of the matters pertaining to marriage; such as dowry, wealth, ceremonies, rituals, and customs, but it has ordered carefulness in 'spouse selection'. For example.

“Be lenient ... do not exercise extreme care.”

“The best marriage is the easiest one.”

“The best of wives are those whose dowry sum is small and their expenditure and upkeep is low.”

“But when it comes to the discussion of 'spouse selection' and 'its criteria and standards', Islam says be very careful.

إياكم و خضراء الدمن

“Avoid the greenery (herbs) growing over a sewer (cesspool).”

إياكم و تزويج الحمقاء

“Avoid marrying stupid and silly (insane) ones.”

فانظر ما تقلده.

“See what you are putting around your neck.”

And tense of other caution and warnings.

So be completely mindful and alert that these two kinds of ordains are not mixed up and taken erroneously. Leniency and easy attitude have their own place; whereas minuteness, precision, carefulness, and strictness have their own. Everything is suitable in its own place.”

Criteria of Spouse Selection

We must have certain standards for the selection of a spouse. That is to say, girls and boys must have criteria and know what kind of spouse they wish to have and with what qualities and virtues. This is the actual work. It is much like someone who wants to travel, so he must fix and specify his destination and then start the journey. But if he only knows that he needs to travel but does not have any aim, objective or destination in his mind, he wanders around and gets lost.

There are two kinds of standards, qualities, and specifications that should be taken into consideration when selecting a spouse:

- (a) Those which are the pillars and foundations and definitely required for a prosperous life.
- (b) Those which are the conditions of attaining completion, and are necessary for the betterment and welfare of life and are mostly relevant and dependent upon the taste, style and the status of a person.

Now we consider these standards, criteria and qualities.

First: Religiousness (From The Fundamental And Inevitable Factors)

He who does not have religion does not have anything whatever he owns and possesses, he is considered and evaluated as 'nothing'. An irreligious man is actually a 'moving dead body'. The person who is not committed and bound to religion, which is the most real matter of life, there exists no security and guarantee that he would be committed to the rights of his spouse, and be bound to the norms of a shared life.

A religious and pious person cannot go along with an irreligious spouse and have a prosperous and blessed common life. A pious person may possibly tolerate and bear other shortcomings of the spouse, but can never bear and accommodate the irreverence and recklessness of the spouse.

Yes, if both of them are without religion and heedless to the laws of religion, it is possible. But their lives would never be successful. Prosperity is absolutely impossible to achieve without honesty; absolutely impossible to achieve without honesty. Absolutely impossible!! Yes, they might have accepted something as prosperity and consider themselves as prosperous, but this consideration is 'sheer ignorance.' That is to say, they are in fact unfortunate and miserable, but they think they are blessed and successful.

Anyhow, a religious and pious person wants a religious spouse. If one is religious and the other, irreligious and uncommitted, they will not become prosperous.

Of course, being religious means being so in the real sense of it. Meaning being absolutely committed to Islam, accepting it from the core of one's heart, and practicing upon it, not the shallow, rootless and feigned religiousness.

A reflection of the Prophet's (S) saying:

A man came to the Muhammad (S) to seek guidance in connection with the selection of a spouse. He (S) said to him:

عليك بذات الدين.

"It is (binding) upon you to have a religious spouse." [1](#)

On another occasion, he (S) ordered all people of all ages:

"It is binding upon all of you to select a religious spouse."

And again in another case he (S) said:

من تزوج امرأة لمالها وكله الله إليه, و من تزوجها لجمالها رأي

فيها ما يكره , و من تزوجها لدينها جمع الله له ذلك.

"A man who marries a woman for the sake of her wealth, Allah leaves him in his own condition, and the one who marries her (only) for her beauty, he will find in her (things) which he dislikes (displeasing matters) and the one who marries her for the sake of her faith (religiousness), Allah will gather up all these things for him." [2](#)

There is an elegant and subtle point in the tradition; that is, if he marries her (only) for her beauty, he sees unpleasant things in her.

Perhaps these 'unpleasant matters' mean that the beauty of an irreligious wife would be the cause of a bad name, scandal and disgrace. The same beauty that was the stimulant of marriage with her becomes the cause of nuisance and dishonour.

Question And Observation

At this stage, a question and objection comes forth; that is, if being religious is the real standard of success, then why do we see many religious ones who do not lead good lives and their lives are disturbed and unhappy?

Answer

Firstly, religiousness (devoutness) means real religiousness. That is, we take only such a person as religious whose entire practice, speeches, morality, and all the rest of his life's matters are subject to Islam. Such an individual would really be decent and gentle. Islam is the law of Allah for the prosperity of man and if followed and practiced, it does positively bring felicity and blessings. Islam is not merely a set of a few obvious practices that anybody performing them may be a real religious one.

Secondly, it is possible that the fault be at another place, which means they may be really religious, but lacking some qualities and peculiarities being the condition for prosperity of the shared and common life. For instance, they might not have ideological, moral and physical co-ordination, homogeneity and harmony. Because, whilst being religious is the real standard, there are some other criteria, which must be observed when selecting spouse. (These will be described soon).

Thirdly, the difficulty and fault may be present at the other end. That is to say, you may know one of the two spouses as a religious person and not know the other one and be completely unaware about his or her spirits. Perhaps he or she is not really religious and the root of the difficulty lies there.

Fourthly, one of both of them may be suffering from a nervous or spiritual disease. These disease cause many difficulties in the joint life. Religious people too, having been affected by certain factors may suffer from ailments and nervous and spiritual complications.

Anyway, being religious and pious is the basic condition and quality of a suitable spouse and there must be a thorough enquiry and contemplation about it before marriage takes place.

The Fruit of Religiousness

This quality and virtue has many other fruits. That is to say, religiousness is like a root or origin, which has many branches and fruits.

(a) Piety: A religious person is positively pious; and if he is not, then he is not religious one.

(b) Veil: The veil is from the fruits of the 'tree of religiousness'. The Hijab (veil) is not only specified for

women and girl, boys and men too must wear a (spiritual) veil. To sum up, the veil of a woman and a man has some differences which exist due to women's physique, being bodily more attractive, and the physical and sexual differences between the two sexes.

(c) Nobility

(d) Modesty:

“The one who does not have modesty lacks religion.” So the one who has modesty, does have religion as well.

What Should The Irreligious Youth Do?

All that has been described so far, regarding the standards and the first virtue (religiousness) was mostly related to the pious ones. so what should the irreligious youth do?

Answer

Firstly: They must also become pious and practise like the pious ones. Religion and faith are the provision and stock of the world and prosperity in the hereafter. So it is obligatory for every sane man to attain this provision. Any amount of research, study, investigation and consultation taking place on this road is worthwhile. Just as the human intellect and mind deems it fit that man must search and endeavour for the sake of earning a livelihood in this material life, so does it demand to seek the way of eternal bliss.

Secondly: The irreligious youth must also possess some of the qualities and merits of the religious ones. The man who is not bound to faith and religion, must take into view some of the merits of the pious ones when selecting a spouse. For instance, an irreligious spouse must too possess modesty, nobility, and sexual purity; otherwise their lives would become full of misery, distress and difficulties. This is because even irreligious persons cannot tolerate immodesty, impurity, debauchery and libertinism (unless they may have negated humanity, in which case, they are out of the scope of our discussion).

The more a person is modest, noble, and clear, the more he is religious, although he himself may not be aware of disbelieve.

Modesty, nobility, purity and all the virtues and peculiarities, which are considered positive and

beautiful are a part of religion. In any case, nothing can be permit and allowance to marry an immodest mean, vile, dissolute, and impure person.

So the irreligious and faithless persons must at least practice the first part of the standard of religiousness; that is, modesty, nobility and sexual purity.

We, at the end of this chapter, shall again talk about it.

Second: Morality (A Basic and Positive Specification for Both Parties)

Morality does not alone mean to be conventionally booming and smiling and good-natured, since laughing on certain occasion is not only anti-morality, but also immoral. Instead, morality means good etiquette and lovely habits and virtues from an intellectual and religious point of view.

Status of Morality in Spouse Selection

The Prophet (S) said about the virtues and qualities of a suitable and decent spouse:

إذا جاءكم من ترضون خلقه و دينه فزوجوه و إن لاتفعلوا تكن فتنة في الأرض و فساد كبير

“When someone with whose morality and religion you are pleased comes to you (for marriage), conclude the marriage. If you do not do it, then a great commotion and disturbance and corruption would take place on earth.”

Please observe that the prophet of Islam (a.s) described 'morality' and 'religion' as two real standards and criteria of marriage and spouse selection. These two are the foundation of prosperous life and the importance of other standards follows them.

A Muslim, named Hussain Bin Bashir Baseti, wrote a letter with the following content about a person who had asked the hand of his daughter in marriage, to Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s) and enquired as to what his duty was in the matter:

“... A person from among my relatives, who is ill natured, has asked the hand of my daughter in marriage. What must I do now? Shall I marry my daughter to him or not? What do you say about it?”

Imam wrote in response to his letter:

“If he is ill natured (bad tempered), do not marry your daughter to him.”

You see that Imam (a.s) responds distinctly, vividly, and negatively due to this one vice. To live alongside an ill natured and bad tempered person is similar to a life long vigorous imprisonment. The bad temper of one of the two spouses affects the other and the children as well.

Specimens of Decent and Indecent Behaviour

Now we discuss the meaning of 'decent attitude' an morality in detail and describe two example of these so that the meaning of morality when it comes to spouse selection is illustrated and explained explicitly.

1- Using Decent and Indecent Language

Using foul and dirty language, insolence, and talking disrespectfully, carelessly, and abusively are specimens and indication of bad temperament and immorality, whereas sweet language, soft conduct and talking respectfully are the symbols of morality and good character.

As a matter of fact, 'the tongue' is the representative and translator of one's internal conditions.'

“The same matter trickles out of a pot which is inside it.”

It is not possible that the interior of a man be sound, healthy, and pure but his tongue be dirty, foul, abusive and pungent. The tongue is the window, which exhibits the contents of the interior. Man's tongue is the mirror of his heart.

2- Magnanimity and Jealousy

Jealousy is the important indicator of ill nature, and magnanimity and generosity are the salient specimens of good character and morality.

3- Sweet-Naturedness and ill-naturedness

Leading a life with an ill natured and bad tempered person is very difficult and life with a sweet natured and well-behaved person gives pleasure, enjoyment and hope. A good nature is one of the sign of faith and ill-naturedness and impoliteness is the manifestation of a weakness in faith.

Of course, as has been described in the beginning of this discussion, good-naturedness or smiling is not always and everywhere a sign of good conduct. For instance, the mirthfulness of women and men in the presence of an unfamiliar person (stranger) is against morality and is highly disagreeable. And similarly, laughing and making others laugh through backbiting, slandering, mockery, and describing others' errors is illegal, prohibited and against moral values and Islamic ethics.

4- Accepting The Truth And Stubbornness

Stubbornness and obstinacy inflicts heavy damages upon family life.

5- Wise Humility And Stupid Pride And Arrogance

6- Truthfulness And Lying

7- Grace And Deliberateness And Ungraciousness And Debauchery

8- Forbearance And Impatience And Incapaciousness

9- Favourable Opinion And Mistrust

10- Being Warm And Affectionate And Being Apathetic

11- Forgiveness And Hostility

12- Respect And Disrespect

13- Boldness And Fear

14- Politeness And Rough Attitude

15- Faithfulness And Disloyalty

16- Generosity And Parsimony

17- Contentment And Greed

Answer To A Question

Question: What is the way to discover these virtues? In other words, what course must we adopt in selecting a spouse so that we choose a person with the required virtues?

Answer. Refer this discussion to the sixth chapter where you will find the answer to this question.

Third: Nobility of the Family (A Fundamental and Unavoidable Condition For Both Sides)

Family nobility does not mean fame, wealth, and social status. Rather it means modesty, purity and religiousness. Marriage with someone is equal to a bond with a family, tribe, and a race.

It is not logical that in connection with marriage one says: "I desire to marry this person and have notion do with his or her family, relation, and tribe", since:

1- This person is part of the same family and tribe and is the branch of the same tree. This branch has received its nutrition and growth from the roots of the same tree. It is certain that most the moral, spiritual, intellectual and physical qualities and specifications of that family have been transferred through heritage, training, environment, habits, etc to this person.

The prophet of Islam (S) said in this regard:

تزوجوا في الحجر الصالح فإن العرق دساس.

"Marry from a decent family, for genealogy affect very much."

At another place he (S) said:

أنظر في إي شيء تضع ولدك فإن العرق دساس

“Investigate very carefully and minutely as to where you will place your place your child, for genealogy affects very much.”

2- Even if you do not have anything to do with them, they would have something to do with you!

Never can you detach your spouse from them. Neither can you yourself cut off your link with them. You must be associated and linked to them for a whole lifetime. If the spouse's family are a wicked and corrupt people, they will agonize the person. And one cannot totally refrain and put an absolute constraint upon their interference in one's life, and on the bonds with them.

3- Their good or bad name and reputation remains attached to a person for the whole of his life and does have effects upon it. It will be much too difficult for you to endure and withstand their bad name.

4- Their qualities and peculiarities have effect upon the future of the children.

The Muhammad (S) said in this connection:

إختاروا لنطفكم فإن الأبناء تشبه الأحوال

“Choose a proper and suitable place for your semen, because children become similar to their maternal uncles.” [3](#)

Brother and sister! You must never be subjected to sentiments and emotions and take decision in that condition regarding important matters.

If 'spouse selection' is excluded from the influence and hold of intellect and reason and is placed into the realm of sentiments and superficial views, it would be followed by misery and misfortune.

Now you are positioned and stationed on the threshold and doorway of a great change. Minutely think and contemplate what you are doing, now you wish to connect your future with a family. The result of this linkage should be progress, completion and prosperity, not downfall, retrogression, and misery. See the glorious prophet of Islam (a.s) with the eyes of your heart, addressing you, and hear his alarming and warning message with the ears of your soul, as he said:

“The prophet of Islam (S) stood to deliver a speech and said,

“Oh people, beware of the greenery (growing) upon a dung hill. He was asked “Oh prophet of Allah (a.s), what is the greenery on the dung hill?”

He replied, *“A beautiful woman raised and brought up in a bad nursery (family).”*⁴

We have seen many youth who have been deceived by the apparent and outward show and have thrown themselves into sewers and marshes from where the exit has become impossible.

Question and Answer

Question: We have observed that sometimes decent, nice children come of bad families and indecent and wicked children come from good families. Why?

Answer: Yes it is as you say, but this happens only sometimes and is an exceptional event. Sometimes a flower blooms in a bad place and a thorn does in a good place. But laws cannot be based upon exceptions. What we describe is on the basis of majority.

Secondly, these exceptions have common roots with their principle. Without doubt, the effect of these common roots is there in their existence, which may not appear in normal situations and circumstances, but do become apparent in turbulent and abnormal conditions.

Thirdly, if somebody is sure that this branch is different from the main tree, and similarly he may be able to separate and detach this branch from the origin, and does not permit that his or her family have any role to play, interfere in his or her future, and so on, then he or she can marry. But it is not everyone's job.

Another Question

So what should the children of corrupt, impure and immoral families do? Shall they remain unmarried?

Answer

The detailed answer to this question will come at the end of this chapter.

Forth: Reason (Basic Condition for Both Parties)

A sound and healthy mind is need for the sake of bringing about a prosperous life. Intellect is like a flashlight, which illuminates the avenue of life and projects and shows the ups and downs of it, so that one can take suitable decisions about them. Intellect is the medium of distinguishing between goodness, wrong and evil. Spouses must be equipped with the power of mind and reason for the sake of administrating and managing a correct life and bringing up and raising decent children.

The commander of the believers Ali (a.s) staunchly and strongly forbade marriage with a foolish and insane person.

إياكم و تزويج الحمقاء فإن صحبتها بلاء و ولدها ضياع

“Avoid marrying a stupid person, since her company is a woe (calamity or distress) and her children are also wasted.”⁵

Imam described two important point in this Hadith; one is that the company of a foolish spouse is distress and woe which makes a wise man miserable, and the other one is that of the waste and loss of her offspring, since genes affect them by way of heritage and simultaneously, their training, conduct, and character to are lost.

Notice!

It is possible that a person is educated but not wise an sagacious, or wise but not educated. That is to say, being educated does not necessarily mean being sage and wise, just as intelligence is not the same as being educated. Of course, knowledge and mind mutually affect each other. Many a time, a person may be educated but lacks reason and insight into life. At the same time, another one may be uneducated but have the reason and wits to organize and run one's life. And if these two (reason and education) get together, it is so much better. Similarly, some of the craftiness and cunningness must not be taken for intellect, and the doer of those be named intelligent ad sagacious.

Meaning of Reason as Defined by Imam As-Sadiq (a.s)

He was asked, *“What is mind?”*

He said:

ما عبد به الرحمن واكتسب به الجنان

“It is a ting by which Allah is worshiped and paradise is achieved.”

The questions asked: *“So what was it that Moawiyah (Allah's curse be upon him) possessed?”*

Imam said:

تلك النكراء وتلك الشيطنة، وهي شبيهة بالعقل وليست بالعقل

“What he had was deception (trickery) and craftiness and that has a resemblance with reason but is not the reason itself.” 6

An Unpleasant Specimen

A girl, who had a weak intellect but apparently was beautiful, was engaged to Ghulam. Right from the time of engagement, Ghulam became aware for the weakness of the girl's mind and wanted to change his mind and give up the idea of marriage with her, but her beauty and charm had dazzled his mind.

Anyway, the marriage took shape. After a certain period of time, the difficulties started, because the pretty girl who had charmed Ghulam with her beauty, which had filled up all the gaps and shortcomings of the girl in his opinion, was unable to withstand the continuance of that condition and could not take the place and responsibilities of a wife. That woman could not play the role of a sympathiser, companion, and helper of her husband, as a wife. Their lives became colder with each day that passed until they had a child.

Usually after a child enters a family, life becomes sweeter and more hopeful. But not only did not occur in their lives, but their difficulties and hardships increased, because the woman did not have the capability and potential of bearing children and could not be a good mother for the child.

Ghulam took his wife to a psychiatrist for a check up (whereas he should have done it before marriage).

The psychiatrist diagnose that the wits and mind of the girl was low and equivalent to half her own age and that she was not curable. It is clear that such a life cannot continue. In the end, Ghulam divorced his wife and the innocent child became motherless.

A More Unpleasant Specimen

Hamida was a religious, sagacious, wise and honourable lady who was faced with a characterless, cunning, libertine, and witless person. She was greatly agonized and distressed by the character and conduct of her husband.

The husband earned money by unfair and illegal means like forgery, fraud and unfair mediations. Hamida was extremely perturbed and terrified about his doubtful prohibited earnings. Her husband did not mind having unlawful and illicit relation with other women, whereas she herself was a pure, noble woman and was much pained and distressed by the anti-moral activities of her husband; yet, she guarded the reputation and honour (of the family) and kept silent about it.

A few years passed in this manner and for all her endeavours she could not reform and set her husband aright. On the contrary, the wealthier he became, the more corrupt and debauched he became. At last,

her patience came to an end, and she could not no longer tolerate and stand his bad, evil character and unwise conduct and finally left him.

But alas! She was no more the same Hamida she used to be before marriage. Her felicity, sound mind and joyous spirit were withered and destroyed by that witless devil.

(فاعتبروا يا أولي الأبصار)

“O you watchful people, take lesson!”

Fifth: Physical and Mental Health

Physical and spiritual health has an important role in the success and prosperity of the joint life of a couple. Some of the ailments do not have much importance and are not hurdles and hindrances in performing marital duties and responsibilities. They do not give any shock or blow to life and one can bear them, or they can be cured and remedied by treatment and looked after.

Our discussion does not pertain to such diseases. Instead, those which must be taken into view while selecting a spouse are chronic ailment and deformities and disabilities, both of a physical and spiritual nature, which are incurable and accompany a man for the whole of his life, and where their endurance and bearing difficult for the spouse. Moreover, they are constraining factors in playing the perfect role of a spouse.

A spouse must love his or her mate to have a good life, and some defects and deformities hinder this love.

Letting this matter go unnoticed and having a sentimental and unreasonable attitude to may cause heavy loss and damage to life.

Consider This Miserable Specimen

Hadi was a healthy and enthusiastic youth. He married a girl who had a physical deformity. He was aware about it before the marriage, yet being overwhelmed by sentiments, and not contemplating the consequences and the other dimensions of the matter, he, through pity and sympathy, accepted to perform a good deed by marrying her.

After a certain time, the man started making excuses. The physical defect of the woman was such that it affected his sexual satisfaction.

Hadi was shy to say distinctly and clearly what troubled him. And so he made other excuses. The confrontation and disputes increased. These differences and tussles were on hand, while on the other,

the women felt very humiliated due to her deformity. Thus she began to suffer from spiritual and psychological diseases too. The complications increased with the passage of time.

Hadi consulted me about the problems in their lives, and believed the psychological and nervous ailment were the real factor of their differences and difficulties, not as a disease, but in the form of his wife's faults. But I knew where the actual difficulty was.

Psychological treatments were undertaken, but the differences continued, until Hadi's energies failed and he could no more tolerate and carry on with that life. He married another girl.

Now, as I write these lines, that poor girl lives in her father's house. She is neither divorced nor does she have a joint life.

Islam has prohibited marriage with certain patients. For instance, those carrying diseases like leprosy, madness, etc. which are the cause of spouse misery and the destruction of the future generation.

Question and Answer

Q: So what must disable and deformed patients do? Should they always remain spouseless?

A: At the end of this chapter, and similarly in the discussion under the topic of 'sacrificial marriages' which is located in 'chapter 6' we will Insha'Allah, answer this question.

Sixth: Beauty

Beauty is a distinction and has an exceptionally great effect in sweetening and making marital life prosperous. When persons, as spouses and helpers, want to raise a prosperous and felicitous centre and live together with love, purity, and intimacy for the whole of their lives, it is necessary that they should like each other from every aspect and must also like each other's physiques, faces and apparent looks.

Beauty does not have a certain standard and fixed scale and lacks a 'law of criterion' so that individuals may be judged by that; instead, to an extent, it is pertinent to the taste of the individuals themselves. It is even possible that a person is beautiful from one person's view and ugly from that of another. It is said about

Laila and Majnoon (two lovers) that Laila was an ugly girl from the point of view others, but from Majnoon's she was pretty. So the quality of beauty is a relative quality and it must not essentially be at the loftiest grade. Instead, what is necessary is the mutual liking and attraction of the two spouses. If a person does not like the apparent looks and the face and figure of his spouse, he may unintentionally commit excess upon her and find faults and criticize her, making her life bitter.

The beauty of the spouse has effect on protecting and strengthening the modesty and faith of the

spouse. If a spouse is pleased with the beauty of his spouse, he would not divert his sight, mind and practice towards others and would not envy others' beautiful spouses. As a result, he would not go after strangers and would not commit dishonesty with his wife (both men and women), unless he comes out of the course of nature and does not have a share of faith and modesty.

Islam has emphasized and stressed this point. The Prophet Muhammad (S) said:

إذا أراد أحدكم أن يتزوج المرأة فليسأل عن شعرها, كما يسأل عن وجهها, فإن الشعر أحد الجمالين

“When one of you intends to marry a woman, he should ask about her hair, just as he asks about her face (beauty), since the hair is one of the two beauties (of women).”

And similarly, it has been recommended that the spouses beautify and decorate themselves for each other and please and satisfy one another to remain safe and sound from deviations, corruption, and debauchery.

When one of the infallible Imams has coloured his blessed hair with Henna (dye made from a shrub), someone surprisingly asked him, *“Have you beautified yourself?”*

Imam (a.s) said: *“yes! Decorating and beautifying (oneself) increases the modesty of women.”* [7](#)

Indifference and carelessness toward these matters may bring about miseries and scandals.

It is necessary to discuss love and sexual problems separately, which we will do in the chapter under the topic 'Love, the axis of life'.

Note

Beauty should be considered beside other qualities and standards, no as an independent one. That is, beauty devoid of religiousness, modesty and morality is not only unappreciated as a distinction, but also is a dangerous calamity. Beauty is taken to be a perfection, worth and distinction for someone, only when that person is equipped and decorated with religion, morality, modesty, nobility and reason, otherwise it is a defaming affliction.

Beauty lacking modesty is greenery growing upon a dung hill. The saying of the Muhammad (S), which has been described, is very suitable here:

“Avoid the greenery growing over the dunghill (heaps of dirt).”

Similarly, *“The one who marries a woman for her beauty (only), he will see unpleasant thing in her.”*

'Beauty' is not considered one of the basic and independent factors in marital life, rather it is a 'quality of

perfection' which if accompanied by fundamental and basic qualities has worth, otherwise no!

Regrettably, sometimes this quality dazzles the insight of the youth and they sacrifice most of their values upon it. The apparent attractions and charms deprive them of farsightedness and make them fascinated and enchanted, so that having forgotten the real and actual standards, they neglect those. Thus they raise the structure of life upon a weak and unstable foundation.

As a consequence, after a period, when that freshness and apparent attractions have a fall and, on the other hand, the enthusiasm and emotional storm of passions also subside, then dismay and disagreements evolve on the scene and the displeasing factors and peculiarities become obvious and evident.

But for the person who establishes his life upon the foundations of faith, religiousness, modesty and the real and noble values, and considers beauty as a 'completing distinction' the passage of time cannot wear out and erode that life.

إن الذين آمنوا و عملوا الصالحات سيجعل لهم الرحمن ودا

“Surely (as for) those who believe and do good deeds, for them will Allah bring about love.”

Allah places such and intense love and immense and profound fondness as a reward in the hearts of faithful spouses that cannot be wiped out and annihilated even by the termination of youth's livelihood.

ما عندكم ينفد و ما عندالله باق

“What is with you passes away (finishes) and what is with Allah is enduring.”

The relation that is established on the basis of Allah's values is an eternal and everlasting bondage and those contrary to it would be unsteady and unstable.

Seventh: Knowledge and Education

Knowledge and education have a great effect on the prosperity and felicity of man. Being educated and gaining knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim man and woman.⁸

This specification is the focus of attention in spouse selection and a joint life and is considered to be a distinction for a decent and suitable spouse. It also has a deep effect on attaining perfection and the progress of life, performing marital duties and the bringing up and training of children.

But this peculiarity (like beauty) is the condition of perfection, not its foundation and should be considered beside real and basic qualities and standards, not independently. All that has been

discussed about 'beauty' stands valid and is true this discussion as well.

Knowledge, short of commitment and faith is always harmful, as is beauty without faith and modesty.

That which is important in this topic is the proportions and equality of learning between two spouses, which will Insha'Allah, be described in the next discussion, i.e. 'equity.'

Eighth: Being Each Other's Match (Equity and Proportionate Ness)

It has been said in the beginning of this chapter that this part, (standards of spouse selection), is the most important chapter out of all the discussion. And now we say that the vitally important part of the discussion is 'equity and balance between the two spouses.' This is the most sensitive matter to concentrate on while selection a spouse.

Equity between the couple means: a proportion, balance, co-ordination, concurrence and congeniality between the boy and the girl, and conventionally, the harmony of a man and woman to get along together.

Marriage is a form of combination between two human being and two families. Joint and common life is 'a compound' thing, the actual and basic elements of which are the man and the woman. The more the harmony, co-ordination and congeniality of thought, spirit, morality and physique in this compound, the more its strength, enjoyment, fruits, positive consequences, stability and continuance. The less the ration of its consistence, the more life would be unstable, bitter and fruitless.

The main cause of the miseries, turbulence and turmoil of family life is due to the lack of co-ordination and proportion between men and women.

Two people who join each other's company and wish to prolong this company for the whole of their lives and share all matters, taking joint decisions, bringing children into existence, training them and making them reach prosperity must definitely be harmonious, concurrent, and congenial and have reciprocal equity.

Regrettably, in the wake of the spouse selection problem, conventional goodness is usually taken as sufficient and less attention is paid to the equity and balance between the boy and the girl; whereas this is the axis and pivot of the standard of spouse selection.

There are only a few people on our society who are completely incapable of marrying and having a spouse. All boys and girls have the capability and capacity for marriage, but all that needs to be taken into consideration is which girl suits which boy.

These problems that we see all around us for e.g., that such and such a woman has difficulty with her

husband and their life is disturbed and in a bad shape, or that such and such a man has conflict with his wife and is offended and annoyed with her and they pass an 'unwanted' and 'undesirable' life, are due to the fact that mutually proper and suitable spouses were not chosen. If this had been done, these difficulties, odds, conflicts and family disturbances would not have existed or at least, been minimized.

“The persons who, before their marriage, endeavour to study their spouses and find spouses who are suitable and proportional for them and are conventionally their counterparts have solved a part of their post marriage difficulties and problems regarding children training. Otherwise, they save and secure the difficulties which could be solved before the post marriage period.”⁹

Attention

A hundred percent co-ordination and congeniality is not possible, since every individual has his own mind, spirit, morality and character, specific environment and family and has a certain distance and difference from the other one. But an attempt should be made to lessen and reduce this distance to a minimum, so that the two spouses are as close to each other as possible.

A Lesson-Giving Example

Before arriving at the instances and cases of 'equity' and 'compatibility', I wish to describe a self-witnessed example, closely touched by me. I was present at all its stages, so that the topic will become clear and conspicuous, and the ground for the later subjects is levelled.

Ismail and Safoora were both religious, good-natured and committed to Islamic values and the Islamic revolution, but their views about these issues were different.

Ismail had been brought up in a village environment along with its rural culture, rites and ceremonial specifications and was committed to the peculiarities of his social cradle. Safoora had been bred and brought up in a large city along with its peculiar, typical atmosphere of rites and rituals. Each of them looked at the world from the window of his and her personal perception and ideas. No spiritual, moral, educational, physical, familial or cultural harmony existed between the two. So much so that their points of view about Islam and the Revolution, to which both were committed, were different and a vast (ideological) gap existed between them.

A mediator had introduced them for marriage. He did not have any negative intention and did it as a religious duty and for the pleasure of Allah. But regrettably, he did not have any information about their spiritual, physical and social harmony and congeniality. And so he was unsuccessful in his introduction and mediation and this did not result in a good life for those two.

Ismail and Safoora married. And right from the beginning of their joint life difference and conflicts and tussles started taking shape. Ismail said there were things important to her (Safoora) that did not have any importance for him, and there were things important to him, which did not mean anything to her.

Safoora too held the same opinion.

Both of them were highly educated with good academic career, but they had a vast difference of opinion on various topics and version of knowledge. Each one of them had their own particular ideas and styles regarding family linkages, bonds, relations and the visits of guests, which were quite distant from each other.

Their views and conduct about the problems pertaining to children's education and training, too, were completely diverse and dissimilar and they could never practice in a common, uniform and co-ordinated style. Neither of them would step down from the height of his opinion and approach, and conventionally, neither of the two gave in to the other's yoke.

Many times their case was presented for the judgement of others, where they put forward their problems before family consultants, and yet they never reached any understanding and agreement.

Finally, one of their consultants and advisors who was very cautious and rarely advised the separation of a wife and a husband expressed that they should separate, saying, "His life is not sustainable, and there is no alternative except separation."

At the end, Ismail and Safoora separated through divorce! And this event took shape at the expense of a victim and that was their child.

Salient Points of Incoordination of Ismail and Safoora

- 1- A cultural and ideological distance (difference of opinion about ideological, social, and educational problems).
- 2- A spiritual and psychological differences.
- 3- A difference of style and taste in various matters.
- 4- Sexual and physical dissimilarity (one of the two was sexually strong, having a hot and active temperament, while the other one was weak, and could not satisfy and saturate the other. One of the real and important causes of their conflict was this problem. The one who was not satiated and saturated was shy and too modest to express this matter clearly, and relieved the pressure at another place and in fact, avenged it elsewhere.
- 5- A moral difference
- 6- A beauty problem. One of the two was unhappy with the other's looks, figure and beauty, although the other side was satisfied. This factor too had quite an effect and role in their differences and conflicts.
- 7- A difference with respect to the families of each other. (None like the family and relatives of the other

and had difficulties having relations with them).

Refuting a Doubt

We, in any case, do not want to establish that a villager is not an equal and good match for a city inhabitant. And we do not mean to imply that a city dweller is superior or vice versa. There are many citizens and villagers who marry and lead good lives.

And many times two city dwellers or two villagers do not have any mutual harmony and co-ordination. Rather, what we mean to say is that spiritual, ideological, and physical harmony is important and essential between two life partners. Moreover, what must be viewed in selecting spouses is equality (balance of the personalities of the couple).

Piety and divine values are the standards and criteria of superiority, nobility, and graciousness.

إن أكرمكم عند الله أتقاكم إن الله عليم خبير

“Surely, the most honourable of you with Allah is your most pious one”. (49: 13)

Conditions of Compatibility

Now with the explanations given, the ground for the description of the case of equity and harmony between girl and boys have become ready; so will divide the topic of equity and explain a few of its details.

1-Religious Compatibility

A religious woman who is committed to the laws, principles, and derivatives of Islam must marry a man like herself. Of course, a hundred percent proportionality is not possible, but the closer they are and the less of a distance, the better.

A man questioned the prophet of Islam (S): “Whom must we marry?” He replied:

الأكفاء

“Those suitable (good matches).”

He asked, *“Who are suitable matches?”*

The Muhammad (S) responded:

المؤمنون بعضهم أكفاء بعض.

“Some of the believers are the matches of each other.”

We see that the Muhammad (S) described faith as the standards and real foundation of being a match.

Imam As-Sadiq (a.s) said about Fatima Zahra (s.a):

لولا أن الله خلق أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام لم يكن لفاطمة كفو علي وجه الارض، آدم فما دونه.

“Had Allah not created Ali (a.s), there would have been no match and equivalent on the earth for Fatima (s.a), from the age of Adam (a.s) to the end”.

If a faithful person marries a faithless one and cannot convert the latter to become religious, either he has to become homogenous with the spouse and become faithless and be in a permanent state of confrontation and conflict; both situations being a great loss. The children too, who are the outcome and production of such a turbulent and disturbed life, do not reach prosperity and blessing.

Question and Answer

Q: Can it not be that a faithful and religious person marries and irreligious spouse and guides her? Has such a case not yet taken shape?

A: (a) If someone finds such energy in himself and is sure that he or she can make it, then there is no harm to materialize such a marriage. Even though this is a desired and required practice and has a great reward, not everyone possesses all that vigour and energy. Attaining this confidence is also not an easy thing. If such a case (exceptionally) takes shape, it is not a justification for others to follow it. And this exception cannot be generalized to cover all people.

(b) It is quite possible that the situation reverses and the irreligious one makes the other take up his or her colour.

Some of the reasons described by Islam for not marrying an irreligious one are as follows:

لأن المرأة تأخذ من أدب زوجها و يقهرها علي دينه.

“Because the woman is influenced by her husband's conduct, and he forces her to accept his belief.” [10](#)

The man, too, accepts the effects of his wife's belief and morality and his wife may make him perform irreligious activities. How long can a man resist and combat the unfair and unlawful wants and desires of his wife? One cannot fight that all his life and vigorously combat against it. We know of plenty of cases

where the irreligious and careless wife made her religious spouse miserable.

(c) Of course, there exist some exceptions as well where a religious and faithful spouse has guided his or her irreligious life partner. So far so good. But exceptions cannot overwhelm the majority, and rules and regulations cannot be founded upon them.

2- Cultural and Mental Compatibility

Cultural and mental understanding and homogeneity has a basic role in the joint life of a couple. The architects of this center should be able to understand each other and their mysteries and intents, for the sake of bringing into effect a dynamic, fruitful and felicitous life. Moreover, they should take joint and harmonious decisions in most problems and practice upon their bases, be mutual helpers in the ups and downs of life, and train their children on the basis of a harmoniously designed programme.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (a.s) said:

العارفة لاتوضع إلا عند العارف.

“An intelligent and wise someone must not be placed except beside a sage and wise man.”

We have observed the harms and damage caused by the mental and cultural lack of co-ordination between the spouses.

Of course, a 100% understanding and concurrence is still not possible, yet one must endeavour to get as near to it as possible and diminish the distance.

3- Moral Compatibility

Moral homogeneity and harmony is of the most important cases of equity between a husband and wife. It is possible that the wife and husband are equal and compatible from a religious aspect, but not from moral aspect.

Attend To This Specimen

Zaid Bin Haresa, the adopted son brought up by the Prophet (S), married Zainab, the cousin of the Prophet (S) The husband and wife held a lofty place from a religious point of view. but they did not have and understanding from a moral aspect and so conventionally speaking, their moralities were not harmonious. They had severe difference and disputes. The Prophet (S) admonished them and suggested to them many times to build up mutual understanding and compatibility. But this young couple did not have the endurance and energy to put up with each other. Finally, Allah mediated and separated them through divorce.

There is no doubt that these two; husband and wife were decent and nice people. As far as the decency of Zaid is concerned, it is sufficient that the Prophet (S) adopted him and had a great love for him and sometimes called him by the name of 'dear and beloved Zaid.' With regard to the decency of Zainab, it is sufficient to say that Allah Himself had her married to His prophet (after being divorced by Zaid).

وَإِذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِي أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَتُخْفِي فِي نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ وَتَخْشَى
النَّاسَ وَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَاهُ ۗ فَلَمَّا قَصَى زَيْدٌ مِنْهَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجْنَاكَهَا

“ And when you said to him to whom Allah had shown favor and to whom you had shown a favor: Keep your wife to yourself and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; and you concealed in your soul what Allah would bring to light, and you feared men, and Allah had a greater right that you should fear Him. But when Zaid had accomplished his want of her, We gave her to you as a wife..” (Holy Qur’an, Sura al-Ahzaab, 33:37)

We observed the moral disagreement of Ismail and Safoora too.

As a result, we must not think that the religiousness of the husband and wife is sufficient for establishing a successful (marital) life; other aspects must also be taken into consideration.

4- Educational Compatibility

It is better that a husband and wife should not have much distance and difference from an educational and informational point of view, so that they have more understanding in their lives.

Of course, this quality must be considered along with other qualities and peculiarities. That is, if, for instance the woman is proud and shallow, her educational qualification should not be higher than that of her husband, since this would certainly bring about ample difficulties in their lives. But if she is humble, there is less chance and probability of this difficulty. As to the husband, this problem exists in the same shape with a little difference.

A Lesson-giving Specimen From the “Mirror Of Lesson”

These days when I am busy teaching and writing this book, a TV program named 'Falling Leaf' is being broadcast from the serial 'Mirror of Lesson'. Although I do not wish to support the whole of this serial, there is an attractive point in it, which is appropriate to this part of our discussion. That is, Afsana's higher level of education compared to Ali. We see how Afsana belittles her husband Ali who has less education than her.

And what painful difficulties have come into existence in their life. The higher education of Afsana does not have any good or benefit for their joint life, rather, it is a means of harm. Had Ali married and equally

educated girl and Afsana married a boy of her own level, most of their agonies and disputes would not have taken shape.

5- Physical Compatibility

Balance and proportionality of the physique and sex has a great importance in the life of spouses. Sexual problems are one of the real and fundamental organs and pillars of marital life. Mutual sexual saturation and satisfaction of the husband and the wife has a deep and profound effect upon their lives, just as dissatisfaction and lack of saturation has destructive and dangerous effect upon the total sum of marital life.

If they satisfy and please each other from this aspect, they would be thankful to each other and put their duties and responsibilities into practice and tolerate the odds of life. But if they are displeased in this regard, they may hate each other and be disappointed and inter in respect of the performance of the responsibilities of life. This is a major point, which is regrettable belittled and overlooked in most of cases, or it is passed by shamefully and shyly and consequently causes terrible shocks.

If one of the two spouses is sexually and physically strong, having a fervent and fiery passion and the other one is weak and frigid, most of the matters of their life become upset and unbalanced. There is also a strong probability of corruption and deviation. This lack of balance and proportionality incurs heavy damages and shocks their nerves and spirit. If we wish to explain and illustrate it with more explicitness, it would prolong the book, whereas we have based it upon briefness. But it must be considered explicitly at its own place.

True, we must not describe such sexual problems in a naked shape, heedless to modesty, as is customary in some of the non-Islamic societies, but these must be discussed modestly. Did the Prophet of Islam (S) and other leader of Islam not describe these problems in a clear-cut and detailed way to teach the people? Can the youth and spouses be overlooked, not given information, defenseless in the wake of this important matter and essential need”?

Just as we have a specialist for each and every organ of our body, with referral points and places for all the partial or total matters and problems of the society, why should there not exist centres and specialists for such affairs of life, family and physical, sexual and spiritual difficulties of the youth and spouses? is the importance of this problem even less than a tooth for which we have all these specialists, dentists, and well-equipped laboratories?

We have seen a number of examples, which by studying their difficulties and profound and chronic differences of marital life; we reach one sensitive point and that is, sexual displeasure and dissatisfaction! Then it is observed that the real and actual cause of all the discomforts is this very point. But they feel shame in expressing it vividly and openly. And in some cases they do not even know themselves what is harming them.

When we observe that married men and women commit sexual corruption, and develop illicit and illegal relations with strangers and we detect the roots of this affair, in most cases (though not all), we discover that the reason for these was sexual dissatisfaction and non-fulfilment.

One of the main reasons for the deviation of Zuleikha and her inclination towards Yousef (Joseph) (a.s), was the sexual inability of her husband.

There exist a large number of variant cases, which I have personally observed that I have avoided and overlooked due to various reservations.

Anyhow, the physical sexual equivalence and equity of the boy and the girl must definitely be taken into consideration while selecting spouses. One of the two should not be strongly built, hot and fervent and the other a weak, withered, and frigid one. Instead they must be physically and sexually balanced counterparts, so that they are able to satisfy and saturate each other.

Moreover, it is necessary for the spouse to acquire the required information in these matters, to get information from those who are informed and seek help and advice if confronted with a difficulty.

Attention

Nervous and psychological ailments are amongst the basic causes of sexual weaknesses. The traces of these ailments are definitely present in all the modes of sexual weakness and inability, such as hasty and immature discharge, imperfect sexual intercourse and the inability of satisfying the spouse.

These diseases must be treated by expert psychologists and psychiatrists. This topic is quite vast and has broad spectrum and needs detailed discussion so at present we will not enter into it.

6- Equality of Beauty

Attention to the harmony in the beauty of the face and figure between the two spouses is also necessary. If one of the two is beautiful, handsome and proportionately figured and the other one is ugly and badly featured and figured, there is a probability of displeasure and difficulty for both. Spiritual difficulty and a sense of sexual deprivation, frustration, deviation, immodesty, and depression for the beautiful one would exist. Please take into what has been described about the sixth attribute (beauty) previously in this chapter.

7- Equality in Age

A balance and equity of ages must also be considered in the selection of a spouse. The difference in the age of sexual puberty in males and females is a natural phenomenon. Boys generally attain puberty four years after the girls.

The equity and matching of the ages of the boys and the girl relates to the difference of age, not the

uniformity of it, since this difference has been placed in their creation. Of course, observing a difference of four years in age is not obligatory; instead, it is better if it is there. This quality should be added to the total sum of attributes for consideration and contemplation. It is possible that the age of the girl is not less than the boy (to this extent), but she may have other peculiarities and distinctions to compensate for the shortage.

8- Economical Equality

A common custom could be discussed here which is: It is not advisable for there to be a large gap and difference in the monetary positions and status of the two families of the boy and the girl.

We know ourselves pretty well that we become unbalanced and off track by laying hands on an amount of wealth and material sources. We start to be proud and boast of favour to others and humiliate and belittle them. Why must we deceive ourselves then? Commonly, if a poor or an economically average boy marries a girl from a wealthy family, he must become their servant, whereas, if a poor girl marries a boy from a rich family, she must become their maid.

Of course, there are a few exceptions, of which we shall talk at the end of this chapter.

9- Family Equality

Just as has been formerly mentioned, in the discussion of 'Family Nobility', marriage with a person is equivalent to having a relation with a family and a race. So the families of the boy and the girl must have proportionality and be equivalent from religious, social, and moral aspects.

10- Political Consistency

For instance, those believing in and adherent to the Islamic revolution and the system must not marry anti revolutionary and anti system families, although they may apparently be religious, since they would definitely come across difficulties. Either they have to quit and abandon their beliefs and become harmonious with them or they must face, confront, and have a permanent debate and tussle with them, both of these being a waste and loss.

The Islamic revolution was born from Islam, and opposing the roots and origins of this, is opposing Islam. Of course, those who are committed to the origin of the revolution and the Islamic system and might sympathetically criticize some matters; we do not consider them to be the opponents of the revolution.

11- Social Consistency

The person who is learned, knowledgeable, associated and connected with research and wants to spend his life in the field of learning and research, whose family and social life has the same composition and is fabricated in the same way and who has a profound investigative spirit must never marry a person

of a family whose social spirit is a pompous, aristocratic, and ceremonious one or to those who are used to luxurious life, pompous invitations, bizarre night vigils full of passion, and excessive, extravagant journey and programmes of enjoyment and entertainment. We have seen many persons who made this mistake and were deluded and fell prey to misery and affliction.

Of course, it is necessary and essential to attend to the entertainment of life, and the same person who is engaged in study and research should not remain heedless to this aspect of life.

Ayatollah Jawadi Amuli used to say: "According to Islamic traditions, determination and extravagant invitations do not exist with each other." It is not possible that a student and research scholar and investigator reaches a place and position through luxurious living."¹¹

We know some friends who, through mistakes and neglect, married girls who themselves, or their families, were people with luxurious and ceremonious modes of life. Conventionally speaking, they were from the well-off strata and even if they were not from that group, their spirit, training, and social conduct was not concordant with knowledge, piety, and contentment. As a result, their lives became entangled in affliction and painful displeasures, and in some cases, were shattered.

The saying "*birds of a feather, flock together*" may look to be quite and ordinary and indelicate expression, but it has a great truth in it.

It is true that the superstitious stratum distinctions are void, but human societies have variant spirits, training and social or ethical behaviours, which cannot be denied.

[A Considerable Specimen](#)

Mr ... is a learned and wise researcher and has a probing spirit. Having lived a joint marital life of a few years with Mrs... and having a few children ultimately reached divorce. That man describes the actual cause of their separation as such:

My job is in a scientific and research role. I work, like any worker, nearly ten hours a day in connection with my research. My wife did not have any interest in my work and would always arrange entertainment programs and wish me to join them. I used to tell her, "Just as a building labourer, carpenter, blacksmith and grocer go to their work early in the morning and come back home in the afternoon to offer their prayers, have lunch and take a rest before going back to their prayers, have lunch and take a rest before going back to their workplace to hand over the products of their work to society, I too feel myself committed to putting in the same amount of effort, spending my working hours in the library, busy with the research assignment and yielding its production to society.

I too spent the same amount of time in entertainment programmes as they do, not more. My wife did not appreciate this logic stand, and pledge of mine and insisted on me joining all her scheduled programmes. But I did not submit to her will, since I considered my assignment more important than that,

until such time as we could no longer live together.”

The marriage of those spouses who do not have social and mental harmony is harmful to both of them. You can see in the affair described, that both have faced loss and neither of the two can be recognized as the defaulter. Because that researcher and learned person can not be denounced for not surrendering to his wife's programs, and neither can that wife not be rebuked for not becoming a learned research scholar, withstanding the researchful life of that man's life dedicated to research.

Even if they wished, they could not possibly have become homologous, since each one of the two possessed a specific and particular kind of spirit, training and objectives. They considered prosperity and felicity and obligation in what they practiced and could not appreciate the other one's stand.

But what is indisputable is that both of them had one fault and error, which is that they should not have married in the first place. If each of them had married a homogeneous person, they would have been quite relaxed and comfortable. The man should have married a knowledge loving, studious lady of research, and the women should have married a man of worldly living, entertainments and material enjoyment.

Perhaps at the time of proposal and marriage they were not conscious and aware of the essentiality of ideological and social harmony and co-ordination between a husband and a wife. They married in a state of indifference and heedlessness.

Ayatollah Ahmadi Mianji used to say: “The religious scholars who were ascetic men, their wives were ascetics. But if their wives did not remain contented and pressurized them and demanded more, those scholars could not have been ascetics.”

The wife of Allama Tabatabai had a major effect on his progress and success. Allama had a simple and ascetic life and their house was a rented one; yet his wife, for all her worth and regard was convinced about Allama's course of knowledge and research and accompanied him with utmost forbearance, affection, and fortitude until the end of his life.

12- Psychological Consistency

In this section, we benefit from the letter written by a worthy brother who did not allow us to print his name:

Spiritual and psychological harmony is one condition of equity. In more elaborate and minute terms personalities of various persons have been categorized into many groups. One of the most prominent of them is the categorization of internal and externals. Of course this is a scientific discussion, which should be given shape by benefiting from the views of experts and specialists. What can be briefly said is that the two categories are relative phenomena and, as a matter of fact, it is a spectrum, which can be graded from 1 (Sheer internal inclination) to 100 (sheer external inclination). From the other side, sheer

interior inclination (isolation) and exterior inclination (selflessness) are undesired upon the Islamic standard of values.

So we must say: It cannot be said, for a desired Islamic life, that the internal person and external person should marry persons from their own category and group. Instead, a balance should be established. But to constrain future confrontations and a lack of understanding, there should not be much of a distance. That is to say, the mutual distance should not be more than 20 or 30 degree. For instance, the one whose degree is 20 on one scale shall not have a comfortable life with someone who is located at 80 degrees on the same scale (a difference of 60 degrees).

13- Future Equality (Future Must Also To A Possible Extent Be Taken In View)

It is possible that a boy and a girl are equivalent and proportionate at the time of proposal and marriage, and apparently there may not be any considerable non-co-ordination and heterogeneity between them, but after a few years of marriage, a change or variation takes place in their life and consequently, a disharmony and discord brings about difficulty. So what must be done in these cases? How must future disharmonies be prevented?

The changes that occur in individuals and loves are of two forms:

1. Unpredictable Variations

Some changes and variations take place in the lives of certain people, which are unpredictable even though one might be the most foresighted person. Such kinds of occurrences and happenings need a specific reaction and a special decision and their suitable solutions should be sought. Such cases are out of the scope of our discussion.

Predictable Changes

Man can by pondering, contemplating, counselling, and seeking advice of alert and knowledgeable persons, considering his capabilities, talents, and inclinations to foresee many of the problems and events of his future life.

The youth who finds keenness, vigour and talents in respect of problems of knowledge and learning, and wishes to lead a life of knowledge and research must be attentive to this point when starting the search for a spouse. He or she must select a spouse possessing the capability an inclination towards these matters, and be fit to stand the limitations of such a life. The tolerance of these limitations needs recognition, capability and interest.

A person who loves luxuries and unlimited recreation cannot sacrifice these upon lofty and scared aims. How could a person brought up amid the ceremonious and enjoyable luxuries of life be expected to

become familiar with the gatherings of knowledge, morality, and excellence? The person whose life is integrated with gold, clothes, fashion worshipping and passions cannot go along with a pious and meaningful life.

How can a person born and bred in a mean and badly trained family, lacking faith in spiritual values, and one who has been nourished by the sap of that unclean tree and whose flesh, skin and soul has grown from that stinking marsh, breathe and live in a fragrant garden of purity and spiritualism? (We have nothing to do with the exceptions).

The future of a family can, to a great extent, be foreseen by the consideration of its form of conduct and morality. A person who intends to shoulder the big responsibilities of society and his life has to meet changes, variations, and revolutions and who expects his wife to accompany and assist him, must choose a witty, sagacious, tolerant and purposeful spouse. The girl who loves virtues and excellence and wishes to follow 'Zeinab al-Kubra' (s.a) must marry a man resembling Hussain (a.s). The boy who wants to have pious and gnostic children must marry a pious, ascetic and gnostic girl.

Discussing the Future Aims and Probable Changes Before Marriage

The boy and the girl should tell each other the aims, ideals, future designs in their minds and the probable changes to occur in future. Because, if the spouses know the aims, purpose and plans of the future before getting married, they either accept those and prepare themselves for bearing and accompanying of they reject them and the matter does not occur.

But if they do not know and understand, then they might not accept and tolerate those things after being confronted with them. Consequently, they get involved and the matter reaches a point of conflict and incongruity.

Question and Answer

In the preliminary era of Islam, we observe some cases in the histories of the leaders of Islam and the companions of the Prophet (S) where some marriage took place in which these standards and cases of match-making were not taken into view. For instance, in the marriage of Hazrat Mohammad (S), the Proportionality of age and economical status were not observed.

Hazrat Khadija (a.s) was much older and richer than the Prophet (S). Likewise, in the marriage of Juwaibir and Zalfa the homogeneity of the family social status and beauty were not viewed. Zalfa was very beautiful and her family's social status was much higher than that of Juwaibir; but this marriage was executed by the command of the holy Prophet (S). Some of the infallible Imams married their slave maids and there are many more examples.

Similarly, in our own age, we also sometimes see marriages and lives in which some of the above-mentioned standards and criteria are not observed in connection with the match-making of the spouses and they have relatively better lives. Do these specimens not contradict and undermine the standards of spouse selection in the above discussion?

Answer

1- What we discuss in these arguments is based upon the majority of people. It is possible that the problems discussed may have exceptions that are reserved in their places. But rules and regulations can never be set upon the bases of exceptions.

2- The strengths and capacities of individuals are different and the heavy load of responsibility cannot be put equally on all shoulders. That one who is weak bends his back and perhaps, his back may even break.

Heavy loads are the responsibility of energetic and powerful men. But as far as the common folk and the different strata and group of society are concerned, the energies and capacities of the majority of them should be taken into view and the responsibility and law be formulated according to their conditions.

For instance, Allah farmed some authorities and specified duties for the Prophet (S) so that nobody else except him was bound and obliged to perform them, (such as the obligatory night service, his guardianship and superiority in all matters over the Muslims and non Muslims, the number of marriages allowed and many other things).

3- If there are people to be found in other times who can practise exceptional matters, we too would appreciate and encourage them.

Thus the marriage such as that of the Prophet (S) with Khadija (a.s) or that of Zalfa with Juwaibir are not common prescriptions to be suggested and prescribed to all. yes, if the likes of Khadija (a.s) and Mohammad (S) appear, they would be the matches of each other and their marriage would be blessing and prosperity, although they may be various in respect of age and wealth.

Whenever a faithful and pious girl like Zalfa comes into existence and is as submissive to the Prophet (S) as she was, and a boy having the decency and faith of Juwaiber is found and he submits to the Prophet in the same way, both would be the match and counterpart of each other; though the boy may be ugly and poor and the girl be beautiful and wealthy. So we must be careful not to mix matters up.

Of course, there is nobody and there was nobody like the Prophet and the infallible Imams, but at least there should be some resemblance to them so that such marriage are suggested.

The commander of the believers, Ali (a.s) said:

“You cannot lead your lives like me. But help me in piety, endeavour, modesty and honesty (Try to

imitate me)." [12](#)

If not like the infallibles, we can become the like of others such as Zalfa and Juwaibir. We know many girls in our own society who married the dear soldiers of the scared war and serve them from the core of their hearts and take pride in it. [13](#)

Important Caution! Carefulness Yes! Obsession, No!

If one has the knowledge of correct standards criteria of spouse selection, one would not face perplexity and fault. But if one does not lay hand on the correct an exact standard and is unaware what to do, one would be perplexed and uncertain about it. Sometimes, one is dragged and pushed into and state of excessiveness and practises unnecessary and undue obsession. At times, one get involved in deficiency; both ways are damaging and bring repentance.

The balanced, correct, and desirable way is that at first, one should achieve the standards, which one deems true and fit, then select the spouse according to those standards, following the ways and manners to be described in the next chapter.

The minute care I am emphasizing is other than undue obsession.

We must know that a perfect spouse does not have any shortage and shortcoming according to the desire and want of person can never be found and can never be obtained (except the commander of the faithful, Hazrat Ali (a.s) and Fatima Zahra (s.a) both of them infallibles and pure form all faults, shortcoming and sins). We do not know any other couple, which might be infallibles. Even the spouses of other infallibles were not infallibles (innocent). Nobody (apart from the innocent and the infallibles) (both men and women) is pure of faults and everybody definitely has weak points.

If somebody wishes to have an all round, perfect, and complete spouse which should be according to his wants and desires, he must firstly look into himself to see whether he or she is free of all faults and does not have any weak points. Surely, no one can make such a claim. Therefore he or she should know that the person who is going to be his or her spouse is also not devoid and free of all defects and complete. One must not think so idealistically, or no one will ever reach one's complete ideal.

Sometimes I tell my friends and acquaintances who practise this illogical obsession, exceeding the limits of spouse selection, "If you wish to have a perfect and ideal spouse, who may be, from all aspects, according to your desire, then Insha'Allah, when you go to heaven, you will find that, because all those in paradise (both men and women) are perfect and perfectly liked by each other. But such a person is not found in this world. Besides, are you yourself so perfect as to demand a person who is complete?"

Therefore, a through and complete check and care must be exercised in the selection of a proportional and balanced spouse for oneself. But it should be born in mind that a hundred percent homogeneity and harmony is not possible and a certain amount of distance and disharmony would definitely exist. All that

should be endeavoured is to lessen this distance and disharmony, so that it reaches the lowest possible limit.

The distance and lack of homogeneity might be compensated for and made good by mutual understanding, love, forbearance and magnanimity.

So: Minute care Yes! Obsession No!

Question and Answer

Now when the standards and qualities of the spouse have been described, there is another question to be discussed: Those who lack these qualities and attributes, what must they do? Should they remain spouseless for the rest of their lives?

Answer

1- A portion of the answer to this question has been equality and homogeneity; meaning, if everyone selects his counterpart and proportional spouse, only very few will remain spouseless. There are only a few people who may not find their counterpart and match. For instance, an irreligious, characterless, and immoral person must not look forward to marrying a pious and good-natured one, having decent and moral character; instead, this person must marry someone like himself or herself; because 'birds of a feather flock together'.

And a person who has a lower grade of knowledge, his or her counterpart and spouse is a person like himself or herself; and same is true about other attributes and peculiarities.

The Qur'an's just logic in this regard:

الْخَبِيثَاتُ لِلْخَبِيثِينَ وَالْخَبِيثُونَ لِلْخَبِيثَاتِ ۖ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ

“The impure women are for the impure men, and the impure men are for the impure women, and the pure women are for the pure men, and the pure men are for the pure women.”(Sura an-Noor, 24:26)

This is the genetic and divine law and legislation made by Allah that the pure ones attract the pure ones like themselves, and the impure ones attract their likes.

'Similarity is the cause of attraction.'

2- With reference to what has been described in the section 'Care yes! Obsession no!', another portion of this question has been answered; since we said it is not necessary that spouse be complete and perfectly ideal, but rather an average fairness and completion is sufficient and enough.

3- We explained certain virtues and attributes that are the condition of perfection, not the foundation of it. Consequently, one must not be very severe and strict about the attributes of completion (i.e., beauty, education and wealth, etc.)

4- There are certain individuals who have the power, tolerance, and endurance to accept some weaknesses, whereas others do not have it. For instance, some accept and endure the physical disability of certain organs of the spouse. [14](#)

5- Keeping in view above four answers and the exceptional cases which were described before, as well as the points which we will discuss in the chapter 'Sacrificial Marriage', there would only be a few who might remain spouseless.

But there is a small group in society, which do not have the capability and capacity of marriage. These people can be categorised as follows:

(A) The patient whose ailments are not curable and can be hazardous and damaging to the life of the next generation; for instance, psychologically disturbed individuals and the insane and leprosy patients, etc.

Of course, if they are treated and the specialist doctors certify that they are healthy and perfect, then marriage with them will have no hindrance.

(B) Those addicted to dangerous addictions.

Until such time as they abandon their addiction and correct their morality, conduct, and spirit, they must not marry in any case.

(C) Careless, deviated, corrupt and persons of bad character.

Their remedy is to boycott them. Never must the coming generation be corrupted by taking pity upon these sharp-toothed leopards. If they do not get married, they would have to think about remedying their habits, making amends, and making up their deficiencies.

We, in the section 'Morality' of this chapter (the second virtue and attribute), described a hadith where Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s) wrote a letter in response to a father who said: "The person who has some to ask the hand of my daughter in marriage is ill-natured. Shall I marry her to him or not?..." Imam (a.s) distinctly and vividly answered "Do not marry her to him if he is an ill-tempered and bad-natured one." This word from Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s) is a form of boycott.

This rejection and refusal is an effective warning to the corrupt and ill-natured ones to rectify themselves. If they rectify and remedy themselves, they are suitable for marriage, otherwise they must be rejected (whether a boy or a girl). We do not have any right to drag the next generation toward corruption and destruction just to take pity on them.

The interest and welfare of society has priority over the interest of the individual. Both must be protected as far as possible. But if co-existence between the two is not possible and it becomes necessary to sacrifice one of the two over the other, then certainly the individual must be sacrificed over the society and not the society over the individual. This is what Islam and intellect commands us to do.

The thought and belief among some people that if such and such a person is married, he could be set right and correct is not true always and for everyone. This is a famous saying with no basis. It is not true that every corrupt and evil person is corrected and rectified by him marrying. Yes, certain individuals do. But the exceptions cannot be extended to all and include everyone.

There is no guarantee that an evil person will be corrected by marriage. Instead, there is a strong chance and probability that he might even corrupt his spouse as well: not only does he not conform to her, but he causes her to conform to himself.

Avoiding Negligence

At the end of this chapter, it is essential to give a necessary warning; that is, negligence and carelessness is the source and origin of many human miseries and troubles. It is harmful in all the matters, but as for marriage, it is more harmful. A moment of negligence may be followed by life-long repentance and sorrow. We see many of the people who say that their failures in marital life occurred on account of one moment of negligence in the selection of the spouse.

One of them said: "I was quite aware of the problems of marriage before I married. I knew the standards of spouse selection and had sufficient information about the necessity of harmony between the spouses. Even to the extent that I used to recommend it to others. But I do not know what happened that I became negligent when I selected a spouse I forgot all those things which I used to suggest to others and ultimately what I was afraid of, did occur to me."

Usually we know many things, but overlook them at the time of practising.

We must be very cautious in connection with spouse selection and remind ourselves to avoid becoming careless in this issue.

O Allah! Be the helper and guide of the youth and guide them in this vitally important issue.

Love, The Pivot of Life

Just as the human body needs spirit to continue living and a spiritless body is cold, frigid, and withered, marital life, too, stands in need of spirit to become prosperous, fruitful, and dynamic; and that spirit is love. A life short of love is like a lifeless and spiritless body.

similarly, as a building needs some binding material (cement, etc) and the page of a book requires glue

to remain organised, the institution of the family also needs a cement and glue as the binding force to strengthen and continue its fruitful life; that is to say love and affection between the husband and the wife.

Love is and elixir of prosperity, which gives hope to sad depressed hearts and turns coldness and frigidity into fervently warm emotions. Love turns thorns into fragrant flowers.

We turn to professor Martyr Mutahhari's worthy saying:

“The boy and girl who never thought of anything while single, except those things which were directly related to their own personalities, had no sooner attached their hearts to each other and set up the assembly of a family, that they find themselves, for the first time attached and associated with the destiny of another being. And when they have a child, their spirits are completely changed. That lazy, slow moving boy has now turned into a clever and fast moving one and the girl who would not leave her bed even by force, no sooner hears the voice of her baby in the cradle when she jumps like lightning.”

What is that power that took away and removed that looseness, laxity, and slackness and made the youth so sensitive? It is nothing but love and attachment. Love awakens the dormant and sleeping organs and frees the tied up energies just like the breaking up of the atom, freeing the atomic energy. It is inspiring and a hero maker. Love completes the soul and brings the amazing and astonishing interior potential talents into view. It is inspiring from the comprehensive and perceptive point of view and strengthens the intention and courage from the emotional aspect. [15](#)

If love governs family life and the wife and husband love each other from heartily, many difficulties are eased and solved, and are not even considered and counted to be difficulties, just like the hardships of a holy war on the way of Allah; for such hardships taste sweeter than honey for a mujahid. And similar to the odds and hardships that a researcher bears and endures on the way of knowledge and takes pleasure from them and enjoys them.

Be merry, oh our sweet love;

Oh the physician of all our ailments. [16](#)

But if love does not exist, then many of life's matters, even those which are simple and easy, become hard and tough and appear like the cumbersome toil of a prison annoying and molesting the soul and the body.

If love is there, then the husband and the wife put on the spectacles of beautification and whatever that they see it is good and beautiful to them. They may even consider each other's faults as beautiful. But if this life-giving element is lacking, then they put out the spectacles of misconception and view everything as ugly. Even to the extent that they might view each other's merits as demerits and dismaying.

Ali (a.s) the commander of believers said:

من أبغض شيئاً أبغض أن ينظر إليه وأن يذكر عنده.

“If a person does not like a thing, he does not like to look at it and hear about it.”

It is part of human nature and instinct that when he dislikes a thing, even its name, sign and memory is disliked by him. And if he loves a thing, then everything, which leads to it and reminds him of it is liked by him. He enjoys everything attached and associated to it.

If one does not like one's spouse, and instead feels hate and scorn for him or her, then one would unconsciously and unknowingly wrong him or her. This would make one find faults and pick a quarrel and enter into contention and dispute. But if love is there, one never views the partial faults and even if one views them, one neglects them.

In an atmosphere and environment of purity where a couple has mutual affection and attraction, all life is beautiful. Even the walls and doors of the house reflect beauty, charm and freshness, and the atmosphere of the home is attractive, hopeful and refreshing. The two hearts of the loving couple are full of sentiment and love, beating for each other.

As if their heart beatings are harmonious and analogous. And those are not two hearts, but one heart in two chests – like a single soul in two bodies. They love everything pertinent to each other. They love each other's families, relatives, and associates. Everything belonging to the other one is lovely, sweet and pretty: the face, conduct, speech, pictures, clothes, dresses, letters, memories, etc.

If two spouses love each other, they would even get along with each other's deficiencies and lapses. The husband and the wife want to live together for the whole of life. They are supposed to meet hardships, odds and burdens during this time, as these are the musts of worldly life. They must have some kind of provision to traverse this lengthy way of life.

And love is the best provision for this journey. If they have this energy right at the starting point of the journey of life, they would be able to carry on with it to the end and at each other's side, reaching the destination of prosperity. But if this energy is lacking, then they should fail to combat the odds of life and perform their heavy duties and carry this trust to the destination.

Frigidity and coolness turns into warmth, and bitterness into sweetness under the fascinating and charming shade of love. In this fragrant and enchanting atmosphere decent and trained children evolve.

We again refer to the words of professor Mutahhari, the sagacious philosopher and martyr of the way of love:

“The support and kindness of man's heart toward his wife is so worthy and valuable to the woman that marital life is not endurable for the woman without it. The woman's life must take in emotions and sentiments from the man so as to be able to saturate sentiments from the man so as to be able to

saturate her children from her full of tender spring and kind

sentiments and emotions. The man is like a mountain and the woman like a spring and the children like flowers and plants. The spring should receive the rain of the mountain and sprout it in the form of pure and clean water to make the plants, flowers and herbs green, fresh, and blooming. If rain does not fall upon the mountains or the mountains' form is such that nothing is absorbed by the soil, the spring will dry up and the plants and flowers wither.

Thus, as the life of landscapes and deserts is dependent upon the mountain rain, similar is the case of the man's sentiments and feeling with regard to the woman. These sentiments make the lives of the woman and the children pure, sublime and felicitous.”¹⁷

Kinds of Love

1- Loves of Lust and Passion

These are on the basis of sexual attractions, lust and passionate desires. Although this kind of love is necessary in spouse selection and joint life and must definitely exist, it is not sufficient alone. Moreover it does not have all those benefits, qualities, and peculiarities, which have been stated about love, and it can not last forever, because with the passage of time of the couple's joint life, lustful desires and passions would subside and the preliminary zest and fervour of sexual attraction would gradually fade away, Following the birth of children, the freshness of youth would decrease and the faces and physiques would lose their previous shapes and forms.

After many years pass, the effects of old age would become apparent in the man and the woman and that would be the time when strong and powerful incentives and motives to continue a prosperous life would no more exist.

The combining and adhesive force of life should be so strong that it persists and lasts through all the stages and phases of life and is able to make the skeleton of life stand on a firm footing. This (sexual) kind of love does not alone have such strength and endurance; its colour being faded and a shame is brought by it.

2- Lofty Love:

In this kind of love, a person's inclinations are toward the lofty values. If this type of love comes to exist in the husband –wife relationship, the sexual desires, lusts and passions would also be placed under its umbrella and would pick up the colours of lofty and superb values. Both forms of love are essential in marital life and each one in itself is not sufficient.

To say that the inclinations and relations of spouses should only rest upon supreme and lofty values and that sexual love is not necessary would be a mistake. Rather, both must be present to make each other

perfect. In this problem, too, like all other marital problems, the middle way should be adopted, not the way of excessiveness or deficiency. The first type of love, when alone, is subversive and damaging, but when accompanied by the other form loses its negative and harmful aspect and having become a part of superb values, turns into a beneficial one.

Here too professor Martyr Mutahhari opens the vista saying:

“Human sentiments and feeling have form and grades. Some of them are from the category of passions, specifically sexual lust, being common instincts among man and all the animals. It arises from the sexual origin and is finished right there. Its increasing and decreasing is mostly related to the physiological functions of the reproductive system and inevitably is at the time of youth. With the passage of time on one side and its being greatly saturated and satisfied on the other it is used up.”

“Man has another form of feeling which are factually and naturally diverse to sexual lust. We had better name them sentiments, and by the Qur’anic interpretation, 'amiability' and 'compassion'.

“Qur’an interpret the marital relations between men and women by the words 'amiability' and 'compassion' and it is extremely lofty point. It is an indication of the human aspect and the super-animal dimension of marital life. It is indicative of the fact that lust and passions are not the only linkage in marital life. The real and actual relation is the purity, truth, communion and unity of the two souls.”¹⁸

Question And Answer

Q: The first form of love is recognised and known by all, but the second form is not very clear and vivid. What is the love, which rests upon lofty values and the marital life should be set up according to it and the former one should be placed under its umbrella?

A: The facts described in this chapter about the criteria of spouse selection are a complete and comprehensive response to this question, the standards and values, which have been described, cover both forms of love.

Lasting Love

As already described, the love of a husband and a wife must persist and continue and must last even after the days of youth are gone.

The husband and wife need such sentiments and kind feelings, which may hold their family life with all the warmth and fervour even after sexual attraction, passions, lustful desires and the freshness of youth are finished.

Allah has placed the source and origin of this love in the spouse: “And He put between you love and compassion.”

So if their lives are set upon correct foundations and are managed and administrated in the right way, then that 'love' and 'compassion' will continue and will remain life-long.

We have seen a great number of couple where the passing of the youth period not only did not create any flaw and weakness in their love, but also with the passing of age and movement towards old age, their mutual regard and graciousness increased. As a matter of fact, their conduct becomes the phase of their perfection and the height and ceiling of their joint loves.

A Magnanimous and Beautiful Specimen

Aunt Zainab and Hajj Hassan were life parents for the last seventy years. I can recollect the final 25 years of their lives nearly, in which they had all the reverence and respect for each other and I do not know any event that could indicate any mutual disrespect and disinclination in their lives.

I asked their relatives about the rest of their life together and came to know that they were always like this. Aunt Zainab was both a wife and a nurse for Hajj Hassan who was older than her and who become ill in his last years. She held the old man in such respect, reverence, and kindness that it amazed and made the one who saw it praise her. In this part of their old age, sexual phenomenon did not mean anything to them, since they had surpassed it. But the love, honour and grand respect was overwhelming their relations even still.

Whenever Hajj Hassan fell ill, the aunt would nurse and look after him with extreme kindness and respect. Whenever I visited them, Hajj Hassan said:

“This lady has looked after me so very well. If it was not for her, I would not have been able to pass my old age honourably. It is because of her kindness and nursing that I can go to the mosque and attend to my services and prayers and lead a honourable life. Her existence is a great boon and beneficence, which Allah has bestowed upon me. I always pray for her.”

I enjoyed seeing their sincere relations and felt sorry about many husbands and wives who have cold relations and have scornful and menacing conduct towards each other. I used to wish all spouses had been like aunt Zainab and Hajj Hassan.

Hajj Hassan had grown very old and was nearly ninety years of age and could no longer stand or walk to perform his work. But Allah had saved and spared his perform his work. But Allah saved and spared his kind spouse for him. She used to look after and nurse her old husband with respect, love and self-sacrifice, never allowing him to face humiliation and misery.

The last time I visited Hajj Hassan to enquire after his health, he said: “Had Allah not given this spouse tome, I could no longer continue my life”.

The last days of Hajj Hassan's life approached and he was about to leave Zainab alone after a lovely

joint life of seventy years. Aunt Zainab was nursing him with all her might, looking after him from all aspects, revolving around him like a butterfly around a candle. She served him to all possible extents. Hajj Hassan occasionally opened his eyes and looked at her. His looks reflected the sign of respect, reverence, thankfulness and gratitude for her. As if he was saying: “Oh y pure angel, you were my spouse and faithful friend. You spent your youth and life beside me.

You put up with my deficiencies and lacking in our lives and did not complain to anyone. You secured my honour. You were the partner of my sorrows and joys and my companion amid the of odds of life. Now when, I am leaving this world, I am pleased with you. And I bear witness to Allah that you were a good wife. I am pleased with you. And I hope Allah may also be pleased with you. And I hope Allah may also be please with you, and grant you reward.”

His lips sometimes moved and he prayed for her.

Aunt Zainab's condition was nearly similar to her husband and she also uttered the same prayers for her old husband through her conduct, speech, condition, and looks.

At last the delegate of Allah came to take his soul as if the death delegate of Allah too thanked and praised her, since only a few hours before the angel's arrival she had bathed and cleaned him up and changed his clothes; as if she wanted to send a bridegroom toward his wedding chamber.

Following the passing away of Hajj Hassan, I went to see the aunt. Her eyes were shedding tears. Her heart was grieved and heavy, but she had a feeling of pride and exaltation, since she felt she had performed the divine duties in connection with her husband.

Dear youths, do you not wish to have a prosperous life like that of aunt Zainab and Hajj Hassan? Of course, you do! So you must observe the existence of love and affection in the selection of your spouse. You should marry someone, whom you definitely love and that person must also love you. Marriage is not only the communion of bodies it is also the unity of heart. And this relation should be so strong and unbreakable as to persist and last until the end of life. And only a relation can have such a quality, which is establishes on two pillars; that is the same two forms of love, which have previously been defined.

Mutual Love

In one way, love alone does not suffice a felicitous life. Instead, both spouses must love and adorn each other. If one loves the other and the other does not, then their life would have difficulty. The indifference and apathy of the other would soon cool down the love and affection of the spouse. Consequently, hatred and scorn will develop on both sides. It is two-way love that created prosperity, not one way love.

A Net of Deception

One of the traps into which most of the youth fall and usually can not escape is that they discover,

before the marriage's execution, that they do not like each other (or one of them does not like the other) and they want to avoid the marriage, but the family members and their friends say “Now you marry and afterwards love will be created!” These inexperienced youths, having believed in their word, marry and thereafter not only love is not created, but also with each passing day their mutual scorn and hatred increases miseries surround them.

And then those people, who recommended their marriage and promised them the development of love, all vanish away. All have left them alone to themselves to pass a cool, frigid, spiritless life with a mountain of difficulties and agonies. Even if those who promised them that love would develop wish to help them, they simply cannot.

Youth (both boys and girls) must concentrate upon and be cautious about this point: that love must be present or should take shape at the beginning so as to build the foundations of marriage. There is no guarantee that it may develop at a later stage. I have seen many persons who married bearing this wrong conception and logic in their minds and their lives were ruined. We would describe one of these bitter stories later on. Here take a look at two sorrowful events, which have been described by Ayatollah Amini.

First Tragic Story:

Mrs ... writes in her letter: “Nearly a year ago, I married a young man whom I did not know previously. he twice visited our home, but I did not have the chance to think carefully whether I like him as my future husband or not. I told myself that after the marriage contract takes shape, love would follow. But unfortunately, after the marriage contract, when he came to our home, I discovered that I really did not have any inclination towards him.

Thereafter, I discussed the matter with my family, but I was strongly opposed. They said: “You will start to like him later on”. But how even after the lapse of one year from the date of our marriage, not only have I not developed any liking for him, but even I do not love the sight of him. Really I am exhausted. Many times I thought of committing suicide, but I was afraid of Allah. My life is like a hell. I burn inwardly and tolerate it. What must I do?”¹⁹

Second Tragic Letter

Mr ... from ... writes: “It is now five years I have been serving in the Islamic Republic's armed forces. Four years ago I married my cousin. During these four years, I did not have any interest in life, nor do I have it yet, because I married this girl, whose life has been made bitter by me, upon the insistence of my parents.

I moved for the asking of her hand in marriage and thus destroyed her life and mine. I do everything possible to forget the past and set my heart and please it with this life, but it is in vain. Whenever I go home on leave, I become the cause of the displeasures and pain to my parents as well as my wife. Now

my parents have accepted their fault but to no use. It is very late now and I do not know what to do. I always pray with weeping eyes at the end my service. I feel sorry about why I ruined the life of this girl whom I can not make happy.”²⁰

Important Question and Answer

So far we have come to conclude that love between spouses is the axis and real pillar of marital life, and should be present before marriage, and that life be founded upon it.

Now the question raises about the boy and the girl who did not see and know each other before marriage, or even if they knew one another, there was no attachment and affiliation between them (as they did not have any intention to marry) and now they have made up their minds to take steps regarding proposal and investigation (into each other's characters etc), how is possible that all of a sudden love should be developed in their hearts? How must they understand whether they like each other or not? They were not acquainted and friendly towards each other to discover their love, hatred or any of the two.

Briefly speaking what is the way and criteria of their discovery of each other's love or hate?

Answer: this is a very important and fundamental question and must be perfectly attended to and needs much concentration, careful thought, and contemplation. And now carefully read the explanation in this respect.

The illegal friendships and the street romances, which are practise by immodest people is against the interest of boys and girls, and can never end up in a sacred and prosperous marriage. We definitely do not suggest with reference to the facts described in chapters 5 and 6 that this problem is well soluble.

In this manner we keep the standards described in chapter 5 in view and start following the guide plan of chapter 6. The more we move ahead, the more our recognition of the concerned person increases and the attraction or disinclination towards him becomes evident. With the increase in our information pertaining to one's qualities and traits and that of his family, our love or scorn for him would be inflated.

We keep moving on this course until we reach a final decision (positive or negative). If we do not reach a clear-cut conclusion in the initial phase of the plan, consultation and friendships and mundane loves. And by love we do not mean such unsuitable and incorrect matters. These illegal companionships and loves severely damage the honour and personality of the youth and bring them many miseries. And the girl suffers more harm than the boy.

The fate of a girl who loses her modesty and honour as a result of mixing with passionate and lustful men is extremely painful. Never has a prosperous family been seen to be raised from the effect of these filthy games. Regretfully, some weak-minded girls are deceived by the false promises of these glib-tongued impostors and they lose their honour and modesty on the hope of finding a felicitous marriage.

As a result, they smoulder in the hearth of repentance and regret. (Of course, there are girls too who trap boys and make them miserable.)

Anyway, the correct way and answer to the question is as follows: seek advice, mediation, and investigation and sending a messenger, then we carry on with the final phases (writing a letter, sending pictures, direct conversation, seeing each other) until we reach a point of decision.

Do not forget the final point of the sixth chapter; that is “step by step and with patience and perfect caution”.

Do not forget this. If one works according to what has been described, and the various stages of spouse selection are crossed with patience and caution and the standards described in chapter 5 are observed, the situation of love or no love and attraction or repulsion will become clear.

I strongly emphasize and stress that until such time as the state of love is not fully clear and evident and it is not known that the girl and the boy like each other, steps in connection with marriage must not be taken. Of course, they may not drop the idea also. If there exists a condition of neither love nor hatred and the fact that whether they love or hate each other remains ambiguous, then a final decision must not be taken; rather the plan of chapter 6 should be carried on until ultimately it is known that they like each other or not.

My brother and sister, be fully cautious and attentive not to be subjected to any deviational factor. And take your last decision with great care, caution and patience, and by considering all the dimensions of the problem. It is possible that some people may pressurize you by saying “Why are you suspending it? What kind of flaw or demerit does that person have? Come on, hurry up, give an answer, you do not need to think so much.

What will people say if they understand this? It will break my heart if you reject him (or her) and I will curse you! and you will remain spouseless for the rest of your life. You just say OK and leave the rest of it to us! Everything will be all right...”

If this style does not work, they may threaten you, particularly in the case of the girl, and make the youth yield to an unwanted marriage through fear, pressure and harassment.

But you do not pay heed to such words and false ultimatums and threats, And it cannot take place unless you say “Yes” and no one can do a thing in this regard. If a marriage takes place without the consent of the boy and the girl and under pressure, it is null and void. And such a marriage would be illegal. Do not submit to an illegal marriage. Some of the elders when confronted with a negative reply or suspension of the reply by the boy or the girl often say “What fault does that person have, so that you are not accepting or are delaying the marriage?”

The answer to this is that it is not essential that the person must necessarily have some shortcoming so

that the reply be given is negative or the matter be suspended, but he may be even good and still one does not accept him as a spouse. And this is the legal right of a person to accept or reject a proposal.

An Artificial Life is Unendurable

If marriage is not accompanied by mutual love and respect, an upset and disturbed life will come into existence, and no force, law or convention can settle it down. Let us look into the philosophical and wise words of martyr professor Mutahhari in this regard:

“Two persons can be made to work together by force and legal compulsion, so can they be obliged to honour their commitment on the basis of justice and co-work for many years, but it is not possible to force two individuals by law to love an sincerely befriend each other and practice mutual self sacrifice, with each one regarding the prosperity of the other as his own.” [21](#)

At the end of this chapter, we again stress and remember that: minute care, Yes! obsession, No!
“Caution! Caution oh listener! Trial, trial oh unmindful. Nobody informs and awakens you like the wise and knowledgeable one.” [22](#)

- [1.](#) Wasail al-Shia, vol. 14, p 30.
- [2.](#) Wasail al-Shia, vol. 14, p 31.
- [3.](#) Jawahir, vol. 29, p 37.
- [4.](#) Wasail al-Shia, vol. 14, p 29.
- [5.](#) Wasail a-Shia, vol. 14, p 56.
- [6.](#) Usool Kafi, vol. 1, Kitabul Aql Wal Jahl, Hadith 3.
- [7.](#) Biharul Anwar, vol. 103, p 237.
- [8.](#) Prophet (S), Usool al-Kafi, vol. 1, the chapter on Excellence of knowledge, Hadith 1.
- [9.](#) How to conduct the children, by Dr. Mohammad Reza Sharafi, p 50
- [10.](#) Furoo al-Kafi, p5.
- [11.](#) From his ethical reminders, seminary of Qom.
- [12.](#) Nahjul Balagha, Imam Ali's (a.s) letter to Usman bin Hunaif.
- [13.](#) We will discuss this issue in the seventh chapter “sacrificial marriage.”
- [14.](#) We will discuss this in the chapter “sacrificial marriage.”
- [15.](#) The attraction and repulsion of Ali (a.s), Sadra publication, sixth edition, p. 48-50.
- [16.](#) Mathnawi Maulavi.
- [17.](#) Right of the woman in Islam, Sadra Publications, 8th edition, p326, p 317.
- [18.](#) Attraction and repulsion of Ali (a.s) p55-58.
- [19.](#) Spouse selection, p 98,96, first edition
- [20.](#) Spouse selection, p 191.
- [21.](#) Right of the woman in Islam, p 313, Sadra Publications, fifth edition.
- [22.](#) Nahjul Balagha, sermon 153, Subhi saleh.

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