

*Among His Signs is that He created spouses for you of your own kind so that you might find tranquillity in them. And He has placed affection and compassion between you. There are certainly Signs in that for people who reflect. AL-ĤŪM 30: 21*

# Marriage

A FORM OF 'IBADAH

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## INTRODUCTION

Marriage marks a unique moment in the life of an individual, the dawn of a new era in the life of a person, the acquiring of a new part in the role-play of this world. It is the coming together of two souls, the merging of two worlds, the meeting of two minds. It is when two incomplete halves come together to become one complete, loving whole.

It is no wonder that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

“You won’t find anything like marriage for two lovers.”

*Ibn Mājah*

and:

“When the slave enters matrimony, he has completed half of his religion; let him now fear Allāh regarding the remaining half.”

*al-Bayhaqi in Shu`ab al-Īmān*

But, as with all bounties, marriage brings with it many responsibilities; for life is ultimately a test and every part of it, the good and the bad, is there to determine how you interact with the situations placed before you, how you respond to your Maker.

“And the life of this world is but amusement and play, whilst truly the Home in the Hereafter, that is Life indeed, if they but knew.”

*al-`Ankabūt 29:64*

This booklet has been put together to help those who are to take this momentous step, or have already taken it, make their decisions based on the guidance of Allāh and His Messenger, and so fill their lives with the peace, the blessings and the pleasure of Allāh that only such decisions can bring. And with Allāh lies the end of all roads.

## WHY MARRIAGE?

A person may ask 'what is the importance of Nikāḥ?' Many people consider it merely as a legitimate way of fulfilling one's desires. Is this correct? In the light of the Qur'ān and Sunnah what must one know regarding the rights of the wife and husband? How must a husband behave towards his wife and how must she behave in return? These and other questions are seriously worth thinking about, as their answers may not be known to all.

Due to Nikāḥ, a lady who was at first prohibited to view, now not only becomes lawful for intimate relationship for her husband, but more importantly, becomes his soul-mate to share in each other's joys and sorrows.

There are numerous benefits of Nikāḥ (religious, moral, physical, psychological, etc). The most significant of which is its being a commandment of Allah ordained in the very nature of man and woman, and it is a sunnah of the Prophets ﷺ especially emphasised by Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

In a ḥadīth the Prophet ﷺ has stated that Nikāḥ is of his Sunnah (*Ibn Mājah*), and emphatically warned that he who does not like or disowns his Sunnah is not of him or his followers. *al-Bukhārī & Muslim*

## MARRIAGE IS PERPETUAL `IBĀDAH

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has stated, 'In the fulfilling of your sexual desires there is a ṣadaqah (i.e. the reward of charity).'

The Ṣaḥābah ؓ (surprised) asked, 'Is one of us to come to his lusts and have a reward in it?'

Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied, 'Tell me, if he were to place his lusts in Ḥarām would he be sinful? So accordingly, when he places his urges in Ḥalāl there is for him a reward in it.'

*Muslim*

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ has also said, 'When one spends upon his family with the intention and hope of reward, it is for him charity.'

*al-Bukhārī & Muslim*

In fact, according to another ḥadīth, '(Of) the Dīnār you spend in the Way of Allāh, the Dīnār you spend in the (freeing of) a slave, the Dīnār you spend in charity on a poor person and the Dīnār you spend on your family, the greatest in reward is the one you spent on your family.'

*Muslim*

From such narrated virtues it is obvious that Nikāḥ is an unrivalled `ibādah but its perpetual nature of reaping rewards is rarely thought of.

## MUTUAL CONCEALMENT

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ ۗ

*'They are libās (concealment) for you and  
you are libās for them'*

*al-Baqarah 187*

The manner in which clothes cover and hide a person and their physical faults, and also offer privacy, is similar to the married couple and their being a covering for each other from the revealing of defects or deficiencies. It is also a means of safeguarding one's self from sins. Just as clothes grant a person protection from many harms, in the very same way, Nikāḥ provides peace and relief to the heart. Like a person is closely attached to his clothes (both physically and psychologically), similar is the bond between husband and wife.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا

وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ

لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾

***And amongst His signs is that He created for you wives from amongst yourselves, that you may find repose in them and He has created between you affection and mercy. Indeed, herein are signs for people who reflect.'***

*ar-Rūm 30:21*

## **IS MARRIAGE NOT A CONTRACT?**

The Rasūl ﷺ has declared marriage as of his Sunnah and those who disregard his Sunnah as being disowned by him. Nikāḥ is an instinctive need of man and woman, and a means for the preservation of mankind. Moreover, not only is Nikāḥ a desired ideal, but its lifelong fulfilment and safekeeping have in actual fact been stressed upon.

The Nabī ﷺ has described spending on one's wife, even affectionately placing a morsel into her mouth as a means for the husband acquiring the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. Similarly, obedience and service to the husband has been described as a pathway to Paradise for the wife.

The rank of Nikāḥ, in Islāmic terminology, can be raised to that of being mandatory, because it can guarantee spiritual purity and protection from sin. It also gives rise to the concept of the family which is foundational for a morally inclined community. The Muslim family concept is the most successful and considerate of everyone's needs. The non-Muslim world look with envy at the Muslim family concept because they too are not blind of its benefits and purpose.

This view may seem to some as typical of those held by religious conservatives who cannot tolerate the flow to modernisation, but one should for one's self weigh the pros and cons. In Western societies, women have been brought out of their homes to leave for the office. Yes, there are some economic advantages to this, such as an increase in productivity, but it has meant many compromises from which a necessary consequence has been the destruction of the family system.

Because of this many psychological, moral and functional disasters which outweigh the economic benefits have had to be borne. Many of these problems have become apparent and also apparently insolvable. Dysfunctional families, juvenile delinquency, unruly behaviour, lack of parenting, adultery, etc are only some of the problems society faces because of the absence or destruction of the family's maternal pillar.

If Nikāḥ is seen as a Sunnah of the Rasūl ﷺ and an `Ibādah, instead of a social contract, and the roles of family members are acknowledged as equal and unique and not expected to be equal and identical, many of the problems that our society and families face will be taken care of.

## **A SINGLE PERSON CANNOT BE INDEPENDENT**

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has mentioned about the unmarried person;

'Dependent and helpless is he who has no wife!' Those listening asked, 'What if he is very wealthy, is he still dependent?' The Nabī ﷺ replied, 'Yes, though he may be extremely wealthy. And dependent and helpless is she who has no husband!' Those listening asked, 'What if she is very wealthy, is she still dependent?' The Rasūl ﷺ replied, 'Yes, even though she may be extremely wealthy.' *al-Bayhaqī in Shu`ab al-Imān*

'The whole world is a commodity, and the most valuable of its commodities is a righteous woman.'

*Muslim*

## **THE ALTERNATIVES AND THEIR RULINGS**

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said 'Whoever guarantees me the safeguarding of his tongue and his private parts, I give him the guarantee of Paradise'.

*al-Bukhārī*

In view of the rapid increase of sexual diseases, medical experts encourage everyone to abstain from sex until they marry. Sexually

active teenagers are also more likely to be emotionally hurt and have an increased risk of depression and suicide. The discipline of abstinence in teenage years is a good preparation for fulfilling sex in later life.

Islām shows a path which not only is perfect in its ideology but it is also perfect in practicality. Islām not only differentiates between right and wrong, but it also shows the alternatives. Regarding sex or any form of sexual gratification outside of a proper heterosexual marriage, Islām squarely states its prohibition.

## **PROMISCUITY**

Promiscuity, or the practice of loose sex outside marriage, is Ḥarām. The reason for this is obvious. No person would like it if their mother, father, wife, husband, brother, sister, son or daughter were to have sex or made to have sex with a stranger. And as a person would want for themselves a partner who is a virgin, untouched by any stranger, one must understand that they also have a right to the same.

In a lengthy Ḥadīth mentioned in al-Bukhārī it has been mentioned that those who perform this despicable act will in Jahannam be burnt in a massive furnace. Remembering that the fire of Hell burns more than 70 times hotter and fiercer than the fire of this world, facing eternity in such a furnace will be unbearable.

A despicable new trend, romanticized by the filth of the pornographic industry, include such lewd acts as 'swinging', 'orgies' 'wife swapping' and 'open marriages'. All these filthy acts include a sexual free-for-all under the guise of mutual consent. This is Ḥarām to the extreme.

The Prophet of Allāh ﷺ narrated that on a night of spiritual ascension to the heavens, Allāh ﷻ also showed him the depths of Hell. A giant furnace had been prepared and filled with naked men and women



who were burning inside in a fire at least 70 times more hot and fierce than the fire of this world. The people described in this punishment will be those guilty of adultery. This has been narrated in al-Bukhārī, and the fire’s temperature has been narrated in al-Tirmidhī.

Those who perform such acts with the ‘reason’ of consent will face a punishment far worse than this.

## KEEPING FRIENDS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX

Keeping friends of the opposite sex is Ḥarām. The reason for this is that anything leading to Ḥarām is itself Ḥarām. There are some who think that having such friendships without sexual activities is permissible. However, the natural chemistry that comes into play between man and woman creates such strong undercurrents that innocent friendships are often anything but, even if not expressed. And there is no guarantee that it won’t lead to sex. But besides that, the warning of the Prophet ﷺ is not a joke. ‘It is better for you that a metal rod be plunged into your head than that you should touch a female who is not lawful for you.’

*Majma` az-Zawā'id from aṭ-Ṭabarānī*

## HOMOSEXUALITY

Homosexuality is Ḥarām in Islām. Its reason is that it destroys the very fabrics of family and society in general. Its religious ruling can be understood from the following Qur’anic statement regarding the destruction of a homosexual nation:

وَلَوْطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا  
 مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ  
 شَهْوَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النِّسَاءِ ۗ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

*And (remember Prophet) Lūt, when he said to his people:  
 'Do you commit such an obscenity that  
 none proceeding you has committed in the world?  
 Indeed, you practice your lusts on men instead of women.  
 Nay but you are a people transgressing  
 beyond bounds!'*

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا ۖ فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ  
 عِقَابُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

*...And We rained down upon them a rain (of stones). See, then, what  
 was the end of the criminals and transgressors.'*

*al-A`rāf 7:84*

Rasūlullāh ﷺ warned, 'Allāh will not look (with mercy) towards the person who comes to a man or woman from behind,' that is, commits anal intercourse.

*at-Tirmidhī, Ibn Ḥibbān*

A look at traditional perceptions of all societies shows that it is not only the view of Islām but in the very nature of man that this act is an unnatural and repulsive perversion.

Its physical harms are also noteworthy as the advent of many sexually transmitted diseases (including AIDS) has been clearly related to homosexuality.

## **MASTURBATION**

Masturbation is Ḥarām and also harmful for both male and female. There are many aḥadīth that state its prohibition in very clear warnings.

Ḥasan Ibn `Arafah relates from the Prophet ﷺ, "Seven persons are such that Allāh will not look at them on the day of Judgement, nor will he purify them, nor will he include them amongst the learned, and Allāh will enter them into Hell. They will enter Jahannum first, except for

those who repent, for Allāh will accept their repentance. (The first of them is) a person who masturbates...” *Ibn Kathīr, al-Bayhaqī*

There are numerous harms in masturbating, including that of potential impotence. If a person gets married and is unable to have sex, it will be too late to consider masturbation a vice while the marriage blows up in smoke.

## CELIBACY

Celibacy is, of course, the only option before marriage, but it is not an alternative to marriage. The Prophet ﷺ expressed extreme dislike for the person who wished to remain celibate in favour of perpetual worship stating that Nikāḥ is from his (cherished) Sunnah and that ‘there is no celibacy in Islām.’ *Abū Dāwūd, al-Ḥākim*

From the above we can see that only sex within marriage is permitted within Islām. Thus Islām has made what is permitted clear from what is not permitted. The Prophet ﷺ has also given the alternative in case of not being able to marry.

‘O company of youth, whosoever amongst you has the means of getting married should do so because it lowers the gaze and protects the private parts; and whosoever does not have the ability should fast for, indeed, it is a protection for him.’ *al-Bukhārī*

Ideally then, a young person who experiences carnal urges should get married with their parents’ consent as soon as possible. This has so many benefits to society, including the obvious ones like protection from destructive vices such as prostitution and girlfriend-boyfriend relationships, as well as others. This is for both the young and old to understand as this is the Islāmic teaching - the commandment of Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ, which holds more importance than cultural dictates and ignorant practices.

## HARMS OF ZINĀ (ADULTERY & FORNICATION)

A common problem in the West is that life is made 'too fast' for marriage, and, anyway, people think it as socially acceptable for two consenting adults to engage in a 'casual sexual relationship'.

Allāh ﷻ says in the Glorious Qur'ān:

وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا الزِّنَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا

*Do not come near to adultery or fornication,  
indeed it is a shameful deed and an evil way.*

*al-Isrā' 32*

Rasūlullāh ﷺ commented:

'Beware of adultery, for indeed, it is accompanied by six evil consequences: three in this world and three in the Hereafter. Those in this world are: loss of radiance (of Īmān) from the face, reduction in life span and continuous poverty. And the three of the Hereafter are: the Wrath of Allāh ﷻ, a damned reckoning and infernal punishment.'

*al-Bayhaqi, al-Kabā'ir*

It is now common knowledge that many of our Muslim youth are involved in sexual relationships prior to marriage. This is no minor issue but a colossal disaster as a whole generation which is to make up tomorrow's mothers and fathers loses its innocence and purity. Yet instead of people taking responsibility and active steps to tackle this problem, people would much rather live in denial or shift the blame to the other party; stating in the process that their own children despite their devilry were born angels. It's sad to hear many parents try to justify their children's actions despite their wrongs out of pride, or feeling that good parentage requires them to stand up for their kids.

The majority of Muslim youth grow up in an immoral environment without correct upbringing and true sense of purpose in life, as well as

suffering from an identity crisis without any sense of true purpose in life. In this, parents especially must take a pro-active role towards their children and not allow their children to think of them as their worst enemies or those who understand them the least. Obviously this isn't going to happen by beating the message into them (which, as it is, is un-Islāmic). Every effort must be made at any expense to check this problem by prior education and firm love (more on this further on inshā' Allāh).

We must also remember that physically and, even more significantly, spiritually Ḥalāl or good consumption equals good in actions and being, and Ḥarām or bad consumption likewise breeds bad actions and being. Many of our youth consume Ḥarām or doubtful food (often thanks to complacency on the part of parents), as well as being prey to what they see and listen to through mediums which fill them with thoughts and actions that are also Ḥarām. The fundamental reasons, mediums and routes which lead to adultery and immorality are either ignored or, worse still, accepted by many parents and guardians, whereas Allāh says in the Glorious Qur'an:

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّيْنَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فُحِشَةً ۖ وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٣٢﴾

*'Do not (even) come near to adultery and fornication;  
Truly it is a shameful deed and an evil way.*

*al-Isrā' 32*

The Rasūl of Allāh ﷺ has also spelt out, 'The adultery of the eyes is evil glances. The adultery of the feet is to walk towards evil. The adultery of the tongue is lustful talk. The adultery of the heart is evil desire. But in the end the sexual organs affirm all this or prove it wrong.' *al-Bukhārī*

## BEHIND NIKĀH

Allāh ﷻ, Who changes Ḥarām to Ḥalāl and sin to obedience and

`ibādah through the means of Nikāh, gives two families as well as two individuals a new bond and relationship. However, it is also a time when all must review their obligations and duties towards existing relations. It must never happen that one only remembers one's wife and forgets one's mother, or in aiding the in-laws forgets one's father.

It is extremely significant that all three Qur'ānic verses recited to commence the Nikāh ceremony (4:1, 3:102 & 33:70) are centered around taqwā - being conscious of one's duties towards Allāh and those whose duties Allāh has charged one with. At this crucial juncture, the attention of the bride and groom is drawn towards the magnitude of responsibility that they are entering into. Their entire lives and behaviour must be formulated in accordance to what the Sharī`ah has stipulated, and must be transformed into an exemplary model for whom the forgiveness and pleasure of Allāh ﷻ is assured.

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧٦﴾

*“..And whomsoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ, he has indeed achieved a great achievement.”*

*al-Aḥzāb 71*

## LIFE'S CHORES ARE ALSO `IBĀDAH

The Prophet ﷺ stated, ‘The best of you is he who is the best to his family, and I am the best of you to my family.’ *at-Tirmidhī, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ḥākim*

Rasūlullāh's ﷺ lifestyle is the best example for how we should live our lives in every aspect, especially that of the married life. His life was full of incidents which show exactly how we should be in regards to consideration, justice, and perception for the needs of women, which cannot be learnt from the mannerisms of other great historical figures. The close bond with his wives, the forethought for their needs and desires, and the mindfulness of taking part in the household chores is

all beyond comparison. His loving and warm approach was not restricted to his wives but encompassed children, the weak and poor and everyone he dealt with in general, ﷺ. When performing an act as formidable as Ṣalāh, he would shorten it if a child were to cry, to save its mother from worry. This is the role model for all humanity and the standard aimed for when husband and wife unite in Allāh's name.

## **MODERN SOCIETY'S BLUNDER**

Muslims, especially those living in the West, must not only represent the beliefs of Islām, but also display true family-structure and domestic and social life in accordance to Islāmic teaching. Love, respect and trust between husband and wife in the secular world are quickly deteriorating. Greed and self-centredness so consume the minds of all that the selfish love of one's own interests overtakes the love of family.

It is accepted by all, especially the rich, that money cannot buy happiness. When the love for money enters the heart, it kills its contentment, and solace cannot be found in anything else after that. There are many couples in poorer countries and even here in the West whose financial standing may be humble, but by virtue of the presence of mutual love, respect and trust, the greatest trials such as poverty, hunger and the loss of the most treasured of possessions are borne and overcome with resolve and overshadowed by inner peace and happiness. Simplicity and sincerity are not only the truest outcomes of love, but also the greatest ingredients for sustaining it through thick and thin.

## **THE CRITERIA FOR SELECTING A PARTNER**

The Rasūl of Allāh ﷺ has said, 'A lady is married for one of four reasons: wealth; rank; beauty; or piety. Marry her that possesses piety and achieve success!'

*al-Bukhārī and Muslim*

He ﷺ also said, 'When a person whose religion and character you are pleased with proposes to you, marry him. If you do not, there will be tribulations on the earth and far-reaching corruption.' *at-Tirmidhi*

Muslim society has today become so blind and diseased that we give preference to our own standards over those clearly commanded by Islām. While an Asian father, for example, may know (in his heart) that in marrying his daughter to a particular pious boy of, let's say, poor African origins lies her religious and spiritual prosperity, racial prejudices and stereotyping, as well as an unjustified and baseless pride in one's own ethnicity, would prevent him from even giving it a second thought.

Compare this with the example of `Umar al-Fārūq ؓ who one night overheard a mother ordering her daughter to mix water into a bucket of milk in order to make extra profits from the increased amount.

'Mother, I cannot,' answered the girl, 'for `Umar has prohibited all such acts of deception.'

The mother retorted, 'And how would `Umar come to know what you are doing at this hour?'

`Umar may not be watching over us,' replied the young maiden, 'but where can we hide from the Lord of `Umar?'

When `Umar ؓ overheard this conversation, he was so impressed with the young lady's piety that he immediately told his assistant to make a careful note of the house.

Later that morning, `Umar ؓ, summoned his servant and asked him to find out the details of the girl whom he had overheard and whether or not she was married. He returned with news that the girl was single and that mother and daughter were poor members of the Banū Hilāl tribe.



Hearing this, `Umar ؓ, summoned his son `Āṣim ؓ, and said to him, 'Son, accept my advice, I have come to know of a girl whose piety and God-consciousness have touched me. Let me propose for her hand in marriage on your behalf; I have hope that, Inshā Allāh, a pious child will be born from her who will raise the flag of Islām.'

`Āṣim ؓ accepted his father's suggestion and agreed to him sending a proposal on his behalf. `Umar ؓ invited both mother and daughter to his residence. The girl's character did not disappoint.

`Umar ؓ addressed her; 'I know of your pious qualities. I would consider it an honour if you would accept my son's marriage proposal and become his wife.'

The girl with the consent of her mother accepted and married `Āṣim ؓ. From this union a daughter was born, who was to become the mother of the great `Umar Ibn `Abdul-Azīz (R.A.), who, for his justice and selflessness, came to be known as the second `Umar.

## WHEN SHOULD THE KNOT BE TIED?

### REACHING MATURITY

According to the Shari`ah, children are classified as bāligh (mature) when:

- they become capable of reproduction (i.e. with the onset of seminal discharge or menstruation),

or when

- they reach 15 lunar, (**not** solar) years of age, whichever occurs first.

Bulūgh (maturity) heralds the commencement of accountability. Should a bāligh person fail to uphold any Farḍ or Wājib (both are different categories of obligatory acts), they will be liable for

punishment on account of transgressing the divine law of Allāh ﷻ, unless they repent **and** also offer compensation (qaḍā’).

This phase of their lives is very delicate. Parents should be extra pre-cautious and protective at this stage, taking care not to be over protective or paranoid as this also has negative effects. When their children reach this stage, they must ensure that the youngsters keep appropriate company, not favourite company.

Exposure to TV, pornography and intermingling of the sexes from a young age has destroyed the Muslim's natural shame and modesty.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has stated, ‘Every religion has a distinguishing feature, our’s is Ḥayā’ (modesty/shame),’ *Ibn Mājah*  
and, ‘Modesty is from Faith (Īmān) and Faith leads to the Garden, while obscenity is from hardheartedness and hardheartedness leads to the Fire.’ *at-Tirmidhī, al-Hākim, Ibn Mājah*

Whenever Allāh ﷻ wishes to destroy a person, He first snatches Ḥayā’ away (*Ibn Mājah*), without which he becomes perverse and openly engrossed in sin.

Humans generally possess two instinctive wants, one being sexual desires and the second being a need for affection, love and companionship. With adolescence, these features become almost uncontrollably more pronounced. To make things worse, in youth, understanding is still incomplete. Thus, the problem of all these issues must be stemmed before establishment, as the saying goes ‘prevention is better than cure’. Some ways of doing this are:

- Always keep children occupied with constructive work, paying heed to the saying, ‘The idle mind is the Devil’s workshop.’
- Children must be encouraged to keep the company of the pious and those of noble character. If their friends are Islām-orientated and well-mannered they will be safe from many vices.

- Indecent material and company of all forms magnify carnal urges or “curiosities” in a very incorrect way. The only way to stop them is to be active in guidance, not dictatorial.
- When children appear to have developed some carnal understanding, separate their sleeping arrangements, even between just brothers and just sisters.

## WHEN?

Whoever is able to fulfil the responsibilities of Nikāḥ should perform Nikāḥ, because it lowers (protects) one's gaze and guards one's chastity.

Although the onset of puberty brings with it the first stirring of sexual desire, yet marriage in the early teens when the body is still physically developing can be harmful.

Premature sexual activity can lead to problems in later life, including premature ejaculation and impotence.

On the other hand, if marriage is left until the later teens, and unlawful sexual gratification is abstained from during this period, then when married, true contentment and fulfilment can be experienced. This is why it is necessary to find a suitable match for one's children when they reach a suitable age (approximately 17 years for girls and for boys 19 years) so that their desires are focused towards their lawful partners. Many parents may express concern that their children are too young to marry at this age, but this is exactly where parents' encouragement and support is needed, quite possibly for the final time. After all, isn't it better to have to offer help and guidance because of the children's innocence and lack of experience than to wait until they become adept themselves through premarital experimentation?

## WHAT DOES ALLĀH SAY?

Allāh ﷻ states in the Qur'an;

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيْمَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ  
وَإِمَائِكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِيهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ

وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

*'And marry those among you who are single and the virtuous ones among your slaves;*

*If they be poor, Allāh will enrich them out of His Bounty.*

*And Allāh is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knowing.'*

*an-Nūr 24:32*

Rasūlullāh ﷺ advised `Alī ؑ, although the advice applies to all:

'O `Alī! Do not delay in three things: firstly, Ṣalāh when its time arrives; secondly, (burial of the) deceased (janāzah) when it is ready; thirdly, in the marriage of a single boy or girl when a (suitable) match is found.'

*at-Tirmidhī*

However, the ruling of Nikāḥ varies according to the different situations of the individuals concerned:

## OBLIGATORY (WĀJIB) NIKĀḤ

If one has such strong carnal urges that the probability exists of falling prey to Ḥarām (including Ḥarām viewing, masturbation etc.) and also possesses the means to marry then to get married is obligatory. Possessing the means is not conditional on being able to afford a large banquet inviting hundreds of people, or spend thousands of pounds on the bride's jewellery and mahr (dowry). The Shari`ah has no sympathy for this type of extravagance and pompous show. It simply

means to be able to afford the necessary maintenance that is a wife's right. To refrain from Nikāḥ in this instance would be a sin. Even if one's parents were to insist that he/she remain single, (e.g. until their studies are completed), while they know that they will not be able to abstain from Ḥarām, it would be sinful to obey the parents for 'there is no obedience to any creature in the disobedience of the Creator'.

*at-Tirmidhī, Muṣannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah*

## ADVISEABLE (SUNNAH) NIKĀḤ

If one has the means to marry but the urge is not such as to cause an inclination towards sin then Nikāḥ would be sunnah according to the Prophet's advise because a person's urges/needs can change in an instance, and it is always advisable to take precaution.

## IMPERMISSIBLE

However, if there is real fear, not just apprehension of being unable to fulfil the rights of one's spouse, whether it be their physical or material right, then it would be wrong for such a person to wed.

## MAḤĀRIM

Relatives who are too closely related to be marriageable are known as maḥārim (sing. maḥram). This can be due to kinship, *raḍā`ah* (foster relationship) or marriage.

### Relations Of Kin

Relatives not marriageable due to blood are:

- A **male's** mother and maternal or paternal grandmothers and above; a **female's** father and maternal grandfathers and above.
- A **male's** daughter, granddaughter and below; a **female's** son, grandson below.
- A **male's** full- or half-sister; a **female's** full- or half-brother.
- A **male's** maternal or paternal aunt (the full- or half-sister of either

parent); a **female's** maternal or paternal uncle.

- A **male's** niece or great-niece or beyond from his full- or half-sibling; a **female's** nephew or great nephew or beyond from her full- or half-sibling.

## Foster Relations (Raḍā`ah)

A woman who breast-feeds a child of two lunar years of age or less becomes considered his foster mother, her children and anyone else she breast-feeds his foster brothers and sisters, and the father of her last child (and, therefore, the cause of her milk) his foster father. The Prophet ﷺ has said, 'Relations non-marriageable due to kinship are non-marriageable due to fosterage,' (*al-Bukhārī*). The five types of relatives that constitute one's maḥārim due to blood as mentioned above would, therefore, be the maḥārim of a child due to breast-feeding as well, with the following exceptions:

- The foster mother of a male's sibling and the mother of his foster sibling; the foster father of a female's sibling and the father of her foster sister.
- The sister of a man's foster child; the brother of a woman's foster child.
- The wife of one's foster father, apart from the one who breast-fed him, of course.
- The grandmother of a man's foster child; the grandfather of a woman's foster child.
- The spouse of one's foster child.

## Relations of Marriage

In-laws not marriageable are:

- A **man's** mother-in-law, wife's grandmothers, and above; a **woman's** father-in-law, husband's grandfathers, and above. This becomes applicable from the moment marriage is contracted.
- The daughters of a **man's** wife from a previous marriage, grand-

daughters and below. This is applicable only when the marriage has been consummated. The son of a **woman's** husband from someone else becomes her maḥram from the moment marriage is contracted.

- The wife of a **man's** son, grandson and below; the husband of a **woman's** daughter, granddaughter and below.
- A **man's** stepmother, step grandmother and above; a **woman's** stepfather, step grandfather and above.
- All this also applies if the relationship is illegitimate (Zinā).

Due to the closeness of relationship with these Maḥārim, marriage with them is permanently unlawful and the laws of Ḥijāb that apply between men and women otherwise do not apply here. Temporarily unlawful for marriage are the close female relatives of one's wife who, had they been men, would have been Maḥārim to her, e.g. the wife's sister, maternal aunt, etc. It is not permitted to combine two such closely related women in marriage at one time, one may though be married after the marriage with the former is dissolved. Obviously included in this are also women already in wedlock to someone else.

## MARRIAGE WITH NON-MUSLIMS

The permissibility of marriage with non-Muslims is only in the situation of a Muslim male marrying a Jewish or Christian (Ahl al-Kitāb) female. Any other type of relationship is Ḥarām, even if a common-law marriage is performed, and every second of such a relationship would be spent in sin and all sexual relations classified as zinā (fornication/adultery), and therefore would be punishable accordingly.

This only applies if the spouse chooses not to accept Islām. If they accept Islām prior to Nikāḥ, this would, of course, not be the case. One must not, however, induce anyone to accept Islām for the sake of marriage alone. The great decision of belief is of one's own heart.

The matter of appropriateness, however, is something else. One must bear in mind that while one's partner's beliefs and ideology may possibly affect one's own beliefs, they will almost certainly become one's children's beliefs. This in the long run will mean that if one is happy in marrying and loving a person who will ultimately enter Allāh's wrath, one is also happy if his children enter Allāh's wrath.

وَلَا تَرْكَبُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ ۖ

*'And incline not towards those who do wrong,  
lest the Fire (of Hell) touches you'*

Hūd 113

During the rule of `Umar رضي الله عنه, the condition of Muslims was one of extreme piety and purity. The general inclination was towards Din. Despite this, `Umar رضي الله عنه, forbade Muslims from marrying Christian or Jewish women. He stated, 'I am not declaring what Allāh has made Ḥalāl as Ḥarām for undoubtedly Allāh ﷻ has granted permission to marry women of Ahl al-Kitāb; but I fear that the believing women would be neglected because of this.' *at-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī*

Again it must be emphasised that if one does intend marriage to a Christian or Jewish woman then it must first be ascertained that she is indeed one, and not just an atheist with the name. This means that the woman must truly be a believer of Christianity or Judaism (by any denomination based on their scriptures), though even this is not recommended, and according to some authorities is not even allowed due to the above.

## OBJECTIVES OF NIKĀḤ

In the light of the Qur'an and Sunnah, the purposes behind NikāḤ are:

- Protection of dignity, chastity and children, this is the fundamental



purpose of Nikāḥ, not merely to fulfil one's desires like animals. The Prophet ﷺ has said, 'When a slave marries, he secures half of his faith. Let him now fear Allāh regarding the remaining half.'

*Shu`ab al-Īmān of al-Bayhaqī*

- Both men and women need each other. Men generally have a natural need towards affection, friendship and warmth. Women represent the pinnacle of caring and love for a man, this quality is not found anywhere else. Women are generally weaker than men. They have a natural inclination towards the protection and security available in the physically and emotionally stronger sex. This does not suggest that either is inferior to the other. It means that their roles are different. They are two halves; only in their coming together is wholeness achieved for both.
- People obviously need to reproduce for the preservation of the human race and have thus been fitted with carnal urges. Allāh ﷻ has compared the married couple to a farmer and his field, and pious children to a good harvest.

## INTENTIONS

Amongst the necessary characteristics of marriage the most important is correct intention, as this in even conjugal and domestic activities is rewarded:

- Nikāḥ is performed to act upon the Sunnah of the Rasūl ﷺ who stated, 'Nikāḥ is of my Sunnah.' The Prophet ﷺ at many incidents has also said, 'Whoever dislikes my Sunnah is not of me.'
- Perform Nikāḥ because it saves one from evil and keeps one under control. Additional benefits include one's heart being saved from evil thoughts as the eyes, too, are protected from staring at Ḥarām.
- Allāh ﷻ bestows the husband and wife pious children. The obedience to Allāh ﷻ that they portray will also earn their parents reward.

- A person with a family that he teaches to perform good receives more reward for good deeds than a single person, therefore one should include this in his intention also.
- More children mean an increase in the number of Muslims. Rasūlullāh ﷺ will take pride in this.

## ETIQUETTES OF FINDING A PARTNER

Rasūlullāh ﷺ commented:

‘Do not marry women (merely) on account of their beauty, for it is possible that this very beauty may become the cause of her destruction. Neither marry women because of their wealth, for it is possible this may be a cause for her rebellion and mischief. Rather marry women because of their piety. A lowly slave-girl graced with piety and noble character is infinitely superior to a beautiful high class woman of poor character.’

*Ibn Mājah*

When one reaches the age of marriage, their opinion should always be taken into account. If due to uneasiness, they do not say anything or appear lost, their wishes can be ascertained by close friends or relatives whom the child feels comfortable talking to.

Parents becoming aware of their child's thought patterns should consider the desired partner's mannerisms, character, piety and suitability. At this stage, it is morally and Islāmically very wrong and detrimental to the parent-child relationship to act in total disregard of the child's wishes or behind their backs in arranging a 'suitable' equal-by-caste match.

**One should always remember that it is the couple who will be living together.** If this is not considered, the possibility of unhappiness and discontentment, ending in heart-break and pain for our children, is very real. One must bear in mind the wishes of the couple. Obviously,

in a situation where they be so irresponsible and foolish as to refuse every good, pious choice of their parents, and insist on marrying some blatantly sinful person then, coupled with gentle, loving and tactful persuasion, resort to du`ā, for Allāh ﷻ has full control over all situations. One must never get hysterical or forceful, or even deaf to the child's talk, as this has adverse effects. One must relate the benefits of marrying a good person in a caring, concerned way explaining that they will also be the ones to affect their children. Moreover, it will ensure no hatred arises in the parents' hearts, nor the children's.

## **VIEWING A POSSIBLE MATCH**

It is advisable for the possible match to meet each other with the consent and guidance of parents. Private meetings and all forms of communication (be it by email, phone calls or text-messaging, or by anything else that comes along) where they are alone/unsupervised is not permissible and is extremely sinful.

This one meeting is encouraged by Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Its benefit is that what each person has so far heard of the other based on gossip or reports founded on biased opinions can now be verified or otherwise by the couple themselves. Inclinations and perceptions of people vary greatly, thus a first-hand view and questioning allows a more truthful and open decision from both parties. This will minimise the chance of hidden problems turning up in future.

When considering a match, consider the following;

- The prospective partner's piety and character must be considered in both boy and girl. Additionally, girls should also possess the ability to manage the house etc, and boys should have skills such as responsibility, ability to provide maintenance, etc.
- Preferably the boy should be a year to four years senior to the girl. Both the boy and girl's being of the same marital status (which includes virginity) is a major factor of compatibility.

Imām Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (RA) stated: 'Marry your daughter to a pious person for, if nothing else, at least on account of his bond with Allāh ﷻ he will not abuse her nor fail to fulfil her rights.'

## REASONS FOR CHOOSING

The Messenger ﷺ has stated; 'Women are married for four reasons: wealth, family rank, beauty and piety. Choose the possessor of piety and achieve success.'

*al-Bukhārī, Muslim*

### BEAUTY

Beauty, whilst being a blessing and something that should be considered as it can be a major factor to the development of love between husband and wife, is, however, not eternal. External factors beyond one's control can destroy it, as well as youthful beauty fading away in a few years. Love based solely on looks diminishes with looks.

Something to think about is that if only beauty is sought disregarding piety, then the beautiful person will be hard to satisfy on account of their arrogance that is born out of vanity. Also such people who are devoid of shame will also enjoy being watched and 'appreciated' by all and sundry. This can never be a good thing. If beauty is possessed by one who is pious then for their spouse it is an additional blessing.

### WEALTH

Wealth too, should not determine one's requirements in choosing a spouse. Wealth is even more inconsiderate than beauty. The phrase; 'here today gone tomorrow' aptly describes it. A prospective husband should also reflect that although the girl's family may be rich, Nikāḥ is made to her, not her (or her father's) wealth. Should she be wealthy, it should be below one's dignity to enjoy being a parasite off her wealth. Also if she is from a wealthy background, her 'requirements' will also be expensive. So before marrying a wealthy girl, think: will she be satisfied with your humble income?

## FAMILY RANK AND CASTE

People consider marriage to someone of a lower social class or different colour as unthinkable, viewing it as a cause of bringing disgrace to the family name. White may think lowly of black, Arabs may despise non-Arabs and certain tribes of one race may think lowly of others (this happens especially in Indian/Pakistani cultures). Backward thinking parents disallow their children to get married to anyone outside of their tribe or its equivalent. This is wrong. Such thinking is draconian, and actually reminiscent of pagan customs and ideology. It is also something that can incur the punishment of Allāh.

## PIETY

According to Shari`ah the only criteria that determines a person's real rank and true worth, as according to Allāh ﷻ, is piety and virtue. All other criteria are superficial and/or made up. The most precious of traits are honour and chastity.

`Alī ﷺ narrates, 'We were present with Rasūlullāh ﷺ when He asked us: 'Tell me, what thing is best for a woman?'

The Ṣaḥābah ﷺ present maintained silence. `Alī ﷺ relates, 'I returned and asked Fāṭimah ﷺ, 'What thing is best for women?'

She replied, 'That (unlawful) men do not see them.'

`Alī ﷺ related this reply to Rasūlullāh ﷺ who commented, 'Fāṭimah is a part of me.' (Her answer was exactly what the Prophet ﷺ had meant.)

*al-Bazzār*

This is what both the parents and the person marrying should very carefully consider about their prospective partners:

- `Aqā'id (beliefs). Many secular educated Muslims suffer from distorted beliefs regarding Islām which were taught to them by non-Muslim avenues. One must be wary of the beliefs of the person who is going to be the other parent of one's child.

- `Ibādah. The person must be punctual on the fundamental pillars of Islām, e.g. Ṣalāh, Ṣawm, Zakāh. These are major issues which must not be trivialized; after all, looking in the long run, both husband and wife will want to be together in the next life, too.
- Good character. For obvious reasons one would want to get married to one who has good character, and who understands that in different situations, one's own opinion should not supercede sense.
- Integrity in dealings. No one wants to marry a thief or be called the partner of one.
- Social conduct. Although one should not worry about what people say, one should also not give the opportunity to be spoken bad about because of one's own conduct. One's spouse should also be up to this standard.
- Health. One must not discriminate against a person because they suffer from an illness. But one must remember that it is natural that a person has a dislike of it. This will lead to problems, if the illness is not curable or controllable.
- Relationship. Often, though definitely not always, there is greater compatibility and understanding between people who share similar backgrounds or come from the same culture.
- Temperament. Ideally both the boy and girl should enjoy the same outlook, otherwise life would present more problems than solutions.
- Education. Both should have received at least a foundational level of Islāmic education and basic secular education and not be intellectually miles apart.
- Housekeeping Skills. It is important that both the partners be competent in all or most aspects of domestic responsibilities, and be willing to help each other. The boy should also have a profession or skill or some other means of earning a Ḥalāl livelihood to be able to maintain his family without dependance on others.

- Bad habits. It is also imperative to find out whether the boy or girl suffer from any problems or bad habits, e.g. drugs, alcohol or addiction to TV.

## DU`Ā'

Allāh ﷻ promises in the Qur'ān:

**'Make du`ā' to (call upon) Me, I shall answer you'**

*al-Ghāfir 40:60*

Rasūlullāh ﷺ also gave the glad tidings;

'Whoever the door of du`ā' is opened for among you, the doors of mercy have been opened for him.'

*at-Tirmidhī*

He also explained:

'Only du`ā' is able to alter taqdir (fate).'

*at-Tirmidhī*

The Messenger ﷺ further elaborated:

'There is no Muslim who makes a du`ā' that is free from (asking for) sin or severing ties of blood, except Allāh gives him one of three things:

- Allāh answers for him his prayer in this world, or
- He stores it for him in the Hereafter, or
- He averts from him an evil equivalent to it.'

The Ṣaḥābah ﷺ exclaimed, 'In that case we will surely profiteer!'

'Allāh has more,' said the Messenger ﷺ.

*Aḥmad*

## Examples Of Relevant Ad`iyah (Supplications)

رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ

وَأَجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

RABBANĀ HAB LANĀ MIN 'AZWĀJINĀ WA DHURRIY-YĀTINĀ  
QURRATA 'A'YUNIW-WAJ' ALNĀ LIL MUTTAQĪNA 'IMĀMĀ

*O Allāh! Give to us of our partners and children (that which is) the comfort of our eyes, and make us the leaders of the pious.*

al-Furqān 74

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ صَالِحِ مَا تُؤْتِي النَّاسَ مِنَ الْمَالِ  
وَالْأَهْلِ وَالْوَالِدِ غَيْرِ ضَالٍّ وَلَا مُضِلٍّ

‘ALLĀHUMMA ‘INNĪ ‘AS’ALUKA MIN ṢĀLIHI MĀ  
TU’TIN-NĀSA MINAL MĀLI WAL ‘AHLI WAL WALADI  
GHAYRA ḌĀLLIW-WA LĀ MUḌILL

*O Allāh! I ask You of the good which You give to people: of wealth, wife, and offspring that which is neither astray nor leads astray.*

at-Tirmidhī

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِي دِينِي  
وَدُنْيَايَ وَأَهْلِي وَمَالِي

‘ALLĀHUMMA INNĪ ‘AS’ALUKAL ‘AFWA WAL ‘ĀFIYATA  
FĪ DĪNĪ WA DUNYĀYA WA ‘AHLĪ WA MĀLĪ

*O Allāh! I seek Your forgiveness, and I seek peace in regards to my religion, worldly life, family and wealth.*

Ibn Hibbān

اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي أَسْمَاعِنَا وَأَبْصَارِنَا وَقُلُوبِنَا وَأَزْوَاجِنَا  
وَذُرِّيَاتِنَا وَتُبَّ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

‘ALLĀHUMMA BĀRIK LANĀ FĪ ‘ASMĀ’INĀ WA ‘ABSĀRINĀ WA  
QULŪBINĀ WA ‘AZWĀJINĀ WA DHURRIY-YĀTINĀ WA TUB  
‘ALAYNĀ ‘INNAKA ‘ANTAT TAWWĀBUR RAḤĪM



*O Allāh! Bless us in our hearing, seeing and hearts, and in our partners and offspring, and accept our repentance, for only You are the Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.*

Abū Dāwūd

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ امْرَأَةٍ تُشَيِّنِي قَبْلَ الْمَشِيبِ  
وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ وُلْدٍ يَكُونُ عَلَيَّ  
وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ مَالٍ يَكُونُ عَلَيَّ عَذَابًا

‘ALLĀHUMMA ‘INNĪ ‘A’ŪDHU BIKA MINIM-RA’ATIN

TUSHAY-YIBUNĪ QABLAL MASHĪB,

WA ‘A’ŪDHU BIKA MIW-WALADIY-YAKŪNU `ALAYYA,

WA ‘A’ŪDHU BIKA MIM MĀLIY-YAKŪNU `ALAYYA `ADHĀBĀ

*O Allāh, I seek Your protection from a wife who ages me before old age, And I seek Your protection from such children who are against me, And I seek your protection from wealth which is a punishment for me.*

al-Firdaws

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ مُوجِبَاتِ رَحْمَتِكَ وَعَزَائِمَ مَغْفِرَتِكَ  
وَالسَّلَامَةَ مِنْ كُلِّ إِثْمٍ وَالْغَنِيمَةَ مِنْ كُلِّ بَرٍّ  
وَالْفَوْزَ بِالْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّجَاةَ بِعَوْنِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ

‘ALLĀHUMMA ‘INNĀ NAS’ALUKA MŪJIBĀTI RAḤMATIK,

WA ‘AZĀ’IMA MAGH-FIRATIK, WAS-SALĀMATĀ MIN

KULLI ‘ITHM, WAL GHANĪMATĀ MIN KULLI BIRR,

WAL FAWZA BIL JANNAH,

WAN-NAJĀTA BI `AWNĪKA MINAN-NĀR.

O Allāh! I ask You for all which necessitates Your mercy,  
 and which brings about Your Forgiveness.  
 (I ask You) for the benefit of all good, and for safety from all evil.  
 (I ask You) for success to Heaven,  
 (and I seek) deliverance with Your help from the Fire.

al-Ḥakim

## THE NEED FOR ISTIKHĀRAH AND CONSULTATION

**Istikhārah** means to seek good from Allāh ﷻ by means of Ṣalāh and du`ā'.

**Mashwarah** or **Shūrā** means to seek advice/counsel from others.

Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ۖ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ ط

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

*'And consult with them in actions.*

*Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allāh, certainly, Allāh loves those who put their trust (in Him).*

Āl `Imrān159

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ ۗ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

*And those who answer the Call of their Lord and establish Ṣalāh and who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation and who spend of what We have bestowed on them.*

ash-Shūrā 38

Jābir ؓ narrates, 'Just as the Rasūl ﷺ taught us the verses of the Qur'an, he would also teach us how to perform Istikhārah in all our important affairs. He ﷺ said, "Whenever an important matter arises, perform two rak`ahs nafl and recite the du`ā' (for Istikhārah)."' *al-Bukhārī*

Whenever a Muslim decides to perform any important task, he/she should firstly seek the opinion of a person who, as well as being a true friend and well-wisher, is also knowledgeable, preferably an `Ālim. This mashwarah is very important, more virtuous and beneficial than Istikhārah alone. One should not disregard the opinion of one's well wishers if their opinion is against one's wish or desire, but the opinion given should be reflected upon with an open mind. Istikhārah should be performed on the sincere advice given.

Istikhārah is to ask Allāh to only allow the matter to ensue if it is good for one, and to not let it be otherwise. After making Istikhārah, one should continue doing what one needs to do, reassured in the knowledge that ultimately only that will happen which is good for one. The final outcome will inevitably be the answer to the Istikhārah.

Istikhārah (i.e. its Ṣalāh) can be performed at any time besides the makrūh times. Although most prefer its performance at night before going to bed, it can be performed whenever convenient.

## DU`Ā' OF ISTIKHĀRAH

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ وَأَسْتَقْدِرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ  
وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيمِ فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ وَلَا أَقْدِرُ وَ  
تَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتَ

تَعَلَّمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ خَيْرٌ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ  
 أَمْرِي فَاقْدِرْهُ لِي وَيَسِّرْهُ لِي ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ، وَإِنْ كُنْتُ  
 تَعَلَّمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ شَرٌّ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ  
 أَمْرِي فَاصْرِفْهُ عَنِّي وَاصْرِفْهُ عَنِّي وَاقْدِرْ لِي الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ  
 كَانَ ثُمَّ أَرْضِنِي بِهِ،

‘ALLĀHUMMA ‘INNĪ ‘ASTAKHĪRUKA BI ‘ILMIK, WA ‘ASTAQ-  
 DIRUKA BI QUDRATIK, WA ‘AS’ALUKA MIN FAḌLIKAL ‘AẒĪM.

FA ‘INNAKA TAQDIRU WA LĀ ‘AQDIR, WA TA’LAMU  
 WA LĀ ‘A’LAM, WA ‘ANTA ‘ALLĀMUL GHUYŪB.

‘ALLĀHUMMA ‘IN KUNTA TA’LAMU ‘ANNA HĀDHAL ‘AMRA  
 KHAYRUL-LĪ FĪ DĪNĪ WA MA’ĀSHĪ WA ‘ĀQIBATI ‘AMRĪ  
 FAQ-DIRHU LĪ WA YASSIRHU LĪ THUMMA BĀRIK LĪ FĪH.

WA ‘IN KUNTA TA’LAMU ANNA HĀDHAL ‘AMRA SHARRUL-LĪ FĪ  
 DĪNĪ WA MA’ĀSHĪ WA ‘ĀQIBATI ‘AMRĪ FAṢRIF-HU ‘ANNĪ  
 WAṢRIFNĪ ‘ANHU WAQDIR LIYAL KHAYRA ḤAYTHU KĀNA  
 THUMMA ‘ARḌINĪ BIH.

*O Allāh, I seek good from You through Your knowledge,  
 And I seek ability from You through Your power,  
 And I ask of You from Your great benevolence;  
 For You possess power while I have no power,  
 and You are the Knowledgeable while I have no knowledge,  
 And You are the Knower of the unseen.*

*O Allāh, if You know this action to be good for me in so far as my*

*religion, my livelihood and the consequences of my actions are concerned then ordain it for me, and make it easy for me, then bless me in it;*

*And if You know this action to be bad for me in so far as my religion, my livelihood and the consequences of my actions are concerned then turn it away from me, and turn me away from it, and destine for me that which is good wherever it may be, then make me content with it.*

*al-Bukhārī*

*(Note: Where underlined, one should think of the action for which Istikhārah is made)*

## ENGAGEMENT

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

‘When a person whose piety and character you are pleased with sends a proposal of Nikāḥ to your home, accept his proposal. Otherwise, there will be great tribulations and anarchy upon earth.’

*at-Tirmidhī*

No Muslim should propose upon the proposal of another Muslim, until he either marries or withdraws his proposal.<sup>1</sup>

*al-Bukhārī*

An engagement is a promise between prospective spouses and/or their families of marriage.

The custom of having an engagement party, engagement cards, engagement ring, distribution of sweets, cakes, drinks or any other silly arrangement is incorrect and a reprehensible innovation (bid`ah).

One must however remember that this like any other promise or pledge is no light matter. One must consider very carefully before making this promise on one’s own marriage or on behalf of others, and thereafter this promise must be honoured. Only in the event of the disclosure of a hidden fault/vice can this promise be reconsidered.

## **PERMISSIBLE ACTS FOR AN ENGAGED PERSON**

It is Ḥarām for the couple-to-be to meet, (except during the decision-making stage) touch or see each other and to otherwise act like a married couple after the engagement. Until they perform the Nikāḥ, they are still strangers according to Islam and so Ḥarām for each other.

## **PERMISSION OF ELDERS**

The benefits and blessings observed in marriages where permission is sought from the elders of the household and the entire arrangement is made in consultation with the families is not seen in weddings where the couple marry on their own. This type of arrangement when the couple decide everything for themselves, including the premarital formalities, is completely disregarding familial relationships, almost as though the couple think that the parents don't matter.

Islām considers decency, modesty and restraint unsurpassable virtues in both men and women. The absence of these qualities is often the root cause of many of the problems faced in marriage.

## **MODERN DAY ARRANGEMENTS OF MARRIAGE**

Placing and responding to the shameless adverts placed by boys and girls in classifieds, personals, internet dating sites, text dating services and chat-lines has become rampant. The boy boasts of his qualifications, profession, wealth, sporting interests, as well as personality, or even sense of humour, as if this should really drive the nail home. He then announces his desire for a girl with specific qualities, and anyone interested sends in a photo and details. Girls too flaunt their selling points: qualifications, western birth, beauty, desirable figure, age, not forgetting personality/sense of humour, without any shame or inhibitions. She too outlines her requirements. Next, they start to communicate with the response(s)

they receive and meet a few times to 'try out' their prospective partner before a 'serious relationship' begins. If this produces a match, they will take the matter further (i.e. undercover), otherwise this whole process is repeated until a match is found and the much romanticized 'hearts beating together' is thought to be experienced.

The Prophet ﷺ forewarned about emulating such lewd cultures and practices, 'Most certainly will you follow the ways of those who have preceded you step by step, inch by inch, to the extent that if they were to enter a lizard's hole you would follow them into it.'

Somebody asked: 'O Rasūlullāh ﷺ, do you mean the Jews and the Christians?' The Rasūl ﷺ replied, 'Who else?' *al-Bukhārī, Muslim*

Should a genuine need arise to approach any organisation, it must be a reputable Muslim marriage bureau that is in line with Sharī`ah, not a dating bureau. This too only should be a last resort and only with the supervision of one's family. This is both for advice and protection.

## THE WALĪ AND HIS ROLES AND DUTIES

**Wālī:** is a person who represents the person marrying, and is translated in English as custodian.

For both the bride and bridegroom, the father enjoys this right. In his absence the grandfather will be custodian and in the absence of them both, the mature, elder brother, then paternal and maternal uncles, etc. All of these must be mature Muslims.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ commented:

The woman previously married has greater right and say over her affair than her walī (guardian) and the virgin (previously unmarried) must also be consulted for consent. Her remaining silent (and not objecting) is her consent.'

*Muslim*

Scholars elaborate: ‘From this (and other aḥādīth) it is quite obvious that no walī may marry any mature and intelligent lady (whether previously married or not) without her willing consent. *Ma`āriful Ḥadīth*

The trend is for one male, from both families, to be physically present when requesting the girl’s permission. This is totally wrong and completely against the Shar`ī command of ḥijāb. Only maḥram males should seek the girl’s permission and thereafter ensure they be present when the Nikāḥ is solemnized. A father, brother or uncle of the girl should place the request and witness the consent. Non-mahram males cannot go to the girl at all.

## ETIQUETTES OF NIKĀḤ

Nikāḥ should be publicized and performed in public as the Rasūl ﷺ has advised, ‘Announce weddings and solemnise them in the Mosque and (celebrate them with) the beating of drums.’ *at-Tirmidhi*

Another lesson from the aḥādīth is that it is preferable to perform Nikāḥ in the Masjid, preferably after a Ṣalāh, when a greater number of pious people will be present whose presence will attract the mercy of Allāh ﷻ and whose du`ā` will benefit the newly-married.

Unfortunately common behaviour of Muslims on occasions of Nikāḥ is extremely disrespectful of the Masājid. As Muslims, who are on the true path, we should contrast this with the behaviour of non-Muslims inside their places of worship, and think whose is better and more appropriate. At all times we must uphold the sanctity of our Masājid.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said, ‘Do not make a commotion in Mosques like that of markets.’ *Abū Dāwūd*

An `Ālim (or pious person) should perform the Nikāḥ. The proposal and acceptance should be made after the Sermon (Khuṭbah). The



bridegroom should say the complete sentence, 'I have accepted' clearly and audibly.

Cultures vary, and many ways of performing the Nikāḥ and conducting ceremonies have been coined. The Sunnah du`a' for congratulating the newlywed is the following:

بَارَكَ اللهُ لَكَ وَبَارَكَ عَلَيْكَ وَجَمَعَ بَيْنَكُمَا فِي خَيْرٍ

BĀRAKAL-LĀHU LAKA WA BĀRAKA  
`ALAYKA WA JAMA`A BAYNAKUMĀ  
FĪ KHAYR.

***'May Allāh bless for you (this union) and shower His blessings on you and may He bring you both together in goodness.'***

*at-Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah*

## MAHR (DOWRY)

Rasūlullāh ﷺ commented:

'Any man who fixes for a woman a dowry while Allāh knows he has no intention of ever making it over to her and so has deceived her using Allāh (as his Surety) and (thereby) gained access to her most private part illegitimately will meet Allāh on the Day of Judgement as a fornicator.'

*Majma' az-Zawā'id from Aḥmad*

Mahr is Wājib (compulsory). Even if it is not mentioned at the time of Nikāḥ one will still be obliged to pay it. The minimum quantity of mahr is the value of approximately 31 grams of Silver. Because this amount varies it is not correct to fix an amount in tendered currency. There is no maximum limit, however a light mahr has been praised highly by the Prophet ﷺ.

The amount generally known as mahr Fāṭimī, is what `Alī ؑ gave at the time of his Nikāḥ to Fāṭimah ؑ, which equates to approximately 1.6kg of silver (1,584 grams).

## THE MUSLIM BRIDE'S ARRIVAL AT HER NEW HOME

Our Prophet, Muḥammad ﷺ arranged for his foster-mother Umm Ayman ؓ, the noble lady who had breast-fed him and whom he lovingly referred to as 'mother', to escort his daughter Fāṭimah ؓ, to her husband's house after Nikāḥ. Ibn Hibbān

The best of creation left an example for us to follow in the precedent he set at the time of his beloved daughter's marriage. This example is of simplicity, plain and simple. The Rasūl ﷺ has said, 'Truly the greatest wedding in barakah (Allāh's blessings) is the least in expenditure' (*al-Bayhaqī in Shu'ab al-Īmān*). Is it not madness to go to ghastly lengths and expenses to *ensure* the couple lose out on the one thing that they need most at this crucial moment - the blessings of Allāh?

One should be happy with taking one's daughter oneself to her in-laws after marriage. The arrogance and pride of many people means the groom is expected to pay a fortune to hire a limousine to head an entourage of thrill-seeking well-wishers to come and collect the bride. This is wrong and according to Islāmic law extremely reprehensible, as well as completely unnecessary.

In fact, there is no such thing as a wedding party (*shādī da`wat*) at the time of the Nikāḥ in the Sunnah of the blessed Messenger ﷺ and Ṣaḥābah. The custom that exists of throwing a party at this occasion, which, unfortunately, even the otherwise practicing are immersed in, is a remnant of pre-Islāmic practices and is contrary to the spirit of the Sunnah, a bid`ah. After all, why should the bride's side, for whom this is an immensely sad and heart-wrenching moment, be expected to fork out thousands and throw a party as they give away a daughter or sister on whom they have spent so many hard years and so much expenditure bringing up, loving, maintaining and educating? It's the groom who has cause for celebration as he acquires a partner, a soul-mate and a ready-made aide to share life with, and the Shari`ah quite rightly asks that he have a Walimah *after* consummating the marriage.

## THE BRIDE'S ARRIVAL

Neither should the new wife be unladylike or foolish by talking too much, nor should she withdraw to the extent that people have to plead to get a word out, as this too is a sign of idiocy/arrogance.

Should the bride find any aspect of living with in-laws displeasing, she must not relate this to her own parents or anyone else for them to gossip about. This is backbiting, and only serves to ignite strife, arguments and disputes, nothing positive from this is ever achieved. Instead, she should discuss her concerns with her husband, choosing an appropriate time, and he in turn must listen to her and work to resolve the issue with her based on fairness in a way to minimise unpleasantness and pain for both his wife and his parents.

The new wife should live amongst her in-laws with dignity from the very first day as first impressions last forever, showing compassion to juniors and treating elders with respect. She should try to never delegate any of her responsibilities to others nor leave things lying around for others to put away. She should help the in-laws in domestic duties, as this will create mutual love. Upon arrival at her in-law's, even if the heart feels uncomfortable with new people and a new place, the bride should keep calm and not spend her time in tears.

As long as her husband's parents are alive, the bride should try to serve them and consider this service a source of reward. With sacrifice they brought up their son bringing him to where he is now. In old age, they can justifiably expect service from their children. The bride should be careful of allowing anything to happen that would give the impression that she is trying to distance her husband from his parents.

This practical advice in no way refuses the wife her Wājib (obligatory) right of separate living quarters if she so wishes. But this should not be

sought in a manner that portrays dislike of the in-laws. In the majority of cases, it is best if couples do separate their residence from parents, but on good terms.

## THE ETIQUETTES OF MUSLIM SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

Rasūlullāh ﷺ is reported to have said, 'Do not have intercourse with your wife until she is as aroused as you are,' and explained that this was to be achieved through 'kissing, fondling and caressing her.'

*al-Mughni*

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has stated, 'In the fulfilling of your sexual desires there is a ṣadaqah (i.e. the reward of charity).'

The Ṣaḥābah ؓ (surprised) asked, 'Is one of us to come to his lusts and have a reward in it?'

Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied, 'Tell me, if he were to place his lusts in Ḥarām would he be sinful? So accordingly, when he places his urges in Ḥalāl there is for him a reward in it.'

*Muslim*

## ETIQUETTES OF THE FIRST NIGHT

With the arrival of the bride at her husband's home, both will meet for the first time. This should be at the husband's own residence or that of a very close sensible relative. There is no need for expensive hotels and pocket breaking holidays, as this is unnecessary and extravagant.

If one does wish to go some place, acknowledging and upholding Shar`ī limitations then it is not wrong. Here Shar`ī limitation not only covers expenses involved (that they be reasonable), but also the appropriateness of the chosen venue/destination.

## ‘ISHĀ’ ṢALĀH AND THANKING ALLĀH ﷻ

‘Ishā’ Ṣalāh and, according to the Ḥanafī madh-hab, Witr are both

compulsory but are often neglected by the couple. This must under all circumstance be avoided, as it shows total ingratitude to Allāh ﷻ, who in His mercy has allowed this marriage to take place. After their performance, both, husband and wife should take time to make du`ā' for good, blessings, mutual love, faithfulness, chastity, prosperity, marital success and pious offspring.

One should thank Allāh ﷻ for saving one from Ḥarām and granting one Ḥalāl. It is, therefore, a good practice for the newlyweds to offer two rak`ahs together, either with the husband leading, or both individually performing Ṣalāh simultaneously, with a combined intention of shukr (gratitude), tahajjud (night prayers), tawbah (prayer of repentance) and ḥājah (prayer requesting fulfilment of needs). Since all of these are nafl (optional) prayers, all four can be combined into one.

## **WHEN MEETING YOUR SPOUSE FOR THE FIRST NIGHT**

Within one's means and without extravagance, parents/relatives can try to prepare the room with appropriate items where the newlyweds will meet, and what they are likely to need. Items such as comfortable bedding, perfume, fruit, drinks, ḥalwah (mithāi - sweetmeats) and chocolates, are items which will be to their comfort and which are within limits, befitting.

'Friends' like to resort to pranks and practical jokes (and even pay-to-enter blackmail) in order to irritate the couple on the first night. This is wrong. It can have adverse effects on the couple and their outlook to each other. It is essential for the couple to have full privacy and not to be disturbed in any way. It is a grave sin for anyone to eavesdrop or for either of the couple to gossip about the other regarding the activities or secrets of the first night (or any other night).

The Nabī ﷺ said, 'On the Day of Qiyāmah of the lowest people in the

sight of Allāh will be the man who makes love to his wife and then reveals her secrets to others.'

*Muslim*

Usually the new wife sits in wait for her husband. People should ensure that the husband is not kept in idle chatter or any other pre-occupation so as to keep her waiting. The husband should proceed to meet his queen without delay after `Ishā' Ṣalāh. After knocking and requesting permission, the bridegroom should make salām clearly and audibly. This is a sunnah which should be maintained throughout the married life. The bride should reply to the salām and welcome her husband.

When Ummul Mu'minīn Umm Salamah ؓ was married by Rasūlullāh ﷺ she exclaimed, 'Marḥabam-bi Rasūlillāh ﷺ' (Welcome to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ).

The husband should then sit with his wife and take her hand. He should then affectionately place his hand upon her forehead, reciting this du`ā';

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَهَا وَخَيْرَ مَا جَبَلْتَهَا عَلَيْهِ

وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهَا وَشَرِّ مَا جَبَلْتَهَا عَلَيْهِ

‘ALLĀHUMMA ‘INNĪ ‘AS’ALUKA KHAYRAHĀ  
WA KHAYRA MĀ JABALTAHĀ ‘ALAYHI  
WA ‘A’ŪDHU BIKA MIN SHARRIHĀ  
WA SHARRI MĀ JABALTAHĀ ‘ALAYH.

*O Allāh, I ask You for the good of her  
and the goodness which You have created her upon;  
And I seek protection in You from the evil of her  
and whatever evil You have created her upon.*

*Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah*

The bride may also recite a similar du`ā' (this is not specifically in the Sunnah but, going by the general rule of the applicability of the Prophet's teachings to both men and women, it is good nonetheless):

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَهُ وَخَيْرَ مَا جَبَلْتَهُ عَلَيْهِ  
وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهِ وَشَرِّ مَا جَبَلْتَهُ عَلَيْهِ

‘ALLĀHUMMA ‘INNĪ ‘AS’ALUKA KHAYRAHŪ  
WA KHAYRA MĀ JABALTAHŪ `ALAYHI  
WA ‘A`ŪDHU BIKA MIN SHARRIHĪ  
WA SHARRI MĀ JABALTAHŪ `ALAYH.

*O Allāh, I ask You for the good of him  
and the goodness which You have created him upon;  
And I seek protection in You from the evil of him  
and whatever evil You have created him upon.*

The benefits of this are that Allāh ﷻ will remove evil from the spouses and prevent evil from befalling them, and He will bless the household.

Starting a conversation is always easier than anticipated. Appearing happy and smiling affectionately through this nervous ordeal helps each other and benefits the relationship. The conversation should be initiated by asking about each other and listening appreciatively and attentively. And without trying too hard (or being obscene) a few jokes can be cracked to lighten the atmosphere. Thereafter engage in speaking about Allāh ﷻ and His mercy. After which the purpose behind the Nikāḥ can be explained. Upon this the couple should make an agreement with each other to always obey Allāh ﷻ and be faithful and loyal to each other.

It is very fitting at this point for each to present an appropriate gift (e.g.

a necklace for her, a watch for him) to the other. This shows love, commitment and appreciation. Light refreshments can be served to each other to overcome any remaining shyness. One must bear in mind that (ideally) both before this meeting were strangers, thus it is natural (and a very good sign) for both to feel uneasy about being alone with one of the opposite sex with whom intimacy is permitted. Both should thus bear the feeling of the other, if any signs of shyness or uneasiness are shown.

Sexual activity should not be commenced or demanded immediately. The husband should take the lead in creating an atmosphere, and breaking the ice by use of words of love, humour and mutual caring and caressing, all the time slowly getting physically closer, caressing and embracing her.

Ignorant men advised by ignorant friends think sex must be performed immediately to demonstrate manliness and dominance over the wife. Only a complete idiot can behave in such a selfish manner, not taking into consideration the feelings of his wife, his future life partner. Both husband and wife have the rest of their married lives for this. Selfishness at this stage will give the new wife the impression of being used only to fulfil the husband's sexual desires. This will create more problems than can ever be resolved.

Modesty in Muslim ladies prevents them from immediately jumping for sex. When she does eventually become prepared for it, she will be extremely nervous, and in dire need of support from the husband.

The breaking of her virginity will cause immense physical pain which will be felt more than sexual pleasure. If the husband is not attentive towards her or behaves rashly at this intimate and delicate stage, the wife will hate him, and the negative effects of this hatred will continue for a long time into the marriage.



In marriage, the wife (and also the husband) both experience an entire new lifestyle which was previously unknown to them. In the delicate stage of the building up of roles of both the husband and wife it is imperative for both to be neither selfish and subjugating nor so selfless as to allow the other to unwittingly take advantage. Ideally both will recognize their responsibilities as their's and not expect any help in it. They should also help and assist the other in his/her work, acknowledging that it is the other's responsibility, but seeking Allāh's pleasure through their spouse's.

Both husband and wife while regarding the other as the person of their dreams should also understand that ultimately their dream, just as they are, are still human and prone to mistakes and faults. This is not said as a put off, but it is a reminder that mistakes will occur from both sides, and just as one wishes for one's own mistakes to be overlooked and forgiven, they should overlook the mistakes of the other.

The Mother of the Believers, Umm Salamah ؓ narrates that if ever an eye of any of the wives of the Rasūl ﷺ ached, he would not have sexual relationship with them out of consideration for their health. This and other issues must be considered by both partners at all times in order to maintain a happy, mutually loving relationship.

## **COHABITATION**

### **INTENTION**

Muslims should realize that conjugal fulfilment is a fundamental need of humans, therefore Islām has not only dealt with this subject openly, but in great detail. A Muslim's every action should be performed with the goal of Allāh's ﷻ pleasure. As has been explained by the Prophet ﷺ even the fulfilment of nocturnal marital rights merits reward if done with the right intentions, i.e. acquiring of pious offspring, protection from adultery and fulfilment of mutual rights in a permitted manner.

## ETIQUETTES OF SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ فَاتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ ۚ  
وَقَدِّمُوا لِنَفْسِكُمْ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ

مُلْقَوَةٌ ۖ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

*Your wives are your fields.*

*Come, then, unto your field from where you will,  
and advance something for yourselves,  
and fear Allāh and know that you are to meet Him,  
and give good news to the believers.'*

al-Baqarah 223

Rasūlullāh ﷺ explained:

'Therefore come unto your soil (wife) from the front in the front part (i.e. the vagina only), or come from the back into the front part (vagina). And save yourselves from the back portion (anus) in the way you save yourselves from the pubic region during the period of menstruation.'

at-Tirmidhi

As long as the wife is not in her monthly cycle, the couple may engage in sexual intercourse as long as it is in the vagina, whatever position is comfortable to both. Anal and oral sex is not permitted.

Regarding the issue of different positions allowed for the husband and wife, Islām gives permission for any position for this act, as long as entry is in the vagina. The couple should however ensure that both are comfortable, and under no circumstance ashamed of, or

psychologically forced into it. Medically, standing whilst having sex has been found to be harmful and so is not recommended although permissible.

Regarding which positions are preferred, two are hinted at in the Qur'ān and Sunnah, these are sitting and lying down whilst engaging in sexual contact. It is further recommended that the husband be on top covering her totally. This is practically more fulfilling, more likely to allow conception and is also much more healthier.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has commented:

'If, when any of you makes love with his wife (i.e. before he starts), he says (the following du`ā' to Allāh ﷻ; it is also appropriate for the wife to read this du`ā', too):

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ اللَّهُمَّ جَنِّبْنَا الشَّيْطَانَ وَجَنِّبِ الشَّيْطَانَ مَا رَزَقْتَنَا

BISMILLĀH, 'ALLĀHUMMA JANNIBNASH-SHAYṬĀNA  
WA JANNIBISH-SHAYṬĀNA MĀ RAZAQTANĀ

*In the name of Allāh,  
O Allāh, protect us from Shayṭān and  
protect from Shayṭān that which you grant to us.*

Shayṭān will not be able to harm any child conceived from this union.'

*al-Bukhārī & Muslim*

One must at this time remember Allāh ﷻ and thank Him abundantly. If one is oblivious of Allāh's ﷻ mercy, then this defiance will be seen in one's children and their behaviour towards the parents.

## **SEX DURING MENSTRUATION (Ḥayḍ)**

Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ ۗ قُلْ هُوَ أَذًى ۖ فَاعْتَزِلُوا

النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ ۖ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَطْهُرْنَ ۚ

*'They ask you about menstruation.*

*Say, 'It is an impurity and pain,*

*therefore keep away from women during menstruation;*

*and do not have intimacy with them until they are cleansed...'*

*al-Baqarah 2:222*

Zayd Ibn Aslam (RA), a Tābi`ī, relates that once a person asked the Rasūl ﷺ, 'What indulgences are permissible for me with my wife when she is menstruating?'

He ﷺ replied, 'Cover her (between her navel to her knees) with a cloth, then you may do as you please with the top part of her body (e.g. by kissing and caressing).'  
*Mālik*

During the days of menstruation, it is Ḥarām for a husband to engage in sexual intercourse with his wife. However, besides actual sex itself, the husband is permitted to fondle the other parts of her body.

If during Ḥayḍ, a person makes the grave mistake of cohabiting then it is necessary to repent from it and also to make Kaffārah (atonement through charity). For him who has sex with his wife during Ḥayḍ, the Prophet ﷺ has instructed the donating of a dinār (+/- £150) or half a dinār in charity as recompense.  
*Ibn Mājah*

Medical evidence shows that sex for both the spouses during the wife's Ḥayḍ or Nifās (postnatal bleeding) is extremely harmful. Many women have even suffered severe blood loss and also haemorrhages due to having sex too soon after childbirth.

## **ORAL SEX**

While the genital organs, on condition of washing them, may be considered ritually clean (ṭāhir), every clean thing is not necessarily suitable for going in the mouth. It is makrūh (reprehensible) to orally fondle the genitals. It is only thanks to the sex industry that this filthy action has been popularised and even contemplated. It is not becoming of a Muslim to follow the West's filthy example.

## **PHYSICAL PREPARATION**

One should brush one's teeth, use perfume and ensure of no body odours or disheveled appearance. This should be done at all times, but on occasion of intimacy it takes on a greater significance.

There is no greater cause of abhorrence than foul odour. Clean cloth should be used to prevent the bed from being polluted and separate towels utilized to clean the private parts after sexual activity.

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION**

Psychological preparation must be made prior to cohabitation. This increases enjoyment and is much more mutually considerate. Each should express their desire for the other both verbally and practically.

Ibn `Abbās ؓ has said, 'I love to adorn myself for my wife as much as I like (her) to beautify (herself) for me.' The habit of dressing to go out and staying scruffy (or 'casual') at home is not only inconsiderate but seriously questionable; who is it that we are dressing to impress? Allāh ﷻ has granted the wife much reward in dressing-up for her husband.

## **WHEN TO HAVE SEX**

There are a few occasions every month, usually just after the menstrual bleeding, that most women develop an intense craving for sex. Besides

these there are also many other times where the urge might rise. The husband needs to recognize these moments and endeavor to fulfil her desires. This will increase her love and respect for him.

A wife should also remember that the husband also has needs (which can arise at any time) and she should also be willing to cater for them. This will increase his love and respect for her.

The best time to make love is at least three hours after having eaten. To make love immediately after having eaten a heavy meal, or when very hungry or tired, is detrimental to health.

## **HOW OFTEN?**

Everything runs at an optimum (most productive and best) if all things concerning it are kept in balance, i.e. within moderation (not too much or too little). Thus for the body and mind to function at their most productive rates, total deprivation from carnal fulfilment is hazardous, and excessive indulgence is also hazardous. Bluntly put, too much or too little sex is harmful for a person as an individual and also the couple and their relationship.

Our Shari`ah has not set out any specific limits for sexual activity, as individual strength, needs and physique vary. It is encouraged, however, (as well as bathing) on Thursday night. Greater sexual prowess or craving does not make one more of a man as men generally like to boast. Whoever has a greater need may indulge more often, though to have sex every night or more than once a night as a habit can be harmful.

Ejaculation of semen depletes a considerable amount of the body's energy, which must be replenished otherwise the rest of the body suffers. Thus, it becomes obvious that repeated depletion of this energy and nutrients too often may result in illness. Also over-

indulgence becomes burdensome upon the wife. Women usually become satisfied with considerate, fulfilling sex, at moderate intervals, rather than frequent 'quickies' where climax is not fully achieved.

The newly married couple are encouraged to engage in conjugal activities initially once every two to four days, gradually slowing down to once a week and whenever a really strong urge is felt by either partner.

## **FOREPLAY**

Prior to having sex the couple should engage in foreplay. Through this there is greater enjoyment and pleasure, especially for the wife. This is in accordance to the Sunnah of our beloved Nabī ﷺ who has stated, 'None of you should fall upon his wife like an animal; let there first be a messenger between you.' When asked what that messenger was, he ﷺ replied, 'Kisses and words.'

*ad-Daylami*

Caressing, kissing, fondling, massaging, playing, whispering and stroking all arouse passion, craving and enthusiasm for sex. The couple should spend considerable time indulging themselves and each other in these activities. The couple should explore each other whilst considering each other's dispositions and making sure no aspect of Shari`ah law is disregarded (e.g. anal and oral sex are not permissible so must not be engaged in). Also when one is fondling the breasts one must ensure that no milk is drunk or tasted in the arousing process.

## **ORGASM**

At the time of orgasm of either of the partners it is best not to engage in speech. Should the husband experience early ejaculation he should not separate until his wife achieves orgasm and vice versa. If this is not done it is denying the wife her right, as well as sowing the seed of discontentment and anger towards the husband in her heart, which

opens the door of needing to search for sexual satisfaction elsewhere.

It appears in a Ḥadith, 'When one of you has sex with his wife let him harmonise with her. Should he fulfil his need before she fulfils her's let him not hasten until she has been satisfied.' *Majma` az-Zawā'id from Abū Ya`lā*

Islām teaches both man and woman to be considerate lovers and not selfish of the other's needs.

During ejaculation, both should silently pray in the heart:

اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَجْعَلْ لِلشَّيْطَانِ فِيْمَا رَزَقْتَنِي نَصِيْبًا

ALLĀHUMMA LĀ TAJ' AL LISH-SHAYṬĀNI

FĪMĀ RAZAQTANĪ NAṢĪBĀ

***O Allāh, do not allow Shayṭān any part of what You grant me.'***

*Faṭḥ al-Bārī from Muṣannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah*

After intercourse, both should wipe their genital organs clean with clean towels/cloths. Thereafter the couple should try to perform ghusl (bath). If this is too inconvenient then wuḍū' (ablution) is sufficient. If this too is difficult then tayammum should be performed. One should not indulge in more sex without at least washing the genitalia.

As long as the body remains warm, it is not medically advisable to expose it to cold air or water. People suffering from inflammation or pain while urinating or during vaginal discharge are recommended to urinate and thereafter perform Istinjā' (washing of genitals after urination or excretion) prior to and after (not necessarily immediately after) cohabitation.

Having sex multiple times beyond true satisfaction may be medically unadvisable (this varies per person). Also, one should have sex when real arousal is experienced (i.e. when craving exists from within so that



there is no need to physically stimulate the organs) and not only when one has time on their hands. If the need arises for cohabitation a second or more times one should again indulge in foreplay and prepare the wife.

## EDIBLE APHRODISIACS

### (Food For Increased Sexual Performance/Appetite)

Sexual capacity can depend upon the food one consumes, its quality and type. It nourishes blood and thus semen. One should always consume food which is nutritious and healthy. When one is trying to increase libido and sperm quality eating sensibly becomes all the more important.

Allāh ﷻ reveals in the Qur'ān that Maryam ؑ, the mother of `Īsā ﷺ, was addressed when she was driven by the pains of childbirth:

وَهْزِيْ اِلَيْكَ بِجِدْعِ النَّخْلَةِ تُسْقِطُ عَلَيْكَ رَطْبًا جَنِيًّا ۝١٥

*'And shake towards yourself the trunk of date-palm,  
it will let fall upon you fresh ripe dates.'*

Maryam 19:25

`Ā'ishah ؓ relates that the Rasūl ﷺ was very fond of **honey** because Allāh ﷻ reveals in the Qur'ān:

تَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَنُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ ۝١٥

*'There comes forth from their (the bees') bellies, a drink (honey) of  
varying colour wherein is healing for men, '*

an-Nahl 16:69

Unlike other foods, honey does not lose any of its benefits even over a long period of time. Its nutrients are lapped up by the blood extremely quickly, and it generates immense energy without disturbing or

causing an imbalance in the body's system or processes.

**Milk** according to `Abdullāh Ibn `Abbās ؓ was the favourite drink of our Prophet ﷺ. It also develops sexual potency, dispels dryness and because it is so easily digested provides energy to body organs. Its nutrients are extremely beneficial for the body.

**Harīrah** is a soupy dish of meat, clarified butter, wheat and a little seasoning. This dish was recommended to the Rasūl ﷺ by Jibr'il ؑ and it was explained as having a potency enhancing capacity sufficient for 40 men.

**Garlic** according to some Aḥādith, contains healing properties. Some people have researched garlic and found it to be very beneficial in boosting sexual potency in people, especially those with weaker temperaments and tendencies. However, garlic was disliked by the Prophet ﷺ when eaten raw before entry into the Masjid.

Other foods that have all been recommended by the Rasūl ﷺ:

**Beetroot, saffron, eggs, etc.**

**Foods which are Harmful to Potency** (if taken in excess) - all types of sour fruits, pickles, chutneys, tamarind, vinegar, red chillies, hot spices, tea & coffee.

To drink cold water or any other cold drink immediately after sex is not recommended medically as it is harmful.

Besides these, it is worth noting that smoking, as well as having countless other harms, can also cause irreparable harm to sexual potency as well as sperm production and quality.

**Note:** While certain foods are good in promoting sexual prowess, it does not mean that food is meant to be used during sex, in places where they were not intended to be. This is very disrespectful and wasteful, thus deserving its ruling of impermissibility.

## FRAGRANT APHRODISIACS

Flowers and fragrances are known to have a very positive effect on the sexual potency of both men and women. The classical fragrances (e.g. musk, amber, rose etc.) have superb arousing capabilities.

The newer types of perfumes also have this same type of effect. Although many scholars allow the use of alcohol-based perfumes, one should still try to acquire the alcohol-free range to avoid the differences of opinion surrounding the permissibility of the alcoholic range.

## VISUAL APHRODISIACS

Clothes and self portrayal of the husband to the wife and even more so of the wife to the husband also have an effect in increasing a craving for each other and intimacy.

Lingerie can be worn by the wife to arouse the husband and intensify the foreplay. But this intimate costuming must be kept in total privacy between the husband and wife, both in action and talk. The only limitation to this is that it is compliant with the guidelines of Islām. These are mutual permission, no impersonation of others and no shamelessness (e.g. anal and oral sex).

## BATHING

**Ghusl** is the ritual bath which, performed in its entirety, will free one from the state of Janābah.

**Janābah** is from the states of Ḥadath Akbar (gross impurity) which leave one requiring a bath. Janābah is caused by either of the following;

1. Entry of the tip of the penis in the opening of the vagina (or even the anal passage if one were to commit this vile, Ḥarām act), to the extent that the head of the penis is no longer visible, irrespective of whether semen is ejaculated or not. In this event both involved require a compulsory bath.
2. Ejaculation of sperm (in the case of the male) or matter (in the case of the female) on condition of it being experienced with sexual arousal and following an orgasmic climax, be it in the form of wet dreams or in the state of consciousness, regardless of whether it is caused by anything touching the private parts or by merely thinking about sex, whether permissible or impermissible (thinking about impermissible sex is not permissible).

Ḥayḍ (menses) and Nifās (postnatal bleeding) are the two remaining causes of Ḥadath Akbar and so also obligate making ghusl.

Purification from Ḥadath Akbar is obtained by means of ghusl or, in the case of not being able to use water, by tayammum (please refer to our publication titled Ṣalāh for more details).

## **Actions Prohibited In Ḥadath Akbar**

Acts of worship prohibited while in the state of Ḥadath Akbar are:

1. Performing Ṣalāh, the touching and/or reciting of the Qur'an.
2. To enter a Masjīd or to make Ṭawāf of the Ka`bah.

## WALĪMAH (FEEDING AFTER THE MARRIAGE NIGHT)

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said;

'If one is invited to a walimah, he should accept it.' *al-Bukhārī, Muslim*

'A bad food is that walimah; where the rich are invited and the needy and destitute overlooked. Yet whoever declines the invitation (without a legitimate reason) has disobeyed Allāh and His Messenger.'

*al-Bukhārī, Muslim*

The walimah is offered by the new husband, and is an act of virtue as well as a display of appreciation towards the new wife and her family. It's status has been emphasised by the Prophet ﷺ as a time of happiness and a time to show additional thankfulness towards Allāh ﷻ.

### THE PROPHET'S EXAMPLE ﷺ

On the marriage of the Prophet of Allāh ﷺ to Safiyyah ؓ while returning from the Khaybar expedition, he ﷺ requested his Companions ؓ to bring whatever food they had available for walimah, even if it were a few dates (*al-Bayhaqī*). This again shows that the Prophet's ﷺ example was of simplicity and that the main reason of walimah is the getting together of people to symbolize the importance of marriage.

`Ā'ishah ؓ relates that at her walimah there were no camels or sheep slaughtered. A bowl of milk was given by the family of Sa'd Ibn `Ubādah ؓ and this on its own sufficed as the walimah .

Muslims who consider it as socially essential to have a large walimah wherein dozens of different foods are usually served with countless other extravagances, simply cannot understand why the Prophet ﷺ chose such simplicity.

Anas ؓ narrates, 'The walimah the Rasūl ﷺ gave after marrying Zaynab bint Jaḥsh ؓ was the largest he had given.'  
*al-Bukhārī, Muslim*

On that occasion, the Nabī ﷺ arranged for a sheep to be slaughtered to feed the guests, and Umm Sulaym ؓ, (the mother of Anas ؓ) sent Ḥarīrah (a special soup). The Rasūl ﷺ had instructed Anas ؓ to invite many friends by name, as well as anyone who he happened to meet. A total of about 300 men gathered at the residence of the Nabī ﷺ who, whilst reciting a du`ā, instructed people to eat in clusters of ten, and to eat from in front of them. After all had eaten to their fill, the Rasūl ﷺ requested the food be removed. Anas comments, 'At the time of removal, I was unable to distinguish whether there had been more food when I had served the meal or upon its completion!'  
*Muslim*

Although the Nabī ﷺ had generously invited a large number of people for this walimah, no expensive halls had to be hired, there was no ghibah or gossip, no intermingling of sexes, no time wasting after the food had been eaten, no pomp, no show. This showed that the Prophet's ﷺ example was not only simplicity but it was also hateful of extravagance.

Regarding the walimah:

- It is Sunnah for the new husband's family to offer walimah. There is no basis in the Shari`ah for the new wife's family to hold any party.
- Upon arrival at a walimah if one finds any form of sin taking place, then one should leave immediately.
- It is wrong to incur debt in order to have a walimah.
- Ṣalāh and other Islāmic obligations must not be compromised by either the hosts or guests.
- It is idiocy to think it is a requirement of nobility and rank to hold an extravagant, wasteful meal and invite many. Where are we, our peers and our interpretation of honour and respect compared to

the example of our beloved Prophet ﷺ and his companions ?

- The ill-practices of intermingling of the sexes, photography, music and all the other things that now have become part of the ceremonies are sins totally against the Shari`ah.
- It is not permissible to bring any extra people (or children) with those who have been invited without prior permission.
- If the revenue of the host is known, or there are strong reasons to suspect it to be of ill means (anything not permissible according to Islāmic law), then his invitation should be rejected politely.

## **GOLDEN ADVICE FOR THE COUPLE**

Marriage makes each spouse the lifetime companion of the other. Whatever the circumstance, all events are to be faced as a couple. No matter how happy others may appear, one's circumstances if accepted with contentment upon the will and wisdom of Allāh ﷻ will be a bearer of happiness and reward.

The wife should accept her husband, his home and income as their's together, and she should always bear in mind that her husband is her true beloved, best friend and well-wisher in all family decisions. The husband too must always accept his wife as his life-partner.

Husbands and wives are usually well aware of their rights and what is owed to them by the other. If the selfish mentality of taking was replaced with a less self-centred and more considerate attitude, conscious of what one owes to the other, both would automatically get their own rights as well as infuse the relationship with love. Look at the wisdom in what the Rasūl ﷺ advised his companions, 'Fulfill the rights binding on you, and ask Allāh for that which is due to you.'

*al-Bukhārī, Muslim*

During the initial stages, the couple must try and spend as much time together as possible, as it provides an opportunity to understand each

other's nature and also to lay a strong marital foundation, an essential part of securing a successful marriage. Many people think it is appropriate that the husband goes on a long journey immediately after marriage; there is no Islāmic necessity behind it but rather it is harmful for the relationship and should be postponed for at least two months.

The couple must make a point to arrive home early every evening and avoid the habit of wasting time in idle chit-chat with friends. Whatever work/activity one is involved in should be completed early or postponed and time should be set aside for spending together.

The love between the couple in the initial stages of marriage is blinding, overcoming as it does rational reasoning and thinking. It is thus immensely vital for the couple not to let the marriage tumble towards an irreligious direction, because of this blinding love that they have for each other. Both husband and wife should pledge to each other that they will follow Dīn at all costs.

The new husband must show compassion to the wife who has left her parents and family to start a new family with him. Her sacrifice and her feelings should be respected and appreciated. Similarly, the wife should also appreciate the husband's sacrifice in his willingness to sacrifice his earnings to share them with his new wife. Thus both should feel for each other, and also for the establishment of the family. A wife should treat her husband's parents as her own, and he should also feel the same way about her parents.

One point for the wife to bear in mind is that the husband at the beginning would spend almost every evening with her as is normal. Thereafter the husband would naturally become more preoccupied with either work or recreation. This too within limits is normal and must never be misconstrued to mean that the husband does not care.



The husband must understand that he should not impose on the wife, even if she says she doesn't mind. Many times husbands like to entertain friends and family at home. This is not discouraged, but should not be done too often or too many of the responsibilities placed onto the wife.

## THE MARRIED COUPLE

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ ۗ

*'They (your wives) are a libās (cover/screen)  
for you and you (men) are a libās for them.'*

*al-Baqarah 187*

This āyah vividly describes the unique bond between husband and wife. With Nikāḥ, both acquire responsibilities and rights for and over each other. True consideration is that one is lenient when it comes to one's own rights being neglected, and adamant when it comes to fulfilling the right of others.

In the way that life cannot be lived without clothes, similarly, without the protective garment of Nikāḥ, neither can man nor woman achieve an inner gratifying peace. This does not refer to only carnal desires, as both the spouses are in need of each other and in need of each other's support.

## RIGHTS GIVEN BY SHARĪ`AH

The Sharī`ah demands that the husband treats his wife with fairness and affection at all times. In addition to this the Sharī`ah dictates that the wife has an irrevocable right to the following three things;

1. Food - must be sufficient for her.
2. Clothing - she must have at least two full sets of clothes to cover her.
3. Housing - she must at least have a room which ensures her privacy.

In so far as the first two rights are concerned, the husband is fully responsible for their fulfilment. From whatever he eats and wears, he must make sure that she receives the same quality. There should be no need for the wife to go out to work as her needs are catered for, and she will also have her responsibilities in managing the affairs of the house. Both the husband and wife should appreciate each other's rank and role commanded by Allāh ﷻ. Also in fulfilling each other's rights, each should take into consideration the other's tastes and wishes. Provided they are within limits of the Shari`ah, they should try to fulfil these as long as they are within one's means.

## **LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS**

Women must realize that a good Muslim wife does not resort to placing her husband in a situation where he is forced to choose between her and his parents even when her rights are at stake. This is not demanding her to relinquish her rights, but it is teaching that a wife should use her common sense and only ask her husband for separate accommodation if he is able to give it to her. If he is unable to provide a house then he will be fulfilling her rights by giving her one room that only she has the key for, wherein she has total privacy whenever she requires it.

Practically, the best arrangement is that the couple arrange for separate living accommodations. Through this, one will avoid falling prey to arguments and quarrels. Parents should within means help their children to arrange separate accommodation immediately upon marriage.

If the wife wishes for separate accommodation and it is within the husband's means, then it is necessary for the husband to fulfil this right of her's. Even if the husband's parents do not wish for their son to live separately but the wife demands it, it is imperative for the husband to

grant her this right, whether in the same building or in a separate one, and he needs to explain this to his parents in an amicable and tactful way. Parents must also be understanding and not stubbornly insist on imprisoning their daughter-in-law.

In the event of the newly wed couple living with the husband's parents, all who live there must at all times respect the new wife's privacy. Some people automatically assume that since she is the daughter-in-law she becomes a possession of the family, and thus does not have any rights or privacy. This view is Ḥarām and those who continue neglecting her rights will be liable for severe punishment from Allāh ﷻ.

## HUSBAND-WIFE RELATIONSHIP

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ

عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ط

*'Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allāh has made one excel the other (in strength) and because they spend (to support them) from their means*

an-Nisā' 34

The Nabī ﷺ has said, 'The Mu'min with the most perfect Īmān is one who has the best character and who is the kindest to his wife.' at-Tirmidhī

Undoubtedly, Allāh ﷻ has blessed men and women with many qualities, many are shared by both, but there are some which are specific to women and some specific to men. Of the qualities specific to men are such which are necessary for a leadership role. This is why men have been described as having command over women.

This leadership role, as can clearly be seen from the Qur'ānic injunction, is a responsibility on the husband as he has been better

suited to that in his very design and as he must bear the greatest burden of responsibility: he must fulfil the rights of the wife and children, provide for them and meet their needs and also ensure that they are overseen for moral and character related betterments. In this an overwhelming majority of husbands fail in their duty, for which they are questionable before Allāh.

Clearly, this is not subjugation of the wife, as the media are forever trying to portray, but the role she has been exclusively designed for and in which she excels the man is a unique and different, albeit just as important, one. Just as there can never be two leaders of a country, there can never be two leaders in one household and so there must be one ultimate decision-maker in the family environment. This is the role of the husband, and the giver of this role to the husband is the Giver of life Himself ﷻ.

The wife and family must understand that this is not enslaving them, but rather it is a responsibility on the husband which the family should help (not subjugate him) with.

The core of unity and equality is to recognise and accept that everyone has their individual role. For one to be leader and others to play supporting and complementary roles does not negate equality - indeed this is how all teams are organised, even in the 'democratic' world. Feminist lobbies in their cries for equality want women to do the same and be the same as men. They fail to see that individuality and unique roles do not negate equality.

Allāh ﷻ decrees:

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ  
وَالْقَنَاتِ وَالْقَنَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ

وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَشِيعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ  
 وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّامِيَاتِ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ  
 فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

*Verily, Muslim men and Muslim women;  
 and believing men and believing women;  
 and obedient men and obedient women (to Allāh);  
 and truthful men and truthful women  
 (both in speech and deeds);  
 and men and women who are patient and constant  
 (who perform all the duties which Allāh has ordered  
 and in abstaining from all that Allāh has forbidden);  
 and humble men and humble women (before Allāh);  
 and men and women who give in charity;  
 and fasting men and fasting women;  
 and men who guard their chastity,  
 and women who guard their chastity;  
 and men who remember Allāh abundantly  
 and women who remember (Him abundantly) -  
 For them Allāh has prepared forgiveness  
 and a great reward (i.e. Paradise).*

al-Ahzāb 33:35

Here Allāh ﷻ exemplifies the equality of both men and women: both hold equal worth before Him and equal responsibilities to Him and both on the fulfilment of these responsibilities are equally appreciated and rewarded.

Allāh is Just and only commands justice. The teachings of His beloved Rasūl reflect the same. Both men and women have been charged with duties which they owe to each other, but for the sake of Allāh. And both have been instructed with some of the most emphatic language:

‘Fear Allāh regarding women, for truly you have taken them to yourselves under the security of Allāh and made accessible their most private parts with **His** word...’ *Muslim, at-Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah*

‘O Allāh, I invoke a (severe) onus on (the neglect of) the rights of the two weak ones: the orphan and the woman.’ *an-Nasa’ī*

‘Were I to order anyone to prostrate before another, I would have ordered the woman to prostrate before her husband.’ *at-Tirmidhī*

## BEHAVIOUR OF BELIEVERS

First and foremost, one should intend by adopting good conduct achieving the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ and fulfilling His command, and also as a means of practically living the beauty of Islām. If one has this correct intention then one will be rewarded.

Thereafter it is imperative to have knowledge of what is right and wrong. This for obvious reasons is necessary, as it tells one what stance must be adopted in different situations, e.g. if one is at fault and somebody reproaches him or her for it, rather than making excuses, the mistake should be accepted as such and apologies made.

Amongst that which Allāh ﷻ and his Prophet ﷺ have strongly emphasized and described as beloved to them is the adoption of good manners and a beautiful character. This applies to everyone at all times, but the husband and wife should be extra conscious of this if they wish for a happy life together.

One mustn’t look for the faults of or think bad of others. Instead one should keep one’s own shortcomings in mind, and make one’s mission

to rectify them. If one has people under one's jurisdiction or responsibility, one should tolerate their shortcomings and forgive their mistakes and show compassion just as one would hope for in such circumstances. If one becomes aware of the faults or secrets of another, one should keep them concealed and work to resolve the problem in a productive way. If however this would harm anyone, the target should be made aware of it.

At all times one must remember and thank Allāh ﷻ by the heart, tongue and actions. Do not remain negligent. If one derives pleasure in remembering Allāh ﷻ one must thank Him. If ever hardship or grief is faced, one should consider it to be from Allāh ﷻ and not become disheartened; one should instead convince oneself that a content and subservient response will always be rewarded. Hope must always be on Allāh ﷻ, this stance will be beneficial in both the worlds.

## PROBLEMS

A sexual problem for one person might not be a problem for another. Everyone is different and their understandings and problems vary, so both of the spouses should be willing and open when discussing any problems, no matter how private they may be, and their possible solutions. If one needs to seek medical advice, one has no need to feel ashamed as such problems are not new or disgracing (although one need not go around publicizing them). There are usually simple Ḥalāl cures available, for almost all the different problems that either of the spouses may face. Avoid 'miracle cures' like Tamīmahs (Ta'weezes, amulets) and other such things of dubious origins. Seek Allāh's help through du`ā' and Prophetic remedies, including Wazā'if.

## **MEN'S PROBLEMS**

### **EARLY DISCHARGE**

Premature ejaculation is probably the most common sexual problem for a man. Rarely due to a physical cause, in most cases the problem stems from a lack of psychological preparation such as anxiety. Viewing pornography and masturbation also contribute to this.

### **PREPARATION IS THE CURE**

People suffering from premature ejaculation should try to keep the mind from focusing too intently on sex prior to and, as far as possible, during the act itself as mental excitement speeds up ejaculation. Confidence in being able to satisfy one's wife and determination also play a big part in allowing one to have more fulfilling sex.

Taking time for foreplay before sex is in the interests of both partners as it allows the woman time to build up to a level of arousal on par with the man's so that both achieve an orgasm, and close enough in synchrony, regardless of how long the actual act lasts (refer to *Foreplay and Orgasm*, p.55.) The husband and wife should not be afraid to explore each other to find different styles and positions that are comfortable and pleasing to each other.

Part of the psychological preparation is overcoming tension and nervousness, often the root cause for ejaculating too soon. Anxiety in the young and inexperienced, and an inflated sense of self-consciousness in the old are particularly common reasons. Reassurance and encouragement from the partner are usually all that is required to instil self-confidence. If she feels the husband is about to ejaculate too early, the wife should encourage him by talking and getting him to take deep breaths and withdraw his penis. By gently clasp the base of the penis allowing him to regain his breath, the husband will slowly regain composure and a 'second wind'. It may sometimes be necessary to seek help and advice from a therapist.



## **LOW LIBIDO**

This is a dwindling desire for cohabitation and can be caused either by physical or psychological reasons. If psychologically induced, the problem will need to be dealt with as above. Lack of sexual appetite is reported in almost nine out of ten cases of depression. Any suspected physical problems should be referred to a doctor.

## **ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION**

The causes of not being able to obtain and/or maintain an erection can be many. Most (e.g. alcohol, drugs and their like) are not, or should not be, applicable to Muslims. There are plenty of practical solutions available for erectile dysfunction caused by medical reasons which can be prescribed by a G.P. A doctor's advice can also be sought to improve the length of an erection through various exercises.

## **WOMEN'S PROBLEMS**

### **NOT CLIMAXING**

Refer to pp. 55, 72 and above on foreplay. Medical research estimates that almost one in eight women have never experienced an orgasm, while almost eight in ten find difficulty in achieving one by intercourse only. Stroking and licking her erogenous zones (avoiding oral sex) and stimulating her clitoris with the fingers until she is aroused and only then moving on to penetrating will allow both to time their orgasms together. Again, further help may be sought by consulting a therapist.

### **LUBRICATION**

The use of water based lubrication is a must for those who experience dryness or pain during sex.

### **VAGINAL INFLAMATION**

Lack of sufficient hygiene is one of the main causes of this. Deodorants

or powders can also be a factor in vaginal irritation, as can uncomfortable underwear and tight fitting garments.

## **THRUSH**

Thrush is a bacterial/fungal infection that affects the vaginal area which again is mostly due to uncleanliness of the genitals, whether her's or his, causing an unpleasant white frothy appearance around the mouth and lining of the vagina. Medication for this is easily available in the form of anti-fungal creams and ointments.

Some women when cleaning their private parts with tissue and water have the habit to start from the anus and move towards the vagina and follow on to the urethra. By stroking upwards, the bacteria that will be present in the anal region may enter the vagina and cause infection. The technique of washing downwards away from the vagina is much more hygienic as it reduces the possibilities of vaginal infection.

Prevention is, of course, better than cure, and simple steps like regular washing, changing underwear daily, shaving the pubic area often (preferably once a week) and wearing loose-fitting garments that allow natural movement made of material that lets the body breathe can all greatly reduce the chances of developing these painful conditions.

Partners are often the cause of transmitting sexually related diseases and infections, so such problems should be treated as a shared problem and not just her/his problem. Encouragement and reassurance as well as sincerity, consideration and discretion are all essential in dealing with all marital problems, especially issues as sensitive as these.

# ṬALĀQ - DIVORCE

## BACKGROUND

‘The most detestable of all permissible actions in the sight of Allāh is Ṭalāq.’ *Abū Dāwūd*

It is an accepted fact that in certain situations Ṭalāq (divorce) is inevitable. In these situations divorce becomes permitted after all efforts of reconciliation have been exhausted. It is ordinarily issued by the husband.

In Islam, divorce is given either verbally or in writing. There are no court procedures that need be undertaken, as when the word Ṭalāq or its equivalent is uttered or written by the husband, the divorce is enacted instantly.

This simple procedure has its benefits and problems. A major benefit is that it can offer an oppressed wife quick release from suffering, so that she is not subjected to prolonged mistreatment by the husband, who could use the threat (or the constant issuing and retracting) of divorce as a means of psychological imprisonment and mental torture.

A problem of such a simple means of divorce is the ease with which it can be misused. So many marriages are dissolved in a fit of blind rage, causing irreparable damage when it had not been intended. Others still have no idea that they have issued Ṭalāq to their wives and so continue to live with them, every moment of which is in sin as the man and woman are no longer husband and wife.

Before proceeding to explain the different types of Ṭalāqs and their implications, it must be clearly emphasised that Ṭalāq is not a matter that can be joked about, as the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ has said:

‘There are three things which are serious in seriousness and are serious

in jest; (they are) Nikāḥ, Ṭalāq and retraction (of Ṭalāq).’ *at-Tirmidhi*

Ṭalāq given under duress or the influence of drink or drugs is, therefore, also effective.

The outcome of Ṭalāq is almost always negative. The worst hit victims are usually children. If the couple were related to begin with then it can lead to a massive family breakup. For two families to become sworn enemies of each other over an essentially personal matter between two individuals is not only un-Islāmic but very primitive.

## ṬALĀQ AND ITS TYPES

Ṭalāq is actualised by saying or writing a statement denoting divorce to one’s wife in all but future tense, e.g. ‘I give you Ṭalāq’, ‘I divorce you’, or ‘You are divorced’, etc., as opposed to ‘I will give you Ṭalāq’ and ‘I will divorce you’. Ṭalāq can be made conditional to a future event, in which case it will realised upon the occurrence of the event, e.g. ‘You are divorced if you speak to so-and-so’.

Primarily Ṭalāq is of two types: **Raj`i** and **Bā`in**. This is until the number of Ṭalāqs issued reaches three, whereupon the Ṭalāq in either case then becomes **Mughallaz**.

**Raj`i** is a retractable Ṭalāq. The marriage is not completely dissolved until the waiting period (‘iddah) expires, so the husband can retract and resume marital relations without having to repeat the Nikāḥ within the ‘iddah, though he would now have one less Ṭalāq that can be issued. This can be done verbally or through action, by expressing his wish to retain the woman as his wife. Any subsequent Ṭalāqs given during the ‘iddah would also be valid. The wife does not have to observe Ḥijāb from the husband until the ‘iddah expires, in fact it is preferable for her to adorn herself before him to encourage him to retract.

**Bā'in** is a complete Ṭalāq, that is, one that effects an immediate dissolution of all marital ties. The wife must, therefore, observe Ḥijāb from him immediately. Remarrying is the only option to become husband and wife again, so both parties would have to agree in order to reunite. If the couple do decide to remarry, the marriage may be contracted in the woman's `iddah. A Ṭalāq Raj`i becomes Bā'in upon the expiry of the waiting period. Any subsequent Ṭalāqs will be void as the man and woman are no longer in wedlock.

The `iddah of a divorcee is the period she must wait before it is permissible for her to marry anyone apart from the husband who has just divorced her. This is generally three menstrual periods, ending with the completion of the third instance of menstruation after being divorced. For a pregnant woman, the `iddah ends upon delivery. The `iddah for anyone who does not have periods, whether because of young age, menopause or otherwise, is three lunar months. The `iddah for a woman whose husband has passed away is four lunar months and ten days.

**Mughallaz** (Gross Ṭalāq) is realised with the issuing of three Ṭalāqs, whether together or separately, over any length of time as long as the wife had not consummated marriage with another man in between Ṭalāqs, in which case any previously given Ṭalāqs are discounted. With Ṭalāq Mughallaz, husband and wife become permanently unlawful for each other, unless the wife consummates marriage with another man and then returns to her first husband.

## TERMINOLOGY OF THE DIFFERENT ṬALĀQS

Ṭalāq can be issued in direct terms, i.e. using the words Ṭalāq or divorce, or in indirect terms liable to more than one interpretation.

If issued in direct terms of divorce to or of one's wife, a Ṭalāq Raj`i will

be effected regardless of the intention (as per the above ḥadīth).

If issued in indirect terms, divorce will only occur if the intention was of divorce. In that context, if the words used imply separation or dissolution of marital ties, or anything more than just Ṭalāq, the form of Ṭalāq effected is a Ṭalāq Bā'in, e.g. 'We are now no longer husband and wife', 'Go your own way', 'Veil yourself'. Since a retractable Ṭalāq does not entail complete separation or Ḥijāb, or any other act which a woman cannot do without her husband or need not do to her husband, thus, saying such sentences intending divorce would cause a Ṭalāq Bā'in. Other examples include, 'I give you the severest of Ṭalāqs', or 'the ugliest of Ṭalāqs'.

Only if the indirect term used to execute Ṭalāq can imply a retractable Ṭalāq would the ensuing Ṭalāq be a Ṭalāq Raj`i. This is the case in the statement, 'Begin your `iddah', as the waiting period after divorce applies in both cases and not only for Ṭalāq Bā'in.

**Note:** The sunnah method for divorcing one's wife is to issue the Ṭalāq during a Ṭuhr (time between periods) in which one has not had intercourse with one's wife, and then to leave her until her `iddah expires. This allows the man plenty of time and opportunity to rethink his decision, and leaves the door open for future reconciliation. It is Makrūh Taḥrīmī (prohibitively reprehensible) to divorce one's wife during menstruation; anyone that does so should retract immediately and wait until after her menses to re-issue Ṭalāq.

It is also Makrūh Taḥrīmī to issue all three Ṭalāqs together. Imām al-Bayhaqī relates that a man came to Ibn `Abbās ؓ and told him that his uncle had divorced his wife three times all together. Ibn `Abbās ؓ replied, 'Your uncle has disobeyed Allāh, and so He has made him regret, and he has obeyed Shayṭān, and he was not able to make any way out for him.'

## GLOSSARY

<b>Bā'in</b>	A form of divorce in which retraction is only through remarriage.
<b>Bulūgh</b>	When a child attains puberty and becomes Islamically responsible.
<b>Ḥalāl</b>	Permissible according to Islāmic law
<b>Ḥarām</b>	Impermissible according to Islamic law
<b>Ḥayā</b>	An Arabic word meaning modesty, shame, morality, etc
<b>Ḥayḍ</b>	A woman's menstrual period.
<b>Istikhārah</b>	To seek good by means of supplication and/or prayers.
<b>ʿIddah</b>	A woman's waiting period after divorce or her husband's passing away. Lasts for three menstrual cycles or four lunar months and ten days respectively, or until the end of her pregnancy in its event.
<b>Khuṭbah</b>	Sermon (of marriage).
<b>Mahr</b>	Dowry.
<b>Maḥram</b>	A person who one is not allowed to marry due to close relationship.
<b>Mashwarah</b>	Consulting the knowledgeable for Advice.
<b>Mughallaz</b>	Three <b>Ṭalāqs</b> accumulating which would disallow retraction unless the wife were to remarry elsewhere.
<b>Nikāh</b>	Marriage as in accordance to Islamic law.
<b>Raḍā`ah</b>	Fosterage with which one becomes <b>Maḥram</b> to another.
<b>Raj`i</b>	A form of divorce in which retraction can be made.
<b>Ruju`</b>	Retraction of divorce which can be done verbally.
<b>Shari`ah</b>	Islāmic law
<b>Shūrah</b>	Same as <b>Mashwarah</b> .
<b>Ṭalāq</b>	Divorce as in accordance to Islamic Law
<b>Ṭuhr</b>	A woman's non-bleeding period in her monthly cycle
<b>Walī</b>	Guardian (in some contexts custodian)
<b>Walimah</b>	A simple feast given by the groom after the consummation of the marriage.

## SOME RELATED AHĀDĪTH

### For Both of You

‘There are three whose assistance is a right binding upon Allāh:

The slave who has made a contract to buy his own freedom;  
One who wishes to marry, seeking to protect his/her chastity;  
The one who struggles in the Way of Allāh.’

*at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasa’ī, Ibn Mājah*

‘Should I not tell you of the best of that which can be treasured? (It is) a good wife; when her husband looks at her, she is pleasing to him; when he orders her, she obeys him; and when he is absent from her, she looks after what he leaves behind.’

*al-Ḥākim*

A companion asked what rights a wife has over her husband. The Messenger ﷺ replied, ‘That you feed her when you eat, clothe her when you clothe yourself, and that you do not strike her face, nor abuse her, nor abandon her anywhere except in the home.’

*Abū Dāwūd*

‘Let no believing man detest any believing woman; if he finds one trait displeasing in her, there will be another which he likes.’

*Muslim*

From the Prophet’s Farewell Sermon ﷺ:

‘Hear well: you have rights upon your women and your women have rights upon you. Your right upon them is that they let none invade your privacy that you would dislike nor permit into your homes those that you dislike. Hear well: and their right upon you is that are good to them in providing for them their clothing and their food.’

*at-Tirmidhī*

‘By Him in Whose hands lies my soul, no man calls his wife to bed to which she refuses but the One in Heaven is angry with her until he becomes pleased with her.’

*al-Bukhārī, Muslim*

‘Show mercy to those on Earth; He that is in Heaven will show mercy  
t o y o u . ’



## TRANSLITERATION GUIDE

Please take note of the table below as our transliteration method may be different to those adopted by others.

The transliterated symbols are unvarying in pronunciation, e.g. the representation “s” will remain pronounced as “s” and not distort to “z” in any circumstance, e.g. Islām is *not* pronounced Izlām.

While every effort has been made to ensure the transliteration is as close to the Arabic as possible, no alphabet can ever fully represent another.

This is all the more true where recitation of Qur’ānic verses is concerned as this must adhere to the very precise science of Tajwīd. It is therefore imperative that the readers do not consider a transliteration a substitute for learning to read Arabic correctly from a competent teacher.

### VOWELS

<b>A / a</b>	SHORT “A” AS IN “AGO”	<b>I / i</b>	SHORT “I” AS IN “SIT”
<b>Ā / ā</b>	LONG “A” AS IN “HAT”	<b>Ī / ī</b>	LONG VOWEL AS IN “SEE”
<b>AY or AI</b>	DIPHTHONG AS IN “PAGE”	<b>AW or AU</b>	DIPHTHONG AS IN “HOME”
‘	ABRUPT START/PAUSE DOES NOT OCCUR IN ENGLISH	<b>U / u</b>	SHORT “U” AS IN “PUT”
		<b>Ū / ū</b>	LONG VOWEL AS IN “FOOD”

### CONSONANTS

ب	<b>B</b>	“B” NO “H” ATTACHED	ض	<b>Ḍ</b>	“DH” USING SIDES OF THE TONGUE
ت	<b>T</b>	“T” NO “H” ATTACHED	ط	<b>Ṭ</b>	“T” WITH RAISED TONGUE
ث	<b>TH</b>	“TH” AS IN THIN	ظ	<b>Ẓ</b>	“TH” AS IN THEN, SOUND IS WITH RAISED TONGUE
ح	<b>Ḥ</b>	“H” GUTTURAL SOUND	ع	‘	GUTTURAL SOUND - ACCOMPANIES VOWEL
خ	<b>KH</b>	“KH” VERY GUTTURAL NO TONGUE USAGE	غ	<b>GH</b>	“GH” VERY GUTTURAL NO TONGUE USAGE
د	<b>D</b>	“D” NO “H” ATTACHED	ق	<b>Q</b>	“K” WITH BACK OF TONGUE RAISED
ذ	<b>DH</b>	“TH” AS IN THEN	و	<b>W</b>	“W” READ - NOT SILENT
س	<b>S</b>	“S” ONLY - NOT “Z”	ي	<b>Y</b>	“Y” ONLY - NOT “I”
ش	<b>SH</b>	“SH” AS IN SHIN			
ص	<b>Ṣ</b>	“S” WITH RAISED TONGUE			

Note: Double consonants must be pronounced with emphasis on both letters without pause, e.g. **ALLĀHUMMA** should be read **AL-LĀHUM-MA**.

### SYMBOLS

SUBHĀNAHŪ WA TA`ĀLĀ FOR ALLAH “GLORIFIED AND EXALTED IS HE”	ṢALLALLĀHU `ALAYHI WA SALLAM FOR MUHAMMAD “PEACE BE UPON HIM”
RAḌĪYAL-LĀHU `ANHU FOR COMPANIONS “ALLAH BE PLEASED WITH HIM”	`ALAYHIS-SALĀM FOR PROPHETS “PEACE BE UPON THEM”