

Marriage and its Merits

The family is a small social unit that begins with the union of husband and wife and is fortified with the birth of children. Marriage is a natural need for humans, which is sanctioned by pronouncing the formula of the marriage contract (the marriage vows).

Islam assigns great importance upon establishing the family and regards it as a holy event. Various Hadith consider family the finest institution in existence. Imam Muhammad Baqir (‘a) has cited from the Prophet of Allah (S):

«عن أبي جعفر (ع) قال: رسول الله (ص): «ما بُني بناء في الإسلام أحبّ إلى الله عزوجل من التزويج»

No institution has been established in Islam that is more loved by Allah, the Honored, the Glorified, than marriage.^{[1](#)}

Imam Sadiq (‘a) has cited from the Prophet of Allah (S):

«عن أبي عبدالله (ع) قال: قال رسول الله (ص): «ما من شيء أحبّ إلى الله من بيت يعمر في الإسلام بالنكاح، و ما من شيء أبغض إلى الله من بيت يخرّب في الإسلام بالفرقة، يعني الطلاق»

Nothing is more loved by Allah than a house that is populated through marriage and nothing is more hated by Allah than a house that is broken through separation (i.e. divorce).^{[2](#)}

Marriage is an invaluable Islamic tradition, the necessity of which the Holy Prophet (S) and Immaculate Imams (‘a) have emphasized. Amir al-Mu’minin (‘a) has declared:

«قال أمير المؤمنين (ع): تزوّجوا فإنّ رسول الله (ص) قال: «من أحبّ أن يتّبع سنّتي فإنّ من سنّتي التزويج»

Marry because the Prophet of Allah (S) has stated: Those who wish to follow my traditions must know

that marriage is one of them.[3](#)

The Prophet of Allah (S) has stated:

«قال رسول الله (ص): «النكاح سنتي فمن رغب عن سنتي فليس مني»

Marriage is my tradition and whoever forsakes my tradition is not of me.[4](#)

Islam does not regard marriage (and procreation) as an animalistic deed and it does not enjoin its followers to monastic existence and abandonment of marriage. On the contrary, it regards it as a way of purification [*tazkiyah*] and edification [*tahdhib*] of the soul, abstinence from sin, and proximity to Allah. Imam Sadiq ('a) has stated:

«قال أبو عبدالله (ع): «ركعتان يصلِّيهما المتزوج أفضل من سبعين ركعة يصلِّيها عزب»

Two *rak'ats*[5](#) prayer of a married person is superior to seventy *rak'ats* prayer of an unmarried person.[6](#)

The Holy Prophet (S) has stated:

«قال النبي (ص): «ركعتان يصلِّيهما متزوج أفضل من رجل عزب يقوم ليله و يصوم نهاره»

Two *rak'ats* prayer of a married person is superior to the worship of an unmarried man who spends his nights in prayer and his days in fast.[7](#)

Imam Sadiq has cited from the Prophet of Allah (S):

«عن أبي عبدالله (ع) قال: قال رسول الله (ع): «رُدَّال موتاكم العزَّاب»

The worst of your dead are those who die without marrying.[8](#)

Marriage and establishing a family is valuable according to Islam and has many merits, some of which are explained below.

1. Instrument of Love and Friendship

In this turmoil imbued life we humans require peace, tranquility, and love. We all need a sympathetic confidant, supporter, and well-wisher who we can love and enjoy his or her sincere love, aid, and support in return. We each need a person who can be our partner in life—someone who is loyal, kind, and sympathetic in health and sickness, in prosperity and hardship, in happiness and despondency, in

wealth and poverty, and by and large in all circumstances.

Who is better for meeting this need than a spouse and what place is better than the warm camaraderie of family. Allah, the Exalted, states in the Quran:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“And of His signs is that He has created for you, from yourselves, spouses that you may gain peace through them and He has set among you love and compassion. Surely in this there are signs for thoughtful people.”⁹

2. Instrument of Contenance and Immunity from Sin

Humans naturally require sexual relations and release. Controlling sexual desires is challenging if they are not satisfied legitimately and they draw a person to deviation and sin. Thus, marriage is the best and healthiest implement for satisfying natural sexual instincts and immunization against deviation. The Prophet of Allah (S) has stated:

«قال رسول الله (ص): «من أحبَّ أن يلقى الله طاهراً مطهراً فليلقه بزوجةٍ

Whoever wishes to meet Allah pure and immaculate must marry. [10](#)

The noble Imam Sadiq (‘a), has cited from the Prophet of Allah (S):

«عن أبي عبدالله (ع) قال: قال رسول الله (ص): «من تزوج أحرز نصف دينه

Whoever gets married has guarded half of their religion. [11](#)

Noble Musa ibn Ja‘far (‘a) has cited from his forefathers who cited from the Prophet of Allah (S):

موسى بن جعفر (ع)، عن النبي (ص)، قال: «ما من شاب تزوج في حداثة سنّه إلا عَجَّ شيطانه: يا ويلاه، يا ويلاه، عَصَمَ مِنِّي ثلثي دينه، فليتَّق الله العبد في الثلث الباقي

When someone marries when they are young, their devil cries: ‘Woe unto me! Woe unto me! This youth has protected two thirds of their religion from me. So for the remaining third this person must fear Allah and be His devout servant.’ [12](#)

3. Instrument of Physical and Mental Health

Sexual desires and release are natural needs that bring about physical and mental health. Control and suppression of these needs strain the psyche and damage one's equilibrium. The origin of many mental disorders such as depression, despair, anxiety, phobia, pessimism, nihilism, distrust, and anger may be suppression of sexual instincts. Thus, timely marriage and legitimate sexual fulfillment can be considered a key factor in physical and mental health. The Prophet of Allah (S) has stated:

قال رسول الله (ص): «زوّجوا أيا ماكم؛ فإنّ الله يحسن لهم أخلاقهم، و يوسّع لهم فى أرزاقهم، و يزيدهم فى مروّاتهم.»

Wed unto each other your unmarried men and women; for then surely Allah shall improve their behavior, expand their livelihood, and increase their humaneness. [13](#)

4. Increase in the Well-being of the Social Environment

If individuals marry at the outset of their maturity, they shall love and depend on their families and become immune to many types of moral corruption. As a result, the statistics relating to rape, taking advantage of girls and women, fornication, sexual acts with members of the same sex, masturbation, and even addiction, murder, theft, and many other crimes will plummet. Timely marriage has a great effect upon the health and security of the environment. This is why Islam advises parents and caregivers to prepare the means of marriage for those who have not yet married. The Quran states:

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

“And join your single men and women and your righteous bondservants in matrimony. If they are poor, Allah will enrich them of His bounty. And Allah is the Facilitator, the Omniscient.” [14](#)

The Prophet of Allah (S) has declared:

«عن النبيّ (ص) قال: «من حقّ الولد على والده ثلاثة: يُحسّن اسمه، و يعلمه الكتابة، و يزوجه إذا بلغ»

A father has three duties toward his children: he must give them worthy names, teach them literacy, and wed them when they mature. [15](#)

5. Procreation

Islam favors procreation and regards it as an important objective of marriage. Imam Muhammad Baqir (a) has cited from the Prophet of Allah (S):

عن أبي جعفر (ع)، قال: قال رسول الله (ص): «ما يمنع المؤمن أن يتخذ أهلاً؛ لعلّ الله يرزقه نسمة تنقل الارض بلا اله الا الله.»

What is wrong with a believer taking a spouse; it may be that Allah provides them with a child that vitalizes the world with (speakers of the adage of monotheism:) *la ilaha illallah*. [16](#)

The Prophet of Allah (S) has stated:

«قال النبيّ (ص): تناكحوا تكثرُوا؛ «فإنّي أباهي بكم الأمم يوم القيامة و لو بالسقط

Marry so you increase because surely I shall take pride in you, among the civilizations, on the Day of Judgment, even (counting) miscarriages. [17](#)

6. Pleasure and Sensuality

An important merit of marriage is legitimate sexual pleasure and gratification. Sexual acts bring about one of the highest of worldly pleasures and, according to Islam, are not only decent and legitimate acts if done with the intention to become closer to Allah [*qasd-e qurbat*] but also good deeds that have rewards [*thawab*]. Furthermore, sexual relations are even obligatory in some circumstances.

Conditions of the Marriage Contract

Marriage is a sacred contract that is realized with the synthesis of several factors:

1. Consent of the man and woman
2. Permission of the woman's father or grandfather (assuming that she is previously unwed)
3. Determination of the *Mahr* (*Mahr* can be real estate, cash, credit, or any other type of property, whether abundant or meager) [18](#)
4. Vocalization of the marriage formulas (by the man and woman or their representative—someone who is acquainted with the Arabic language)

After vocalization of the marriage formulas (marriage vows), the individual lives of the woman and man

turn into familial life, and thus the man and woman gain new responsibilities.

- [1.](#) – Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, vol. 20, p. 15.
- [2.](#) – Ibid, p. 16.
- [3.](#) – Ibid, p. 17.
- [4.](#) – Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 103, p. 220.
- [5.](#) – Rak'at is the basic unit of Salat, the compulsory daily Islamic prayer. [trans.]
- [6.](#) – Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, vol. 20, p. 18.
- [7.](#) – Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, p. 19.
- [8.](#) – Ibid, p. 19.
- [9.](#) – Surah Rum 30:21.
- [10.](#) – Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, vol. 20, p. 18.
- [11.](#) – Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, vol. 20, p. 17.
- [12.](#) – Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 103, p. 221.
- [13.](#) – Ibid, p. 222.
- [14.](#) – Surah Nur 24:32.
- [15.](#) – Makarim al-Akhlaq, vol.1, p. 253.
- [16.](#) – Wasa'il ush-Shi'ah, vol. 20, p. 14.
- [17.](#) – Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 103, p. 220.
- [18.](#) – Mahr is a specified (at time of marriage) amount that a man must pay his wife as a wedding gift. [trans.]

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