

The Third Talk

1 Biological Scientists on Matrimony

The main topic of our discussion during this session is domestic morals. In this direction whatever we have dealt with in the previous talks was a sort of preface, although rather inadequate! Today's talk is on the importance of matrimony in light of the findings of the biological scientists.

When the hormones associated with the sexual instinct are released in the body, they bring about a peculiar revolution in the body and soul of a person, whether a girl or a boy. The resulting changes are so obvious that it manifests itself in the appearance of the person. Islam terms this changed condition as the age of *buloogh*. According to Islam, *buloogh* is that stage when the hormones associated with the sexual instinct are released and become strong in a person. In other words, the person experiences a strange transition. When these hormones are released, the person automatically experiences an attraction that is called sexual attraction.

Prior to this the sexual instinct was dormant, but now it begins to manifest itself. As soon as this happens, the young person must be handled very carefully. I have previously said that if these manifestations are not handled thoughtfully, the results could be serious. We should also bear in mind that the sexual urge is not like the urge for eating and drinking. Sexual urge is also not like the desire to amass wealth, acquire property and other similar human desires. If Freud's theory has to be accepted, then all the desires have their root in the sexual desire. His theory seems incorrect. But romance, poetry and other related instincts can be connected to the sexual instinct in a person. You very seldom hear that someone has written a poem on bread or water, for instance. But poetry is mostly about love and romance. The love of one person for another arises from the sex instinct that manifests itself in the persons.

Here I would like to make a point to the young sons and daughters! If two young boys, or two young girls, have unusual love and affection for each other, then they must watch out, otherwise they might be exposed to a grave risk. This love must certainly be stopped. They may argue that they are just friends and the friendship is not because of sex instinct, but they are lying. If one person has extreme feelings

towards another, it definitely is love. And love is a product of the sex instinct. The purest form of love, unadulterated with any other instinct, can only be one's love for Allah. One may develop love for Imam Hussein (a.s) and Kerbala, or for Imam Zamana. If one has an unusual love for Allah or these personalities, it is certainly a blessing. But if this is not the case, then the affected individual must realise that he is in a very dangerous situation. Reciting poetry for the beloved or becoming a lover of someone is because of the sexual urge.

2. Quranic View of Matrimony

The Holy Verse reads:

لِيُنْفِقْ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ وَ مَن قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا ءَاتَتْهُ اللّٰهُ لَا يَكْلِفُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا مَا ءَاتَتْهَا

Let him who has abundance, spend of his abundance, and he whose provision is measured, let him spend of that which Allah hath given him. Allah asketh naught of any soul save that which He hath given it. (Sura Al Talaaq 65:07)

This verse pertains to the lives of human beings and this verse is also about wives. Men and women are absolutely natural and essential for each other, in the same way that bread and water are essential. If a person cannot acquire these essentials on his own, others must assist him. Since the sexual instinct is different from other human instincts, the Holy Quran has a specific and distinct commandment about it:

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيْمَىٰ مِنكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللّٰهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ وَاللّٰهُ وَسْعٌ عَلِيمٌ

And marry such of you as are solitary and the pious of your slaves and maidservants. If they be poor, Allah will enrich them of His bounty. Allah is of ample means, Aware. (Sura An-Nur 24: 32)

The importance of matrimony in the society is stressed in this verse. Here the word 'ankihu', meaning marry, is used in a collective sense hinting at the importance of matrimony in the society. It is the responsibility of the parents to get their young ones married. If the parents don't have the means, then the Islamic government must discharge this duty. If it is unable to do so, the society has to bear this responsibility. Quran says that the society has to take the responsibility of helping the poor boys and girls marry. It also says that people should have faith in Allah that after matrimony they will flourish. If you trust in Allah, and believe Him to be the Sustainer, then marry and do not worry unduly about the future!

If your trust in Allah is firm, if you work hard enough, if you follow the commandments of Islam, then fear of poverty should not worry you. Another verse of the Quran exhorts the society to help remove the poverty and penury of individuals. It urges people to help each other in the society. Particularly in the

matter of matrimony, the Quran exhorts the society to help those young boys and girls marry, who don't have the means to meet the expenses of marriage.

3. Matrimony in the Light of Tradition

The author of *Wasail* is one person who has a right over the *Mumineen* in general and the *Maraji'* in particular. In his invaluable book he has recorded almost six thousand traditions. He has recorded traditions that say that there is great felicity for the person who helps a young man get a bride or helps a young girl get married. When one reads these traditions, one feels as if there can be no felicity greater than this.

It is narrated from Imam Musa ibn Jafar (a.s.) that on the Day of Reckoning three types of persons will be under the shade of the Firmament. One of the groups will consist of the persons who helped someone to marry. In this tradition the Imam (a.s.) says that on the Day of Judgment Allah will grant such persons with His Blessings. (*Wasail al-Shia*, Vol 14, Page 27)

Similar traditions are recorded in other chapters of the book too. The author has recorded more than twenty such traditions. One such tradition is:

“Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) said that a person came to his revered father. The Imam (a.s.) asked him, “Do you have a spouse?” The person replied in the negative. (I mention this especially for the benefit of those young girls and boys who can marry, but won't) Then the Imam (a.s.) said, “If Allah gives me whatever is there on the earth and asks me to remain without a wife, I would turn down the offer!” Here ‘whatever is on earth’ does not mean millions of dollars, it means the earth and all that it contains. The Imam is addressing girls as well as boys that if Allah gives him the earth and all that it contains, but if he is without a spouse even for one night, this wealth has no value. Then the Imam said to that person, “Let me tell you the difference between those who have spouses and those who don't. If a married man or woman offers two *rakaat* of prayer, it is more felicitous than the worship of an unmarried person, who prays at night and fasts during the day.”

It is narrated from the Prophet (s) and the Imams (a.s) that no house is liked more by Allah than that which is built on the foundation of matrimony. This tradition points to a very special fact. The fact is that when you get a young girl and a young boy married, you are helping to make a home! What is more felicitous – making a home or making a mosque or a school? The Holy Prophet (s) says that when young couples marry and make their homes, it is definitely more felicitous!

There are several other traditions stressing the importance of matrimony in Islam. The least reward is stated in the tradition that says that when a married man or woman offers the morning prayers, a reward of forty *rakaats* is entered in their record of deeds. It means that the rewards for all the prayers offered by married persons are enhanced 70 times! This is the importance of matrimony in Islam.

To the contrary, about those young men and women who can marry but won't marry, the Prophet (s) and the Imams (a.s.) have made the following observation: The lowest of the men are those who die single.

There are several other such traditions that severely condemn men and women remaining unmarried. I am not recounting them here because they can cause a feeling of depression in the minds of the audience! If the readers wish to know more about these, they may refer to Volume 16 of Wasail al Shia.

The sayings of the Holy Prophet (s) and the Imams (a.s.) are no exaggerations. The Shias of the *Ahl al Bayt* have a special belief. Their belief is that all the Divine Commandments are based on attaining certain advantages (*Masaleh*) and avoiding certain evils (*Mafasid*). If Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a.s.) has given certain orders, it follows that there must be some reason for it. If Imam Baqir (a.s.) has asked men to refrain from certain things, there must be something negative about them. This is a confirmed belief of the Shias.

4. Importance Of Sexual Instinct In Islam

The instinct of sex is different from other instincts in the human beings. When other instincts reach a peak and become strong, they make the person helpless. Sexual instinct is different in this aspect. Prophet Yusuf (a.s.) could resist all the temptations of Zuleikha and was able to shake her off. Zuleikha had already made up her mind. According to the Quran, if it were not for Prophet Yusuf's infallibility and his firm determination, he too would have succumbed.

When Hadhrat Yusuf was again confronted with a bevy of beautiful women at Zuleikha's chambers, they cut their hands, instead of cutting the apples. All those beautiful women became attracted to and desired Yusuf (a.s.). From this very difficult situation too Prophet Yusuf came out unscathed. Here I would like to quote a verse from the Holy Quran that I request the young ones and their parents to bear in mind:

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ وَإِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَكُن مِّنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

He said my Lord I prefer the prison to them, and if Thou will not fend off their wiles from me I shall incline unto them and become of the foolish. (Sura Yusuf, 12 :33).

Prophet Yusuf says that if Allah had not been merciful, he would have been trapped by the women and become wretched and helpless. In the sentence '*akoon minal jaheleen*,' *jahl* means desire overcoming intellect. Thus in this verse, Yusuf (a.s.) is quoted saying that O lord you were merciful, you helped me to overcome my sexual instinct. These verses pertaining to Prophet Yusuf prove that the sexual instinct is different from other instincts. If we ponder over the fact, we find that Islam has a very unique view regarding the sexual instinct. The unique thing is that it doesn't ask its followers to suppress this instinct. People should not do anything that might extinguish this instinct forever. Therefore, the first commandment is that people should not look at one another with lust or amorous intent. This is a sort of

defensive measure and is not asking total abstinence. Viewing someone with lustful looks is considered sinful. Looking at someone with desire causes the person to become wretched, because one glance can be enough to cause infatuation, which is a disease worse than cancer.

Therefore the Holy Quran addresses every lady and says: “O lady! When you move with, or talk to a male stranger you must exercise care in selection of your dress and your behavior. O lady! If you are put in a situation when you must speak with a male stranger, then talk only to the extent that it is absolutely essential”.

Even while conversing with someone over the telephone, the talk should be restricted to the bare necessities. When a woman walks in the lane, she should ensure that the *chador* is worn properly. Also, the *chador* should not be of a material that might attract attention of the wayfarers. The footwear and the posture of walking too should not be such that men become aware of you. If your *chador* is transparent, this is oppression because it can arouse passions. If a youth gets motivated due to the carelessness of women, it might often be difficult for him to control his sexual instinct.

We conclude from the foregone discussion that the sex instinct requires the attention of the parents and the young boys and girls. The instinct will be at its zenith from the age of fifteen or sixteen years to about 28 years. During these twelve to fifteen years one can have the legitimate pleasures of the sex instinct. After this period the Need of a wife or a husband starts tapering down. But the society has grown so callous, that a major part of this prime period is spent by the youth without matrimony because of economic and other reasons.

5. Moderation In Dowry

If we avoid extravagance and luxurious life, then all our social problems can be resolved. Is it not possible that the excessive dowry that we give to one daughter be distributed among ten such daughters, so that ten girls can be married! The ladies and gentlemen in our society might not agree to such a suggestion. But Islam says this is possible! Maula Amir al Mu'minin (a.s.) is an example for our society. There is a couplet written by Imam Ali (a.s.) in which he says that a luxurious life makes one mentally weak and destroys him psychologically. This is the thing which causes pride in individuals and the society and makes man a worshipper of things other than his Lord. Man becomes a slave to the society. This curse of dowry that the parents have to bear is like a yoke, breaking their backs. Marrying a daughter is akin to being ground with a mortar and pestle. We are all neck deep in this morass – you, me, the villager, the city dweller, the wise, the ignorant, the learned, the illiterate – all of us are involved in this. If we are contented in the matter of dowry, we shall be able to marry away several daughters in the place of one. You might say this frugality is not possible. I insist that it is possible!

An anecdote reported by Ayatullah Haeri should serve as an example for all of us. He reports that once, while a Shaykh was seated with a group of his students, a trader brought a cloak for him. He saw that the cloak was very good, but wearing it would be unbefitting for him. On the other hand, refusing a gift,

too, would not be correct. Therefore he asked the trader about the cost of the cloak. The trader did not want to reveal the price of the cloak. So the Shaykh asked him, how many ordinary cloaks could be bought for the price of that expensive cloak. The trader said that about eighteen ordinary cloaks could be bought for that money. The Shaykh said, I accept this cloak, but is it possible to get this cloak exchanged for eighteen ordinary cloaks?" The trader agreed to the suggestion, took away the expensive cloak and returned with eighteen ordinary cloaks. The Shaykh distributed the cloaks among his students and draped one over his own shoulder. Then he turned towards the trader and asked him, "Is this gift from you better or the earlier expensive cloak that you brought for me? If I had worn that cloak, I would have been the only person wearing it. But now there are eighteen persons wearing new cloaks!" You might say that such things are not possible in our daily lives. I say, they are possible, and should be possible. We all have to answer to Allah for our deeds. A tradition says: Each one of you is a ruler, and every ruler will be questioned about the people under his rule.

Dear young people! If we wish to revolutionize our lives, get rid of worries and remove the ills from our society, we shall have to take a second look at our ethics and character! We shall have to reform our domestic ethics. We should tell our daughters that the heavy dowries that they carry at the time of their wedding could suffice for giving dowries to as many as sixteen brides. Thus, she can have the pleasure of celebrating the wedding of sixteen sisters.

Today's discussion is incomplete. Inshallah, I shall continue this discussion in my subsequent talks.

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