

Islamic Conditions for Marriage

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Marry those among you who are single, or the virtuous ones among your slaves, male or female. [Holy Quran: Nur 24:32]

Religion and Piety

The revered religion of Islam is in fact a system supplied with beliefs, morals and practical matters. Religious faith in Islam consists of joining up of the heart with God and belief in the Day of Judgment; the angels; the Prophets and the Glorious Quran. Morality in Islam consists of humbleness; humility; etiquette; patience; submissiveness; fortitude; tolerance; perseverance; kindness; compassion; good will; having mild disposition; chastity and sincerity; justice, helpfulness; and generosity. Action in Islam consists of prayer; fasting; the Hajj(the Holy pilgrimage to Meccac); paying alms and the one fifth levy; enjoining the good and forbidding the evil; Jihad;¹⁵ taking God as a friend and dissociation from evil; being good to one's parents; and observing the rights of those whom one encounters.

Of course, the three above-mentioned matters are not all the matters of Islam, but rather examples of the perfect, comprehensive, universal religion of Islam which is responsible - in all of life's affairs - for the welfare of people in this world and in the Hereafter. Actually, religion is the sun and guiding light in life; the guide towards God; and the improver of man in this world and in the Hereafter.

There is no worthier jewel in the treasury of God's Creation than religion: the religion propagated by all the Prophets, the Imams, the Saints. It is the religion in which whoever becomes adorned with, puts on a semblance of God, having opened up all the doors of prosperity to himself. Whoever keeps his distance from Islam will have opened all the doors of misfortune for himself.

Religion and piety hold the same worth before God. Beautifying one's self with God's religion results in the best person, the most outstanding creature and an incomparable or matchless living being in Creation.

Those who have faith and do righteous deeds, they are the best of the creatures. [Holy Quran: Baiyina 98:7]

If one adorns himself with the attributes of a believer mentioned in the Glorious Quran and religious traditions, this will result in an acceptable believer expressed in the following terms:

"being humble in prayer; protesting against false and futile talk; paying the alms tax; protecting the private parts of the body from forbidden acts; protecting whatever has been entrusted to you; keeping one's promise or oath and guarding one's prayers."

Those who humble themselves in their prayers; who avoid vain talk; who are active in deeds of charity; who abstain from sex except with those joined to them in the marriage bond, or (the captives) whom their right hands possess, - for (in their case) they are free from blame, but those whose desires exceed those limits are transgressors; - those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants; and who (strictly) guard their prayers; [Holy Quran: Muminun 23:2-9]

We may add the following : being humble on earth; encountering the ignorant with a healthy mind; spending the night in prostration and standing; praying for being saved from the Wrath; not being extravagant when helping the needy; avoiding envy; being moderate; avoiding association of other gods to be partners with God; murder and fornication; avoiding false, oppressive witnessing; forgiving vain talk through nobility; taking a good look at God's signs; praying for the wife and the children; and praying to lead the righteous.

Those who spend the night in adoration of their Lord prostrate and standing; those who say, "Our Lord! avert from us the Wrath of Hell, for its Wrath is indeed an affliction grievous, - evil indeed is it as an abode, and as a place to rest in"; those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just (balance) between those (extremes); those who invoke not, with God, any other god, nor slay such life as God has made sacred, except for just cause, nor commit fornication;

- and any that does this (not only) meets punishment (but) the Penalty on the Day of Judgment will be doubles to him, and he will dwell therein in ignominy.- unless he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, for God will change the evil of such persons into good, and God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful, and whoever repents and does good has truly turned to God with an (acceptable) conversion;- those who witness no falsehood, and, if they pass by futility, they pass by it with honorable (avoidance);

those who, when they are admonished with the Signs of their Lord, droop not down at them as if they were deaf or blind; and those who pray, "Our Lord! Grant unto us wives and offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes, and give us (the grace) to lead the righteous. [Holy Quran: Furqan 25:64-74]

The Commander of the Faithful (Imam Ali) stated: Among the characteristics of a believer we can state that he is not attached to financial affairs; his efforts are mainly geared to religiousness; his nobility is in contentment; and his efforts are for the Hereafter. His good

deeds are increased; his ranks are elevated; and he is approaching deliverance and prosperity.

[Mizan al-Hikmat, v.1, p.333]

He also said: A believer is one who is continually remembering God; thinks a lot; is thankful for all the blessings; and perseveres in the face of hardships. [Ibid]

Imam Sadiq (Pbuh) said: A believer is one whose total income is legitimately earned; is good-tempered; is not deceitful; donates some of his extra income; and avoids excessive talk. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.67, p.293]

We can see the following points in the traditions regarding the worth of the believers. Imam Sadiq (Pbuh) has been narrated as having said: A believer's honor and respect is greater than that of the Ka'ba. [Mizan al-Hikmat, v.1, p.330]

The fifth Imam (Pbuh) said:

A believer is well-known in the Heavens in the same manner that a man knows his wife and children. And verily a believer is closer to God than the Archangel. [Ibid]

The Prophet (Pbuh) said: God, Majestic is His Praise, says: I swear by My Honor and Majesty that I have not created any creature among My Creation that is dearer than a believer. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.71, p.158]

Being Matched

Now that we have introduced the necessity of religion and piety, it should be noted that one of the most important conditions for marriage is that the couple should be well-matched. What is meant by being well-matched is that the couple who wish to get married must have some outward and inward similarities. The most important similarity is in their piety. That is according to the holy divine culture, they must both be religious. As the Holy Quran states:

And women of purity are for men of purity. [Holy Quran: Nur 24:26]

God's book states:

Marry women of your choice. [Holy Quran: Nisaa 4:3]

The first stage of this purity of men and women is their inward purity, that is, belief in God, the Hereafter, the Prophethood, the Quran, the angels and having divine morality. Therefore a believing Muslim man does not have the right to marry non-Muslim, unbelieving women. If such a forbidden marriage takes place, then their children are considered to be born in sin. In the same manner a Muslim believing woman does not have the right to marry an unbelieving man, and their marriage is considered illegitimate, as are their children. Believing men or women are not matched with unbelieving men or women. Should such a forbidden marriage take place, both sides are exposed to

The Glorious Quran has seriously advised against the marriage of a believing person with an unbeliever:

Do not marry unbelieving women (idolaters), until they believe: a slave woman who believes is better than an unbelieving woman, even though she allure you. Nor marry (your girls) to unbelievers until they believe: a man slave who believes is better than an unbeliever, even though he allure you. Unbelievers do (but) beckon you to the fire. But God beckons by His Grace to the Garden (of Bliss) and forgiveness, and makes His signs clear to mankind: that they may celebrate His praise. [Holy Quran: Baqara 2:221]

Therefore you must be careful not to let your believing daughters marry with a young fellow who is ignorant and does not have faith. Likewise, do not choose a girl who denies divine principles to marry your believing noble son. The first and foremost condition for the marriage of a couple is their faith.

Thus two believing, chaste, and shining lights will join, the fruit of which will be good children. Do not think that being handsome, wealthy or of a high status for an unbelieving man, or likewise in a woman who is not adorned with the truth can bring prosperity, health, happiness and continuity of a mutual life.

It is necessary for the families not to be too strict about finding the best match. When the two sides are nearly matched in terms of faith, morality and Islamic practices, and looks and posture, then they are considered to be a good match for each other by the Holy Shariat.

Consider the following traditions regarding being matched:

Imam Sadiq (Pbuh) said: A woman who is chaste and is financially easy to live with is your best match. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.372] The Prophet (Pbuh) said: If a courter proposes to marry your daughter and you are sure about his religiousness and trustworthiness, then provide the means for such a marriage. Prohibiting marriage of a well-matched couple may lead to sedition and great corruption on the Earth. [Ibid]

In another tradition the Prophet (Pbuh) said: Marry your daughter off to one whose morality and religiousness satisfies you. Should you prevent such a marriage, you have caused a great corruption and sedition on the Earth. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.373]

Yes, in fact the cause of self satisfaction, homosexuality, fornication, nervous problems, and psychic ailments of many young men and women is being too strict in regards to marriage; creating obstacles; insisting on wrong customs and traditions followed by imposing hard conditions; and expecting beauty, position and wealth by the families. And in fact the end results of all this will directly affect the parents, the relatives and those families who are too

strict in regards to marriage, both here and in the Hereafter. The Prophet (Pbuh) said: Provide the means for the wedding of well-matched couples. And marry with people who are a good match for you, and prepare them to marry you to bring forth good children. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.375]

The essential ingredients of a well-matched couple are faith, morality, trustworthiness and righteousness. It is the moral duty of the parents and the family to prepare the grounds for the marriage of a well-matched couple. This can be speeded up by being more lenient, not imposing ungodly conditions and avoiding unethical traditions. In this way the parents and the family can earn the blessings, pleasure and kindness of God. Imam Baqir (Pbuh) said: The greatest tragedy is when a young believing man proposes marriage to your daughter and you respond in the negative because he does not have the same financial status as you do. [Marriage in Islam, p.32]

Prejudices related to the family, city or tribe should be considered detrimental in marriage as such prejudices are rejected in the divine religion. So do not consider being poor or rich; coming from this city or that one; belonging to this tribe or that one as the criteria for marriage. All men and women are the offspring of one couple (Adam and Eve) and no one has any especial privileges over others except that due to being more pious and virtuous.

Imam Sajjad's Views on Being Matched

Hazrat Baqir (Pbuh), the fifth Imam said: In one of the way-stations during Hajj, my noble father Imam Zayn al-Abideen (Pbuh) encountered a lady whose good temper attracted him. He inquired if she was married, and was told that she was not. Then my father proposed to marry her without investigating about her family, and this proposal led to marriage. One of the Ansar who became informed of this issue could not stand this simple marriage. He thought that she may not belong to a noble family, and this may cause problems for the fourth Imam. He spent some time investigating about her and finally found out that she belonged to the Shayban tribe.

He came to the fourth Imam and told him that thanks God she is from a well-known, noble family. The Imam told him that he thought the man was wiser than that. He told him "Do you not know that God the Almighty removed all inferiorities and compensated for all defects by Islam. He replaced inferiority with nobility. Now, no matter what the social status of a Muslim is, he/she is not inferior but is respectable. The inferiorities belong to the Age of Ignorance." [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.374]

Therefore being of the same tribe, dwelling in the same town or having the same amount of

wealth do not mean being well-matched. As decreed by Islam there exist no privileges for the Arabs over the Persians; the whites over the blacks; the Qurayshy over the non-Qurayshy. All that counts is piety. If a Muslim couple have faith, piety, morality, trustworthiness, chastity, purity and health, then they are well-matched. This is true even if one is an Arab and the other one is a Persian; one lives in a city and the other one is a villager; one is rich and the other is poor; one is white and the other is black; one belongs to a noble family and the other one does not.

Ali, the son of Isbat wrote a letter to Imam Javad (Pbuh) and stated that he had not been able to find people that match him in faith and morality to marry off his daughters to. The Imam responded by writing: "I realized what you wrote regarding your daughters. May God bless you with His Mercy and Kindness.

You need not be so careful in regards to your daughters. The Prophet (Pbuh) has recommended us to accept a courter's proposal to marry our daughters should his morality and religiousness be acceptable. Else sedition and great corruption would occur on Earth." [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.373]

Imam Sadiq (Pbuh) told a man called Abraham: "No believer has ever gained any profit more dangerous than wealth. The danger of wealth is worse than that of two vicious wolves which attack a flock of sheep lacking a shepherd. What do these wolves do with the sheep?" He answered: "Nothing but a great loss." The Imam said: "That is right. The least danger of wealth is that a Muslim might come to propose to marry your daughter and you reject him for not being wealthy."

Those Whom You should not Let Your Daughters Marry

It is stated in divine books that man is entrusted with children who are God's blessing and kindness. To safeguard this "trust" we must attend to their moral and religious education and choose a pure and good spouse for them to marry. The woman who gets married and goes to her husband's home will be influenced by her husband, his family and his home. In that environment she will be asked to do things by her husband. The house she goes to must be a divine home with a believing family. Her husband must be reasonably well-mannered and good-tempered, too. It is for this reason that the divine religion has strictly forbidden marrying your daughters to those who do not fulfill Islamic conditions. The Prophet (Pbuh) has been narrated as saying: Marriage is a form of obedience, that is once you marry your daughters off to someone, you in fact make her obedient to him. Therefore you must all be very careful as to whom you entrust your daughters to. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.103,

It is not permitted to marry off your daughters to one who does not adhere to religion, divine decrees and just beliefs. Such a person is considered to be corrupt according to the divine book. It is not permitted to marry off your daughters to one who is ill-tempered, haughty, jealous, greedy, and vulgar.

It is neither permitted nor humane to marry off your daughters to an ignorant, stupid, unwise man who cannot run his life and causes a lot of problems for the woman. It is strictly forbidden to marry off your daughters to an alcoholic who is so base that he does not abstain from what

God has forbidden. Now consider the very important traditions in this regard.

One who marries off his dear noble daughter to an irreligious man, will be cursed a thousand times a day. [Marriage in Islam, p.55] Husayn, the son of Bishar wrote to Musa the son of Jaffar (Pbuh) "One of my relatives who is ill-tempered has requested to marry with my daughter". The Imam responded "Do not marry her to him if he is a wrong doer." [Bihar al-

Anwar, v.103, p.235]

Imam Sadiq (Pbuh) strictly forbade marrying off one's daughters to fools and the ignorant ones - who cannot be trusted in social and personal affairs and those who cannot be entrusted with property- based on verse 5 of the Chapter Nisaa of the Holy Quran. [Marriage in Islam, pp.54-55] The Prophet (Pbuh) said: Should anyone, who is now informed by me - as the Messenger of God - that drinking alcoholic beverages is forbidden, drink and go to propose marriage to the daughter of a family, he deserves no response. [Ibid]

Hazrat Reza, the eighth Imam (Pbuh) said: Be wary of marrying your girls off to those who drink, as this is like giving a virgin for fornication. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.79, p.142]

Verily those who do not adhere to God's obligatory acts, will not avoid sexual deviations. Those who do not have good morality, and are ill-tempered; and those who do not have a right mind and intellect; and those who are so weak that they cannot stop drinking alcoholic beverages are not suited to be entrusted with a believing pious young woman who is entrusted to us by God.

If so, not only will the young woman will be spoiled, but her children too will be influenced by the man's ill effects. This fact has been stated by the sixth Imam (Pbuh) before man came to realize it through science. The effects of illegitimate acts show up in the offspring. [Vasa'il.

v.17, Chapter 1, p.81, Tradition 22043]

Do not Marry Such Women

As you read, Islam does not allow us to marry off our daughters to several groups of people

including the corrupt, the stupid, the ill-tempered, and the alcoholics. Thus by prohibiting such marriages, a woman's respect and honor are safeguarded. In the same manner, Islam prohibits the marriage of young noble, believing men with those women who do not meet divine and Islamic conditions. There exist many important traditions cited in authentic books regarding this issue which have been cited from the sources of revelations. A reference is made to some of them here.

The Prophet (Pbuh) said: Avoid marrying stupid women since living with them will ruin your life and their children will be oppressors. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.103, pp.232-237]

He also said: Avoid a trashy beauty. He was asked: What do you mean by a trash beauty? He replied: I mean a beautiful woman who is raised in a bad family. [Ibid]

The Prophet (Pbuh) used to say in his prayers to God: I seek refuge in Thee from a child who orders me around instead of being obedient; from property which goes to waste without giving any profit; and from a woman who makes me old too fast due to her stupidity and bad behavior; and from a friend who is deceitful. [Marriage in Islam, pp.75-77]

The Prophet (Pbuh) said: The worst of your women are the ones who are sterile; filthy; stubborn; disobedient; disgusted by the family, and dear to themselves; disobedient to the husband and submissive to others. [Ibid]

He also said: Three things have a bad omen: a woman, a quadruped and a house. A woman's bad omen is in her nuptial gift and sterility. [Ibid] He also said: A bad woman is the worst thing.

[Mustadrak, Nekah book, Chapters 6 and 8]

The Commander of the Faithful (Imam Ali) stated: The worst wife is a woman who is not complaisant. [Ibid]

The Prophet (Pbuh) said: Should I not introduce the worst women? Those who are not respectable in their own family; who are haughty to their husbands; who are sterile; who are malicious; who do not stop doing evil deeds; who adorn themselves in the absence of their husbands, and do not adorn themselves in his presence; who are disobedient to their husbands, and do not please them in their own privacy; who do not accept their husband's apology and do not forgive them. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.235]

How to Choose a Spouse

Marriage is my tradition, and whoever does not long for my tradition is not of my nation. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.103, p.220]

The Evil-Doer is Deprived of God's Mercy

In a very important tradition by the noble Prophet of Islam it is stated in Arabic "Al-Naqess Melown" which means "The evil-doer is denied God's Mercy." Undoubtedly, the Arabic term "Naqess" in this tradition does not carry its usual meaning. It does not refer to someone

without eyes, a hand, a foot or having any other type of congenital deformity.

Here it refers to one who has not taken steps to attain wisdom, to acquire good habits nor to adorn himself/herself with beneficial actions, and does not attend to himself/herself by means

other than eating, sleeping and lust.

In fact man has the potential to realize all the facts and attain full perfection. He should try to do so. He should constantly strive to remove his mental, spiritual and inward flaws. He should avoid listlessness. If he does not try to eliminate his imperfections, then he will be spoiled just

as unpalatable water does. He will be damned and deprived of God's Mercy.

Unfortunately there are some seventy or even eighty year olds who have the mentality of a one-year old child, and their actions and morality are similar to those of a five-year old. They have not used the divine spiritual blessings such as Heavenly Books; the Prophethood; the Religious Leadership of the Immaculate Imams; the mysticism of the true mystics and the wisdom of the wise during their lifetime. They have been only engaged in eating and drinking to expand their

body from a tiny sperm to some eighty or ninety kilograms.

They could have turned their bodies into a good tree. They could have built themselves up to become a source of facts and perfection. However, they became proud of simply engaging in material affairs to build up their physical form. Thus they remained poor, imperfect and evil-

doers as they first were. They had business deals and were occupied by their desk and chair.

They had wealth, a spouse and children, but were evil-doers. Therefore, they are at a loss. They commit any form of sin or crime, they violate other people's rights. They oppress while benefiting from God's blessings without shame. Yet, they cooperate with God's enemies, being

the men and jinn, in all areas.

In another tradition from Imam Musa, the son of Jafar (Pbuh) we read: One for whom two days are the same is at a loss; one for whom the end of the two days is the worst time is damned; and one whose life passes and does not improve himself is at a loss. For such a person death

is better than life. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.78, p.327; v.75, p.327, Beirut Press]

There is another tradition with nearly the same context in the authentic Shiite books from Imam Sadiq. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.71, p.173] In another tradition from the noble Prophet of Islam

(Pbuh) we read: "One who does business, is loved by God". Undoubtedly the highest form of doing business and the best trade is obtaining nobility, knowledge, good and human morality. A

businessman, such as the Prophet, is a valuable being and is loved by God.

Let's try not to be evil-doers. Let's not let two consecutive days of our lives be the same. Let's avoid denying ourselves the attainment of perfection, since in the Hereafter whoever is short of spiritual affairs; intellectual development and moral and practical perfection is damned and at a loss. His balance of deeds will be light and he will deserve torture. But if the balance of his spirituality is heavy, that is, he has good faith, morality and good deeds, then he will prosper.

Consider the following two verses of the Glorious Quran in this regard:
The balance that they will be true (to a nicety): Those whose scale (of good) will be heavy, will prosper. [Holy Quran: A'raf 7:8] Those whose scale will be light, will find their souls in perdition, for that they wrongfully treated Our Signs. [Holy Quran: A'raf 7:9]

The Path to Perfection

In the Glorious Quran, God the Benevolent has recommended that all people realize two facts to strive towards perfection, giving due consideration to divine and humane conditions. These two are related to the material life and the spiritual life, which are expressed in four verses of the Chapter Al-i-Imran in the Holy Quran.

Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet: women and sons; heaped-up hoards of gold and silver; horses branded (for blood and excellence); and (wealth of) cattle and well-tilled land. Such are the possessions of this world's life; but in nearness to God is the best of goals (to return to).

Say: Shall I give you glad tidings of things far better than those? For the righteous are Gardens in nearness to their Lord, with rivers flowing beneath; therein is their eternal home; with companions pure (and holy); and the good pleasure of God. For in God's sight are (all) His servants, (namely),

those who say: "Our Lord! we have indeed believed: forgive us, then, our sins, and save us from the agony of the Fire;"- Those who show patience, firmness and self-control; who are true (in word and deed); who worship devoutly; who spend (in the way of God); and who pray for forgiveness in the early hours of the morning. [Holy Quran: Al-i-Imran 3:14-17]

The passive form of the verb "Zuyanna" in the Arabic text of the first verse implies its importance, that is, God is the doer of the verb or the one who makes all those facts fair in the eyes of men. This is so that they become inclined and attracted to these issues and through this inclination, love and attraction, they get married; work; subdue the animals; irrigate or build the land; and they attain some productivity in their material life.

On the other hand they are also adorned with piety, faith, supplication, and fear of the Hereafter and strive to obtain perseverance, honesty, worship, spending in charity and imploring God's

forgiveness. This is so that they can attain God's pleasure, the promised Heaven and pure heavenly spouses.

Anyway according to the noble verses of the Glorious Quran, the cause of man's attraction to and love for women is their delicate creation, beauty, dignity, intrinsic shyness, delicate voice, amorous playfulness and coquetishness. This attraction and lust is the main drive for men to become interested and fall in love with women and get married and establish a joint life. Thus, they can have children and work hard in business, agriculture, etc. to provide for their material life and guarantee the continuation of the life of the household and the family. If this is complemented with piety and is void of sin; is accompanied with faith, supplication, perseverance, honesty, worship, spending and imploring God's forgiveness at dawn, then man's prosperity in this world and the Hereafter is guaranteed. Man can thus benefit from all worldly pleasures, and vast eternal benefits, most importantly God's pleasure.

How to Choose a Spouse in Islam

The approach to choosing a spouse is much different in the angelic spirit of Islam, when compared to those religions or schools of thought which have become void of the spirit of revelations. Islam does not allow a believing Muslim man to choose any woman as his wife. Neither does it allow a believing Muslim woman to choose any man as her husband. This is so because there are certain things to be considered in marriage, such as their well-being and prosperity in this world and the Hereafter; immunity from corruption and Satanic plans. As viewed in Islam, marriage is not just based on lust, carnal desires, and material gains. The goal of Islam from marriage is to maintain people's beliefs; to build a divine home; to raise good children; and to seek God's pleasure. It is in this framework that all that is involved; the marriage itself; maintaining a spouse; loving a legitimate spouse; having sex as much as either side requires; respecting each others' rights; bearing children; raising them; carrying out the necessary duties such as working to provide for the housing, food and clothing of the wife and the children are all considered to be worship of God and each step taken in this regard will have a great heavenly reward. It is in this context that one can understand why Islam insists on finding a well-matched spouse. We are forced to humbly accept Islam's divine conditions for marriage, since a marriage without regard for these conditions will end up in a life full of sedition. The house will be filled with torture and suffering; pain and agony; sadness and sorrow. Such a life might end up in separation and divorce with its ever-lasting bad feelings. It may even end up in insanity or suicide if one party is not strong enough.

Avoid associating or marrying a woman who has not attained intellectual development through studying; and has not helped herself reach perfection by attaining piety, faith and morality. Such women are raised in a family void of monotheism, morality, piety, worship and belief in God's unity. They bring nothing for their husbands but sedition, corruption and destruction. An important tradition from Imam Baqir (Pbuh) has been quoted as: "The Prophet (Pbuh) passed by some women.

He suddenly stopped and addressed them, and said: I have not seen any group of people lacking wisdom and religion like you, and stealing the wisdom of the wise. I have seen that your torture is greater than that of all the dwellers of Hell. I strongly recommend that you try to get closer to God, by perfecting your faith and acquiring knowledge, and good deeds." [Marriage in Islam, p.45 as cited in Vasa'il al-Shiaa . Abvab Muqadamat Nikah] Imam Sadiq (Pbuh) said: "The strongest enemy of a believing man is his bad wife." [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.240]

In another tradition it has been stated: "There are six things which are essential causes of committing sins and rebelling against God: love of this world; love of power; excessive sleeping; love for women; love for eating and being lazy." [Vasa'il al-Shiaa. Abvab Muqadamat Nikah, Chapter 4; Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.225, Vafa Press]

Thus it is best that you confine yourself to abide by the conditions stated by Islam in choosing a spouse. I shall express all these conditions based on traditions. Try not to choose a spouse based on her beauty, love or wealth. The Prophet (Pbuh) said: "Do not choose a wife for her wealth or beauty. Her wealth will cause her rebellion, and her beauty will cause her corruption. You must consider her faith and religiousness for marriage." [Mustadrak al-Vasa'il, On Marriage, Ch.13]

The Prophet (Pbuh) has been quoted as saying: "If there is bad omen in anything, that is a woman." [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.227] In fact if a woman is deprived of knowledge, faith, morality, good-temper, dignity and nobility, then she is bad and will ruin her husband's life. The Prophet (Pbuh) also said: "A bad woman is the worst thing." [Ibid]

An Amazing Story

It has been written in the commentary by Abul-Futuh-i-Razi: There was a young fellow who would recite the call to prayer from the top of the special place on the mosque. One night he looked at the houses surrounding the mosque when he was reciting the call to prayer. This kind of looking has been prohibited by Islam to safeguard man from sedition and for his own sake. Suddenly he saw a good-looking young girl, and fell in love with her. After saying the call to

prayer he went and knocked at her door. The house owner opened the door. The young man told him that he had come and was ready to marry their daughter. The man said that they were Assyrian Christians, and they would only wed their daughter to him if he accepted Christianity. The young fellow who had fallen madly in love with that beautiful girl did not choose a best match and let lust and beauty be the reasons for his marriage. He accepted her father's condition and abandoned Islam, but on the wedding day, he fell down the stairs and died.

Islamic and Humane Conditions in Choosing a Spouse

1- The respectable families should provide the means for the young man and woman to meet each other before marriage. It is not necessary to wed them to make them Mahram (lawful to see each other) for this purpose. This has been allowed by Islam, and is considered legitimate in Islamic jurisprudence. They must see each other, so that they can recognize each others' good characteristics or apparent defects, and then decide. This will also block the way for future claims. Of course, this visit should be with the intention of getting married and deciding whether or not to finalize the marriage. It should be void of sin.

Please notice the traditions in this regard:

The Prophet (Pbuh) told Mughayreh, the son of Shua'ba who had married a woman: "Had you looked at her before you got married, there was more hope for you to get along with her."

[Marriage in Islam, p.47]

Muhammad, the son of Muslim, the son of Muslim" . said that he asked Imam Baqir (Pbuh): "Does a man who wants to get married have the right to look at the woman?" He answered: "Yes of course. He wants to purchase with the highest price, yet how can he not look?" [Vasa'il

al-Shiia, Introductory chapters on marriage, Chapter 36]

Hassan Sary said: I asked Imam Sadiq (Pbuh): "Is it permissible for the man to take a good look at a woman before he marries her? Can he look at her face and the back of her head?" He answered: "Yes. It is not forbidden to look at the back of her head or look at her face." [Vasa'il

al-Shiia, Introductory chapters on marriage, Chapter 36]

A man told the sixth Imam: "Is it permissible for a man to look at a woman's hair and her beauties when he wants to marry her?" He said: "If he wants to become aware of her characteristics it is all right." [Vasa'il al-Shiia, Introductory chapters on marriage, Chapter 36] In another tradition the Imam was asked: "Is it permissible for the woman to stand up so that the man can see her?" He answered: "Yes, she can even wear clothing showing the form of her

body at that time." [Marriage in Islam, p.49]

The Prophet (Pbuh) told a man from his companions who had proposed to marry a woman:

"Look at her face and her hands."

These traditions and the like imply that if someone chooses a woman to marry, after he investigates about her family, her faith and morality, it is fine to look at her to learn about her physical features such as her hair, her looks and beauty, her height, and her posture. This will block any future claims about her defects which might otherwise cause disappointment or argument. This does not mean that men can go around to look inside every house and observe all the beauties of the Muslim girls to choose one if they please. [Marriage in Islam, p.49]

2- When you choose a wife and decide to marry her, you must intend to marry to seek God's pleasure, not her beauty, perfection, amorous playfulness or coquettishness. You must act to please God and to abide His decree and to follow the tradition of the divine Prophets, especially the noble Prophet of Islam (Pbuh) There are many important traditions regarding marriage in order to get nearer to God and attain His pleasure cited from the Prophet (Pbuh): One who marries for God's sake, and strives to provide the means for the marriage of others for God's sake, deserves to be a Friend of God. [Muhjat ul-Biyza, v.3, p.54]

Yes, people of such character and nobility deserve to be included among those mentioned in the following verse:

God is the protector of those who have faith: from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light. [Holy Quran: Baqara 2:257] God likes men to have a wife and children. That is why He granted John to Zacharias and granted Ismael to Abraham when they were old. God

Has stated in one of the verses of His Book to His Pure Prophet: We did send apostles before thee, and appointed for them wives and children: [Holy Quran: Ra'd 13:38]

3- It is not right to rush into marriage. It has been stated in Islamic teachings that to rush into something is the work of Satan. One must be careful in choosing a spouse. He/she must spend enough time, consult with others, and get to know the other party and his/her family. This is all necessary so that any great loss; spiritual, or psychological blow to either party can be avoided. In this regard Imam Sadiq (Pbuh) said: In fact a woman is similar to a necklace. Be careful about the necklace you wear forever. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.233, Vafa Press]

4- The characteristics of a good woman who deserves to get married to a believing young Muslim man have been carefully stated in credible traditions cited in valuable Shiite books. The Prophet (Pbuh) said: When you intend to get married to a woman, investigate about her hair as well as her face, since her hair is also a part of her beauties. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.237]

5-13- Jaber, the son of Abdullah Ansari has stated: "We were sitting with the Prophet(Pbuh). Then we started to talk about women, and how some are superior to others. The Prophet

(Pbuh) asked if he should talk to us in this regard, and we welcomed his proposal. He said the best of your women is one who is kind; bears children; is chaste; is respected in her family; and is humble to her husband; beautifies herself only for her husband and is respectful but indifferent to others; obeys her husband; submits to him in private but does not act like dirty old men. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.235]

14 to 18- The Commander of the Faithful (Pbuh) said: The best of your women have five traits. He was asked what they were. Then he answered: leniency; good-temperedness; easy to get along with; one who does not rest until her husband is pleased and calm once he gets angry; protects her husband's honor in his absence. Such a woman is one of the agents of God and should not be disappointed of God's Mercy. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.231]

19- Imam Baqir (Pbuh) said: A man consulted with the Prophet(Pbuh) regarding marriage. The Prophet (Pbuh) said: "Get married, but with a religious woman. God will give you a good reward. A good woman is similar to an especial crow which is hard to get." The man asked what especial crow? He responded: "One with one white leg." [Marriage in Islam, p.59]

20 to 21- Abraham Karkhy said that he told Imam Sadiq (Pbuh): "My wife who was my companion has died and now I am considering getting married again." The Imam told him: "Be extremely careful with whom you marry and share all your secrets, wealth, religion and trust. If you have no choice but to marry, find a well-behaved and good-tempered young woman." [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.232]

22- The Prophet (Pbuh) said: One of the beneficial things that God has destined for a Muslim man is a woman looking at whom pleases him, one who protects his honor in his absence; and one who obeys him in his presence. [Marriage in Islam, p.60]

23- The Prophet (Pbuh) said: "The noblest woman in my nation is one with the most beauty and a nuptial gift of the least amount." [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.236]

24- The Commander of the Faithful (Pbuh) said: The Prophet (Pbuh) asked the people: Let me know what is best for women? Fatimah (Pbuh) responded: That she does not see men, and men do not see her, too. The Prophet (Pbuh) who was amazed at this response said: Fatimah is the chip off the old block! [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.238]

25-26- Imam Sadiq (Pbuh) said: The best of your women is one who is grateful if you give her property, and if for some reason you denied her of some property she is pleased and satisfied." [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.239]

27-30- The sixth Imam (Pbuh) said: The best of your women is one who smells good; cooks well; spends properly; abstains from spending at the right time. Such women are agents of God. For them there is no disappointment. They shall not be sorry.

[Marriage in Islam, p.61] 31- The Prophet (Pbuh) said: The most blessed wife is one who imposes the least expenses upon her husband. [Marriage in Islam, p.70]

32-34- The Commander of the Faithful (Pbuh) said: The best characteristics of a woman in marriage are the worst of men's characteristics: pride, fear and jealousy. If she has pride, she will not submit to anyone but her husband. If she is jealous, she protects their belongings, and if she has fear, then she gets afraid of any circumstances and tries to protect herself. Thus she will not fall prey to others. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.238]

35-38- The Prophet (Pbuh) said: Marry virgin girls. They have sweeter lips, and tighter wombs. They learn faster, and their love for their husband and mutual life is more lasting. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.237]

39 to 40- Imam Sadiq (Pbuh) said: The best of your women is one who is no longer shy when she is undressed in private quarters with her husband. And when she wears her clothes, she is shy. [Marriage in Islam, p.67]

These are the characteristics of a good Muslim woman. Our dear young Muslim men should look for these nearly forty traits in women. Once they find one with a reasonable amount of positive traits, then they should choose her as their wife and the mother of their children. They should try not to be too strict in choosing a spouse, since such an obsession will make it hard to marry.

Islam's Original Plans for Marriage

And those who pray, "Our Lord! Grant unto us wives and offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes, and give us (the grace) to lead the righteous." [Holy Quran: Furqan 25:74]

Marriage Negotiations

When a marriage is being considered, it is customary among Muslims to conduct investigations about both families. Then they conduct negotiations to determine the conditions for the marriage and the wedding ceremony, and to establish the amount of the nuptial gift. Among the questions asked, the families should try to answer those questions that are appropriate and within the framework of the holy religion. They should also do the same regarding the questions they ask. In these negotiations, it is best to exercise the utmost honesty. They should tell the true age of the couple, the real job of the man, his actual wealth, behavior and morality; his true spirit; relationships; degree of education; and any defects or shortcomings. The defects may be negligible. The woman's family too should be honest in responding to the questions asked by the man's

family. They should not be afraid to tell the truth, since this will prevent any future problems or a probable deadlock. It will prevent any future harm, bad feelings, separation, inter-family arguments or the ruining of the relationships between the two families. Honesty and truthfulness can protect both families against any harm, bad feelings and sorrow. It eases decision-making for both sides and causes prosperity. Concealing the defects of men and women, deception and trickery are immoral and religiously prohibited. They are considered to be great sins. The bad effects of this will not only harm the couple, but will also damage both families.

Concealing defects of men and women, deception and trickery sometimes result in the break up of a wedding, the cancellation of the nuptial gift, and the breaking up of the marriage without a divorce. This is the leeway Islam has granted to either side who may have been deceived by concealing defects. The Glorious Quran has prohibited any deception, trickery or concealing of defects and considers those who deceive, deserve divine punishment in this world and the Hereafter.

The Prophet (Pbuh) said: One who deceives a Muslim does not belong to our nation. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.75, p.285]

The Commander of the Faithful (Pbuh) said: Deceiving one who has trusted in you is equal to atheism. [Mizan al-Hikmat, pp.166-167]

He has also said: One who deceives people will be harmed by his/her deception. [Mizan al-Hikmat, pp.166-167]

Regarding the characteristics of the pious, Imam Ali (Pbuh) has said the following in Sermon 193 of Nahj ul-Balaghah: The pious ones do not get close to people by deception. The Prophet (Pbuh) said: Deception, trickery and treason will result in the Hell Fire. He also said: One who is a Muslim does not engage in deception or trickery. I heard from Gabriel that deception and trickery will result in the Hell Fire.

The issues related to concealing defects of men and women; deception and trickery; continued marriage; separation or divorce; the duty of man to pay the nuptial gift or not having to pay it are extensively discussed in volume 100 of Bihar al-Anwar, Vafa Press, Beirut starting from page 361 and also in the practical treatise of great Shiite scholars.

The Necessity to Pay the Nuptial Gift

The two sides should agree on a reasonable amount after honest negotiations. The less strict you are about the amount of the nuptial gift, the more God will be pleased. The leaders of Islam have instructed us to be lenient about this issue to ease the marriage of our young

daughters and sons. The families should not imagine that an expensive nuptial gift arranged will prevent the disruption of the family and will help its continuation. There have been many married young women who have had expensive nuptial gifts but returned to their parent's home after marriage. They got seriously hurt and fell apart! You should rely on God's Favor in these issues, and avoid what might cause pain, belittling or insulting of either party in the future. Once an amount has been agreed upon, and the bride and the groom have accepted it, then half of it is due to be paid immediately upon the establishment of the marriage contract, and the other half must be paid after the marriage is consummated. If it is all paid at the time of the marriage contract, it is much better. The youth must realize that the payment of the nuptial gift is obligatory, and refusal to pay it is a great sin. This necessity to pay the nuptial gift has been clarified in verses 236-237 and 241 of Chapter Baqara, verse 4 of Nisaa, verses 27-28 of Qisas, and verse 49 of Al-Ahzab. No one should impose the least harm or oppression upon women, in this respect or in any other form. The Prophet (Pbuh) said: A man who oppressively does not pay a woman's nuptial gift is considered an adulterer by God. On the Day of Judgment God will tell him: "O my servant, I married my servant to you based on a certain contract. You did not honor that contract, and oppressed her." Then God will take away some of the man's good deeds and will credit it to his wife's record of deeds. If there is not enough good deeds to fulfill the woman's rights, he shall be thrown in the Hell Fire due to not honoring his contract. Contracts bring responsibility. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.349, Vafa Press, Beirut]

Imam Sadiq (Pbuh) said: There are three groups of thieves. Those who are envious of paying the alms tax; those who consider it rightful to devour the nuptial gift; and those who borrow money and do not intend to pay it back. [Ibid]

Imam Reza (Pbuh) has quoted his ancestors as having quoted from the Prophet (Pbuh) as saying: God, the Almighty will forgive any sin except denying a woman's nuptial gift, not paying the wages of an employee or selling a free man. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, pp.350-351]

Imam Sadiq (Pbuh) said: The most wicked sins are murder, not paying the nuptial gift, and not paying the wages of an employee. [Ibid]

Noble women have been instructed to forgo the nuptial gift if possible. This is a highly moral act and is a symbol of nobility and generosity. In a very important tradition from The Prophet (Pbuh) we read: A woman who forgoes her nuptial gift after the wedding and before consummation of the marriage, will be credited for the reward of freeing one slave for every Dinar of the nuptial gift. Then the

Prophet (Pbuh) was asked what if she forgoes her nuptial gift after the consummation of the marriage? The Prophet (Pbuh) answered: Forgoing the nuptial gift after the consummation of the marriage is a result of love and companionship. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.351]

The Wedding Trousseau

It is customary among Muslims that the father prepares the wedding trousseau for his dear daughter who is the apple of his eye. He does this through his nobility, kindness and love for his daughter. In this regard, we should remind the groom and his respectable family not to forget contentment which is one of the attributes of the Imams, the Prophets and is a fact truly loved by God. They should be content with and grateful for whatever the bride's family sends with her.

This is usually as much as they can afford. They should not let this be the cause of insults, belittlement or attacks on the personality of the parties involved. The respectable father of the bride should consider his own social status and that of the groom's family. He should also not be wasteful, since God is the enemy of those who waste. The wedding trousseau need not be extensive or extremely expensive. It need not consist of extraordinary goods. The expenditures for the wedding trousseau should not be out of traditional and religious bounds. It should not cause a great debt behind. For sure you should not try to keep up with the Joneses. Do not raise the expectations of the youth regarding the wedding trousseau, so they only go to propose to women with filthy rich fathers. This will cause a serious problem for the rest and is really inhumane; despised by God; and is a cause of torture in the Hereafter. You should spend rightfully earned income to purchase the wedding trousseau, so that the obligatory worship rituals of the couple on the clothes and rugs that are purchased are acceptable by God. Do not put yourself through too much trouble due to your children's excessive expectations. Do not let this cause you eternal torture and punishment.

A Divine, Spiritual Model for the Wedding Trousseau

In his valuable book Bihar al-Anwar, Allameh Majlesi has narrated Imam Sadiq (Pbuh) as saying the following about Fatimah (Pbuh): The Commander of the Faithful (Pbuh) did not have much material wealth. All he had was a couple of dresses, a camel, a sword, and an armor. He earned his daily bread by working in other people's gardens and farms. When he came to the Prophet (Pbuh) to propose to marry the Master of all women, the Prophet's daughter Fatimah, the Prophet (Pbuh) told him to get up and sell his armor. He sold his armor and gave the money to the Prophet (Pbuh).

Neither did he say how much it was, nor did the Prophet (Pbuh) ask. The Prophet (Pbuh) gave a fistful of the money to Bilal and asked him to buy perfume for his daughter. He gave some of the money to Abu Bakr and asked him to buy her clothes and household appliances. He told Ummar and some of his companions to help in the shopping. The following items were purchased:

- 1- Shirt: seven Durhams
- 2- Shawl: four Durhams
- 3- Black Kheybar veil
- 4- A rope bound bed
- 5- A couple of mattresses with Egyptian linen cover and palm fiber and sheep wool filling
- 6- Four pillows with Tayef leather cover and filled with stuffing.
- 7- A woolen curtain
- 8- A straw mat
- 9- A hand grinder
- 10- A copper tub
- 11- A water-skin
- 12- A bowl
- 13- A small bucket
- 14- An ewer
- 15- A green jar
- 16- Several ceramic vases.

When they brought all this to the Prophet (Pbuh) he took a look at them and said: May God bless them for the Household. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.43, pp.111-112]

The author continues by writing: That simple trousseau belonged to a woman whose father had an unprecedented popularity and power. His companions were ready to sacrifice their lives instead of gold and silver. But he neither forced the sorrow of going under debt upon his groom, nor did he spend from the Muslim's treasury which must be spent for the welfare of the general public, the orphans and the poor. He did not spend a lot to show off or buy excessive luxuries.

He did not raise the level of marriage expenditures to pressure others who might use this wedding as a model all throughout history. Thus he saved millions of people from hardship, stress and sorrow. The most important point is that when he recognized that he was unable to provide for the trousseau for which he was morally responsible, he asked his noble groom to sell his armor.

Using the money he bought the trousseau and the living necessities, and showed how much sincerity and love existed in their relationship. He was not ashamed of this act. The noble groom, too, was so sincere and spiritual that did not think about or even say one word about it being the duty of the father of the bride to buy the trousseau. The fruit of this marriage are eleven of the Immaculate Imams. This family has so far produced thousands of jurisprudents; scientists; wise men; mystics; God lovers; religious authorities; and believers. There has never been another such marriage with all its blessings in the whole history of mankind.

Praying at the Wedding Threshold

Imploring God, praying and supplication, crying in His Presence are all desirable forms of worship at all times, especially before the wedding. This kind of prayer is closer to be accepted by God, and it can establish a background for the fulfillment of many legitimate aspirations. The Commander of the Faithful (Pbuh) said: One who intends to get married should perform two units of prayer, recite the chapters Fatiha and Ya-Sin, and then praise God and say: O God, please grant me a deserving, kind, child bearing, grateful, content, zealous wife. She would thank me when I am kind to her; she would forgive me if I hurt her by mistake; she would help me if I remember you; she will remind me if I forget; she would protect herself and my honor in my absence; she would be pleased when I enter; she would obey when I command; she would abide if I swear; she would make me happy if I get angry. O' Owner of Grandeur and Nobility, please I ask You for I will not receive anything but what You destine for me. The Commander of the Faithful (Pbuh) then said: Whoever does this at the wedding threshold, shall get what he wanted by God's Favor.

The Time and Etiquette for Wedding

A group of families think that the marriage or wedding ceremonies provide a permit for carrying out whatever carnal desires they please. At the time of the wedding of their children, they commit divinely forbidden acts based on the request of their children, the couple's friends, or their relatives. They think that this way they make the party more fun. However, marriage and wedding ceremonies should be accompanied by dignity; nobility; respect; and should be void of sins; forbidden acts and arousing elements. Thus they can be a cause of God's pleasure and can yield divine blessings.

Imam Musa, the son of Jafar (Pbuh) said: It is not at all required to abstain from unforbidden pleasures. Of course, we must be happy during a marriage ceremony and a wedding party. We should not forget to engage in legitimate means of entertainment like comics, jokes and singing. Even singing wise poetry, meaningful lyrics; pleasant slogans and the customs that are usual among Muslim women in such ceremonies are all fine. It is quite natural to stay up late at these times.

The Prophet (Pbuh) said: It is fine to stay up until late in the three following situations: reciting the Quran; studying to acquire knowledge; accompanying a bride to her husband's house.[Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.267]

In Islam it is considered better to perform the wedding at night. Fatimah's wedding was carried out at night. Jaber Ansari said: When the divine Prophet married Fatimah off to Ali, a few narrow minded people came to him and objected why he had married her off with a very small amount of nuptial gift. The Prophet (Pbuh) told them that this was not his decision. It was God who married off Fatimah to Ali.

On the night of the wedding the Prophet (Pbuh) prepared his piebald camel. He threw a gown over it and asked Fatimah to ride it. He ordered Salman to pull the camel. He himself followed it from behind. Midway through he heard something come down. He looked and saw that Gabriel and Michael had descended from Heaven each accompanied with seventy thousand angels.

He asked them the reason for the descension. They replied: We have come to see Fatimah off to Ali's house, and then they express their congratulations. Then they said "God is the Greatest", so did the angels. The divine Prophet too said "God is the Greatest". Thus, it became a tradition to say "God is the Greatest" when accompanying the bride. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.266]

Yes. You must prepare for and conduct the wedding ceremonies in a manner that will result in the descension of angels and God's blessings. Imam Sadiq (Pbuh) said: Take the bride to the groom's house at night. [Marriage in Islam, p.112]

Imam Reza (Pbuh) said: Wedding at night is one of the traditions of the Prophet, since the night is for resting in peace and a woman is for peace, too.[Marriage in Islam, p.112]

The Prophet (Pbuh) ordered the daughters of Abdulmutalib and the women of Medina to follow Fatimah (Pbuh) at the night of her wedding; be happy and sing; say God is great and praise be to Him; and avoid saying what God dislikes. [Marriage in Islam, p.114; Mustadrak, Chapter on Marriage, section 31]

On the night of the wedding it is recommended to feed the guests who have accepted the

invitation.

The Prophet (Pbuh) said: There are only five occasions for a banquet: Marriage; childbirth; circumcision; purchasing a house; and returning from the pilgrimage. [Marriage in Islam, p114; Mustadrak, Chapter on marriage, section 31]

It has been narrated that the Prophet of Islam (Pbuh) said on the wedding night of Fatimah Zahra (Pbuh):

O' Ali. Prepare an excellent dinner in honor of your spouse. He added: We will give the meat and the bread, you provide the dates and the ghee. Then Imam Ali (Pbuh) said: I bought the dates and the ghee. The Prophet (Pbuh) rolled up his sleeves and shredded the dates into pieces and dropped them in the ghee.

He mixed them until it became a mixture of dates, oil and flour. He sent a ram to be slaughtered. A lot of bread was baked. He then told Ali (Pbuh) to invite whoever he wished. Ali says: "I went to the mosque and asked the people to accept the invitation to Fatimah's banquet". [Marriage in Islam, p.91]

Regarding being invited to a wedding party, the Prophet (Pbuh) said: Do not rush to go to a wedding party if you are invited. Wedding ceremonies remind us of the worldly issues. But rush to a funeral ceremony when invited since that reminds you of the Hereafter. The families must arrange the marriage and wedding ceremonies in such a way that it not only has a bad influence on the kids, the youth and the young participants and but not also foster or encourage them to commit any sin. It also provides a convenient place for the believing men and women invitees to participate.

Nuptial Night Customs

There are many verses of the Glorious Quran and traditions regarding intercourse which are very beneficial for both men and women. Consider some of the recommendations of the Prophet (Pbuh) and the Holy Household in this regard which have been narrated in the most authentic books on traditions. It is polite for the groom to take of the brides' shoes once she has been brought to his house. Then he should wash her feet and spread water from the house entrance door to as far away as possible.

This can block seventy thousand causes of the family becoming poor. Seventy thousand blessings will cover the house. Seven angels of mercy will start to fly over the bride's head and their blessings will fill the whole house. The bride will be protected against diseases like insanity and leprosy for as long as she lives there.

The bride should avoid eating milk, vinegar, coriander or sour apple during the first week of the

marriage. These four can have a negative effect on her womb and may turn her sterile. The Prophet (Pbuh) said: If a woman starts her period while drinking vinegar, this will slow down its termination. Coriander will extend the duration of the period, and will make delivery difficult. A sour apple will quickly stop the period and the blood which remains in the womb will cause illness.

Avoid lovemaking at the beginning, the middle and the end of the (periodic) month. Do not make love in the afternoon. It is not good to talk, it is very bad to stare when making love. It is extremely psychologically damaging to the child who may get born if the man thinks about another woman while making love.

It is better to wear a light clothing when making love.

It is inconvenient to make love standing up like animals.

Avoid intercourse on the night of Fitr Holiday (the end of the holy month of fasting); and Sacrifice Holiday; under a tree; under the sun; between the two consecutive calls for prayer (Adhan and Iqamih); the night of the fifteenth day of Sha'ban (the birth date of the Holy Twelfth Imam); on the roof; and on the night of travel. Weddings and intercourse are recommended on Sunday night; early Monday night; Wednesday night; on Thursday; Thursday night ; the eve of Friday.

These times have a lot of material benefits as well as very important spiritual effects. Making love at the times that intercourse has been prohibited may result in children with insanity; leprosy; foolishness; cross-eyedness; deafness; blindness; jealousy; becoming feminine; argument and separation; being sterile; having six fingers; having four fingers; being poor; extreme desire to attack other people; blind-heartedness; ugliness and dumbness.

The times that intercourse has been recommended can result in children with such qualities as memorizing the Holy Quran; being pleased with divine decrees; faith; security from torture; love and kindness; compassion; nobility and generosity; being refined; having mastery over science; religiousness and prosperity; and attaining the status of God's saints.

These are issues that cannot be recognized with material tools or medical instruments. They are facts that the Noble Prophet of Islam (Pbuh) has recommended and said to the Commander of the Faithful (Pbuh), and has asked him to guard these recommendations on marriage and lovemaking as he has guarded them after receiving them from Gabriel [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.280; Elal al-Sharayeh, pp.514-517; Amali Sadoogh, pp.566-570] It has been prohibited to make love instantly. This is oppressive to women and sexual foreplay is both necessary and beneficial to both men and women.

The Prophet (Pbuh) said: Three actions are oppressive: Being accompanied by a man and not

asking his name; Being invited to a party and not attending; Or not eating food if one has accepted the invitation; And lovemaking without foreplay. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.285] The sixth Imam said: Three actions are the tradition of divine Prophets: putting on perfume; shaving the private parts and thoroughly fulfilling your wife's carnal desires. [Ibid] The Commander of the Faithful (Pbuh) said: Not sleeping with your wife and not fulfilling her sexual instincts is a cause of torture in the grave. [Elal al-Sharayeh, p.309] It is forbidden to make love during the period. It is forbidden not to make love for over four months without any good excuse or the spouse's consent, and it has retribution. Making love while unclean is undesirable.

Hazrat Ali (Pbuh) has said: Do not make love instantly. The woman has sensual and physical needs. Help her with foreplay, then make love. If you see another woman and feel that she is beautiful, then immediately go to your wife. God has granted your wife the same beauties. And not looking at another woman and going home to make love to your own wife will block Satan from conquering your heart.

If you are not married, then perform two units of prayer immediately. Praise God and send benedictions upon the Prophet (Pbuh) and his Household. Then seek help from God. God may grant you what you need through His Kindness. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.287]

The reward of fulfilling a woman's carnal desires is so great that according to a tradition the noble Prophet of God told a man: Are you fasting today? The man said no. Have you gone to visit the ill today? The man said no. Have you gone to a funeral today? The man said no. Have you fed one who cannot work today? The man said no. Then he said: Go back home and make love with your wife, since this is similar to a donation from you to her. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.289]

You should not make love in the presence of a child, since this is both morally and psychologically bad for the child. The sixth Imam (Pbuh) has said that this increases the chances of the child committing adultery in the future. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.290]

One should avoid intercourse with a full stomach, since it harms your health. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.290]

Do not make love when there is a baby in the cradle who may observe you. [Bihar al-Anwar, v.100, p.295]

How wonderful is the religion of Islam in its full coverage of all issues regarding moral, educational and sensual affairs. Especially the coverage on women's rights with a precise look at all affairs of life. It really grants us a good outlook on personal, family and social issues. It must be so since Islam is the manifestation of revelations; divine knowledge and the insight of

the Prophet (Pbuh) and the Holy Household, and it is not derived from a limited earthen
mentality