

Chapter Seven: Engagement Period

One factor that has a sensitive role to play in a joint life is the engagement period.

If this duration of time is dealt with elegantly and its peculiar duties are performed, then it can have a profound and immense effect upon the later periods of growth, fruitfulness and solidarity.

There is a common saying that 'one day of the engagement period is better than a year of the post marriage period.' Although this saying is an exaggeration, it describes an important fact and actually the engagement period is, from many aspects more important, sweeter, enjoyable and personality – developing than the post marriage period. In this period, the pillars and foundations of the future life can be laid.

In chapter 4, it was partially brought under discussion from a particular angle that engagement is a way of solving way the duration of education and military training. But hereby, we will consider the engagement period as an independent and overwhelming entity and subject.

By 'engagement duration', we mean the time distance between the marriage contract and the marriage ceremony. That is to say, 'Nikah' or marriage contract should have taken place, or if they are not prepared for the permanent marriage contract and they want to conduct it at a particular leisure or with special celebration, then they can enter into a 'temporary marriage contract' until such time as they decide on the time of the 'permanent marriage contract'.

The temporary marriage contract has specific laws and conditions that must be observed. One of them is that it must definitely be conducted with the permission of the girl's father (just as is the case in permanent marriage contract.)

So be careful and cautious that here we are not discussing anything about the engagement without a marriage contract).

The Need of an Engagement Period

From certain aspects it is essential that there be a distance between the contract and marriage.

1- The girl who has lived for many years in a family with her family members, especially her father and mother, has a deep and strong attachment to them and separation from them is very tough and difficult for her. So it is not advisable to suddenly detach her from her family, since this would emotionally be harmful for her. Instead, it is necessary to bring a gradual readiness in her to face the separation.

2- The boy and the girl whose life responsibilities were, up until now on the shoulders of the parents, do not have the readiness to shoulder that at once, therefore a gap is necessary so that they may prepare themselves to shoulder the weight of joint life responsibilities.

The style of birds' lives is very beautiful and based upon wisdom in this respect. The mother bird trains her offspring for a long time to fly and live independently. She prepares them to organise their own lives and does not let them go away from her until this readiness comes into existence.

3- It is difficult for the boy and girl who were strangers only sometime ago to adjust beside each other without any preliminary stages and all of a sudden start an independent life. It is necessary for them to get familiar and develop attachment to be ready for their common life together.

4- It is possible that the girl and the boy, due to certain reason like those described in chapter four, such as: continuing education or military training, are not prepared to begin a joint and independent life, but do have the readiness to get engaged. So they get engaged, and remain so until such time as the hurdles and restraints are removed and they can marry.

5- The parents of the girl and the boy also need to get prepared for the marriage of their dear ones. The duration of the engagement provides them with the necessary opportunity to be ready for it.

The Benefits of the Engagement Period and the Duties of the Girl and the Boy During It

In addition to the needs and benefits, which have been described in the above discussion, i.e. the need of the engagement period', and the benefits of marriage previously described, the engagement period has independent benefits and, at the same time, the boy and the girl have some duties to perform which are described as follows:

1- The Enhancement of Mutual Recognition and Understanding

Although the boy and the girl should have gained sufficient mutual recognition in the phase of selection (described in chapter 6), they must also develop a much closer and intimate recognition, with more

knowledge of one another's spirits, morality and views. In fact this familiarity and recognition of the engagement period accomplishes the recognition developed during the phase of selection. Thereafter, they prepare themselves for an understanding and homogeneity in their joint life, in the reflection of this close and complete recognition.

That recognition was meant for selection and this is for understanding and harmony.

2- Improvement and Training

If someone observes a peculiarity in his/her fiancé' which may not be liked by him/her and he/she may want to remove, rectify, or reform it or even create another virtue or condition in him/her, then the engagement period is the best time for such a reformation, change and training.

This is because their mutual relations have not shaped into usual ones and they believe in a particular mutual love and reverence. As a result, their mutual accommodation and the ground for change, reform and rectification is more positive and level.

3-Enhancement of Love

On the basis of the discussion 'love, the pivot of life,' one of the actual and real conditions of prosperity in marital life is love and its ground should be levelled before marriage.

Nevertheless, the engagement duration is the best chance and opportunity for the growth, enhancement, consolidation and strengthening of love. The conduct, conversation and all the practices of the fiancés are effective in increasing or decreasing love. Therefore, the boy and the girl must be very careful and attentive to their practices. And they must not spare any effort to increase love and avoid the love decreasing practices.

4- Development of Hope Regarding One's Future Life

Hope too has an important role in the prosperity of common life. Fiancés should not be negligent about strengthening hope in each other's heart by hopeful words, soberness and confidence of conduct.

5- Laying the Foundation Of Independence In Future Life

The boy and girl are usually attached and aligned with the parents' life; this alignment should change into independence.

The period of engagement is a suitable chance to lay the foundation of this independence. Fiancés should do the future planning, design the aims and horizons of their future and the ways to reach them.

6- Valuing Each Other's Sentiments and Feelings

Fiancés should be careful about each other's sentiments and emotions and value and answer them appropriately. Some fiancés do not consider it necessary to answer the delicate sentiments and feelings of their fiancés and think this would cause them to become dearer to their fiancés, whereas, on the contrary, the feelings of their fiancés are hurt. As a result, they start nursing a grudge against them and may harm their lives seriously.

The memories of the engagement period linger on in the memory until the last part of life and affect one's future life (both sweet and bitter memories).

Therefore, the fiancé must have a perfectly calculated and planned conduct and refrain from practices that damage one's ego and personality. Indifference, carelessness, pride and insolence toward the fiancé harms and hurts the sentiments and personality of the other side heavily.

The girl must be proud and reticent, but towards strangers and those not intimate, not toward her legal fiancé.

Regretfully, it is often observed that the youth complain about the proud and reticent attitude of their fiancés. For instances, they say: "I bought a gift for her with thousands of hopes and aspirations, but she showed carelessness and disrespect and did not accept my gift and I returned with a broken and bleeding heart."

Religious girls must know that such conduct is not part of faith and modesty, rather, these are prohibited.

It is meaningless for a girl to hide herself from her fiancé who is her intimate and husband and to show recklessness.

Yes, we admit that modest girls shy in the former parts of the engagement and cannot show much intimacy and love toward their fiancé. Boys too must observe and recognize this fact, but this condition of shamefulness must soon go and their relation be based upon intimacy and love, accompanied by mutual respect.

7- Gift Presenting

Presents have a strange role in attracting hearts and enhancing and boosting love; it is essential for the fiancés not to be negligent of this beautiful and important point.

It is not necessary that the gifts should be very precious, but it is essential that it must be concordant with the inclination of the other party. And more importantly, that it is presented in an elegant and fine way. Presenting a gift requires a particular elegance and style. It must not be forgotten that presentation of a gift should not be one-sided. (Not that only boys give gifts.)

Of course, he may present more than the girl.

8- Writing Love Letters

Writing letters full of love and purity has a nice effect upon the enhancement of love a strengthening of mutual relations. Even if the two fiancés are close to each other and always see each other, writing letter has a positive effect.

They should write the letters and at the time of visiting and departure, give them to each other. Of course, in case of travelling and being far away from each other, the letters should be detailed and more in number.

We have seen many spouses who retain the letters written during the engagement period even after the passage of many years. They read, cherish, and enjoy those sweet memories.

9- Sincere Visits

Fiancés should have lovely visits in the sweet and memorable time of the engagement. These visits strengthen the hope, enthusiasm and love of them both. The visits not only are modest, but also strengthen modesty for the both of them.

During these visits they should have warm and sincere dialogue and show love, affection and affiliation towards each other and talk about their future life and express hope and warmth of feeling for each other. And they might proceed on journeys, recreation and sightseeing (journeys during this period have a vital role and place).

10- Short Journeys

During this worthy and precious opportunity between the marriage contract and the marriage, a better co-ordination and understanding may develop so as to provide a ground for their future life. They can make use of travels and journeys to reach this aim.

Journeys, even though short, are a suitable ground for the unconscious manifestation of positive and negative aspects of human morality and character. Hence it provides a good opportunity for getting know each other better. Logic for these is that since the formal life has not yet started, so both parties have the readiness and flexibility to rectify and reform themselves upon the positive suggestion and criticism of each other.

These journeys, apart from being beneficial for the enhancement of mutual recognition on morality and the spirits of each other, are quite beautiful, lovely and memorable.

Of course, it is evidently understood that these should be done with the permission of the parents of the girl.

11- Participating in Spiritual Aggregations

One of the constructive programmes, which has a positive effect upon the spiritual and moral progress and maturity, development of mutual understanding between spouses and increasing the magnificence of this grand period is joint participation in the aggregations and meetings of knowledge, religion, and morality.

12- Gaining Knowledge and Arts Regarding Organising One's life, caring for a spouse and the study of books in this respect

Matrimony, management of life and training of children needs education and this education and training must start before marriage and continue to the end of one's life.

It is necessary for parents to acquaint their children gradually with the matters and responsibilities of life right from childhood, so as to make them prepared for their life.

Some of parents, as a love to their offspring, refrain from letting them work and becoming familiar and conversant with the matters pertaining to their future lives. This practice of parents is not only not a love and service to their children, but it also incurs heavy losses upon them. This is because it is in the childhood and youth that the nature of is children gets prepared for all types of education and training.

If they do not become familiar and conversant with the problems of life and the essential readiness does not develop in them, when they themselves get to shoulder the responsibilities of running a life, they will be defeated and lost when they lose the help and shelter of their parents and come to face the facts and hardships and responsibilities, they will become harassed, disappointed, and hopeless and will develop a sense of self-depreciation and inferiority.

Many of the youth have ample amount of information about the variant problems, but they know little or nothing about spouse ship and life management.

Fortunately, nowadays it is observed that the youth show a great deal of zeal and enthusiasm and inclination toward gaining various education, arts and skills, both curricular and extra curricular. This makes one hopeful about a better and affluent future.

There are classes of different subjects being held, and plenty of books and teachers are also available, but unfortunately, there is no organisation, arrangement an inclination concerning subjects and arts like spouse ship, household affairs, life administration, children training, understanding and co-ordination between the husband and the wife. Briefly speaking, the organising and maintaining of the garden of life, which is the real nucleus in composing society, is not observed, And this inattentiveness and slackness incurs heavy damages upon the structure of society, the remedy and compensation for which in most cases is not possible.

There are many youths in our society (and many other societies) who achieve degrees in various subjects, including technology, arts, science and research, but when it comes to compose a marital life, they become perplexed and do not know the alphabet of the arts and science of the foundations of life, of erecting the pillars of the centre of life and the tender plant of life and the gardening of the garden of life. There are only few who help and assist them and drag them out of this terrifying and dreadful whirlpool and make them reach the shore.

Then these youths who are untrained and unequipped in the ways of spouse selection, spouse ship and running the life feel a huge void in themselves.

Since they greatly need a spouse, they are obliged to somehow marry and recognise a family and then they face those undesirable results which include: turmoiled and disturbed families, depressing conflicts and contentions, shameful and scandalous indecent words, dishonouring beatings, worn out nerves, sad and depressed souls, withered hearts, upset and diseased digestive system, ruining and destructive corruption, lost and wasted talents, destroyed aspirations, depressed hopes, damaged desires, unreachd aims, defeated struggles, agonising problems, sad deprivations, injured and hurt sentiments and feelings and frozen hearts.

And the after-fruits of this thorny garden are untrained, manner less, badly trained, difficult, talentless, weak, mean and naughty children.

Oh Allah, be it that your hidden hand comes to our help and guides us out of this valley of perplexity and aberration.

So it is essential for boys and girls to equip themselves with the arts, awareness, and knowledge of the life administration before marriage and attend the institutions and classes regarding these matters (if there are any) and to study books on this topic.

The engagement period and the time gap between the marriage contract and the marriage is a suitable opportunity to achieve this end to be prepared and ready.

Now we suggest some books about this subject. [1](#)

1- Constitution of spouse ship, by Ayatollah Ibrahim Amini.

This is one of the best books written on this topic and has two parts, One part pertains to 'wife maintaining' and the other is about 'husband maintaining'. Each one of the two may be studied by the boy and the girl, or the husband and the wife to learn their duties and practice them. Of course, there is no harm if each one reads both the parts, But not that girls and women study the part concerning men, and boys and men read the part specified for girls ad women so that they understand what rights they have upon the other; instead, each one should understand and take in what are his/her duties and responsibilities to be performed.

2- Family's Heaven, two volumes, by late Dr. Sayyid Jawad Mustafawi.

3- Marriage; the man making school, by martyr Dr. Pak Nijad. This book has three volumes, all in single binding. Volume 2 is related to the issues concerning the engagement period and the chamber of marriage. The writer has produced a few beneficial books about marriage, spouse maintaining and the issues relating to family life.

4- Books of Dr. Ali Qayemi. (He has some good books on the issues and various phases of family life.)

5- The guide to life for young couples, by Sayyid Hadi Mudarresi.

He has written a number of volumes of useful books on this topic. The original books are in Arabic and they have many translations with various names. If you know the name of the writer and the topic, it would be easy to find the book.

6- Morality in the family, by Sayyid Ali Akbar Hussaini (the executor of the TV. program 'morality in the family').

7- The books of the "Association of Parents and Trainers" regarding the topic of family and marriage.

8- Answers to sexual-marital problems, by Dr. Hana Stone and Dr. Abraham Stone (this book provides useful and essential information to the boy and the girl). Of course it may have objectionable matters, since the writers of this book are non-Muslims.

One of the interesting and useful programs in these fields can be that the bride and bridegroom study a book in the sweet time of their engagement.

A Worthy Essay in This Connection

Here it is appropriate that we present a large part of the worthy essay of Mr. Mohammad Ale-Ishaq, written under the title 'Engage period, a solution to youth problems' printed and circulated by the 'Centre of Islamic Research of Qum'.

"It is our suggestion that the tradition of engagement be revived in society, and its revolutionary and scientific values be explained and illustrated through modern propagation media, so that it may reach the status of social consciousness and tradition. The same custom and policy which is current and customary in pure families of Qum and some parts of Mashhad and the north should be promoted.

If every youth has the right to pluck a flower from the garden of life, then let him choose it as long as it is a bud and before its petals have scattered.

If a man gets full up and fed with lawful bread and cheese, human nobility and decency stops him from committing excess and aggression against others' dinner tables.

If we purchase a garden full of grapes for a youth of ours and hand him over the key, he will never jump over the wall of others' gardens.

How long can one endure thirst?

It is suggested that the religious marriage contract be done(with simple informal ceremonies). And so the two spouse may receive benefit through loving relation apart from marriage and fulfil their physical needs and requirements through legal and lawful means. When their studies are completed and they get a job and procure income, they can marry with all the ceremonies.

If one asks what the surety they will not marry is, we reply that if they marry, there would be no dowry for them and experience has shown that both the spouses guard their real capital.

In response to the question that they might get fed up with each other and separate by dissolving the engagement then what must be done, we reply that, firstly, engagement is the most suitable period in which they harmonise their common life in the shelter of passionate love and the difference change into the light and beauty of love. If as an unlikely case the homogeneity did not take shape, then it would be far better to separate before bearing children, and the capital has to been wasted and the future of a child has not been endangered.

Even in the ordinary marriage a few percent end up in separation, so then should people not marry at all?

The Value of the Engagement Period

1- From a psychological point of view, instinctual deprivations cause spiritual problems (complex) and unbalance man spiritually. And sexual deprivation is of the deepest of them, which, according to some psychologists (who are extremists), is the root of all the moral aberrations and deviations and the social crimes.

Reflection of the difficulty of sexual deprivations

After the period of deprivation ends, one is involved and entangled in the reflections of it which become the cause of mistrust among wives in the shape of evil and polygamy and bring about family turmoil and disturbances. The only remedy to it is timely sexual saturation and satisfaction.

With these explanations is it suitable to invest in police, judicial and administrative operations or the promotion and expansion of engagement and timely sexual saturation? If we say engagement is the guarantee of human spiritual balance and the factor of preventing moral and social deviations and aberrations we would not have said anything wrong.

2- The love instinct, which is satisfied in infancy by a mother's kisses exerts more pressure on the young generation's spirit at the time of youth.

The young girl and boy have a thing lost and they feel themselves in a state of unfamiliarity, until such time as they find it. They go around, searching for a heart full of love and affection. It is better to say they are after a spiritual shelter so that they may feel self-assured and at peace beside that, and prepare themselves for the solution of life's problems and combat against death causing factors. The pressure of this need is not less than that of the sexual need.

The plan of engagement secures the best shape of spiritual needs and satisfaction of the young generation.

3- The family is the centre of the conduct and behaviour of two human being with two different and variant organism, two cultures and two viewpoints towards life. Most people marry to achieve and lay hand upon their unrealised aspirations and desires (desires unrealised by their parents.)

Naturally, such an environment is the centre of differences and oppositions and the root of most separations and divorces lies in these very differences.

The engagement period is most suitable to solve these disputes and differences, since under the shelter of passionate love the differences are changed into uniformity and homology and the ground for a stable, sweet life is gained.

If we estimate the negative effects of these family differences upon children, we would fairly decide that the engagement period is the factor of prosperity and felicity.

4- Personal nobility and human personality is the factor, which stops man from committing indecent works. It is due to the pressure of the unsatisfied and unfulfilled natural needs that man does not have the strength to endure them and thus tramples human nobility and decency under his feet.

If the natural needs of the youth and their difficulties are taken into consideration and get satiated on time in a legal shape, the ground for most of the moral and social aberrations and deviations is finished and the immoral propaganda of the west becomes ineffective.

5- Dispersed and scattered thoughts are dangers which threaten the brains of youths. If the Islamic revolution requires active, inventive and delightful brains, it should stop young brains from lusty thoughts.

Put yourself in the place of a pious and revolutionary youth. How many years can the thirst be endured and remained inattentive and indifferent towards stimulating and tempting factors? The reckless youth satisfy themselves through unfair means, but the one who does not want to commit sin; shall the aberrant thoughts leave him alone?

Experiments and experience of psychology has proved that one hour of deviational thoughts (particularly lustful ones) drain the mind empty of all its energies. As a result, the concentration of thought, power, subtlety, freshness, initiative, inventiveness and creativeness will be annihilated.

If engagement is the solution to all these problems, would parents denounce and reject it?

If engagement is the best way to fight and combat the hackneyed western culture and the satellite, would the executive remain indifferent to it? All that is important is that slogans alone are not sufficient and all modern propagation media must be co-ordinated. What happens if the television telecasts the ceremony of two engaged spouses during their initial contact, at the time of selection, and in a joint journey?

What if the aggregation of the marriage contract is shown in a simple way including the moment when the parents hand over the girl's hand into the boy's and the clergyman prays for their prosperity?2

The Length of the Engagement Period

A particular length of time cannot be specified for the engagement period; rather it depends upon the position and the taste of the individuals. But it can be said that if any specific conditions are not there, like continuing education and completing one's military training, and the boy and the girl have made the necessary preparations for marriage, then a six to nine-month length of time seems suitable.

We reiterate and stress that a specific time period does not exist for it. All that is necessary is achieving the required preparation and readiness, which has already been described, so that special benefits may be reaped from this duration.

The Mishaps And Catastrophes During The Engagement Period

There exists a probability that catastrophes will take shape in this period. These 'probable mishaps' are not alike with respect to all societies and variant families; instead, in the same way as the habits, moralities, rituals, customs and beliefs of people are different, the mishaps of the engagement period and generally the catastrophes of family life too are different and variant, since these are attached and related to moralities, circumstances, beliefs and customs of the people.

Here we describe a few of these calamities so that the youth and their families may put a curb and restraint upon them and if, God forbid, they take place, they might remove and remedy them.

1- The Heart's Excuses

One of the peculiarities of man is that the power of one's fancy and imagination flies very high, and if not controlled, curbed and balanced, does not stop anywhere. It skips over the facts and figures to fly in a world of dreams, unreal aspirations, and desires. On the other hand, man's condition of comparison too is quite strong.

He compares what he possesses to what others possess or to things he has reached in his fancies. And in these comparisons, he usually falls prey to fault and illusion, and does not see the facts as they

are. Instead, he considers what is possessed by him as contemptible and little, and the things possessed by others or being imagined as great and beautiful.

The sense of variety-loving too helps in this matter, and as a result, he is confronted with sorrow, grief, emulation, regret, loss and hopelessness and develops the desire to change his assets for others.

The third condition which exists in man is such that he does not have much interest and inclination towards what is legal and lawful for him, but he is greedy about what is prohibited for him.

For instance, in normal circumstances, he does not have much desire for a certain type of food. Perhaps that food is present in his house for days, but he does not consume it. But if he feels ill and the physician prohibits him from it, he develops a strange tendency and desire for it.

Or, when he is fasting and eating is prohibited for him, he starts to have a strong wish to eat and drink, but at the time of breakfast, he does not have much desire for it.

Actually, the power of imagination, discontentment with the present condition and variety loving nature of man should be discussed in another discussion, but here we consider it from a special angle:

Man is confronted with faults of opinion and recognition; in this way, he observes things from a distance and his mind takes a picture of them, then he flashes it to the interior of his mind and interprets and analyses it to reach a result, which usually differs from the reality of those things. Whenever a ground is provided so that he can observe and evaluate those things in a warm and sensitive manner, he discovers that they are different from what he has previously seen and evaluated from a distance.

For instance, the scenes and people which we see in colour films, if we saw them closely or see them afterwards, we discover that their reality is quite different from what is seen in the film. Particularly, if the film and pictures are large and beautiful and seen from a distance.

Another example: If we see the people who perform in a theatre when light reflectors throw coloured light upon them from distance and we meet them afterward and have social contacts with them, we discover that the faces under the reflectors from a distance are quite different from the face observed closely.

Or if we get something that was not in our means, and we had an extremely strong inclination towards it, we find that there was nothing so important about that.

Everyone has certain experiences in his life wherein he has observed these differences and is aware of this fact.

Now, if man (both ladies and gentlemen) puts on the spectacles of lust and passion on his eyes and watches lust-evoking, sexy scenes and then analyses them through his rich and high flying imagination, it is evident what sort of false pictures would be embedded in his conscience. Then the trouble starts

when he may wish to conform and compare those false pictures with his wife.

It is quite clear that however much his wife may be beautiful and attractive; she cannot reach those false pictures. And that is the moment when hopelessness, dismay and excuse making will start. (Allah's curse be upon the propagators and promoters of corruption and the films containing sexy material. Allah knows what troubles and calamities these have, whether live of picture, bought for the youth and wives, though they may be aged.)

One of the factors causing the dismay and hopelessness in spouse relations is comparing one's wife with the girls or wives of others. Usually this comparison leads to the wrong result that others' spouses are better. There is a well-known idiom among our people that man sees the then of the neighbour as a goose. This idiom describes the very wrong comparison and discontentment, incorrect notions and being greedy about things prohibited.

If a person wants peace of mind, prosperity and satisfaction, he must abandon this comparison and be contented with his won spouse. All the excellence described about contentment do not pertain to economical contentment. Instead, it includes being contented with one's own spouse and it is more important than contentment in economical affairs.

One of the family –running negative effects of casting prohibited looks (both for men and women) is that a person looks at hundreds of girls, boys, men and women of different colours and races in different dress, with figures and faces and imprints their picture in his/her heart.

The power of imagination develops and decorates them and when he/she reaches the spouses and compares him/her to them, thinks him/her to be below and less than them in beauty and attractiveness. Then he/she is confronted with perplexity, envy, dismay, and disappointment.

The leaders of Islam have repeatedly forbidden people from casting prohibited looks. For instance:

النظرة سهم من سهام إبليس مسمومة. وكم من نظرة أو نظرة أورثت حسرة

“A prohibited look is one of the poisoned arrows of Satan. And many looks have been followed by prolonged remorse (regret).”

Casting prohibited looks is not specific to men, but includes women as well. My sister and brother, if you want felicity and fortune, then refrain and cover up your eyes, minds and thoughts from all women and men of the world and concentrate upon your own spouse. Do not compare your spouse with anybody. Be contented with each other. Do not think others are better than your spouse. No, they are also human beings and have faults, shortcomings, virtues and peculiarities. If you see faults in your spouse and do not find him/her perfect and according to your taste and ideal, know that others too are more or less the same.

Just as you yourself are the same. That is to say, you are not ideal, complete and superb. As a matter of fact, Allah has created people in different forms and shapes based upon His wisdom. The training, environments and genetic factors are different, as are the morality and spirits of different persons.

Do not have obsessions. You cannot find anyone who is perfect according to your choice and liking.

'Rivalry and envy' which is considered void and rejected by all people (although practically they confirm it) is not specific to ceremonial affairs; rather it covers our discussion as well. Comparing one's spouse with others is a form of rivalry.

Attention

It is not always that a person compares his/her spouse in issues such as sexual attractiveness and discontented, instead, this false comparison can also exist in spiritual and moral issues and issues of knowledge. That is, one says, "my spouse is at a lower grade of faith, knowledge and morality than the spouse of such and such a person; I wish so and so perfect and faithful woman was my wife; she is more rational and wise, faithful, educated, good mannered and skilled than my wife.

This comparison too is false and void and does not have any result, except frustration, regret, pain, dismay and disappointment. It may also only be a fancy, like the then of a neighbour, which appears to be a goose. If you really wish the spiritual progress of your wife, help her on this way and provide the means for her development. Belittling and humiliating her is against piety and morality.

We have plenty of specimens in connection with excuses of the heart and mind, incorrect comparisons, greed and discontentment, but we only cite the following one:

A Noteworthy Specimen

Jawad worked in the female section of an institution and dealt with tens of girls and women daily.

One day he came to me, saying, "I am displeased with my wife because she lacks the virtues and perfection that I desire. I am very pained by this situation and have become disappointed with my wife."

Then he described and counted her flaws and defects as causes of his displeasure. I, who was aware of the condition of his life and knew his wife was a good lady, explained that after thinking and looking into the problems, his problems could be solved so he would stop feeling this disappointment and dismay. He could put things into practice so we could handle the other solutions. My suggestion was that he immediately resign his post in that unit of the institution and start working in another one where he did not have to deal with girls and ladies.

Jawad surprisingly asked: "*What connection does that have with my problem?*"

I said to him: "You are in contact with a lot of girls and ladies everyday and work with them. You may

observe a virtue in each one of them, whether real or imaginary. Although you are a pure and faithful person, these pictures influence your personality, mind, and conscience. You then unconsciously compare your wife with them and since you are unaware of their faults and shortcomings and only look at their beauties, you simultaneously are aware of the flaws of your wife and come to the conclusion that she has shortcomings and is lacking compared to them.

Thus you become disappointed. You may not actually be conscious of this comparison, but your conscience does its job. Nobody can claim that he/she does not get affected and influenced by contact with the opposite sex and the non-intimate ones. Even Yousef (Joseph) (a.s) says to Allah,

“If You do not save and secure me from the craftiness and cunningness of them (the women of Egypt) it is possible that I may be inclined towards them.” (Sura Yusuf, 12: 33)

So do not consider yourself safe from their effect. And, before your life has shattered, resign from that unit. On the other hand, your social contacts with all these ladies and girls has effects upon the sense of envy and jealousy of your wife, and it is hard for her to endure and tolerate that her husband permanently works closely with strange women and girls. This issue is the cause of her sorrow, agony, distress and dismay, although she may not utter a word so that her life and yours is not made bitter.”

At the beginning it was difficult for Jawad to accept this suggestion. But I brought him round to do it as a test.

Jawad resigned from the job and started working in the male section. He showed up after nearly two months and cheerfully said, “This test gave a good result and was very effective in improving the condition of my life.”

I told him, *“If you want to be prosperous and comfortable in your family life, do not compare your wife with others.”*

And then we looked into other problems of his life. And now that many years have passed after this event, he is leading a good felicitous life.

My sister and brother: Be pious and content and hold your spouse strongly. Do not exchange her/him for the whole world. She/he is the same spouse which you desired.

The very one, not another one.

Of course, the grounds of progress, reform and personality construction is always provisioned. Put efforts in making her progress and mature. But do not ask anything above her energy. She has a limited capacity. Just as you have!

This bud has been bestowed upon you from the garden of existence. Secure her. Do not let her petals be scattered away.

You do not know the faults of others and only look at their virtues from a distance. Had you been able to look at the other side of the picture, you would have known that your wife is better than many others whom you wish were your wife.

Be attached to your heart-comforting mate and shut your eyes from the rest of the world.

Attention

Of course, the husband and the wife are duty-bound to decorate themselves externally and internally in a way that they may please each other so that their eyes are filled up with each other's sights and there remains no room for others. Decoration, cleanliness, apparent beauty and positive attributes and the internal perfection have a real role to play in attracting hearts and developing the warmth of love and aspiration. The apparent decoration, beauty and decent interior attributes are the primary factors to attract man toward themselves and the lacking of them is the first cause of rejection and dismay.

2- Undue Expectation

Regretfully, at times it is observed that the girl, the boy or their families have undue expectations from each others and load each other's shoulders with heavy burdens and turn this sweet period into a bitter one.

These undue expectations are usually materialistic, extravagant and rooted in rites and rituals of ignorance and every common sense considers them denounced and rejected.

Some parents and elders, who should be the helper of the youth and support them in organising their lives, pressurize them to the extent of bending, rather than breaking their backs. Youth with broken and painful hearts complain about these expectations, and impositions.

Such things are the cause of disappointment and damage to life, so they must be avoided. And if elders raise such problems, the boy and the girl should be careful and vigilant about each other. Besides not getting fixed up with these futile matters, it is a must for them to defend each other. Each one must not allow the other to be pressurized.

The co-ordination and co-working of the boy, the girl and their families to organise their future life is an absolute necessity and these expectations and impositions are against co-working, communion of hearts and sincerity.

Emulation and races in decoration, ceremonies, rites and customs are wrong the development and independence of the youth.

Attention: One Must Certainly Have A Celebration

Celebration of marriage, besides not being undesirable, is rather recommended and desired.

celebrations in their marriage. This aspiration must be answered positively. From an Islamic point of view, marriage celebration was held for the marriage of the commander of believers Ali (a.s) and Zahra (s.a) by the order of the Prophet (S).

We recommend to the youth that they hold celebrations for their marriage (marriage contract and marriage or both) and should not marry short of celebration. What is not required or desired is lavish and extravagant spending, (unnecessary) decor and undue expectations, not the actual celebration. Every person who has not deviated from human nature can understand the ugliness and undesirability of these matters and can differentiate between the desired celebration and the undesired celebration.

Man should free himself from the attachment and alignment of the beliefs and views of others and must not be apprehensive about others' feelings about himself; instead he must try to judge his own duty, and act according to it. Thus he will be prosperous.

3- Interference And Temptations Of The Ignorant And The Self-Interested

We have observed many youths whose sweet period of engagement, and the pure nucleus of their lives and hearts are encountered with bitterness and coldness due to the interferences and meddling of scorpion-natured ignorant people (who sting by their nature) or the crafty, self interested ones (who look for disturbances to add fuel to the fire). (Allah's curse be upon these enemies of youth prosperity.)

4- Not Observing The Parents' Conditions

Some of the youth, when they get their spouses, forget their parents of pay less attention to them, and sometimes they are disrespectful to them.

At times, after bringing a bride or even after engagement and the marriage contract, the mother feels that their son does not have the previous affiliation and attachment to her. And this is a very hard and serious situation for her, which she cannot endure. Then she starts the conflict and quarrels.

An intelligent and clever man observes the rights of both sides, that of the parents, as well as the wife's. Neither he sacrifices the parents for the wife, nor the other way round.

I have seen the inefficiency and mismanagement of the bridegroom in the conflicts between the bride and her husband's mother. And I have seen the inattentiveness, inefficiency, and mismanagement of the bride in the husband's disputes with his wife's parents.

If the bride and bridegroom are completely focused on all matters and observed everyone's rights most of the conflicts and tussles between them and the parents do not take shape.

The bride and the bridegroom must be aware that the parents have taken all that pain and labour for many years and brought them up with hardships and now it would not be justice to have a cold attitude towards them.

Annoying parents is followed by the displeasure of Allah and Allah's displeasure brings grave and serious results for the life of children and becomes the cause of chastisement in the hereafter. Parents are the cause of abundance in their children's lives and this worthy and precious capital must not be lost. Parents do not want the misery of their children. They wish their prosperity.

Young brother and sister, appreciate the worth of these heart-burns. It is not just to forget and push back these benefactors when you have your beloved. Many youth have been observed who come to appreciate the worth of parents only after bearing children and enduring some of their hardships' even though we know that today's facilities are much more than yesterday's when our parents brought us up with more hardships.

So pay the right of everyone at his own place. It is not fair to be insolent and disrespectful to any of the two. Do not do anything which may have future sorrow and regret, and suddenly when you wake up, the parents are gone. Then there would be nothing much you could do.

5- Excessive visits

During this period, the relation of girls and boys and their families should be warm and sincere, but must not reach excessive limits.

If the visits, feasts and parties become excessive, both parties become exhausted. And this exhaustion damages love, particularly if this duration is prolonged.

Many youth ask how many times a week or after how many days must we visit during the engagement and marriage. The reply is that it does not have a specified average or standard, instead it should be seen how much of the grounds are available and what is the quality of greetings. It should not be so rare to cause discouragement nor so frequent to be exhausting. Neither arrogance and indifference nor excessiveness and humiliating oneself and putting others to inconvenience.

Maintain balance since it is better.

Additionally, there must not be any kind of imposition and formality in these visits. Neither of the two sides should have the expectations of detailed formal feasts and colourful dinner tables and precious gifts. They must observe each other's condition.

Likewise, the bride and bridegroom must observe the etiquette of modesty and shyness, particularly in families where there are other boys and girls. Indifference towards modesty becomes the cause of disrespect of the bride and the bridegroom in the parents' eyes and the deviation of youngsters of the family.

Refreshing The Unpleasant Memories Of The Past

During the period before marriage some offences and shortcomings may face the two sides.

During the various phase of marriage, including asking for the girl's hand in marriage, giving the reply setting the conditions of marriage, invitation, and such affairs, there might have been some words exchanged between the elders or associated of the two sides, or the boy or the girl might have said something discouraging or those scorpion-natured ones might have stung to create displeasure and offence. This offence must not influence the marriage.

All of these things must be cleared up no sooner the marriage contract is held, and must not prolong to cover the post marriage time. If someone has been shown disregard and he thinks he has been disrespected, he must forgive it for Allah's sake.

Now that these two youths have started their joint life with safety, the chiefs and elders too should forgive and forget their displeasure and must never proceed for the compensation and the renewal of grudges.

Discussing these two youths have started their joint life with safety, the chiefs and elders too should forgive and forget their displeasure and must never proceed for the compensation and the renewal of grudges.

Discussing these absurd and ignorance-based matters is the sign of immaturity of the husband and the wife and sometimes incurs heavy and serious damage upon the life of the two.

7- Talk About Former Lovers

Some brides and bridegrooms and their associates (especially mothers and grandmothers), to make themselves more respectful and to compensate for their belittlement, or due to any other ill intention, talk about those previous ones who came to ask for their hand in marriage and usually describe their number in quite exaggerated numbers to boast of them. It not only does not make them respectful and is of no use, but it creates a grudge and is followed by plenty of harm.

Brides and bridegrooms should not talk about themselves in this regard and must prevent their associates from doing the same. Similarly, never tell the spouse about any association or inclination, which one might have had with anyone. And never talk about any other women, girls, or men before each other. Negligence of these points may apparently look to be small, but great harm can follow.

Here we appropriately produce the words of Ayatollah Amini:

“One of the important topic which the boy and the girl are prone to discover in the period between engagement and marriage is the grade of the love of their spouse for them. Each husband and wife wants to understand that his/her spouse has what degree of effect upon the future life. So it is essential for the wife and the husband to express the grade of love for each other and they must avoid uttering any discouraging word or practice, which might reflect their eagerness and love.

Man must avoid looking at other women and men and must only look at one's own spouse. Praising

other men and women and talking about the existence of other men or women who asked for their hand in marriage as well as fault finding and criticism are among the causes of discouragement and must maintain prestige and seriousness in their conduct and avoid ugly joke and non-serious and cheap activities. They must observe each other's regard and respect and no do anything which may make them so open to each other that the parameter of respect is dissolved." ³

8- Undue Ardour Of The Girl's Parents

Some girls' parents have undue and out of place ardour and emulation and prevent the friendly relation of their daughter with the lawful fiancé. And this practice becomes the cause of discouragement of them both.

I say to such mothers and fathers: If you have liked this son-in-law and have confidence in him, accepted him after sufficient recognition and considered him to be a suitable spouse for your daughter, then there is no room left for apprehension, restraining, and prohibiting, and prohibiting their seeing each other. But if you have not acquired the necessary recognition of him and have not liked him and do not have confidence in him, then why did you agree that your daughter marry him?

It is not reasonable that a person marries his daughter to someone and is suspicious about him and does not treat him as a suitable spouse for his daughter! This boy is now your son-in-law and the lawful and legal husband of your daughter and she too is the legal and lawful wife of him. From point of view, the period of engagement does not have any difference from that of the after marriage.

If you say, if this is his wife, he should take her to his own house, not that she may be his wife and live in our house, I reply to it: Did we not discuss only a few pages before (in this book) under the topic 'Need of engagement' that it is essential that there should be a time distance between the marriage contract and the marriage itself and we also described the logic of it?

In any case, the girl's parents must observe the condition of these two youths and not cause their annoyance by observing undue ardour, so that in the future, relations of the couple with the parents are based upon sincerity, purity, and respect and they do not have any malice and displeasure for them in their hearts.

Of course, the son-in-law must also make sure that while the girl is in her parents' home and the ceremonial marriage has not taken place, the permission of the parents is sought in connection with going for recreation, journeys and all other matters. It cannot be expected that the parents should not hold any opinion and allow the girl and the boy to go freely in all the matters, since they must conserve and secure the honour of their family too.

The youth should not trespass their respect and commit excess upon their honour; instead, they must take their status and position into view. It is particularly necessary where there are other adult boys and girls in a family, which observe the conduct of their sister and her husband. In such a case, if they

behave carelessly and do not observe the restrictions of honour, they can be the cause of aberration of other youth.

We emphatically recommend to the bride and the bridegroom that they must observe the honour, reverence, and agreement of parents in all matters. A recklessness and careless attitude in this connection can inflict heavy and grave damage.

- [1.](#) Evidently, the introduction of these books does not approve all of their matters.
- [2.](#) Risalat Newspaper, Issue no. 2102 1st of Urdibehesht 1372 SH, P4.
- [3.](#) Spouse selection. p 227.

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