

The Fifteenth Talk

1. Polygamy And The Reasons Therefor

Today we shall discuss about the reasons for people opting for polygamy. This discussion is neither on jurisprudence nor on the cultural aspect of human life. It pertains only to the morality of polygamy.

2. Need of Having More Than One Wife

The first category of people who opt for having more than one wife are those whose first wife is ill and is unable to satisfy their sexual desires and is also physically incapable of performing the household chores. In such a situation the husband is forced to marry a second wife. The institution of marriage is considered to be very important and necessary in Islam. Christianity strictly enforces monogamy, hence its followers are facing a lot of problems. The second category is that of people whose wives are physiologically incapable of bearing children. In such cases both husband and wife desire a child. But it is very rare that such wives agree to the husband bringing home another wife to mother a child. I appeal to such women to arrange a second marriage for their husbands. They can look for a suitable girl to adjust with the family and live amicably.

3. Marriage For Carnal Satisfaction

Some men opt for polygamy to satisfy their lust. They think that more than one wife will provide a variety to them. Despite having a wife at home, they marry a second wife, and then a third. If possible they make a *harem* for themselves. This attitude arises from a very serious moral problem. The pursuit of these desires pushes a person into a dangerous valley because such desires can never be fulfilled; the person always wants more and more. There is no end to it. If you try to fulfil your desire, you will never be fully satisfied.

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq says that even if a person has a quantity of gold and silver equal to that of a river, he will not be satisfied. Similar is the case of the sexual instinct, the more you try to satisfy it, the more you will crave for it. Thus we find that the caliphs of the Ummayyad and Abbasid clans had made special

dens of vice, with hundreds of women, but they always wanted to add more. The more they tried to satisfy their carnal lust, the more they craved for it. But, what is the source of this craving? Psychologists say that when men stare at women, chase them, when women move around without hijab, boldly look at and talk with *namahram* men, then the sexual lust is aroused. Once this happens, a man who has a beautiful and young wife, marries a second and a third; and even then continues to stare at young girls, and is still not satisfied! He dreams of setting up a harem like that of Haroun al Rashid. Similarly, those inappropriately dressed women who talk and laugh with and pay attention to *namahram* men are, according to the psychologists, in a very dangerous situation. Once a woman lands in this condition, she is not shy of exposing even her sensitive body parts like the hair, bosom and the arms to *namahram* men. For example, we often find young women going to shops wearing sleeveless shirts, so that the shopkeeper can see her bare arms.. Similarly some women sit out in the streets without covering themselves with a *chador*.

Psychologists say that the cause of all these conditions is the craving of the sex instinct in the human race. We also come across some old men, who are sexually weak, but stare at young girls with lustful eyes. If such a person is a shop keeper, he stares at more than a hundred young girls a day and glances at women with lustful eyes. Islam considers this to be a very dangerous situation. For a man and especially for a woman to be lounging in the street is a wrong act, especially when she is without proper *hijab*. Such a woman has no character. A respectable woman would not be out in the streets without proper *hijab*. She would be in her house, caring for her children, and her home. If she has some free time, she would read a good book, or listen to a religious cassette. Another problem is that when two or three women get together they must backbite, and accuse others falsely. Such women should know that Hadhrat Fatima Zahra (s.a) is not pleased with them. If such women claim to be the slaves of Hadhrat Zahra (s.a), they are lying because Hadhrat Zahra (s.a) has nothing to do with such women.

Going back to our topic, the basis of the second type of polygamy is a craving for sex. When a person practices polygamy only for sexual lust, he is not only cheating others but is also cheating himself. He says that he is remarrying for reward. In fact he only exposes himself to retribution because he wants to attain a reward by lying. He is really marrying only to satisfy his lust. The moralists condemn such marriages. Beware and don't make yourselves the slaves of your desires. Don't become engrossed in satisfying your hearts desires. Don't fill your stomachs to the full, do not sleep too much, do not be lazy, and do not become talkative. Keep to the path of moderation; know that marrying for lust is wrong; the educators of ethics condemn such marriages.

We quote here a remark made by an eminent scholar of ethics. Only the people who have developed themselves can utter such valuable words. When we ponder over their utterances, we can't help but wonder. One of the senior jurists of Najaf al-Ashraf used to live in Karbala. He was Aga Sayed Ibrahim Qazwini. He was very erudite and because of his exemplary manners he was very popular among the students. The daughter of Fath Ali Shah, Zia al Saltana, took a divorce from her husband. She was a very pretty and young damsel. After taking the divorce she settled down in a place near Karbala. Since

she was all alone now, she sent word to Aga Qazwini through someone that she wished to marry him. The Aga replied that his marrying Zia al Saltana was not appropriate. They were incompatible because while he himself was an old man, she was very young; she was a princess and he was a poor student of jurisprudence struggling to make ends meet. The following day a message came to the Aga from the princess that she would be proud to marry him and that she wished her name to be joined to his! She said that she didn't expect any monetary support from him and, to the contrary, she offered to meet all his household expenses. When the late Aga Ibrahim saw that the girl was very determined, he sent word to her that his wife was a middle aged woman of forty and had adjusted very well with his penury. For many years she had put up with his penury, and had tolerated enough troubles. Now by remarrying, he did not want to create further troubles for her; hence he was not at all inclined towards marrying the princess. She was happily spending her life with him. He wished not to create any problems for her bringing home another wife. In these circumstances he forcefully turned down the proposal of the princess!"

Aga Ibrahim's words may surprise some people. But in my opinion, these words teach us a lot. I appeal to those who want to remarry for the sake of getting reward to, instead, bear the expenses of the woman they want to marry (and her children), this will be a better reward. Imam Musa bin Jafar (a.s) has said that if he was able to foot the expenses of a needy family for a week, it would be better than performing 70 hajj.

4 Marriage Of Compulsion

The third type of marriage is the marriage of compulsion. Human beings have certain desires that get satisfied sometimes, and remain unsatisfied at other times. The unsatisfied desires slowly move from the conscious to the subconscious mind. According to the psychologists, when this happens a kind of a knot is formed in the heart which is very dangerous. If this person has the knowledge and the means, he will set the entire world on fire.

Sometimes women don't discharge their responsibilities. As I mentioned in my previous talk, they are not mindful about the small but very important things and unable to fulfil their small responsibilities that assume bigger proportions later on. For example: when the husband returns home from work, the wife receives him with a glum face instead of giving him a smiling reception. When such an attitude becomes a habit, the husband starts thinking that perhaps he will be more comfortable if he marries a second wife. Thus, he is hurt by his wife and re-marries, assuming that he will be free of such troubles in his second marriage. If, unfortunately, he faces the same type of treatment from the second wife, he might opt for a third marriage. He searches for peace and comfort by re-marrying. These are the marriages of compulsion.

I want to ask the ladies if a husband marries again and again, who is really at fault? The wives must admit that they are at fault because they did not keep their husbands happy. They did not discharge the

responsibility that Islam had given them. They did not heed the advice of the psychologists. The most important function of a wife is to provide comfort to her husband. She must be careful about the small things in the daily life, the neglect of which might bring about serious consequences for her. What are the things that create trouble and turmoil for the wife? It is her neglect, her laziness and her lack of understanding that create such troubles for her.

Here I recount a historical event. There was a woman, Umm Sulaym, at the time of the Prophet (s). She was the wife of one of the Ansaar. She was a native of Madina. Her husband was a craftsman and an intelligent man. Both husband and wife had embraced Islam. Both used to fulfil their duties. They had a son about two to three years of age. Once, the child fell ill. One day after the man had left for work, the child died. The woman sat near the dead child and kept crying. After a while she thought that the child was dead and cannot come back to life. She decided that she should not make her husband sad and restless. So she kept the body of the son in such a place where her husband would not see it, because she thought that if he receives this sad news as soon as he enters the house, he will also become very miserable. Then she changed her clothes and adorned herself for her husband. Upon his arrival, she herself opened the door, and greeted him. After exchanging pleasantries the husband inquired about the condition of the child. The wife said, "*Alhamdu Lillah!* He is well!" They sat down, talked, and relaxed. When it was time for salah (prayer) they performed the ghusl (bath). The husband wished to attend the congregational prayer with the Prophet (s). Before he left home she asked him, "If someone keeps something valuable with you for safe-keeping and returns to claim it after sometime, and you refuse to give it back! What will be the consequence of the act?" The husband said, "That would be very bad, not to return what has been entrusted for safe-keeping is a big sin!" The wife said "Two years back Allah had given us something for safe-keeping. Now that the time has come for us to return it, Allah has taken it back from us. Our dear child is no more! Therefore go and offer your prayers with the Prophet (s) and then inform your friends so that they can attend his burial." The husband said, "*Alhamdu Lillah!*" I don't know why the man thanked Allah at that moment. Whatever he praised Allah for was appropriate, but he must have praised Allah the most for giving him a good wife.

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

As for those who strive for Us, we surely guide them to Our paths, and lo! Allah is with the good.
Sura al-'Ankabut, 29: 69)

The man entered the mosque. It appeared as if the Prophet (s) was waiting for him. The Prophet (s) congratulated him. The same night the woman became pregnant. The couple was blessed with a son again. He grew into a wise, intelligent and learned person. Scholars have written a lot about him. Allah had blessed the couple with a son better than the one that was taken away from them!

I ask the ladies, that if they try to emulate Umm Sulaym, will their husbands continue to shout or hit them? No. It is your own fault that your husband doesn't appear happy at home, shouts or becomes

violent. This is because you don't look after your husband and children properly; you don't take care of the house properly. Come morning and the woman is out in the street, and that too without *hijab*, talking and laughing. In the afternoon the husband returns home only to find a dirty house, a dirty wife and dirty children. There is no trace of any lunch. When faced with this situation, he is forced to consider re-marriage. He thinks that, perhaps, the second wife will keep his home; the children and herself clean, and prepare meals on time. When he re-marries, the first wife starts crying.

Ladies! Don't become the cause of your own misfortune! If you make yourself a good housewife, take care of your husband, children and home properly, there will be no reason for your husband to re-marry. Times are such that the husband can barely afford one wife, how will he support the second wife. In spite of this if he re-marries, it is your own fault – you neglected to look after him, forcing him to re-marry. This is termed as marriage of compulsion.

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