

GARMENTS FOR EACH
OTHER

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ

SELECTED EXCERPTS FROM SERMONS OF
HAZRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH V(ABA)
RELATING TO MARITAL HARMONY

LAJNA IMA'ILLAH, USA

Garments For Each Other

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The Lajna Ima'illah (Assembly of the Maidservants of God) is an international Muslim women's organization, established by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra), the second successor to the Promised Messiah (as), as a vital branch of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. The Lajna Ima'illah's objectives are to serve the spiritual and intellectual development of Ahmadi Muslim women, to enable them to raise their children in the practice of Islam and to serve humanity through beneficial programs.

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يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ
مِّنْ نَّفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا
وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً^ج
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ^ط
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ۝٢

“O ye people! Fear your Lord, who created you from a single soul and created therefrom its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women; and fear Allah, in whose name you appeal to one another, and fear Him particularly respecting ties of relationship. Verily, Allah watches over you.”



HAZRAT MIRZA MASROOR AHMAD
KHALIFATUL MASIH V ﷺ

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations have been used in parentheses. Readers are urged to recite the full salutations:

- saw sal-lallahu ‘alaihi wa sallam, meaning ‘may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him’ is written after the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw).
- as alaihis salam, meaning ‘may peace be upon him’ is written after the names of Prophets other than the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw).
- ra radi-Allahu ‘anhu/’anha/’anhum, meaning ‘may Allah be pleased with him/her/them’ is written after the names of the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) or of the Promised Messiah (as).
- rh rahimahullahu Ta’ala, meaning ‘may Allah shower His Mercy upon him’ is written after the names of deceased pious Muslims who are not Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) or of the Promised Messiah (as).
- aba ayyadahullahu ta’ala bi nasrihil ‘aziz, meaning ‘may Allah support him with His Mighty Help’ is written after the name of the current Khalifah of the Promised Messiah (alaihi salam)

GLOSSARY

Ahmadi	A follower of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah (as)
Ahmadiyyat	Muslim sect believing Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to be the Promised Messiah and the Mahdi awaited by Muslims
Bai'at	Pledge of initiation at the hands of a Prophet or his Successor
Baraat	Collective term for bridegroom's bridal party
Bid'at	Undesirable innovation in religious belief or practice
Hadith	Saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw)
Hazrat	His Holiness
Haq Mehr	Dowry given to bride by bridegroom
Huzoor	Your Honor/Holiness, His Honor/Holiness
Islam	Peace and submission
Istighfar	To ask for forgiveness from Allah; to repent
Jalsa Salana	Annual Convention/Gathering
Jama'at	Community, organization
Khalifah	Caliph, successor, vicegerent
Khilafat	System of Caliphate: the successors to the Prophet
Khalifatul-Masih	Successor to the Promised Messiah
Khula	Divorce initiated by wife
Mehndi	Henna party held by bride's family
Nikah	Marriage contract
Qadha	Judicial Board of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community
Qaul-e-Sadid	The straightforward word, being honest

Rehmi	Blood relations, ties of kinship
Rishta Nata	Marriage/matchmaking (department)
Ronaq	Celebration
Sunnah	Practices of the Holy Prophet (sa)
Taqwa	Righteousness, love of Allah
Tarbiyat	Moral training
Walimah	Marriage celebration (reception) held by bridegroom's family after wedding

INTRODUCTION

The sanctity of marriage has been made very clear in Islam. At the time of marriage husband and wife make a strong covenant before God to enter into this contract with love and obedience to Him, which should be guarded and nurtured to the very best of our ability. The Holy Prophet (saw) has said:

“When a man has married he has fulfilled one half of his religion.”¹

As Muslims, we are most fortunate to have such clear guidance on our responsibilities and our conduct in marriage as we do from the Holy Qur’an and in the beautiful and loving practice of the Holy Prophet (saw). As Ahmadis, we are especially blessed and fortunate to have these teachings brought to life again by the Imam of the Latter Days, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) of Qadian and his Khulafa, in ways that we can understand and integrate in our day to day interactions. It gives me great pleasure, therefore, to introduce this book, which is a collection of carefully chosen excerpts, sermons and an address to Lajna given by our beloved Imam, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) on the subject of marriage and how to live in harmony with one’s spouse and in-laws, by following which we may experience the peace and security promised to us through Khilafat.

You will see that the book is sectioned into topics to facilitate access to issues that may concern us. May Allah bless the diligent work of those who compiled it, namely National Secretary Tarbiyat, Dr. Aziza Rahman and her team of helpers: Sadia Rahman, Mubarika Sadiq, Mujdah Sadiq, Zeenat Dar, Saliha Dar, Ayesha Maham, Atiqa Mateen, Sadiqa Malik, Qudsia Lone, Sarah Ammar, Aysha Rahman, Shazia Sohail, Mariam Rahman, Bushra Salam Bajwa, Dr. Amtul R. Ahmad and Sadiqa Mian.

It is my humble prayer that this collection of our beloved Huzoor's (aba) thoughtful direction, wisdom and guidance will

enable us all to find that longed-for peace and happiness that every woman desires from her marriage and home environment. May we be reminded to enter our relationships with prayerfulness, *Taqwa* (love of Allah and fear of losing His love), truthfulness and honesty, and with patience and forgiveness so that we may be a true source of peace and contentment for our spouse and family members and so that we may be the recipients of Allah’s Grace as the Holy Qur’an describes:

“And one of His Signs is this, that He has created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them, and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that surely are Signs for a people who reflect.”²

Saliha Malik
Sadr Lajna Ima’illah, USA
January 2017

References:

- 1 Jami’at Tirmidhi
- 2 Holy Qur’an, 30: 22

CHAPTER 1

MATCH FINDING

MATRIMONIAL MATTERS IN GENERAL - MARRIAGE OF WIDOWS - CRITERIA FOR FINDING A MATCH

(Excerpts from Friday Sermon, December 24, 2004)

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ
عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ ۖ إِن يَكُونُوا
فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٧﴾

“And marry widows from among you, and your male slaves and female slaves who are fit for marriage. If they be poor, Allah will grant them means out of His bounty; and Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing.”¹

Currently, we are facing many issues regarding marriage; every day there are letters about it. They come from girls and from women concerned about their children’s marriages. Those girls and boys who are economically challenged have their own issues. Widows have their own issues. Some are still at a marriageable age; some want to remarry for security but are facing problems. However, some do not remarry even though they have the desire to do so because of fear of the critical eyes of society.

Each group has its own set of issues. I would like to talk about marriage of widows in some Eastern societies. In these societies marriage of a widow is considered unacceptable, even a sin.

Therefore, those who wish to get remarried, even if they have a decent proposal, are unable to do so because as I mentioned earlier, their relatives consider it to be a major sin. These women are gossiped about in so many ways that they are pushed deep into depression and lose interest in their own lives. The irony here is that while in Europe, these families become open minded and liberal in other matters, some of which are not even allowed by Islam, but in the matter of marriage of widows which is actually a commandment from Allah Almighty, they are overcome by a false sense of honor.

Allah Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an:

“And marry widows from among you and your male slaves and female slaves who are righteous for marriage. If they be poor, Allah will grant them means out of His bounty; and Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing.”²

This is the commandment from Allah Almighty and should be followed by everyone. Allah Almighty clearly declares that if you wish to spread righteousness in society then try to arrange marriages for widows. Allah Almighty extends this commandment to the respectable slaves and maids of that time, in order to avoid spreading social ills in the society. Those who are poor should not despair either. This is a commandment of marriage. These days we do not have slaves, however, in many poor countries, people do not have the means to marry. The Jama'at and some individuals do help in this regard. So, Allah Almighty says that do not think that they cannot marry because of poverty. If a man does not work, is unemployed, or has no means of earning, his marriage should still be arranged and the Jama'at has a system for helping such people, as it should. So usually, except in a few cases, when this help is given they realize that now they are married and have a family to support, they have to try to find some work, business, or employment.

Under the wife's pressure he is more inclined to find a job. There are many examples of poor people whose circumstances improved after marriage.

So Allah Almighty says that this is His work, He is All-Knowing. He knows how things will turn out for any person. So society should focus on making an effort to arrange marriages for widows and the poor. In this way, society will be protected from many vices. There are many widows who want to marry again and are in financial need or have other issues. After losing their husbands, they face challenges in society and they want to find peace and protection rather than enduring these problems. So Allah Almighty has instructed that marriages for widows should be arranged to solve their problems and for the protection of society.

So this is Allah Almighty's command, but as I have mentioned there are some people in society who dislike it. They dislike it even while living in an Islamic and Ahmadi Muslim society. Every Ahmadi Muslim should remember that the erroneous traditions, which have come from non-Ahmadi Muslims and other religions, should not take root in our society. We must get rid of them.

Allah Almighty allows widows, once they have concluded the waiting period of four months and ten days after the death of their husband, to make the decision about marriage on their own. They are not required to have the decision made for them, nor do they need permission from their elders. The only condition is that the marriage should be arranged in an acceptable way and as long as the society is aware of the marriage, there is nothing wrong in it.

So, widows are given the right to make decisions about their future and they are granted permission to do so. The people around them are advised not to put hurdles in their way without

a good reason or because of their own relationships. If marriages are being arranged in the proper and legitimate manner, then Allah Almighty has granted permission for them. There is no sin on them in this regard.

Elders of the family or relatives should not place hurdles or discourage remarriage by saying that so and so is not a good proposal for you, it should not be happening, or it is not right etc. The widow has the authority to decide for herself. You are free from any responsibility. Allah knows what is in your heart. If you are trying to prevent a union for a good reason, then tell her truthfully but then step back and let her make the decision. Allah Almighty knows what is in your heart and He knows your intentions and you will not be accountable. If you have good intentions, you will get a reward for it.

In this regard, Allah says:

وَالَّذِينَ يَتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذُرُونَ
أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ
أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا ۖ فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا
جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٥﴾

“Those of you who pass away and leave behind their wives then those wives should wait for four months and ten days and when they reach this prescribed time they should decide for themselves according to the appropriate way and there will be no sin on you and Allah is well aware of what you do.”³

The Promised Messiah (as) said:

“The commandment of marriage for a widow is the same as marriage of an unmarried person. Some nations consider the remarriage of a widow to be dishonorable and this bad custom has become widespread. That is why Allah has given a commandment regarding remarriage of widows. However, this does not mean that every widow needs to get remarried. Remarriage should be only for those who are fit for it or have a great need to be remarried. Some women are old when they are widowed; others cannot marry due to certain circumstances such as an illness. Or she has enough children and had such a good relationship that her heart will not allow her to have another husband. In such situations, it is not necessary to force a widow into marriage; however, the bad custom of forcing a widow to stay alone for the rest of her life should be abandoned.”⁴

The Holy Prophet (saw) has explained the rights of a widow in this way:

“It is related by Ibn-e-Abbas (ra) that the Holy Prophet (saw) said, “In the matter of marriage, a widow has more right than her *Wali* (guardian) to make a decision. However, an unmarried girl would be asked by her *Wali* and silence on her part will be considered her permission.”⁵

So it is clear that widows have superior rights, as the condition for unmarried girls is that her *Wali* should make her decision. It is because the commandments from Allah Almighty are given to bring about righteousness and peace in society. A widow has experienced life and its ups and downs and has the capacity to make her decision thoughtfully; thus she has been given this

right. But an unmarried girl can make the wrong decision due to her inexperience and that is why her guardian is given the right to make a decision. However, she has the right to disagree with her father or guardian. In the event that she is not willing, she can inform the system of the Jama'at and have her decision made by the Jama'at. However, she is not permitted to take any step on her own. This could be harmful for the welfare and piety of a society and there is a danger that it will create disorder.

It happened many times that a girl would go to the Holy Prophet (saw) and say that her father would like her to get married to such and such man and the Prophet (saw) always gave a decision in favor of the girl.

Sometimes girls do not wish to marry a certain person. Once a girl came to the Holy Prophet (saw) and asked, "Do we women have any rights in making decisions about our marriage?" The Holy Prophet (saw) said, "Absolutely you do." She said, "My father wants to marry me to such and such old man." The Holy Prophet (saw) said, "You are permitted to refuse." However, that pious girl went on to say, "I only wanted to establish the rights of women, but I do not wish to break my father's heart as I love him, and so I am willing for this marriage. I just wanted to make sure that women's rights are safeguarded and that is the reason that I came." ⁶

On another occasion, the Holy Prophet (saw) called off a marriage planned by the father against the will of a girl. It is related by Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas (ra) that a woman's husband died. She had a child from that marriage. The younger brother of her husband (the uncle of the child) asked for her hand in marriage from her father. The woman was also in agreement; however, her father had planned a marriage somewhere else without her consent. On this, the woman came to the Holy Prophet (saw) and complained. The Holy Prophet (saw) called her father and asked about it. Her father said, "I have settled her

marriage with a man better than her brother-in-law.” The Holy Prophet (saw) called off the planned marriage and married her to the uncle of the child, her brother-in-law. ⁷

Now, in this instance, the right of the widow was upheld. It was important to regard her wishes as well. However, it is important to remember that in the Jama’at, any man an Ahmadi Muslim girl wishes to marry has to be Ahmadi Muslim. The reason for this is to safeguard a righteous society, promote virtues and to have righteous offspring. If Ahmadi Muslim boys reject Ahmadi Muslim girls and Ahmadi Muslim girls refuse Ahmadi Muslim boys in order to marry others [non-Ahmadis] there is a grave danger of disruption in families and in the Jama’at. Their children will be in danger of going astray from faith. Therefore, there should be compatibility in religion as well as compatibility in worldly matters.

Some of our young girls and boys have a desire to marry outside the Jama’at. We need to pay attention to this matter, especially in today’s liberal society. The system of the Jama’at is also more concerned about this as the frequency of young people following their own desires and marrying outside the Jama’at is increasing.

In another *Hadith*, it is related by Hazrat Abu Hatim (ra) that the Holy Prophet (saw) said that if a man with good morals and piety comes with a marriage proposal, his offer should be accepted. If you do not accept [such a proposal] discord will spread in the world. The person who asked this question, tried to ask again. However, the Holy Prophet (saw) repeated this three times, that if a man with good morals and piety comes with a marriage proposal, his offer should be accepted. ⁸

So, the Holy Prophet (saw) has emphasized that if a man is righteous, his proposal should be accepted even if he is not well off. It is Allah Almighty’s promise that He will increase a person’s means if he is steadfast in his faith. Therefore, when

proposals are received for daughters the response should not be delayed. In fact, if the righteousness of the person is satisfactory, the proposal should be accepted. Similarly, the Holy Prophet (saw) instructed men that a woman's physical and material assets should not be considered but it is her righteousness that should be considered.

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) related that the Holy Prophet (saw) said:

“There are four reasons for which a man marries a woman; her wealth, her family background, her beauty, or her righteousness. You should however prefer a righteous woman. May Allah bless you with a righteous wife”⁹

In this manner, he actually directed attention to the means of attaining righteous progeny and a harmonious home. If a mother is righteous, then usually the children are righteous. There is no wealth greater than the peace of mind that comes from virtuous and righteous children. Only a righteous progeny can bring honor for parents in an Ahmadi society, so every Ahmadi should pay attention to this.

The complaints that are now received more frequently are that a girl is righteous, pious, with good morals and is educated and she participates in Jama'at activities; however, she is a little compromised on her beauty or stature. People come to visit her and go away. Once before I have brought this to your attention that since facial beauty and stature are apparent in pictures, why do you need to visit her home and see her in person to bother the family? It is the commandment of Allah Almighty that you should not pay attention to these minor details and instead look at her righteousness.

This is why the Holy Prophet (saw) said that if you wish to safeguard your next generation then pay attention to righteousness. If you prefer a righteous girl, then you will be the inheritors of the prayers of the Holy Prophet (saw) and you will see your next generation treading on the path of righteousness.

Some people, while looking for a match, examine a girl in such a way as they would examine a goat before its sacrifice. Marriage is a contract. It does not mean that one party is to be sacrificed; rather it is in the name of sacrifices made by both for each other's sake. This is the relationship referred to by the Holy Prophet (saw), as narrated by Hazrat Abdullah Bin Amr (ra) when he said:

“This world is a provision for life and there is no better provision for life than a pious wife.”¹⁰

So, people who conduct materialistic calculations should keep this *Hadith* in mind - that there is no better provision for life or materialistic world than a righteous woman. A righteous woman will safeguard your home and she will raise your children with high morals. As a result, you will inherit the blessings of both the religion and the world.

There is another narration by Hazrat A'isha (ra) that the Holy Prophet (saw) said:

“You should make arrangements so that the righteous men and righteous women may get married to each other.”¹¹

This refers to arranging marriages between righteous men and righteous women. This noble service could save the community from disorder; therefore, it should be done in a timely manner. However nowadays I meet a large number of unmarried men, aged 34-35 years old, who accompany their parents. These parents have kept their sons with them; they did not give any

attention to arranging their marriage. Some people behave in a similar way towards their daughters to benefit from their earnings. Others do so to benefit from the earnings of their sons. Families benefitting from the earnings of their daughters do so because their sons are useless, uneducated and unemployed, and therefore they depend on the income of their daughters. Even when these girls get married, parents try their best to keep the son-in-law in their house, which is usually not possible. This causes rifts in the household.

Therefore, if the girl and her husband would like to live separately in their own home after marriage and their parents are not that old and dependent on them then they should be left alone to make their own home. However, if parents are old and weak and do not have any other child at home, then the situation is different and a sacrifice should be made. This is normally the responsibility of sons but if there are no sons then a daughter should take this responsibility. But in ordinary circumstances once a girl is married and sent to her husband's home she should be left alone to build her own household. Our Jama'at system with the three auxiliaries, Lajna, Khuddam, and Ansar, should pay attention to this matter. This advice should be rendered through their *Tarbiyat* programs with Ansar advising fathers, Lajna advising girls and their mothers, and Khuddam should advise boys.

It is related by Hazrat Mugheera (ra) that he sent a proposal for marriage to a family. The Holy Prophet (saw) said:

“You should see the girl because after seeing her, there is a better chance that you will develop understanding and affection between each other.”¹²

Nowadays this permission is interpreted in the wrong way by society. It is being interpreted as allowing the boy and girl to be alone together or go out together so that they can develop a

relationship. Even going together to a different city or sitting together alone for hours in the home is considered to be permissible, but this is not right. The reason for making this allowance is that seeing each other face to face makes it easier to form an opinion of each other.

Some characteristics become apparent while talking to someone and thus there is no harm in sitting together with the family for a meal. Many traits and behaviors become noticeable during the sharing of a meal. In case there is some behavior which a person may dislike, it is better to find out before marriage rather than have problems afterwards. If good qualities are seen, then a better understanding and liking can develop for that proposal and sometimes a bond with the proposed person can develop before the wedding.

Sometimes there are malicious people who like to break up a match once the proposal is accepted, but they will not succeed when the two parties have met face to face and know each other. Then there are families that go to the other extreme where they will not allow the boy and girl to even see each other while arranging a match or before the wedding. They think it is a matter of honor. Islamic teaching is very balanced; it is neither excessive nor deficient, it does not go to one extreme or the other. This is how it should be followed and this is how tranquility will be brought about in society and disorder removed.

In these times, the Promised Messiah (as) made a heartfelt effort to implement the commandments of the Holy Qur'an and of the Holy Prophet (saw). He especially drew attention to the importance of arranging marriages for Ahmadi girls and boys within the Jama'at so that the next generation stays firm in the religion. The Promised Messiah (as) put emphasis on marrying within the Jama'at and there is a lesson in that for those who marry their children outside the Jama'at.

The Promised Messiah (as) said:

“By the grace, bounty and divine provisions of Allah Almighty, our Jama’at is making great progress and now numbers in thousands and soon with the grace of Allah will number hundreds of thousands” (Now it numbers in millions.) “I feel it advisable to devise a good system for arranging marriages for our boys and girls in order to promote mutual accord among ourselves and avoid the bad influences and actions of our close [non-Ahmadi] relatives. It is obvious that it is not possible for the Jama’at to establish new relationships with those who have reached the limits of prejudice, enmity, avarice and hostility under the influence of the opposition of the mullahs, unless they repent and enter the fold of the Jama’at. The Jama’at is not dependent on them in any way. The Jama’at includes such people in abundance who excel in wealth, money, education, proficiency, family dynasty, righteousness and in having fear of God. Besides this, the Jama’at consists of people from all Islamic nations so there is no need for our Jama’at to make new relationships with those who call us disbelievers, or label us as Dajjal. Even when they don’t say it themselves, they praise and follow those who do.”¹³

And

“Remember that anyone who cannot leave such people is not worthy of entering our Jama’at. As long as a brother does not leave his brother and a father does not leave his son for the sake of purity and truth, they are not from among us. O Members of my Jama’at! Listen with attention that for all the righteous people it is imperative to strictly adhere to these conditions. Therefore, I have made arrangements that in future a

ledger must stay with me with complete secrecy and total confidentiality, wherein the names of girls and boys of the Jama'at are entered. And if the parents of the girl are unable to find a boy in their family who is from the Jama'at, bears good moral character, and is at the level of their satisfaction; or in case of a boy, they are similarly unable to find a girl; in such cases, it is imperative upon them to allow us to find someone from the Jama'at. And every one must feel confident that we shall with true sincerity and sympathy for the parents try to find a suitable match for their boys or girls. Furthermore, it will be kept in mind that the match is made from a family of the same lineage or nationality, and if not, then at least they are from among those who usually don't mind making relationships among each other. High priority will be given to their good conduct, character and potential for progression towards goodness. This ledger will be kept secret and at times as the situation calls for, the information will be passed on. This ledger will be kept confidential and no opinion will be shared about them without having verified their intellect and chastity." Some people ask us to tell them beforehand. "Therefore, it is incumbent upon those who show their allegiance to us that they submit a list of their children with names, ages and nationality, so that it can be recorded in the ledger." ¹⁴

This was the announcement made by the Promised Messiah (as). Accordingly, the department of Rishta Nata (Jama'at matrimonial department) is established in the center of the Jama'at and all over the world. Some people are interested in providing this service on an individual basis so the Jama'at has assigned them some of this task. The Grace of Allah makes matches; however, we still have to face some challenges. May Allah remove them!

This is also an answer to those who say that we should be allowed to marry our children outside the Jama'at. The Promised Messiah (as) has said that even when they don't call us non-believers themselves and don't pass verdicts about us, yet they sit in the company of those who do and agree to what is said about us. They do not say anything out of fear. They go in their Mosques and they listen to them. Therefore, they belong to them and we should not make new relationships with them. Then the Promised Messiah (as) advised us to send the names of girls and boys. Now we have this department of Rishta Nata and as I mentioned, it is in the Jama'at the world over.

People complain about their daughters not getting married. One of the challenges is that parents send in the names of daughters but they don't send the names of their sons. If the boys are also in the list it will make it easier to make matches. In general, girls outnumber boys, 51 - 52 girls versus 48 - 49 boys, out of every hundred. However, if the profiles that are received by the Jama'at are looked at, they are in the ratio of 7-8 girls to 1 boy, so it is very challenging to find matches. If both sides send their profiles, then it will become easier to make matches. In the case of boys, parents try to make a match by themselves. Except in the case where the marriage of a boy is being arranged within their close relatives or immediate family, profiles of boys should also be submitted. In this manner, we would be able to marry these girls. In addition to the parents, the boys should also pay attention to this matter and first they should try to marry the girls within the Jama'at; if they don't find a girl from among their families then try to find one under the Jama'at system. Then again, some people get caught in the issue of family lineage, race, or beauty etc. I had mentioned some of it earlier that they reject the proposal based on these criteria. They are so deeply caught in these issues that the girls are left unmarried. The issue of different castes should also be dropped now.

In this regard the Promised Messiah (as) said, “Different races are not a label of nobleness. Allah Almighty has only made us different castes or tribes so we could be recognized, and besides these days it is hard to find out the caste beyond four generations. It does not behoove a righteous person to get caught up in the issue of caste. When Allah Almighty has decided that the caste of a person is not certified and that real respect and greatness lie in righteousness, we should not be caught up in these issues.”

I pray that Allah Almighty enables us to establish these relationships according to the ways of righteousness. May He enable us to get our children married, and according to the commandments of the Holy Qur’an enable us to help orphans and widows to get married at an individual level and at the level of the system of the Jama’at and of the society. May all those parents of girls who are worried be relieved of these worries, Ameen.

References:

- 1 Holy Qur’an 24:33
- 2 Ibid
- 3 Holy Qur’an 2:235
- 4 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Malfoozat, Vol. 5, p. 320
- 5 Sunan Ibn Majah, Chapter 11, Hadith 1870
- 6 Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 3, Book 9, Hadith 1874
- 7 Masnad-ul-Imam ul Azam
- 8 Jami’at Tirmidhi, Book of Nikah
- 9 Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 3, Book 9, Hadith 1858
- 10 Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 3, Book 9, Hadith 1855
- 11 Sunan Aldarmi
- 12 Jami’at Tirmidhi, Vol. 2, Book 6, Hadith 1087
- 13 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Majmooa Ishtiharat, Vol. 3, p 50-51
- 14 Ibid

SEEKING A MATCH - AN EXAMPLE OF THE WRONG WAY TO SEEK A MATCH - PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE BY ALLAH ALMIGHTY

(Excerpt from Friday Sermon, December 1, 2006)

A few days ago, someone wrote to me that he could not find a match for marriage due to non-cooperation from the *Rishta Nata* department (Jama'at matrimonial service) of Pakistan. I asked for a report and found that several matches had been suggested but they were not accepted because the boy wanted a match according to his conditions. He himself was only educated up to 10th grade; his own schooling was minimal but his conditions were that the girl must be educated, with a Master's degree; she should be earning, and her dowry should include a house and cash in amount of one to two million rupees. She should not only bear his expenses but also neither she nor her family should ask him to work. It should be his decision whether to work or not. Such a person can only be called insane. The *Rishta Nata* department should not pay any attention to such matches and such boys (I do not know why they kept suggesting matches to him), because if the *Rishta Nata* workers have to deal with such people, they might become insane themselves. Unfortunately for them they have to cooperate, but no one except a fool or a bully makes such demands.

Sometimes no demands are made before the day of the wedding, but right after the wedding the behavior of the boy's family changes completely. Sometimes complaints are received where unethical demands are made to the girl's family. If the girl's family does not respond to their satisfaction and the demands are not met, the girl faces taunts and disputes. May Allah give understanding to such people and have mercy on them.

Therefore, when a foolish and unreasonable person does something like this, he is actually being unjust to himself because no one can be unjust to Allah. This type of person has no perception of the Divine attribute of *Rubbubiyyat* (the Sustainer). These people do not comprehend the infinite benevolence bestowed upon us by our Lord, who has given us commandments as beneficence. When we act upon these commandments, we are able to reap the blessings of prayers taught to us by God; without them we would not be able to. One such prayer is found in the Holy Qur'an in verses 84-86 of Surah Al-Shu'ara:

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي حُكْمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي
 بِالصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾
 وَاجْعَلْ لِي لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾
 وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنْ وَرَثَةِ جَنَّةِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٨٦﴾

“My Lord, bestow wisdom on me and join me with the righteous. And give me a true reputation among posterity. And make me one of the inheritors of the Garden of Bliss.”¹

References:

1 Holy Qur'an 26:84-86

A BEAUTIFUL EXAMPLE OF PIETY IN A NEW CONVERT - MARRIAGE WITH A NEW CONVERT

(Excerpt from Friday Sermon, September 2, 2011)

Our missionary from Kyrgyzstan, Arshad Mahmood, relates that a girl named Jojez Abdullawia, accepted Ahmadiyyat through Salamat, who is the National President of Jama'at Kyrgyzstan. This girl was working on the American base in Kyrgyzstan, where a young American Christian man worked with her. Seeing this girl's decent conduct and modesty, this boy expressed his wish to marry her. The girl replied that since she was an Ahmadi Muslim, she would give him her response after inquiring from her Jama'at. Subsequently, she came to the mission house where it was explained to her that a Muslim girl could not marry a non-Muslim man since Islam does not permit it.

Consequently, this new convert, who was an honorable and good-natured girl, rejected the proposal from the non-Muslim American boy. The young Christian, who was very attracted to her, asked if they would be able to marry if he accepted Islam. The girl replied that he should convert to Islam only if he believes in its truth. She said that she could not accept conversion for the sake of marriage; meaning that if this is the reason for his conversion, then she will not marry him. Since Kyrgyzstan is a poor country, the girls there prefer to marry foreigners; but this girl rejected the proposal because she was an Ahmadi. The Christian boy, after six months of continuous research and perusal of the Jama'at's literature, accepted Islam and Ahmadiyyat by taking *Bai'at* on July 1, 2011.

During the time he was researching into Ahmadiyyat, this youngster also looked at the anti-Ahmadi websites and studied them also. But in the end, his heart was satisfied with Ahmadiyyat as the true Islam and Allah, the Almighty, granted him the ability to accept Ahmadiyyat. This is an example of true,

pious reformation; this is the steadfastness, which is prayed for and for which prayers should be made. This new Ahmadi girl had received a good marriage proposal, 'good' in worldly terms, but she rejected it for the sake of faith despite her poverty. This incident provides an opportunity for reflection for those girls who desire to marry outsiders and those who only take *Bai 'at* for the sake of marriage. This is why a rule has been made that until a year has passed since taking *Bai 'at*, and the sincerity of the boy has been observed, generally our girls are not permitted to marry new converts so that it can be determined whether or not the *Bai 'at* was taken only for the sake of marriage.

CHAPTER 2

WEDDING FUNCTIONS AND RITUALS

EXCESSIVE SPENDING ON CLOTHES AT WEDDINGS

(Excerpt from Friday Sermon, January 2, 2004)

The Holy Prophet (saw) said,

“One who gives up wearing expensive clothes due to humbleness and humility even though he can afford them, Allah will allow him to wear any garment that he prefers among the garments of faith.”¹

This *Hadith* is not only about clothes. It actually refers to intentions. Nowadays, people spend hundreds of thousands of rupees during weddings on clothes for the bride, the groom and their relatives, clothes that are worn just once or twice. This is done just to show off that their dowry has so many costly dresses or that they can afford such expensive clothes. All of it is pride and pretension. In earlier times, expensive clothes were of high quality and were used for a long time, but today they are not the same and cannot be used by their children or later generations. They are just wasted. In addition, by following and showing off fashion, they are disobeying the command of the Holy Qur’an that forbids women to display their beauty. Engrossed by fashion, no one cares how revealing the clothes are; but Ahmadi girls and Ahmadi women must avoid clothes that reveal nakedness. If they dress purely to show off, then other evils will also flourish.

May Allah enable every Ahmadi girl and every Ahmadi woman to wear the garments of faith, and save them from worldly clothes that are solely for the purpose of pretentious display. Similarly, if men dress to show off, they also fall in the same category. It is not forbidden to wear nice, neat and clean clothes but it is forbidden to wear them with the intention of showing off and for vanity.

References:

- 1 Jami'at Tirmidhi Book, Hadith 802

RELATING TO MARRIAGES - EXCESSIVE SPENDING - MARRIAGE CEREMONIES

(Friday Sermon, November 25, 2005)

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ
الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ
فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَا أُمَّرَهُمْ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ
الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ
وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ فَالَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا
التَّوْرَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مَعَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

١٥٩
ع
٩

“Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet, the immaculate one, whom they find mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel which are with them. He enjoins on them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful for them the good things and forbids them the bad, and

removes from them their burden and the shackles that were upon them. So those who shall believe in him, and honor and support him, and help him, and follow the light that has been sent down with him — these shall prosper.”¹

Every nation and every culture has a set of traditions, which they follow to celebrate their joyous occasions, including weddings. Whether they are Christian, Muslim or any other religion, they celebrate their joyous occasions according to their own ethnic or tribal traditions. Many religions have actually incorporated these traditions into their religious practices. Wherever you go, particularly in Christian societies, you can see that ethnic customs have been incorporated into religion. There are very few who completely ignore these traditions.

Islam is a complete religion; it does allow some expression of happiness on these occasions. For example, according to one narration, once Hazrat A'isha (ra) prepared a bride for an Ansari (native of Medina). The Holy Prophet (saw) asked her why she had not organized for songs to be sung as the Ansaris have a liking for songs. On another occasion, he said that the *Nikah* (announcement of marriage) should be announced in a pleasing manner and the tambourine played. But even with this, there are clear guidelines, as the Holy Prophet (saw) did not say that one is free to do anything one wished. Songs should be limited to a modest level of singing in a modest environment. These songs should have pure and wholesome lyrics. On one occasion the Holy Prophet (saw) himself expressed joy by putting some words together like this: “We come to you, we come to you, welcome us!”

So, it is incorrect to think that one can do anything, right or wrong, on the occasion of weddings and that there is no harm in it. Sometimes rude and vulgar songs that are embarrassing to the listener are played at weddings in our countries. The language of

these songs is so absurd and vulgar, that I am surprised that anyone can listen to it. We are grateful to Allah Almighty that Ahmadi society is protected from this to a large extent. However, because of the way these trends are making their way into the Indian and Pakistani society, I do get complaints that some Ahmadis also get drunk, sing, and dance to celebrate their happy occasions and raise havoc. May Allah save us from these! This has occurred due to coming under the influence of those religious groups who have forsaken all their religious values.

So as I said, Ahmadis can also be influenced by the society. I have received rare complaints. Therefore, Ahmadis should be careful to protect themselves from these vulgar activities. Some songs are improper because Hindus use these songs as part of the worship of their gods and goddesses. They have different idols for different purposes. These idols have different names and they are asked for help accordingly. Our people listen to them and sing with them without realizing their meanings. Thus, on these joyous occasions, instead of beseeching Allah's bounties and praying for the wedding to be blessed in every way and to result in progeny who will serve and worship Allah, they are inadvertently committing *Shirk*. Therefore, when I hear these complaints I advise them to stay away from such activities.

Another improper practice is dancing: people dance to absurd and vulgar songs at events held before a wedding and again when the girl goes to her husband's house, with relatives joining in. This behavior is not permitted at all, but sometimes it is reported that some liberal and materialistic families do indulge in such behavior. Then some complaints are made that such families are not disciplined because they are wealthy or they are related to an office holder and so no action is taken against them. They say that such people's behavior is ignored but if the poor act the same way, they are punished. This is just conjecture on their part; this suspicion is created if such occurrences are overlooked, either by mistake or because I am not made aware of it.

However, I would like to clarify that once these incidents, which shatter the dignity of the Jama'at and Islamic values, are brought to my attention, I take action without exception or discrimination. Therefore, you should eschew these suspicions.

Some families hold their separate programs with selected guests after most of the other guests have departed, and indulge in raucous and coarse behavior, including dancing. Dancing to vulgar songs is unacceptable, even if performed only among women or separately among boys. Therefore, today I am telling Ahmadis of Pakistan and India to reform themselves, as Hindu traditions are gaining popularity and making their way into common practice. The administrative system of the Jama'at, as well as auxiliary organizations, should keep a particular eye on weddings and to report any incidents of dancing to movie songs or songs that spread *Shirk*. They should not be intimidated by a family's name and relationships. This is the season of weddings in Pakistan and rare complaints have been received. So these few months should be monitored closely and such behavior should be reported wherever it occurs. During wedding season people are influenced by each other.

In fact, most of the non-Ahmadi guests who are invited to our weddings appreciate our tradition of beginning with recitation of the Holy Qur'an, followed by recital of devotional poetry and ending with collective silent prayers before the bride is given away. Our tradition is that we send the couple away with prayers for their happiness and the bestowal of Allah's blessings. We also pray for the offspring of the marriage to be pious and righteous. In addition to the poems, as I have already said, decent songs may be sung to express joy at a girl's wedding. However, although the Holy Prophet (saw) mentioned that the Ansari liked singing of songs, he did not say it *must* be done. He said that if there is a particular ethnicity or a culture that like it and if it does not take one away from religion or bring in innovations which take one closer to *Shirk*, then there is no harm in it. He did not

say that it is necessary that every tribe must beat a tambourine. It means that local traditions, which do not conflict with religion, could be adopted to express joy. This provides a light amusement as well and there is no harm in it if it is not an innovation in religion and it does not lead to *Shirk*. However, things that lead to *Shirk* or cause conflict with one's beliefs cannot be permitted.

The marriage ceremony has a close connection with religion, which is why the Holy Prophet (saw) advised that preference should be given to the proposal where the proposed spouse is more righteous. It is true, as I have said before, that Islam does not tell you to forsake the world completely but it does not tell you to become so engrossed in it as to forget your faith. It is wrong to think that a wedding is purely a personal celebration and a personal matter. If that was true and a wedding was only an occasion for singing, playing music and making merry, then the Holy Prophet (saw) would not have advised us to begin a wedding ceremony with the praise of Allah Almighty and he would not have directed us to adopt righteousness. In fact, the entire *Nikah* sermon draws attention towards *Taqwa* (righteousness). The foundation of every aspect of marriage is *Taqwa*. Therefore, we should stay within the boundaries of what is permitted and keep to moderation. We should not step out of these bounds to create disorder in religion. We should always remember that a person who calls himself a Muslim should know that the institution of marriage is to spread goodness, perform righteous deeds and to raise a righteous generation. Parents and relatives of the marrying couple should keep this in mind and the couple should also be mindful that this is the purpose of marriage; it is not just for physical pleasures or vulgar fun.

The Holy Prophet (saw) married several times for these reasons and he enjoined marriage for the sake of religion. He did not approve of those who are always busy in prayers and dedicate all their time for religious work, but are mindless of their duty

towards themselves and their families. He did not approve of those who marry only for wealth and beauty and are always worried about their worldly affairs and their families, but have no time for worship or for any religious service. In short, Islam does not permit us to indulge so much in worldly matters as to forget about religion. Nor does it teach us to live in solitude and to stay away from this world. Once it was brought to the attention of the Holy Prophet (saw) that one of the Companions had announced that he would not get married but would spend his time in worship and fasting. On hearing this, the Holy Prophet (saw) said, “What kind of people are these? I worship, I fast, I pay my dues to people and I married also, therefore whoso turns away from my tradition is not from me!”

Islam teaches us not to incline too much towards one thing and the Holy Prophet (saw) is the best model. Do not do too much or too little of anything. The Holy Prophet (saw) said that whoso turns away from my tradition, is not of me. In this there is a warning for those who look on marriage only as an occasion for having a celebration, assuming that they are at liberty to do whatever they like and think there is no harm in it. So the Holy Prophet (saw) said that those who turn away from his traditions are not of him. He said to those who indulge in excess: staying away from vain pursuits and establishing high standards of righteousness is to follow my tradition. Therefore, you should try to follow my tradition by treading a path of righteousness and by staying away from absurdity, sport and pastime.

Some people are influenced by other families, either imitating or competing with them and thus they waste their good deeds, for example, by singing songs that were sung at other weddings. All Ahmadis should be careful about this. If someone else did something, he will be accountable for it; you will be accountable for your actions. If a certain individual did something which was not reported to the Jama'at and hence he evaded any disciplinary action by the system of the Community, it is not necessary that

the next person will also get away with it. Above all [remember that] everything, all good deeds that you do, are for Allah Almighty and He is watching. Therefore, if you want to belong to the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah (as), you have to avoid everything which is innovation to religion and causes disorder. There are many improper things practiced at weddings which are then copied by other people. Social ills take deep roots in a society in this way, thus corrupting religion and its organization. So, as I said before and am repeating again, do not hide behind examples of other people's actions to save yourselves. Instead you should protect yourselves. In fact, if you see another Ahmadi do such things, you should report it, rather than using their example as an excuse, so that they and the whole society can be reformed.

I have already explained that if someone is dancing or playing indecent songs, they will be accountable for it. Some social ills may not equate to *Shirk* and may not corrupt religion directly but they are still undesirable activities. Moreover, these customs and trends are beginning to become a burden for people. Those practicing these customs are imposing hardship on themselves and difficulties for those who copy them. These include the dowry, overspending at weddings and *Walimah* and other undesirable and burdensome customs. We should be glad that we belong to a religion that relieves us from all these customs and rituals of society, family or tribes. These customs have made lives miserable and should be abandoned, not adopted!

The translation of the verse which I recited tells you that you are a follower of the religion and of the Prophet (saw) who came to relieve you from burdens. It relieves you from customs and rituals which become shackles around your neck and will enslave you. So why would you fall victim to these customs and rituals while you are a follower of the religion that relieves you from them? Allah Almighty says that you are the fortunate ones who are relieved from the burden of these shackles. Now you

can prosper and act righteously and success will be at your feet. Therefore, we should realize that Allah Almighty is giving us glad tidings of progress by abandoning these undesirable customs. Yet we are increasing our emulation of worldly pastimes.

I have also mentioned some undesirable customs that often appear in our Jama'at. Some parts of our society incorporate these societal ills as if they are necessary for a perfect wedding. These trends might appear in other countries as well. However, since Indian and Pakistani Ahmadis were among the first to accept the Promised Messiah (as), many of you sitting here have ancestors who accepted him: they have the greatest responsibility not to allow any custom or ritual to make its way into society and become a burden. These customs have no connection or relationship with Islam, faith, or the teachings of the Holy Prophet (saw). Once one culture imposes its customs, others will demand the right to practice the customs from their own countries also. Some of these traditions are not in conflict with Islam and may be practiced. As I mentioned earlier, the Holy Prophet (saw) has given an example of the celebration of an Ansari's wedding. On the other hand, the trends which conflict with your religion, no matter what nation they belong to, should be rejected. Ahmadi society is a united society and its mission is to establish unity in the world and raise the flag of Islam. If everyone started practicing their own customs, their religion would be changed and many things will make their way into it. These little things can lead to greater innovations into the religion. Therefore, we should be careful.

What is the model that the Holy Prophet (saw) has given us? His beloved daughter got married, as is common knowledge and everyone has heard the account. And what a simple wedding it was! Had he wished, he could have given her a lot. [These days] people take loans to make dowries. His Companions could have sacrificed a lot for him. There were many who were wealthy and

could have given many things to him and yet the Holy Prophet (saw) gave her away in simplicity.

Hazrat A'isha (ra) and Ummul Momineen Hazrat Umme Salma (ra) related that the Holy Prophet (saw) directed us to dress and prepare Hazrat Fatimah (ra) so that he could take her to Hazrat Ali (ra). He outlined the preparation of the room:

“We clay-plastered the room, prepared two pillows stuffed with the peel of dates and offered dates, grapes and sweetened water to the guests. We took a stick and placed it on one side of the room so it could be used as a hanger for clothes or the water bag of leather. In brief, we have not seen a wedding better than Hazrat Fatimah's (ra).”²

This narrative is only about her wedding. The Holy Prophet (saw) set a high standard according to the simplicity of that time. He told his daughter that simplicity is the right way and it earns the pleasure of Allah for which a true believer should strive. Later on, when on one occasion Hazrat Fatimah (ra) asked to be given a servant since her hands were full of blisters, the Holy Prophet (saw) said, “You should work with your own hands. There are many more Muslims who are more deserving of servants than you.” The point here is that the Holy Prophet (saw) emphasized and initiated the practice of simplicity from his own household. I do not mean to say one should also give only two pillows. This is an example of simplicity and you should adopt it. You should not burden yourself unnecessarily and nor should you wear the shackles of loans on your neck. You should stay within your budgets and work with what you have, and you can still fulfil this responsibility according to the customs and trends of the time. You should fulfil the responsibility of marrying your children as well as serving your guests properly while staying within your means.

In this context, I would like to share that many girls are getting married with the help of Maryam Shaadi Fund. Sometimes however, those who repeatedly benefit from it continue to demand for more, or they ask for a certain amount of money. So I advise those few, who are bothersome and sometimes insistent, not to be influenced by the customs and trends of society. The Holy Prophet (saw) came to liberate you from all this. He liberated you from all these issues. So, in this time, after you have entered the fold of the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah (as), you should strengthen your pledges. The sixth condition of *Bai'at* says 'He/she should refrain from following un-Islamic customs and lustful inclinations.' He [the Promised Messiah (as)] emphasized contentment and gratitude. This condition of *Bai'at* is for all Ahmadis, rich or poor. Every Ahmadi should take heed of this and give according to their means.

I have advised before and now urge that people must contribute towards Maryam Shaadi Fund, especially those who are wealthy. When they arrange their own children's wedding they should consider it their duty to pay for the wedding of a poor girl also.

Another issue, which is being raised, is setting the amount of the *Haq Mehr* (dowry given by bridegroom to bride). If, God forbid, the marriage fails for some reason, very often the man delays paying it. Then action is taken against him because of that. Therefore, you should think carefully before setting the *Haq Mehr* amount, so it is not as a means to show off but what can actually be paid. It should not be set as a large amount merely to show off to the world and then later on cause conflict in society.

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) relates that a person from the Ansar came to the Holy Prophet (saw) and said I have sent a proposal of marriage to a woman. The Holy Prophet (saw) asked him if he had seen her since the Ansar looked for something particular in women. He replied that yes he had. The Holy Prophet (saw) asked how much *Haq Mehr* had he decided to give? He replied,

“Four Uqiya of silver (one Uqiya is 1.2 ounce).” The Holy Prophet (saw) asked, “Four Uqiya? So, are you going to dig through the corner of this mountain to give her four Uqiya of silver? I don’t have that much to give you. However, I can send you on a campaign so you are able to earn some spoils [from a war].” Then the Holy Prophet (saw) sent a squadron to Bani Abbas and sent him with them.³

The point here is that the Holy Prophet (saw) did not approve of a *Haq Mehr* that is beyond one’s means. Since it was not within this Ansari’s means, he said it was too much. Nonetheless, the Holy Prophet (saw) knew that he would ask it from him and from the treasury. Therefore, when he came to the Prophet (saw), the Prophet (saw) sent him on a campaign to earn some spoils and pay his *Haq Mehr*. This is why you should always think before setting the amount of *Haq Mehr*. It should be within your means and resources.

Issues regarding *Haq Mehr* create many conflicts. We receive many cases in *Qadha* and on these occasions the situation becomes uncomfortable. Before the wedding, the family of the girl tries to secure the man by setting a large *Haq Mehr*. However, after the wedding, if conflicts arise and the marriage ends in divorce, men try to avoid paying it by making various excuses. At this point, the situation becomes very painful for the Jama’at system and for me because he will be punished if he does not pay the *Haq Mehr*. The Promised Messiah (as) has given very clear instructions in this regard. I can share with you that once someone asked him, “How much should the amount of *Haq Mehr* be?” The Promised Messiah (as) said it should be set with the agreement of both parties. Both families should decide and agree upon the amount so that neither party is to blame at the end.

According to Islam, the *Haq Mehr* does not have to be set according to a particular amount written in the *Hadith* or in the

other books of *Fiqh* (explanation of instructions). There is no limit on *Haq Mehr*. It is meant to be according to the custom of the time set by people. In our country [Pakistan], the problem is that the intention with which it is set can be different. Often the amount is set as tens of thousands with the intention to show off and to scare the man into good behavior; however, it can result in terrible consequences. Neither does the girl's family really expect to receive it, nor does the man's family have any intention of paying it. As the Promised Messiah (as) said that when conflicts arise, more issues are raised [regarding *Haq Mehr*]. He said, "Our religion says that when there is a conflict you should not pay the *Haq Mehr* until it is proven that this amount was set with mutual agreement and righteous intent, and that it is the correct amount. Then according to the man's status and the current trend, the decision was taken. This is because neither Islamic law nor the common law will allow the implementation of bad intentions."

The office of *Qadha* should be watchful of such cases. The Jama'at system or the *Qadha* Board should only mandate according to the financial status of the man and the amount of *Haq Mehr* should be set according to his means. On these occasions one has to dig deep into the matter. While status is being checked both parties should be truthful. The payer should not usurp the right of others, nor should the recipients fill their bellies with fire.

There is another issue regarding the *Haq Mehr* payment. Once a question was raised before the Promised Messiah (as) that a woman would not forgo her *Haq Mehr* (after the wedding, the in-laws wanted her to forgo it). The Promised Messiah (as) said, "This is a woman's right. It should be paid firstly at the time of *Nikah* or afterwards. In Punjab and India, it is [considered] a benevolent act on the part of women if they forgo their *Haq Mehr* to their husbands before or at the time of death. This is only a custom." ⁴

Once, a Companion of the Promised Messiah (as) said, “My wife has forgiven me her *Haq Mehr*.” The Promised Messiah (as) asked if he had placed it in her hand. He replied, “No.” The Promised Messiah (as) said, “Go and place it in her hand and then it is acceptable if she forgives it.” When the Companion returned he said, “I placed it in her hand and she refused to give it back to me.” The Promised Messiah (as) said, “This should be the way.”⁵

This is the right way, that you should place it in her hand and then ask her if she forgives it. Therefore, those who make excuses and say “I said this or that,” should think before bringing a lawsuit.

I must mention another issue here. Yesterday I received a letter from a Bangladeshi Ahmadi who wrote: “My wife has passed away and I had not paid her *Haq Mehr*. What should I do now?” A similar question was raised at the time of the Promised Messiah (as). A person said that his wife had passed away and he had not yet paid her *Haq Mehr* nor asked her to forgive it. What should he do now? The Promised Messiah (as) gave the verdict and said:

“*Haq Mehr* is part of her estate and is a loan to you. You should pay it and it should be divided according to the division of inheritance with her other property. There is a share for her husband as well. The other option is to offer it as charity in her name.”⁶

Here in Europe, I see cases where some people think that whatever rights are given by the local laws to the wife are sufficient and there is no need to pay the wife’s *Haq Mehr*. The issue here is that the local laws provide rights primarily for children, if they have any. Even if they provide for the wife, it is for a limited time period. Therefore, in my opinion it is not

permissible to demand that the *Haq Mehr* should not be asked for and that it should be adjusted as part of her legal benefits.

As the Promised Messiah (as) has said, the *Haq Mehr* should not be set more than a person's means. The *Qadha* Board can calculate how much it should be for you. Once that is settled, it becomes a loan on you and a loan always has to be repaid. So, do not make excuses for not paying the *Haq Mehr*. It is a loan; it should be paid as a loan and it has nothing to do with the wife's rights according to the law of the country.

On one occasion the Promised Messiah (as) questioned how could a person who is worth only ten rupees pay a *Haq Mehr* of one *lakh* (one hundred thousand)? That is why the system of Nizam-e-Jama'at has the right to amend or determine the amount of the *Haq Mehr* according to the means of the person. Non-Ahmadis have made many strange customs and they have made a mockery out of religion. They have added absurd customs and trends; for example, in the time of the Promised Messiah (as), it was prevalent in India (and I took this example from there) that the *Haq Mehr* was two *muns* (approx. 80 lbs.) of mosquito fat. Obviously, it is neither possible to collect that much fat, nor will the dowry be paid. The Promised Messiah (as) said this trend is absolutely wrong. We should be grateful that we have accepted the Promised Messiah (as) who has saved us from the verdicts and decisions made by these non-practicing scholars. Therefore, the couples getting married and their families should show gratitude by practicing truth, righteousness and having *Qaul-e-Sadid* (straightforward talk).

Another wedding expense that has greatly increased is that of food, causing those with lesser means to struggle with the cost and to ask for help. Often the bride's family spend extravagantly, as do the groom's, even though in Pakistan it is now forbidden by law to offer food or host such receptions. Yet people still do it and find new ways to do it. When they are told that the expense

should be according to one's resources, they reply that they only made one dish. The question is – is that not a deception? If you do not have resources, you should not do it. In any case, you should obey the law. Or whatever you normally eat should be made and only as many people that it can feed should be invited.

Likewise, some affluent people waste a great amount of food at their weddings. Eight to ten dishes are prepared which are not eaten and thus wasted. Many of these people are from Europe who go there (Pakistan) to get married themselves or arrange their relatives' marriages and show off that they have come there for the wedding. Sometimes what happens is that there is a lot of leftover food that is not even given away to the poor so that it could be used. Therefore, if you can afford all this, it is better to donate it to the weddings of the poor.

In addition, a great deal of effort is very often spent on extraordinary decorations. Some people who hold weddings in Rabwah suffer from a kind of inferiority complex. Generally, people from here and Europe, and a few from Rabwah, do not use the local businesses for wedding arrangements but make arrangements from elsewhere e.g. Lahore, because they think the quality is higher there. The local people from Rabwah do not have the means to do so, and often do not do so. Of course, everyone has the right to make their own choice but it should not be based on an inferiority complex. An Ahmadi should not have this kind of complex at all, or any other complex for that matter. These requirements turn into shackles gripping your neck.

Secondly, there are people in Rabwah who run businesses for wedding arrangements and they should be kept in mind. All facilities are available in Rabwah now. Those who are trying to run their business in Rabwah should be given consideration. It is a small city; these business men are there to give service to Ahmadis so Ahmadis should give them an opportunity. I am also telling the business owners that they should raise their standards

of service and make products of higher quality so there is no deficiency. They should compete with others and keep their prices reasonable so no one can make an excuse about higher prices. This is the secret of running a business. When Hazrat Musleh Mau'ud (ra) established Rabwah, he advised the shopkeepers to keep the quality of their products high and their profit margin low and that this would make their businesses shine. Deceptive practices do not make a business succeed. May Allah enable all of them to follow these guidelines!

May Allah enable us to free ourselves from all these customs and rituals so we are able to lessen our burden! May we be enabled to act on Allah's commandments and follow the tradition of our Prophet Muhammad (saw). And may we always give preference to our religion over this world in keeping with the teachings of the authority and justice of the time. To give preference to your religion over this world is an action that enfolds all other righteous deeds and directs one's attention to let go of all vices and absurd customs. So, we should pay special attention to this.

References:

- 1 Holy Qur'an 7:158
- 2 Sunan ibn Majah, Vol. 3, Book 9, Hadith 1911
- 3 Sahih Muslim, Book of Nikah
- 4 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Malfoozat, Vol.3, p. 606
- 5 Talkees Al Izhar Iazwatul Khumar, page 160
- 6 Fatwa Hazrat Masih Mau'ud, page 148

LAVISH AND WASTEFUL SPENDING ON WEDDINGS - MEHNDI - RONAQ - INNOVATIONS

(Excerpt from Friday Sermon, September 25, 2009)

An example of personal extravagance that seems to be on the increase is lavish spending on weddings. This is mostly done by way of imitation. Both here and in Pakistan, a wide variety of meals are being prepared for a wedding celebration, which is held in addition to the *Walimah* feast. While there is no harm in having celebrations, they can be kept very simple. Then the custom of holding a *Mehndi* (henna party) before the wedding by the bride's family to express their happiness has increased. Now a lot of money is spent on such occasions, cards are printed and distributed, and special invitations are extended. If a *Mehndi* is desired, then the bride's friends can simply get together and celebrate; but these occasions are being extended and exaggerated purely for show.

A new practice has emerged where the groom's family holds similar functions in the name of a *Ronaq* (celebration). I have observed that people with sound religious knowledge are also indulging in this new trend, which is in fact a *Bid'at* (innovation).

In addition, those who do not partake of these matters—and one should always assume in good light that they shun them due to piety—are branded miserly. In particular, some families travel to Pakistan and spend excessively on parties, jewelry and clothes, with each one trying to outdo the other. All this is extravagance. As I have said earlier, these savings could be used for the poor. This expense could be used for weddings of the needy. These large amounts of money can be used for orphans and other virtuous deeds. If awareness for saving is inculcated, it can transform human beings into '*Ibadur Rahman*' (grateful servants of the Gracious God).

NON-ISLAMIC RITUALS AND INNOVATIONS AT WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS - MARRIAGE FEASTS AND WALIMAH - DUTY OF AN AHMADI

(Excerpt from Friday Sermon, 15th January 2010)

As I am talking about occasions of joy and grief, the one considered the most joyous of these is marriage, which is also an obligation. When some Companions (ra) of the Holy Prophet (saw) said that they would spend their lives worshipping God Almighty and would not marry for that reason, the Holy Prophet (saw) did not approve. He said:

“True *Taqwa* (righteousness, love of Allah and fear of losing His love) lies in following my example and teaching. I have married and I also fast and offer worship.”¹

It is beyond one’s ability to even imagine the exceptional quality of worship offered by the Holy Prophet (saw). Thus, it is obligatory for Muslims that they must marry, unless there is something preventing them from it or something prohibitive in the way. But there are some customs, especially in the Pakistani and Indian culture, which have crept into marriage ceremonies, which have nothing whatsoever to do with Islamic teachings.

Nowadays, so much money is spent on some of these customs that in societies where these traditions are celebrated with much show and gusto, people have started to believe that perhaps these traditions are also obligations of marriage and that a marriage cannot take place without them.

There is the tradition of *Mehndi* (henna party), to which people have started giving as much importance as to the marriage ceremony itself. For its celebration, dinner parties are arranged, invitation cards are printed, and stages are set up and decorated

for the bride's seating; and not only this, but the dinner parties carry on for several days, starting well before the wedding. Sometimes, these dinner parties start several weeks in advance, and each day a new stage is decorated and comments are made on how many items were on the menu one day versus the other.

These are all worldly rituals which have trapped even those who are not financially well-off and as a result, they end up suffering under the burden of debt. Non-Ahmadis practice these customs, but now even some Ahmadi families are blatantly following these frivolous and indecent customs. Some families feel compelled to follow these traditions when they should actually have had the sense to listen to and obey the directives of the Imam of the time and avoided these worldly traditions. Instead, they have followed the society around them and are allowing the grip of these customs to get tighter and tighter around them.

A few months ago, I brought it to the Jama'at's attention that we should avoid spending unnecessarily on *Mehndis* and should stop turning them into huge dinner parties. On that day, there was going to be a *Mehndi* celebration at an Ahmadi family's home here in London. When they heard my sermon, they cancelled the big dinner party and only invited the bride-to-be's few friends over for dinner and sent the rest of the food to Baitul Futuh Mosque for a function that was scheduled there. So, these are the Ahmadis who respond quickly when something is brought to their attention, and then also write letters to apologize.

But I have received some complaints from Pakistan, and even from Rabwah, that some people have been over-indulging in these customs and because Rabwah is a small city, whatever is done there quickly becomes quite apparent to all. So now I am saying this very loud and clear - stop following these indecent rituals and customs and put an end to them.

The Promised Messiah (as) once said:

"People in our nation have the bad habit of wasting hundreds of rupees on marriage ceremonies"²

A hundred years ago, or even before that, spending hundreds of rupees was a huge expenditure. But today it is not a matter of hundreds of rupees but hundreds and thousands of rupees, well beyond one's means, which has probably surpassed the hundreds of rupees of that time.

The Promised Messiah (as) also said that fireworks and the like are not allowed.³ People are arranging fireworks now for weddings. Nowadays, people also decorate their homes with lights during weddings and do so excessively. On the one hand, there is this outcry which everyone coming from Pakistan speaks of that there is a power shortage there, that load shedding goes on for hours and that everything has become unbearably expensive; on the other hand, some homes are spending unnecessarily and excessively and are thus not only harming their country but are also committing sin.

Therefore, Pakistani Ahmadis in general should be careful not to be wasteful, and there should be particular regard for this in Rabwah. And in Rabwah, it is the responsibility of Sadr 'Umumi to monitor that there is no excessive spending and showing off of one's wealth and prestige during weddings.

It is due to God's special Grace bestowed on the Jama'at that its members have been able to stay away from the customs associated with occasions of sorrow. Ahmadis stay away from customs such as *satvan*, *dasvan* and *chalisvan* (customs observed on 7th, 10th and 40th day after death) etc., that are observed by non-Ahmadi Muslims. These customs at times, in fact oftentimes, become a burden on family members. But if people get caught up in one type of erroneous custom under the

pressure of society, then they can easily get caught up in the other kinds as well and then these kinds of things may start here in the Jama'at as well.

Thus, every Ahmadi should remember his or her status; that it is a blessing of Allah Almighty, that He has enabled them to join the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah (as). Now it is their duty to follow true Islamic teachings. In regard to marriages, the only obligatory act according to Islamic teaching is the marriage itself, so an event can be arranged for that. If one has the means, one can serve dinner as well. However, it is not obligatory for every marriage ceremony that guests must be invited and dinner served at the arrival of the bridegroom and his family. If the groom's party is coming from afar, then dinner can be arranged just for them. But if the laws of the country prohibit this, then one should not serve dinner in that fashion and should only have limited dinner arrangements at one's home for family members and the few people who have come with the groom. This is because at one time the laws of Pakistan had imposed restrictions. I do not know what the current situation is but to some extent, restrictions still exist.

The other obligatory event is the *Walimah* which is the actual commandment for the groom's family to invite their near ones and to serve them a meal. In fact, in Islam this is the only wedding occasion for which the commandment to serve a meal has been given. But even that need not be on a large scale. One can invite people and serve a meal according to one's own means.

So, as I mentioned, Allah has communicated to us the purpose of our creation. Every act that is an act of goodness, and is for the sake of pleasing God Almighty, becomes an act of worship. If we keep this in mind, then this alone will become our salvation and through this we can save ourselves from these customs. We can save ourselves from wrongful innovations in faith, we can

save ourselves from excessive spending, we can save ourselves from indecencies and we can save ourselves from oppression.

One type of oppression is the obvious oppression which cruel and unjust people inflict on others. Then there is another type of oppression which people sometimes subconsciously inflict on their own selves by becoming trapped in these customs and traditions. Then, by establishing these customs in society, they also inflict oppression upon those less well-off, who begin to believe that perhaps these customs have now become an obligation.

A society, where these kinds of oppressions, indecencies, and wrongful innovations in faith take hold, becomes transformed into a society where people encroach on each other's rights, and as I have just mentioned, where people inflict cruelty on each other. But if we safeguard ourselves from these ills, we will be safeguarding ourselves from usurping the rights of others. We will be safeguarded against inflicting oppression; and we will become those with whom Allah is pleased.

And today, who speaks louder than an Ahmadi for a society where people are concerned with pleasing Allah and fulfilling the rights of others? Today, who besides an Ahmadi pledges to shun blind pursuit of worldly customs and to shun base material desires? Today, who besides an Ahmadi pledges to live in complete subservience to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an? Today, who besides an Ahmadi pledges to keep Allah's Word and the sayings of the Holy Prophet (saw) as a guide for his or her each and every action?

References:

- 1 Sahih al-Bukhari 5063, Book 67, Hadith 1
- 2 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Majmu‘a Ishtiharat, Vol, 1, Page 70
- 3 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Malfoozat, Vol. 5, Page 49

CHAPTER 3

MARITAL ISSUES

BENEVOLENCE TOWARDS CLOSE RELATIVES - PARENTS AND IN-LAWS - RESPECT BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE

(Excerpts from Friday Sermon, January 23, 2004)

If your behavior does not match up to high standards of moral conduct, then you may be wasting your acts of worship. And what are the standards that Allah wants us to uphold? He says that standard requires that you show kind treatment to your close relatives. Married men and married women have close relatives through their wives and husbands. Close relatives of married men are the relatives of their wives, and close relatives of married women are the relatives of their husbands. Both women and men are commanded to show good treatment toward these relatives; both have been given the same commandment. When husbands and wives are treating each other's blood relatives kindly, when they are being good to the near and dear ones of each other, when they are trying to fulfil their responsibilities toward them, it is quite obvious that this in itself will increase love and affection between the husband and wife. When they make their best efforts to fulfil each other's rights, Allah says that then you will become those who safeguard the ties of kinship, that is, the bond of blood relations, and thus you will become My favored ones.

At times, a husband and wife will argue over minor issues in their home, and there may be friction between them. Allah has made the man stronger and more powerful. If a man adopts silence, probably more than eighty percent of disputes would end

right there. One only has to keep in mind that one has to show kind treatment and exercise patience.

What kind of an example has our Holy Prophet (saw) set for us in this regard? It has been narrated that once Hazrat A'isha (ra) was speaking somewhat loudly and rapidly to the Holy Prophet (saw) in their home; her father, Hazrat Abu Bakr (ra), who happened to drop in, saw this and could not contain himself. He stepped forward to chastise his daughter for talking to Allah's Prophet in such a manner. Upon seeing this, the Holy Prophet (saw) inserted himself between the father and the daughter and saved Hazrat A'isha (ra) from Hazrat Abu Bakr's expected punishment. When Hazrat Abu Bakr (ra) left, the Holy Prophet (saw) lightheartedly said to Hazrat A'isha (ra), "See, how I saved you from your father today?" So we see what exemplary conduct this is; not only did he try to end the conflict by staying quiet, but he also told Hazrat Abu Bakr (ra), not to say anything to A'isha (ra). And then he immediately diffused the momentary tension by making a lighthearted comment.

Then it is related that, a few days later, Hazrat Abu Bakr (ra) visited again, and this time Hazrat A'isha (ra) was speaking cheerfully to the Holy Prophet (saw). Hazrat Abu Bakr (ra) said, "Since you made me a part of your quarrel, now let me participate in your happiness too." ¹

The Holy Prophet (saw) was very mindful of Hazrat A'isha's (ra) needs. Once he said to her, "A'isha, I can recognize your displeasure and happiness very well." Hazrat A'isha (ra) asked, "How?" The Holy Prophet (saw) said, "When you are happy with me, you utter your oaths in the name of the God of Muhammad in your conversation. And when you are displeased with me, you speak of the God of Ibrahim." Hazrat A'isha (ra) said, "Yes, O Prophet of Allah, this is correct but I desist from mentioning your name with my tongue only." (Your love cannot leave my heart). ²

The Promised Messiah (as) said:

“Except for indecency, one should tolerate all instances of women’s rudeness and harshness.” He also said, “I consider it to be exceptionally shameful that being a man, one should fight against a woman. God has made us men and this is actually a supreme blessing upon us. Our gratitude for this blessing lies in dealing pleasantly and gently with women.”³

Once a friend’s inconsiderate attitude and abusive language was being discussed; it was apparent that he treated his wife harshly. The Promised Messiah (as) was deeply grieved, distressed and angered. He said, ‘Our friends should not be like that.’ After that he discussed women’s societal treatment for a long time and in the end said:

“My condition is such that once I happened to call out to my wife loudly, but I felt that the loud call filled my heart with grief, even though no hurtful or harsh word was uttered from my tongue at that time. After that, I kept reciting *Istighfar* (seeking forgiveness from Allah) for a long time, offered *Nafil* (voluntary prostrations) with great humility and concentration, and also offered some *Sadaqat* (charity) as this harsh attitude toward my wife was the result of my hidden shortcoming regarding the commands of Allah.”⁴

So, these are examples of kind treatment of wives, which are demonstrated in the actions of the Promised Messiah (as), as a result of following the Prophet Muhammad (saw). We can create peace in our home by following their examples.

Then the Promised Messiah (as) says:

“If you want God to be pleased with you in the Heavens, then your mutual relations should be like

those of two brothers from the same womb. Show mercy to your subordinates, and to your wives, and to your poor brothers, so that you may be shown mercy in the Heavens. You should sincerely become His so that He becomes yours too.”⁵

References:

- 1 Sunan Abi Dawud 4999, Book 43, Hadith 227
- 2 Sahih al-Bukhari 5228, Book 67, Hadith 161
- 3 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Malfoozat, Vol.1 page 307
- 4 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Malfoozat, Vol.1 page 1307
- 5 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Kashti-i-Nuh, page 13

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE - PHYSICAL CHASTISEMENT

(Excerpt from Friday Sermon, July 2, 2004)

In this Friday sermon, Huzoor (aba) gave very important advice about being a leader from a very famous *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet (saw) with regard to taking care of family members. Huzoor (aba) said:

“Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar (ra) relates that I heard the Holy Prophet (saw) say that each one of you is a guardian and each one will be asked about his responsibilities. *Imam* (leader) is a guardian and he will be asked about his responsibilities. Man is a guardian over his family and will be asked about his responsibilities towards them. Woman is a guardian over her husband’s household and she will be asked about her responsibilities. A servant is a guardian over his master’s wealth and he will be asked about these responsibilities. The narrator says that he recalls that the Holy Prophet (saw) also said a man is a guardian over his father’s wealth and he will be asked about these responsibilities. He said, each one of you is a guardian and will be asked about your responsibilities.”¹

Different classes of people are mentioned in this narration, who are guardians in their own sphere, but because I am talking about men at this time so I want to give a little explanation. It has become a custom for men to say they have responsibilities outside of the house and they are busy in their business and jobs, so they cannot pay attention to the home and watching children is the responsibility of women. They should remember that as men and head of the family, they are responsible to keep an eye on the household. A man should fulfil the rights towards his wife and children. He should spend time with them, even if it is only

on the two days in the weekend. He should get them connected with the mosque and encourage them to participate in Jama'at activities. He should arrange some recreational programs and should also take interest in their activities so they can share their problems with him like a friend. He should talk to his wife and children about their problems and should help solve these issues; this is the only way he can have the status as head of the family.

Any leader who is unaware of the problems of the people can never be successful; therefore, the best guardian is one who knows the problems that exist around him. It is worrisome that many people want to run away from or overlook their responsibilities, and this number is increasing. They try to live their lives in their own world, but a faithful Ahmadi Muslim should stay away from these things. Faithful Muslims are commanded that if they are ignorant of worldly affairs and busy in their worship or other responsibilities and have made such a routine that they are unaware of their surroundings, they are not fulfilling their duties towards their wives and children, and ultimately are not fulfilling their responsibilities towards society. They are on a wrong path and cannot establish higher standards of *Taqwa*. If you want to achieve higher standards, then you have to fulfil your duties towards Allah and fellow human beings.

It is narrated by Abdullah bin Umar (ra) that the Holy Prophet (saw) addressed him and asked if it is true that he fasts all day and offers Salat all night. Upon this, Abdullah bin Umar (ra) said yes. The Holy Prophet (saw) said not to do this, and to keep fast at one time and skip at another, and to pray at night but also sleep, because your body has a right on you, and your eyes have a right on you, and your wife has a right on you, and people who come to see you have a right on you.²

As a head of the household, the Holy Prophet (saw) fulfilled his duties towards his family. Hazrat Aswad (ra) narrates that he asked Hazrat A'isha (ra) what the Holy Prophet (saw) used to do

at home. She said he would stay busy helping his family and when it would be time for Salat, he would go for Salat.³ Who could be busier than the Holy Prophet (saw) and who worshipped Allah more than him? But when we look at his character, he had taken an interest in household affairs, did chores at home, and took part in other activities. The Holy Prophet (saw) used to say “the best of you is he who treats his family best” and he said “I am the best in treatment of my family.”⁴

We should check ourselves to see if we are following his beautiful model. Some complaints come that a man was sitting on a chair reading the newspaper; when he got thirsty he called his wife to get him cold water or juice from the refrigerator, even though the refrigerator was close to him and he could easily take it out himself. And if the wife brings the drink late due to being busy elsewhere, he starts yelling and screaming. On one hand, people claim they love the Holy Prophet (saw) and on the other hand, they cannot show even basic courtesy. Such examples come to light and, when asked, they respond by saying the Holy Qur’an has given them permission to scold women. It should be very clear that the Holy Qur’an has not given such permission. They should not defame the Holy Qur’an for their personal interests.

Regarding domestic affairs, Hazrat A’isha (ra) narrated that the Holy Prophet (saw) was the most soft-spoken of all people. He used to live in the house like a common person. He never frowned and was always smiling. Hazrat A’isha (ra) also relates that the Holy Prophet (saw) never raised a hand on his wife or servants. He never said anything to his servants.⁵

Nowadays, women are hit over trivial matters. When permission is given to punish women, there are some conditions along with it; there is no permission to do so of your own free will. Perhaps there are no Ahmadi women who need punishment due to these

conditions. Therefore, instead of finding faults in women, fulfil your responsibilities and fulfil the rights of women. It is said in the Holy Qur'an:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ
 اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا
 مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۗ فَالْصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ
 حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۗ
 وَالَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ
 وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاصْرَبُوهُنَّ ۗ
 فَإِنِ اطَّعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۗ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾

“Men are guardians over women because Allah has made some of them excel over others, and because men spend on them of their wealth. So virtuous women are obedient and guard the secrets of their husbands with Allah’s protection. And as for those, on whose part you fear disobedience, admonish them and keep away from them in their beds, and chastise them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Surely Allah is high and great.”⁶

Men are guardians over women and Allah has blessed some of them with excellence because they spend their wealth on their wives. But the men who sit home and do nothing are not guardians. Thus, pious women are obedient and safeguard that in their [husband's] absence which Allah has commanded them to safeguard. Those women who become rebellious should first be counseled. A bad reputation amongst the neighbors may have caused this. So first admonish them, then leave them separate in their beds and then you may bodily punish them. If a woman reforms herself from her rebellious behavior, do not find excuses or reasons to punish her. Remember, if you do not have fear of Allah, and think you are everything and woman has no status in your eyes, then keep in mind that there is Allah who can punish you for your actions. So act according to the appointed measures of punishment. The commandment to punish comes into effect when you see no sign of reformation and [wrong] behavior from the woman continues. It should never be the case that you start hitting a woman over every trivial matter. Do not be so cruel that you look for excuses and categorize a pious woman as an immoral one and start punishing her. Such men should remember that the Nizam-e-Jama'at, which has been established by God, also punishes such men. Do not try to defame the Holy Qur'an, and reform yourself.

The Promised Messiah (as) said:

“Our Perfect Guide, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) said, ‘The best among you is he who is best towards his wife.’ How can one claim to be pious when he does not behave well towards his wife? Only the one who treats his wife in the best manner can do good acts and show kindness towards others.” There are some

who appear pious but have many shortcomings; they are not kind to their wives and their families. Society should not just look at the outward appearance, but look deeply at such individuals. He said, “.... Only the one who treats his wife in the best manner can do good acts and show kindness towards others, not the one who hits his wife over the slightest excuse. There have been instances where an enraged husband hit his wife over some slight matter, and hit her at some delicate part [of her body] and killed her. This is why God Almighty has said, there is no doubt that admonition is necessary if a woman behaves improperly.”⁷

The Holy Prophet (saw) advised husbands and wives to find good in each other. He said, if you find faults in each other, or do not like some habits, you may like some other of their habits that you will admire. Adopting selflessness, those good things should be kept in mind to keep a friendly and reconciliatory atmosphere at home. This advice is for both husband and wife. If both keep control on their emotions, then those petty small fights, which are always happening in the homes will stop and children will not be distressed. Sometimes these petty matters become very painful, and one is left wondering if there are some people in this world who are worse than animals.⁸

After living fifteen years with the Holy Prophet (saw), Hazrat Khadijah (ra) gave witness at the time of the first revelation. When the first revelation occurred, the Holy Prophet (saw) was very distressed. Hazrat Khadijah (ra) said, “Allah will never let you go in vain because you fulfil obligations of kinship (*Sila Rehmi*) and are kind to your relatives, and you burden yourself with the needs of the poor, and you are keeping alive all the good things which are not seen anymore. You are steadfast on truth despite all the challenges faced by speaking the truth, that is, you say the right thing and you are hospitable.”⁹

The morals stated by Hazrat Khadijah (ra) about the Holy Prophet (saw) are the ones that should be found in a human being, especially in a man, which can lead to the establishment of a pure society. That is, he fulfills obligations of kinship and treats his relatives well and takes care of their needs, and takes away their troubles. *Sila Rehmi* (fulfilling obligations of kinship) has vast meanings. It gives the same rights to the relatives of the wife as there are for the man's relatives. It is just as important to extend *Sila Rehmi* to them as to the relatives of the man. If you adopt that habit and establish *Sila Rehmi* with both sides, then arguments or fights will not happen in such homes. Most conflicts happen over this issue. Men immediately get mad over trivial matters or if there are there are some complaints against parents or if a mother or father said something, albeit jokingly, men say I will never talk to your father or mother... or I will never talk to your brother. Then blame starts to be hurled around. These trivial altercations lead to major fights.

The Holy Prophet (saw) used to treat the relatives and friends of his wives in a very good manner. Of the many examples, I will relate one here:

“A narrator relates that whenever the Holy Prophet (saw) heard the voice of Hala, sister of Khadijah (ra), he would welcome her by standing up and announcing very happily that the sister of Khadijah (ra) had come. It was the Holy Prophet's (saw) custom that if any animal was slaughtered, he would make sure that the meat was sent to the friends of Hazrat Khadijah (ra).”¹⁰

Let me explain and elaborate on this, and I need to do so as some matters [of concern] have emerged. These days, men and women have started mingling in the society. No one should assume from this that they have permission to sit in women's gatherings or that they can freely sit with their wife's friends. There is a difference between being respectful and becoming friendly with

the friends of one's wife, as this only creates a lot of problems. Sometimes such incidents happen that the wife is left behind and the friend becomes the wife. The man makes a new life for himself and the first wife is left grieving. This behavior is very cruel and Islam has not given such permission. The men say Islam has given them permission to do this. There is a need for extra vigilance in these societies and men should understand their responsibilities. They should take care of that wife who has passed a long time with them, both good and bad. Now that the times are better, are you just going to reject her? This is not justice.

Hazrat A'isha (ra) related that one time she said to the Holy Prophet (saw) that Allah had blessed him with very good wives, now he should not miss that old woman (Hazrat Khadijah (ra)). The Holy Prophet (saw) said:

“No, Khadijah (ra) became my companion when I was alone; she became my support when I was helpless. She showered her wealth on me and Allah blessed me with children from her; she validated me when everyone called me a liar.”¹¹

This was the model of our beloved Holy Prophet (saw), but I have to say with great sorrow that it grieves me to hear such matters, and I become anxious that some of us have gone in the wrong direction. These people forget the sacrifices of their wives and some become so mean that they put pressure on the wife and demand money from her parents for their business. Sometimes they demand a share in the house that the wife has bought with her own money and sometimes they threaten her. It is very surprising that sometimes men from very noble families are the ones doing this. Such people should fear Allah and reform themselves. They should be clear that if some matters are brought to the Nizam-e-Jama'at, it will never support them and has never done so in the past. They should remember that they

have daughters who could one day be treated like this. If they do not have daughters and cannot feel the pain, they should remember that their life will end and they will have to go before Allah Almighty.

Hazrat A'isha (ra) related that if the Holy Prophet (saw) came home late in the night, he would not wake anyone up and he would eat his food by himself, or he would drink milk himself. ¹²

This was the character of the Holy Prophet (saw). But now we see examples [contrary to this]. Some men regularly come home late from work and if the wife eats earlier because of feeling unwell, the husband raises havoc in the house and stays in a very bad mood because she did not wait for him. This issue has become greater in our Pakistani, Hindustani and eastern societies. It was always there, but with education it should have reformed; yet it has increased instead. Even if only 2% of such people exist, it is worrisome and it can become a greater number. When a husband gets mad with his wife, then his parents get mad with her too, [complaining] that you did not wait.

There is a tradition about the Holy Prophet's (saw) wife, Safiyyah (ra), who was the daughter of the Jewish tribe leader, Hayi bin Khittab, a great enemy of the Holy Prophet (saw). While returning from the battle of Khaiber, the Holy Prophet (saw) took off his gown, folded it and put it on the camel where Hazrat Safiyyah (ra) was going to sit. He then bent his knee for her and told her to step on and climb onto the camel. ¹³

See, how he took care of this wife. The Holy Prophet (saw) has given us these examples to follow. Nowadays, some men do not take care of their wives because they fear people will call them 'slaves to their wives'. I am surprised that elders and relatives of men tell them not to become slaves instead of instructing them on how to increase their love and affection. They do not give them the advice consistent with how they are acting themselves.

Another narration explains how the Holy Prophet's (saw) family life was exemplary in every aspect. He used to take care of all the needs of his family. Even before his death, he gave special instructions about the needs of his family and that their expenses should be paid regularly after his death. ¹⁴

The men who have eyes on the wealth of women should remember that it is their responsibility (to take care of the family) and they have no right on their wife's money; they are responsible to fulfil the expenses of their wives and children. Even if they have to work as a laborer, it is their duty to take care of the household. If they work hard and pray, God will bless them with prosperity.

There is a tradition related by Hazrat Salman bin Awwa (ra) that his father was present at the time of the last pilgrimage of the Holy Prophet (saw). On this occasion, the Holy Prophet (saw) advised the audience, after praising Allah. The Holy Prophet (saw) said to always look after the welfare of women because they are connected with you like prisoners, and you have no right of ownership on them, except when they openly commit immorality (that is you have no right of ownership that you may start hitting them when you like, or treating them in a manner that you like, except when they commit immorality), but they have a right on you that you take care of their clothing and food. ” ¹⁵

The Promised Messiah (as) has said that the Holy Prophet (saw) is a perfect role model for us. If we look at the life of the Holy Prophet (saw), we can see how he treated women. I consider that man a coward who competes with women, and he is not a real man. If you study the life of the Holy Prophet (saw), you will know how good his conduct was. He had a dignified presence; yet if an elderly woman stopped him, he would stay there (with her) until she would give permission [to go]. ¹⁶

There is a tradition related by Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) that the Holy Prophet (saw) said to treat women kindly. Woman has been created from a rib and the most crooked part of the rib is the uppermost. If you try to straighten it, you will break it and if you leave it alone it will remain crooked. So treat women kindly. Another narration states that a woman is like a rib. If you try to straighten it, you will break it. If you want to gain benefit from it, you can do so despite its crookedness. ¹⁷

The angle of the rib, or the curvature, is the reason for its strength, and the most delicate part of the body is protected by it i.e. the heart, and some other organs. Man is taking advantage of Allah's creation. You can see in buildings and bridges, wherever they have to make them strong, they give them curvature. If you want to get benefit from the strong character of women, then do not try to change them according to your liking. Otherwise, they will be no good for you. It is proven that women are given a virtue of sacrifice. If you treat them well, they will always be ready to sacrifice themselves for your desires. You cannot gain any benefit by being tough or harsh, but with love and kindness.

Allah told the Promised Messiah (as) in a revelation, "This way is not good; stop the leader of the Muslims, Abdul Karim, from this. Be polite. Be polite because kindness is the key of virtues" He said, "The first duty of the faithful is to treat everyone kindly. Sometimes using a few bitter words is okay." ¹⁸

In the footnote to this revelation, the Promised Messiah (as) has said:

"This revelation is a lesson for the entire Jama'at on treating your wives with love and kindness. They are not your maids. In fact, marriage is a contract between a man and a woman. Thus, try not to betray this contract. Allah instructs us in the Holy Qur'an to treat our wives in a good manner, and a *Hadith* states: "One

who treats his wife well is the best among you.” Therefore, be good with your wives, physically and spiritually. Pray for them and avoid divorce because the worst person in the sight of Allah is one who is hasty in divorce. Allah made you a couple; do not break it like a dirty dish.”¹⁹

He also said:

“People have made mistakes in their treatment of their wives and children, and they have gone astray from the right path, and their actions are against the teachings of the Holy Qur’an. The Holy Qur’an says treat your wives with love and kindness but they are acting against it. There are two types of people. One group are such people who have given total freedom to women, so much that they have become immodest. They do not care for their religion and they openly act against Islam and no one questions them. The other group is very harsh and strict with them and makes no distinction between them and animals. They hit them in a cruel way without considering that they are hitting a living thing. They treat them worse than animals and maids: hence they treat them really badly. There is a very famous Punjabi phrase that a woman is like a shoe; take one off and wear the other one. This is a very dangerous statement and completely against Islamic traditions. The Holy Prophet (saw) is the perfect example. Look at his life and how he treated women. In my opinion the man who competes with a woman is a coward and not a man at all.”²⁰

Sometimes minor conflicts happen at home. Women as mothers-in-law have such habits that they will say throw the daughter-in-law out of the house. But we get surprised when the fathers-in-law, who are men and who have been given wisdom by Allah,

listen to their wives, and then talk to their daughters-in-law badly and will even raise a hand on them without any reason. Then they ask their sons to beat the wife and, if she dies, it does not make any difference; they will bring a new wife. May Allah give wisdom to such men; they should remember that the Promised Messiah (as) has called such men cowards and not ‘men’.

The Promised Messiah (as) has said:

“Husbands and wives should have the relationship of real, truthful friends. The first witness to a man’s good character and relation to Allah are these women. If they do not have good relations with them, then how is it possible they have good relations with Allah? The Holy Prophet (saw) has said, “One who treats his wife well is the best among you.”²¹

“Once, a conversation was going on in the masjid about women where it was mentioned that a well-known Ahmadi member had a very bad temper and used to treat women like prisoners. If they came out of the house, he would beat them. But according to *Shariah* (Islamic jurisprudence), it is commanded to treat them well.²² We should pray for women, for their reformation, and have fear of Allah, but should not treat them like butchers, because nothing can happen until Allah wants it to...”²³

The Promised Messiah (as) said that a man who does not treat his wife and her relatives with kindness and gentleness is not of my Jama’at.

References:

- 1 Sahih al-Bukhari 893, Book 11, Hadith 18
- 2 Sahih al-Bukhari 1975, Book 30, Hadith 82
- 3 Sahih al-Bukhari 676, Book 10, Hadith 70
- 4 Ibn Majah Vol. 3, Book 9, Hadith 1977
- 5 Jami'at Tirmidhi, Chapter on virtues of Holy Prophet (saw), Hadith 6
- 6 Holy Qur'an 4:35
- 7 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Malfoozat, Vol. 1, Pages 403-404
- 8 Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtues
- 9 Sahih al-Bukhari 3 Book 1, Hadith 3
- 10 Sahih Muslim Book 44, Hadith 108
- 11 Masnad Ahmad bin Hanbal Vol. 6, Page 118
- 12 Sahih Muslim, Book of Sharia
- 13 Sahih Bukhari 4211 Book 64, Hadith 251
- 14 Sahih Bukhari 2776 Book 55, Hadith 3
- 15 Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 3, Book 9, Hadith 1851
- 16 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Malfoozat, Vol. 2, Page 387
- 17 Sahih al-Bukhari 3331, Book 60, Hadith 6
- 18 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Arbaeen, Ruḥani Khaza'in, Vol. 17, Pages 428-429
- 19 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Zamima Tohfa Golrawiya, Ruḥani Khaza'in, Vol. 17, Page 75
- 20 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Malfoozat, Vol. 2, Page 396
- 21 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Malfoozat, Vol. 3, Page 300-301
- 22 Holy Qur'an 4:20
- 23 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Malfoozat, Vol. 3, Page 1

MORAL CHARACTER OF HUSBAND CAN BE JUDGED BY TESTIMONY OF WIFE

(Excerpt from Friday Sermon, February 25, 2005)

Hazrat A'isha (ra) narrates that the Holy Prophet's (saw) conduct was in exact accord with the Qur'an; his pleasure was in God's pleasure, and his displeasure was in God's displeasure. The Holy Prophet (saw) stated, "I have been appointed to perfect excellence of conduct."¹

And there are not a few, or ten or twenty incidents that portray the conduct of the Holy Prophet (saw). The wife of the Holy Prophet (saw) is not the only witness in this regard. To gain insight into one's domestic life, the testimony of the wife is highly regarded. The quality of one's morals and internal affairs can be judged by the testimony of the wife and children.

References:

- 1 Ash-Shifa by Qazi 'Iyad, Chapter 2, Section 10

MARITAL DISHARMONY AND FRICTION

(Friday Sermon, November 10, 2006)

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) gave a discourse on marital disharmony and conflict in his Friday Sermon.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ
مِّنْ نَّفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا
وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۗ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ۝١

“O ye people! Fear your Lord, who created you from a single soul and created therefrom its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women; and fear Allah, in whose name you appeal to one another, and fear Him particularly respecting ties of relationship. Verily, Allah watches over you.”¹

Nowadays, complaints regarding marital disharmony are on the rise. Sometimes, marital affairs and their conflicts result in bad and deeply hurtful situations. At times, coarse allegations are made against women and they are severely mistreated by their husband and in-laws. If it were not for the Grace of Allah, especially in the light of His commandment ‘*Zakkir*,² which means to ‘keep on admonishing’ and ‘admonishing always benefits others’, in addition to subservience and representation of the Holy Prophet (saw) and the Promised Messiah (as) whose

attention is drawn to counsel and to advise, there would be a great despondence and hopelessness prompting one to leave these people in their state as they have crossed all limits. One hopes that there is a seed of decency in those people who believed in the Imam of the Age, as a result of which that seed eventually sprouted into a bud, and those people have now accepted Ahmadiyyat and will adhere to it. Therefore, according to Allah's commandment 'to admonish' and the responsibility which has been laid upon me by Allah that I should counsel and advise in the hope that this counseling will be blessed, I will try to give some advice. I pray that may Allah bless and create such an effect in my counseling words that all the homes that are breaking will become a heavenly place. I have been trying to draw attention to this topic in my previous sermons, but today, I will explain it in more detail.

As I said, after receiving letters and after meeting with the Jama'at members, it is distressing to hear incidents concerning marital conflicts in the sense that our aims are high, yet we have entangled ourselves in an egotistical web born out of trivial matters; we are turning our heavenly homes into a place of hell. Instead of making a positive effort to support the progress of the Jama'at, our actions are completely negative. Whosoever is creating these problems, by entangling himself in his own web of ego, is not only creating troubles for himself and the other party, but also creating problems for the organization of the Jama'at, and for me as well. May Allah give them wisdom to understand the mission for which Allah raised the Promised Messiah (as).

The Promised Messiah (as) said his advent for which Allah has appointed him is to remove all animosities between the Creator and His creation and to establish the bond of love and sincerity between them. He also said:

“Allah has sent me in this world, so I can attract people towards their Creator and His Holy guidance with forbearance and gentleness, and through the light which has been given to me, show the right path to others. A man always needs some facts and evidence, so he can believe in the existence of God.”³

Hence, each Ahmadi should strive to fulfil this great objective. None of the Ahmadis can fulfil this objective of the Promised Messiah (as) until they rid themselves of their egocentric tendencies and finally act on that true guidance which the Promised Messiah (as) has given them.

If they do not have gentleness and courtesy in their own homes, then how could they show the path to misguided people, for they are lost themselves from their own path? Therefore, each Ahmadi should reflect on themselves and their homes and contemplate if they have unconsciously drifted away from the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Promised Messiah (as). They should assess whether they are under the influence of their own egos. Both men and women should self-reflect; in addition, both sides of in-laws should self-reflect as well.

Complaints are received from both the men's side and women's side regarding marital conflicts. It could be a fault of either side, even though, usually, it is the male side that commits the excesses. I recently asked Ameer Sahib to investigate the numerous complaints received on this matter and examine who is at the fault, whether the girl or the boy, or if the parents are also responsible for making this matter worse. According to the survey, the rate of incidents of culpability amongst men is three times that of women, whereas, in 30% to 40% of the matters, it is the in-laws who create the friction. In this case, the parents of the girls are still less responsible than the boys.

The boy's parents always try to show their superiority over the girl's parents. Sometimes the verbal aggression of the in-laws drives the girl to go back to her parent's house. Although it is wrong of her to do so, it is also the responsibility of the boy to serve his parents as well as to fulfil the obligations towards his wife. If this happens, then the wife will generally serve her in-laws in a good manner. There are those who trust their daughters-in-law even more than their own children. It is not as if there is no virtue or sincerity in the community, certainly the majority of the community is firm on what is good. But these examples that come out are worrying as these should not exist at all. If similar surveys were conducted in the USA or in Canada as the one conducted in the UK, a similar picture would emerge there as well. The department of *Tarbiyat* and all the auxiliaries need to be very proactive in this matter.

Islam has given us beautiful teachings to strengthen our family relationships and establish an environment of love and affection. One is surprised and feels sorry for those people who entangle themselves in the net of their own egos, and make plans to create disorder in not only two homes, but two families, and sometimes, even a whole generation. May Allah have mercy on them!

The wisdom behind the announcement of the Islamic *Nikah*, where a man and a woman are tied into a new relationship, is that they agree that they shall most heedfully abide by the Divine commandments that are recited at the time. They will strive to act upon the commandments of those Qur'anic verses which are being recited at the time of the *Nikah*, so they can mold their lives according to those teachings. So, the first admonishment of these Qur'anic verses is to adopt *Taqwa* and follow righteousness. They agree to act upon the advice given at the time of the *Nikah*; they are giving their acceptance of the engagement under these commands. Therefore in reality, if they have true love and fear of their beloved Lord in their hearts, who

fulfills their desires and needs not only at the time of their creation but also before that, then they will only do those works which can please Him and, as a result of this, they will be recipients of His blessings. Husband and wife are linked to each other by a covenant. If they promised to fulfil each other's rights at the time of their *Nikah*, then it is their responsibility to further beautify this relationship, and to care for each other's relatives.

Then they should also remember that if they care for each other's sentiments and feelings, and are respectful towards each other's relatives, those who seek to create splits in relationships will never be successful. Always remember that sometimes they are influenced by the society and the surroundings. If their foundation is based on *Taqwa*, then Allah will always protect them from these satanic attacks. If their relationship is based on trust and if they follow *Taqwa*, then the inciter, no matter how close they are to them, will not succeed. The inciter will only get one answer: the husband will say that he knows his wife very well and the wife will say that she knows her husband very well. There must be some misunderstanding. They should resolve this issue right away if a stranger goes up to one's wife, and tells her rumors about her husband and then tells the wife not to mention him in any way because he doesn't want to be questioned. He then goes to the husband, and tells him more rumors about his wife and also repeats not to mention him for the same reason. One who says something in private and does not want his name to be mentioned to anyone is only lying and trying to create problems and a split between the couple. If someone has sympathy for others, and they want to resolve the issue, then they should utter such words which may strengthen their relationship.

Therefore, both husband and wife should stay firm on *Taqwa*, pray for their mutual relationship to grow stronger and to have regard and respect for each other's relatives. If there is an issue, no matter who created it, the husband and wife should clear it up by talking to each other with love and affection, so that the

culprit's lies will be exposed. Letting the issues fester creates nothing but hatred, rifts in relationships and broken homes. At times when they are not following the path of righteousness and have no fear of Allah in their hearts, men make dreadful allegations against their wives, either by coming under influence of others, or the society, or in pursuit of a second marriage. If the need for a second marriage is warrantable, then they may go ahead, but if the sole aim is to get rid of the wife and hope she may seek *Khula* so that if they have not yet paid the *Haq Mehr* they may avoid it, then it is a petty and mean ploy. In such instances the *Qadha* board should ensure that the *Haq Mehr* is paid to the women. The laws of these countries also hold them accountable for other expenses.

I also want to address some general matters. Sometimes a couple buys a house, solely with the wife's money. At the time of separation, the husband will try to take partial payment from the house to his name. Although this is legal, in the sight of Allah he is clearly committing a sin. Allah Almighty says that if he has given a big treasure to his wife, he shouldn't take it back from her. Not only this, the husband tries to snatch all her belongings and possess them. Sometimes, a man uses the excuse that the wife is disobedient and does not want to listen to him. She does not respect his parents, but rather disrespects them and fights with his brothers and sisters. She incites the children against him and by gossiping brings disrepute to the family in neighborhood and amongst friends. There are clear commandments in such instances:

وَالَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ
 وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاصْرِبُوهُنَّ ۚ
 فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۗ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ۝

“...And for those on whose part you fear disobedience, admonish them and leave them alone in their beds, and chastise them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Surely, Allah is High, Great.”⁴

It means that first you should counsel them. If they do not understand and cross limits, which cause a bad reputation, then strictness is allowed. However, this should never be an excuse to become harsh with the woman and to beat her so much that it results in a bodily injury. It is a cruel act. They should always keep in view this *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet (saw) in which he says that if there is a need of physically punishing her, then it should be in such a way that there are no marks on the body. A husband should not make excuses in other matters, such as why did you speak loudly in my presence, why is the bread cooked in such a way, why have you spoken to my parents in such a matter, why did you speak in such a manner etc. These are petty little matters. He has no permission to hurt her physically. So men shouldn't try to adapt Allah's commandment according to their own wishes and desires, but should rather have fear of Allah.

Allah Almighty says that if the wife has taken an extreme action and there is a need to punish her, then always remember that he shouldn't have malice for her after this. If she submits to him

fully and is obedient, then he shouldn't commit any action against her.

Allah Almighty says:

فَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمْكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ط

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيًّا كَبِيرًا ﴿٣٥﴾

“Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Surely, Allah is High, Great.”⁵

This verse reminds men that if they consider themselves physically stronger than women, let them be mindful that Allah is far Greater, Stronger and Mightier than them. Always remember that a woman has some status in front of them, which is almost an equal status, but the men have no significance in Allah's presence. Therefore, they should fear Allah and they should refrain from these evil acts.

Another trend that is on the rise is that as soon as the marriage takes place, feelings of hatred begin. In some cases, hatred begins at the time of the marriage. Why do they get married in the first place? Unfortunately, it is on the rise in these countries. It seems that Ahmadis are being influenced by others, even though Allah Almighty has enabled Ahmadis to join the Jama'at of the Promised Messiah (as) and come under the influence of His pure religion. If the marriage is not to one's liking, then one still needs to stay together and try to understand each other, according to the pledge of the *Nikah*; one ought to abide by *Taqwa*. However, if feelings of dislike continue to develop, before taking an extreme step, both are commanded to appoint mediators, involve relatives, ponder over it all and reflect over it. There are separate commandments for both parties.

It is regrettable, although not very common, that sometimes the demand comes from the wife on the first day of marriage that ‘even though we got married, I do not want to live with him.’ After investigation, it transpires that the marriage only took place due to parental pressure and that their intent was to marry elsewhere. Parents should think about this and should not destroy lives in this manner. There is a large number of men from Pakistan, India, etc., who marry girls living in these countries; as soon as their immigration status is confirmed, they find excuses to get out of this relationship, and then turn nasty. Allah Almighty says in Surah Al- Nisa, Verse 20:

“And consort with them in kindness; and if you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing wherein Allah has placed much good.”⁶

Therefore, if the marriage has already taken place, then the virtuous act is that they tolerate each other, treat each other kindly, understand each other’s feelings, and adopt *Taqwa*. Allah Almighty says that they do not have the knowledge of the Unseen, and only Allah knows the Unseen. He is the Lord of the Universe. If they treat each other kindly in accordance with Allah’s commandment, then their disliking will turn into liking. They will find goodness and their relationship will improve.

Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih I (ra) said that once he heard about a man who didn’t treat his wife kindly and was very abusive towards her. He said that one day he came across this person along the way. He taught him, in the light of this verse, on how one should treat his wife. The man went home straight to his wife and said, “Do you know that I always treat you like an enemy? Maulvi Nooruddin Sahib has opened my eyes and now I will always treat you kindly.” Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih I (ra) said that Allah Almighty rewarded him abundantly and he was blessed with four beautiful sons. He lived happily after that. If someone

acts upon the commandments of Allah to gain His pleasure, He will always reward him abundantly.

Boys who come from Asian countries like Pakistan and divorce their wives after a few days of marriage saying they do not like their wives, and those boys who bring wives from these countries and then divorce them right away, make a petty excuse that they just do not like them. They say, “We only got married with them because our parents forced us to do so.” These boys should analyze themselves.

As I said these boys who create these problems are of two types. One type of boy lives in the Western countries and brings his wife from an Asian country and then assesses whether there is compatibility. Under the influence of the society, they assume that if there is compatibility between them then they will continue this relationship; otherwise they will kick the girls out of their homes. Such boys do not register their marriages after *Nikah* in those countries, so that they are not liable for giving any legal protection to the girls and nobody can take any legal action against them. Their actions show that they have no right to remain in this Jama’at and that even their parents are equally involved in these matters. However, the Jama’at protects those girls.

The other type of boy comes from outside the country (UK), marries a girl and tries to register their marriage immediately. Once the marriage is registered and they get the visa, they begin to find weaknesses in their wives and divorce them. Then they remarry with their own choice. So, both types of boy deviate from the path of *Taqwa* or righteousness. These boys should not be unjust to their own souls. They should not tarnish the image of the Jama’at. They should adhere to righteousness and follow *Taqwa*. Allah Almighty says that those who commit such injustice should always remember that there is a greater power above them who is most Dominant.

Another malady which is destroying homes after marriage causes fights and lack of peace in homes, is that despite the capacity to live independently, young men stay at their parents' home along with their other siblings. If the parents are elderly, there is no one to help them and they cannot move around or help themselves, then it is the son's duty and obligation to stay with them and serve them. However, if there are other siblings who live with them, then there is no harm in living separately. Nowadays, there are many problems that arise from these matters. It is not a noble act and they are not showing any kindness to the parents, rather they are committing more sins by doing that.

Recently a tragic incident has occurred in the Jama'at in one country. There was one family living together in the same house and each brother shared two rooms with their wives and children in that house. One day, two of the sisters-in-law had an argument over their children. When their husbands came home in the evening, one of the wives mentioned to him about the whole incident, telling him how his brother and sister-in-law said something about a dispute between the children. The husband didn't even investigate the matter, picked up a gun, killed his three brothers, and then killed himself. So the four brothers died in the same home at the same time.

It may be that a joint family system promotes love and affection, but if it only increases hatred, then there is no commandment for it. It is then better to live separately. So, in all those matters, instead of making an emotional decision, one should use reason to make those decisions.

Allah Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an in Chapter 24, verse 62:

لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَىٰ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْمَىٰ
 حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى
 أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَنْ تَأْكُلُوا مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ
 آبَائِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ إِخْوَانِكُمْ
 أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخَوَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَعْمَامِكُمْ أَوْ
 بُيُوتِ عَمَّاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ إِخْوَانِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ
 خَالَاتِكُمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتُمْ أَيْمَانَهُمْ أَوْ
 صَدِيقِكُمْ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَأْكُلُوا
 جَمِيعًا أَوْ أَشْتَاتًا ۗ

“There is no harm for the blind and there is no harm for the lame, and there is no harm for the sick and none for yourselves, that you eat from your own houses, or the houses of your fathers, or the houses of your mothers or the houses of your brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of your fathers’ brothers or the houses of your fathers’ sisters, or the houses of your mothers’ brothers, or the houses of your mothers’ sisters, or *from* that of which the keys are in your possession, or *from the house of* a friend of yours. There is no harm for you whether you eat together or separately....” ⁷

Explaining this verse Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih I (ra) said that if the families follow the commandment of the Holy Qur'an, then the traditional hostility in the Sub-continent between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law would cease. It is obvious, as the verse clearly indicates, that separate abodes for parents and siblings are permissible, and there is no harm if they go to these homes, and they can eat anything they want. Sometimes people think that if they live separately from their parents they will commit a big sin. Sometimes parents emotionally blackmail their sons in staying together and tell them that if they live separately then they deserve hell. It is a totally wrong attitude.

Several times I have asked the girls about this; in front of their mothers-in-law they say that they are absolutely fine in living together with their mothers-in-law. However, if I ask them privately, then the girls say that they are forced to live with them. If somebody investigates the matter closely, then the result is that sometimes mothers-in-law behave atrociously to their daughters-in-law, and sometimes the daughters-in-law are similarly to blame.

The Promised Messiah (as) came to spread love, so being an Ahmadi you should promote this love and should desist from spreading hatred in this way. Most of the people live together with their families with respect and love; however, those who cannot should not make emotional decisions. If they have enough resources and there is an option of living in separate homes, then it is better to live separately. Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih I (ra) made an important point that if it is necessary to live together then why has the Holy Qur'an mentioned the separate homes of parents in the previous verse? It is important to show kindness to the parents, and not to complain to them nor even use a word expressing disgust and only approach them with excellent speech. People should adhere to those commandments all the time. The commandment to take care of close relations on

both sides of the in-laws is a fundamental point at the time of the *Nikah*.

So, the important thing is that they should take care of each other's needs and strive to eliminate injustice, whoever is causing it. As I have said before, sometimes the men are so unjust that by making false allegations about their wives, they humiliate them; sometimes women do the same thing as well. These men, who presumptively avail of "resources" that are available to them, but are not available to their wives, are preparing a fire of hell for themselves. They should have fear of Allah and rid themselves of such atrocious acts.

Sometimes, men have committed so much injustice that they flee with the children to other countries, separating them from their mothers, no matter how much the poor mothers are crying and shouting. These men still call themselves Ahmadi! They also make dreadful allegations against their wives, even though it is clear in the Holy Qur'an not to dishonor them for your own gains. Sometimes, all the relatives of the men are also helping them. Immediate action should be taken by the system of the Jama'at against such men and all those relatives who aid them. One can see what is written in the Holy Qur'an and what their actions are. It is unfortunate that sometimes office holders help such men as well and they do not follow righteousness at all. Then, there are some men who incite the children against their mothers and makes false allegations on the mothers in front of their children. All these acts destroy the children's sense of morality. These men are just preparing a fire of hell for their children to safeguard their own egos. If the Jama'at takes action against these men, or if they are expelled from the Jama'at, still they do not care and leave the Jama'at for their own self-pride.

I also want to say something in the context of *Waqf-e-Nau*. In the situations where parents are expelled from the Community, their *Waqf-e-Nau* children are also expelled from the Jama'at.

Local Jama'ats should investigate the matter on a local level. In Pakistan, the Department of *Waqf-e-Nau* always keeps a record of such matters. In other countries, Ameer Jama'at, or the Secretary *Waqf-e-Nau*, should take care of these issues. In case of pardon, each individual case is presented to the Khalifah, whether the *Waqf* is to be reinstated or not. This is why it is essential to maintain records.

Therefore, the actual purpose is to remove oppression and to create justice. Among the duties of Khilafat, justice and establishment of justice rank very high. Therefore, the office holders of the Community should be mindful that they represent the Khalifah in their tasks and ought to carry out their obligations fully mindful that God is ever watching them. If they are angry with someone over something, they should wait a couple of days before handling the specific matter. On the other side, the other party should not make false statements to obtain their rights unlawfully (they should avoid injustice).

As I have said before, if you keep in mind the admonishments mentioned at the time of *Nikah*, follow righteousness, and speak the straightforward word (*Qaul-e-Sadid*), then these problems will never arise. If you obtain your rights illegally, then you are committing falsehood and idolatry. The Holy Prophet (saw) said that if you cause me to make an unlawful decision, then you are putting yourselves in fire. If you are devoid of *Taqwa*, then it will make you commit idolatry. Thus, you should say *Istighfar*, seek forgiveness and mercy from Allah.

As I mentioned earlier, sometimes the fathers, who flee with the children to other countries, make false statements or incite the children to give evidence against their mothers in courts, snatch the children, or hide them unlawfully. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an, no mother should suffer pain because of her child or no father should suffer pain because of his child. If they do not follow righteousness and pay the rights and duties towards each

other, then always be mindful, Allah knows everything and He sees everything. He will never let the wicked or the unjust go without punishment. Men should always be mindful that just as their parents have rights over them, the mothers of their children have rights over their children. As I said, and as the survey also showed, mostly the men are the ones who cause this injustice. So the men should look after their wives and provide them with all the rights. If they follow righteousness, then they will see, by the Grace of Allah, their wives will be obedient to them. So, rather than having broken homes, their homes will become happy and present a great example in the society.

The Promised Messiah (as) wrote a letter of admonition to one of his Companions:

“It is distressing that I heard from some of your truly beloved and devoted friends, that in matrimonial matters and the treatment of other family members, your behavior is extremely harsh towards them. Sometimes you are so impatient that you forget your limits. This complaint amazes me because all of those friends who mentioned you, actually praise your character and truly love you. Man has been made guardian for his wife, and he tries to use his superiority which he has over women to humiliate her or to show his own pride in petty matters. However, Allah Almighty and the Holy Prophet (saw) have enjoined much tolerance and patience in the treatment of one’s wife. So, I feel it is important to inform you about this. Allah says in the Holy Qur’an, ‘But consider them as your dear friend and treat them gently in this transitory world.’ The Holy Prophet (saw) said that ‘the best among you is the one who is best in the treatment of his wife.’ There is so much emphasis on the kind treatment of one’s wife that I cannot cover this in this letter. A man’s wife is vulnerable and weak and Allah has

handed her over to you. Allah is watching over how a person deals in this matter. He should show kindness to her and should always remember that his wife is a temporary guest who has been allocated in his charge and He is watching over how far he can carry out the responsibilities of the guest. You are a servant of God and she is a servant of God as well. What preference or superiority do you have on her? A husband should not be harsh with her and should show mercy to her instead. He should teach her religion. Actually, my opinion is that a man's wife is the first trial of his character. If I even speak a little harshly with my wife in anger, my whole body begins to tremble that Allah Almighty has handed me this girl [who has come] from far away. If I am ever harsh with her, I consider it as a sinful act. I then tell her to pray for me in her *Salat* that if it is against the pleasure of God, May Allah forgive me. I fear a great deal that I do not get involved in such an atrocious act. So I hope you will also do the same. Our Great Master, the Holy Prophet (saw) had much courtesy for his wives. What more can I write? Was-Salam.”⁸

References:

- 1 Holy Qur'an 4:2
- 2 Holy Qur'an 87:10
- 3 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Tiryah-ul-Qulub*, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 15, Pages 143-144
- 4 Holy Qur'an 4:35
- 5 Holy Qur'an 4:35
- 6 Holy Qur'an 4:20
- 7 Holy Qur'an 24:62
- 8 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Al-Hakam*; Vol. 9 No. 13, April 17th, 1905, page 6

RIGHTS OF ORPHANS, WIDOWS AND DIVORCED WOMEN

(Excerpt from Friday Sermon, November 16, 2007)

The third verse which I quoted:

وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ ۗ وَلَا
يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ
إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنْنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۗ وَبُعُولَتُهُنَّ
أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا وَلَهُنَّ
مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ وَلِلرِّجَالِ
عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ٥

“And the divorced women shall wait concerning themselves for three courses; and it is not lawful for them that they conceal what Allah has created in their wombs, if they believe in Allah and the Last Day; and their husbands have the greater right to take them back during that period, provided they desire reconciliation. And they (the women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in equity; but men have a degree of advantage above them. And Allah is Mighty and Wise.”¹

This verse refers to women’s rights. A divorced woman has the right and freedom to remarry after a period of *Iddat* (a fixed number of stipulated days). Another command of the Holy

Qur'an states that they should not be prevented from remarrying. Rather she should be assisted, as she is mature herself, and it is fine if she decides to remarry.

A woman is instructed that if she finds out that she is pregnant after a divorce, she should inform her ex-husband and should not hide it. If the marriage did not work out for some reason, it does not mean that she should take revenge and hide the pregnancy from the father of the child. Allah says that this news might soften his heart and he might return and the marriage may be saved. Allah says that husbands have a greater obligation to take them (their wives) back so that marriages can be saved and grievances can be removed. Further, close relatives are instructed not to become a hindrance. Sometimes it is the close friends and relatives who are destroying the life of the girl. Even if the girl is not objecting and ready for reconciliation, her relatives create a fuss, that as she has been divorced, they will not send her back. It becomes a matter of false honor and ego.

Sometimes cases are reported to me also. I am amazed to see that sometimes parents are destroying their own daughters' homes due to their false sense of honor. Some girls write letters to me that we, (husband and wife), want to live together, but our parents have made it an issue because of their egos. So, Allah says that the relatives should not become a hindrance in re-establishment of this union. If a man has realized his mistake, then the girl's home should not be destroyed only due to a false sense of honor. Thus, by safeguarding the rights of women, Allah establishes the rule that women have the same rights over men as men have over them.

Allah says:

“And the divorced women shall wait concerning themselves for three courses; and it is not lawful for them that they conceal what Allah has created in their

wombs, if they believe in Allah and the Last Day; and their husbands have the greater right to take them back during that period, provided they desire reconciliation. And they (the women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in equity; but men have a rank above them. And Allah is Mighty, Wise.”²

So, for the sake of humanity and for a relationship that has been built on a covenant, both men and women have been instructed to fulfil the rights of each other. If both are attentive to each other’s rights, their relationship will grow stronger. Thus, this commandment is given to establish the rights of women. These beautiful teachings of Islam have brought about a revolution in society. Before the advent of Islam, Arabs had deprived women of all their rights. In fact, no other religion has established the rights of women as Islam has done. The Holy Prophet (saw) stressed the rights of women on many occasions. The Holy Prophet (saw) said,

“The best among you is the one who is best to his wives and I am the best of those who are good to their wives.”³

In Surah Al-Nisa verse 20, Allah Almighty, says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرْتُبُوا
النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا ط وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا
بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ
بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا
شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٢٠﴾

“O ye who believe! it is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will; nor should you detain them wrongfully that you may take away part of that which you have given them, except that they be guilty of a flagrant evil; and consort with them in kindness; and if you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing wherein Allah has placed much good.”⁴

Thus, a man should not be hasty in his decisions. He should remember that Allah has the power to lead this to a good end. These days, divorces are very common. That is why men should take their time before making such decisions. They should keep in mind that sometimes petty issues lead to huge problems. It is possible that you may not like something in your marriage, but Allah might have placed benefit in it for you.

If you treat your wives in this manner for the sake of Allah’s pleasure, then through prayers, He will bless your efforts. If there are children in homes that are on the verge of destruction and are about to break up, the children will be very disturbed. But when the husband and wife seek the Will and Pleasure of Allah, the same homes become peaceful and a means of fostering love and affection.

In the same verse, Allah has advised both men and women that although they are both equal in rights, men have a higher rank due to some administrative reasons and also because of some strengths and responsibilities. Therefore, women should give men some margin for this. And Allah has instructed men that if He has granted them superiority in the role of guardian, then it is their job to understand and fulfil their responsibilities; it is the man’s duty to provide for the operation and expenses of the household. It does not mean that he should stay in the house and force his wife to go out to earn money and work. This is happening in some households here in Western society. It is the

man's job to assume total responsibility for his wife and children.

Thus, Allah, who is Mighty and Wise, has established the rights of men and women. And by using the terms Mighty and Wise in the end, Allah has reminded men that they should not take advantage of the authority they have been given over women, because the Mighty Lord is above them. He is watching all their actions. It is His rule. His eye is on them. If they mistreat their families, they will earn His wrath. So they should use their authority and advantage over women to the extent they are allowed, and be mindful of their duty to fulfil their rights. If they keep these things in mind, they will benefit from the wisdom of the Wise God who has given them this advantage. Therefore, these are the commandments of the Mighty and Wise Allah, the Exalted, which will establish peace in society and tranquility in homes. Then acts of goodness abound and the beauty of this profound teaching is enhanced and continues to spread. But if a person is not mindful of these teachings, he will not only disrupt the peace of society, but will also earn the wrath of Allah Almighty. May Allah enable us all to understand this profound teaching, Ameen.

References:

- 1 Holy Qur'an 2:229
- 2 Holy Qur'an 2:229
- 3 Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 3, Book 9, Hadith 1977
- 4 Holy Qur'an 4:20

CONTROLLING ANGER IN THE HOME

(Excerpt from Friday Sermon, March 21, 2008)

The following example from his domestic life shows how the Holy Prophet (saw) controlled his anger and trained others in such a way that they would realize their error, without exercising harshness.

It is related that a man from the Bani Su'ata requested Hazrat A'isha (ra) if she could tell him about the Holy Prophet's blessed characteristics. Hazrat A'isha (ra) asked, "Have you not read in the Holy Qur'an:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٥٠﴾

"And thou dost surely possess high moral excellences." ¹

Then Hazrat A'isha (ra) related that once the Holy Prophet (saw) was with his Companions. She had prepared food for him and, at the same time, Hazrat Hafsah (ra) had also prepared food and sent it before she (Hazrat A'isha) could send hers. She instructed her maid to spill Hazrat Hafsah's food out of its bowl. While placing the food in front of Prophet Muhammad (saw), the maid dropped the food in such a way that the bowl broke and the food fell down. Hazrat A'isha (ra) narrates that the Holy Prophet (saw) collected the broken pieces of the container, picked up the spilt food and put it on a leather placemat that was lying there, and then ate the same food. He returned Hazrat A'isha's (ra) food bowl to Hazrat Hafsah (ra), saying she should accept it in lieu of hers and eat the food also. Hazrat A'isha (ra) says that there was no sign of anger on the Holy Prophet's (saw) blessed face. ²

Through his action the Holy Prophet (saw) admonished the servant and Hazrat A'isha (ra) that mutual rivalry among wives

should remain within reasonable limits; in fact, there should be no animosity amongst each other. The exemplary model set by the Holy Prophet (saw) in all his affairs was not only for the people of that time; rather it is an example for us to follow till the end of the world. It should not be that we only read, listen and enjoy these examples but when the time comes, we overlook their significance.

Numerous complaints are received about how masters abuse their servants for minor mistakes. Similarly, some husbands treat their wives brutally. They beat them wrongfully. Some cases are so bad that the wives have to go to hospital. In Europe, the police often make arrests and then a series of legal cases starts. The *Sunnah* (practice) of the Holy Prophet (saw) of being gentle, loving and kind towards family members is there for us to act upon. In some instances, the situation gets out of control and the husband's relatives become a part of the quarrel. Sisters-in-law and mothers-in-law also beat the poor wife. In any case, such situations should be avoided. To control one's anger, the Holy Prophet (saw) said that if an angry person is standing, he should sit down, and if he is sitting, then he should lie down and recite prayers of *Istighfar* (seek forgiveness) and *Lahaul* (complete surrender to God), and pour cold water over himself or perform ablution. All these admonishments have been given so that one may act on them.

In these times the Promised Messiah (as), the true servant of the Holy Prophet (saw) has presented lofty examples of noble conduct. I will mention a few here:

First, he would admonish and then remind his followers how the Holy Prophet (saw) emphasized those qualities that are essential to maintain peace in one's home. Regarding treatment of women, the Promised Messiah (as) said:

“Except for indecency, all instances of women’s rudeness and harshness should be tolerated. I consider it to be exceptionally shameful that being a man, one should fight against a woman. God has made us men and this is actually a supreme blessing upon us. Our gratitude for this blessing lies in dealing pleasantly and gently with women.”³

On one occasion, he came to know about a friend’s rudeness and use of foul language. Someone complained that he treats his wife very harshly. The Promised Messiah (as) was very displeased to hear this and said, “Our friends should not be like this.” After this, he advised us on treatment of women for a long period.

References:

- 1 Holy Qur’an 68:5
- 2 Sunan Ibn Majah 2333, Book 13, Hadith 26
- 3 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Malfoozat, Vol. 1, Page 307

LACK OF KINDNESS IN MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

(Excerpt from Friday Sermon, April 4, 2008)

This advice is extremely important. Every day I receive some letters, which indicate that lack of gentleness and steadfastness is the greatest reason behind marital conflicts. The Promised Messiah (as) has shown his concern regarding this lack of kindness and gentleness. In his time, there were probably only a few people who were lacking the qualities that he was concerned about, but with the increase in the Jama'at's membership, certain vices may increase. Therefore, we must pay attention to this.

The system of the Jama'at can carry out reformation to a certain degree. However, each individual must engage in his own real reformation himself. If every Ahmadi would heed the warning of the Promised Messiah (as), "One whose conduct is not good, I am afraid his faith is in danger," then every Ahmadi's heart would quiver, and it *should* quiver. I have observed that it is arrogance and lack of kindness and forbearance that become the basis of most conflicts. If one party says something, the other party, instead of ending the conflict by showing forbearance, replies back with more aggression. As a result, conflicts become lengthy. *Islahi* (counseling) Committees are unable to resolve the matter; then it is sent to *Qadha* (judiciary department of the Jama'at). Then if someone refuses to accept the decision of the *Qadha*, we have to expel such a person from the Jama'at, even though it is against our own wish.

If this happens, a perfectly good family is deprived of the enlightenment it previously enjoyed. Some people regress so far that, in their stubbornness, as the Promised Messiah (as) said, their faith becomes endangered. In fact, their faith is not just endangered; it is lost. Because of their parents' punishment, some good-natured children are negatively affected by their parents' actions and they have to face embarrassment in their surroundings. Then the issue of the *Waqf-e-Nau* children of such

quarrelsome parents has to be reviewed, whether or not to continue the dedication of these children. If parents are unable to fulfil their social obligations and are not obedient to the Jama'at system, then it is unlikely that they will be able to train their children properly. Therefore, due to lack of kindness and humility, a family gambles with its own faith as well as that of its progeny. As the Promised Messiah (as) said, such people do not have the right to tell others that they have accepted the truth. Further, they may also become the cause of making a pious person drift away from Ahmadiyyat. Thus one mistake gives birth to another mistake and it continues to increase.

Therefore, for an Ahmadi who gets so overwhelmed by his anger that he becomes unmindful of the consequences, this is a matter of great concern and should be so. Most Ahmadis become troubled after being penalized. They write letters of apology and unconditionally agree to accept every decision. If they would ponder over these consequences beforehand, then at least their children and their families could be saved from humiliation.

DISPUTES BETWEEN HUSBANDS AND WIVES

(Excerpt from Friday Sermon, August 22, 2008)

Nowadays, cases from here and from all over the world are reported to me regarding disputes between husbands and wives in which both men and women are at fault. The men do not practice tolerance that a true believer should have, nor do the women show any tolerance at all. I have drawn your attention towards this previously also. I have said several times that although most of the time men are at fault, there are some situations when only the girl or woman is wrong. Both sides are responsible for creating grievances and destroying their homes. If people on both sides control their emotions and become righteous at heart, such problems would never arise. The Holy Prophet (saw) admonished such people that while both of you see flaws in one another, there must also be some qualities that you like in each other as well. It is not possible that there are only flaws in the other person. If you focus on the good qualities and adopt the habit of sacrifice, then an atmosphere of love, affection and reconciliation can develop between you. The wives of the Holy Prophet (saw) have testified that he was the best of all in kind treatment towards his wives. Thus, when the Holy Prophet (saw) admonishes us, it is not just a piece of advice; the Holy Prophet (saw) has also proven it by his personal example.

ALLAH SAVES THOSE WHO CONCEAL THE FAULTS OF OTHERS

(Excerpt from Friday Sermon, March 27, 2009)

What is the responsibility that the Holy Prophet (saw) has laid upon a believer, so that he may benefit from the quality of *Sattar* (Concealer of faults) of Allah Almighty and attract His blessings? I will present a few *Ahadith* in this respect.

It has been narrated in a *Hadith* that the Holy Prophet (saw) said:

“Anyone who shields the honor of a believing woman, Allah will protect him from the fire.”¹

I have chosen this *Hadith* especially for those people, husbands and wives, who start making allegations against each other in the event of a conflict. Furthermore, their relatives get involved and make unwarranted accusations, especially the boy's family about the girl and the girl's family about the boy. Allah has admonished us to conceal each other's faults. Some allegations have truth in them, but some are completely unfounded. In some cases, the boy or his family make such allegations against the girl in *Qadha* (department of justice within the Jama'at) that one is embarrassed to hear them. The Holy Prophet (saw) stated that if one shields the honor of a believing woman, then Allah will protect him from the fire. In some cases, separation of the couple takes place. A couple is free to be separated for whatsoever reasons but this can be achieved without making baseless allegations against each other. Thus, an Ahmadi should avoid such things, no matter which side it is. Here the example of a woman's honor is given; however, in the next *Hadith*, it is given as a general guideline.

Hazrat Abu Sa'id Khudri (ra) narrated that the Holy Prophet (saw) said:

“Allah will grant Paradise to a believer who conceals a shortcoming of his brother, after seeing it.”²

This means that shortcomings should be concealed instead of being divulged. This *Hadith* warns relatives on both sides, and also advises that if you want to resolve your issues, do so in a permissible manner; not by generating accusations against each other. And if you do it in the permissible manner, that is, that you conceal each other’s faults even when your relationship worsens, then Allah will grant you Paradise.

The first *Hadith* signals protection from the fire for those who conceal the shortcomings of others. Here, it is further said that such people will be granted Paradise. Not only will Allah protect them from punishment but He will also reward them. So these are ways through which Allah bestows blessings.

References:

- 1 Majma‘al-Zawa’id, Vol. 6, Page 268, Kitabal-Hudud, Hadith # 10477
- 2 Majma‘al-Zawa’id, Vol. 6, Page 268. Kitabal-Hudud, Hadith # 10476

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE - GARMENT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND CONCEALING EACH OTHER'S FAULTS

(Excerpt from Friday Sermon, April 3, 2009)

Allah Almighty has taught us ways to achieve the goal of getting closer to Him. A person should strive to be perfect in his faith, fulfil the rights of Allah and of His beings and try to perform virtuous deeds. Allah Almighty has mentioned the deeds that please and displease Him in the Holy Qur'an. Therefore, a believer should try his best to obey all the commandments mentioned by Allah Almighty and avoid vices, so that he will be able to receive the benefits of His *Sattar* (covering of faults) and His Mercy.

Last Friday I spoke of matrimonial relationships. In some cases, the mutual relationship between husbands and wives is ruined because of unkind and offensive remarks from both parties. This is strongly disliked by Allah. Allah Almighty urges both husband and wife to fulfil their respective obligations.

He says in the Holy Qur'an:

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ
لَهُنَّ

“They are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them.”¹

The Holy Qur'an uses the word “garment,” which means a source of cover for your body, as a source of adornment and protection from extreme weather. So, it is the responsibility of both the husband and wife to cover up the faults of their mutual relationship.

Similarly, when a man or a woman makes a pledge to the contract of marriage, then they must make their utmost effort to tolerate each other. They should cover up the faults and shortcomings of each other, and avoid bickering over petty little matters. The attitude and appearance of an Ahmadi married couple should be complimentary and they should be a role model for others.

At times, some young married couples say that there is no mutual compatibility between them. On further investigation, it comes to light that neither of them had tried to understand their relationship seriously. They did not try to achieve the real purpose of marriage for which Allah has commanded His servants to get married. At times, it appears that they get married simply as a pastime. There is a tremendous lack of tolerance, and mountains are made out of mole-hills over petty matters. This leads to a critical situation between them. If they practice the teachings of Allah Almighty, and are not insistent in their personal egos and self-esteem, then such conflicts will never arise. If husbands and wives pledge that they will continue to be a source of comfort for each other in order to seek Allah's pleasure, then no problems will ever arise in their relationship.

The Promised Messiah (as) said that all these conflicts result from anger and impatience from both sides. They should try to suppress their anger, as suppressing of anger is liked by Allah and indeed, He has commanded it.

Every Ahmadi who has come into the *Bai 'at* (oath of allegiance) of the Promised Messiah (as) has promised to bring a pious change in himself and improve his marital affairs, he should try to fulfil the promise made in the *Bai 'at*.

When I hear of marital conflicts which lead to break up, I am reminded of an incident of a young girl who gave an excellent lesson to a couple. The young girl saw a married couple arguing

and bickering in front of her, and she was so surprised to see their behavior towards one another that she continued to stare at them. The couple noticed this and asked the girl what was the matter, had she never seen her mother and father fight? Did they never get angry? The girl replied that yes, they did get angry; but when her father got angry, her mother kept quiet, and when her mother got angry, her father kept quiet. This is a way to inculcate tolerance.

So, both the husbands and wives should create the quality of tolerance in themselves. Sometimes, marriages break up in the beginning because of petty little matters. There are instances where only a few days after the wedding, the couple decides that there is no mutual compatibility between them, even though, the engagement had taken place a long time ago. They are not discreet about private matters concerning each other and disclose their secrets in public. Some of their close friends like to give counsel just to enjoy the situation, and some, due to their habit of giving wrong advice, give erroneous suggestions. As a consequence, some marriages break up. Giving counsel or advice is a trust. So if those couples, young or old, seek guidance from somebody, then it is the responsibility of an Ahmadi Muslim to give advice that builds a home, not one that breaks a home.

Both husbands and wives can cover up the faults and shortcomings of each other if they suppress their anger and have fear of Allah in their hearts. This is the reason Allah Almighty has drawn attention in the Holy Qur'an towards the term 'garment of righteousness (*Libaas-ut-Taqwa*)'. In Surah Al A'raf, it is stated:

يَبْنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا
يُؤَارِي سَوَاتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا وَلِبَاسَ
التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

“O children of Adam! We have indeed sent down to you raiment to cover your shame and to be an elegant dress; but the raiment of righteousness, that is the best.”²

These are the signs of Allah, so people can get advice from it. Allah Almighty has provided garments to cover the body and to be a source of adornment. The main purpose of garments is to cover the physical form of a person so that humans can be distinguished from other creations. On the other hand, Allah has also said that the true garment is the garment of righteousness.

I wish to clarify that there should be a difference in the standard of the attire or garment of a believer and a non-believer. In fact, anyone who is modest has a distinctive standard. However, whether in the East or West, materialistic society gives preference to attire which is revealing or in which the body’s curves are prominent.

While the measure of being well-dressed for men means being fully clothed, these same men want women’s attire to be revealing and most women want this too. Such women have no fear of Allah, and have no covering or garment of righteousness. Most of these men desire their women to wear the latest fashions and be admired by society, and so they encourage this kind of attire, whether the clothes are revealing or not.

However, believers, both men and women, who have fear of Allah always want to wear the attire that is a source of seeking the pleasure of Allah. This is only possible when they seek the garment of *Taqwa*; when they dress properly with special care, and when husbands and wives who are garments to each other, instill *Taqwa* in their mutual relationship in front of society. Similarly, life has its ups and downs and relationships go through various stages. There can be hardships, but there is also friendship. However, a true believer does not exploit his friend's confidentiality at times of mutual differences; neither do married couples who have *Taqwa*, divulge private information about each other. Rather, for the sake of attaining Allah's pleasure they are always discreet. So this is the garment of righteousness, which not only covers physical appearance, but also covers up the faults and shortcomings of others. This cannot be achieved unless one turns to Allah Almighty because Satan is always ready to find ways to remove the garment of *Taqwa* from righteous people.

In the next verse, Allah Almighty states:

يَبْنَىٓ اٰدَمَ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ كَمَا اَخْرَجَ

اٰبَوَيْكُم مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ يَنْزَعُ عَنْهُمَا لِبَاسَهُمَا

لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوْآتِهِمَا ۗ اِنَّهٗ يَرٰكُمْ هُوَ وَقَبِيْلُهُ

مِّنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ ۗ اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا الشَّيْطٰنَ

اَوْلِيَاءَ لِلَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝

“O children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you, even as he turned your parents out of the garden, stripping

them of their raiment that he might show them their shame. Truly he sees you, he and his tribe, from where you see them not. Surely, we have made Satan's friends for those who believe not.”³

Indecent clothes have already been mentioned but a believer never wears clothes which are revealing. Instead, a believer always wears modest attire so as to be a role model for others. Sometimes reports are received from here in the Western countries and also from Pakistan that young girls are not only disbanding the idea of *pardah*, but are also wearing dresses that are inappropriate and immodest. These acts can only be done by girls who lack the garment of *Taqwa*, or righteousness.

I say to every Ahmadi man and Ahmadi woman that the best garment is the garment of *Taqwa*. They should always try to keep it on, so that Allah's attribute of *Sattar* always covers them. Then Satan, who always tries to lead men and women to abandon their *pardah* and expose their weaknesses, will never be successful. If they have faith and have accepted the Imam of the age, they should strive to protect themselves from Satanic temptations, and cover themselves with the garment of *Taqwa* or righteousness. May Allah enable us to achieve this goal, Ameen.

References:

- 1 Holy Qur'an 2:188
- 2 Holy Qur'an 7:27
- 3 Holy Qur'an 7:28

ISLAMIC TEACHINGS ON MARITAL RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS, POLYGAMY, AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN DIVORCE

(Excerpt from Friday Sermon May 15, 2009)

I have previously mentioned that along with many other matters, Allah Almighty has given us guidance on family matters. I will present some of the verses of the Holy Qur'an concerning family affairs but before doing so I will talk about high standard of treatment of his family set by the Holy Prophet (saw).

On one occasion the Holy Prophet (saw) said, "The best among you is the one who is best to his wives, and I am the best among you in my treatment towards my wives."¹

The Holy Prophet (saw) then advised us that "if you see any weaknesses in one another or if there is a quality a husband dislikes in his wife, he should be mindful of another quality that he likes in her."²

So keeping in mind these good points, one should acquire the quality of sacrifice and should try to create the atmosphere of reconciliation. This commandment is applicable to both men and women. The blessed wives of the Holy Prophet (saw) were witnesses to the fact that his treatment with them was most excellent in all aspects of daily life. Whenever he wanted to go on a journey, he would draw lots with their names, and whosoever's name was drawn would accompany him.³ If his wives fell ill, he would look after them.⁴

He was always considerate of their feelings but in spite of that he would pray to God that indeed He was aware that, as far as human limitations were allowed, he was just and fair with all his blessed wives; however, he had no control over his heart, and if

his heart was inclined to one of them more than the others, due to a particular quality, he sought God's forgiveness.⁵

The Holy Prophet (saw) would talk to Hazrat A'isha (ra) about the qualities of Hazrat Khadijah (ra): he said that she had become his companion when he was all alone. She had become his helper when he was helpless. She spent all her wealth upon him. Allah had blessed him with all his progeny from her. When the world rejected him, she validated him.⁶

His admiration for her good qualities and the love he had for her remained in his heart always. Despite the presence of living and younger wives, his wife Hazrat Khadijah (ra) was the most beloved because he had received most of his Divine revelations whilst in her apartment.⁷

When Hazrat A'isha (ra) asked him why, in spite of the presence of his living wives, the Prophet always remembered the elderly Khadijah, he responded by telling her lovingly to not be narrow-minded, and to inculcate fortitude, and explained that these are the good qualities for which he would always remember his first wife.⁸

Those who criticize the Holy Prophet (saw) and make baseless allegations against him, do they not observe the noble example of our master, the Holy Prophet (saw), and how he discharged the rights of his families? While all his behavior with his living wives was fair and equal, he had no control over his heart which was inclined towards the wife who had made immense sacrifices in the early days. He explained that this was because he was appreciative and, if he did not show gratitude in this regard, he would not be a grateful servant of God, who had never left him without any help and bestowed him with abundant blessings.

The Holy Prophet (saw) treated his wives with kindness because of the fact that Allah has commanded one to always be kind to

one's spouses and treat them with justice and equality. When he informed his followers that this is the commandment of Allah, and that they should follow it, it was he himself who set the highest example.

If Allah has permitted more than one wife, then Islam has laid certain conditions. This is one of the criticisms of Islam and the Holy Prophet (saw) - that this permission of [having] more than one wife is injustice to women and that it only takes care of the rights and sentiments of men.

Allah says, in the Holy Qur'an, that this is not unrestricted permission. He says:

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ
فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مِمَّا
وَتَلْتِ وَرُبْعٌ ۚ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا
فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۗ ذَلِكَ
أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا ۝

“And if you fear that you, the society, may fail to do justice in matters concerning orphans, in the aftermath of war, then marry women of your choice, two, or three, or four. And if you fear that you will not deal justly, then marry only one or what your right hand possesses. That is the nearest way for you to avoid injustice.”⁹

This verse also safeguards the rights of orphan girls, so that marriage with them may not result in injustice. One should discharge full responsibility to them and ensure that their feelings are taken care of after marriage, and no one should think

that since there is no one else to take care of them that one may treat them as one wishes. If a person fears his own temperament, or doubts that he will be able to do justice, then he should get married to a free woman. A person can only be allowed to marry two, three or four wives if he can maintain justice, otherwise, he can only marry one.

The Promised Messiah (as) says

“There is no harm in marrying orphan girls who are under your care, but if you feel that you may not be fair in dealing with them because they are orphans, then marry women who have parents and relations who are watchful over them, who would respect you and make you be careful. You may marry two or three or four of them, provided that you can deal equitably with all of them. But if you feel that you may not deal justly between them, then marry only one, even if you should feel the need of more than one.”¹⁰

The Promised Messiah (as) used the phrase ‘even if the need is felt’. This is a very significant expression. The *Hakam* (Arbiter) and *Adl* (Judge) of the time has decided this matter for us, which is that one’s personal need to take more than one wife is not important, but the maintenance of peace and concord of society is.

At times complaints are received that despite having children, men make excuses to bring a second wife. If one cannot be fair and deal justly, then one should not marry a second wife. Justice includes all kinds of rights and responsibilities: if a person does not have enough income to support the expense of the family but still marries a second woman, then he deprives the first wife of her rights.

The Promised Messiah (as) says that if one has no choice but to marry a second wife, then one has to take care of the first wife even more than before.¹¹ It is often seen in this society, that the rights of the first wife and the responsibility of her children are slowly eroded in disobedience of God’s commandments. Indeed, one has to be very careful that there is no unfairness in the financial and other rights of the first wife.

The Promised Messiah (as) said “it is his own opinion that a person should not put himself in a trial by getting married for the second time”.¹²

To fulfil the rights of one wife is such a big responsibility that a person can put himself in a trial by not accomplishing this and thus, he can become the recipient of the wrath and displeasure of Allah Almighty. The Holy Prophet (saw) used to pray to Allah that ostensibly he always tried to fulfil the rights of all his wives; however, if he expressed a certain wife’s qualities to the others, he sought God’s forgiveness. This is precisely in accordance with human nature and Allah Almighty knows everything, as He is the Knower of the Unseen. He created man and gave the permission of more than one marriage and has declared that a situation can arise that one may be more inclined towards one wife. In such instances, He commands that it is imperative that the apparent rights of all wives be fulfilled.

Allah says, in Surah Al Nisa:

وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ
 وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمِيلِ
 فَتَذَرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ^ط وَإِنْ تَصْلِحُوا
 وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٣﴾

“And you cannot keep perfect balance between wives, despite your best intentions, so incline not entirely to one, lest the other should be left suspended, unattended and uncared for. And if you amend and act righteously, surely Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.”¹³

So in such matters, where a person does not have full control over himself, absolute justice is impossible. On the other hand, absolute justice is imperative where a person does have the capacity to fulfil all the obligations. The simple necessities such as meals, clothing, arrangements for accommodations, and giving time for the wife’s needs are all included in those rights. It is not appropriate for a person to provide his wife with financial expenses but not give her enough time or attention. In the same way, it is absolutely wrong if he fully arranges for her accommodations but does not provide for her household expenses and leaves her at the mercy of others. So, as far as the apparent aspect is concerned, it is the total responsibility of a husband to fulfil all the responsibilities towards his wife.

In one narration, the Holy Prophet (saw) said:

“If a person has two wives, but is inclined only towards one wife, totally ignoring the rights of the other; then on the Day of Judgment, he will be raised in such a condition that one part of his body would be cut off and separated from the whole body.”¹⁴

Therefore, Allah says that a person displays righteousness when he takes complete care of the responsibilities and duties of both wives. There should not be a situation in which one of the wives is deprived of her rights and responsibilities. Do not neglect her to the extent that her rights are not being properly fulfilled. This should not be the attitude of a believer. It is the responsibility of

a believer to protect himself from such acts that Allah has clearly forbidden and try to reform himself.

At times, complaints are received from women that their husbands do not pay attention to them and is more inclined towards the other wife. Sometimes certain cases come to my attention where there is only one wife, and the husband vows that he will neither look after her nor divorce her or let her leave. If the matter goes to the *Qadha* then it is unnecessarily lengthened; some men will not give divorce, so that in desperation, the wife seeks *Khula* and the man thus escapes paying the *Haq Mehr* (dowry). All these matters distance one from *Taqwa* (righteousness). If a person seeks God's mercy, then he has to demonstrate mercy and reform himself. He should fulfil the rights of his wife and let her live in his house with respect. If a person wishes to partake of a measure of God's mercy, he has to expand his own mercy.

The next verse of the Holy Qur'an states:

وَإِنْ يَتَفَرَّقَا يُغْنِ اللَّهُ كِلَا مَنِ سَعْتِهِ ط

وَكَانَ اللَّهُ وَاسِعًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٣﴾

“And if they separate, Allah will make both independent, out of His abundance; and Allah is Bountiful, Wise.”¹⁵

Here, Allah commands that if there is no way to reconcile, then do not leave them suspended; one should separate in the best manner and part with dignity and respect. If a man has left his wife suspended, then the wife has the right to approach the *Qadha* and request *Khula*.

Allah says that a believing man and a believing woman could be considered to be following the path of righteousness if they are trying their best to live amicably with love and respect. If, in

spite of these efforts, the relationship is still unsuccessful, then they should get separated in a dignified manner. He should part from her in the best manner, after fulfilling all her rights. This is the man's duty and the woman's right. Allah says that His limitless Bounties and His Mercy will create better arrangements for them afterwards. Allah will look after their needs and make them prosperous.

According to one *Hadith*, divorce is a most unpleasant act in the sight of God.¹⁶ However, if a relationship is based on *Taqwa* and all the efforts to continue the relationship fail, then Allah knows what is in their hearts. If separation is sought while inclined to Him, Allah Almighty makes bountiful arrangements for all concerned. Since Allah possesses the attribute of *Al-Hakeem*, the Wise, those decisions which are taken with the help of Allah are based on wisdom and are full of guidance directly from Allah Almighty.

This verse also establishes the principle that matrimonial relationships should not be based on emotions. There should not be any emotions involved in making those decisions, neither from the parent's side nor from the husband or wife's side; they should be made after careful consideration instead. People should pray to Allah and seek the guidance of Allah Almighty, who is All-Embracing. Matches made in this manner are blessed by God and He graces them with great scope. Allah states that if decisions are made in such a manner, then He will make them prosper and expand the couple's provisions and He will bless their relationship.

I will mention another point about divorce: at times, men make matters of divorce drag on and try to prolong it. There are clear and distinct commandments regarding the rights of the wife after a marriage which has lasted a period of time, and also where there are children. When the relationship finally ends in divorce, the rights of the wife are quite clear. *Haq Mehr* and child-support

should be paid by the men. However, Allah has commanded a man to fulfil the rights of a wife in the instance of a divorce, even when the ‘going away’ ceremony has not taken place and the marriage has not been consummated.

It is stated in Surah Al Baqarah:

لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا
 لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً
 وَمِمَّا عَوَّضْتُمْ عَلَى الْمَوْسِعِ قَدْرَهُ وَعَلَى
 الْمُقْتِرِ قَدْرَهُ مَتَاعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا
 عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

“It shall be no sin for you if you divorce women while you have not touched them, nor settled for them a dowry. But provide for them- the rich man, according to his means and the poor man, according to his means- a provision in a becoming manner, this is an obligation upon the virtuous.”¹⁷

In this verse, Allah states that if the man wishes to break up the relationship, then it is the duty of the man, whatever the reasons might be, to treat his wife in the best possible manner and pay all the dues within his capacity. If Allah Almighty had granted him with abundance of wealth, then he is commanded to show his abundance as well. If he fails to show it, then Allah has the power to curtail all of his abundance. If Allah had blessed him with abundance, and he is not kind towards his wife and does not pay her rightful dues, then Allah Almighty has the capacity to change his abundance into poverty. So, if a person wishes to earn the blessings of Allah, then he should show kindness towards his

wife. Allah does not burden a soul beyond his capacity; that is why He said that if a person is righteous and pious then it is his responsibility to show kindness.

The Holy Prophet (saw) was most specific about this matter. Once, the matter of an Ansari man was brought to his attention. The man said that he had divorced his wife before settling on *Haq Mehr* and before consummating the marriage. The Prophet (saw) asked him if he had anything to give; he answered no. So, the Prophet (saw) told him that if he had nothing else to give, then he should give her the cap he wore. ¹⁸

This illustrates the significance of the rights of women in marriage. This, of course, is an instance where *Haq Mehr* was not settled on. In the instance where it is settled on, but the marriage has not been consummated, then the command is to pay half of it.

The Holy Qur'an has clearly mentioned the commandments pertaining to the rights of woman upon their husbands and families, and these rights have been fully established. It also mentions the rights and responsibilities of the husbands upon their wives and children, and how to maintain those relationships. In citing these commandments, Allah says that these responsibilities are not beyond one's capacity and power and that they should be fulfilled. There is another detail about this which I will not mention now; for today, two points are sufficient. Firstly, one should always follow the blessed model of Holy Prophet (saw) in regards to fulfilling the rights of women, and note how he established the highest standard in the treatment of his wives to gain the pleasure of Allah Almighty. Secondly, it is very important for every Ahmadi Muslim to put this blessed model in practice, especially men, and the obligations they need to fulfill.

References:

- 1 Jami'at Tirmidhi, Vol. 1, Book 46, Hadith 3895
- 2 Sahih Muslim, Book of Marriage, Hadith 3645
- 3 Sahih al-Bukhari 2661 Book 52, Hadith 25
- 4 Sahih al-Bukhari 2661 Book 52, Hadith 25
- 5 Abu Dawood, Book of Marriage, Hadith 2134
- 6 Sahih al-Bukhari 3818: Book 63, Hadith 44
- 7 Jami'at Tirmidhi, Book of Virtues, Hadith 3879
- 8 Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, Vol.8, Hadith 25376
- 9 Holy Qur'an 4:4
- 10 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol.10, Page 337
- 11 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Malfoozat vol 3 page 430
- 12 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Al Hakam, March 6th 1898
- 13 Holy Qur'an 4:130
- 14 Sunan an-Nasa'i, Book of virtues of Women, Hadith 3942
- 15 Holy Qur'an 4:131
- 16 Abu Dawood, Book of Divorce, Hadith 2178
- 17 Holy Qur'an 2:237
- 18 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Roohul Ma'ani Vol.1, Page 145-146

HONESTY IN MARITAL RELATIONSHIP

(Excerpt from Friday Sermon, September 25, 2009)

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا

بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا ﴿٧٣﴾

“And those who bear not false witness, and when they pass by anything vain, they pass on with dignity.”¹

The tenth distinct quality of the servants of the Gracious God is that neither do they tell lies nor do they give false testimony. Falsehood plays a huge part in the decline of nations. Divine communities aspire to attain heights; if falsehood penetrates among them, then they do not remain God’s special people. Ahmadis should employ one hundred percent honesty in all their affairs and their testimonies. For example, in marital matters, during *Nikah*, it is asserted that *Qaul-e-Sadid* (the right, straightforward word) should be employed. Unambiguous truth should be spoken, from which no alternative meaning can be derived. However, after the wedding ceremony is over, lies are told; friction sets in and eventually marriages break up for egotistical reasons and where children are involved, they suffer greatly. Huzoor (aba) said he has drawn attention to this matter many times before. In order to honor the dues of God and the dues of mankind, it is essential to shun falsehood.

References:

1 Holy Qur’an 25:73

TAQWA (RIGHTEOUSNESS) AND MARRIAGE

(Address to Lajna Ima'illah, Jalsa Salana UK, July 23, 2011)

After reciting Tashahhud, Ta'awwudh, and Surah Al-Fatihah, Huzoor (aba) recited:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ
مِّنْ نَّفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا
وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۗ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ۝٢

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا
سَدِيدًا ۝٧١

يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ
ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ۝٧٢

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَتَتَزَكَّرُوا
نَفْسَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لِغَدٍ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۗ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ۝١٩

“O ye people! Fear your Lord Who created you from a single soul and created therefrom its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women; and fear Allah, in whose name you appeal to one another, and fear Him particularly respecting ties of relationship. Verily, Allah watches over you.”¹

O ye who believe! Fear Allah, and say the right word.”²

He will bless your works for you and forgive you your sins. And whoso obeys Allah and His Messenger shall surely attain a mighty success.”³

O ye who believe! Fear Allah; and let every soul look to what it sends forth for the morrow. And fear Allah; verily Allah is Well-Aware of what you do.”⁴

The verses that were just recited before you at the beginning of the session are verses from three different *Surahs* (chapters) which are read at the time of *Nikah* (marriage announcement). Generally speaking, it is mostly men who attend the *Nikah* ceremony, so they know about these verses. That is, at least they know these verses are recited at *Nikah*; I am not saying they also know about acting upon them. However, ladies do not attend the *Nikah* so often; hence I selected the verses to briefly speak on the subject to the ladies.

These verses point out most significant matters to men and women regarding fulfilling the important bond of marriage. The first significant matter to which attention is drawn is *Taqwa* (righteousness, love of Allah and the fear of losing His love). As you have been informed, the first verse among these verses is from Surah Al-Nisa. The second and third are verses from Surah Al-Ahzab and the fourth is a verse from Surah Al-Hashr.

As mentioned before, the first thing to which attention is drawn is *Taqwa* (righteousness). The word *Taqwa* is used twice in the

first verse, the second verse also mentions *Taqwa*, and the fourth and final verse mentions *Taqwa* twice. In short, *Taqwa* is mentioned five times in the verses recited at the time of *Nikah*, and each time *Taqwa* is mentioned, it says: adopt *Taqwa* of Allah and adopt *Taqwa* of your Lord. After this, a new instruction is given to adopt *Taqwa* so that your actions, which you have to undertake, are full of *Taqwa*; they are essential for you to fulfil this bond.

I mentioned *Taqwa* yesterday in that the Promised Messiah (as) wishes to see a very high standard of *Taqwa* in us. Allah told him that if man inculcates the root of *Taqwa*, it is through this alone that he will acquire everything. Status and dignity in this world, and the knowledge of this world are all insignificant. If a believing man or a believing woman considers that he or she must give precedence to faith over worldly matters, considers that the pledge he or she repeats is so that it should become the voice of his or her heart and he or she becomes one who practices it, then the root for all this is *Taqwa*. Without it, pledges cannot be fulfilled nor can a male believer or a female believer establish the condition of their faith. If *Taqwa* is established, then one will attain the faith and also this world.

When a man or a woman claims to have faith and claims to be a believer, then certainly it is his or her wish, and greatest of all wishes, and indeed it should be so, that he or she finds God so that his or her world and faith are both adorned. Thus, it is extremely important to practice *Taqwa* if God is to be attained and His pleasure is sought. *Taqwa* is to forsake the smallest of ills with disgust and to adopt the smallest of virtues with deepest sincerity of heart. One is not to define vices and virtues oneself; rather, it is also *Taqwa* to look for the definitions in the commandments of Allah, to look for them in the *Ahadith* (sayings) and *Sunnah* (practice) of the Holy Prophet (saw). One should read the pronouncements of the Promised Messiah (as) who was sent as the Imam of the Age to clarify the true teachings

of Islam to people. Read them and also note them and sincerely strive to put them in practice, and see which matters are forbidden because they are vices, and which matters have been enjoined upon us because they are virtues and merits.

These are not the only verses enjoining *Taqwa*; rather, the Holy Qur'an enjoins this in numerous places. The Promised Messiah (as) said:

“In the Holy Qur'an more emphasis has been laid on virtue and righteousness [*Taqwa*] than on any other commandment. The reason for this is that righteousness bestows the strength to resist all vice and urges progress towards all good. Righteousness is in all circumstances a charm that guarantees security and is a citadel for safeguarding against all harm. A righteous person can avoid many vain and harmful contentions that often lead other people to ruin. They sow the seed of dissension among the people through their hasty actions and suspicions and lay themselves open to objection.”⁵

The Promised Messiah (as) further says that man's entire spiritual beauty is in treading the fine ways of *Taqwa*.

“The spiritual beauty of man is to walk along all the fine ways of righteousness. They are the attractive features of spiritual beauty. It is obvious that to be mindful of the trusts of God Almighty and to fulfil all the covenants of faith, and to employ all faculties and limbs both overt, like the eyes and ears and hands and feet, and others like them, and those that are covert, like the mind and other faculties and qualities, on their proper occasions and to restrain them from coming into action on improper occasions, and to be warned against the subtle attacks of vice and to be mindful of the rights of one's fellow beings, is the way of perfecting one's

spiritual beauty. God Almighty has in the Holy Qur'an designated righteousness as raiment, *Libaas-ut-Taqwa* (raiment of *Taqwa*) is an expression of the Holy Qur'an. This is an indication that spiritual beauty and spiritual ornament are achieved through righteousness. Righteousness means that one must be mindful even of the smallest details of the Divine trusts and covenants and also of all the trusts and covenants of one's fellow beings, as far as it may be possible. That is, one must try to fulfil, to the best of one's ability, all the requirements in their minutest details." ⁶

Thus, this is the standard which, when acquired, saves society from many problems. This is the standard, which, if generated in us, turns our world into faith. Whatever wish we have, it will be for the pleasure of Allah Almighty. One who seeks the pleasure of Allah Almighty, has no wish that is attained by only being interested in the world.

Men and women are the basic unit of society. Although they are different genders, they have a connection, and after joining in the relationship as husband and wife, they become a unit. This is the relationship and the bond from which the next generation ensues. If this unit and couple do not have *Taqwa*, then there is also no guarantee for the *Taqwa* of the next generation. There is also no guarantee for the high morals and *Taqwa* of society, because a society is formed by the numerical growth of humanity. Therefore, when a believer is in search of *Taqwa*, it is not just for himself; rather it is also for his offspring and for his society. When this fundamental unit espouses such *Taqwa*, it will be a guarantor for the *Taqwa* of the next generation and there will also be a guarantee of *Taqwa* of society—and high morals will be witnessed.

As the Promised Messiah (as) has said, *Taqwa* is a 'charm' for security. Indeed, every person, no matter which religion one

belongs to, or even one who does not belong to a religion, desires to remain in the sphere of security. Whether or not one gives security to the other, one wishes security for him or herself. A villain, a thief, a robber would without doubt harm others but would want himself to be safe from all kinds of losses. Thus, if every person wishes to have security, does not want to receive any harm, wants his night and day to pass safely and soundly, wants to remain safe from every enemy and remain protected from every trouble and does not want to face difficulties—if a believer wishes all this, the way for him is to adopt *Taqwa*. The Promised Messiah (as) has clarified this point for us that if you want security, you should adopt *Taqwa*. *Taqwa* alone is a ‘charm’ for security, which is a guarantor of your security. With *Taqwa* one comes in the refuge of Allah Almighty.

The Promised Messiah (as) says at another place:

“If you become God’s, know for certain that God is yours. You will be asleep and God will stay awake for you.”⁷

Thus, one for whom God will stay awake and gives protection from all evil comes into a tremendous sphere of security which no power on earth can break. However, as Allah Almighty has stated it in the Qur’an and the Promised Messiah (as) has also explained, such security is conditional to *Taqwa*. It is necessary to avoid every vice while being mindful of fear of Allah Almighty, as it is essential to adopt every virtue. When fear of God is instilled in the real sense, man avoids vices. This is why the Promised Messiah (as) said that *Taqwa* gives strength to avoid every single vice and when this strength is attained, man obtains that priceless charm which is a guarantee of security. Man comes into a strong citadel around which Allah Almighty, has arranged guards, which no satanic ploy can penetrate. Satanic thoughts and feelings develop only when man forgets Allah and does not fear Him. Thus, with fear of God man cannot

ever make a move which displeases Allah and destroys the peace of the world, which destroys the peace of one's society and destroys the peace and security of one's family.

The Promised Messiah (as) says that by coming into this citadel one is sheltered from many evils, is safeguarded and protected from useless and dangerous altercations. Thus, in today's society, we need to avoid idle and meaningless matters and create peace and tranquillity in our lives. Allah has taught us different ways to avoid, and to help others avoid, various evils and dangerous altercations. Unfortunately, people do not pay attention to these ways and destroy their lives. They thus deprive themselves of the elegance that Allah has facilitated for a male believer and a female believer, which should be the badge of honour of a male believer and female believer, and would greatly enhance his or her beauty.

Clothes and apparent beauty are insignificant. Allah grants real beauty. Women take a lot of care of their beauty and adornment, but there are many who remain unaware of their *real* beauty. Beauty does not come from putting make-up on, dressing up and wearing jewellery. Allah has taught real beauty. Women remain unaware of that beauty which enhances their real beauty manifold. This does not come from gaining freedom, does not come from losing oneself in the futilities of the society, does not come from giving up modesty (*Hayaa*), does not come from uncovering one's head and does not come from making materialistic demands to husbands. There is also beauty for men, which does not come from marrying fashionable women; rather it comes from adopting *Taqwa* of Allah. Influenced by the Western ways, some of our women too consider that perhaps this is what beauty is. It should always be remembered that beauty comes from wearing the raiment of *Taqwa*: and the raiment of *Taqwa* can be availed by those who, whether men or women, strive with all their capacities and capabilities to fulfil their covenants of faith and trust.

The Promised Messiah (as) says that we should employ all apparent physical limbs to fulfil these trusts. It is the duty of every man and woman that they should employ his or her eyes, ears, tongue and every other faculty subservient to the pleasure of Allah. It is seen that the tongue, ears and eyes play a significant role in marital conflicts. Men do not employ them properly and women do not employ them properly. I have mentioned this before that when couples ask for advice, I often say to them that if they use their tongue, ears and eyes properly for each other, their problems would never arise. If gentle and affectionate speech is employed, problems can never arise. Similarly, it has been generally seen, be it men or be it women, it is the tongue that goes on prolonging the conflicts when cases and problems are brought up. A time comes when they make their minds up, or are inclined to make their minds up, that they do not want to be together.

Likewise, close your ears to anything said about *Rehmi* relatives (blood relatives, ties of kinship) on both sides and other such matters, which may cause any kind of resentment between relatives. Sometimes if a person or a party says something wrong, the other also retorts back in kind. If one closes one's ears for a short time in order to stop conflict, many problems can subside there and then and apart from the problems of habitually quarrelsome men and women, generally, conflicts do not come to pass. Therefore, close your ears and you will have peace. I relate an account, and it is a true account, that a husband and wife were quarrelling while a little girl was watching them in astonishment. A short while later, they both realized the error of their ways and in order to cover their embarrassment, they asked the girl whether her mother and father ever argued or got upset or spoke harshly to each other? The girl replied, "Yes, if my father is angry, my mother stays quiet and if my mother is angry, my father stays quiet and the disagreement does not go any further in our home." This is the good influence it can have on children.

Keep your eyes closed to each other's shortcomings and keep your eyes open to each other's good qualities. After all, each person, be it a man or a woman, has good qualities as well as shortcomings. I have seen that men are usually the first to start spotting the shortcomings of women. When women start looking for shortcomings in response, they go so far ahead that there is no turning back. Moreover, one should not even look at what is forbidden and what dishonours one's *Taqwa*. Domestic problems can damage mutual trust but if purity of sight is maintained then this damage does not occur and problems go away. Then, do not let your heart be desirous of what is forbidden, keep it filled with fear of Allah. As a result, problems do not ever arise and Satan does not ever enter one's heart stealthily to create discord in families.

Satan does not only signify a person whose way of entry may be detected. Each bad company, each bad friend who will try to destroy your home, who will try and incite you against your husband, against mother-in-law, against sister-in-law, or will try to incite a husband against his wife, or one who will say something trivial that will create anxiety in one's heart, is a Satan. Thus, it is the obligation of each male believer and each female believer to be heedful of such Satans. The foundation of the union of marriage is strengthened once mutual trust is established. If trust is lost, then the very same palace that was erected with the promise of love and affection is razed to the ground; in fact, it turns to ruins.

Therefore, while a believer tries his best to fulfil his pledge made with his God, he also tries his best to fulfil the pledge made with mankind. Without discharging the dues of mankind, the standards of discharging the dues of Allah cannot be attained. Cracks begin to appear in it too. Once a crack appears in a utensil, it gradually increases in size. Thus, fulfilling the dues of mankind is also very important and, in this instance, the dues of husband and wife on each other are very significant. Their

significance is for the betterment of society and the next generation. Therefore, it is a huge responsibility of a true believer to fulfil them.

The reason Allah has drawn attention to the dues of husband and wife and why the Holy Prophet (saw) selected these verses for the time of *Nikah* is so that husband and wife discharge each other's dues while staying firm on *Taqwa*. Then alone would they be able to fulfil the trusts of Allah and the pledges of faith in a proper manner, as well as the trust and pledges of society. Thus, every male believer and female believer and every Ahmadi man and woman should remember that their covenants will only be fulfilled when they strive to and fulfil the basic due of every relationship.

While Allah has created holy matrimony to facilitate each other's comfort, it is also a means of procreation of mankind. From it arises that generation which, if brought up well through training, then becomes the guarantor of peace in society. Physical gratification and continuation of race alone are not the only objectives, for they are found even in animals. Allah has created man as the most eminent of all creation and this entails some requisites. For mankind there is also mental gratification in this. This is why the Holy Prophet (saw) has said that compatibility should be kept in mind in matrimonial matches. Compatibility involves many things, like family, education, but this is also used as an excuse not to go ahead with a match and to break it.

If one adopts *Taqwa*, such excuses are not made; on the contrary, right decisions are made. Relationships provide mental gratification as well as spiritual gratification. Empathy between husband and wife considerably promotes mental, spiritual and educational *Tarbiyat* (moral training) of the next generation. A man and woman who lay the foundation of a family in fact lay the foundation of a society; they lay the foundation of either

making a nation good or bad. Therefore, there is great need to reflect on this aspect.

By citing the word *Taqwa* five times at the time of *Nikah*, Allah Almighty has drawn our attention to the point that our every action, every word, every practice should not just be for ourselves. On the contrary, while based on *Taqwa* and fear of Allah Almighty, it should also fulfil the dues of Allah as well as those of one another. In this way children are born who pray for their parents. As is stated in the Holy Qur'an, when parents raise their children with piety, the offspring then pray for their parents:

وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْتَنِي
صَغِيرًا ط

“And say, My Lord, have mercy on them even as they nourished me in my childhood.”⁸

This prayer does not only signify that parents physically nurtured their children, rather, it entails their care towards religious education and training, care towards spiritual improvement, care towards moral training and care towards worldly education so that one may become a useful part of society. However, such people are not born in homes where conflicts take place, where mothers and fathers only focus on egotistical matters, except in some families, when Allah wills that in reaction to the way their parents are, children grow up to be different. They develop disgust for their parent, mother or father, whoever commits unfairness. They leave home and focus on their own *Tarbiyat*, although there are very few of this kind. It is therefore very important that in order to save our progeny, we do not make our own selves the sole focal point of our

attention. Rather, it is essential to instil the habit of sacrificing one's thoughts and one's emotions; then alone can a beautiful society be created.

Only a believing child, that is, a person who has insight into what *Taqwa* is, can be drawn to make this prayer. He realises that *Taqwa* is that, in gratitude of the favours of his parents, he seeks God's help for them and prays for their betterment. Allah has spread men and women in multitudes and has also spread them through disbelievers. Allah has stated: 'O men and women, you have been spread in multitudes, adopt the *Taqwa* of Allah', that is, if those special people who are inclined to religion seek God's pleasure, if they want religion, then they should search for that *Taqwa*, which takes one to God. They should search for that humility and fear which will stop them from vices for the sake of Allah and will enable them to do good. In fact, we observe in the world that in terms of population, the number of disbelievers is greater in comparison to believers. However, attention is drawn here to the fact that the real preponderance is of those who practice *Taqwa* because theirs will be a good ultimate ending, and it is through them alone that the peace and harmony of the world is established. Therefore, do not be impressed by materialistic people, rather follow *Taqwa* so that you become recipients of the blessings of Allah. Your offspring also will pray for you and will be a source of elevating your station.

At times, one issue emerges a lot in our marital problems that come to the fore from both men and women: that one of them disparages the other's parents or siblings. Men accuse women and women accuse men of belittling their parents, saying such and such about them and being abusive about them. This is far removed from *Taqwa* and creates discord in families. It is not a matter of only making accusations; at times, these turn out to be the truth where children are provoked against grandparents and improper words are used for each other's close relatives and efforts are made to turn children against them. Allah states that

this is far removed from *Taqwa* and this is not *Taqwa* and in doing this you are going far away from *Taqwa*. Therefore, be careful of your relations of kinship as well.

These verses also draw attention to this. The very first verse enjoins to take care of one's *Rehmi* relations. Rather than only be considerate themselves, parents should also teach their children the sanctity and respect of *Rehmi* relations. Only then can a pure society be established. Indeed, parents should take great care of the sanctity of this aspect because the examples of parents influence children. The Holy Prophet (saw), who understood human nature more than anyone else, selected these verses for the *Nikah* sermon and thus made men and women realise at the time of joining in matrimony, or tried to make them realise, to always remember that the bond of a husband and wife is a bond in which, whilst one has to have warm feelings and sentiments for one another, one also has to respect one another's *Rehmi* relations. This is essential if one is a true believer.

If a person has fear of Allah Almighty, then one is obligated to utilize one's apparent organs and limbs as well as one's heart to cultivate good *Rehmi* relations. If women do not do this, or men do not do this, then they should remember that Allah is watching over them and can see their actions and deeds. When Allah states that He is watching over [us], He also chastises those practices of men and women which do not realize the dues of *Rehmi* relations. Thus, from the very first day, a man and a woman should come together in the bond of marriage with the thought that there is not just one bond to be fulfilled. The husband and wife do not only have each other's relationship to fulfil, rather, they have to fulfil all the close relationships. This is the thought with which a wife should run her husband's home and this is the thought with which a man should marry a woman; that is, they will fulfil their wider relationships, the *Rehmi* relationships, in addition to their own relationship. If we understand this view thoroughly and then instil it in our society, there will be an

extraordinary reduction in the number of conflicts that start with trivial matters and lead up to physical abuse and police involvement and result in *Khula* and divorce.

Further, honesty is the root of all good. This is why when a man said that he could only give up one vice and asked which vice it should be, the Holy Prophet (saw) told him to give up lying and to always tell the truth. By following this directive, one by one all his vices were removed. ⁹ This is the reason Allah has stated to adopt honesty.

The second verse read at the time of *Nikah*, which the Holy Prophet (saw) chose, states that *Taqwa* is in saying what is right and clear. Some things are certainly true at times, but they can have many meanings, which can be both positive and negative. Some very clever people say what suits them and then say they meant such and such, and what they say is also correct, but everyone else has another understanding of it. It is stated here: say *Qaul-e-Sadid* [the straightforward word], and *Qaul-e-Sadid* means to say what is exceptionally clear and true. As I said, some people craftily say something, both men and women, especially when their cases are being presented or their matters are brought up. It is stated that, primarily, say everything truthfully when arranging matrimonial matches. If a proposal comes for a girl, her health, age, height, etc., whatever it may be, should be told very clearly. All the information should be given to the boy. However, after receiving the information, it is the obligation of the boys not to turn up simply to look at the girl. Rather, after receiving the information, they should pray and then only go with the intention of arranging a match. If they go with this intention, a pure society will be created. When matches are sought with *Taqwa*, girls will not experience the anxieties that they do. Similarly, boys should very clearly tell about their education, health, etc., and if they have any shortcomings, these should be communicated very clearly. Because *Qaul-e-Sadid*

entails that everything should be clearly explained before a match is arranged.

If these matters are revealed beforehand there would be no question of conflicts and quarrels escalating later on. In some matches where girls come from Pakistan, India or other countries, matters are not disclosed correctly and clearly and people tell lies. As a result, when the girls arrive here, within a short period the situation ends up in *Khula*, or divorce, which is an extremely abhorrent act in the sight of God, although it is not *Haram* (forbidden) and is permissible, it is considered extremely abhorrent and should be avoided.

Likewise, if the required information is provided beforehand, many instances of early *Khula* or divorce can be avoided.

Some girls and boys wish to get married elsewhere but agree to go with the choice of their parents, wherever the parents insist on. These marriages break up after a short while. Parents should also employ *Qaul-e-Sadid*, which is clear communication and should tell the family with whom they are arranging a match that they have pressured their son or daughter into the match so that the other party can make their decision judiciously.

The basis of mutual confidence built after marriage should also be on *Qaul-e-Sadid*: on what is clear, unambiguous and truthful. Allah knows human nature and has given upholding truth as the basic instruction for societal peace to help fulfil mutual relationships and to live in peace and well-being. It should be truthfulness which is not confusing in any way at all. It is stated that if one promises to always say what is clear and unambiguous and not go near lies and misinformation, Allah guarantees forgiveness of sins. One's deeds will be reformed, and obviously when deeds are reformed and one works to gain the pleasure of Allah, then Allah also loves that person. Just as I explained by giving the example of the *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet (saw) that,

if you stop telling lies, your other vices will be removed. Thus, everyone should adopt this principle.

Every person's sustenance, be it man or woman, is in obedience to Allah and His Prophet (saw). If one claims to be a believer, be it a man or a woman, then one has to abide by them, therein is our success. Thus, one would garner bounties of Allah, in this life as well be the recipient of blessings in the Hereafter.

The last verse also draws attention with reference to *Taqwa* that this world should not be considered one's sole purpose; it should not be considered that this world is everything. Be aware and be mindful. This is not an insignificant matter. Be particularly mindful as to what you have sent forward for tomorrow and what virtues you are practising. What *Taqwa* have you adopted? Have you safeguarded your *Salat*? Have you fulfilled the dues of your husbands and have the husbands fulfilled the dues of wives? Have the dues of children been fulfilled? Have you upheld your pledges and protected your familial relations? There will be accountability to Allah for all of this, so be mindful what you have sent forth because the real blessings, which will be everlasting, are the blessings of the Hereafter. Remember not to think that your practices in this world are hidden from Allah. Allah states that He is well aware of everything you do. This verse is yet again reminding us that the root of every evil is in not following *Taqwa* and not paying attention to it. Thus, if you want real moral and spiritual advancement, remember that it is not possible without faith and belief in Allah and sincere adherence to His commandments.

Therefore, matrimonial matters and fulfilment of relationships outwardly appears to be a worldly matter but for a believer, the world is also his or her faith. An Ahmadi believer, man or woman, indeed has to and should live his or her life in the manner that would fulfil his or her pledges. Only then will they become recipients of blessings and will be fulfilling the pledge

that an Ahmadi makes with the Imam of the Age, the Promised Messiah (as), after entering the Jama'at in the form of the oath of allegiance (*Bai'at*). Our girls and women should also be mindful that their foremost obligation is to abide by *Taqwa* and seeking the pleasure of Allah. Marriage, too, is to seek the pleasure of God and for the continuation of pious progeny. In this regard, when enjoining men about which qualities they should look for and give preference to in a match, the Holy Prophet (saw) said that a woman's piety should be given preference.

In one *Hadith*, Hazrat Abdullah bin Amr (ra) narrates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said that this world is but a provision and the best provision in the world is a pious woman.¹⁰

That is, a pious woman is the best among the provisions needed to spend life in this world. Likewise, another *Hadith* relates that Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) narrates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said:

“A woman may be married for four reasons: for her property, her status, her beauty and her piety, but you should give preference to a pious woman. May God bless you with a pious woman”¹¹

Thus, if our men also abide by *Taqwa* and keep these qualities in view, every girl will follow virtuous ways more than ever. With the grace of Allah our girls, our young women, generally follow virtuous ways. However, those who are influenced by society should also enhance their standards of virtue. When girls enhance their standards of virtue considering it as a benchmark for a matrimonial match, they will also try and seek those boys who have higher standards of virtues. Compatibility is when the standard of piety and *Taqwa* are the same. It cannot be that a villain, a thief and robber says that he wishes for a pious and virtuous wife who abides by *Taqwa*. It should not be assumed

that the Holy Prophet (saw) considered men to be pious and thus told them that they all were very pious and touching high standards of piety therefore they should seek a pious woman. He certainly prayed for the person because he must have known about his piety. However, he also imparted a matter of principle, and told the men that they too should become pious and then marry a pious woman. If they were not pious and were embroiled in bad practices how could they seek pious wives? Indeed, it is a pious man alone who will seek a pious wife and thus man and woman will abide by *Taqwa* and focus on establishing their relationship and raising pious children. Attention has been drawn to the fact that they both uphold virtues so that a pious generation ensues; a generation which would create a beautiful society which would abide by *Taqwa* and a family which would abide by *Taqwa*.

Thus, lack of patience, love of the world and distance from *Taqwa* in the world today has created fissures in the sacred relationships of husbands and wives. The solution alone lies in practising these Qur'anic commandments. Regretfully, I have to say that our girls, women and men are being influenced by the current ways of the world.

The Promised Messiah (as) stated:

“Do not emulate those nations who have fallen completely to materialism.”¹²

Do not follow those who consider this world everything. The divorce rate in the world and in these [Western] countries has particularly gone up sharply. It has been high among materialistic people for a long time. Marriage lasts for a while and then breaks down. This environment affects Ahmadis as well, not just here but also in Pakistan, India and other places. Therefore, we should be drawn towards our reformation, lest in imitating the world we also drown ourselves in the darkness

which is destroying the world and is responsible for its destruction. On the contrary, we should keep our weaknesses in view and focus on our reformation.

A very worrying analysis has come before me as I review different countries. In general terms the situation is that our rate of divorce and *Khula* is continuing to rise. The reason for this is impatience, lack of virtues and distance from *Taqwa*. When I reviewed the situation of the last three years here in the UK, I was astonished that the rate of divorce and *Khula* has gone up approximately 3%, and 20% of all marriages are ending in divorce. This is a worrying situation and we need to pay a great deal of attention to it. When an investigation is made, the reasons behind this are the ones I mentioned earlier: use of abusive language between husband and wife, bad morals and a lack of tolerance. Another factor is when parents, siblings and relatives interfere, be it the siblings and parents of the man or the woman. Interference in each other's relations worsens the situation. Although it is enjoined to fulfil the duty to *Rehmi* relations, parents and siblings are also commanded not to create conflict and to let the husband and wife live in peace. If this were practiced, relationships would never break so rapidly. There is also the factor of not being truthful. Boys come here from abroad to get married. Girls here are educated. It is said that the boy is a graduate but it is later found out that he has even failed his Matriculation, and the relationship breaks. Similarly, shortcomings are discovered in girls. So always adhere to truthfulness.

Now I want to say to older women that one of the complaints of relationships breaking is that mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law hit their daughters-in-law. Not only do they get the husbands to hit them but they also strike them, which cannot be tolerated at all. Once here, boys get involved in certain bad practices and do not want their wives to stay with them. If the wife is from Pakistan, they want to send her back to Pakistan under one

excuse or the other. Mutual rights are not fulfilled and when the Jama'at tries to resolve matters, they do not cooperate with the Jama'at. There are many reasons which cause breakup of relationships and they are all based on one factor, a lack of *Taqwa*. For this reason, the rate of breakups is continuing to increase. May Allah give sense to men and to women in that abiding by righteousness they strive to fulfil their relationships.

We should pay heed to and value the favour bestowed on us by Allah, that He has included us in the Jama'at, we should have Allah's pleasure in view and should be mindful of what we have sent forth for tomorrow, rather than what personal gain we have made in this world. May Allah enable all men and women to realize this, Ameen.

References:

- 1 Holy Qur'an 4:2
- 2 Holy Qur'an 33:71
- 3 Holy Qur'an 33:72
- 4 Holy Qur'an 59:19
- 5 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Essence of Islam*, Volume. II, Page 347
- 6 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Essence of Islam*, Volume II, pp. 347 – 348)
- 7 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Kashti-i-Nuh*, Ruḥani Khaza'in, Volume 19, page 2
- 8 Holy Qur'an 17:25
- 9 *Commentary by Imam Razi*, Volume 16, page 176
- 10 Sunan Ibn Majah, *Book of Marriage*, Hadith 1855
- 11 Sahih Al Bukhari, *Book of Marriage*, Hadith 5090
- 12 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Kashti-i-Nuh*, Ruḥani Khaza'in, Volume 19, Page 22

MEHNDI CELEBRATIONS AT AHMADI WEDDINGS

(Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V's (aba) Instructions)

During his visit to Germany earlier this year, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) had a meeting with the Amila members of Lajna Ima'illah Germany on June 17, 2011. In response to a question regarding Huzoor (aba) forbidding the acquisition of a hall for the celebration of *Mehndi* (pre-marriage henna party) as well as for engagement functions, Huzoor (aba) said:

“The real issue here is that when I delivered a sermon (regarding this), I made it very clear that only the nearest relations and closest friends of the bride can participate and be invited. Every other acquaintance from every neighborhood should not be invited as a close friend!

If the family itself is large and the house is small, then a small space can be acquired for holding the function. This was what I had made precisely clear in my sermon. But to hold a grand function, getting invitation cards printed for the purpose, following various customs, having in-laws join the occasion bringing a *Baraat* (groom's marriage party) with them was what I had forbidden and I instructed that such practices must not be introduced. The family can have a small-scale event to celebrate their joy. Even very close relatives can hold this function. Maternal and paternal uncles and cousins, men should not be invited when a function is being held for girls. If they end up coming, then it is alright for men from the immediate family to be there but no one from outside the family, neither (the bride's) father's friends, nor anybody else, should attend. In addition, elaborate meals should not be planned.

As far as an engagement is concerned, there is no harm in an engagement itself. It is just an occasion to put on a ring. But (again) acquiring a hall, holding a grand function, having elaborate meals was what I had forbidden.

A Russian Ahmadi has written to me in appreciation of this instruction saying that they too have such customs. There is a tribe in which, when a child is born, the grandparents hold a fake wedding, lest they are not alive when the child grows up and gets married! Invitations are issued, special meals are cooked and people come in abundance. He admits that these customs have become a heavy burden for them and is very grateful at my having stopped all such customs. The Russians have understood (my instructions), and yet this is still unclear to all of you!"¹

(Translated from *Daily Al-Fazl*, July 6, 2011, page 5)

References:

1. <http://www.alfazl.org/rabwah/A20110706.pdf>