

Preface

The greatest desire of all young men and women who reach the age of puberty is to marry. Through the establishment of a joint marital life, they would earn more independence, as well as have a kind and trustworthy partner. They regard marriage as the beginning of their lives of prosperity.

Man has been created for woman and *vice versa*.

They are attracted to each other like magnets. Marriage and establishing a joint life is a natural desire of human beings responding to their instincts. It is considered one of the greatest Divine blessings. In fact, where else could one find a better shelter for the youth than a sincere family unit?

It is the desire of raising a family which preserves the youth from pursuing irrational dreams and internal anxieties. The marital union enables them to find a kind and faithful partner who could share the hard and difficult times. The sacred marital covenant is a Divine rope which links the hearts, calms them when they become unsettled, and focuses irrational dreams on one ideal goal. The house is the centre of love, kindness, and friendship, whereby it is the best place to relax and live comfortably.

The Almighty Allah mentions this blessing in the Holy Qur'an:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً
وَرَحْمَةً ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them and He put between you love and compassion; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect" (30:21).

"The Prophet (S) of Islam stated: 'A man who is not married, even though he may be wealthy is surely poor and needy: and the same is true for a woman.'"¹

"Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) asked a man: 'Are you married?' The man replied "no". The Imam stated: 'I would not like to stay unmarried even for one night, even if I were to own the whole world'.²

"The Holy Prophet (S) stated: 'There has not been created any institution in Islam which is more favored and dearer to Allah than marriage'.³

Even though the Compassionate Allah has endowed human beings with such a precious blessing, they do not appreciate it and sometimes due to ignorance and selfishness, convert this warm and blessed union, into a dark prison or even a burning Hell! It is due to man's own ignorance that the members of the family have to live in this dark prison or that the sacred marital covenant has to be destroyed.

If a couple is aware of their duties and acts accordingly, then a house would be a place of friendship and would resemble heaven. But, if there are family differences and arguments, the family home, could truly change into a prison. Family differences are due to various reasons, such as economic factors, family background of the man and woman, living environment, unwanted interference by fathers, mothers and relatives, and tens of other reasons.

But according to the author, the most important factor is the ignorance of husband and wife regarding their duties and lack of preparation for their marital life. Generally, in order to accomplish a task, expertise and readiness are necessary requirements. If one lacks the necessary knowledge and readiness, then one cannot successfully achieve his desired goal. Thus, training classes are formed to educate people for different tasks.

Expertise, readiness, and knowledge are also needed in marriage. A young man must possess enough information about his wife's principles of values and internal desires. He must also be aware of marital problems and ways of solving them. He should not regard marriage as merely buying goods, or hiring a maid, but to acknowledge it as a treaty of friendship, honesty, kindness, partnership, and cooperation in a joint family life.

A young woman should also be aware of her husband's philosophy of life and wishes. She should not consider that marriage is like engaging a servant for fulfilling needs without any terms and conditions; but as a pledge for partnership and cooperation in making efforts for conducting the life. In order to obtain a successful partnership, there is a need for understanding, cooperation, and devotion.

Although the future of young men and women largely depends on a marriage which requires awareness of the importance of the concepts of marriage and preparation for undertaking such a task, our society unfortunately neglects the importance of these conditions.

The parents pay a great deal of attention to such points as dowry, beauty, and personality. However, they disregard the readiness for establishing a marital life as a necessary condition. They marry their sons and daughters off without providing adequate information about family life.

Consequently two young and inexperienced people step into a new life and confront many problems. Differences, arguments, and fights begin to develop. Their parents then interfere to help resolve the differences. But, since their interferences are mostly biased, the differences are exaggerated and the situation becomes worse.

The initial years of family life are eventful and critical. This is the period where many families can be torn between divorce and disintegration. Some of them continue their marriage and prefer this self-made prison to divorce and others learn more about each other and form a relatively comfortable life.

What a nice thing it could be had there been some means of educating and informing young men and women about the foundations and the establishment of marriage in the form of classes entitled "marriage preparation" which would prepare them for establishing their own families. I am hopeful of the day that such program is established.

The present book is written on the basis of this necessity. In resolving the issues of this book, I have relied upon the Holy Qur'an, the traditions of the Holy Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (a.s.), as well as some general statistics, and my personal experience.

Although certain guidelines for a better marriage have been presented, I do not claim that all family problems can be solved by reading this book. It is hoped that the book will provide better insight and awareness for those experiencing marital and family problems. It is highly expected of those responsible persons who realize the importance of this matter, to take serious steps in order to help those who suffer from the agonies and sufferings of family deterioration and conflict. (Insha'Allah)

This book has been divided in two parts. The first part concerns the duties of women to their husbands and the second part covers the duties of men to their wives. But men and women are recommended to read both parts in order to get a better insight into the matter. By reading only one part of the book, the reader might feel a bias towards one side or the other; but by reading both the parts, one would admit that this is not the case.

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Qum

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1. Wasa'il al Shiah, vol. 14, p 3.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid, p 23

<https://www.al-islam.org/principles-marriage-family-ethics-ayatullah-ibrahim-amini/preface>