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Social Measures

The lady of the house, dressed in the latest fashion, was waiting impatiently for her daughter Zaynab to get dressed for the wedding party. The lady was impatient, and walked up and down the room. Now and then she stopped in front of a mirror to have a look at her image. Her daughter was a bit late, so she rang a bell and a pretty maid came in the room. She was wearing a short dress and had her hair done.

The woman admired the attractive maid and said, "I see, Samia, you have finished before your little lady. Go and tell her to hurry up. We have no time to spare... It takes an hour to reach the bride's house."

The maid replied, "Yes, my lady." Samia left the room and soon returned, saying that Zaynab would be getting ready now. Zaynab's mother became angry and exclaimed, "What has she been doing All this time?"

The maid answered, "She has been praying."

"Praying?! Oh, what an abnormal girl she is! Go again and tell her to hurry up."

The maid went out and came back to announce that Zaynab was coming.

The mother said, "What did you say? How could she get ready in such a short time? Surely she will bring disgrace to me at this party. How I pity her. She is spoiling her beauty by negligence and indifference." Admiring herself again in the mirror, she saw her daughter enter with a smile on her angelic face.

The daughter said, "Here I am mother, quite ready."

Her mother gave her a sharp look, and said ironically, "Of course you are ready! What is this? Are you going in this long dress? Where is your make-up? Is there a girl of your age who does not know how to color her lips or put on eyeliner except you? I have been waiting all this time while you did nothing but pray. Now you say you are ready!"

Zaynab waited for her mother to finish, and then she said politely, "Yes, I have performed my prayers since it is my religious duty, and I cannot pray at the party which will end after prayer time. My dress is

not that long, but it certainly is not a mini. My hair is tidy, with no need to waste my time at a hairdresser to be polluted with chemicals. As for the make-up, of course, I know how to color my eyes and my lips, but I feel this is not necessary. I like to show myself as I am, with no mask on my face. "

Her mother turned her head away, disapproving of her daughter's logic. She said, "Let us leave before you get on the pulpit and give us a long sermon, as is your habit. But I feel bitterness when I see the maid exceeds you in her good appearance."

Zaynab replied, "If such measures are the true criterion, I agree that she does exceed me." The mother stated," In fact, I don't know how you are going to face the famous people there. You will appear so poor and humble among the men and women."

"The party is not for both sexes," Zaynab replied.

"Had it been like that, I would not have agreed to go. In any case, there will not be any singers or music of any kind."

The mother laughed in a mocking tone and said,

"Then the party is for giving a religious speech on the decency of hijab."

Zaynab answered quietly, "No! There is no religious speech. It is only a formal farewell party to a bride starting her honeymoon."

The mother feared delay, so she said to her daughter, "Come on; tell me the details on our way to the party." Zaynab put on a long black coat and a scarf on her head as she always did. They got into their car, with the maid carrying a box of her mistress's cosmetics.

While they were driving, Zaynab's mother asked her daughter, "How do you know that the party is not for both sexes?" Zaynab answered, "It was supposed to take place at one of the clubs, according to the bride's mother. But my friend, the bride, is a good believer, as you know. Thus she refused to have her wedding party according to western values, or in defiance of religious morals. Quarrels started between the mother and daughter. But the groom took the side of the bride, and my friend insisted on canceling the celebration. Finally her mother gave in and agreed to have a simple farewell party."

Zaynab's mother was astonished and asked, "Does the groom have the same reactionary beliefs as the bride?" Zaynab tried to smile at her mother's cruel words.

She said, "Of course he has the same beliefs, and he is of equal moderation. Otherwise, she would not have agreed to marry him. A good believer does not marry a playboy who is totally different in beliefs and ideals. Disputes in such matters are a serious threat to a marriage. How can you brand such ideals 'reactionary' while they are the essence of our religion? They are clearly elaborated in the Holy Qur'an .Our belief is the right path, while the non-Islamic way is the reactionary one, since it goes back to the

primitive stage of humanity when there were no Divine creeds or human values."

Her mother was affected by the argument and she said," You are right, but civilization requires something different."

Zaynab replied, "Oh, mother! What civilization is this? Tragedies and disasters are under the surface. Bright masks hide devilish motives and inhuman desires. Oh, mother! We should not be fooled by this civilization."

The mother spoke in a sorrowful tone, "This is the general attitude of the day and the social measures that count."

"We shall try to defeat such perceptions," Zaynab said. "We will prove that in a society, a young girl can show herself through her real personality –not by her make-up or her fashionable clothing. When she has an independent personality, she will taste the sweetness of victory. It is contrary to woman's true nature to expose her in a framework of fashion or make-up, which is only a means for public exposure."

They arrived at the house of the bride. The mother tapped her daughter on the shoulder and said, "May Allah bless you. I wish I could have your strong faith and self-confidence."

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