

The Sixteenth Talk

1. On Divorce

Today's topic of discussion is divorce. In Islam divorce is the most detested of the legitimate acts. It is well known that the Prophet of Islam (s) has said:

In my view the most undesirable thing is divorce

Christianity forbids divorce under all circumstances save one, but this meeting is not the correct place to discuss it. There is so much adultery prevalent in the Western societies, because the couples have to continue with incompatible marriages.

When we study the statistics regarding divorce in Iran, we find that the numbers are increasing year after year. This is happening despite the undesirability of divorce. Divorce is becoming like a trend in our society!

In Post-Revolution Iran, divorce has emerged as a major problem for the society. There has been a lot of debate on this issue, still the numbers keep increasing. Why is it so? We shall try to find an answer to this question in our discussion today. We know that for our beloved Prophet (s), divorce was most undesirable thing. Today we shall analyse why this undesirable practice has assumed such formidable proportions! Just as marriage was divided into three parts divorce too will be discussed in three parts.

2. Types Of Divorce

Divorce Of Necessity

One category of divorce is the divorce of necessity that Islam permits under strictly defined conditions. Islam says that although divorce is undesirable, it is permissible under the law of shariah. If a person's hand develops gangrene, it must be amputated. If the hand is not amputated, gangrene will spread to the whole body. The affected person will not be happy, but he is resigned to his fate and even thanks and pays the doctor for cutting his hand and saving the rest of his body from gangrene. Necessary

divorce can be treated like amputation of the hand when the unfortunate person is afflicted with cancer. Sometimes the husband and wife are totally incompatible, and inspite of forgiving and overlooking shortcomings, inspite of making sacrifices, things just don't work out. Sometimes a pious and upright man is married to an amoral woman. Or a chaste woman is married to a lecherous and impious man. This impious man is incompatible with the virtuous lady, he feels as if he has been imprisoned. There is no solution to this problem except divorce, it is impossible to reconcile the two, they should be separated. In such situations, the divorce law is a very useful one, from the point of view of Islam as well as the society. Even Christianity accepts that the Islamic provision of divorce, with all its conditions, is appropriate. Without the divorce law, Islam would be incomplete. This law is applied when there is no other solution except separation. When a woman is not able to adjust with her husband, she becomes wayward and the husband is not able to reform her, then separation is the only solution. If a husband becomes amoral, and is beyond reform, then it becomes necessary for the wife to separate from him. Here divorce is necessary. But such cases are very rare. If these were the reasons for divorce, there would not be more than a hundred divorces throughout the country. The sheer number of divorces tells us that these are not the divorces of necessity.

Ladies who do not observe the *hijab* should know that they are oppressors, and on the Day of Judgement they will be grouped with the oppressors. What can be more oppressive than flaming the passions of unmarried men by not wearing the *hijab*, by displaying ones face and body to unmarried men which then leads them to sin? The fire of passion is not an ordinary one. If this youth falls into sin, it is because of this woman who refuses to cover herself. Some women go shopping and display all their feminine charms to the shopkeeper, just to strike a bargain. Some women exceed the limits of decent behaviour. They sell their respect in order to buy some cloth or a pair of socks. When I say that they sell their respect, I do not mean that they indulge fornication. I mean that they laugh and joke with *namahram* men and display all their charms to them. This is, in a way, selling oneself. Selling oneself does not only mean indulging in fornication; that is the final step on this ladder.

Divorce For Carnal Satisfaction

The second type of divorce is one given for vile reasons; this divorce is given for the satisfaction of the carnal desires. For example, a careless man is attracted to a woman and in order to marry her, he divorces his wife. Worse than this is when a woman gets attracted to a man, becomes rebellious and wants her husband to grant her a divorce so that she can marry her lover. These are divorces sought for vile reasons. These are divorces sought for satisfying passions. This type of divorce is found to be more amongst careless people. I consider it necessary to point out the reasons for such divorces, and I request the ladies to please pay special attention. This is the result of mingling of the sexes, because men and women look at each other, because men and women talk to each other unnecessarily, and more than all this it is because of a lack of *hijab* or wearing clothes deemed inappropriate by Islam. One type of 'selling oneself' is when the woman wears a dress that exposes some of her body, goes out of her house and shows her body to *namahram* men. A type of 'selling oneself' is when a woman attracts

the attention of the shopkeeper by displaying her charms and joking with him. He in turn laughs and jokes and talks seductively. This type of woman, who sells herself, should know that she is a big oppressor, because the Satan comes to this shopkeeper or *namahram* man, and then presents this woman to him. When this happens all the love that that man has for his wife disappears and things reach such a stage that he divorces his wife and the children are left without any support. All this happens because the woman displayed her feminine charms to the shopkeeper or to the *namahram* man. This is a great oppression and attracts an equally great retribution.

A thing which brings about great turmoil is infatuation. This is an ailment which is worse than the cancer. All types of infatuations, whether between persons of the same sex, that is between two girls or two boys, or between a man and a woman, are like cancerous diseases. If, God forbid, someone becomes inflicted with this disease he can never get along with his wife. Even if she does everything for him, he wants to leave her. He does not even care about his own self-respect. When we read the poetry of lovers, we find that the first thing a person loses in the path of infatuation is his self-respect and dignity. What is the source of this infatuation? This is born out of lust for sex. Beware! Don't let Satan mislead you. When two boys or two girls "love" each other, this "love" arises out of lust for sex, even if they call it love. Love, in the name of Allah, love for the sake of Allah only, is rare. The truth is what Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s) has said: When the love of the Lord departs from a persons heart, then the love of someone else occupies its place.

Exchanging Glances And Meeting Each Other

Some experts are of opinion that there are certain rays in the human body, which emanate from the eyes in the form of love. Therefore, Islam forbids people from looking at each other with the feelings of lust. The safest attitude is to refrain from looking at a *namahram*. Men should not talk with women except when necessary. They should not look at women except when necessary. In the Holy Quran there are several verses on this subject. At one place it tells the women not to adorn themselves and beautify themselves for *namahrams*. At another place, it tells the women that they should talk with *namahram* only to the extent absolutely necessary. At yet another place it tells the men and women not to look at each other. In the chapter of *Ahzaab* the Quran addresses the Prophet (s) thus:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
عَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

O Prophet! Tell thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers that they let down upon them their cover garments; that they may be known, so that they will not be troubled, God is Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. (Sura Ahzaab, 33: 59)

Therefore, according to the Holy Quran the respectability, the dignity, the status and the value of a woman lies in covering herself. Muslim women must be recognized because of their veil. If a woman

does not cover her face, and a man falls in love with her, then there is nothing for her except shame. God forbid that a married woman herself falls in love with someone. This will be the most shameful thing, and believe me, the following verse of the Holy Quran is most suitable for this man and woman:

خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِين

He loseth both the world and the Hereafter. That is the sheer loss. (Sura al Hajj, 22: 11)

The divorces taking place in such circumstances are due to the behaviour of women who display their charms to *namahram* men; those veiled and unveiled women who are not careful about the way in which they speak and talk. Women are beautiful and so attractive that the Holy Prophet (s) and the infallible Imams (a.s.) have said that if a woman is walking ahead of a man, he should not look at the back of that woman! He should not walk behind her, but should allow a gap between them. This discretion is advised because women are attractive for men; if this attraction turns into adoration, and even if the woman does not respond to the man, both the man and the woman will suffer. Islam has advised men not to immediately sit in a place vacated by a woman. The man may occupy the seat after it has become cold, so that the warmth of the seat does not give rise to satanic thoughts in him. Many divorces take place because women don't observe proper *hijab*, or because women talk to men or because they display their feminine charms. I appeal to the ladies to take special care in covering their bodies. If a *namahram* man looks at you with lust, you will be unsuccessful in this world as well as in the hereafter.

I would like to see separate public transport for men and women. If this is not possible, then at least there should be separate areas in the buses for men and women. God forbid, that a woman should share a seat with a man, or that the bodies of *namahram* men and women should touch each other, while travelling or standing in a bus, even if only their clothes come in contact. This is extremely dangerous. The woman is like a priceless jewel. Priceless jewels should be secured safely in a box. The more one guards priceless articles, the more these can be protected from thieves. Ladies and gentlemen, you should be wise in the way you behave and speak. I ask the men that if your wife does not dress appropriately and steps out of the house and others become besotted with her, then what will happen?.

Divorce Of Compulsion

The third category of divorce, like the marriage of compulsion, is the divorce of compulsion. Nearly 80% of divorces fall into this category. There can be several reasons for such divorces. The first reason is that the wife doesn't perform her duties properly. She becomes a problem for the man. She neglects to perform the small, but important, tasks. All these small things add up to make the husband lose interest in his spouse. He becomes impatient with her. In extreme cases the distraught husband starts beating and being violent with his wife and children. He couldn't care less, even if he is advised that his wife and children will be left without support. The same husband who used to confront all hardships to support his

wife and children turns into a thoughtless and uncaring person.

In certain cases, it is the husband who neglects the small, but really important things. His behaviour at home is undesirable. He is very stingy and rude. The wife becomes so fed-up with him that she starts nitpicking the smallest things. Don't be under the impression that because she is good now, she will continue to be good even after she gets fed-up. No, when the woman has had enough she will neither bother about the children, nor the relatives, but will be ready to forsake all of them if necessary.

Men should organise their time. People who have achieved something in life always have a timetable to do things. Some people are so particular that even their toilet timings are fixed. They have fixed timings for eating, sleeping and work. Those who organise their time are the successful ones. Thus I request all the men and women to organise their time properly. The men must earmark some time to spend with their children. The wife should not feel lonely. We find some men with their heads in a book all the time. They are always reading. Gaining knowledge is a good thing, but it should not be at the expense of the wife who feels lonely and sad. It is very dangerous if a person is so busy that he has no time to be with his family. A businessman wakes up in the morning and leaves for work. After dealing with all kinds of people when he returns home in the evening, all he wants is dinner and his bed. This is when he has not brought the accounts register home. Otherwise he falls asleep on the register itself. Such men should be aware that this is very harmful. A time will come when his good wife becomes bad. She loses interest in running the house. The man remains glued to the mosque while his children attend singing parties. When it is said: 'Work for eight hours and worship for 8 hours,' it does not mean that you should be glued to the mosque for eight hours. It means that your wife and children also have a share in these eight hours. When a man returns home from work in the evening he should ask after the wife before asking after the children, because he is closer to his wife. If a child comes forward, pick him in your arms, but your sight should be on your wife.

Some time ago a woman killed three of her children. She had inflicted seventeen injuries on one of the children. When interrogated, the woman said that whenever her husband came home he gave all his attention to the children and ignored her. She became jealous and decided to kill her children. I am stressing on this topic because sometimes we are faced with such situations. Sometimes a woman telephones us and cries and complains bitterly. When the matter is investigated, we find that her husband is financially well-off, and sexually not lacking. There is one problem though – he cannot reach out to his wife. He has no time to sit and talk with her.

The Prophet of Islam (s) says that when a husband reaches home he should talk to his wife before discussing any other matters. Give her the opportunity to relate whatever she wants to. Give her the opportunity to unburden her heart. And listen to her. Don't interrupt her. Then encourage her and with great kindness help her to solve her problems. Thank her for all the trouble she takes to run the household. Then spend about half an hour talking and playing with the children.

The children, in one family, became wayward when they grew up. The mother pinned the blame entirely

on their father who, she said, was always glued to books or to the Quran. He never had time for them; he never played with them or talked to them. He never asked the children where they were going or where they were coming from. The scholar, the student, the man who, on arriving home, does not pay attention to his wife or children, has usurped their right, and knowledge acquired by usurping someone's right can never be fruitful or useful. This man, this student, should first meet his wife and children and then study. Then, when he has studied for a couple of hours, it is the responsibility of the wife to adorn herself, and attend to him with a cup of tea or at least a glass of water. Greet him with a smile, offer him the tea or coffee and sit next to him. All the tiredness and tedium of the husband would disappear if the wife were to behave in this way.

A person, whose wife had expired, used to cry very much. We asked him why he was so disconsolate. We told him to resign to the Will of Allah. He replied, "I am resigned to the Will of Allah! But I am sad that my well-wisher is in the grave. When I would get tired after a few hours of studying, she would bring me a cup of refreshing tea, and refresh my tired mind. All the books that I have written are thanks to her loving care and attention!"

A scientist says that if I have invented something new or if I have been able to serve the world, it was because of my wife. She always dispelled my tiredness.

If a husband neglects his wife and busies himself all the time in his studies or business, he is faced with a very dangerous situation. This is a reason spouses hate each other, and where there is hate, divorce raises its ugly head. The woman, although she is chaste, good, and respectable, reaches the court and obtains divorce, because her patience is over. She says that she wants peace of mind. She is not even concerned about her children. Such divorces are because of the thoughtlessness of the spouses, and not giving time and attention to each other. Men don't shoulder their responsibilities; they don't make the woman a part of their lives. Almost 70% of divorces are caused by such attitude of the couples. The husband and wife are suspicious about each other. If the husband is ten minutes late, the wife insults him: "Where were you? Were you with your second wife?" Then the husband retaliates by marrying a second wife, and sometimes a third. These suspicions and baseless thoughts are found in women, and also in some men. But if men are suspicious, they will have to bear a greater retribution.

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