

The Fourteenth Talk

1. The Causes Of Continued Love And Affection

Our discussion is about love and sympathy. Today we shall talk about the acts that promote love between man and wife, even if they have grown very old. They might have children at home; even daughters-in-law etc. But despite all this, there will be no decrease in the love between the old couple!

2. Trivial But Important

The psychologists talk about “small, but big (important) things”. This means that there are certain things that, although small in appearance, might prove very important for making or marring an individual’s personality.

3. Taking Care Of Cleanliness And Hygiene

One of the most important things stressed by Islam is hygiene. A Muslim’s house has to be clean, the courtyard, doors and clothes must be clean and pure. The linen used in the house has to be clean and tidy. When he goes to a meeting, he should be properly and neatly attired. But we find that a lot of people don’t take care of their hygiene. They don’t brush their teeth properly. Their feet stink with sweat. They seldom wash their socks and the feet, considering it to be something unimportant. On the face of it, it appears to be a trivial thing, but plays a big role in disgracing this person. When someone notes foul smell from someone’s mouth, body or feet: he begins to dislike his company. Sometimes people silently curse such unhygienic persons. Such persons even attend the congregations in the mosques and religious gatherings in their unhygienic state. Some people wear shirts with soiled collars, and consider it to be a small matter, but this can lead to their disgrace.

Whenever the Prophet of Islam (s) prepared to go to any meeting, he always looked at himself in the mirror. He used to take meticulous care of his person and his dress, making sure these were neat and clean, before he left home for such meetings. It is not necessary that a person’s dress be expensive. What Islam stresses on is cleanliness. Some ladies neglect personal cleanliness while at home. When

their husbands return home after the day's work, they find the wives shabby with dishevelled hair and crumpled clothes. Probably because she has to look after her children, she does not give much importance to such things. But this amounts to carelessness in acquiring the love of the husband. It is wrong to take this lightly or treat it as a joke. It may appear small, but actually it is an important thing. Some men don't brush their teeth properly, whereas the Prophet of Islam (s) has said that a person who offers one rakaat of prayer after brushing his teeth will get reward equal to that for offering seventy prayers.. He (s) also said that if he did not fear that it would put the Muslims in difficulty, he (s) would have made it obligatory. If the husband does not brush the first, second or third time, the wife may bear it, but then it will create a feeling of aversion in his wife. Even if she doesn't show her dislike for him, her heart will no longer love him. Similarly, if the wife's mouth stinks, the husband will not like her. It is very unfortunate if a husband dislikes his wife because her mouth or body stinks. Shame on the man who is unclean at home. Cleanliness at home and in the society is of prime importance. The Prophet of Islam (s) gave so much importance to hygiene that he said, "*Cleanliness is part of Faith*"

If you want to recognize a true Muslim, check whether he observes cleanliness or not. You should look at his cleanliness and hygiene! If he lacks in cleanliness, then his faith is defective. If one observes cleanliness then according to Psychologists, it is a small, but important thing.

4. Expressing Friendship

It has come in the traditions that if you befriend a Muslim, you must express your friendship to him. It is mentioned in the traditions that a man should express his love for his wife by telling her that he loves her. Similarly a wife should express to the husband her love for him.

The Prophet (s) has said that when a husband expresses his friendship and love to his wife, she will never forget it. In common practice we consider it unimportant to express our friendship and love to others. If a husband and wife love each other, they should mention it to the spouse, at least once a month if not everyday. Not doing this amounts to carelessness. It is embarrassing for some women to do this, but they must say it. Words like these or '*Assalamun alaikum*' are an expression of affection. When you meet others you should enquire about them, and express your affection for them, because Islam desires Muslims to be friends with each other. Islam wants us to maintain ties with each other, and has declared cutting of the ties of kinship a major sin. Islam does not like those who do not visit others or those who remain aloof, because these meetings increase our love for each other.

Husbands and wives should express their love for each other. Whenever they meet, they should have a smile on their faces. This may seem a small matter, but is very important for gaining love of the spouse. It has been mentioned in the traditions that the wife should freshen herself before her husband arrives home after the day's work. She should wear the dress of his choice and adorn herself. She should lay the table for dinner with the cutlery etc. She should quieten the children so that they do not disturb their father who comes tired from work!

It is also recorded in the traditions that when the husband knocks at the door on his return from work, the wife herself should open the door to welcome him and not ask a son or a daughter to attend on him. She should greet him (say salaam) with a smile. These attentions might appear trivial, or the women may object that the man is being given too much importance, but these things go a long way in cementing the love between the couple. With such an attitude of the wife, even the most ill-tempered of husbands will, sooner or later, metamorphose into a loving and caring partner!

5. Giving Gifts

It has come in the traditions that when a man returns home after a visit he should carry a gift, though very small, for his wife! Every care, worry and anger should throw away when he reaches the threshold of his home. When the wife opens the door and greets him, he should respond with a pleasant smile. In fact, he should take precedence in greeting the wife! Then he should offer affectionately the gift he has brought for her. When dinner is served, he should thank the wife, even if he does not like the food. Some husbands might think that these pleasantries are trivial, unnecessary things. But they go a long way in strengthening the love between the man and wife! A few loving words from you is all that is required for her worries, anger and tiredness to disappear. We don't take care of these small things and therefore the atmosphere at our homes is cold, devoid of warmth, and dull! When we investigate, we find that in many a home the cause of this cold environment is the wife. The husband enters the house and finds his wife dirty, then she does not even receive him warmly, even if the husband loves her, his love will gradually wear away. When the husband comes home and the wife serves him a dish he does not like and says, "This dish has been cooked by your aunt, eat it if you want you, otherwise remain hungry" – the result of this attitude is obvious. When the husband comes home, instead of giving her a gift, shouts at her, then a fight breaks out and there is a hue and cry all around. If you want to maintain the cool breeze of love and affection in your house, you must pay attention to these small but very important matters.

6. Asmayee And The Patient Woman

Asmayee was Mamoon's vizier. Mamoon was an evil person. Asmayee was a secretive person. He once went on a hunt and was separated from his group. Islam prohibits hunting for pleasure, but the Bani Umayya and Bani Abbas indulged in this act very frequently. They used to hunt and kill animals for pleasure. Asmayee says that when he lost track of his group and was trying to find them, he spotted a tent. He went to the tent and found a young and beautiful woman sitting there. With her permission, he too sat there. He asked for some water to quench his thirst. But she said, "I don't have the permission of my husband!" Then she added, "I have some milk for *my* breakfast, which I can give you." She gave the milk to Asmayee and he drank it. He waited in the tent for about an hour but the woman appeared restless during all that period. Then he saw a camel rider arriving near the tent. The person, dark and old, was the woman's husband. Asmayee was surprised that the pretty damsel was married to the ugly

old man.

The woman helped her husband to dismount from the camel, helped him to wash his hands and feet, and very respectfully took him into the tent and sat in front of him. The old man was very rude and ill-mannered. The more he got rude, the more polite the woman became. Ultimately the husband became so rude that Asmayee thought it better to bear the heat of the sun than sit in the comfort of the tent. He went out of the tent but the old man didn't bother about him. Since Asmayee was a guest, the woman came to the door of the tent to bid him good-bye. Once out of the tent he mentioned to the woman that, despite her youth and beauty, she was serving her husband politely, while he continued to be rude to her. The woman said angrily, "Asmayee! I did not expect you to talk ill of my husband behind his back and try to create a rift between us!" Then she added, "I have heard a tradition of the Prophet of Islam (s) and I try to follow it. Whatever is there in the world is transient. Only the Hereafter is eternal. We have to go to our graves. We have to face the Barzakh. Our destiny is either Heaven or Hell. That is eternal! The transient things of the world, good and bad, will be over in the twinkling of an eye. I want to act on this tradition to become deserving of the Heaven. I have heard that the Prophet (s) has said:

"Faith has two parts—patience during hardships and gratefulness for the Bounties."

A Muslim must bear hardships with patience, and thank Allah for His blessings. I serve my husband and bear his rudeness with patience so that my faith becomes perfect, and it becomes my thanks to my Lord for giving me youth and beauty."

This is a truly Islamic lady. Opposed to this, sometimes women use the foulest possible language. Even a totally mannerless person will not use such words. A few days ago I had told you that husbands and wives should not insult each other. I had asked the ladies never to compare the financial status of their husbands with that of other men. The husbands too should not praise other women in comparison with their wives. Some men indiscreetly tell their wives that other women are prettier than them. This one indiscreet utterance will destroy whatever little love the wife had for the husband. As far as the husband is concerned, it is a very small sentence, but it is big enough to kill love. On the contrary, the husband should tell his wife that he has not seen anyone as pretty as her. Both the man and the woman should serve each other and pay compliments to each other. One of the situations in which lying is not *Haram* includes praising the looks of the wife even if she is actually ugly. Similarly the wives should also sing the praises of the manliness of their husbands. These small attentions go a long way in cementing love and affection between the couples.

It has come in the traditions that when a woman perfumes herself and goes out and *namahram* men smell her fragrance; or if her bangles jingle and attract the attention of *namahram* men, the angels in the Firmament will curse the woman. Similarly when a woman wears a perfume and goes out, the ground on which she walks and everything else on it curses her. She will be cursed till she returns back home. I appeal to the ladies that the *chador* that they wear for going out should not have any fragrance. Again I appeal to the ladies not to perfume themselves when going out. If *namahram* men happen to smell their

perfume, the angels, the walls, the earth and everything else in the environment curse them. Don't be under the impression that the inanimate things in the environs don't have any sense.

وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَ لَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ

.....and there is not a thing but hymneth His praise; but ye understand not their praise..... (Sura al-'Isra', 17: 44)

If man has the faculty of hearing, he can hear the pillars of buildings saying *Allahu Akbar!* A lady who wears perfume only for her husband is praised by the angels the whole night till dawn! Allah, the Prophet (s) the Imams (a.s.) and the angels- all will be pleased with her.

For a wife wearing perfume before retiring to bed might be a very ordinary thing, but for cementing love with her spouse it is a very important act. Wearing an expensive *chador* for going out or moving about in the street dressed in attractive apparel, without wearing a *chador*, does not enhance the personality of the ladies in the least. In fact, this will only serve to tarnish their personality! The Holy Quran ordains:

وَلَا تَبْرُجْنَ تَبْرُجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى

..... and display not your finery like the display of the ignorance of yore..... (Sura al Ahzaab, 33: 33)

The Holy Quran addresses the women and says that they are Muslim ladies and possess a personality of their own. They should not flirt around in finery everywhere like the women of the days of ignorance. When they go out on the street their dress should not be such that it attracts *namahram* men. They should cover their faces with veils so that *namahram* men cannot see their faces. If a woman has a good personality and wants to adorn herself, she should adorn herself for her husband. Similarly, the husband should try to look good for his wife.

No one should be under the impression that expressing ones' personality means creating a hue and cry at home, shouting and terrifying others like wild animals do. Some husbands say that if they don't do this, others will dominate them. This is a major flaw in their thinking. They should try to become men who are soft-spoken. Instead of using harsh language with the wife, the husband should tell her that he loves her and likes her and works so hard so that she can have a comfortable life. He should tell her that it gives him pleasure to see her in comfort. Creating a furore at home and terrifying the members of the family are not signs of manhood! Helping the wife, keeping oneself neat and clean, using a soft and sweet tongue are the signs of manhood.

One day the Prophet of Islam (s) was in the room of Hadhrat Ayesha when one of his other wives sent some food for him. Seeing this, Hadhrat Ayesha felt a pang of jealousy and pushed the bowl of food with her foot. The bowl broke and the food spilled on the floor. Seeing this, the Prophet (s) asked Ayesha why she behaved in that manner. He pointed out to her that not only had she wasted good food, but had also broken the bowl and had also deprived him of his wish to eat the food. The Prophet (s) told Ayesha softly that she should refrain from such acts in the future. The Prophet (s) thus set an example for men to behave politely and with maturity with their spouses.

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