

HAPPINESS IN ISLAMIC MARRIAGE



By Farid Ahmed, MNZM

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Introduction:

All the praise to Allah for HIS mercy on mankind. HE gifted humans a complete code of life called Islam. In it, the guidelines to be happy in Islamic marriage is also included. Marriage occupies a big chunk of people's daily lives. For marriage people plans, spend times, works hard, build homes, raise children, cook, and eat, clean, and organize things, care of relatives etc. If we count all these marriage related things and the time spent on it, we can certainly see that how marriage dominates people's lives. In other words, if people can be happy in marriage, then they can be happy in all marriage related issues in lives.

Similarly, the opposite is true as well. To be happy in marriage, people must have happiness in marriage related issues as well. Happiness in marriage cannot be separated from the related issues in life because life revolves around many issues, connected with one another, and only a holistic approach and guidance about it can make sure that everything is in balance and happiness is guaranteed outcome. Only Islam offers that holistic solution, and for this reason, happiness in Islamic marriage is a very important topic. It requires more discussion and more studies, and I am humbled to put little efforts into it in this book.

I have been serving as a Marriage Celebrant in my community for over a decade, and in every marriage ceremony, I try to give a talk on happiness in Marriage. My audience has been Muslims, non-Muslims, young and old, and I always receive good feedback from my audience. They advise me to continue speaking on this topic. They inspired me to write a book with the hope that it might be useful for many people, and it will be a Da'wa from my side. So, I have taken this effort for the pleasure of Allah, as a voluntary charity work, and I pray to Allah for the rewards, Ameen!

Even though the writing is mine, but before and after, many good souls have been involved in it. Their encouragements, supports, editing, and precious time have made my work easier. I acknowledge them and their hard work. For them, I pray that may Allah reward them plenty, Ameen!

To err is human, and I am not free from shortcomings. In my writing, for any shortcomings, I seek Allah's protection, and I begin in the name of All-Merciful Allah, and I beg for HIS forgiveness. If the readers find something to put forward advice, I shall appreciate that. May Allah grant me knowledge and wisdom to carry on this hard task, Ameen!

Farid Ahmed, MNZM

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Chapter 1: Happiness in marriage

Three main issues in this book

What do I mean by three in one? I mean, in one book there is three main aspects. This book is, “Happiness in Islamic marriage.” It is a book that has three heads, and they are, Happiness, Islam, and Marriage. Interestingly, these three heads together are to make one body, or we can call them three limbs in the same body. Every Muslim who dreams for a happy marriage needs to understand the co-relation between these aspects.

In my childhood, I was a dreamer. I dreamt about few things, and I worked very hard for the dream to come true. I prayed, studied, listened to advice, followed the guidance as much as I could to materialize my dreams. One of my dreams were for example, to marry one day with my own earning independently. Allah helped me to achieve that dream to come true. Obviously, I always prayed for a happy marriage because I have seen many unhappy marriages. What is your dream about marriage?

Every Muslim dream for a happy marriage, but often that remain a dream only. For some, they may think that once they say, “I do” in marriage vows, then happiness will drop on them from the sky. They may think that happiness comes automatically without any planning or efforts, but after marriage, when they realize happiness for them was a delusion, they stumble for a big time. Disappointment, anger, arguments, and dissension replaces the happiness. Then, some newly married men or women wake up with a broken dream.

What is wrong with some of their dreams for happiness? Their wrong is, they took the happiness seriously, without combining the three main aspects (Islam, marriage, and happiness). Their dream was only for the happiness was like expecting a nice cake without the complete recipe. Let us take a closer look to these three aspects below:

Happiness: Generally, everyone who get married, wants to be happy in marriage. That is not limited to Muslims only, but it is a craving every human has, and Allah has given that feeling. Every human wants to be happy, to be loved, to feel belonged, to feel secured and to have total peace in their hearts and in the relationship. Since the first man Adam and his wife Eve, they married to one another for that happiness. We can’t see happiness, but we all can feel it.

Despite every human wanting to be happy in marriage, can they? Are all the marriages happy? What about Muslim marriages? Are all the marriages happy? We know the answer. All marriages are not happy, and there are lots of marriages suffering from unhappiness. Some marriages are, many spouses say, “Like living in hell in this life.” We cannot see or feel the unhappy spouse’s feelings, but we can see the symptoms of that unhappiness. Such as, we see domestic violence. It is a sign of unhappy marriage. Happiness and injuries do not go together. Happiness has love and compassion in it, but hurting, beating, and inflicting pain is not happiness.

Divorce is another sign of unhappiness. Many divorces are the result of hate, cruelty, mistrust, argument, and fights in the marriage. Can hate makes a couple happy? Can mistrust earn happiness between two spouses? Can an arguing heart be happy? Can angry arguments sustain the happy, sweet conjugal relationship? Negative traits cannot build happiness but can destroy the happiness quickly. Unhappiness in marriage is like a fire, and that fire travels very far, generation after generation, closed one to the far relatives, from home to the society and can affect morally, economically, and socially.

To prevent unhappiness, there is so many efforts going on in this world. Counselling for happiness, legal advises for security, teachings for proper planning and practicing, books with

many tips, courts for imposing law, religious guidance for purity and happiness in marriages are available in this world. The efforts are continuing, and sadly, the unhappiness in marriages is also continuing. To add to all these efforts, I would like to add my book with guidance for happiness in marriages, and I hope it can be helpful for some.

Marriage: Who does not know about marriage? Marriage is a common issue in every culture, religion, and society. It is the oldest institution of union between a man and a woman. So, everyone knows about it. There are so many writings on marriage, businesses around marriage, functions about marriage, and it is a vehicle for cohesion in the societies. It does not only bring two persons together, but with them comes families, relatives, and friends. Marriage brings joy and happiness through foods, gatherings, and entertainments. Marriage plays a great role in the unity in societies.

When married people deal with their marriages, young people feel nervous about it. Not all, but most of the young people are very keen to know about marriage. Some feel shy to talk to others for advice, and some do their own study to find out more. Others are good observers, and they pick up tips by observing other marriages. In some countries, there is a marriage course the candidates must go through. The point is that young people try to find out one way or another way about marriage before they are committed to it. Love and marriage have been so fascinating among young people, on that some clever people make movies, dramas, play in the theatre, and write novels etc to fulfil the psychological needs for people's mind.

Like others, I had hope and apprehension about marriage. As a Muslim youth, I felt the need for information regarding marriage that was absent in my time in my place. I wish I knew more about Islamic Marriage, and the availability of Islamic information for youth like me. With my little knowledge, I was a pseudo-counsellor for my classmates and junior boys who used to trust me and asked me so many questions that forced me to learn more. This book is a tiny effort to answer some questions for the Muslim youth. In my youth, I did not know that Islamic marriage as being a worship, a test from Allah, and a team effort if used properly, then achieving Paradise is easier.

Islamic: What do I mean by Islamic? I mean according to Islamic guidance. In every culture or religion, marriage has rules and regulations, rights and responsibilities, the philosophies behind it. I am not aiming to write about every culture because that is a hard job, but in this book, I would like to focus on Islamic codes for Muslims. As a Muslim, one must learn the Islamic teachings about marriage to have a complete understanding.

Is there a difference between Islamic marriage and other marriages? Yes, there is. Difference in the purpose of marriage, codes of marriage, management of marriage, rights in marriage, responsibilities in marriage, who to marry, who not to marry, conditions of marriage, disputes in marriage, how to solve disputes in marriage, halal actions in marriage, haram action in marriage and so on. For example, why a Muslim need to marry has different reason for someone else. Therefore, Muslims needs to be well-versed about Islamic marriage.

If Muslims do not know the Islamic guidelines in marriage, and do not practice the Islamic codes in marriage, then they are not doing their duties, and not getting the true taste of Islamic guidelines in marriage. Often, due to busy life, a Muslim may not have enough knowledge about the Islamic guidelines in marriage, or sometimes, Muslims are suffering in marriages due to the lack of knowledge and practice about Islamic codes. For them learning about Islamic codes in marriage is very important. I hope this book will stimulate interest in some Muslims to learn Islamic guidelines in marriage to be happy.

Importance of happiness in marriage

Happiness in marriage! People do not marry to be unhappy, do they? Everyone dreams for happiness in marriage, and they work very hard to achieve that. In general, happiness is a craving in human feelings, and they need it for their good existence. Without it they suffer and feel miserable, and the sufferings have far-reaching bad outcomes. If anyone knew before marriage that his or her marriage was going to be unhappy, then that person might have avoided getting into the marriage.

The importance of happiness in marriage is endless. I should list a few for the understanding of the readers. They are as follows:

For a happy heart: Imagine, you had a little argument with your wife at night, and since then she does not smile at you when she looks at you. How do you feel with that? Do you feel happy about it? You have a lot of money, and you have many friends. You dine in the restaurant and hang out with friends, but you do not feel happy. Can you simply say to yourself, “Forget about her. She is nothing to me?” Will that help you to brush off the unhappiness in your heart. Or will your heart be heavy from that unhappy feeling? Husband and wife are too close to one another. They are overlapping one another emotionally, mentally, and physically. If you are not happy in that wrap, your heart will be unhappy because your heart is going towards the wrong and unhealthy direction. I am not pointing to who is wrong here, but I am only pointing to the feeling in either your heart or your wife’s heart. The feeling will be unhappy if you are not happy in your marriage. Therefore, for a happy heart, the happiness in your marriage is extremely important. Money, luxury, power cannot give you a happy heart if you are not happy in your marriage.

For a positive mind: Imagine, your husband does not love you, and you feel that all the time. Will you have a calm mind to say to yourself, “It is nothing, and I must not worry about that?” Will it work if you do not worry? Or naturally, your mind will go through so many negative thoughts with anticipations, and that will give you anxieties and panicky thinking about the worst. Generally, when the marriage is unhappy, the spouses struggle to stay positive, think positive, talk positive or act positively. For example, if a spouse is asking a simple question, the other might give an abrupt answer which is negative words from a negative mind. The mind is the head office to articulate words, or sentences to conversations, and if the mind is positive then a positive, non-inciting, or kind comment comes out from the mouth. But if the mind is negative then the tongue lashes out negative comments to inflame the fire of unhappiness further. Did it ever happen to you in your marriage? Unhappiness in marriage destroys the positive thinking in mind. For a positive mind, happiness in marriage is very important. A positive mind is saved from anxieties, anticipations, panic, suspicion, wrong thinking and so on.

For a good well-being: Husband and wife live together in the same house, sleep together in the same bed, eat together, share their good and bad issues together, and they maintain an inseparable life. If one is happy, that happiness influences another, and if one is unhappy, that unhappiness also influences another. Now, if the marriage is unhappy, then the peace of mind leaves, and worries or uncertainty comes in. Many negative thoughts find chances to affect the sound mind, emotion, and physical health. As a result, health pays the price. Often minor to major sickness is the result of unhappiness in marriage. For example, a husband with excessive anger cannot sleep well. The doctor finds out that he has high blood pressure with irritable bowel syndrome. It could be linked with the unhappy marriage, and that husband feels irritable towards his wife when once he used to feel happy with. Or a wife suffers from migraine after some unhappy episode with her husband. She worries, cries alone, bottles up her emotion, and suffers from emotional disappointment with bitterness. She feels her husband has let her down badly, and she is depressed from that. What has happened to that happy lady once she was open,

communicative, smiley, and happy? Well, the unhappiness in marriage has started to damage her well-being. It has got into her mind, and she is gradually losing her self-control for losing her happiness in marriage. So, many husbands and wives are victims of unhappy conjugal life, and spending some time and money for medicine, counselling, and therapies without knowing that the best therapy is to work out their issues in marriage to become happy husband and wife.

For success in work or business: I was a student in High School and being the top in the class with highest marks, my seat was at front according to the school rule. The disadvantage of sitting at the front was being questioned by the teachers. They expected me to be on top of my study regularly to be able to answer questions for the benefit of the class. But it helped me to be regular in my study. One morning, a teacher entered the class, asked me to pass the textbook that I did, and when he took the book with his left hand, he slapped me hard on my cheek with his right hand. He hit me too hard too suddenly, and I felt numb on my right cheek instantly that had extended to the right ear, but before I controlled myself, the second slap landed on my left cheek and left ear. Sadly, he continued slapping me as if he was hitting his opposite boxer in the boxing ring without any mercy to knock me down. His slap produced big sound that attracted classmates and a teacher from the next room. He stopped when he saw another teacher. The teacher reported to the headmaster, and the managing committee decided to sack him from his job. But I forgave him and pleaded to give him another chance. What is the lesson in this story? Upon inquiry I found that he was unhappy with his wife and had an argument with her before coming to school. So, the lesson is, for success at work happy marriage is necessary. His unhappy marriage made him mad, made him angry, made him to lose his etiquette in teaching, and made him humiliated as well. He lost his reputation at work, and almost lost his job that was providing his wife and kids bread and butter. I felt sympathy for his children because he was the only bread and butter earner for them, and I forgave him for the sake of his children.

For the better relationships: Marriage is not only between two people, but it unites two families, two lots of relatives, and two lots of friends. It creates a strong bond between so many people in the society with a code of relationship. When a relative, even a far relative is in trouble, the rest feel morally obliged to help the one who is in trouble. This is a great benefit to build social harmony, cohesion, and social responsibility to build a happy and peaceful society. But if the marriage is unhappy, then the opposite happens to the relatives, friends, and the society. Relatives become polarized in favour or against, and the fire of unhappiness spreads fast. Often, parents take sides, and they try to influence others to take a side as well. The healthy and happy relationship comes under fire. I was under fire many times in my life because of the unhappy marriage of others. They wanted me to take sides. I was scolded, mocked, abused, and threatened for not taking wrong side. I was told that for the sake of relationship I must take the relative's side. For unhappy marriages friends can be labelled as foes, relationships between people can break like glass, harmony can take the shape on enmity, backbiting against one another can increase, both sides can be busy with character assassinating, love can turn into hate, and peace can turn into chaos. As I said, unhappiness is like a fire, and that fire has only one medicine. That medicine is to do everything in marriage to be happy. For keeping, and maintaining better relationship, happiness in marriage is very important.

For the peace of mind: Who can function well without peace of mind? For happiness people need peace of mind and for the peace of mind happiness is also necessary. One cannot survive without another. A mind needs to be free from uncertainty, fear, and anxiety for the peace of mind. For it, marriage must have the stability with stable and genuine relationship. If the marriage relationship is like a rocky boat, always unstable, and there is no certainty if it will drown or float, then how can that marriage give peace of mind. Peace of mind requires firmness, trust, and full of positivity in the relationship. But if there is mistrust, then genuine bond never lands on the

spouses. Mistrust does not allow two people to deepen their love and dedication for one another. For example, if you cannot trust your spouse, will you feel comfortable holding his/her hand in difficult times? You will always fear what if your spouse cheats you, betrays you, harms you, disappoints you and neglects you. You will never have the peace of mind if your marriage is unstable with unhappiness. Many people exchange their marriage vows to be with one another in good or bad days, but they cannot keep their promise. The challenges are there to test their authenticity, and if one of them, or both fail in the test, then the trust becomes shaky, unstable, and it damages the reliability and contributes unhappiness. Unhappiness removes the peace of mind. Therefore, happiness in marriage is essential for peace of mind.

For the best focus in prayer: Muslims pray 5 times daily. In the prayer, concentration is important. The worshippers need to focus on the prayer to receive rewards from Allah. He/she needs to concentrate deeply as if he/she can see Allah or if not then he/she needs to concentrate on the awareness that Allah is watching him/her. To be able to do that, a worshipper needs a relaxed mind free from anger, unhappiness, jealousy, and envy. If the marriage is unhappy, then the anger follows that person, and anger can deter the person from full concentration in the prayer. For the best prayer the worshipper must have the best state of mind, and for the best state of mind, the worshipper needs to be happy. An unhappy, restless, and anxious mind is not free to concentrate on prayers. The level of devotion will be compromised, and the reward will be lesser. Many people can pray together, but their rewards are different depending on their state of mind and the concentration in their prayers. Unhappy mind is blocked with unhappy issues, and the blocks prevent the person to focus completely. If I am not happy for something, I noticed my struggle in prayers requiring more struggles to put the heart and soul in it. No unhappiness is good, but unhappiness in marriage affects people more readily because spouses are so close to one another, and their closeness constantly reminds them about their unhappiness.

For the best manner: If the water in the pot is boiling, what do we expect the outcome will be? We see the angry movements of boiling water, its restlessness in moving up and down, and the out-of-control water drops outside the pot. It looks unhappy, and the gesture of it is unhappy. Similarly, an unhappy heart is like a boiling pot, and its expression is through the manner. In an unhappy marriage, the common gesture is anger, shouting, attack/defence with words, unkind remarks to hurt one another, or to put one another down. Anger takes away best speaking, kind words, polite gesture, lovely conversations etc. Unhappiness in marriage make spouses very sensitive to one another and even a little thing annoys them, and their response may become offensive, argumentative, and uncivil. People can offer their best manner when they are happy with everything. They can be smiley when they are happy, but they can be rude and irritable when they are unhappy. The manner is the outer expression of what is in the heart. A happy heart is a healthy heart, and a healthy heart does not express sick behaviour to damage self or to damage others. If a spouse is unhappy at home, friends and workmates can see that. Most importantly the family members, and relatives see that through uncontrolled behaviours. A happy home may turn into a chaotic home from unhappy marriage. Therefore, if anyone wants to keep up the best manner then happiness in marriage is one of the prescriptions.

For the best of the society: Husband and wife is a team. It is the fundamental team for the society because from it comes children, next progeny, and the future citizens. Then the parents become the first teachers for the next generation. If they mould their children with right attitude, right manner, and right education, then they will become a healthy part of the greater society. They will be loving, peaceful, positive in their leadership and in positive contribution in the society. For that a happy marriage is essential. A happy marriage can offer a lovely home, a peaceful surrounding, and can pass loving and peaceful citizens for the society. On the other hand, if the marriage is unhappy, then the home will have negative practices like abuse, anger,

lack of unity, lack of discipline, and lack of moral qualities. When children learn unhappiness at home, they pass it to the society as well. Most children do not come out of that bad spiral because they practice what they have learnt. The result is bad for the society. If we talk about the unhappy spouses, they also directly or indirectly affect the society. For example, due to unhappy marriage if there is domestic violence, the children, relatives, friends, work, or business, everything can be affected. The productivity will be less, time will be wasted at work, economy will be affected due to less tax paying, and taxpayer's money will be spent for counselling and medication etc. Society is made up with a human chain, and when one person is down in the society, then it will prevent the prosperity in the entire society. The more people in the society are happy, the more prosperity the society can achieve.

For the good motivation: Why people work hard? There is a motivation behind it. Many people get motivated by their dreams. Such as, the dream of getting married, will enjoy the happiness in marriage, will give and receive love, will raise children nicely to make a happy home and so on. Human is a social being. Allah made them to depend on one another. From that dependence comes the craving to receive love from spouse, and to complement one another by fulfilling their emotional needs. That is why we see the devastation in a person who feels abandoned by the loved ones. We see a spouse is committing suicide for breaking up the marriage relationship with the question in mind, "What is the point of living?" It means, that a suicidal person had lost motivation to work, study, enjoyment in life and even to be alive. Loss of motivation can be very dangerous, and it can transform a small thing to a big thing. It can even cost one's life. Many spouses are motivated to study hard, to work hard, to sacrifice a lot for a happy home with a happy marriage. They love their family so much and that love drives them to be active, productive, and prosperous because they want a happy family. But if that happy marriage dream breaks badly, their mental and emotional palace collapses as well. They lose their motivation. Some unhappy spouses become inactive, and develop aversion to work, people and the society. Another may get into alcoholism, drugs, and harmful agents to numb their feeling. They do not only lose their motivation, but they take the destructive path in their lives.

For the best reward from Allah: Marriage is a teamwork for the Paradise. When two people come together to form unity in faith and action through marriage, they can do better together than separately being alone. They can advise one another, motivate one another, and assist one another in learning and in practicing. Furthermore, their good actions being married can be recorded as voluntary charity (Sadaqah) for higher rewards. For example, their smile, love, nice words, support, encouragement, advice for good actions, helping to avoid bad actions, and so on will be recorded as Sadaqah (voluntary charity). In other words, they can earn more good deeds being married than being unmarried. Then, two people can pray for one another, can comfort one another in necessity, and can contribute happiness to the family and the society. All these good things can be achieved by being a united team if the marriage is happy. Allah wants the marriage to be happy. For it, HE has given all the required tools such as love and mercy in spouse's hearts. They should use those tools to be happy in marriage, and to gain cash rewards such as happiness, honour, peace, and prosperity in this life, and they can achieve high rewards to be happily married forever in the Paradise. Therefore, for receiving best reward from Allah, they should work hard to be happy in marriage.

For inspiring others: Most marriages take place in public with other people. Families, relatives, and friends come together to support, to enjoy, and to wish well to the married couple. People bring gifts, have fun, and hope that the marriage will last with happiness. If the marriage is unhappy, then the message goes around to everyone, and the negative gossips go around. With negative gossips, many young people feel scared to get married. They fear, "What if my marriage becomes unhappy?" On the other hand, if the marriage is happy, and always good gossips go

around, then it becomes an inspiring issue for many others. I remember, when my wife and I were teaching Quran to the children, some of them used to say, “Uncle and aunt! I want to marry one day and be happy like you two.” What did we do? We were not perfect couple! Maybe, they saw us happy, never heard about any fight between us, none of us went to anyone complaining against one another, and no one heard anything bad about us, and from that a positive image, I realized some young people took inspiration to be married happily. It is true that our younger generation need to see good examples in us, some good role modelling from older people, to be inspired towards happiness in marriage. Happy marriages are therefore inspiring for many others.

Essentials for happy marriage

Getting married and happiness in marriage is not the same. Marriage is two parties coming together in business. It is a life business, and a serious far-reaching business indeed! Financial business can be dissolved peacefully by walking out without issues being left behind, but if the life business does not work, then it affects children, family, relatives, and the society generations after generations. That’s why, happiness in marriage is essential for positive present and future. The fact is, happiness in marriage does not come as a gift, but it must be earned by the spouses. To earn happiness, there is a need to adjust between one another with some essential qualities. Every spouse should master those qualities to make right effort to earn happiness in marriage. Below I shall list a few essential qualities with brief description:

Right mentality: Right mentality is the foundation for happy marriage. Good foundation of a building is essential for strength, stability, safety, and longevity. Spouses need sound mentality to adjust smoothly without arguments or obstructions. The example of right mentality are, same faith, same ambition for Paradise, humility without arrogance, flexibilities without stubbornness, keenness to understand one another without criticism, using the wisdom in decision making rather than impulsiveness, efforts to use intelligence without foolishness, sympathetic without vindictive, cool-tempered rather than hot-tempered, patience and not impatience, courageous and bold instead of timidity, sensitivity towards one another’s needs rather than insensitivity, loving rather than hating, thoughtful about the happiness rather than carelessness, or friendly relationship rather than unfriendly, and pro-active for happiness instead of inactivity etc. One must remember, a happy marriage is like a forever investment. It requires learning, educating, awareness, working together, and persistence in efforts.

Right attitude: What is attitude? The way of thinking is called attitude. How a spouse thinks about the marriage has a lot to do in either happiness or unhappiness. If a spouse or both spouses think of everything in a negative way, then happiness in marriage will only be a dream. The attitude must be positive to turn all the efforts positive for positive outcome. Some examples will be useful here. If a spouse or both spouses thinks about relationship negatively, that will be a negative attitude about life and relationship in general. Or if one thinks that life is not meant to be happy anyway, and it is full of struggle only, then that spouse cannot think for happiness and cannot work for it either. Or if a spouse was cheated in life and has a fixed thought about the present one that sooner or later the new one will cheat, then suspicion will be a block preventing the hope of happiness anyway. Or if a husband has fixed idea that female is 2nd class, then that wrong idea will ruin the harmonious relationship because the proper respect for happiness won’t be there.

Or if a spouse thinks that he/she only deserves service for beauty, wealth, title, degree, or power with high position, then for the one-sidedness, happiness will never be achieved in marriage. Or if a spouse has fixed idea about gender such as “This gender is horrible.” That fixity creates a generalised feeling towards a gender without assessing that gender in an individual basis. With

that attitude, the foundation of relationship becomes weak, and happiness cannot be built on a weak foundation. Or if a spouse experiences something bad in marriage, and gives up and thinks, “What is the point of trying anymore.” From that negative thought the positive efforts can be paralyzed. Or if a spouse has attitude to focus on the negative sides of the spouse instead of balancing with the positive side, then that spouse always asks for unhappiness. Or if a spouse thinks that the other spouse must be all perfect without looking at own imperfection, then nothing will make that spouse happy. In marriage, focusing on the positive things, praising for the positive things, and finding happiness in positive things makes the marriage happy.

Right knowledge: In marriage, right knowledge is very essential. Marriage is like a small state. If one can govern it with right knowledge, then that state will enjoy safety, security, peace, and happiness. But if that state is run without right knowledge, then confusion, chaos, and unhappiness cannot be avoided. What is the right knowledge in Islamic marriage? In Islamic marriage, the right knowledge is “Islamic Knowledge”. Muslim spouses must realize, no matter how educated they are; to make their marriage happy, they must learn Islamic knowledge. The simple reason is in Islamic marriage, they must follow Islamic code. Without right knowledge of Islam, how can they follow Islamic code? For example, if a farmer wants success in farming, or a businessman wants profit in business, then he must have the right knowledge about farming and business. Islamic marriage is the same.

Muslim spouses must have good knowledge about Islamic marriage according to Allah’s guidance. They must know all the aspects of Islamic knowledge to save their marriage from disasters. They must know the answers of many questions such as, what is Islamic marriage, why Islamic knowledge is different than other marriages, why Islamic marriage is a test from Allah, how to pass the test through marriage, what are the special benefits of Islamic marriage in both lives, what are codes in Islam to help Islamic marriage to be happy, what are the rights and responsibilities in Islamic marriage, what are the proper Islamic manner for spouses, how to overcome troubles and tribulations in Islamic marriage, and where to find all the answers to acquire right Islamic knowledge for happy marriage etc. Marriage is a life business, and Islamic marriage is an eternal life business that includes sharing this life and the next life, sharing emotions, love, feeling, happiness, or grief etc. Islamic knowledge is there to guide the marriage from darkness to the bright light to show how to reach the ultimate happiness in marriage in the Paradise.

Wisdom: What is wisdom? It has many meanings but one of them is, “the ability to see the result of the actions, or to think about the likely scenario because of an action”. Lots of marriages suffer from the lack of wisdom of a spouse or both spouses. Their unwise talk or actions may borrow unhappiness. Often a spouse may say something without proper thinking and that may break the heart of his or her spouse. One unwise word has power to put off the beautiful smile of your spouse. Similarly, one wise comment can bring your spouse out of sadness. One harsh comment may increase the stress or worries on another spouse and similarly, one wise comment can rescue a spouse from lots of anticipations and worries.

I shall give you a true story about an unwise action of a husband. A born Muslim man married to a new Muslim lady. That lady revered him as her role model. He, for the sake of fun drinks alcohol. He often tells himself, “Well! I shall give up after few years!” Yes, he did give up after few years. The pious wife asked him why he gave up. The man said: “It is not allowed in our religion, I did it wrongly.” He expected her to take it easy, but she did not. She became extremely disappointed with him because she thought her role model was dishonest, wrong doer, capable of cheating Allah, and that he could cheat her any time etc. As a result, her heart was broken, her trust was

shaken, and her devotion towards him was lessened. His action was with lack of wisdom, and it had damaged his happy marriage.

That's how, every day through words or actions, husband or wife may be unwisely complicating their own future. If they think before their actions or words, then they can refine their manners towards happiness. Muslim spouses learn wisdom through Islamic knowledge. It helps them to see the result of an action. Then they think what actions will bring sin and unhappiness, and what actions will bring good and happiness in their daily lives. With wisdom, they become very farsighted. They even can see the Hell Fire or Paradise, as the result of their wrong or right actions in marriage.

Rightly guided feelings: Feelings have no boundary. Feelings come from the emotional plane. Like a desert emotional plane has no fence or walls around it. Thus, anything can pop in the feeling. The feelings can be with impure or pure desires. Pure feelings guide towards happiness, but impure feelings guide towards unhappiness in marriage. The biggest challenge is how a spouse can guard from impure, selfish, lustful, treachery and greedy feelings when there is no fence around them? Well, that is where Islamic guidance comes to differentiate between the pure and impure feeling. Muslim spouses can use that guidance as a wall to guard their impure feelings to be saved from unhappy marriage.

For example, Islam guides us about the feelings that are allowed or forbidden by Allah, beneficial or harmful, how to guard the harmful feeling, how to keep the hearts clean from wrong advice from Satan, how to increase true loving feeling in marriage, what feelings to keep secret without revealing to friends to avoid complications, how to respect one another's feeling, the manner of sharing feelings to increase the bond and trust, and guidance about how to be sensitive positively about one another's honest feelings etc. Allah knows human feelings very well as the Creator, and ONLY HIS guidance to guard the feelings from impurity is the most effective formula. That's why there is guidance for right feelings for happy marriage in Islam as well. Therefore, Muslim spouse should follow the Islamic guidance about right feelings in marriage.

Right manner: Manner is the expression of the mind and emotion. If a spouse has good mind and heart, then his or her manner would be good. We expect good fruits from a good tree and that good tree had good seed in the first place. Right manner towards a spouse brings joy, and wrong manner towards a spouse ruins the joy. What is right manner in Islamic marriage? The right manner in Islamic marriage is, to behave nicely, politely, gently, with love and care, with respect and mercy etc. Right manners are expressed through words, gestures, and actions. A marriage may have money, luxury, and palace but with wrong manner to one another. What will happen then? The sweet relation will crumble with any outside storm. Just imagine, a rich husband talks to his poor wife (from a poor family) with pride, reminding, and without any respect, then will that wrong manner bring happiness between them?

How right manners bring joy for the married couple? No one will argue that bad manner, rude manner, abusive manner, violent manner, intimidating manner, controlling manner, aggressive manner, disrespectful manner, arrogant manner, angry manner, and any negative manner can ruin the happy marriage. Bad manner contributes to emotional turmoil, depression, compromised well-being in all levels. Manner is a breach of rights, and on the Day of Judgment in Allah's court, a victim spouse will be given opportunity for seeking justice and compensation from the bad manner spouse.

As a spouse, if I think, "I talk abruptly sometimes towards my lovely spouse, but I love my spouse dearly." I must know, that is a dangerous behaviour because my abrupt talk can break my spouse's heart, can make her depressed, or can contribute a deadly sickness in her mind, emotion, or body. My abrupt remarks may make my spouse cry and feel very unhappy. So,

whether I love my spouse or not, has no value if I am making my spouse suffer with my bad manner. Islam teaches for good manners from spouses. Allah loves those who are good mannered. HIS messengers were married, and they were best mannered towards their spouses. Muslim spouses must follow best manner for happiness in their marriage.

Friendliness between spouses: Do you want your wife to fear you? To obey you? To listen to you? To take your command only? Or do you want your husband to kneel to you because you sponsored him to come to a foreign country? Or you will act as a commanding officer to boss your husband around? I have seen many examples like that, and I have also seen the terrible outcome. Often, this mentality comes from some wrong culture, and poor spouses suffer without a friendly relationship. Islam came to correct these kinds of wrong notions. Islam teaches for a noble relationship that will have respect, love, and friendliness.

What do I mean by friendliness? Or what are the components in a friendly relationship? Some of them are, unselfish heart, helpful heart, sympathetic heart, no intention to harm any way or form, most reliable and honest, trustworthy by treatment and manners with deep feeling, pleasant without being sour, non-judgmental but ready to collect nicely, non-critical, good listener, lovely and genuinely caring. Friendliness is one feels like they can share the feelings without fear or worry, and the feeling attraction without doubt, suspicion, and contradiction. Spouses should not have barriers between them, and they should approach one another as bosom friends without hiding anything, or without doing or saying anything behind one another's back. If they do not have that strong friendly bond, then Satan may come in between them to create misunderstanding. The Satan can be from Jinn or from Humans.

You want to spend your whole life with a spouse and if your spouse is unfriendly towards you, how can you enjoy that relationship? You need a spouse that you really feel comfortable with, or your spouse makes you feel that you can share your inner feeling without fear. Your spouse is your companion for this life and next life. So, he or she should be your best friend. Islam offers guidance about friendship between spouses. It gives role models in marriages from Allah's messengers. Islam even teaches that a smile towards a spouse is a charity, or looking at own spouse with love is like a charity reward. Therefore, friendliness in spouse is also a very important happy factor for the happiness in Islamic marriage.

Good moral character: Good moral character is one of the most important happy factors in Islamic marriage. Usually, when people look for an ideal spouse for marriage, they look for beauty, wealth, family status and good moral character according to Islamic codes. Among those qualities, beauty is temporary, wealth may increase or decrease, family status also may change. Just think deeply for a moment, if you get all those qualities in a spouse except good moral character, then would you be happy in your marriage? To understand it, I shall give few example questions below:

- A spouse is very beautiful but prone to secret extra-marital affairs. It is due to lack of good moral character. Do you expect that marriage to be happy?
- Another spouse is very wealthy but an addicted gambler. That is also lack of good moral character. Can you expect happiness in that marriage?
- Or a spouse with high family status but extremely arrogant and treats his/her spouse with disrespect. That is also against best moral character. Can you expect happiness in that marriage?

In the three above examples, we found the absence of good moral character and you will agree that without good moral character, no marriage can be happy. A happy marriage needs trust, respect, love, honesty, humility, truthfulness, unselfish mind and attitudes, and a mind without envy or excessive jealousy. These, come from the "moral character". If you do not have good

moral character in your spouse, then your happiness is doomed. Therefore, Muslim spouses must bear good moral character for the happiness in Islamic marriage.

Time for family: Lots of marriages suffer due to time imbalance. Many spouses have no time for their families. They are too busy to make money, or to earn fame, or to rise in the society ladder, or to get promotion in politics, or to spend lot of time with friends. They take their marriages for granted and they do not spend enough time with their spouse, kids and so on. As a result, the following problems may face them if they are not careful:

- Forsaken feeling: If spouses do not spend enough time together and spends time with others to avoid the family, one of them may feel forsaken and not loved. From that forsaken feeling, may develop depression, disappointment, suspicion, and many other bad feelings. Those bad feelings then become a wall between the spouses to prevent happiness.
- Feeling alone: Feeling alone is one of the worst feelings one can have. It may arise in a spouse if the married couple do not spend quality time together. Lots of bad thoughts may arise from lonely feelings in spouse, which can bring distaste in happy relationship.
- Dependence on someone else: When a spouse is absent, the other one for survival, often clings to someone else. Sometimes, that leads to a disaster. The third person comes in between two intimate spouses, and often in-appropriate advice from the third person may make the sweet relationship into a sour one.
- Room for misunderstanding: Two spouses cannot share ideas about everything if they do not spend enough time with one another. It creates a vacuum between them in terms of necessary information regarding their family. As a result, misunderstanding arises and may lead to dispute and disharmony among them.
- No teamwork: When two do not spend enough time with one another, the team spirit collapses. Two energies do not join in one to make their conjugal life prosper quickly. It brings loss for the marriage without any gain.
- Family goes astray: If spouses are not spending enough quality family time, then the family members may go astray. A couple may be working and working to earn more money for children, yet the children are without guidance at home watching TV too long, going to school without doing their homework and so on. In the long run, that busyness will cause disaster for the children's future.
- Family breaks: If spouses do not spend enough time together, then the bond between them becomes weaker and weaker over the years. Then some trial and tribulation may come like a storm and their weak bond may not be strong enough to resist it. The result may be the break of family.

Muslim spouses must make time for their families. They must bring a balance between the time for work and family. They need time to share the work, worry, happiness, challenges, planning and actions etc. That will increase the bond, trusts, experience to face challenges together, training for one another, and the productivity without negative feelings in them.

Halal income and expenditure: Some spouses are deceived by the wrong ideas. They may think, happiness in marriage depends in having a lot of money, or having a luxurious life, or spending lots of money in entertainment, enjoyment, expensive gifts, and holidays and so on. From that wrong notion, they may try to make lots of money in a short period of time. That's why they may take the sinful path to get wealth, such as, taking bribes, earning complex interest, occupying another's property illegally, stealing or robbing, and taking all sorts of unfair means to pile up wealth by hook or crook.

Happiness in Islamic marriage does not come from Haram (Illegitimate) income. Because Haram income removes Allah's blessings. In sinful actions, Allah does not grant HIS blessings. Prohibited income pollutes the true Faith, and for it lots of calamities come to warn them to correct themselves. Yes, they may see money, luxury, name, and fame with Haram income, but with it they will see problems after problems as warnings. Or they may be allowed to continue their wrongs until Allah finally punishes them. If any believer enjoys Haram without seeing punishment, then it is a bad signal for him/her. That signal indicates that they are going to be caught badly.

The same about the how spouses spend their money. Allah has given Halal and Haram boundary on income as well as in expenditure. If anyone chooses the Haram ways of spending in marriage, that will also have bad effect in happiness in marriage. Allah will take account on the Day of Judgment about the income and expenses, and in this life, prohibited expenses will bring unhappy consequences. Allah is the source of true happiness. Happiness comes from Allah. People may have money or luxury life, but they are not necessarily happy. Many rich people need sleeping pills to force themselves into sleep because they do not have a peace of mind. Allah grants happiness to those who obey HIS code.

Divine solution in disputes: Marriage begins with happy modes, but it may become unhappy at some stage. Initially, it comes with love, but with problems love can fly away through the window. Getting love is often easier than maintaining the love in marriage. It is not easy rather it is hard work. Two persons come to the marriage with two different unique mentality, habits, and preferences. Unless they follow divine rules to be united, they may face disagreements, disputes, and unhappiness in marriage. In good days, everything tastes sweet in marriage. But if any problem comes, then the blaming game may begin. Each spouse may look for faults with another. Or when they try to make decisions, their differences in opinions may hinder their smooth relationship. A spouse may say, "Take my way or the highway."

Just imagine, if there was no dispute in marriage, then how happy the marriage would be. Allah knows that as the Creator, and HE prescribed holy marriage with holy promise with solution for disputes in marriages. The solution is, as Muslims, each spouse will submit their ego, choice, desire, cravings and wants to the obedience of Allah. Then, if they face a dispute between them, they will simply unite in obeying Allah in decision making according to the teaching of Allah's messenger. Very simple! Both will agree to put their ego aside, and to accept the solution according to the Quran and Sunnah. That way, nothing can break their harmony. Satan cannot defeat them, and their selfish desires also cannot defeat them.

If any Muslim marriage suffers from disputes, and hang in with one another unhappily, should find where things is going wrong. Then he or she should make a list of disagreements and causes, and then check whether one or both, are following own ego, desire, relative's suggestions, or following the code of Allah. If anyone does that, will find the reasons for unhappiness, and the solution Islam has given. Then if both follows Allah's guidance, then the solution is there free of charge, and the happiness will be restored by following the divine guidance.

Good habits: Spouses can have good habits or bad habits. Bad habits are not helpful for happiness in marriage. For the sake of happiness in Islamic marriage, spouses must give up bad habits. I shall give some examples of bad habits below:

- Praising other spouse's beauty, in front of your spouse,
- Comparing your spouse with others to put your spouse down,
- Always late in picking up your spouse,
- Not keeping your promise that you made to your spouse,

- Careless about dress, and appearance to your spouse,
- Blaming your spouse with everything,
- Shouting at spouse when talking,
- Sarcastic remarks and laugh to your spouse,
- Sitting lazy when your spouse is working at home,
- Picking nose in front of your spouse,
- Biting nails when spouse is eating,
- Drinking tea and leaving the cup in sink for the spouse to clean,
- Lying with spouse even in simple things,
- Swearing when talking to your spouse,
- Banging head when angry with spouse and so on.

These are some examples only. Even though these habits are minor issues in marriage, but they build up from moles to mountains if not changed. These little habits are enough to annoy your lovely spouse. Therefore, bad habits should be identified and should be given up without obstinacy. In marriage relationship, good habits are very important for happiness. Good habits are admirable, best for good health, and sweet for happy relationship. Children follow adult's habits, and the best way of teaching children best habit is to become a role model. Therefore, good habits are another happy factor in Islamic marriage.

Divine protection: Spouses are not self-sufficient. They have lacking in them. They cannot be 100% perfect. Besides, they cannot protect themselves from dangers from within or from outside. From within, often their jealousy, suspicion, foolishness, lack of wisdom, ignorance, or selfishness etc may become impediment to the happiness in marriage. From outside, could be bad inspiration from Satan, or from another bad human. Besides, other humans may plot conspiracy against them to destroy their happiness. Or from outside may come sickness, calamities, natural disasters, and misfortunes to snatch their happiness away.

From all those harms, married couples need insurance, the divine insurance, which is fully capable to protect them from unhappiness. That divine insurance is with Allah Almighty. In Islamic marriage, that's why, spouses must always seek Allah's protection and supplicate to Allah regularly to save them from all kinds of harms and to grant them happiness. Only Allah can protect them from all sorts of unhappiness. No matter how good they try, they cannot do it alone without Allah's help. So many things are out of control for the spouses, and they need Allah's help to control all sorts of harmful agents from them. That realisation always keeps the Muslim spouses humble, and reliant on Allah's Mercy. Allah loves that.

Allah's guidance: As humans, husband or wife has no full knowledge to guide himself or herself perfectly to achieve happiness in marriage. For guidance, the knowledge must be accurate, not biased, not faulty and with the consideration of all open and secret things. Can any spouse achieve the perfect knowledge to guide them to happiness? They cannot because Allah has given humans very little knowledge, so they depend on Allah's guidance. If the human knowledge was enough for happiness, then all the clever professors, philosophers and psychologists would have been happy in their marriages. Then, they could sell the "Happiness in marriage formula" to people and they could make a lot of money.

No, it does not work that way because Allah kept the happy formula with HIMSELF, and whoever will follow HIS guidance in marriage or in everything, HE has promised happiness for them. Too err is human. Humans are with imperfection. They are not independent. They are incapable of understanding one another's emotion completely. They are not creators. They have no full control on them. They do not know when a spouse will be sick, upset, sad, happy, accident, in

troubles and so on. On the other hand, Allah is their creator, and HE sent guidance for their happiness. Muslims come to Islam for that divine guidance from Allah, and they promise to follow that guidance in every step of their lives to achieve happiness in this life and in the next life.

Different thoughts about happiness

Do all people think that marriage brings happiness? Not really. People have different thoughts about it. For different thoughts some people crave for marriage, while others run away from it. Some people think that marriage brings happiness and some think that marriage brings sufferings. The difference in thoughts can be summarized into three main categories:

Marriage is bad for spiritual happiness: Some people think that marriage is an obstacle to attain full spiritual happiness. So, they prefer to abstain from marriage to devote fully to the service of God. It deprives people's physical and emotional needs, It deprives men and women complimenting one another, It is denial that GOD created men and women to marry for happiness, It does not follow the marriage tradition between Adam and Eve, it does not follow most prophet's tradition of marriage, it prevents man and woman to have children through marriage and it prevents the growth of society by preventing children from no marriages etc. From this thinking, some people may give in to secret immoral affairs, or abuse and so on.

Marriage is not necessary at all for happiness: This is another misconceived notion. Some people think marriage is a waste of time, or just a piece of paper, or too much commitment, or too much hassle. So, they have chosen to gratify their lust without marriage. Their logic is, if they can enjoy physically and emotionally without marriage, then why should they be tied up with marriage responsibilities? The first group denies the physical needs for their spiritual need, and this group denies the spiritual need for their physical need. This thought does not give importance to spiritual happiness, focuses on happiness through the gratification of lust, denies the moral responsibility in intimate relationship, fails to accept God's ruling about marriage, does not follow prophetic role modelling in marriage, avoids moral binding in intimate relationship and can break it if the physical attraction is over, causing more suffering on female partners with children if the relationship breaks, and it focuses only in this temporary life's happiness ignoring the everlasting happiness in the next life. This thought and practice bring many children without knowing their fathers, without guidance of their fathers, and without happiness in those children etc.

Marriage with divine code is necessary for happiness: This is a holistic way of thinking. It includes physical and emotional needs, spiritual needs, social needs, and it fulfils the purpose of life. This is Islamic teaching. Islam offers a balanced approach regarding marriage. It considers about human life, its purpose, its creator's wish, its temporary and everlasting success and so on. Islam avoids any extreme notions, and guides through moderation for forever happiness through Islamic marriage. Islam accommodates all the necessary aspects in marriage relationships for achieving happiness, for example:

- **Moderation:** Islam encourages the able ones to marry without forcing the sick, unable, and too poor ones to get married.
- **Balanced:** Islam combines physical and spiritual needs in marriage without dropping one by keeping another,
- **Holistic:** Islam does not separate body from the spirit. it teaches that body, spirit, emotion, mind all is together to serve God to attain happiness,
- **Guidance:** Islam guides how to marry per the divine plan and how to enjoy happiness in all levels,
- **God's plan:** Islam explains that it is God's plan to seek happiness through marriage,

- **Forever happiness:** Islam informs that a righteous married couple will enjoy happiness in this life as well as in paradise forever, and they must intend for the everlasting happiness.
- **Part of life journey:** Islam explains that marriage is a part of “journey of life”, so it has purpose, it has duties, it goes through test to achieve happiness in all stages of journey etc.

Therefore, Islamic marriage is the balanced holistic approach for happiness for the mankind. It includes everything a man or woman need for the happiness in this life, as well as in the next life.

Does Islam prescribe Marriage for happiness?

Does Islam prescribe marriage for happiness or for any other reason? It should be a fundamental question before we proceed any further in this book. Often some people misunderstand about Islamic marriage. For example, some may think that Islamic marriage is a prison for women, as they hear wrongly that a wife has no right in Islamic marriage. If that rumour is true, then one can say, Islamic marriage is not designed for happiness. The right answer is, yes, Islamic marriage is for happiness. It is prescribed by Allah for people to be happy in marriage. Allah never prescribe anything on HIS servants to make them suffer with unhappiness. The Islamic guidance is all about how Allah’s servants can be happy, and successful in both lives. Let us remind ourselves the following points about Islamic guidance:

- **Islam means happiness:** Islam comes from the root of peace and peace is happiness. Islam calls for peace in all levels such as: in mind, in soul, in emotion, in physical level or in spiritual level. Therefore, Islamic marriage is for happiness.
- **Source of happiness:** Allah is the source of all happiness. HE prescribed Islamic marriage between men and women, also for them to be happy.
- **Allah created man and woman to be happy in marriage:** Allah created the first man Adam. Then HE created Hawa (Eve) from Adam to complement each other. Then wed them in Islamic marriage to be happy. Holy Quran describes:

➤ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا

“And among HIS Signs is this that HE created (your) mates (wives) for you from yourselves that you may live in joy (happiness and peace) with them.” [Al-Quran 30:21]

Or we can ask the question here for our understanding, “What is the purpose of Islamic marriage?” In other words, why did Allah prescribe holy marriage between Adam and Eve? Or why did HE continue the holy marriage tradition for children of Adam? Or what is the purpose of it? Or did Allah prescribe Islamic marriage for suffering, for punishment, or for any other reason? To find the answer, we should look at again the verse from the Holy Quran:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا

“And among HIS Signs is this that HE created (your) mates (wives) for you from yourselves that you may live in joy (happiness and peace) with them.”

[Al-Quran 30:21]

Let me highlight the main components from the above verse:

Allah made them mate: Allah made the first man Adam, and the first woman Eve as mates as bosom friends. Bosom friends do not hate one another, and they enjoy their companionship to be happy and not to be sad. Bosom friends are for comfort, joy, happiness, and protection for one another. Bosom friends never cause harm, nor inflict injury on one another, but they do opposite. They console one another in worries, sacrifices time, energy, and wealth for the comfort of another. Therefore, the purpose of creating Adam and Eve also to be married to live as

mates in happiness, and to face the obstacles of happiness together as a strong team. This is a theme in the verse above.

Allah made the female from male: Look! Allah could have made them separately because HE can create any way HE wants to. But in the case of Adam and Eve, Allah created Adam first and then HE made Eve from Adam. What is the wisdom behind it? The wisdom is one will be the inseparable part of another. In other words, without one another, or without coming together in marriage, a male or female cannot be complete. Allah made them part of one another and made them part of one another in marriage. That's why, no matter how strong a male or female is, when they come together in marriage with love, they melt to blend. Blending is to remove tension, worries and insecurity, and to be happy. For that reason, in marriage they become sweetheart to one another. This is also the theme of the verse above.

Allah made them to unite: In Allah's creation plan, HE did not want to create a men's world separate or different than a women's world. For example, Allah created humans and angels. Both are creations but with differences. They have so much difference that they cannot live together in marriage. Their different nature does not allow them to function in marriage. But for male and female in humans, Allah has created them with unique qualities with a magnetic connection between them. For that, they must unite to live happily, and to produce children as next progeny. If Allah did not want them to be united in happy marriage, then Allah would have made male and female differently. Therefore, the inspiration of unity among humans begins from husband and wife, and then to children, and then to relatives to the society etc. Allah did not make humans to be divided to fight, hate and to live unhappily. HE taught through human marriages that HIS plan is unity and we must stay united for a happy world. This is another theme of the verse above.

Allah made them to work towards happiness: A mate is not without responsibilities. Without taking responsibilities, and giving rights to another mate, one cannot be a true friend. When a mate is sick, another mate runs for help. Or when a mate is in distress, another mate stands beside ready to sacrifice anything to provide comfort for another friend. There is a proverb, "A friend in need is a friend indeed." It is true that friendship is tested time to time, and a true friend passes the test with sincerity, dedication, and compassion. So, to maintain true friendship, both friends need to work hard for it. The similar teaching is regarding husband and wife in marriage. Allah made them mates with rights and responsibilities to work hard maintaining their high level of friendship to be happy. If we compare the happiness as a nest, then both husband and wife need to work hard to build that happy nest. Allah has placed that responsibility on them according to the verse above.

Allah made them as root of a happy tree: Allah created Adam from dust and then created Eve from him to live in marriage happily. Allah solemnized their marriage in Paradise. The origin of marriage took place in Happy Place (Paradise), and the Paradise will be the final happy destination for the righteous people to live happily in marriage forever. So, Adam and Eve were like the root of a happy tree, and from them children generation after generation are like the branches of that tree. Adam and Eve started the tradition of happy marriage as root, and from there it grew and grew to entire mankind. Allah decided them to be in marriage so that marriage tradition would continue to humans.

Was it Allah's plan to prescribe Islamic marriage for happiness? Yes, it is. Allah's plan about marriage is final. No one has power to change it. HE creates things for a certain purpose. HE created man and woman and prescribed marriage for them if they have ability to do so. Allah has created the feelings for it such as:

- **Craving to be happy:** This craving is created by Allah in them. Every man and woman have a feeling to be happy. It is there, no one can remove it because it is installed according to the plan of the creator, Allah.
- **The attraction between man and woman:** Where did that attraction come from? Again, Allah created it in man and woman. Here, they do not have any choice but to follow Allah's plans, willingly or unwillingly. They feel attracted to each other for the sake of becoming happy.
- **Love and mercy in man and woman:** Who made the love in emotional plane? Again, Allah made it. Man, and woman feel attracted to one another due the feeling of love. Allah created that love in them. Then to maintain that love, they need mercy towards each other. Who created the mercy in them? Again, it is Allah.

So, Allah had HIS plan all along, about human marriages. That's why HE provided all the ingredients they need in them to be happy in their holy marriages. Allah's creation has no shortcomings. Nothing is missing in HIS creation, in HIS planning! Subhaanallah! Let us revise the Quranic verse again for our reminder:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ
٢١

“And among HIS Signs is this that HE created (your) mates (wives) for you from yourselves, that you may live in joy (happiness and peace) with them, and HE has placed love and mercy between your (hearts): Surely, there are Signs in this for those who think.”

[Al-Quran 30:21]

Islamic marriage is designed to be happy:

How is Islamic marriage designed to be happy with conditions? The conditions are if one follows the proper Islamic codes in marriage. For happiness, both spouses must submit themselves to the obedience of Allah, and they must mould themselves with Islamic principles in Marriage. They must remember the important aspects in Islamic marriage. For our understanding, I shall mention just a few of them. Muslim spouses must remember those or must remind themselves about the important aspects. That will allow them to remember why Islamic marriage is a special union and what responsibilities come with it. They are below:

A marriage to fulfil the creator's plan: What is the objective of Islamic marriage? The main objective of Islamic marriage is “To fulfil Allah's plan in life”. This is the primary objective, and then comes physical pleasure and so on as secondary ones. Allah created men and women, then HE prescribed marriage for them, and from them HE creates children for next generations and so on, per HIS master plan. So, Muslims must ask themselves, “Why am I marrying? What should be my intention in my marriage?” Is it money, beauty, power, and position? Or is it only for physical pleasure? Well, Islamic marriage includes everything, and it includes the higher purpose as well. Therefore, in Islamic marriage, the intention must be, “I am marrying to fulfil the plan of my Lord, for HIS pleasure.” In this intention, Allah's obedience is the first and foremost aspect, and Muslim spouses must not forget that to dedicate their marriage for higher purpose to receive Allah's guidance, blessings, and Mercy.

A promise in Allah's name: In Islamic marriage two people (bride and groom) exchange their vows in the name of Allah. Promise in the name of Allah makes it a solemn and holy promise. Allah is Almighty GOD, and HE knows the intentions in the hearts. HE knows their secret intentions, motives, degree of sincerity and devotion. They take Allah as their main guardian Lord in marriage, who will judge them on the Day of judgment should they do anything wrong in the

name of “Islamic marriage”, or if they breach their holy promise. In the sermon in Islamic marriage, Quranic verses are recited to remind the spouses that they must respect their promise that made by Allah, and they do not do anything wrong which they must be accountable. Allah loves them to maintain their pure and holy promises with all cost to be happy. If they follow Allah and HIS Messenger in marriage, then success will kiss their feet.

Using Allah’s recipe with care: It is Allah Who gave two main recipes for happiness in marriage. They are “Love and Mercy”. Islamic marriage reminds Muslims “Love and Mercy” is Allah’s gifts to them and they should use them with care. What do people do if they receive gifts from the king of their country? Or from someone who is very powerful and honourable? They appreciate the gift, look after it, and place in a secured place to avoid loss or theft. Now look! Allah gave special gifts from HIM to married couple, and they are “Love and Mercy.” Should not Muslim spouses look after them? How can they look after them well? The answer is, they should look after them by using them rightly and avoiding abuse with them. For example, if a spouse turns the divine love as selfish love, and give gift of mercy conditional corrupting with greed, then it will be a misuse of Allah’s gifts. Therefore, Muslim spouses must not misuse Allah’s gifts in their marriage. If they do misuse, then Allah will hold them accountable for it. They must remember that.

Marriage as a test from Allah: Islamic marriage is also a test from Allah, like every other thing in this life is a test from Allah. It is a fundamental belief every Muslim spouse must have. With this belief, they will not be deluded by fantasy that getting into marriage is automatic happiness. Without this belief, if a spouse hopes to be happy, soon he or she gives consent for the marriage, will stumble when challenges come their way. Then, one might blame another saying, “I ruined the happiness in my life by marrying you.” The fact is, marriage is another test from Allah, and if the spouses pass that test in this life, then they can expect everlasting happiness in marriage in Paradise by Allah’s permission. Until then, Islamic marriage will go with happiness and challenges. With challenges, Allah will test them whether they follow Allah’s guidance in Islamic marriage or follow their selfish desires. Therefore, Muslim spouses must remember that together they must pass the test. If they remember well, then in any challenges they will work as a strong team and Allah will bless them in their efforts.

Marriage forever: Islamic marriage is aimed to be for forever. Islam teaches that human life will go through two major stages. The first stage is, “This life in this world”, which is short, a testing period, and with trials and tribulations in marriage (for example). The second stage is, “Hereafter”, which is never ending, and with real happiness in Paradise. In paradise, husband and wife will remain young forever, will be healthy all the time, and will be happy forever. Therefore, Muslims should marry for forever happiness. They must target for the happy marriage in Paradise. If their focus is fixed in that lofty success, then little problems in their marriage life cannot break their harmony. They can overcome little hiccups to achieve the greater success. For example, a sportsperson whose aim is the gold medal, can go through struggles, self-disciplines, and hard work without being deterred by challenges because his mind is fixed in the gold medal. During the run, he can stumble but will get up to run again because his focus is on the ultimate prize with gold medal. Now, if spouses have their mind in Paradise, then Paradise is the supreme GOLD medal from Allah. For it they can go through stumbles in life without becoming discouraged in marriage at all.

Marriage as worship: Islamic marriage is a worship to Allah. What makes it a worship? The three things in Islamic marriage make it a worship, and for worship Allah grants blessings, and rewards for them. Those three things are: 1. The Intention of Marriage is to please only Allah, 2. the following the codes of Allah in Marriage, 3. Hoping for reward from Allah. The right intention begins the marriage journey to follow the Islamic marriage codes. Islamic marriage codes consist

of Halal and Haram thoughts, feelings, and actions. With it, the spouses control their selfish desires, cravings, cultures, and traditions for the love of Allah with the hope of rewards from HIM. Before marriage, a Muslim worships Allah individually, but after marriage they become a team, and they add their children in that team to become a devoted team of worshippers. Before marriage, they used to make DUA as an individual, but after marriage they make DUA for one another as a team.

Muslims must remember that their marriage is a part of worshipping Allah. Allah has created humans and Jinn for worshipping HIM and that worship is not limited to 5 times prayers only. Worshipping Allah includes 24 hours in a day and all the time they are Allah's servants to worship HIM. If anyone mistakenly takes marriage as a social commitment, or as a social tradition, then it will devastate the marriage, and they can take Islamic marriage lightly. But if they take the true meaning of Islamic marriage, and they take it as a worship, then they will feel the responsibility to keep their marriage pure from sins, disobedience of Allah, and as a result they turn their marriage into a vehicle of peace, happiness to arrive into Paradise safely.

Marriage with guidance: Islamic marriage comes with full guidance from Allah. Quran and Sunnah provide that guidance for Muslim couples. This is a great aspect in Islamic marriage. It does not leave the couples alone to sort out their problems, or to follow any traditions blindly, or to be in the darkness hovering over them on how to run the marriage life smoothly. Islam comes with complete guidance, a guidance from A to Z. For example, Islamic guidance provides all the answers regarding marriage such as, whom to marry and whom not to. A Muslim is not allowed to marry his mother, sister, father, brother, or uncle etc. Then, Islamic guidance answers how to get married such as exchanging proposal and acceptance in the name of Allah before two witnesses with sermon etc. Then, after marriage how to celebrate, how to feed people, how to treat them etc. Even, if they have any misunderstanding, or any dispute, then Islamic marriage guidance offers solution how to solve their disputes by surrendering to Allah. Or in case, despite all peaceful reconciliation, if marriage does not work, then Islamic guidance offers ways how to separate peacefully with justice and fairness. That way, they are never left alone to struggle, but Allah is with them all the time with guidance to offer them way to achieve happiness in their marriages.

Unity in marriage: Husband comes from a different background, as the wife. They have unique mentality, attitudes from different upbringing, and habits for different lifestyles, and sometimes they have age and educational differences. How can they come into unity to make a unified team in marriage? Is it easy? One may say that love brings them together. That is true but I am talking about continuous unity to make the marriage happy or to maintain the happiness in marriage. They must need unity in marriage, because without it, when they will go through challenges, then love in marriage will wear off gradually. Love is like mercury because it never stays in one level for its fluctuations. It has highs and lows, but if there is ONE single point in which two spouses can unite, then they can maintain happiness through ups and downs. Islam has provided easy solutions for this. The solution is that they will surrender their choices, cravings and demands into the obedience of Allah. Whenever they find disagreement, they can unitedly follow Allah's code. Allah is their point of unity like Hajj when millions of Muslim pilgrims unite for the pleasure of Allah by following one rule from one Allah. They surrender their choices, preferences, liking or disliking to the guidance of Allah. Thus, two persons become one in aim, in objective, in the effort of happiness and success. Allahu Akbar (Allah is the greatest)! What a nice unity!

Inclusiveness: In Islamic marriage, the provision is that marriage should be done with people, and not secretly. Allah made the provision to share the happiness of marriage with families, neighbours, friends, and relatives to make it an inclusive event. Most particularly, it emphasizes

two witnesses to be present when they exchange their promises. The inclusive Islamic marriage system has so many socio-economic, moral, and spiritual benefits. Islam emphasizes the social cohesion. It does not teach the individualism rather it teaches human unity, social services, and to live in a society with rights and responsibilities. Individualistic mentality removes a person from another, and allows a person to be isolated, and to suffer from sadness.

Whereas Islam teaches to be together as families, communities to be close to one another to increase bonds, to practice fairness in everything to be safe and secured, and to make the families and societies happy collectively. That is why, Islamic guidance emphasizes marriage to be inclusive. It also guides every marriage to be a role model for positive relationship, and to inspire others to be better and happier than them. Without that inclusive philosophy, an inclusive society is nothing but a dream. Humans need love between them to be together, and to progress together. Every marriage is an inspiration of love, and that's why all the participants feel happy with marriage occasion.

Nobility in marriage: In Islamic marriage, everything is done with moral code prescribed by Allah. For example, Islamic marriage does not allow secret affair, or extravagance, or shameless activities etc. Islamic marriage strictly follows moral codes without glamour, pride, waste, showing off, perversion, gambling and so on. Nobility in Islamic marriage brings Allah's blessings for happiness. Nobility in Islamic marriage is like a seed. That seed is pure from rotting or insects or damage to produce a noble tree. The noble tree offers pure fruits for the people, and they will enjoy the fruits with happiness. A noble marriage is also like a seed for a healthy society. If the nobility in the marriage is corrupted with selfishness, cruelty, and cheating, then that corruption may travel down to the children, and then to the next generation. If the marriage has domestic violence, fighting, beating, trauma, anger, hate, grudge, and revenge to hurt one another, then it becomes a marriage without nobility. It becomes like a corrupt seed, and that corrupt seed may travel down through generations to make the families, communities, and societies immoral, un noble, and unhappy.

To conclude, Islamic marriage is designed to be happy. I gave few examples above, and when I think about them, then I see the wisdom behind every requirement in Islamic Marriage. Those requirements are a necessity as the strong foundation of happiness in Marriage. Happiness must be achieved, and it can come with good practices, and good practices must need good guidelines with good reasons. Islam offers all the reasons that goes into one's heart as part of the faith, and then the faith demands to practice good practices with good guidelines for achieving higher rewards from Allah Almighty. So, it comes up with continuous motivations to assist the spouses to believe in good practices and to work hard for happiness in marriage with the aim to pass the test in marriage in this life to be in Paradise in happiness forever.

Chapter 2: Secret of Happiness in Marriage

What is the secret root of happiness?

If we consider happiness is a tree, then what is the root for it? The tree comes out from a root, happiness also has a root. If we know the root of happiness, then it will be easier for us to look for it and to attain it. Happiness is a must need for every human. Our emotional need is the same. So, all of us need to know the secret root of happiness in all areas of life especially in our Islamic marriages. Before going to the right answer, I shall highlight few essentials in life to check whether any of those essentials are the root of happiness. They are listed in below:

Is it a secret machine? Is the root of happiness a secret machine? Is it available anywhere? Can we purchase it? Or will there be one in future? Or can all the geniuses get together to invent a machine for happiness? The answer is no.

Is it self-control? Can anyone fully control his or her emotion? Or can anyone stop feeling sad? Or can anyone stop feeling angry? Or can a spouse control the feeling of another spouse? Or can a spouse control the sensitivity of another spouse? The answer is no.

Is it money? If money was the secret root, then why do so many rich couples seek divorce? Or why do so many rich spouses have unhappy marriages? Or why some rich spouses are killing their own spouses? Or why so many rich spouses are pursuing lawsuits against spouses? Or why many rich spouses consume alcohol to numb their sadness from marriage? So, is the money the secret root of happiness? Again, the answer is no.

Is it modern education? Modern education provides tips, offer stories, encourages to do research, shows movies to learn about marriage life. But if the modern education was the root of happiness, then why all modern educated spouses are not happy? Why in some countries, modern educated people have high divorce rate? Or why so many modern educated people are taking anti-depressants due to unhappiness in their marriages? So, is modern education being the secret root of happiness in marriage? The answer is no.

Is it power? If power was the root of happiness, then every ruler would have been happy, or every person would have tried to be a ruler. But powerful people, rulers, police with guns, armies with arms are human beings with sadness or happiness. They are not above depression, or disappointment in marriage and so on. When the issue of happiness comes, even the rulers are powerless. Power cannot buy love, affection, care at all. Often power with arrogance destroy the happy marriages. Rulers, princes, or princesses all need love in marriage, and all are after happiness in marriage. Power cannot control emotions like anger, arrogance, pride, greed and so on. These things often damage the happiness in marriage. Again, is power the secret of happiness? The answer is no.

Is it control of surroundings? Let's say, the root of happiness is to control the surroundings. Because often unhappiness comes through external or internal surroundings. Some external problems that contribute unhappiness are stress from work, anxiety about money matters, fears, phobias, accidents, sickness, natural disasters, manmade wars, unrest, troublesome relatives, or death of loved ones etc. On the other hand, some internal problems that contribute unhappiness are worry about aging, hormonal changes in body, own sickness like diabetes and high blood pressure, hurt feeling, being irritable and snappy at times, being disappointed time to time, feeling disgust about something etc. Do we have power to stop all these? Or can we survive without these? It is impossible to eliminate all these problems in human life. Again, is controlling the surroundings the secret root of happiness? The answer is no.

Is it a medicine? What is medicine for? Medicine is for cure. Unhappiness is a sickness and what is the medicine for it? Is there any medicine available for happiness? So far, we do not know any tablets or capsules are manufactured for happiness in marriage. Medicine may give some amelioration by relieving pain, but still there is no “Happy tonic” available for married couples to take. Again, is medicine the secret root of happiness? The answer is no.

We explored the above to look for the secret root of happiness, but nothing seems to hold the secret. That raise the further question, is the secret root of happiness with us at all? Should not we be very clear on it? We do not want to run after delusions, but we want to run after the certain truth. Now let us look for the answer to the question, “Is secret root of happiness not with us?” The following points should guide us towards the correct direction:

- **We are not creators:** We are not creators of happiness. We got the feeling free without asking. Since our birth we have been using the happiness. So many of us do not know the origin of it, nor we ask about it with the efforts for answers. While we have no answers within ourselves about our happiness, then how can we know the secret root of happiness? Then, how can the secret root of happiness be with us. If there was a happy tree inside us, and we could see that, then we could at least say that we have it.
- **Our knowledge is limited:** Scientists need accurate observation to find the facts about something, and that accurate observation, they need to see, touch, smell, or feel something to be sure. But secret root of happiness cannot be seen, touched, felt, and smelled. Therefore, with limited knowledge we humans cannot know the secret root of happiness. If it was a tree in our gardens, we could take the root out to see, to keep in safe place to feel always happy, but that is not the case.
- **We do not hold enough power:** When it comes to the power to be happy, we humans feel powerless. Rich or poor, ruler or ruled, powerful or powerless, all humans are helpless when they feel unhappy in marriage. They have no absolute power over their emotions, feelings, and thinking without divine guidance. If the power could discover the secret root of happiness, then all the rulers would have been happy always. The secret root of happiness is not under human power.
- **We feel unhappy often:** If we knew the secret root of happiness, then why did we suffer from unhappiness in marriage? If happy root was somewhere, we could purchase it before we exchanged our vows for marriage. If the root was a precious stone for example, then we could try to save money to buy it for guaranteed happiness in our marriages. But we can’t, can we?

We humans knew that secret root of happiness is not with us, but food for thought, I gave few points above. Therefore, we must divert our search for the secret root of happiness elsewhere. As we do not hold it, then we should ask the question, “Who holds the secret root of happiness in marriage then?” When humans struggle to find the secret root of happiness, they should seek the answer from All-Knowing Allah. And Allah answered the question before humans could ask in HIS Divine guidance. HE sent HIS Holy Messenger in all ages to inform humans about secrets of success, progress, and happiness. As the Creator HE holds all the correct information to help us achieve all the best things including happiness in marriage.

The question: What is the secret root of happiness?

The answer: Secret root of happiness is only with Allah.

Allah created humans with every necessary thing in them. That includes happiness. Seeking happiness elsewhere without seeking it from HIM will not bring complete success. Allah as the controller of heart and happiness does not give full happiness if we do not follow HIS codes. If we surrender to Allah for the happiness, then we can save time, and we can avoid uncertainty and confusion. For human psychology, certainty is essential for the peace of mind because it gives

assurance that we are on the right track, and we shall get there with proper efforts. Allah's messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught us that it is Allah Who has control on happiness and peace. That's why, he (peace be upon him) used to pray regularly to Allah for peace and happiness. His wife, Hon Ayesha (May Allah be pleased with her) reported that the Holy Messenger (Peace be upon him) used to supplicate after Salah (Prayer) as following:

«اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ السَّلَامُ وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ تَبَارَكْتَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ».

“Allahumma antas Salam, Wa min-kas Salam [O Allah, YOU are AS-SALAM (The source of peace and happiness) and from YOU is all Peace].

[Sahih Muslim]

We are believers! We are sure that the secret root of happiness and peace is with Allah Al-Mighty. With that we should add more information to strengthen our belief because knowledge is power and Divine knowledge turns our Faith more powerful. So, at this stage, I would like to focus on some REASONS to ascertain that secret of happiness is with Allah. It will increase consolation, satisfaction, and the confidence in believers. Some reasons are as following:

Allah holds the key for happiness: Only Allah holds the key for happiness because HE holds the key to control the internal and external surroundings. If human had the key, they would have exploited it. Allah also holds the key for our life, death, resurrection, and everything in the Universe. Therefore, HE controls the hearts and happiness. the everlasting happiness in the Paradise. Let us look at Allah's message:

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۚ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظِلْمَةٍ ۖ
الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابِسٌ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ٥٩

“With HIM are the keys of the unseen, the treasures that no one knows but HE. HE knows whatever is in the land and in sea. Not a leaf falls without HIS knowledge: There is not a grain in the darkness (or depths) of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry, except what is (written) in a clear record. It is HE, WHO takes your souls by the night and (HE) has knowledge of all that you have done by day: By day HE raises you up again; that a term appointed will be fulfilled; in the end to HIM will be your return; Then HE will show you the truth of all that you did.”

[Al-Quran 6:59]

Only Allah knows the key combination for happiness: Just think, a key maker will know the exact combination to lock or unlock. A key or lock has many slots, edges etc and similarly happiness in marriage has many slots such as, Hearts, Emotions, Feelings, Love, Mercy, Attraction to one another, Reasoning in mind, Affection, Willpower to achieve happiness, Desires in the person, Soul (to have all these), Nervous system to carry happy signals, and a body, mind and emotion to express or to enjoy the feeling of happiness etc. All these things are like slots in a key and is created by Allah. Happiness comes through the harmony and balancing acts among all slots. People need Allah's help to be blessed with necessary things for harmony. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا

“It is HE (Allah) WHO has created all the things and made them in proper (proportions) sizes.”

[Al-Quran 25:2]

Only Allah controls hearts: Spouses feel happiness in their hearts. They cannot control their hearts with their own capacity. Only Allah has the control on their hearts. Besides, it is Allah Who gave guidance to manage human hearts for happiness. Only Allah has the power and control to

put spouse's hearts at rest, and to bring two hearts together. That's why, Allah is teaching the believers to pray to HIM for guiding their hearts for happiness in both lives.

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ

“Our Lord! Do not let our hearts stray away now after YOU have guided us.”

[Al-Quran 3:8]

Only Allah has the power to protect from unhappiness: Again, humans are weak to safeguard their emotion from factors that give them emotional pain. They have some bad feelings that causes unhappiness in them such as, their jealousy, envy, pride, irritability, greed, and selfishness etc. They need to take protection with Allah, to safeguard themselves from their inner unhappy factors. Only Allah has the power to remove those shortcomings in their hearts, to make sure, spouses can enjoy peaceful and happy heart and then they can radiate that happiness to the other spouse. Holy prophet (s.a.w) taught Muslims to seek Allah's protection from the harms within them and from outside to them. Reported by Abu Huraira (May Allah be pleased with him), Holy Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ نَفْسٍ لَا تَشْبَعُ

“O Allah! I seek YOUR protection from a heart that is never pleased (happy, satisfied)

[Ahmed. Abu Dawood. Ibn Maazah]

Allah taught in the Holy Quran what to say to seek HIS protection from unhappy factors:

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ. مَلِكِ النَّاسِ. إِلَهِ النَّاسِ. مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ

“Say: ‘I seek shelter with the Lord of mankind, with the King of mankind, with the GOD of mankind, from the mischief of whisperer (Satan) who hides away.”

[Al-Quran 114]

Holy prophet (Peace be upon him) taught believers to seek Allah's protection from every unhappy factor. It is reported by Anas (may Allah be pleased with him):

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحَزَنِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْجُبْنِ وَالْبُخْلِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ غَلَبَةِ الدَّيْنِ، وَقَهْرِ الرِّجَالِ

“O Allah! I seek shelter with YOU from worries, grief, inability, laziness, and cowardice, burden from debt and oppression from human.”

[Muttafaqun A'laih]

Only Allah can remove the cause of unhappiness: No one has absolute power except Allah for rescuing human from unhappy situations. Spouses in marriage can be unhappy due to some issues that is completely out of their control. Only Allah Almighty can remove such causes of unhappiness if HE wants to. Some examples of those causes are below:

Absence of children: Absence of children can be a cause of unhappiness in marriage. Despite so much trying some spouses may have no children. Only Allah has the power to remove that cause. For example, Allah gave children to prophet Zakaria and his wife a child in their old age.

وَزَكَرِيَّا إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِي فَرْدًا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوَارِثِينَ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ يَحْيَىٰ وَأَصْلَحْنَاهُ زَوْجَهُ

“And Zakaria when he cried to his Lord: ‘O my Lord! Do not leave me without children, even though YOU are the best in inheritors.’ So, WE listened to him: And WE granted him Yahiya (Son): We cured his wife's (inability to bear children) for him.”

[Al-Quran 21:89]

Incurable sickness: Sickness can be another cause of unhappiness in marriage. Some sickness is incurable by medicine. But only Allah has the power to cure any sickness. Prophet Ayub (a.s) was suffering from incurable sickness. Allah cured him. Allah mentions in the Quran:

وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾
فَأَسْتَجِبْنَا لَهُ فَاغْلَبْنَا مَا بِهِ مِنْ ضُرٍّ ۖ وَءَاتَيْنَاهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُم مَّعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَذِكْرًا لِلْعَالَمِينَ ٨٤

“And Ayub, when he cried to his Lord, ‘Truly, distress has caught me, but YOU are the Most Merciful of those that are merciful’. So, WE listened to him, WE removed the suffering that was on him, and WE gave back his people to him, and doubled their number—As a Grace from Ourselves, and as a lesson to remember, for all who worship us.”

[Al-Quran 21:83-84]

Only Allah can send happiness in the hearts: Allah is the controller of the hearts. Only HE can send peace, tranquillity, and happiness in human hearts. Even if they are in threatening situations, Allah can still send peace in their hearts.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“It is HE WHO sent down the peace and calmness (Happiness and contentment) into the hearts of the believers.”

[Al-Quran 48:4]

Only Allah sent down the recipe for healing: An unhappy heart has no peace and burdened with troubles. Unhappy heart is a sick heart, and to cure it, Allah has sent down the divine prescription for healing the heart.

وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And of the Quran, WE send down what is healing and a mercy to those who believe (with practice).”

[Al-Quran 17:82]

Allah will grant everlasting happiness in Paradise: Happiness is this life or in the next life is with Allah only. Marriage is a test and with a pass, good servants of Allah can qualify happy forever marriage in Paradise.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسْكِنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ عِدْنٍ وَرِضْوَانٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

“Allah has promised to believers, men and women, Gardens under which rivers flow, to live in there forever, and beautiful homes in gardens (The Paradise) of eternal joy. But the greatest joy is the Good Pleasure of Allah: That is the supreme happiness.”

[Al Quran: 9.72]

Surrendering to Allah for happiness.

In the previous section, I discussed about the secret root of happiness in marriage and that the root of happiness is with Allah. Therefore, to receive happiness, one must surrender to Allah. In this section, I would like to discuss more on surrendering to Allah for happiness in marriage. Happiness in marriage is not limited to a few years but it is for this life and in the next life. Allah controls both lives, and to receive happiness from Allah in marriage both spouses must surrender to the will of Allah. That surrendering will include their complete willingness of following Allah’s codes in their marriage. It should be easier for true Muslims because true Muslims are fully surrendering to Allah anyway. Surrendering means full submission, and it is an essential duty for Muslims. Allah commands believers:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَآفَّةً

“O you who believe! Enter Islam fully.”

[Al-Quran 2:208]

Allah says again,

وَمَنْ يُسْلِمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ

“And whosoever submits his entire face (self) to Allah, and is one who does good, then (he/she) has truly grasped the most trustworthy handhold: And with Allah are the end and the decision of (all) things.”

[Al-Quran 31:22]

To be clearer, let us add another question here. It is, “What is the meaning of surrendering to Allah in marriage?” To get the answer, one or two lines will not be enough. It requires some explaining for making it easier. Insha Allah, I shall give few points to explain it below:

- **Marry to please Allah only:** That is surrendering your intention, wants and desires to the pleasure of Allah. Remember, Allah sees your hearts and knows what is in your mind. Do not marry for any other reason, and always put Allah first.
- **Choose your spouse to please Allah:** Surrender your choice to the choice of Allah. Allah wants you to choose a pious person to team up for working together for Paradise. Remove other personal, social, cultural, and family expectations.
- **Marry in a way that pleases Allah:** Surrender your glamour, pride, arrogance, showing off, and anything that is Haram (Prohibited). Do not act in Haram way to please your desire, culture, and tradition. Follow ways that Allah loves and made Halal for you.
- **Follow Allah’s rules in Marriage:** Surrender your rules, wants and traditions that contradicts with Quran and Sunnah. It won’t be easy due to family, relative, and social pressure, but for happiness from Allah you got to do it.
- **Obey Allah in income and expenditure:** Surrender your earning and spending to the code of Allah. Accept the fact Allah grants the sustenance, and it must be used in Halal (Permitted by Allah) way.
- **Accept Allah as the Boss:** Surrender your bossing on one another. Consider yourself only a custodian, responsible to one another. Do not try to be a boss with arrogance but take orders and guidance from Allah. Be humble and remember you will be accountable to Allah for your responsibility towards one another.
- **Take Allah as your life controller:** Surrender to your fate that Allah controls and do your best according to Allah’s guidance. Accept the fact that Allah will test you by giving things or without giving things in life, that includes children, richness, power, position, best health, or sickness. Free yourself from fears and worries by putting trust in Allah.
- **See everything positively:** Surrender your look, thinking, feeling to Allah and see, think, and feel happy according to Allah’s teachings. For example, if your wife is sick, see it as a blessing instead of a burden. Or if you work harder in the marriage, do not see it as a suffering but look at the rewards you are getting from it and feel happy about it. Or if things do not go as you plan, see it as Qadr, ask Allah’s help, think positive, and do not blame your spouse to borrow unhappiness.
- **Free yourself from many slaveries:** Surrender your desires, mind, and heart to the slavery to One Allah. Do not be the slave of your wrong selfish wants, or to your family’s selfish wrong desires, or to your wrong social traditions, or to any other human. Take Allah as the Only Master, and feel happy to be HIS slave only, and obey Allah’s codes in everything. That will give you freedom and will help you please Allah for receiving happiness.

- **Surrender to Allah for everything:** As a Muslim, you are not only required to surrender to Allah in marriage but also surrender to Allah in everything. Be Allah's slave every second because Allah created humans and Jinn to worship HIM only. It means, worship in every action, in every second, and in every affair of life. Allah does not like part time slavery, but HE wants full time slavery. Therefore, if we take full time slavery then it will include marriage as well. Full time slavery makes it easier to obey Allah in everything, and to follow HIS codes in everything. Part time slavery is problematic because half-hearted efforts never see the peak of success.

One may ask another question here, and that question is, "How does surrendering to Allah bring happiness in Marriage?" I can add a little to answer that question for more satisfaction, strong faith, and for answering others if they ask this question. I can give few examples to explain it below:

Allah joins hearts together: When two hearts make oaths in the name of Allah to come to marriage, and then they surrender their everything to the WILL OF ALLAH, then Allah blesses their love, and brings their hearts together. Only Allah has power to bring hearts together fully, to protect them from corruptions. The pure heart-joining brings happiness with Allah's blessings. Even Allah has power to join hearts in loving friendship from enmity. An example from Allah's messages:

وَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ۝

“And remember with thanks Allah's favour on you; for you were enemies and HE joined your hearts together in love, so that you by HIS Grace became brethren.”

[Al-Quran 3:103]

Allah brings unity in Marriage: To be happy the couple needs unity. To have unity they need to surrender their desires to one Allah. When they follow one Allah's rules, then their differences in wealth, in wisdom, in experiences, in education, in family status and so on cannot divide them to cause disunity and unhappiness. They become blended with one rule, and one way of Allah. They get unity in intention, unity in faith, unity in purpose of marriage, unity in love and mercy, unity in affairs in marriage, unity as a team to pass the test etc. So, Allah is the only point of unity for a married couple. If they both surrender to Allah fully, then for them differences are no longer an issue of fighting. That's why Allah has guaranteed the happiness at the end of the day for those who surrenders to Allah entirely.

وَمَنْ يُسَلِّمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ

“And whosoever submits his entire face (self) to Allah, and is one who does good, then (he/she) has truly grasped the most trustworthy handhold: And with Allah are the end and the decision of (all) things.”

[Al-Quran 31:22]

Allah takes care of fear or anxieties in marriage: Human is weak. That's why they fear for so many things and worry about lots of things. For fear and worries, they lose their happiness. When they surrender to Allah completely, Allah takes care of their fear and anxieties, in short term or in long term. For example, they believe in Allah as their true guardian in this life and in the next life, they find the purpose of their lives and marriage, they always feel belonged to Allah, and they know that their return is to Allah, and they also believe that Allah will test them with help to pass, and they should look forward to the everlasting happiness in Paradise by righteous action in Marriages. Their belief allows them to be positive, to be hopeful, to be hard-working with righteousness, and to be looking forward to the happiness by Allah's Mercy. Allah assures

mankind that if they follow Allah's guidance, if they surrender to Allah's guidance, then for them will be guaranteed happiness.

فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَن تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“And if, surely, there comes Guidance to you from ME; those who follow MY Guidance, for them there shall be no fear, and they shall not suffer.”

[Al-Quran 2:38]

Secret of marriage prescription.

We know that Allah has prescribed the marriage from the first man and woman. Allah created the first man Adam and from him his wife Eve. Then for their happiness Allah prescribed holy matrimony between them. Since then, marriage became the sacred way of living together for a man and woman. The question is why? What is the secret of that prescription? Let us go through the original history of Islamic marriage and its reasons to find the answer:

Allah made the first man Adam: Holy Quran describes as following:

ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِهِ

“Then HE made him (Adam) in correct proportions, and breathed into him the soul (Allah created for human)”

[Al-Quran 32:9]

In the soul, Allah made the quality of “need for love, company, and soul mate” and so on. So, Adam felt that he needed a company, a soul mate to be happy.

Then Allah made his soul mate: Allah decided to fulfil Adam's feeling. He wanted to feel complete with a soul mate. That need was for a spouse, a wife who will be more than just a friend. So that she will be the most intimate friend as part of him. One day Adam was sleeping in Paradise. Allah made a woman from some of the property of Adam while he was asleep. Adam woke up and saw her [Tafsir Ibn Kaseer]. Allah's message about is:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً

“O Mankind! Fear your Lord, WHO created you, from a single person (Adam), and from him. HE created his mate of similar nature, and from both (Adam and Hawa) spread (like seeds) countless men and women.”

[Al-Quran 4:1]

They needed one another for happiness: After the creation of first woman (Hawa), Adam felt attracted to her and Hawa also felt the same. The reason for that attraction was that Allah created love and mercy between them. Allah says in the Quran:

وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً

“And HE has placed love and mercy between your (hearts).”

[Al-Quran 30:21]

Allah made provision to marry and live together: Then for the proper use of love and mercy between them for happiness, Allah prescribed the provision of marriage between them. So, they could live together as husband and wife. Allah allowed them to have their honeymoon in Paradise. Allah says:

وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا

“And WE said: ‘O Adam! You and your wife live in the Garden; and eat of the plentiful things in there.”

[Al-Quran 2:35]

They were living together in marriage. That marriage was accomplished per Allah's guidance and Allah's guidance is called Islamic guidance. Any marriage is done or managed per Allah's guidance is called Islamic marriage.

That's the origin of the Islamic marriage in the history. Since then, Allah approved Islamic marriage for HIS servants, to all children of Adam and Eve. Allah's Messengers and all righteous people have been practicing Islamic marriage since then.

Allah gave them codes: With the provision of marriage of course Allah gave them code of rights and responsibilities. Prophet Adam and his wife Hawa (Eve) were the first role model of Islamic marriage. Allah commanded them to follow HIS code to be happy.

فَأَمَّا يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“Surely, there comes Guidance to you from ME; those who follow MY Guidance, for them there shall be no fear, and they shall not suffer (But happiness).”

[Al-Quran 2:38]

Allah revealed that information for mankind: The creation of Adam and from him his wife Hawa, and their Islamic marriage, and their enjoyment of love and mercy through the marriage provided and guided by Allah, has been informed by Allah to the mankind through Quran and through HIS messenger's teachings. Allah informs mankind briefly in the Quran:

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

“And among HIS Signs, is this, that Allah created (your) wives for you from yourselves that you may live in joy with them, and HE has placed love and mercy between your (hearts): Surely, there are Signs in this for those who think.”

[Al-Quran 30:21]

To conclude, let us go back to the question “what is the secret for prescribing marriage?” We can then see in the brief information above; we can see the obvious answer for it. The answer is that Allah has prescribed marriage for happiness. The next question is, “Is it very important to know about the secret reason for marriage prescription?” The answer is yes, it is very important. It clarifies from the creator about the purpose of marriage loud and clear. Otherwise, Satan can misguide people about the purpose of marriage, or human minds can cross the limits with negative thoughts regarding marriage. For example, some people say that marriage is only trouble, or what is the point of marriage, or have fun without marriage, or marriage is an old tradition not applicable in this modern time, or women are Satan's agents and we should avoid them, or men are too bad and hate them, or marriage is to make one boss and another servant, so how can they be happy, or marriage is prison and freedom is not getting married etc.

Most importantly, without focusing too much about various comments from human with limited knowledge, it is very important to know the Creator's comment about marriage. If HE says it is for happiness, then that is what all believers will believe in firmly, and they can build their marriage life around that firm belief. With that firm belief, they can be certain that marriage can be happy if both spouses surrender everything to Allah Almighty. They can be free from doubt, hesitation, and confusion because these elements can cause spiritual sickness. Believers need certainty to work hard without wasting time to pass the test, and Allah's Message about the purpose of marriage guarantees them that marriage can be happy.

Secret of sufferings in marriage.

Allah never created mankind to suffer. Allah created all the necessary things in and around mankind to be happy. Allah created everything in the heavens and on earth for the service of humans. Moreover, Allah gave Islamic code to mankind to prevent suffering. Therefore, Islamic marriage with Islamic guidance is to prevent unhappiness for spouses. What kinds of unhappiness a couple may face in their marriage? What kinds of suffering Islam wants to remove from spouses? Below are a few examples for our better understanding:

- **No bond:** Allah gave love and mercy between spouses to create strong bond. Then HE gave Islamic guidance to use love and mercy properly to maintain that bond for happiness. When couples avoid Allah's guidance, they may suffer from boundlessness for the absence of Allah's Blessings.
- **Ill treatment:** When there is no bond, Satan enters the gap and inspires suspicion, questions, doubt, bad feelings etc. Satan encourages them towards abuse, domestic violence, or ill treatments. When spouses follow Allah's code, they save themselves from those troubles.
- **Suppression:** If ill treatment, abuses, and violence is present in marriage, then one become oppressor and most often another must suppress the pain. It takes away the happiness in marriage and allows to inflict pain in one spouse or to both spouses. If they follow Islamic guidance, then they can control their anger and abuse, and can enjoy their happy marriage.
- **Fighting back:** In some cases, the victim spouse loses all the patience and fights back. That ends up into quarrel, or revenge to drive the unhappiness far and further. Many marriages are suffering from these, and the court cannot stop it. The court cannot change the hearts, but Islamic Faith can with solutions.
- **No blessings:** An unhappy marriage never receives blessings from Allah because they do not practice the codes of Islamic marriage. When spouses practice the codes of rights and responsibility, then they do their part, and Allah sends blessing on them for their sincere efforts.
- **No one wins:** In an unhappy marriage, no spouse wins. Both are losers. Islamic marriage code guides the couple how to resolve differences per Allah's code. That makes both to win and to avoid loss.
- **Never ending suffering:** Never ending suffering includes husband and wife, children, family members, relatives and even the whole society directly or indirectly in this life and punishment from Allah in next life for the wrong doer spouses. Islamic marriage codes guide spouses to prevent suffering in this life and in next life.

So, why is Islamic marriage guidance necessary? It is necessary to prevent sufferings in marriages. Allah did not prescribe marriage for sufferings, and HE did not leave spouses in the darkness to suffer without showing them path to come out from darkness to the light. HIS message is clear and precise:

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا ﴿١٨٩﴾

“It is HE WHO created you from a single person (Adam) and made his mate (Hawa) of similar nature, that he might live with her (In peace and happiness).”

[Al-Quran 7:189]

Moreover, to avoid suffering and to enjoy happiness Muslims should follow Islamic marriage codes. Islam warns Muslims to avoid loss. Some losses are for short-term, and other losses for long term. Many losses are secret (unseen) from the sight of people, and only Allah informs them.

The secret (unseen) losses are most serious compared to the loss that is seen in marriage. Some of them are below:

- **Loss of divine bond:** Muslim spouses do not receive Allah's blessings in bond between them if they do not follow Allah's code in their marriage. This is a great loss indeed!
- **Loss of true love:** In the sight of Allah, true love is to love the spouse for the sake of Allah only. But if Muslims do not follow Islamic code in love in marriage, then the love for other gains, by which they lose the true love. Besides, they lose the rewards for true love as well. That is also a great loss.
- **Loss of rewards:** In Islamic marriage, due to the intention and methods, spouses earn rewards from Allah, for their every action in marriage. For example, looking to one another with love is a reward. But without following Islamic codes in marriage, spouses lose those rewards too.
- **Loss of Paradise:** Through Islamic marriage, Allah will grant Paradise for the couple, as a married couple in Paradise, to live in happiness forever. But if spouses do not follow Allah's codes in marriage, and fails in marriage test, then they will lose eternal happiness. May Allah save all!
- **Loss of training for righteousness:** Allah made the Islamic marriage an institution for training all the good qualities like how to be loving, or how to be caring, or how to communicate well, or how to speak nicely with respect and love, or how to be patient towards one another, or how to consult one another for decision making, or how to control anger for a happy relationship etc. But if spouses do not follow Islamic codes in marriages, then they lose the righteous training in marriage.
- **Loss in gaining full Faith:** Holy prophet (Peace be upon him) said "that Islamic marriage is (like) half of the Islamic faith." Because it prevents spouses from lots of sins, removes from them dissatisfaction, and increases focus in worship and so on. But without following Islamic codes in marriage, spouses lose that full faith. That is another big loss as well.
- **Loss of righteous children:** Without Islamic practice in marriage, parents fail to rear their children with righteousness. That is a great loss because Allah will question for that, and children will not pray for the parents after their death if they were not trained to be righteous by parents.
- **Loss in test:** In marriage without Islamic code, spouses may practice illegal and immoral relationships, or abuses, or violence, or alcoholism, or gambling, or taking bribes and many more unfair actions. The result of it is a loss in the life's test.
- **Loss of continuous charity:** Children's good actions, prayers for dead parents and so on are added into parent's deed book account as continuous charity, because they taught their children to be faithful, to act righteousness etc. That continuous charity is extremely necessary for the happiness in next life. But if Muslim spouses do not follow Islamic codes in teaching their children, then their children won't be righteous, and they will lose the continuous charity as well.
- **Loss of Allah's blessing and forgiveness:** In Islamic marriage husband and wife are like two sides of one soul. They correct one another in mistakes so they can follow the straight path. They pray for one another to Allah for forgiveness. They pray to Allah to bless in their relationship, in their sustenance, on their children and so on. Unhappiness, anxieties, and worries often come due to sins. Therefore, if Islamic practices are absent in marriage, then that is replaced by sins, and sins will remove Allah's blessings and forgiveness.

In conclusion, what is the secret of sufferings in Islamic marriage? The answer is that the secret of unhappiness in Islamic marriage is not following Allah's guidance. Allah never forces any one

to follow Islamic codes in marriage but commands the believers to follow Allah's codes to avoid sufferings, and to enjoy happiness. Allah says:

مَنْ أَهْتَدَىٰ فَأِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّٰ فَأِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۚ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ

“Whoever takes the guidance, takes it for his own good: And whoever goes astray does so to his loss. No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another.”

[Al-Quran 17:15]

Is marriage one of the secrets of happiness?

Yes, it is one of the secrets of happiness. Life has many challenges to hinder happiness, and to overcome those hindrances, Islamic marriage is one of the best options. Can everyone afford to get married? Can everyone enjoy the happiness of marriage? No, everyone cannot. This is part of the test. Some people are too sick, or too old, or too poor to afford. That's why, Islam did not make marriage a compulsory duty on everyone, rather it has encouraged those who can afford as Allah has blessed them for test as well. Prophet Ibrahim, Yaqub, Yusuf, Musa, Zakaria, Ismael, Muhammad (pbuh) were married with children. They enjoyed the happiness from marriage.

One can ask, if Islamic marriage has secrets of so much happiness, then why every Islamic marriage is not happy? Rich people who can afford to marry are in marriage, yet many marriages are suffering from unhappiness. Abuses, cruelties, mistrust, treacheries, and disunities are ruining the happiness in many marriages. They married for happiness, but happiness is out of their reach. Their dream was to find happiness in marriage, but why their dreams do not come true? The answer is with an example. For example, you have purchased all the ingredients to make a nice, delicious cake, but you did to follow the right recipe. Would you find your cake nice and enjoyable? You will not. Similarly, some people come into marriage for a happy conjugal life, but they do not follow the recipe for happiness that Allah has given them. So, without divine recipe for happiness, they find hardship, and sufferings.

Now, we should look at a few examples about how Islamic Marriage with Allah's code brings happiness. I shall give some secret benefits that cannot be seen yet very necessary for happiness in Islamic marriage. They are below:

It removes emptiness in hearts: Man, or woman are made incomplete by the creator Allah. A man feels empty without a female and a female feels empty without a man, because Allah did not make them complete without the other. Islamic marriage allows men and women to come together and fill up the emptiness in them, so that they can feel happy. Allah gives example about Adam and Hawa's marriage:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا

“And among HIS Signs is this that HE created (Your) mates for you from yourselves that you may live in joy (and happiness).”

[Al-Quran 30:21]

It fulfils physical needs: Sexual need is also a creation of Allah. With Islamic marriage, one can gratify it according the prescribe code of Allah and can avoid sins and punishment from Allah. That results happiness, doesn't it? Allah says in the Quran:

الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ الْطَّيِّبَاتُ ۖ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَلَّلَ لَكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حَلَّلَ لَهُمْ ۖ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسَفِحِينَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِي أَخْدَانٍ ۚ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

“This day (all) good and pure things are made lawful for you..... you give them (wives) their due dowers, and wish purity, not (Illicit or lustful) desire, nor secret (Illegal love affairs) relations, nor as ‘women friends’.”

[Al-Quran 5:5]

It fulfils mental and emotional needs: Allah made mankind with the craving to be loved. Without the love, human life can be unhappy, full of misery, and full of sadness. Many serious sicknesses are caused by the feeling of unloved, from the feeling of deserted or forsaken etc. Many people are committing suicide just because of the feeling of being unloved. Allah recommended Islamic marriage to give love and to receive love. By that men and women can feel happy and be saved from many unhappy consequences. Allah says in the Quran:

إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً

“And HE has placed love and mercy between your (hearts).”

[Al-Quran 30:21]

It is the medicine of loneliness: Islamic marriage unites two lonely people in a pure way. This unity is so divine. People cannot unite two hearts with money or medicine or by doing any surgical procedures. Islamic marriage unites two hearts through the unity in Faith in the pure way through holy matrimony. They can lean on one another and can provide support for one another. With a good and legitimate company that brings Allah’s blessings, they can enjoy their companionship, and that can be a medicine for removing unhappiness. When Allah created Adam, he felt lonely, and to remove his loneliness HE created Eve for him to get married to be the best companions. Allah says:

وَيَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا

“And O Adam! You and your wife live in the Paradise and enjoy (the good things) as you like (them).”

[Al-Quran 7:19]

It brings joy in society: Islamic marriage is not allowed to be done in secret. It must include family, guardians, relatives, friends etc. Once a marriage date is fixed, everyone is involved in it and feels happy about it. The happiness turns into functions, invitations, gifts, prayers etc. That way Islamic marriage brings happiness to the society in a way that Allah approves. Thus, the society receives Allah’s blessings for their happiness. Islam teaches to get married without secrecy but with family, relatives, and friends to involve the society in happiness. Hon Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that Holy Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said:

أَعْلِنُوا هَذَا النِّكَاحَ

“Advertise the marriage (Make other people known or invite others).”

[Tirmidi/Daeef Hadis yet makes sense because at least two witness is required for Islamic Marriage]

It makes a happy team: What is the secret of a happy team? The secret is the harmony and love between them. Islamic marriage gives the platform to be happy and to be a united team. In life, everyone needs stability and progress in every aspect. Islamic marriage provides that opportunity. Spouses as a team, support, guide, correct one another towards the eternal happiness in Paradise. They do righteous actions as a team and pray together for their happiness as a team. Allah gives example how they pray:

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَرْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

“And those who pray, ‘Our Lord! Give to us wives and children who will be the comfort of our eyes and give us (the grace) to lead the righteous’.”

[Al-Quran 25:74]

Saving one another from everlasting unhappiness: In Islamic marriage, Muslims focus their efforts to save one another from the punishment of Allah in next life. They assist one another in good deeds for attaining happiness in Paradise and they refrain one another from bad deeds to be saved from the punishment of Hell. It is easier to make that effort in marriage, as a team, rather than being alone. For example, Holy Quran reminds:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

“O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is men and stones.”

[Al-Quran 66:6]

Rewards for happiness: Allah made Islamic marriage like a “Reward Source”. In Islamic marriage, every action is a worship in the sight of Allah, and every small or big action is like a charity. That makes Islamic marriage a great source of earning huge rewards easily, to get to the Paradise, in which couples can live happily forever. Some examples below:

By forging your spouse to receive forgiveness from Allah:

وَإِنْ تَعَفَّوْا وَتَصَفَّحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

“But if you forgive them and overlook, and cover up (their faults), Surely Allah is Often Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

[Al-Quran 64:14]

By obeying Allah and HIS messenger the spouses can receive rewards in Paradise:

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالْءَاخِرَةَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْمُحْسِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

“But if you want Allah and HIS messenger and the Home of the Hereafter then surely, Allah has prepared for the well-doers from you a great reward.”

[Al-Quran 33:29]

Reward even by intimacy. Abu Jar Gifary (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Holy messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

وَفِي بُضْعِ أَحَدِكُمْ صَدَقَةٌ

“Even sexual intercourse with own wife is a charity.”

[Muslim]

Reward even from family expenses. Abu Mas’ud Ansari (may Allah be pleased with him), reported that Holy messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said:

إِذَا انْفَقَ الْمُسْلِمُ نَفَقَةً عَلَى أَهْلِهِ وَهُوَ يَحْتَسِبُهَا كَانَتْ لَهُ صَدَقَةٌ

“When a Muslim spends for own family hoping the rewards from Allah, then that spending becomes charity (rewards of charity).”

[Muttafaqun A’laih]

Happiness by stress relief: Husband and wife go through so many stresses in daily life. But they comfort one another in the light of Allah’s guidance. We find, after a long days work, when a husband comes to wife or the wife comes to husband, and they comfort one another with love and wisdom, then all stress disappears. They help relieve pain, grief, anxieties or worries from one another. Allah made them as “Human stress relievers” for happiness. They should protect each other like a garment protects a body from too cold or from the sun’s heat. Allah says:

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ

“They are (Wives) your garments and you (Husbands) are their garments.”

[Al-Quran 2:187]

It safeguards from unhappy immoral actions: Especially for young people, Islamic marriage is like an armour guard to protect them from illegal sexual conducts, and from the uncountable unhappy consequences from it. Islamic marriage guards their private parts, guards their eyes, guards their bad thoughts, and guards their honour in the society. It also guards them from sins that brings nothing but unhappy punishments from Allah Almighty in this life and in next life. Holy Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) has advised young Muslims to get married if they can do so. Abdullah ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Holy Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said:

يا معشر الشباب من استطاع منكم البائة فبيتزوج فانه اغض للبصر واحصن للفرج

“O Young people! Whoever among you can afford should marry. Because Islamic marriage keeps your eyes under control and safeguards your private parts.”

[Muttafaqun A'laih]

Chapter 3: Building foundation for happiness.

Why building foundation for happiness in marriage?

Building a sandcastle is easy. Children build sandcastles at the beach. But that castle is not for real but for fun. Often, they build and then breaks for their pleasure and play. For the real house, the children's pleasure and fun have no chance. In this, the qualified and experienced engineers, builders, and construction companies get involved, and they design it with the consideration of safety, strength, purpose of use, and the successful outcome. They charge money for their skills, and they deliver a safe home in which the owner can enjoy and live happily. The owner also pays so much money with the aim of having a happy nest with safety and security. They ask the professionals to do the job for the accuracy, and for peace of mind. The aim in Islamic marriage is the same as far as safety, security, stability, strength, and happiness concern. No one marries for an unhappy living without stability and comfort. That's why, Muslims begin their marriage process step by step aiming to build a happy marriage.

For a strong building, the engineer plans for a strong foundation. The strength, the longevity and the safety of the entire building depends on primarily on the strong foundation. They design the foundation plan according to the building. If the building has many storeys, then the foundation will be stronger. If in any case, the foundation is weak, then the building can collapse with a little shake from earthquake, or from a powerful storm, or when the building is old. If the building collapses due to weak foundation, then the blame goes to the wrong building plan. Foundation plan always is made before starting the building works. If we consider Islamic marriage as a "Sound building" to live happily, then we must look at the foundation for that as well. Without full planning, and full considerations, can we wish for a sound building? Or can we stop it from collapse? Can we blame others for our unhappy marriage? Can anyone bring a magic wand to turn our marriage with strong foundation and sound building after it collapses?

We cannot put the blame on others except ourselves. We are given options think or not to think beforehand, plan or not plan beforehand, choose the right foundation or to choose carelessness beforehand. The proverb is true that says, "You reap what you sow." If we place a strong foundation in our Islamic marriage to achieve happiness, the result will be accordingly. But if we put the wrong foundation to achieve better than we will deceive ourselves only. We see, if a corrupt contractor puts bamboo in the foundation instead of strong rods, then sometimes the building collapses. Similarly, in Islamic marriage, if Muslims follow the footsteps of Satan expecting the Mercy of Allah for happiness in marriage, then for their corruption, and for not using the right product (Codes of Allah), their happiness in marriage may collapse. In other words, Allah has given products, and choices, and has left the responsibilities on us to build strong foundation for happy marriage or not, and if we chose wrong, then we will be liable for any unhappiness or any destruction. Allah says:

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ

"And whatever misfortune comes to you, it is because of the things your hands have done, and for many HE pardons generously."

[Al-Quran 42:30]

Thinking of a strong foundation for Marriage, we must consider the following basic requirements:

- **Safe enough to carry the load:** No one would build a building on unsafe foundation. In the design of foundation, the engineer must consider all the safety factors to make sure that it can carry the wight of the building above it. The consideration must include the balance, and weight, and all the necessary materials to secure those factors. So, in marriage, the couple

also need to build their foundation to carry the stress-loads that they will go through marriage. If they have strong foundation with right faith, right attitude, and right desires, then they can handle their stresses, disagreements, or differences easily, or they can avoid those negative things due to their strong foundations. Many people may think that they have no other jobs except marrying to be happy, then they will be deceived about the reality. For everything, when you build up, you need foundation for example, for studying in the University one cannot get admission without foundation studies. Or without a foundation training, one cannot be a good farmer.

Don't we follow the foundation rules about other important things in our lives? We do. Then why we do not give the same importance in marriage? Marriage is more sophisticated than anything else in life. It has teamwork, life business, human rights, love and mercy, fairness, rights and responsibilities, future generation and it is the foundation of the society. If marriages are safe, secured, and sound with safety, then it becomes a strong foundation for the happy, safe, and peaceful society. So, why should not we give more importance in the marriage to turn it into the strongest foundations for the future? We must not take marriage for granted. If we do, we will lose rather than the gain. A safe marriage needs safe foundation, and for that foundation we need to learn, motivated to work hard. An engineer studies hard to become a designer for a building-foundation, and we need to take training and learning before marriage to build our safe marriage foundation to carry on our marriage-tests towards success.

- **Build it before building the building:** Right now, on the other side of my road, the builders are building new houses. I can see their work every day from my lounge room. I enjoy their working progress every day. I noticed they prepared the soil first with digging and levelling to put the foundation first. They will finish their foundation with heavy materials to make it strong before placing the top on it. No foundation is made after the building because foundation is the first duty and the building on it is the second step. This is how, every building works. One never places the foundation on top of the building afterward. The same rule applies to Marriage.

If any couple thinks, "Let us get married and then we can build our marriage foundation." It may be quite late, because they have entered the marriage with wrong expectations anyway, and they will be busy with their differences rather than enjoying their unity. What do we do in the field before we play on it? We make a level playing field to play fairly and squarely. Do we prepare the field after we start playing? What may happen if we prepare the field after we start playing? It will not work because by then may be one side will score unfairly to bring imbalance in the game. If we consider the marriage is a fair team playing, then the ground rules with fairness must be established beforehand, and before the game both parties will agree on the fair rule. Marriage has fair rights and responsibilities as ground rules, and unless those rules are built in the minds and habits of spouses, that may create unhappiness. Therefore, Muslim spouses must take their marriages seriously, and they should learn, train, understand, and commit fully to those foundation rules well before they come into marriage, and it will help them in achieving happiness Insha Allah.

- **Follow all the specifications:** When builders start their foundation work, they do not follow their own ideas. They never begin their job until they receive clear specifications from the engineers, or architects. In the specification, the engineers use their knowledge to come up with proper specifications to make the foundation solid, strong, safe, and stable. Then, they have supervisors to follow the work to make sure that all the specifications are met. Besides, there are inspections from the inspectors to check whether the specifications were followed

accurately, and if not to re-do the work. They follow their work with caution and devotion to make sure that they followed proper specification to build a strong foundation.

The same formula applied in Islamic marriage. In Islamic marriage, specifications do not come anywhere except Islam. Islam is the complete code of life, and it has all the specifications for building a strong foundation. The specification includes how to think, how to feel, how to plan, and how to focus on purpose of the marriage. It also includes duties, responsibilities, and righteous action to build the solid, stable, and genuine foundation for happy marriage. That's why, a Muslim must learn about Islam well, understand Islam well, and practice Islamic specifications well for success in every area of life including marriage. Without knowledge, one cannot be well known about a foundation of a building and cannot follow the right specification. Similarly, without Islamic knowledge a Muslim will not know the Islamic specifications regarding solid foundation of marriage. That's why, Islam never encourages ignorance, and the first verse Allah revealed in the Quran was about reading and learning. The verse is:

أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

“Proclaim! (And read aloud!) in the Name of the Lord, and Cherisher, Who created man,

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ

out of a (mere) clot of thickened blood:”

[Al-Quran 96:1-2]

So, the lesson is, without Islamic knowledge and practice, a Muslim spouse cannot build solid foundation for Islamic marriage. If there is unhappiness in a Muslim marriage, the spouses should go to the root cause, and they will find the root cause is ignorance about Islamic codes or not practicing Islamic specifications.

- **Looking after the foundation:** Suppose the foundation was built nicely, and it was safe but that does not mean that the foundation will last forever. It may become weaker day after day with small earthquakes, storms, rainwater, and natural disasters etc. The foundation is prone to damage if it is hit by stronger pressure on it, or the displacement of the earth underneath or around it. Forceful water, or flood may put unexpected stress on it. That is why regular checking and if necessary, regular repairing is essential for a strong foundation. There is no rule that you build and then leave it alone with the expectation that it will be strong all time. Nothing has the permanent warrant of fitness, and you must look after it, inspect it, monitor it, and if there is small crack, fix it without delay.

Similarly, Islamic marriage foundation needs looking after. That's why, it requires continuous assessment to make sure everything is ok, is according to Islamic specifications, and no mistake in it. That monitoring will help to detect defects or mistakes, and it can help to repair the mistake quickly before it becomes a major damage. In Islam, whether it is for marriage, or for righteousness, or for next life or for Paradise, Allah commands believers to self-check all the time in the light of Allah guidance for success and happiness. Looking after our Faith, and our righteous actions are the two most important elements in every foundation, and Allah wants the believers to be mindful about them:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِإِعَادٍ

“O you who believe! Fear Allah and let every soul look to what it has put forward for the future.”

[Al-Quran 59:18]

Foundation indicates about the future building, how strong the building will be, or how secure the building will be. Foundation of Islamic marriage also indicates how happy, strong-bonded, stable, and genuine the marriage will be. In the verse above, the emphasis is to investigate the actions now for the happy future.

To conclude, it is Muslims' responsibilities to build their own foundation for happiness in marriage. Other people, or the angels will not build it for them. If they build strong, solid, safe, and secure foundation for happiness, then they will taste happiness in their marriages. But if they build weak, unsafe foundation for their marriage, they will fail to achieve the happiness. Muslims must remember, happiness must be earned, it is not designed to come automatically. Why so many Muslim marriages are unhappy? One of the reasons is that they did not build strong foundation according to Islamic codes for their happiness in marriage. In other words, they have earned their unhappiness. Allah has given all recipes to build strong foundation for happy marriage. If Muslims do not use those recipes, then they are to be blamed for not using Allah's recipes and for not achieving happiness in their marriages. this chapter is about building the strong foundation for happy marriage, and I shall try to highlight a few important issues that can help Muslims to think, feel, and act to build their marriage foundation insha Allah!

Recipe to build strong foundation for happy marriage?

To build a foundation for a building we need cement, bricks, and rods etc, but to build a foundation for happy marriages we do not need those recipes. For comparison with example, I am using the analogy for our understanding. Islamic recipe for marriage foundation comes with understanding, Faith, and practices to push back all the issues that try to inflict unhappiness in the marriage. For Muslim spouses, this Islamic recipe is important to learn and practice. If their faith and understanding is weak, then their foundation for happiness will be weak as well, and outside stress can break their solid foundation to bring the flood of unhappiness. I would like to highlight a few below:

Understanding about the marriage promise: Muslim spouses exchange vows in the name of Allah. How serious is that vow? If they have a very clear understanding about the vow they make in Allah's name, then that understanding can be the first very important part of the recipe to build the strongest foundation towards happiness. But if a Muslim couple have lack of understanding about their holy promise, then their foundation for happiness will be weak and with pressure it can crumble any time. For that, they will stumble sooner or later resulting in injury, suffering and unhappiness.

What do Muslim spouses need to understand at first about their vows? They must understand, they make vows in Allah's name, and they must not have any insincerity in their intention because Allah will judge them about it. They may get away from witnesses with faulty desires, deception or neglect, but they cannot escape Allah's punishment. They must fear Allah's fair judgment about their marriage promise if there is lack of commitments, and any slightest intention of taking advantage or abusing this holy promise in the Name of Almighty Allah. If that faith is strong, the foundation of Islamic marriage is strong too. In the sermon for Islamic marriage, the celebrant recites three verses from the Holy Quran, and they are: 3:102, 4:1, and 33:70-71.

Each of the above verses begins with, "Fear Allah!" It means the Loving Allah is warning believers to save themselves from dangerous issues about marriage such as falsifying the promise, carelessness about the holy promise, lying about the promise for selfish reasons, and not respecting the promise in hard time etc. It is a warning to save them from wrongs in marriage, so they can save themselves from Allah's fair judgment. HE is and will be fair to everyone. In other

words, the solemn promise in the name of Allah must be respected all the time with love and mercy. Allah says:

وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَىٰ بَعْضُكُم إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذْنَ مِنْكُم مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

“And how could you take it (back) when you have gone in unto each other, and they have taken from you a HOLY PROMISE.”

[Al-Quran 4:21]

Then they must understand and remember that Allah will question spouses about their promises on the Day of Judgment. Holy Quran describes:

وَأَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ ۚ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا

“And fulfil (every) promise (and commitment), verily, (every) act will be questioned (On the Day of Judgment).”

[Al-Quran 17:34]

Then they must understand that Allah will judge and punish for faulty promises between Muslim spouses. For the breach of promises and their duties, they will be punished and will earn suffering thus unhappiness. Allah warns about it:

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ

“And fear Allah, through WHOM you demand your mutual (rights of husband and wife).”

[Al-Quran 4:1]

Therefore, before making the marriage promise, a Muslim needs to understand the Holy Promise very well, and what responsibility with commitment it brings. Then, believe in it strongly. With that strong conviction, Insha Allah the foundation for happiness in marriage will be strong and unshaken. In tough times, remind yourself about your true promise and ask Allah for help for granting you ease to maintain your true promise.

Clear perception about Islamic marriage: Is Islamic marriage for fun? Having children? Using one another for physical and emotional needs? DO whatever one wants in conjugal life? Supporting one another in robbing banks or in crimes? Or be a strong team to spread violence? Or to divorce one another when one wants? Or leading the marriage according to the spouse's own desires? Or following Islamic codes if it suits them or else not following Islamic codes? Or following a mixture of codes from families, cultures, traditions even if that goes against Allah's codes? If the perception is faulty, the foundation will be faulty as well. If you mix right and wrong materials in foundation of a building, you expect the weaker foundation. Similarly, if a Muslim spouse or both, mixes right and wrong perception in their marriage, their marriage foundation will lose purity and perfection thus weak.

In Islamic marriage perception the following things a Muslim must be clear right from the beginning. Before entering any business agreement what do we do? We understand the agreement, nature of the business and the codes of the business for success are the things we try to understand clearly. In Islamic marriage, we should do the same. If we are clear about the guidelines, then we can focus on these without confusion or wasting our valuable time. The three things every Muslim spouse must be clear about are:

1. *In Islamic marriage, the spouses must surrender to Allah's obedience in every affair of marriage.* Failing to do that, or absence of understanding that, and absence of practicing that, the foundation for happiness will be weak. Without obeying Allah's codes, the marriage will lose blessings and mercy from Allah. Thus, the marriage will be prone to unhappiness due to weak foundation.

2. *Islamic marriage is also a worship of Allah.* Worship includes that it must be done for the pleasure of Allah, it must avoid what Allah has prohibited, and it must follow what Allah has permitted with the hope of receiving rewards (such as happiness) from Allah. Failing to do that, the foundation will be weak, and it may crumble the happiness any time.
3. *Islamic marriage is a test from Allah.* It is not just a fun thing without accountability. It is a blessing from Allah, and any misusing of Allah's blessing, one or both spouses will be accountable. Like everything else in life, Islamic marriage is also a test, by which Allah wants to separate good from bad one. Allah says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“And I (Allah) have only created Jinn's and men, that they may worship (and serve) ME.”

[Al-Quran 51:56]

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَفُورُ

“HE WHO created Death and Life, that HE may test which of you is best in deeds: And HE is the Almighty, the Often Forgiving.”

[Al-Quran 67:2]

With clear perception, Muslim spouses can be well-prepared about Islamic marriage, and their clear perception can push back unhappy elements.

Right intention in marriage: Intention of marriage is one of the most important recipes for the right foundation of happiness in Islamic marriage. Intention is also like putting the right seed for the right fruit. Wrong seed cannot bring right fruit. Spouses must plant the right seed for the right fruits. Right intention in marriage results right outcome in the marriage. Why does the right intention matter so much for the happiness in Islamic marriage? Why without the right intention the foundation of happiness in Islamic marriage become shaky? Let us look for the answers below:

- *Right intention brings Allah's blessings in marriage.* The right intention in Islamic teaching is to do everything for the pleasure of Allah according to Allah's guidance. The other nitty gritty will come anyway. Why is it so significant? It prepares Muslims to avoid any intention that is corrupt with selfishness, desires, wants, arrogance, ego, and competition etc. Islam trains Muslims to be only Allah's servants, and to give up worshipping own selfish desires, greed, ego, social status, and power. That's why, for every good action (including marriage), to receive Allah's blessings, pure intention to please Allah is a pre-condition. Intention comes from heart, and if it is pure, and only for the pleasure of Allah, then two spouses enter into marriage with purest form of intention, and their primary focus in marrying is to serve Allah, to do things to please Allah, and to avoid manners and actions that makes Allah unhappy. Once that happen, the foundation for that marriage become very strong, and small or big selfishness cannot interfere with the solid foundation and happiness in marriage becomes secured. The right intention makes a right set-up of minds. Hon Omar (May Allah be pleased with him) reported that Holy Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said:

انما الاعمال بالنيات

“Surely, the result of actions depends on the intention.”

[Muttafaqun A'laih]

- *Right intention should include to marry forever.* Forever means in this life and in never ending next life in Paradise. So, put your attention to be a happy couple in Paradise in which you will stay young, healthy and in peace forever. If you can do that, you can be standing on a strong solid foundation and on that you can build your happy nest. For that intention, you can face together all the struggles and can stay together with the aim of reaching to next life together for eternal happiness in marriage. But if your intention is temporary happiness, and you are tested with some sufferings, then you cannot stay strong, and you may not be able to resist temptation from this temporary life. That way you may lose happiness in this life, and in the next life. Islam teaches to put the attention on the greatest happiness in Paradise, to motivate the spouses to be strong like rocks to face struggles to get there to the destination in Paradise. If that intention is strong, then the marriage foundation is strong as well. So, would you Muslims intend for everlasting happiness in paradise as a couple? Holy Quran delivered that message:

إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمَ فِي شُغْلٍ فَكِهِونَ

“Surely, on that Day, the companions of the Gardens shall be busy and happy in everything that they do.

هُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِي ظِلِّ عَلَى الْأَرْشَادِ مُتْكُونُونَ

They and their wives will be in the (cool) shade of thick trees, resting on the thrones (of dignity).”

[Al-Quran 36:55-56]

- *Right intention includes marrying to receive reward from Allah, not to receive return from the spouse.* Spouses have limitations. How can they fulfil your expectations? If you expect return from spouses, then sooner or later you will be disappointed. But if you expect rewards from Allah, then you will never be disappointed. So, serve your spouses as much as you can lavishly. It is not a loss for you because Allah will reward you. Having that kind of intention is a blessing in marriage. It helps building a strong foundation for happy marriage. It saves the spouses from disappointments, arguments, fights, blaming, anger, violence, depression, and hopelessness, but it motivates them to serve one another unselfishly for the rewards from Allah. Allah gave an example in the Holy Quran about what is the right intention: Follow the example of right intention Allah mentioned in the Holy Quran:

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الْطَّعَامَ عَلَى خُبِّهِ مَسْكِينًا وَبَنِينَ وَأَسِيرًا

“We feed you for the sake of Allah Alone,

إِنَّمَا نَطْعَمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا

no reward do we want (expect) from you, nor thanks.”

[Al-Quran 76:8-9]

Muslim spouses must have the same intention and that is I shall do as much more as possible for my spouse to receive rewards from Allah, and I will encourage my spouse to do more as well without expecting much, arguing or fighting.

Knowledge of right and wrong in marriage: A child is born to learn. If the learning is good, then it becomes a good foundation for a better future. For Islamic marriage it is the same. A child needs to learn what is light and what is fire for safety. If the child considers the fire as light, the child will be burnt. Muslims need to learn what is right and what is wrong in marriage to be saved from danger and unhappiness. That is why, sound knowledge is very important for both spouses

in Islamic marriage. They must save themselves from wrong notions. There are many superstitious beliefs in the society, and without right knowledge, many spouses can follow superstition. Or there can be many malpractices in the society, and without right knowledge a spouse can be persuaded easily. There is black magic, and some spouses in the time of difficulty, go to anyone out of desperation. Then, some people may suggest for unlawful practices in Islam. If without right knowledge, spouses follow the wrong path, that will effect on their happiness in marriage. For example, a couple is desperate for a child, and someone suggests to them to go to a dead saint and pray to him for a child. By doing that they will lose their precious faith and will qualify themselves for harsh accountability from Allah. It may remove Allah's blessings from their marriage life, and they may suffer one after another episode of calamities.

Knowledge is like light and in the marriage journey that light is necessary. With knowledge they can gain safety, remove dangers, and can reach to their destination successfully. With knowledge they will know what sins are and what are good deeds in marriage. They can know which spouse is wrong in the light of Islamic knowledge, and which one needs to be corrected. Knowledge will guide them to avoid wrong actions or attitudes to avoid Allah's punishment. Knowledge will assure them that they are on the right path in their dealings in the marriage. Without it, they will be in the dark, their journey will be with uncertainty and confusions, with doubts and without confidence and without peace of mind resulting in unhappiness. Muslim spouses must be equipped with it to avoid frequent stumbles in darkness. The ones with knowledge have greater chance to do good for happiness than the ones who are ignorant. Holy Quran describes:

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۚ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ

“Say: Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who have understanding that receive guidance.”

[Al-Quran 39:9]

Sense of rights and responsibility: A spouse must know before marriage that it is not going to be a one-way street. If a man thinks that he will marry a woman for slavery, and he can order for this and that, and even she will bring money from her parents for a luxury life for her husband, then the marriage will not be happy anyway. Why will the marriage be unhappy? The answer is the foundation of happy marriage is very weak here. The strong foundation is that both spouses will have a sense of rights and responsibilities. Their mentality will be that “my responsibility comes before my rights” or “I must deliver my duties to be saved from Allah's Judgment, and whatever rights I get I receive with thanks.” Marriage is like a partnership business. In partnership, you must give some and take some. Giving is responsibility and taking is rights. This giving and receiving must be in a fair balanced way. The balanced way is another recipe for strong foundation.

In marriage partnership, often spouses only demand for the rights, ignoring the responsibilities. That imbalance causes tension between the spouses, resulting disappointment, argument, bitterness, and unhappiness. But if both are sincere in their responsibilities, then each one will get his or her rights automatically and they will be happy. Imbalanced rights and responsibilities allow many sicknesses to enter the happy relationship and destroys harmony between lovely spouses. It allows selfishness, laziness, stinginess, lack of appreciation, and lack of sympathy etc. to impede the happiness in relationship. Therefore, spouses must have sense of responsibilities towards one another to make sure no one's rights are ignored. Happiness does not come automatically with marriage, but for it, both spouses must take responsibilities per Allah's guidance. Allah says:

ۚ اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ

“Surely, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change it themselves.”

[Al-Quran 13:11]

Marrying the right person: In a business, if you choose a wrong partner, you will face bankruptcy. Marriage is like a life-business. Would you choose a wrong spouse in marriage then? Marrying the right person will make you successful in life-business. That’s why it is another valuable recipe for the strong foundation for a happy marriage. Who is the right person to marry in an Islamic perspective? What are the qualities you need to look for in the right person for your marriage? Let us look at some required qualities then. They are stated in below:

- *A believing spouse.* You are a believer, and you do not disrespect any non-believer. But to start a life-business, you have every right to choose a partner most suitable for your life-business. If you marry a non-believer for example, you will have difference in faith, in food, in choices, in hobbies, in rearing children, in educating children and so on. You will believe in one purpose of life and your spouse will have a different one. Your aim will be to pass the test for Paradise, but your life-partner will not have the same aim. So, two of you will lead life into two different directions. You want to marry for unity in faith and efforts. With disunity, how can you be happy? Allah’s message is:

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنُوا

“And do not marry unbelieving women, until they believe.

وَلَا تُنكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنُوا

And do not marry (your girls) to non-believers until they believe.”

[Al-Quran 2:221]

- *A righteous believer:* If a believer only believes but does not practice all good morality, then that spouse is not a right person to marry. For example, a righteous believer would be honest, truthful, responsible, sincere, fair, loving, wise, gentle, trustworthy, dutiful due to the fear of Allah’s punishment. You can rely and trust on that righteous spouse. On the other hand, a non-righteous believing spouse may be arrogant, rude, dishonest, liar, cheater, gambler, violent and so on. How can you be happy in your marriage with a non-righteous believer then? Hazrat Abu Huraira (May Allah be pleased with him) reported that Holy Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said:

إِذَا خَاطَبَ إِلَيْكُم مِّن تَرْضُون دِينَهُ وَخُلُقَهُ فَرَّجُوهُ

“When anyone propose to you for marriage, whose piety and best moral character is liked by you, then marry that person.”

[Tirmidi]

- *Religious person:* You are looking for a Mr perfect or Mrs perfect to marry. Muslims should not be deluded about the definition of “perfect”. If they think “perfect” means beauty, then they are looking for a temporary perfection. Or if they think “perfect” means wealth, again they are looking for a temporary perfection. Or if they think “perfect” means family status, then again, they are looking for a temporary perfection. They must think of a perfect spouse, who will assist them to achieve everlasting happiness in paradise. Who is that perfect person then? That person is a religious person who has strong faith and best moral character. Holy prophet (s.a.w) said in a Hadis narrated by Abu Huraira (May Allah be pleased with him) reported that Holy Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said:

تُنْكَحُ الْمَرْأَةُ لِأَرْبَعٍ: لِمَالِهَا وَلِحَسَبِهَا وَلِجَمَالِهَا وَلِدِينِهَا فَاظْفَرْ بِذَاتِ الدِّينِ تَرُبِّتْ يَدَاكَ

“Women are married for four reasons. (1) For her wealth, (2) For her social status, (3) For her beauty, and (4) For her religion (Religious practice, character). So, try to get religious (Righteous) women, (or else) be destroyed (If you want otherwise)”

[Muttafaqun A'laih]

Marry to bring harmony in family: Having a good relationship with family is very important for two main reasons, (1) This is what Allah likes us to do, and (2) It is necessary for happiness. Often, marriage without family approval causes bitterness, misunderstanding, disowning, financial disadvantage, lack of family support when needed, and many more un-necessary troubles which takes peace and happiness away. Certainly, marrying proper family approval reduces stress and adds to happiness. Therefore, marriage with family approval is another solid stone to build the strong foundation for happiness. Marriage is a social binding. Husband and wife must live in the society. So, they should marry in a way that society respects them, or their family respects them or their children are also respected by everyone. They should live in harmony with the family and society for their happy future, for their respectable future. Therefore, Muslims should follow the following tips:

Do not marry secretly: Do it openly with the approval of family in a righteous way. Allah’s message as commanded in the Holy Quran

فَأَنكِحُوا هُنَّ بِإِذْنِ أَهْلِهِنَّ وَءَاثُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

“In every case, you are to wed them with the permission of their guardians, and give them their dowries, per what is reasonable.”

[Al-Quran 4:25]

Do not marry through illegal affairs: Illegal affairs are not only sinful, but it opens the doors to unhappiness in future through losing respect, or inviting criticism, or damaging self-image as a good role model as parents, and losing Allah’s blessings etc. Allah forbids it:

مُحْصَنَاتٍ غَيْرِ مُسَفِّحَاتٍ وَلَا مُتَّخِذَاتِ أَخْدَانٍ

“They should be chaste, not lustful (nor sinful), nor taking (illicit) partners.”

[Al-Quran 4:25]

Marry with your choice: Make sure that you avoid regrets after the marriage. You need to feel good about your spouse before marriage. If you dislike the person before marrying, then that will be a weak foundation for happiness. After marriage you may find difficult to feel good about that person, or you will feel displeased with that spouse. Satan looks for differences and dissatisfactions and intrudes to encourage for affairs if the spouses did not like one another before marriage. For a strong foundation, before marriage, both spouses need positive feelings and liking towards one another. Islam teaches to do everything within rules to make sure that the marriage will be a happy one. That’s why we follow the following guidance according to Islamic teachings:

See your spouse before marriage: Islam forbids to marry blindly and then complaining later. Islam guides spouses to see their proposed spouses in a modest righteous way to avoid unhappy problems later. Mugeera ibn Shu’ba (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

حَطَبْتُ امْرَأَةً فَقَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «هَلْ نَظَرْتَ إِلَيْهَا؟» قُلْتُ: لَا قَالَ: «فَانْظُرِي إِلَيْهَا فَإِنَّهُ أَحَرَى أَنْ يُؤَدِمَ بَيْنَكُمَا»

I proposed a woman for marriage. Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) said to me: “Have you seen her?” I said: “no!” He (peace be upon him) said: “See her! Because it will create love between you both.”

[Ahmed. Tirmidi. Nasaee. Ibn Maazah. Daremy]

Do not marry for another's choice: Marrying for another's choice is another form of blind marriage. Sometimes a groom may say, "Whatever so and so will choose for me, I will accept" or a bride may say the same thing. Often many grooms or brides do it due to naivety or ignorance or for the cultural pressure. They give up their choices to please others in the family. It should not happen. They should feel cooling in their eyes looking at one another but often with forced marriages that cooling is missing. They may suppress their feelings, but they cannot suppress their unhappiness. One can take advice or recommendation from others but should not totally ignore his/her responsibility in choosing the right spouse. Islam made the rule for a bride to take permission from her guardian for marriage. The reason for it is, that Islam gives this responsibility on guardian to represent the girl for a happy marriage, but the guardian must not force the girl to marry against her will. Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both) said:

إِنَّ جَارِيَةً بَكَرًا أَتَتْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَذَكَرَتْ أَنَّ أَبَاهَا زَوَّجَهَا وَهِيَ كَارِهًا فَخَيَّرَهَا النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

"Once a never-married girl came to Prophet (Peace be upon him) and informed that her father wed her without her consent. Then Holy Prophet (pbuh) gave her options to either stay with husband or to leave the husband."

[Abu Dawood]

Marry per Islamic code: Happiness in Islamic marriage comes from Allah's blessings when the spouses act according to Allah's codes. No matter how smart two spouses are, if Allah's blessing is absent in marriage, true happiness will never embrace them. That's why, following Allah's code, is a very important recipe for strong foundation for happy marriage. In other words, if Muslims do not follow Allah's code in their marriages, then they won't receive Allah's blessings for the happiness in their marriages. So, Muslim spouses must be careful about how they are marrying and what method they are following in their marriage. Wrong and sinful method will pave the path of unhappiness for them. Right and righteous method will pave the path of happiness for them. Therefore, they must be careful about marriage rituals to avoid sins to prevent unhappiness in the long run. Few examples below:

Spend in moderation: Overspending in marriage is a wrong deed. Stinginess in spending is also a bad deed. Both are against Allah's code. they remove blessings. They bring elements of greed, showing off, competition and so on. Then the spouses become enveloped with many sins and sinful habits. Those habits bring misunderstanding between families, friends and relatives and contribute to stress, grief, and unhappiness. Allah loves moderation and dislikes both extravagance and stinginess.

وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُومًا مَّحْسُورًا

"And do not make your hand tied to your neck (Like a miser), nor push it out its longest reach (Overspending), so that you become worthy of blame and being penniless."

[Al-Quran 17:29]

Do not compete with others: Some people compete with their neighbours or relatives with marriage. They may compete with decoration, number of guests, abundance of food, name, and fame and so on. In their competitions, their focus is "name and fame". Islam does not allow competition for name or fame. Islam emphasizes to compete in righteousness such as, humility, charity, feeding the needy, moderation etc. Competition in righteousness always brings happiness and removes unhappiness. On the other hand, competition for name and fame makes others jealous, critical, envious which causes unhappiness. Allah forbids

material competition because it enslaves people to their desires. This desire is never ending. Once someone follows his or her desires, falls into the trap of never-ending wants. Then that person develops a never satisfied soul. That is a sickness in the soul which borrows unhappiness. This material competition may make a person bankrupt in morality and without morality happiness never comes in marriage. Allah warns about the material competitors:

أَلْهَبُكُمْ أَنْتَكُمُ

“The competition among yourselves for piling up diverts you (from your duties),

حَتَّى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ

until you visit the graves,

كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

but no, you soon shall know (the reality).”

[Al-Quran 102:1-3]

Do not show off in marriage ceremony: When you are getting married, never intend to show off. Some Muslims like to show off in their marriages. They may show off about how highly qualified their spouses are, or about how beautiful their spouses are, or about how rich their spouses are, or about how high their spouse’s families are, or about how many guests they invite, or about how gorgeous ceremony they organise and so on. The showing off is an expression of pride and it hurts the feelings of other people. Showing off is a big crime in the sight of Allah. It shows the person is not humble with Allah’s gifts. It also shows that the person worships his or her own desires not, Allah. How can a spouse put a strong foundation for happy marriage if he or she takes a stand against Allah right from the beginning of the marriage? Whereas his or her life, mind, feeling, love, wealth, beauty are Allah’s bounties! Where is the gratitude to Allah if someone shows off? Showing off never brings happiness, it is a bad habit, and it is a punishable trait in the sight of Allah. People dislike the people who show off. Even a wise spouse would dislike the showing off nature of other spouse which brings tensions and unhappiness between them. Showing off destroys all the good deeds in marriage or even charity or even prayers. Allah’s message is:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ

“So, warning to the worshippers,

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ

who are neglectful of their prayers,

الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَآؤْنَ

those who (only want) to be seen (show off).”

[Al-Quran 107:4-6]

Do not follow wrong culture in marriage: Don’t take the marriage just as a fun. Take it as a test from Allah. Take it as a worship to Allah. With your every action, you must follow Allah’s code to be happy. Don’t be like some people who would follow any culture for the fun without realising that some cultures give partners to Allah. For example, praying to a legend for the happiness in marriage is a Shirk (joining others with Allah’s power in giving happiness), which will destroy all the good deeds in marriage. That will result in a marriage without Allah’s blessings, and no blessings from Allah means unhappiness. Or some cultures may have actions that is sinful. For example: Dressing, joking, drinking, shamelessness etc. So, if

Muslim spouses follow a sinful culture, then they are losing blessings from Allah which is needed for their true happiness. How can a marriage receive Allah's blessings if it doesn't follow Allah's code? How can a marriage be happy if it doesn't have Allah's blessings? That's why one must be careful about what they are doing during marriage or in the marriage celebration. They need to prevent every hole through which unhappiness can creep in. Following wrong cultures misguide Muslims from the right path and wrong path leads them to the path of unhappiness. Allah reminds the believers in the holy Quran:

وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا أَكْثَرَ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلَوْا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

“And if you obey the most part of those on earth, they will lead you to astray from the Way of Allah.”

[Al-Quran 6:116]

Do not bargain in marriage: Do not make your marriage into a money-making business. Do not be like those who demands for money from the bride or groom. It is very mean. How can you expect love and mercy from your loving spouse, if your spouse finds out right before the marriage that you are a money monger? Where is your love and mercy for your spouse, if you are a money monger, selfish, and greedy person? In this life, you receive according to what you give. If you give love to your spouse, then your spouse will respond accordingly. Similarly, if you give generously to your spouse, then your spouse will respond to it with generosity as well. Now, by demanding for money, wealth, property, expensive jewelleries, you are giving selfish signals to your spouse. In return, you must expect some kind of selfishness from your spouse, because with demand you are sowing the seed of selfishness right from the beginning. What else would you expect other than selfishness? Will selfishness bring happiness? Therefore, never bargain for material things. Go easy on it. Be moderate, reasonable and consider the financial capacity of the other spouse or spouse's family. Show your kindness and generosity and show your love to the spouse rather than showing your love for the money.

Some poor people demand too much just because they need money. Or some rich people demand more to compete with the society. Or some citizens of rich country demand more in marriage just because of their greed to have more. Or some educated people in some cultures demand more per their income and status. In some cases, due to the bargaining, marriage deals even break up. Many men or women are victims of that kind of bargaining. Many are left to cry, to be depressed, or to be unhappy. So, do not destroy your happy journey by becoming mean to get material benefit. Never forget that Allah gave you beauty, health, talent, so never sell these gifts from Allah for money. Be a good example for your spouse, so your spouse will follow your good traits. According to Allah's message, those who can avoid greed, and selfishness in every aspect of life will be successful (In happiness in both lives):

وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“And those saved from the selfishness of their own souls, such are they, the ones who are successful.”

[Al-Quran 59:9]

Focus on passing the test: Before getting married always remember that marriage is a test for you. Allah wants to test you whether you are obeying Allah's code or not. Obeying Allah's code is called Worshipping Allah. If you remember that simple truth, then you will surrender every aspect of marriage according to Allah's code. That will make you pass the test to achieve everlasting happiness in Paradise. Due to the test, Allah will place trials and tribulations in your marriage. If you are sincere and righteous, then Allah will make those trials

easy for you to pass, and Allah will grant you serenity, peace, and happiness on your marriage in this life as well. Therefore, “Following Allah’s code” in marriage is a great requirement to build strong foundation for happy marriage. Allah reminds the believers:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ

“O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is human and stones.”

[Al-Quran 66:6]

In conclusion, I would like to remind again that happiness in Islamic marriage depends on right belief, right choices, right planning, and right actions etc. They are the basic requirements to build a strong and solid foundation for happy marriage. May Allah guide Muslims to build their foundations properly for happy marriages, Ameen!

Avoid unrealistic expectations for strong foundation.

What is unrealistic expectation in marriage? It means, in marriage, a spouse expects things from another spouse that is not possible to get. Or such expectation that another spouse cannot fulfil. 3 main factors make an expectation unrealistic. They are below:

Impossible in reality: Such as a peasant spouse expects to marry a prince, or a poor spouse expects to marry a rich spouse, or a poor spouse expects to get a luxury marriage etc. It means, a spouse should expect things within reality to avoid pain. The marriage plan should be within means and must be happy with whatever one has without impossible expectations. Impossible expectation is a root of unhappiness because of the unavailability.

Impossible to be provided: Such as a spouse expects to be loved by another spouse all the time without considering the stress, work, and sickness in other spouse. Or expect the other spouse to be a yes-man or yes-woman. Or expecting his/her spouse to be smiley all the time. Or expects 100% similarity in nature, intimacy anytime, support for wrongdoing, only male child, providence more than what another spouse can afford, spouse not to speak with another man or woman at all out of suspicion etc. These expectations are impossible to be fulfilled. One cannot expect everything in his or her way. For happiness, spouses must accept the limitation in another spouse. That acceptance will remove sensitivity of getting hurt. The formula here is, “No expectation equals no disappointment which equals happiness.” The opposite is true too. Unrealistic expectations bring disappointments and from it comes unhappiness.

Unwilling to provide: Such as, a spouse expects another spouse to clean in his/her way only, or not to spend time with friends by imposing a curfew, or to stay in the house 24/7, or to agree in intimacy unlimited times daily, or to wear clothes as one’s choice, or to use same perfumes, or to like the same food and drink without individual rights to choose, or to watch the same TV programs etc. If one spouse has these unrealistic expectations from the other, then the other spouse will not be willing to give up own choices for another and soon they will argue, fight and will borrow unhappiness in marriage.

Too much or impractical expectations are mostly about little choices. Each spouse wants some freedom of his or her choices. But these expectations attempt to take away freedom of choices from another spouse. When other spouse hesitates to give up own choices, then problems come in. One may expect these but the other may not give up his or her own choices, habits, or hobbies for the other. Marriage is not that one spouse’s freedom is bought by another. Marriage is a compromise in choices within righteousness. Within righteous choices each one should enjoy some freedom. So, a spouse should not expect the other spouse to give up his or her freedom of choice, because in most cases, the other won’t give you what you are expecting from him or her.

Unrealistic expectations, or too many expectations, builds a weak foundation for happy marriage. It prevents the husband and wife to be blended with realistic approach to be a happy couple. They must be grounded with realistic expectations to make a strong bond between them to face challenges, ups and downs in their marriage journey to maintain happiness without blames, harsh remarks, arguments, quarrels, and destroying the happy nest.

Why do unrealistic expectations in spouses weaken the solid foundation of happy marriage? I have highlighted a few reasons below:

It contributes weak mind for weak foundation: The spouse who has unrealistic expectation is not living on the ground (earth) but living in imagination. That is a problem. When one walks on the earth, he/she should think about how suitably he or she can live on the earth. But when a person lives in dream life, can expect unrealistic things. So, the likely result is, sooner or later he or she will stumble with the reality, the stability will be shaken, the strength will be lost, and the unhappiness will embrace.

It brings inflexible weak attitude: During earthquake you need flexible foundation with allowance to move to stand strongly without breaking. Unrealistic expectations in inflexible rights and responsibilities, and very prone to break the sweet relationship for the “my way or the highway” attitude. A healthy attitude considers the pros and cons, possibility and non-possibility, positive and negative, fair and unfair etc for fairness, balanced and healthiness to build a strong relationship that never breaks.

It brings weakness by lack of respect: When one expects from others only, that is a disrespect for another. Marriage is a mutual relationship where give and take policy makes them happy. In marriage they must decide with mutual consultations as a solid strong team. Unrealistic expectation does not pay respect to another’s ability, shortcomings, limitations, moral codes or principles and that lack of respect creates cracks in their solid foundation of happy relationship in marriage. For example, if a spouse demands for too much money to push other spouse to take bribe, or to exploit the fair system, then the consequences could bring imprisonment for one and that will ruin the happiness. On the other hand, without wrong or high expectation, living honestly and frugally makes the happy foundation strong that does not break.

It annoys the other spouse to weaken the team: Do you hear anytime a spouse said, “My spouse is making me crazy.” If they allow this little annoyance to continue, one day they will make a big hole as little drops of water do in a wall. Annoyance never brings happiness. It gives a sour taste when it’s supposed to be sweet juice. It means, it destroys the taste of love and happiness in marriage.

It never brings what one wants: That is a hard truth. One may have thousands of unrealistic expectations but will he or she get them? Most often he or she is not going to get it. Then why waste time? Why build a castle in the air? Why get disappointed? Why make the marriage bitter? Why not giving it up for the happiness in marriage? Some people say, “can’t complain, who would listen” and it is true in most cases that people do not like to hear too much complaining. Too much expectation is too much complaining. It weakens the strong foundation of happy marriage.

It brings troubles: This is the true outcome of unrealistic expectations. It brings lots of troubles. It destroys all the elements of strong foundation such as confidence, love, cordial relation, positive energy, and peace of mind, security feeling in marriage, team spirit, and proper usage of time etc. Happy marriage must be free from those harmful agents. Happy marriage requires to be happy with the least, to be appreciative with what they have, and to use whatever they have happily to pass the test from Allah for everlasting happiness in Paradise.

Some examples of unrealistic expectations in marriage:

In marriage, there could be so many unrealistic expectations. In different cultures, there may be also some specific expectations people have. It is not possible to list all. But we can look at few common ones that is seen in societies. Some examples are below:

Unrealistic expectation for a perfect spouse: Before marriage every spouse dream for a perfect spouse. They may do a lot of fantasy about their soul mate, imagining how the perfect spouse will be.

They define their “Perfect spouse” in their own way. In other words, whatever quality they imagine to be present in a spouse, is a perfect spouse to them. But there are some problems with that concept of “Perfect spouse.” Such as:

- *Definition:* There is no perfect common definition for a perfect husband or a wife. There is no machine to measure the perfection either. It is only that people imagine excellency about a husband or a wife per their expectations.
- *One eyed view:* So, when a spouse imagines about “perfect spouse”, only sees what he or she expects to see. Thus, that becomes a one-eyed view. The problem is, may be certain qualities are called perfect for him or her, but for others those certain qualities may not be perfect.
- *False perception:* So, unrealistic expectation for a perfect spouse could be a false perception only. A perception is a perception only, but it might not be present in real life. Human imagination has no limit. One may perceive that his wife should be like an angel, but it is a false perception only.
- *Absence of total perfection:* This is the real problem. In reality no one is totally perfect. A spouse may have one strong side but another weak side. No one has everything, because Allah did not create humans as complete, as totally perfect. So always there is some shortcoming in a spouse such as, one is a good cook and another is terrible, or one is rich and another is poor, or one is more beautiful than another, or one is wiser than another, or one is taller than another, or one is courageous and another is timid, or one is a sweet talker and another is sour, or one with best manner and another is less, or one has more qualification than another, or one is more religious than another etc.
- *The result is unhappiness:* Therefore, there is no one totally perfect, so how does a spouse with unrealistic expectations will find a spouse with all the best qualities? It is not possible and that’s why unhappiness waits around the corner for a person who has unrealistic expectation regarding perfect spouse.

Unrealistic expectation to be happy ever after: May be many of you still remember the story you had read in primary school about marriage. Stories about prince and princess, how they got married and lived happily ever after. These stories are imprinted in the simple mind of so many children. For some children that theme of “Happily ever after” is stuck in their imagination, even when they grow older. They also expect to be happy ever after once they get married. But does it happen? These stories are to make children feel happy, and the worst part is that some children believe in that, and they dream for that to happen to them. In teenage years, many children fall in love emotionally believing that “Happily ever after” theory, and they do not understand why the society do not approve their love and their marriage when they are trying to live “Happily ever after”! Some fall in love or get married, but never experience that happiness afterwards, and then cannot cope, and even some commit suicide. This is due to the unrealistic expectation they had. Their fantasy happiness was built on the unrealistic foundation, and it did not support them after their marriage with the reality the faced.

Unrealistic expectation of changing the spouse: If spouse expect the following unrealistic things, then their harmony will be weak, and can break easily due to the weak foundation:

- My spouse will love me exactly as I want,
- My spouse will care about me the way I feel happy,
- My spouse will look after me as I wish,
- My spouse will sacrifice everything for my love as I expect,
- My spouse will change his or her habits for the sake of my love,
- My spouse will blend with me like mashed potatoes etc.

These are not realistic expectations and are the recipe for disasters. The reality is, he/she has own choice, habits, hobbies, and the rights.

Unrealistic expectation about a perfect wedding: Many people also have unrealistic expectation about their wedding. Sometimes those expectations come as family tradition, or the pressure from society. Many people do not realize that those high expectations make the marriage life full of suffering, burdensome, destroys all the rewards and happiness. Over perfectionism can be a mental disease and that person can become too obsessive resulting in never being happy because perfectionism has no end. The other point is, if the spouse puts too much attention in trivial things, then the happiness becomes replaced by anxiety, worry, shame, blame and unhappiness. Any obsession is like an impurity in a foundation and can weaken the foundation when pressure comes on it. I have seen some marriages, how their obsession about small issues ruined their happy ceremony with shame, embarrassment, and bad name. I shall give few examples below for better understanding:

- *Expectation about wedding dress:* The expectation can be one dress without compromise, costly and to borrow money in interest, must buy dresses for both sides even if they cannot afford, fight if the dresses did not fulfil expectation, or even cancelling the wedding if the unrealistic expectations were not met.
- *Expectation about Gifts:* Some family expects very expensive gifts in marriage. They are so obsessive about gifts, that they will spend hours or days bargaining about what to get from the other family. That could be about very expensive dowry, or furniture, electronic goods, car, money for business, jewelleries and so on. I went to few weddings, where I saw how they set up a special desk for collecting gifts. In that desk a couple of people were recording like: who gave the gift, what was the item and how much worth the gift was. At the end of the day, they made announcement about those gifts and praised highly for those who gave expensive gifts. I saw those events were quickly overshadowed with displeasure, humiliated feeling and unworthy or unfortunate feeling in many poor invited guests. That high expectation in gifts, brought shame on many hearts from poor relatives. Also, that brought joy and pride to many hearts of many rich people. Thus, happiness was ruined in many hearts in that event. Too much eager about gift is a sign of greed and expecting others to give is a mentality of begging. Some people may have lots of money, yet they have a begging mind and from that begging mind they expect high return from others. Once they don't get what they expect, then they suffer from disappointment, bitterness, anger, frustration, jealousy, and unhappiness.
- *Expectation about Food:* I have seen in many weddings; people were fighting about the food without shame. It's because they expected better food, and it was not provided as they expected. So right from the wedding day, two families from two spouses, engaged into unhappy journey, just because of the failing of unrealistic expectation about food. You may think, who would fight for food? Maybe poor people? Surprisingly, I saw the fighting came from mostly rich people. I remember a rich relative used to say, "Look! If you invite me, I want this, and that food prepared for me." I know some people told me stories, how they were

guests in wedding and how they felt disappointed about the food. They were angry and they humiliated the host. It is painful to think how many people worship their belly and expect the kind of food they want without any due consideration about how much the host can afford. Again, it is a greed and greed destroys the nobility of wedding. It makes the foundation for happy marriage weak.

- *Expectation about Decorations:* I saw a wedding in a village. The family expectation was to decorate the house, yard and the road that goes beside their home. Many people in that village spoke to me about that decoration. They were condemning, criticising, and blaming the wedding, saying that it was a pompous show off of extravagance. That made me think, what was achieved from that expectation of gorgeous decoration? What extra happiness did that decoration bring into the happiness in marriage? How bad the family felt when they received criticism about their decoration? Spiritually speaking, it rather earned no invocation from poor, nor did bring blessings from Allah. In some culture, they expect many cars to be used in wedding day, to show other people how gorgeous the wedding was. It often costs huge; it often wastes money. If the spouses spent moderately and saved the rest for their happy future, that would have been better. But high expectations cost them more and, in many cases, brings misery later.
- *Expectation about Guests:* A wedding was very chaotic with the number of guests. Groom expected to invite many guests to show that no one in his area had more guests in wedding than his. He invited so many, which created big chaos in wedding ceremony. The host (Bride family) never thought of that many guests, therefore they were not prepared with food. When they saw a large number, their chef decided to add water in the curry to make the amount of food more. But it destroyed the taste of the food, and it could not feed so many hungry mouths. The result was a fight between two families on the wedding day, which brought enmity, humiliation, grief and so on. Unrealistic expectation did not help for a happy peaceful wedding ceremony, rather it damaged the happy occasion.

Islamic teaching about unrealistic expectation:

How can Islam support unrealistic expectations in marriage when they weaken the foundation of happy marriage? A strong foundation must be free from hazards that makes it unsafe now or later. Safety, stability, and strength depends on the purity that is free from unwanted, undesired, unnecessary, and unsafe materials, and in marriage those are unrealistic expectations. In Islamic marriage, it requires a solid foundation based on purity in intention, in expectation, in manner, and in actions. If all elements are pure, then the marriage foundation will be pure, strong, unshakable, and everlasting. That's why, it is important to identify unrealistic expectation in the light of Islam to avoid them, and to save the happy marriage foundation from weakness. Islam teaches to give up all unrealistic expectations in marriage. Islam came to teach mankind about the exact reality, to teach the moderation, to focus on the right aspects of expectations for happiness and to avoid the wrong aspects of expectations that destroys happiness. Islam teaches the guidance of creator, who created humanity, human feeling, and Who guided them the right way of expecting things in marriage without crossing the boundary.

Below, I have mentioned a few points from Islamic point of view regarding the realistic/unrealistic expectations in marriage:

Expect only Allah to be perfect: Never expect anyone or anything to be perfect among Allah's creations. Because the creator Allah made everything with best and worst in it. Allah made human with some perfection and with some imperfection. So, they must rely on ALL-Perfect Allah. Allah is the only Source of Perfection (*As-Salam; Quran 59.23*). Allah made humanity with

best and worst nature in them, for testing them which part they exercise most. So, humans are never perfect. A spouse must remember he or she is not perfect, so why he or she should expect another spouse to be perfect? Islam teaches this reality so that each spouse can be realistic about marriage. Allah says in the Quran about reality, in terms of qualities in human:

وَالَّذِينَ وَالزَّيْتُونَ ١ وَطُورِ سِينِينَ ٢ وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ ٣ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ٤ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ ٥

“WE have truly created man in the best of forms. Then WE bring him down (to be) the lowest of the low.”

[Al-Quran 95.4-5]

Cut down high expectations: Expectation has no limit. The more one gets the more the expectation is increased. Human expectation is like a horse with no reins. Unless the rein is placed on the horse, it does not come under control. Human expectations also need reins, needs control, needs cutting it down to the ground level. Islam puts that rein on human expectation. Islam teaches them to know why they are here, why they are getting married, and what is their responsibilities in marriage. It gives a balanced guideline between rights to expect and the responsibilities to be expected. So, that no one can try to see with one eye only. Messenger of Allah placed examples through his low expectations in his life. He got married without material expectations. He (pbuh) lived conjugal life without lavish expectations. He (pbuh) gave a beautiful example in a hadis about the expectations in entire human life which includes marriage as well. He (pbuh) emphasizes to cut down expectations in material things, in temporary things. Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

لَوْ كَانَ لِإِبْنِ آدَمَ وَاِدِيَانٍ مِنْ مَالٍ لَا يَبْتَغَىٰ وَاِدِيًا ثَالِثًا، وَلَا يَمْلَأُ جَوْفَ ابْنِ آدَمَ إِلَّا التُّرَابُ، وَيَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَنْ تَابَ

“If the son of Adam is given two valleys full of wealth, he would expect for the 3rd one. In fact, son of Adam’s belly can’t be filled up except soil (In grave); and the one who repents to Allah (cut down desires), Allah will accept it.”

[Muttafaqun A'laih]

Expect in moderation: Expectation in moderation is a part of Prophet’s character. One should expect the best to be happy with but not excessively, not beyond reality, not something other may not be able to provide, or something other spouses may not be willing to provide, or something that is not allotted in their Fate (Qadr). One must learn moderation in every aspect of life, especially in marriage. In marriage two souls are involved, and they need to unite in moderate expectations from one another, from others, and they need to accept happily whatever Allah has kept in their Qadr. High expectations remove balance and when the spouse falls from high expectation to low, receives severe injury as well. But the moderate one is like in a plain platform, where no chance of getting stumbled and to receive injury. Abdullah ibn Sarjish (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the holy messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

السمت الحسن والتؤدة والاقتصاد جزء من اربع وعشرين جزء من النبوة

“Best behaviour, calm and composed nature and ways of moderation is 1/24th of messenger hood.”

[Tirmidi]

Expect the best moral character: Expect best moral character because this is the teaching of Allah through HIS messenger (pbuh). Expect morality, piety, righteousness in your spouse. You will never go wrong if you expect these best qualities, and if you pray to Allah for these in you and in your spouse. Best qualities will make a strong foundation for happy marriage. Do not expect bad character such as greed, selfishness, unkindness, unwise, and unrealistic. Pray to Allah to

save you from cheater, liar, intoxicant, gambler, and unreliable dishonest spouse. Bad character destroys the stable and strong foundation for happy marriage. A Muslim spouse should expect his or her spouse to be strong in Faith, to be reliant in Allah, to be patient, to be sincere in marriage, to be committed in marriage and to be dedicated to make the marriage happy. Those types of expectations is realistic, wise, smart, and thoughtful. Expect and pray for a spouse who fears Allah and who is most honourable in the sight of Allah, so that you can be an honourable team:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاهُ

“Surely, the most honourable of you, in the Sight of Allah is (he or she, who is) the most righteous of you.”

[Al-Quran 49:13]

Surrender your expectation to Allah: Accept what Allah gave you. Your wife or your husband is a gift from Allah, you must remember that. Allah has created every man and woman. If you downgrade your spouse, you are downgrading Allah’s creation. If you downgrade your spouse for some of your own expectations, you have not surrendered your expectations to Allah. It means you are still in trap, and you are providing room for Satan to misguide you with false expectations to be unhappy. You may expect one thing as you see best for you, but you do not know the good in it in future. You do not know that what you expect to be good might be bad for you. That future knowledge is with Allah. So, trust Allah and accept your spouse as a precious gift from Allah. Insha Allah, HE will turn your spouse best for you in terms of long-term happiness. Allah says in the Quran:

وَاعْشِرُوهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۖ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُمْ فَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ۙ ١٩

“(O believers!) Live with them on a basis of kindness and justice. If you take a dislike to them, it may be that you dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good.”

[Al-Quran 4:19]

Expect yourself to be reformed: Changing your spouse’s nature is harder than changing your nature. If your spouse has a habit, which is not forbidden by Allah, then why do you demand it to be changed just for your disliking? Why will you try to change without success, and then feeling of not given importance? Why do you have to borrow unhappy feelings? Is it not easier, for you to adjust, and be flexible to feel ok with it? Remember, if you have choices of either reforming yourself or reforming your spouse, avoid forcing the reform on your spouse to avoid fight, displeasure, argument, dissatisfaction, and unhappiness. Start reforming from yourself for it is peaceful, pleasant, respectful, and achievable. The differences here I am talking about is only traits or habits that are Halal (Lawful in Islam) and not the Haram (Unlawful in Islam). Some examples for Halal differences are stated below for understanding:

- One spouse brushes tooth after every meal and the other brushes once a day,
- One spouse cleans plates after food with soap and another with warm water,
- One spouse prefers eggs during breakfast, and another prefers cornflakes,
- One spouse likes rice and curry, but another likes kebab,
- One spouse likes hot food with chilli, but another likes mild food,
- One spouse likes the colour blue for painting, but another likes red etc.

These differences are allowed in Islam. None of you are doing wrong. Here you can reform yourself by feeling cool about your spouse’s choice. If she prefers chilli curry, allow her to enjoy chilli curry and if your husband likes mild curry, then allow him to enjoy it. Do not try to bulldoze him or her with your choice, because it will be JULM (Oppression) and oppression is sinful and

creates fights and contributes to unhappiness. But do not reform yourself, if one of you are doing Haram (unlawful in Islam). Some haram choices are for example:

- One prays 5 times, and another does not. Never give up your 5 times prayer for the pleasure of another because you do not want to displease Allah.
- One speaks the truth, another lies,
- One speaks gently and the other scolds,
- One is kind and another is selfish,
- One is humble and another is proud etc.

In these differences, the righteous spouse MUST NOT accept the wrong doings but must try to convince another spouse gently and wisely. Here, the wrongdoer must surrender to Allah and reform his or her wrong action. That reforming is primarily best for the wrongdoer, because does not he or she want everlasting happiness in Paradise by following Allah's codes? Now, let me give two examples from the marriage life of Holy Prophet (s.a.w), to show how he (s.a.w) and his wife Ayesha (r.a) reformed themselves within lawful issues to adjust with one another for happiness.

- *Time together vs no time together:* Loving spouses like to spend time together as much as possible. Holy Messenger of Allah (pbuh) used to spend so much time in the service of Islam and not so much with his wife. His beloved wife Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her) never complained saying, "Why do you spend time with others, and not with me?" She did not complain because with her wisdom, she saw it was necessary, so she reformed her expectation, supported Allah's Messenger, earned rewards, blessings, strong bond, genuine foundation for happy marriage, peace, and happiness.
- *Old age vs young age:* Holy Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was older than Ayesha (May Allah be pleased with her). Both of their choices were different in terms of age-related feelings and expectations. For example, Ayesha (May Allah be pleased with her) used to play with her girlfriends at earlier days with toys. But prophet (pbuh) never complained, nor expected her to be as matured as he was. Rather he (pbuh) allowed her to enjoy her choice, her need for her age. He (pbuh) that way, adjusted himself with reality, did not expect anything from her unrealistically, accommodated her feeling with a mutual love and respect. The result was an unshakable foundation in marriage that resulted happiness without problems.

Expect only Allah's pleasure: You must realize that if you expect something from your spouse, or from any other creations of Allah, then you are placing yourself in someone who is not completely able to fulfil your expectations. Some spouses expect to be helped, loved, cared, to get next progeny, material gain etc from the spouse or from the spouse's family. But they do not realize that their expectation is on a sandcastle, because on whom they are expecting have no ultimate power or capacity to fulfil any expectation without the help and permission from Allah Almighty. That is where many spouses make big mistakes. Their mistake is that they do not expect only from Allah, but they expect from weak, vulnerable, helpless creations of Allah. One must understand that anyone besides Allah has some of the following traits:

- *Limitation:* Even a spouse has limitation. Suppose you expect her to love you all the time, but she might be going through childhood trauma, where she never felt loved and never knew how to give love. Or you may expect your spouse to take care of you when sick, but maybe she or he is sicker than you in that time. So, expecting from a spouse means living in false hope. But expecting from Allah is the best because Allah can permit and allow you and your spouse to look after each other.
- *Own problems:* Every spouse has own problems to deal with every day. Sickness, sadness, stress, tiredness, lack of sleep, grief, lack of money, lack of confidence, anger problem,

addiction problem, fearfulness, lack of courage, lack of good health etc are common to have as a human being. Now if you expect only good from your spouse, then definitely sooner or later you are going to be disappointed, angry and you will blast one day. So, Islam teaches not to expect anything from others, but to expect from Allah only. If Allah wants to help you, then Allah will grant ability in your spouse to give you some care.

- *Lack of capacity:* You may expect your spouse to have lots of money to enjoy life. But what capacity does he or she have? Human capacity is limited. Some may have money, but no capacity to travel due to sickness or no capacity to eat nice food due to diabetes. So, one must not expect from a spouse, because a spouse always has some lacking in capacity. Islam teaches to expect help from Allah, because only Allah can pour happiness between spouses with having or without having a lot of material things.
- *Lack of qualities:* You may expect a spouse with perfect qualities but that is impossible to get. One may have good education but lacking in humble manner. Or one may have no education but best in common sense. Or one may be poor but very loving. So always you will find some positive qualities, with some negative qualities. Therefore, your expectation on your spouse's qualities will disappoint you, will make you unhappy. Islam teaches to never expect anything from anyone, only do your duty expecting Allah's pleasure because your aim is to pass the test. So, you won't expect from spouse, you won't be disappointed, and you will save yourself from unhappiness.
- *Misunderstanding:* Human feelings are very complex. Due to lack of knowledge about unseen, they become victims of misunderstanding. Husband and wife, no matter how clever they are, they might misunderstand each other at times. So, any expectation on spouse may end up in trouble due to misunderstanding. That's why one must not expect everything perfect from a spouse. Islam teaches to expect pleasure of Allah for marriage, so that Allah can help by removing misunderstanding.
- *Vulnerability to be deceived by Satan:* Satan's main mission is to bring unhappiness between husband and wife. Satan tries to inject suspicion, bad feelings, anger, egotism, proud feeling, doubts, wrong ideas, wrong guess etc into the hearts of spouses every day. If the spouse expects from another spouse, then he or she allows Satan to work around the expectation to create suspicion. For example: A husband expects his wife to love him too much. Now his mind is focused on whether she is loving him enough or not. If she is busy with cooking Satan injects in him, "Look! She loves her cooking more than you." Then he goes to her and starts arguing. She says in return, "Are you crazy! Don't be childish. Grow up. I must do some work in the kitchen." Satan then injects him more, "Did you see how she reacted? She does not love you as she used to." He then gets pumped up and sleeps in a different bed and so on. This is just an example of how expectation puts you in a position where Satan can deceive you easily. Now look at another example. He is a best Muslim. He believes that he should not expect anything from anyone except Allah's pleasure. So, he does not expect his wife to love him all the time. His mind is focused on greater issue and that issue is that he must please Allah in his marriage duties, to be allowed in the happy Paradise. If he gets love from his wife, he says, "Alhamdulillah! Thank you, Allah," If he does not get love all the time, he is not worried because he did not expect it in the first place. If they feel ill towards one another, they seek refuge with Allah:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَآئِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ

“Verily, those who fear Allah, when an evil thought from Satan attacks them, bring Allah to mind (By remembering HIM), indeed, they see (Alright again).”

[Al-Quran 7:201]

- **Expect love and give love for the love of Allah:** When a Muslim spouse expects love, expect it as much as Allah allows to get it. Or when he/she offers love also expects to receive rewards from Allah. They believe, spouses are gifts from Allah, and trusts from Allah. They focus on complementing one another for happiness and avoid complaining about what they do not receive. In the Quran, Allah gives example of true believer's hearts. In that example, Allah described how those believers helped and fed people but never expected anything in return. The same way if we love, help, care for one another in Islamic marriage, we must do it only for the sake of Allah, and without any expectation of return from our spouses, and if we only expect Allah's pleasure, forgiveness, mercy, and paradise, then nothing in marriage can disappoint us. The example:

وَيُطْعَمُونَ عَلَىٰ حَبِّهِ مَسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ۖ إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا ۙ

“And they feed for the love of Allah the needy, the orphan, and the captive and the needy, (saying) ‘We feed you for the sake of Allah alone, no reward do we expect from you, nor (we expect) thanks.’”

[Al-Quran 76:8-9]

Accept your fate (Qadr): Muslims are required to believe in fate (Qadr). They must believe that things happen for a good reason. Good and bad things happen in them for a better result. So, they do not get stuck in their expectations, but they surrender their expectations to Allah by accepting the outcome in anything. On the other hand, if a spouse does not accept what comes as Qadr, then he or she cannot accept trials and tribulations. Any little disadvantage will make him or her cry out with complaints, and that will give him or her unhappiness. Some people question if any bad things come to them, “Why me? Why did it happen to me?”

I knew a man who expected a most beautiful wife. He spent many years to find a most beautiful wife. Finally, he found one and got married. A day after his marriage, I saw him sitting in his yard hitting his head and was crying very loudly. I asked him why he was crying. He said, “I was cheated. I thought she was most beautiful but today I found her to be 2 inches shorter than I expected. How can I be happy now?” This man could not accept Allah's gift as it was. He could not accept whatever Allah gave him. He could not surrender to the fate (Qadr) saying, “This spouse was meant for me” so I accepted her happily, Allah has something good in it.” Instead, he conditioned himself in his expectation and now he is feeling the pain. His money, his wedding, his hard work, his lovely wife all are the instruments for unhappiness to him now.

The question is who made him unhappy? It was him who made himself unhappy. Islam guides to accept what Allah gives after good efforts and to be happy. Whoever follows that guidance will enjoy happiness in marriage. Some young people fall in love before marriage. They expect everyone in family must support their love. Sometimes it does not happen for many reasons. Then one of them gets married to someone else. The other can't give up his or her expectation and suffer from grief or some commit suicide. Why do they suffer from unhappiness? Again, because they cannot easily accept their fate (Qadr). If they learnt to accept that it was not meant to be, then they could move on and get married with another person accepting the fate. Islam teaches us that something may happen in our life, that we did not expect. But if that happens, instead of moaning and suffering from unhappiness, we should accept it happily. Let us look at a case example from Allah's messenger for our guidance:

خَدَمْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَشْرَ سِنِينَ، فَمَا أَمَرَنِي بِأَمْرِ فَتَوَانَيْتُ عَنْهُ أَوْ ضَيَّعْتُهُ، فَلَا مَنِي، فَإِنْ لَامَنِي أَحَدٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ إِلَّا قَالَ: دَعُوهُ، فَلَوْ قُدِّرَ - أَوْ قَالَ: لَوْ قُضِيَ - أَنْ يَكُونَ كَانَ

“Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: When I was eight years old, I joined in the service of Holy messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) and served him for 10 years. If any

time I broke something he (pbuh) never reprimanded me. If any of his family member reprimanded me, he (pbuh) used to say, “Let him go! Whatever in fate (Qadr) was supposed to happen has happened.”

[Masaabih, Bayhaki]

If Muslim spouses follow that example, they can be saved from blaming, arguing, putting one another down, disrespecting one another, cursing from anger, fighting with rage, domestic violence, tension, anxieties, fears, and uneasiness for enjoying happiness.

Chapter 4: Love in Marriage for Happiness

Importance of love in marriage.

Love is a need for all. Love is everywhere. GOD is loving, HE has love for HIS creations, and the creations have love in them. Love in marriage is extremely important. Why love is so important in marriage? Let us find the answer through few following points.

For attraction: Love is like a magnet that attracts the opposite sex. It is a powerful magnet that is present in each human. It is a gift from GOD, and it can be used without petition or permission. Love is a force to pull one another towards a unity. For attraction between spouses, there is no other useful alternative than love. Spouse's money, wealth, reputations, position, power etc has little power to attract than love. Love does not care about the differences between people in terms of class, financial ability, social status, educational difference, or race. If love kicks into the heart of one person, then nothing can take away. This attraction from love has no boundaries. It does not follow any border security law. No one guards it because it is a feeling deep inside the heart. In marriage, this love is so important to maintain that attraction between two spouses.

For affection: Without love there is an opposite feeling of attraction. If a spouse does not love another, then this spouse develops an aversion towards another spouse. Where there is absence of love, there is absence of affection. Even though two spouses are legally married, but the legality has no power in affection. Court cannot force a spouse to show affection to another. Affection is an outcome of love as a plant is the outcome of a seed. Without seed one cannot expect a plant, and similarly, without love in marriage there is no affection. For example, you are trying to fondle with your spouse, but he/she pushes your hands away from him/her. It is a signal of aversion to affection because something is faulty with the love. Love pulls two people to affection because giving and receiving love is called affection. It can be by touching, speaking, intimacy to fulfil one another's inner need. Without giving or receiving affection, the spouses feel empty, incomplete, and to complement one another with proper affection they must have love between them.

For bond: You can mix water and oil, but you cannot make bond between them. Why? Because they have two different natures, and you cannot make them stay together. Husband and wife comes with two different natures, but love works as a strong glue to make bond between them. Love does not allow them to stay separate. They cannot be pulled away because they blend with heart and soul. This bond does not take long at all. Love quickly joins two hearts with feelings, and in first sight they can be bonded. Nothing else other than love is so powerful and so quick in making bond between two spouses. Amazing! Love makes them feel as if they knew one another forever, or as if they were made as soul mates. Love brings all the positive feelings to melt two hearts to join without barriers.

For friendship: Friendship between spouses is not an ordinary one. It is more than friendship. For example, some spouses describe their conjugal relationship, "He is my husband and my best friend, or she is my wife and best friend." What is friendship in marriage? It is the well-wishing without being judgmental, open to listen without judging, and supporting one another to be happy without judging, criticising, or hindering. What can bring that heart-to-heart relationship with friendship between husband and wife? That is called love. Love can blind spouses to amaze about one another to see only the positives without negatives. That's why they focus on fun instead of criticising or judging one another. Friendship removes from them fear about one another, and they can relax with joy in their marriage.

For trust: Suspicion is the opposite to trust. In marriage trust is very important. For example, a rich husband brings his bride home, and hands over all the keys to her by the next day. He puts all the trust in her, even though they have spent only one night in marriage. Why suddenly one trusts another with money, honour, and life? What is the secret of that trust? That trust comes from love. It means, the husband loves his wife so much so that his everything is less important to him than his love for his wife. Similarly, the wife takes care of all the responsibility with love with dedication. They need that trust for becoming a strong solid team to work together towards success. Often, one cannot trust their own business partner as he trusts his wife. Why is that? Again, it is due to love. Pure love brings unbreakable trust, and that trust gives them stability in marriage.

For depending: Why two people marry one another? They marry to become complete. Without marriage, the first man Adam, was feeling the need for a companion to feel complete. Allah then made his wife, so that they could feel complete by complementing one another. To get that complete feeling, they must rely on one another. In marriage journey, they must depend one another because marriage is a joint venture. If one goes down in marriage, another one goes down too. They depend on one another for little or big things. A wife may depend on husband's income, and a husband may depend on wife to care for the baby. Each spouse is unique and has something special to offer. To get the fullest out of their lives they depend one another. What gives them so much confidence without doubt to depend on one another? It is love. Love brings the rights to rely on one another without hesitation and without doubt. They cannot enjoy love without depending one another's love.

For strength: The strong relationship in marriage makes the marriage happier. If a spouse suffers from doubt, suspicion, and lack of confidence about the other spouse, then the relationship is bound to be weak. Their doubts will hinder their strong bond, and trust. They will have a marginal strength but if they are challenged by tough situations, they will struggle to be strong due to their weakness. For example, a weak-minded spouse can be persuaded by friends to put the seed of mistrust about another spouse. From there, suspicion can hinder the strength in relationship. Often, it happens if one or both spouses are seen to be loving towards one another. What can upgrade them from weak to strong relationship? Again, it is love. Love must be expressed without allowing the suspicions from entering. It is love that brings strength in marriage.

For forgiveness: To err is human. Husband and wife, neither of them is an angel. An angel is incapable of making mistakes because Allah did not give them ability to disobey. They are Allah's perfect creation. But for human, they are prone to make mistakes. In marriage, two spouses come together with the goodwill that they will be near perfect in everything. But when the reality hits them, they find unexpected manner, habit, and gesture in them. Often, one may not like another's style which brings tensions. Sometimes, one or both may do deliberate mistake. Once a mistake happens, you cannot bring the past back. What can be done to fix it without adding further damages? Forgiveness is the answer for that. It allows the hurt to heal, and the disharmony to reconcile. But without strong love, one cannot forgive. Love brings distaste to revenge because love does not like to hurt back.

For teamwork: Two people have two different mindsets. Each one wants to win. They both have some degree of stubbornness. When they disagree, they try to look after their ego. If there is an argument, one may say, "Take my way or take the highway." That is normal in the spouses. Many marriages are suffering from that different ego trip. They can work as a team at workplace, but they cannot work as a team at home. Have you ever seen it like that where two bosses in the same house? Do you wonder what is the secret lacking in them? I think, it is lack of love. Sometimes, spouses do not say it, they try to show something else as the reasons, but the real problem is

absent love. True love makes spouses to submit to one another, and to give preference to one another's choice that they own. If they cannot be supportive in strong teamwork, they should assess their level of love. If they can fix their love, then fixing the teamwork will follow automatically.

For well-being: If you have a problem with someone not related to you, you can avoid that person to forget about that issue for the peace of mind. But if the problem is at work, then you may bring headache from work to home. Then, you can express your frustration to your spouse for support, assurance, and advice. Then your spouse rubs your head, shows affections and care, and says with love, "Don't worry, I am with you." With that love and support, you feel very comfortable, your frustration is replaced with love and support, and you feel happy. Now, imagine! Your problem is with your spouse at home, where can you go? Your spouse will be beside you constantly reminding the hurt, and with that you will suffer from mental and emotional distress. Your immune system will try to keep you in balance up to a point, then everything in you will start crumbling. Your well-being will be compromised, and you will develop sickness. Without love in marriage, your well-being is at high risk. So, fix it sooner for both of your well-being.

For piety: You feel unloved by your spouse. If you tell me that it does not worry you, you are not telling the truth. Unloved feeling is scary because it borrows all sorts of negative feelings in a person. For a spouse, it is indigestible. Unloved feeling tears the natural strong bond, the healthy feeling, and the happy moods. A spouse goes through madness in the mind in which hurts runs faster than desert storm and takes away the peace of mind. With that unstable mind and feeling, when you stand up for daily prayers, often you forget, or you find hard focusing on the FACE OF ALLAH. Besides, you feel angry, speak harsh words, neglect duties, and you lose rewards. Ultimately, your unloved feeling is depriving you from being pious to do righteous deeds. On the other hand, if are loved, you feel everything is good, and your focus in prayer is good and your rewards increases quickly. Therefore, love is very important in marriage.

For happiness: Love is unseen light. When it enters the heart, the heart gets illuminated with rays of hope, and it turns the heart into happy mood. Without love the heart is like a dark grave with sadness, bitterness, cruelty, and empty. A grave is empty, dark, and a habitat of poisonous creatures. No one likes to be in a grave until death forces people to go into it. No one wants a heart without love, but sometimes they feel not being loved and that feeling is horrible. In marriage, love makes two spouses alive, vibrant, cheerful, giggling and laughing, but when love falls short their shiny faces become cloudy. Happiness leaves them and sourness replaces their cheerfulness. Did you see unhappy couples? You will notice a deadness in them. They may not express it openly, but you can feel the coldness in their faces, and in their expressions. It is as if their hearts are dead in the absence of love. They are together for other responsibilities, but their hearts are not together for the lack of love. Therefore, love is very important in marriage for the happiness, peace, and prosperity.

For medicine: Love acts like a free yet divine medicine. Every now and then, spouses face unpleasant issues, disagreement in choices, some arguments with different ideas, and some sense of hurt. If that hurt is allowed to build up can cause damage in a sweet relationship. The hurt is unseen in the deep heart, and no one can apply any ointment for the healing of it. But one thing can heal it or repair the damage in the heart very quickly. That medicine is love. If spouses use love towards one another often, then they will be very healthy mentally and emotionally. Love gives them comfort, reassurance, feeling of safety and security, and the feeling of belonging. Love brings all the positive hormones to play positive roles in healing or in keeping the spouses healthy. Love is the cure for unhealthy marriage, and most importantly, love is the medicine for hatred. Love pushes the hatred away and does not allow any ill-feelings to infect the healthy heart

to heart relationship. Allah has given love in spouses hearts, and if they use it as much as they want to, Allah will never charge them any fees. So, why spouses are not using it to be happy in marriage?

Who created love in humans?

Any spouse must ask this question, “who created love in me and in my spouse?” It is surprising even to think that not many spouses ask this simple question. Love is something every spouse is happily enjoying, or grieving for no love, yet never asks the simple question about where this love came from. Maybe it is human nature, that they like to take things for granted, and want to be busy with enjoyment without knowing what it is, or who created it, or why it is created, or how it’s supposed to be used etc. Like love, most humans are enjoying everything in this life, yet not prepared to ask about who has created all these blessings for them.

I have spoken to many people about it and had the opportunity to ask them, “Who created love?” The answers I got can be divided into three main categories below:

First category: The answer is, “I do not know.” The number of people in this category is the most. They are honest in their answer. They did not explore it before. They think that they have been busy in life exploring many other things, and in their environment, this question was not discussed.

Second category: The answer is, “I do not want to know.” They think that it is not important to know. To them, whatever they have, how they should enjoy those, is a far better and more important question. Enjoyment is the biggest focus in them and questioning or thinking about what they do not see or know is a lesser important issue to them.

Third category: The answer is, “I know.” When they say that they know, does not mean that they know the same thing. Some know that love was an automatic thing given to them without a creator. They believe that nature has made them, and they will disappear into nature again. They do not believe that any creator has anything to do with it. Whereas others know that love is the creation of GOD. They believe that everything was created, and nothing came from nothing.

Interestingly, when I tried to learn how many people who believe that LOVE is from GOD, give thanks to GOD for it, their number is quite low. They believe but forget to ask for thanks for it. The wealth, enjoyments and the competition for this life keeps them very busy until they arrive to their graves, and they forget to thank the Creator enough for the LOVE they have received. If I ask myself, as a believer that Allah has created love in me, and in my wife, how often I thanked Allah for it. I must be disappointed with my honest answer. The truth is, I was never thankful enough to Allah and I am sorry for it. I ask Allah to forgive me. Therefore, all Muslims must remember to remind themselves with questions such as, can we buy love from a supermarket? Or from pharmacy? Or from any factory? Or from a science laboratory? Or is love manmade?

One may ask, why do I need to ask who made the love? The answer is why not? If I do not know who created love in me, I will suffer from the following problems:

I will remain ignorant: In daily life, anyone would ask questions about the things they receive. For example, if they receive a packet they will ask, what is in it, who gave it, why did they give it to me, what do I have to do with it? Asking these questions is the demand of common sense, curtesy, and wisdom. Similarly, I should ask the question about love out of common sense, curtesy, and wisdom. Why should I be ignorant about the giver of love, when I want to know every other thing that I have received? How can I like to be ignorant about the creator of love? Do I think ignorance is honourable? No, I do not and for that reason I read, study, pass exams, and learn

every day to increase my knowledge to be a better and responsible human. Therefore, I must ask who created love for me.

I will not know the purpose of love: Since my childhood, I have been learning the purpose of things. For example, little children ask their parents many questions such as, what is it, why is it, and what do I do with it etc? That's how we know about food's purpose. Its purpose is to supply us nutrition to be healthy, to avoid sickness, and to lead a happy life. We know the purpose of water, clothes, cattle, milk, house, table, desk, or a book, but if I do not know the purpose of my life or love in me, then it will be a shame. Without knowledge about the purpose of love, I cannot make my proper aim. If I do not know the destination of my journey, then how can I plan for success? Won't I be wandering around, wasting my precious time, without knowing where I am going? Won't that make my journey a dangerous one? Would you take a journey in the vast sea without knowing your purpose or destination?

I will not know how the creator asked me to use my love: The watch manufacturer provides instructions how to use the watch safely without damaging it. Will I go to a fisherman to tell me how to use my watch instead of going back to the manufacturer? I will not. I shall go to a doctor to explain me the uses of pills, and I shall go to a teacher to explain to me how to use my book for study. That's what we all do, don't we? Now, imagine! I do not know who has prescribed me, nor do I know how to take the pills, and will it be safe for me to start using the pills without knowing the prescriber and the instruction of using? Similarly, if I do not know the creator of love, then to whom am I going to ask for the best uses of it? How can I maximise the benefits of love without knowing the creator of it? Therefore, asking the question about who created love is valid, wise, and essential.

I will not know who can fix it if any problem: Love and hate is the two sides of the same heart. Any mistakes can turn the love into hate. If anything goes wrong, whom should I ask for help if I do not know who created it? Or love can be misunderstood with selfishness or can be misused with ignorance. How can I fix it? I can ask people, but none of them are experts of love because they did not make it. I can see a doctor for medicine if I am love-sick, but the physician cannot fix my troublesome love. The doctor can give me medicine for the mental, emotional and physical ailments that is contributed by lovesickness. The actual love, the true love and sick love is with the knowledge of the creator of it. So, why shouldn't I ask to know who created the love? I should ask to know the source of it, and to rely on the creator who created it to fix the problem with love.

I will not know how to get benefits from the love: Every product that is available in the market, we need to learn their uses. Usually, the suppliers attach an instruction sheet for best uses of the product. Now, if I avoid asking questions about who created love, then how can I know the right uses of it? This is so common sense, and no one uses nothing without learning the proper use of it. A simple question is, who will know better about the use of a product, the creator or the created? Or who would know better about the benefits of love, and with what conditions, or rules? The creator will know it best. If I do not know the creator of love, I would lose all these good instructions for turning the love into everlasting benefits. I must learn more and more about the creator of love for making sure that I win without losing.

I will not know if any consequences of misusing love: We know, if we misuse anything, the result is bad for us. For example, milk is a good product and beneficial for our health. But if milk is not kept safe, don't we know the serious consequences? Imagine, in pure milk, if someone adds a drop of poison! Or milk is kept outside for too long, will bacteria contaminate it? For the misuse, the milk harms health as well. Contaminated milk can offer food poisoning resulting in serious sickness in the person who drinks it. Similarly, love is pure like pure milk, but with improper uses, it can be contaminated, and instead of helping the person, it can corrupt the

person. So, I must know the creator of love to know how I can save myself from misusing the love to prevent danger, suffering and unhappiness.

Islam encourages humans to ask the right questions to learn accurate knowledge. Accurate knowledge can save them from ignorance, confusions, and harms. Allah has given a great faculty in human and that faculty is the ability to think. Islam calls for using that great faculty to think, to contemplate, to search, to find, and to take the right path for the success and happiness. Allah praises in HIS own words to those who think, who ask questions about the creation of Allah, for the guidance and for learning their duties:

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هٰذَا بَطِيْلًا سُبْحٰنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

“Men who remember the Praises of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides and think the (wonders of) creation in the heaven and the earth: (saying) Our Lord! You have not created all these without purpose! Glory to You! Give us relief from the Penalty of the Fire.”

[Al-Quran 3.191]

Asking question leads the spouses to the truth. When the spouses know that love is an important part in happy marriage, then they should start asking questions around it. The starting question can be that who created love? No human has ever claimed that he or she created love. That motivates humans to ask, “Then who created it?” When we continue asking the truth about it, we find that there is a claim, a very bold claim and the claimer is the GOD, the creator, Allah. HE claims that HE created men and women, and everything in them including love, and everything around them in the heaven and on the earth.

وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖۤ اَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا لِّتَسْكُنُوْا اِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۗ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَآٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ۚ

“And among HIS Signs, is this that HE created (your) mates for you from yourselves, that you may live in joy with them, and HE had placed love and mercy between your (hearts): Surely, there are signs in this for those who think.”

[Al-Quran 30:21]

Is love free altogether?

The answer is yes and no! What does it mean? Let us look at the yes and no answer bit more closely. Love is free can be explained below:

It comes without charge: In normal life, if you want to buy a chocolate, you must pay for it. The businesses are there to sell and make some profit. They can't afford to give it free to their customers because they invested money in business, working hard in it to make a living. They depend on selling their goods, and they do not give their products free of charge. On the other hand, Allah created love and has given love in human hearts to be happy. As we need fruits, vegetables, fish, meant for our physical health, and we pay for it, we also need love for our happiness in hearts, and we do not need to buy love from Allah. If Allah charges us, we cannot afford to pay, and Allah does not ask for any money for the love HE has given to us. In that sense, love is free without charge, and Allah does not need to sell it because HE does not need any return like the human businesspeople. Allah has everything unlimited, and HIS free love in HIS creation will not reduce HIS abundance.

It comes without asking: Between humans, we ask for help because we are needy, incomplete, dependent on one another. We ask for help, safety, happiness, and all the best things from Allah. We get angry with our own beloved children if they keep asking for money. We do not like other people asking us to give them again and again because we have limitations in patience, and

generosity. But Allah has unlimited love for HIS creations, and especially for humans. HE provided everything for humans without being asked. HE always wants HIS servants to live happily. HE knows that LOVE is a necessity for humans' happiness, and humans cannot make it or purchase it, and they need help from HIM. Then, HE provided love in human hearts not only free of charge but before they asked Allah for it. How generous Guardian Lord Allah is!

It does not cost when we receive it: Can we count how much love we received from our mothers? As a baby, I needed her close to me. In every discomfort, I cried to receive her love. I did not give her rest during the day and night. I screamed to get her attention. As soon as I cried, she left other important things to run towards me. What made her run? It was her love for me. How much love did we receive from our fathers? Despite his sickness, he went to work to earn money to provide for us. Instead of their luxurious life, they sacrificed so much for giving us love. If we put a price on the love we received, how much cost it will be? Millions, billions, or trillions will not be enough. Did we receive all the love free from them? Yes, we did. Then we grow up, fall in love with our spouses. Do we ever measure how much love we received? Do we think about it? Do we thank our spouses for it? Regrettably, often we receive free and without understanding the importance of it, we take it for granted. That is a tragedy. If we measured or counted how much love we received, and paid thanks for it to Allah and to humans, our life would have changed for better.

It does not cost when we use for others: If we want to give gifts to other people, we often make it or buy it. We can make toy, or we can buy a toy. In terms of love, we cannot make it, but in giving love to others, we do not buy it from anywhere. There are no shops that sells love. Love is not for sale. The most generous Allah gave us love and did not impose a charge on us if we decide to give it to others. If you are a mother, did you measure how much love you gave to your beloved child. It will be beyond measure, and plenty. Or as a loving husband and wife, do you measure how much love you give to one another free of charge? Imagine! If we had to purchase love as we purchase a bouquet of flowers for gifting, then could we afford it? The astonishing thing is, when we offer love, it can be unlimited. The more we love the more we get the supply of love in our hearts from our creator without any fee, or any charge! How wonderful it is! A free priceless gift from Allah!

It does not come with limitation: Islam teaches that Allah shared only 1% love among HIS creations, and HE kept 99% love with HIM. From that 1% love, an ant loves her baby ant, a fish loves her baby fish, an elephant loves her baby elephant, and all other small or large creations are surrounded with love for their safety and happiness. Humans have been given love as well, and Allah did not put any limit in it. It is not like a ration quota that determines the maximum amount for the receiver or for the giver. Allah made any amount available, and humans can offer or receive love for their happiness. That gift from Allah without limit is extra-ordinary. Another notable thing is that Allah did not make love unlimited to certain groups of people. Such as Allah did not give it more to those who believe in HIM, or less to those who defy HIM. Allah gave free love to poor, rich, ruler or ruled, male or female, races without choosing one above another. HE made it available to everyone without limitation, without any costs.

It is a generous gift from Allah: Allah is the Most Generous, the Most Merciful. HE is Generous in everything. HE gave oxygen in the air generously for all without discrimination. HE did the same with the Sunlight, Moon light, rain and so on. Similarly, Allah gave love in humans and other creations as a generous gift. This is only possible for Allah. If we think about it, we will understand the Generosity from Allah, and we can be more thankful to HIM. Therefore, love from Allah is a gift indeed, and we thank Allah for HIS bounties for us!

Having said that, now I would like to explain about the “No” answer. What did I mean by “No” answer? To understand that easier, I shall highlight few points below:

Love is not free from how it should be used: Yes, Allah gave free love, but for safety, Allah has given code with it. Why codes? Allah loves HIS servants, and HE did not leave them guidance to prevent any harm for them. For example, if you give a gift (gold ring) to your daughter, you will give her code how to use it. You will advise her to keep it safe, not to wash with chemicals, or not rub with stones, or not to hit her baby sister with it etc. Why should you offer the codes? The answer is that you love her, you want her to protect her gold ring from damage, or you want her not to use her gold ring to damage others etc. Similarly, every gift we offer to others, we offer advice for their best. Now, Allah gave us a gift called love, and how could HE not give us the best code of use of it? Therefore, Allah gave free love, but did not give freedom to use it in harmful ways. Allah is perfect and did not leave HIS gifts for us to use imperfectly, but guided humans how to use HIS precious gift in a precious way. Humans follow the codes in school, business, education, money regarding earning and spending, religious places, and in marriage. The codes are for the best, and Allah’s codes on love (and everything about life) is also for the best. Again, love is not free from divine codes. If we use Allah’s gift of love any way we like, then Allah’s does not like it.

Love is not free from the bad consequences from misusing it: Love is free, but people are not free from sufferings if they misuse love. For example, you got a free dress, but is it free from damage if you leave them in the rain, or if you use them during fighting with others? Rain may damage your dress, and fighting may tear your dress. So, the gift comes with responsibility. The gift is free, but the responsibility part is not free. Now, about love from Allah which does not cost but if a person uses the love for jealousy, hatred, and envy, then will that person be free from sufferings? His or her wrong use of love will bring anger, agony, disharmony, arguments, and fights. The misuser of free love will not be free from uncountable consequences. Therefore, if a person thinks, “I got free love, and I am free to use it any way I want to,” will bring disaster. Free love does not mean from troubles it is misused. If anyone forgets about it, will be in trouble. Islam teaches the responsibility about love to save people from being harmed.

Love is not free from Allah’s test: What does a school do for the students to organize test? They provide them classrooms, teachers, text books, supports, question papers with questions to create a proper environment for the test. Allah sent humans on this earth for testing them. For that HE provided them life, sustenance, environment, day for work and night for rest, brain, memory, ability to learn, code with right and wrong boundary, love and mercy, good nature, and bad nature. Allah gave them everything free but did not give them freedom from tests. Like in every country, we live free on the land, but always being tested whether we are good citizens or bad citizens. If we are law abiding then we pass the test and live in peace, but if we become criminals by breaking the law, we fail the test, and our place becomes prisons. Or a child is being tested if he is obedient to his parents or not or is he using all the free provision to be good or bad. Now, Islamic teaching is that Allah gave everything to humans to test them, and that includes love. Allah is testing those who uses love according to HIS codes righteously, and who is not. That is a clear message about free love yet not free from Allah’s test.

Love is not free from receiving rewards: Misusing of love is not free from bad consequences and using love properly also not free from good achievements. When people are loving, they receive cash rewards. As a child my secret was my natural love for my parents to receive more attention. My love brought me the happiness that I needed. It gave me the strong belonging without feeling deserted. If a student is with loving nature, becomes a teacher’s pet. Or if you are loving, you will receive love from others. That is a cash reward. Love begets love, and hate begets hate. Love towards others never goes to waste. It always brings positive rewards. A loving couple

make a loving house with children, and the reward is a peaceful house without any violence. If you love your neighbours, you can live in peace without fear and anxieties about them. So, love from Allah is free, but love is not rewards free. Now, think again. When we follow Allah's code in love, we pass the test, and Allah becomes very happy with us. Does Allah leave us free from HIS rewards? Not at all. Allah grants rewards in this life with blessings and happiness, and Allah will grant rewards in Paradise as well. Therefore, again, free love is not free from rewards if we use it righteously according to Allah's code.

Love is not free from Allah's questioning: Unless Allah forgives, everyone must give account to Allah on the Day of Judgment about how they used Allah's bounties. Allah's message is:

ثُمَّ لَنُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ ۝

“Then, shall you be questioned that Day about the joy (that you indulged in!)”

[Al-Quran 102:8]

What is the joy for us? Our life, health, food, oxygen, water, drinks, fruits, light, dark, love, kindness, happiness, taste buds on tongue, and everything else from Allah's bounties that gives us joy is the joy for us. All the joyful things are Allah's blessings and bounties. How can we enjoy a second without Allah's bounties. How can we enjoy love if Allah did not give it free to us? How could we give and receive love for our happiness in this life? How could we bond with one another as family, relatives, friends, or humans if Allah did not give us free love to use? If we take love for granted, and misuse it, how can we think that we can get away from being accountable for it? So, Allah's gifts are free, but Allah will question us if we use HIS divine gift for corruptions, for unrest, for selfishness to make one another suffer. Allah has the final control in our life and death, and HE will resurrect us on the Day of Judgment to judge about uses of life fairly.

These little things are very important for our happy lives. Love plays a major role in human happiness in marriage or in other relationships. If we think that love comes free, and we are free from all the consequences about the use of it, then it will create a wrong perception and belief in us. It may make us reckless, irresponsible, selfish about love, and instead of better use, we may be trapped in our human weaknesses to slaughter one another in the name of love. For making sure that love only brings best outcome, there must be codes, guidance and reward or punishments to keep our use of love on the right track. That's why, Islam teaches in a balanced way to receive free love without freedom of responsibility about it. When spouses take Islamic balanced point of view around love, they get motivated to take love from Allah as a trust, and they try to do everything to discharge that trust properly resulting happiness in marriage. Without the faith in accountability, people are prone to misuse the GOD's gift called Love.

Different kinds of love in marriage

One may wonder how love can be different. Yes, love can be different. Love can be different in terms of degree, or the traits associated with it. For example, meat is meat, but it can be called roast, barbeque, kebab, or curry. Love is also love but has differences. Some different types of love are mentioned below:

Too passionate love: This kind of love is with unrealistic affection. In this love, too much emotion is involved or almost no wisdom is involved. Some people may fall in love with first look. They may see a person beautiful in their eyes, and that is all. Now they do not want to think beyond that beauty, and they fill up imaginations with all positive attributes about the spouse. Their love is running 140 km/hr speed and any time they may lose the control and will face an accident. Passionate love is with high voltage emotion and thus unrealistic. One can love a spouse with passion and expect the other spouse to love with same passion. But, that level of passion

between the two spouses cannot be maintained all the time. In marriage one cannot only think about passion because there is need for cooking, cleaning, eating, working, attending visitors, looking after family members and so on.

Then, soon disappointment will hit him or her and will blame the other, “You actually do not love me as much as I do.” Or he or she realises that once the perceived perfect loving spouses are no longer perfect in giving love. Before, due to passionate love he/she did not check the good and bad in the spouse and now can see the aspects in the spouse that he or she does not like. That may follow blaming own bad luck or the other spouse. Islam teaches to use wisdom and knowledge to see the spouse before marriage and to get information about the spouse to see whether the match is going to be realistic or not. Islam teaches to see the moral characters like righteousness, truthfulness, patience, balanced personality etc in a proposed spouse, because the moral qualities are the ingredients that helps to maintain the love steady and comfortable. Abdullah ibn A’mor (May Allah be pleased with him) said that Holy messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ، وَخَيْرُ مَتَاعِ الدُّنْيَا الْمَرْأَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ

“The entire world is wealth; and the greatest wealth is a righteous wife.”

[Muslim]

The similar way, for wife the greatest wealth in this world is a righteous husband. A righteous wife or husband controls his or her love in marriage in a balanced manner. But too passionate love comes with imbalance and causes disaster at some point destroying happiness in marriage.

Wrong love: What is wrong love? Wrong love is exceeding the boundary Allah has given. Right love or wrong love in Islamic marriage is decided by Allah. In Islam, husband and wife surrenders to the will of Allah. So, for learning, what is right love and what is wrong love? they must ask Allah. They cannot look for an answer from their desires, from their families or from their cultures etc. Allah sent HIS gift with instructions that answers what is wrong love. Below are some examples of wrong love:

- *Love & Sin:* illegal sexual relationship before marriage.
- *Love & defiance:* marrying parents, uncles or aunts despite Allah has prohibited.
- *Love & crime:* using love to make a criminal team.
- *Love & haram:* for love taking bribe, interest, and adopting corruption that is Haram (Prohibited) in Islamic Faith.
- *Love & extravagance:* for love extravagant lifestyle, arrogance, and class system.
- *Love & shamelessness:* Such as exposure immodestly in the name of love.

What is the worst with wrong love? Wrong love makes spouses to please one another by displeasing Allah. Just for the sake of love, spouses should not practice wrong love because Allah did not permit them to practice HIS gift (love) against HIS will. A beautiful example in the Quran about it and it is for taking lesson by the believers:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ ۚ تَبْتَغِي مَرْضَاتَ أَزْوَاجِكَ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ١

“O Prophet! Why do you forbid what Allah has made lawful to you? You seek to please your wives, and Allah is often Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

[Al-Quran 66:1]

Dangerous love: What is dangerous love? Dangerous love is the love that pushes the spouse or spouses into danger. The danger can be short term or long term, big time or small, very severe, or less severe. But dangerous love pushes spouses into danger. Below are some examples of dangerous love:

Example 1: I know two young people who fell in love before marriage. They both were Muslims living in a Muslim country. Neither of them finished study and neither of them had a job. Basically, they were living on parent's income, living with parents. They fell in love without thinking about the future or considering Islamic codes. Soon their love affair came out. The boy's family agreed but the girl's family did not agree in the marriage. They enforced curfew on the girl. Then one night the girl ran away to be with her young man that she loved. But they were caught. Both were beaten that night. Next morning, they were forced to appear before the villagers and be humiliated in front of all villagers. Later, things went out of control. Two families geared up with enmity which followed further fighting and imprisonment. Their love turned out to be a dangerous love.

Example 2: Love that pushes to the punishment of Allah is the most dangerous love. Often a spouse reminds another, "I love you! honey", but may never remind him/her for 5 times prayer. Or for love a spouse does not wake another spouse for Fajr Prayers. Or for the great love spouses enjoy Haram things, or for the love they disobey Allah or stand against Allah's commands. It is dangerous love because it ignores Allah's right, ignores Allah's punishment, and it pushes spouses into Allah's punishment. For example, for love if spouses avoid 5 times prayers for enjoyment in life, and they ignore eternal happiness, then they are practicing dangerous love. For avoiding prayers, their love cannot save them from punishment in the next life. The message of Allah is:

عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ۚ مَا سَأَلَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ ۚ قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ ۚ

“And (ask) of the sinners: What led you into the Fire of Hell? They will say: We were not from those who prayed.”

[Quran 74:41-43]

Immoderate love: Immoderate love means love that is out of balance. It can go either up or down. Both extremes are not good. Immoderate love can be either excessive or repulsive with examples below:

One extreme is excessive love. If a spouse becomes obsessive with the love of another spouse, then she or he cannot be happy. Excess of anything is bad. Excessive consumption of food and drink is very harmful. Everything in life must be in moderation and that includes love. If a spouse has excessive love, then may suffer from the following symptoms:

- **Dependence:** Excessive love may make the spouse too much dependant on another spouse. The feeling may be desperate such as, I cannot live without him/her, therefore I should be with my spouse all the time. It may contribute to lack of confidence, dependency, and inability to be independent.
- **Fear and anxiety:** Excessive love does not allow a spouse to grow courage, and peace of mind. It takes a spouse into a childlike state. For security and protection, the spouse will be obsessive towards another, and without constant love and support from another spouse, excessive loving one will feel fear and anxiety.
- **Obsession:** Obsession is unreasonable and persistent feeling of love towards another spouse. It removes the balance in feelings and does not allow the emotion to see every corner in life. It can blind the person from seeing the right and wrong.
- **Suspicion:** Often excessive love makes a person an over imaginer, and with slight change, the person feels insecure, and becomes suspicious. Sometimes, it may lead to paranoia. It brings fear into the person about what if another spouse is not loving enough, or seeing someone else, or smiling at another one means a potential threat of losing the lover etc.
- **Over control:** From suspicion the over controlling nature will follow to protect the loved ones from others. It may lead one to check another one's phone, messages, spying, hiring private investigators etc.

- **Fighting:** Fight is inevitable for excessive love. Whenever one perceives of not getting same level of love, or another spouse will be annoyed about it, then fighting is obvious sooner or later.
- **Self-harm or harmful:** Excessive love is over-expectation and unrealistic. Unless, a spouse comes out of it to moderate love, then self-harm or harming another spouse can take place.

Repulsive love: Another extreme is repulsive love. It is the opposite extreme of excessive love. Some spouses lose their feeling of love due to various reasons. The reason could be from mental sickness, or hormonal changes, or from some physical sickness, or from any kind of serious emotional shock like rejection, abandonment, betrayals, cheating, hurting, deprivations, abuse, or torture etc. Some symptoms of repulsive love include:

- They don't feel loved any more despite another spouse is loving,
- They lose the feeling of love,
- They may become emotionally frozen from some shock,
- They may fear to love due to some past bad experience,
- They may feel repulsive if the spouse shows love towards them,
- They may feel angry if the spouse approaches them,
- They may feel love is a negative force and it only sucks energy etc.

Blind love: Love that blinds the spouse is called blind love. With blind love a spouse does not want to see the wrong doings of the other spouse. Blind love makes him or her seeing the spouse as an angel. Thus, one spouse follows or supports another spouse blindly. You may hear some comments sometimes from spouses such as:

- No! My darling wife would not do that! You must be wrong. Or
- No! My darling husband would not do that! You must be wrong. Or
- You are my love! I will be with you either in heaven or in hell! Or
- You are my love! I will love you in right or in wrong! Or
- Tell me my love! I can do anything you want me to do! Or
- Would you love me without any question unconditionally?
- If you truly love me then you must do what I say! Or
- It is not true love if a lover cannot jump into the fire for another lover etc.

These are some examples of blind love. Spouses in any given societies are adding problems because of the blind love for example:

- Spouse is helping the spouse in criminal activities because of the blind love,
- Corruptions are spreading because one spouse is helping another with blind love,
- Wrongs are not being resisted from within families due to the blind love,
- Corrections are not taking place due to that blind love,
- Unfairness mounting against neighbours, family members because a spouse supports another spouse in unfairness because of that blind love,
- A spouse does not speak up against the horrendous violence, sexual abuse from another spouse because of that blind love,
- Some fathers sexually molest their children, mothers know it, yet never protest their husband because of that blind love etc.

Blind love never makes the married couple happy. Even if one is committing wrong and another supports it due to blind love, when calamity comes from that wrong, then both spouses suffer. Marriage is like a boat with mainly two passengers in it. If one of them wrongly or out of bad habit makes hole in the boat, allowing water to get in and the boat sinks, while the other out of blind

love say, “My love! I will support you whatever you do” then eventually both will be drowned. Allah’s message is to follow right guidance in everything including in love:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

“You help one another in righteousness and in good deeds, but you do not help one another in sin and evil; Fear Allah: Because Allah is strict in punishment.”

[Al-Quran 5:2]

True love: What is true love? I shall answer this question towards the end of this chapter Insha Allah. It is a burning question where everyone wants the answer for it. They want the answer because they know that only true love can bring happiness in marriage. There are so many writings about true love. At the end of this chapter, I shall try to explain Islamic version about what true love is. Here I shall give some aspects in true love between husband and wife. These aspects are commonly expected in true love. Some aspects of true love are stated below:

- *Love based on friendship:* In this love, they love one another as a true friend. What is a true friend? A true friend is always there to assist, to help, to rescue from danger. A true friend keeps your weakness confidential because he or she never wants any harm to you. A true friend never judges his or her friend but loves the friend as a person. A true friend is the one whom you feel very safe to be with. They are like the proverb, “A friend in need is a friend indeed!” Such true friendship in marriage is a part of true love in marriage.
- *Love based on mutual attraction:* In this love, the love is not one sided. One sided love means one loves and another does not. One feels attraction but another does not. One is trying to fondle but another’s mind is miles away. In close marriage relationship spouses can feel each other. The feeling reveals that one is not fully into the love for another. True love is when two people blend into one and they are attracted to one another sincerely with heart and soul.
- *Love based on shared interest:* In this love, both love many similar things. It is impossible that both will love everything in the same way, but in shared interest both can enjoy many similar things. Just an example would be, both spouses are generous, and they love to give. In giving both are interested. Somehow, they both enjoy giving. If they love the same hobby, then that love will motivate them spending time for planning, working, and fundraising for charity works etc. The more they will dedicate their energy together in same interest, the more their love will grow.
- *Love based on respect:* They not only love one another but they admire one another. In this love, no arrogance, or no competition with ego. They both accept their shortcomings, but they emphasize on each other’s positive qualities, and they respect it. When it comes to opinions, they never rubbish one another but they truly respect each other’s opinion from the bottom of their hearts.
- *Love based on understanding:* In this love, they understand one another, or they always try to understand one another. They try to understand each other’s feelings for not hurting each other’s feelings, to accommodate one another with mutual respect, to listen to one another with care, to treat one another etc. Understanding each other requires effort and the true love makes the spouses invest their time and effort to understand one another, because they do it as a very long-term investment for happiness in marriage.
- *Love based on concern about each other’s welfare:* In this love, they truly worry about each other’s welfare. They prefer to lose for the win of another spouse. They follow every step in their marriage carefully to make sure no one is hurt but is happy. They have 0% intention of hurting one another. Their true love prevents violence, harms, and dangers in their conjugal life.

- *Love based on maturity:* This love is not a childish love. Childish love is not matured. Childish love is not balanced, it comes like wind and goes away like wind. Matured love is with matured thinking, with settled mind, with doubtless emotional bond. This love is solid, and no whisperer can shake it, or no hardship can ruin it, or no life storm can carry it away. Matured love is deep, tasty and it grows over the time. The more husband and wife dedicate their life together, the bond becomes more matured. They feel that love even in their bones. They learn to enjoy each other's company spiritually or without being physical. Just one word from husband or from a wife moves the other.
- *Love based on giving nature:* This love has a feeling to give only. This love is unselfish. It does not care what it receives in return. It motivates the spouse to give and give for the other spouse lavishly. Often spouses with this love will say, "I love you without expecting anything." This L-O-V-E represents Loss of Valuable Energy for one another's happiness.
- *Love with wisdom:* In this love, emotion is not dominant, but the mind is dominant. Emotion is like an engine and wisdom is like steering. Engine makes the car move, but the steering guides the car from going to dangerous direction. Love can be misguided but wisdom keeps it in the right direction. Wisdom can see the consequences of different kinds of love and can guide the love to be safe from wrong consequences.

Love in marriage must be true, pure, and genuine. For happiness, Muslim spouses must know the difference between true love and untrue love. Then, they must follow the qualities of true love for their happy marriage. True love never comes automatically, it must be earned. It requires sincere efforts, using the right qualities, and following Allah's guidance etc.

Love and Mercy for true love:

Allah created love and mercy in spouses. True love needs both. Love without mercy, or mercy without love, does not make a love true. Both love and mercy need to be used per Allah's guidance to enjoy true love. Let us remind ourselves with the Quranic verse where Allah said that HE made love and mercy for the happiness between husband and wife.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ٢١

“And among HIS Signs, is this that HE created (your) mates (Wives) for you from yourselves, that you may live in joy with them, and HE has placed LOVE and MERCY between your hearts: Surely, there are Signs in this for those who think.”

[Al-Quran 30:21]

Some people think that love is enough for happiness in marriage. They think that love can bring spouses together and love can keep them together in happiness as well. Then, they depend on love only. When their love comes under stress, and it wears down with trials, they have nothing else to hold on. I found many people told me that they broke up their marriage because they did not love one another anymore. They came to marriage for love, and when love did not continue in the same level, they could not hold their happy empire any longer. Depending only on love ends up in tragic divorce in many marriages. Loves needs support to face tougher situations and that support is mercy. Mercy must be included in the contingency plan for happiness in marriage.

The question is, what are the main reasons for keeping love and mercy for the true love for happiness? To remember better, briefly below I have listed some reasons:

- **For keeping:** Love brings two spouses together, but mercy keeps them together.
- **For maintaining:** Love attracts them to come together but mercy maintains that togetherness.
- **For patience:** Love often makes them feel rejected, but mercy makes them to be patient.

- **For overlooking:** Love often makes them jealous, but mercy makes them to ignore.
- **For bonding:** Love often wears off, but mercy works as a cement to keep the bond between them.
- **For kindness:** Love often is mixed with love-hate feeling but mercy stops them from being nasty.
- **For compassion:** Love disappointment often makes them angry, but mercy calms them down.
- **For ignoring faults:** Love makes them over-judgmental for perfection, but mercy makes them to ignore faults.
- **For pardoning:** Love-betrayal motivates them to take revenge, but mercy makes them to pardon,
- **For generosity:** Love may have selfish element to get love back, but mercy is giving out of generosity without expecting anything in return etc.

What is mercy? Mercy is compassionate treatment. Mercy is extra generosity. Mercy is a tendency to give more to one than one deserves. Imagine this in marriage! If a spouse has mercy in heart, then he or she will offer more to the spouse than the usual rights of the spouse. That generosity, extra giving tendency and compassionate treatment along with love makes a true love. Allah is All-Wise. HE knows what will keep the love in balance for happiness between husbands and wives. That's why Allah made love and mercy both. So, in true love, one must have love and mercy together to balance out, to get only the benefit out of the love. You will see some old couples walking in the park holding each other's hand. They lost their physical attraction long time ago. What is keeping them together until now? It is the mercy which has no physical aspect. It is the love with mercy that keeps one in the touch with another.

Or you can see one of the spouses may become sick or suffers from accident or imprisoned. Year after year the other spouse looks after the suffering spouse. What is the inner force that compels a spouse to sacrifice everything for the other? That is love with mercy. Love with mercy is never selfish. Love with mercy is always generous. We know prophet Ayyub (pbuh) had incurable disease. Everyone left him. He lost his business. He was left in a bush away from humans. One kind person could not leave him. That was his wife. She used to look after him, used to feed him, used to earn bread and butter for him. What kind of love she had for her husband? It was love with mercy.

Therefore, for true love, mercy must be present in spouses with love. Allah is merciful, HE created mercy. HE loves those who show mercy to HIS creations. HE does not love those who do not show mercy to HIS creations. There is a saying that charity begins at home. So before showing mercy to Allah's creation outside home, one must start showing it to their own spouse. If they do not, then Allah will not show mercy on them. That is Islamic teaching. Jabir ibn Abdullah (may Allah be pleased on him) reported that the Holy messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said:

مَنْ لَا يَرْحَمُ النَّاسَ ، لَا يَرْحَمُهُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

“Allah does not show mercy on those who do not show mercy to mankind.”

[Muttafaqun A'laih]

The next question is, what is true love in Islam? Or what is the definition of true love in the Islamic teaching? The definition is, “That is used for the pleasure of Allah according to Allah's codes with the hope of receiving rewards from Allah.” In other words, true love is part of Allah's worship. Allah's worships need correct intention to please Allah, following Allah's prescription in the use of it, and only hoping result or reward from Allah. To understand it more about “Loving for the pleasure of Allah”, we need to remember the following points:

- Surrendering one's love to the will of Allah,
- Loving only where Allah approves it,
- Not loving where Allah disapproves it,
- Loving only to receive rewards from Allah only,
- Not loving selfishly to get something back from the one he or she loves,
- Loving per Allah's guidance,
- Loving only to pass the test in this life that Allah has given,
- Loving with the intention that, "My love is not for any selfish reasons, not to receive anything back from my loved one, but my love is unselfish, for the pleasure of my creator Allah, WHO created love in me" etc.

Some benefits of loving for the sake of Allah

When I do something for you, do you feel like to do something in return? You install love and care to your children, and what do they do usually in return? They appreciate your love, your teachings, and the values you have taught them. That's what we see in human relationships. Now, what about Allah! Is HE appreciative too when we dedicate our love for HIM and for others? Yes, Allah's name has one specific attribute and that is "ASH-SHAKOOR" (The All-Appreciative). Allah is LOVING, and when HIS servants love one another for HIS pleasure only, HE appreciates it very highly. Below are a few examples:

Special shade when no shade is available: On the Day of Judgment, the earth will be changed to a plane field without trees, water, mountains, rivers, greeneries and without houses or shelter. This earth will be demolished to prepare the earth to gather all the humans for the ultimate Justice through the court of Allah. On that day, there will not be any shade, and some people will swim in their sweat. In that terrible day, loving others for the pleasure of Allah without selfish gains will qualify to receive 'shade' as an appreciation from Allah Merciful. Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Holy messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَقُولُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ: أَيُّنَ الْمُتَحَابِّينَ بَجَلَالِي؟ الْيَوْمَ أَظْلُهُمْ فِي ظِلِّي، يَوْمَ لَا ظِلَّ إِلَّا ظِلِّي

"Allah will say in the Day of Judgment: Where are those who loved one another for the sake of my Honour? I shall give them place under MY special shade today. Today is the Day when there is no other shade except MY shade."

[Muslim]

High Minaret of Light: True love is like a light. It shows the right direction for people in a relationship. Light from love shows the path of compassion, harmony, peace, and happiness. On the other hand, false love shows the path of treachery, betrayals, chaos, and unhappiness. True love for the sake of Allah pleases Allah very much, and Allah will turn the true love into a Minaret of Light as an appreciation on the Day of Judgment in the next life. Allah will make that high Light visible to others to acknowledge the true love that HIS servants used in their relationships: M'uaaj ibn Zabal (May Allah be pleased with him) reported that he heard holy the Holy Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) saying:

قال الله عز وجل المتحابون في جلالي لهم منابر من نور يغبطهم النبيون والشهداء

"Allah says: Those who love one another for the sake of MY Honour, for them (in next life) will be very high minaret of light, so high that even prophets and martyrs will be jealous looking at that."

[Tirmidi]

Love for Paradise: True love has very far-reaching benefit. It does not only bring joy and happiness in this life, but it brings everlasting happiness in the next life as well. But this true love

must be unselfish, and only for the sake of Allah. Believers know that this life is for the test, and this life is not a Paradise for them. So, they practice unselfish love, pure love, and love with generosity. They love to please Allah, and when husband and wife have disappointments, without breaking up, they both continue loving one another for the pleasure of Allah. For their dedicated love, the Paradise is promised for them. In their love, they are patient, perseverant, love for Allah, love for Paradise, and strong Imaan in the reward from Allah in the Paradise are present. Even, in this love, believers should compete with one another because, the one is more loving between husband and wife will achieve higher degree of Allah's Love. What a fair and an excellent reward! Let us look at a hadis on this.

عَنْ قَتَادَةَ عَنْ أَنَسٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ

Abdullah ibn 'Amr reported that The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said:

“Anyone who has love for his brother in Allah and for Allah should say, ‘I love you for Allah,’ and they will both enter the Garden. The one who has love for someone in Allah has a degree over the one he loves because of his love.” [Al-Adab Al-Mufrad 546]

Perfection of Imaan: Believers must have complete Imaan. Would anyone like an incomplete house, or incomplete study, or incomplete journey etc? When we are sick, we pray to Allah for complete recovery, don't we? No one like be stuck in the middle of something because without completing it, either we loss everything we have achieved partly, or we fail reaching the destination. For Allah's pleasure and HIS Paradise, complete Imaan is extremely important. That is why, love for Allah is the primary condition for Paradise, and for the love of Allah doing everything right, and avoiding everything bad is extremely important as well. For example, when it comes between husband and wife, they must practice their love for Allah, and according to Allah's Guidance. That will help them to complete their Imaan. But if they add their choices, selfishness, desires, and greed in their love, instead of loving for Allah and according to Allah's guidance, then they will fail in the completion of their Imaan, and they will loss rewards from Allah. A hadis on it as follows:

عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِلَّهِ وَأَبْغَضَ لِلَّهِ وَأَعْطَى لِلَّهِ وَمَنَعَ لِلَّهِ فَقَدْ اسْتَكْمَلَ الْإِيمَانَ

Abu Umamah reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

“Whoever loves for the sake of Allah, does not love for the sake of Allah, gives for the sake of Allah, and withholds for the sake of Allah has perfected the faith.” [Abu Dawood]

Joy (happiness) On the Day of Judgment: What is true love for? It is for bringing joy and happiness in one another. True Love has the power to remove sufferings between people. That can be spouses, or fellow humans. It does not cost anything, yet it is a very powerful tool to spread joy around. True love is Allah's gift to share around as much as needed and that's why Allah did not put any limitation in distribution of it. This true love can be shared with poor, needy, orphans, weak and vulnerable. It must not be limited to one's family only, but it is to be shared with Allah's creations. True love for Allah's creation is Allah's prescription, and whoever practices true love, does it due to the love for Allah. With true love comes purity from selfishness or worldly expectations, as Allah's Love is pure. Allah gives example of true love:

وَيُطْعِمُونَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ۖ إِنَّمَا تُطْعَمُونَ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا ۙ

“And they feed for the love of Allah the needy, the orphan, and the captive and the needy, (saying) “We feed you for the sake of Allah Alone, we expect no rewards or no thanks from you.”

[Al-Quran 76:8-9]

Does that true love go unpaid without rewards from Allah? That is impossible in the tradition of Allah. When servants do something good according to Allah's prescription to please HIM, then HE never overlooks their good deed, and HE always grants them high reward. Allah's generosity and appreciation has no end. Allah knows them, and quotes their motives in HIS own words:

إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَبِّنَا يَوْمًا غَمًى قَمَطِرًا ١٠

“(They say) Verily we fear a Day of painful suffering (That may arrive) from the side of our Lord.”

[Al-Quran 76: 10]

Does Allah stop on acknowledgement without promising anything more? Not at all! Whatever Allah acknowledges, HE adds HIS promise for the rewards for it. HE listens to what HIS servant is saying, and HE sees what the intention in the servant's heart is, and HE grants the supplications of HIS servants. In the verse above, Allah described his servants true love for others and for what reason, and in the next verse HE promises to grant them for what they practiced true love:

فَوَقَّاهُمُ اللَّهُ شَرَّ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقَّاهُمْ نَضْرَةً وَسُرُورًا ١١

“So, Allah will save them from the sorrow of that Day and will spread over them a Light of beauty and a joy.”

[Al-Quran 76: 11]

Muslims must practice true love.

In this chapter, I have tried to explain about true love. Now, I would like to finish this chapter with the concluding comment about Muslim's choice of love. Muslims must practice the true love. True love is the only choice they must take to follow their faith, purpose of lives, and the way to please Allah for HIS grants of rewards. When a love-choice fulfils one's purpose of life, then it becomes easier to practice. Life has many aspects, like many branches of a tree, but all the branches have the same root. For Muslims, many aspects in their lives do not divide them, but under faith, everything comes together in the same purpose of life. They find the unity in everything through their faith, and they find the true love is only their option to pass the test in this life for everlasting happiness in Paradise. When two spouses practice true love, they find unity in their life journey, and that brings ease, joy, and stability in them.

If we consider true love as a baked cake with yummy taste, and favourite to many people, then we can learn the ingredients in the cake. Cake is the combination of few important things, and without them a yummy cake is impossible to make. What are those ingredients that makes true love? I have described many of them in this chapter, and without too much writing on those, I would like to repeat a list of few for easy reminder. Those ingredients for the true love are as following:

Believers must be lovely spouses to receive Allah's Love: A loving personality is an ingredient of the true love. Love with pretence, or for manipulation, or for selfish reasons is not a pure ingredient for the true love. If a Muslim spouse wants to practice the true love, then he or she must build a loving persona. So, the outcome will be a loving feeling in the heart without pretence, and the outer expression will be lovely too. True believers must be lovely people. They must never be cruel, rude, or hard-hearted people. This is the teaching of Islam. True love is not just in the heart, but it should glow through the personality. A wife must feel loved, safe, and comfortable around the believing husband. Similarly, a husband should feel loved by a believing wife. They should not poke one another like bee stings with harsh words. Their talk should be loving, their smile should be loving, and their manner should be loving, and their everything in conjugal life

should be loving. What is the benefit of their practice of love? The answer is in the following Hadis (They will receive Allah's Love):

عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَجَبَتْ مَحَبَّتِي لِلْمُتَحَابِّينَ فِيَّ وَالْمُتَجَالِسِينَ فِيَّ وَالْمُتَزَاوِرِينَ فِيَّ وَالْمُتَبَاذِلِينَ فِيَّ

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Mu'adh ibn Jabal (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said, **"Allah Almighty said: My love is assured for those who love each other for My sake, who sit together for My sake, who visit each other for My sake, and who spend on each other for My sake."** [Ahmed]

Believers must be kind spouses: Kindness is another important ingredient for true love. True love cannot exist without kindness as cake does not exist without flour. If love loses its right direction, it can turn into jealousy or envy, and it can motivate to hate or hurt the loved ones in marriage. Many spouses come together in marriage with love, but due to many reasons that love can turn into hate. If kindness is there in the hearts of spouses, then it works as an antiseptic to prevent the love from rotting. Kindness protects love from contamination to keep it in its true spirit. Therefore, husband and wife must be kind to one another. True love is a combination of love and kindness. Believers expect kindness from Allah. They expect Allah to forgive their shortcomings and to grant them Paradise kindly. The same way Allah expects them to be kind to Allah's creation. If believers practice kindness, then Allah promises kindness in return.

Husband and wife are expected to be kind, forgiving, pardoning, ignoring mistakes to one another if they are true believers. Their kindness shows that they have true love. With kindness, they can go through ups and downs in their marriage life. But instead of kindness if one finds faults in another and punishes another directly or indirectly, then love is replaced with fear and worries, unity is replaced with disunity and true love gets replaced with fake love. Allah's message through HIS Holy Messenger is to be kind to receive kindness from HIM. Abdullah ibn Amor (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Messenger of Allah said:

الرَّاجِمُونَ يَرْحَمُهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى؛ اِرْحَمُوا مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَرْحَمَكُم مَن فِي السَّمَاءِ

"Allah bestows HIS mercy on kind people. So, you be kind on the inhabitants on the earth, then the One in the Heaven (Allah) will be kind on you."

[Abu Dawood. Tirmidi]

Believers must be fair spouses: Fairness is another ingredient of true love. Truth is fair, balanced, and true love is also fair and balanced. It does not disadvantage anyone. Fair love accommodates one another's needs fairly without discrimination. Unfair love exceeds true moral standard and brings misunderstanding and suspicion. What is fair here? Here, fair mean loving or treating the spouse the same way as you want to be treated. In marriage both husband and wife want to be treated nicely, gently, kindly, and fairly. If each one focuses on getting only what he or she wants from another without fairly treating another, then it becomes a barrier against the true love.

True love is not one sided. True love fairly addresses the rights of both. One cannot expect to offer true love if he or she is selfishly screaming for his or her wants. Islam teaches the solution for this. Islam teaches to look after each other's rights for the true love. It teaches for treating others the same way one likes to be treated. It means, if a husband wants to be loved, then he must give the same for his wife. In other words, he must offer love to her the same way he wants it. Another example is dress. If a husband likes expensive dress, then he also should consider her the same

way. Another example is, if a wife likes nice food for herself then she should like same nice food for her husband.

True believing husband and wife must be sensitive about each other's needs fairly. Fairness increases bond and trust, and unfairness destroys it. Fairness shows how truly they love one another without considering the spouse as second to him or her. Some husbands I have seen expects service from their wives without giving due services to their wives. It is not fair. One must consider the other about health, tiredness, sickness, workload, stress etc fairly. Fair treatments never go wrong in marriage. Islam teaches that the spouse must deliver to the loved ones whatever he or she likes to receive from the loved ones. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said:

والذي نفسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ

“By the Lord on WHOM hand my heart is! No servant can be a complete believer until he or she likes for another the same what he or she likes for himself or herself.”

[Muttafaqun A'laih]

Believers must be gentle natured spouses: Gentle nature is another ingredient for the true love. For example, you can scare a lovely person with abrupt behaviour. Similarly, true love can be misunderstood if it comes out abruptly. Love and roughness never go together. They are opposite to one another. An angry person can be abrupt with gestures, speaking, and manner, but a loving person must be like melting chocolate with adorable attraction. Love is soothing, and true love is soothing with gentle and calming nature. Love is not for hurting, and gentle nature is the vehicle to carry the true love. A husband and wife must have the gentle, tender, and sweetheart nature for one another for practicing the true love. They must not intimidate one another, oppress one another, mistreat one another, hurt one another, abuse one another, talk harshly to one another, or be violent to one another, etc.

This soft and gentle nature not only brings happiness in marriage for this life, but it also brings happiness in the Paradise. Believing husband and wife work together towards that eternal happiness in the Paradise. Therefore, to achieve Paradise, they both need to practice gentle nature towards one another. I'yaad ibn Himaar (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Messenger of Allah said:

قَالَ وَأَهْلُ الْجَنَّةِ ثَلَاثَةٌ ذُو سُلْطَانٍ مُسْطِطٌ مُنْصَدِّقٌ مُوَفَّقٌ وَرَجُلٌ رَحِيمٌ رَقِيقُ الْقَلْبِ لِكُلِّ ذِي قُرْبَى وَمُسْلِمٍ وَعَفِيفٌ مُنْعَفِقٌ ذُو عِيَالٍ

“Three types of people are going to be in Paradise. (1) A ruler who is fair, generous and is given ability to do good works, (2) Such a person who is kind, is sweet hearted (gentle natured) to the closest people (loved ones) as well as to other Muslims, (3) Very good-charactered person and who avoids begging to other people despite responsibility to feed the family.”

[Muslim]

Believing spouses must correct one another: Correction is another ingredient for the true love. When a chef makes a mistake in baking the cake, another chef in the team must correct the other for avoiding the disaster. The cake must be as perfect as possible. Similarly, in true love, two spouses are like two chefs making a team. One of them is responsible to correct another one's mistake whenever necessary. But if one is waiting for another to make mistake to blame, then it is selfish love, and not the true love. True love motivates them to think that if one is wrong then it will influence another to be wrong. True love makes them sensible in teamwork, and if one falls then another will also fall. How can a spouse with true love ignore the disaster for another spouse? Why do husband and wife need to correct one another? They do need to correct one another to pass the test of Allah in this life, to save one another from Allah's punishment, to guide

each other towards the straight path, to save one another from the fire, to remind one another not to defy Allah, and to check one another if they are misusing the true love, etc.

When a spouse doesn't correct another, it is not true love. How can a true love allow the loved one to be punished either by human or by Allah? Islam made this correcting trait a fundamental character of a true believer. Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Messenger of Allah said:

الْمُؤْمِنُ مِرَاةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُ أَخُو الْمُؤْمِنِ يَكْفُ عَلَيْهِ ضَيْعَتُهُ وَيَحُوطُهُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِ

“A believer is like a mirror to another believer. One believer is brother (or sister) to another believer who protects his brother (or sister) from dangerous matters and protects his or her interest in his or her absence.”

[Tirmidi. Abu Dawood]

Believing spouses must prefer one another's right: Preferring another spouse's right more than their own is another ingredient of the true love. It means, a heart is willing to give more than receiving. When a spouse is willing to sacrifice his/her comfort for the comfort of another spouse, that is the symptom of the true love. True believing husband and wife should not argue about what he or she should get. Often some husbands or wives argue saying, “What did you give me? What do I get from you? Why do I have to do more in the relationship? Why can't we share exactly half and half? Etc.”

Is exactly half and half in true love possible? Not always possible. True love makes one happier by giving more than receiving. True love is lavishly giving without demanding. True love brings competition of giving rather than receiving. The opposite is the demand for receiving more, and that feeling suffocates the true love. Demand for receiving makes one's heart selfish, and then to greed, and then to fight for never-ending wants. As a human spouse, it is impossible to fulfil the demands of a demanding spouse, and as a result, that marriage suffers or breaks. Happiness goes away when demand for receiving begins. True love creates a competition between the spouses about who can contribute the most for pleasure, joy, happiness and for the greater rewards from Allah. Always one spouse ends up doing more in certain things than another. For example, in modern days, wives do more than a husband in most cases. A wife often would work to earn money, would do household work, and must do more for the kids etc. whereas the husband may be doing a job without worrying much about kids or household cooking and cleaning etc. How does true love solve this imbalance?

Islam teaches the believers to always think more for the other spouse. Islam teaches that if a spouse does more for another spouse for Allah's sake, then Allah will grant more rewards for that. So, giving the spouse more rights is not a loss at all. A true believer must be happy for the ability to do more for the spouse, because of the extra rewards from Allah. A husband should always think for the welfare of his wife more than his welfare, and a wife should think for the welfare of the husband more than her. If both have that loving attitude, then they can feel happy doing more for one another. True love cares more for the other spouse than own self. Islam teaches to give other preference:

وَيُؤْتِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ ۚ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شَحْنَفَ نَفْسِهِ قَاُولَ لَكَ هُمْ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ٩

“And (they) give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot), and those saved from the selfishness of their own Souls-Such are they, the ones who are successful.”

[Al-Quran 59:9]

Believing spouses seek Allah's help: Seeking Allah's help is another important ingredient of true love. Believers know that they have limitations, but Allah has no limitations. It is only Allah WHO has the power to control hearts, and to bring two hearts together in true love. Allah can place the right feelings into the hearts of the spouses, and believers always make dua for Allah's help. Human feeling is not simple. With a little misunderstanding the feeling changes. In a second love can turn into hate, or something can happen which will put a spouse in doubt about the sincerity of another spouse. Therefore, it is beyond human power to maintain true love in the same degree and to uphold all the characteristics of true love all the time. So, what is the solution for this? Islam teaches to pray to Allah for perfect love, for true love and for all the qualities and abilities to practice true love between husband and wife.

Why Dua is very important? The answer is that Dua reminds the spouses the following essentials for the true love:

- Prayer reminds the couple about Allah Almighty,
- Prayer reminds the couple that without Allah's help they are doomed,
- Prayer reminds the couple that only Allah can make them happy,
- Prayer reminds the couple that they must not defy Allah about love,
- Prayer reminds the couple that they need Allah's blessings for their true love,
- Prayer reminds the couple that they should use love per Allah's code,
- Prayer makes them to learn humility not arrogance about love,
- Prayer reminds them that they are accountable to Allah for the use of love gifted by Allah,
- Prayer makes them God fearing spouses, which is the key for self-control and happiness,
- Prayer reminds them that unless they surrender to Allah, they cannot be happy in marriage, and they cannot enjoy true love etc.

Islam has prescribed believers to beg to Allah with sincerity and with humility for all the good things in this life and in next life. Good things include true love in marriage, or best spouse in marriage, or best character in spouses, or Allah's protection from every bad thing in marriage. Allah teaches the believers in the Quran to pray to Allah:

يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ٢٠١

“Our Lord! Give us best in this world and best in the Hereafter and protect us from the severe pain of the Fire.”

[Al-Quran 2:201]

Both husband and wife should pray for each other's guidance, best disposition, ability for true love, blessing for both, safety for both etc. Islam teaches them that only Allah can bestow a loving family, a family that offers one another true love, joy, and comfort. In the Holy Quran, Allah is teaching the true believers how they should pray:

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا لِمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا ٧

“Our Lord! Give us wives and children who will be comfort of our eyes and give us (the grace) to lead the righteous.”

[Al-Quran 25:74]

Believing spouses must practice righteousness: Practicing righteousness in marriage is another important ingredient of true love. Can anyone expect the right outcome without right actions? Does a rotten seed bring out a healthy plant? Can bad manner in marriage bring good outcome in marriage? It is impossible to get best out of the worst. For a happy marriage, righteous actions, treatments, manners and gestures are extremely important. When righteous actions are

mixed with love, then true love can be expected. True love has all the elements of righteousness in it, and some examples of righteousness in marriage is below:

- Truthfulness,
- Trustworthiness,
- Respectful,
- Confidentiality,
- Speaking in best manner [No cursing or abusing]
- No cheating,
- Not calling with bad name,
- Not malicious,
- Not suspicious,
- Not backbiting,
- Not greedy,
- Not jealous,
- Not arrogant but humble,
- Forgiving,
- Trust in Allah,
- Mild disposition without anger,
- All other Haram actions etc.

If husband and wife practice righteousness, then true love will be maintained between them, true love will be protected from contamination, and Allah's blessing will drop on them. Allah will grant them a good and happy life in this world and in Hereafter. This is Allah's promise to the righteous believers, or in other words this is the promise of Allah for the righteous husbands and wives with true love. Allah promises in the Quran:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ٩٧

“Whosoever works right, (be it) man or woman, and has faith (in Allah), surely, to him will WE give a good life, a life that is good and pure, and WE will bless upon those their reward by the best of their actions.”

[Al-Quran 16:97]

Chapter 5: Best choices for happiness

Best choices in Islamic Marriage.

Since there are too many choices a spouse can make, one must be clear about what is exactly the best choice? How would I know that I or we have not made the worst choice in our marriage? What are the criteria for best choice? Any wise Muslim spouse must ask these questions. Each should ask is it a best choice that I took with my talent, experience, family advice, or my gut feelings? Per Islam, a best choice is, that a choice is made according to the teachings of Quran and Sunnah. Quran and Sunnah teaching originally comes from All Knowing and All Wise Allah. Allah decides for spouses in Islamic marriage the best choices, in terms of the benefits in this life and in next everlasting life.

So, Muslim spouses for best choices, they must surrender their knowledge, ego, and desires to the will of Allah. Again, where would they find Allah's will for their best choices in marriage? They will find them in Quran and Sunnah (Prophet's examples). On the other hand, Muslim spouses must know what the best choices are and what the worst choices are as per Quran and Sunnah. They must learn these from Quran and Sunnah. Allah's messenger is a live example for best choices in marriage. He (pbuh) was happily married, and His wives and him are the perfect examples for the believers. Holy Quran confirms it:

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّن قَبْلِكَ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَذُرِّيَّةً

“And indeed, WE (Allah) did send messengers before you (O Muhammad) and gave them wives and children.”

[Al-Quran 13:38]

Should we not go through a few examples of the best and the worst choices in marriages? We should because marriage is a life business. It is full of choices. Some choices are small, and some are big. Or some have less consequences and some have more. Spouses must make choices that affects their lives and the lives of next generations. One spouse may choose best, and another may choose the worst, and the result can be bad. They must avoid bad choices to avoid the bad outcomes. It is like the proverb, “Reap what you sow.”

Some best choices are below:

1. Live in moderation (not in luxury),
2. Investing for the future for family welfare (not overspending in jewellery or unnecessary items),
3. Generosity (not selfish demands) for rewards from Allah,
4. Humble with respect (not arrogance to put other down),
5. Islamic code in everything (not own desires, wrong culture, or traditions),
6. Peaceful and loving home (not argue, fight or violence), etc.

There are countless choices in marriage that spouses must make. They must make some choices for their day-to-day life, that will either benefit or harm them in short or long term. Allah has given spouses the freedom of choices without sending angels to police them. That freedom of choice is a huge responsibility. It means, we can choose best for the best outcome, or we can choose the worst for the worst outcome. It also means that we are responsible for our happiness or for our misery at the end of the day. Therefore, let us choose the best choices in our Islamic marriages for our happiness. The ball is in our court! We cannot blame anyone else except ourselves if we choose worst choices and invite sufferings on us.

One should ask, what are the basic principles in best choice? Well, Marriage is a union between a man and a woman. Each one has developed habits of how to think and what to do. In marriage, every day they face situations where they must decide individually or collectively what to do. Selecting a thing or way from various options is called making choice. To be happy, the spouses must choose best choices. Of course, there will be best or worst choices available for them. If they choose best choices, the outcome will be happiness, but if they choose worst choices, then the outcome will be unhappiness. Of course, best choices have some basic principles. Without those principles, a choice is not considered best choice. So, what are those principles that are best choice for believers in the Islamic marriage? Let us go through some of those basic principles in a best choice below:

- **Responsibility:** In the best choice one important principle is to give due rights to the spouse. Why? Because believing spouses believe that Allah will question about discharging the rights, and on the Day of Judgment, the spouse can claim compensation if his or her rights were not given. That's why whenever they choose an option in the dealings of marriage, true Muslim spouses make sure that each other's rights are delivered, to be saved from troubles. Responsible spouses earn trust, respect, love, and joy in this life too.
- **Free from Sin:** In the best choice, another principle is not committing sin. Spouses must choose good deeds and avoid bad deeds. If they choose sin for temporary enjoyment, the sufferings will follow due to Allah's displeasure. Therefore, when they make a choice, they must ask, "Is it sinful that Allah has prohibited?" If it is, turn away from it to stay sin free. Sin is a block to happiness in marriage.
- **Harmless:** In the best choice, another principle is that it must be harmless and only beneficial. For example, disciplining one another with inflicting pain is a harmful choice. But offering forgiveness for reconciliation for unity and happiness is a harmless one. Similarly, every decision must be made to avoid harm and give benefits. Harming one another damages the sweet bond and brings destruction. Lying, cheating, deceiving, conspiracy, etc are harmful choices.
- **Efforts for happiness:** In the best choice, another principle is to make sincere efforts only for happiness, and not for unhappiness. Efforts such as mutual consultations, deciding together as a team, spending time together to fulfil one another's needs, teaching and learning from one another to deepen understanding and wisdom, sharing feelings daily, spending quality times together, praying together, and cheering one another up are examples of efforts for happiness.
- **Knowledge for the right choice:** In the best choice, another principle is to know what exactly the best choice is. For believers, they must have knowledge about Islam. For example: If a spouse must choose between revenge and pardon, then how would he or she know which one is the best choice in the light of Islam? With Islamic knowledge one would know all the temporary and permanent benefit of pardoning. Then the right knowledge will lead the spouse to take the best choice in that situation. Right knowledge leads to right choice, and right choice leads to happiness in marriage.
- **Taking accountability:** In the best choice, another principle is that the choice maker feels accountable to Allah for his or her choice. He or she believes that Allah has given the responsibility to choose either best or worst in this life. But for that choice he or she must stand before Allah on the Day of Judgment. That belief makes a spouse very careful in choosing what to do or what to say or how to treat. That sense of accountability makes a spouse a responsible thinker, or a wise choice maker. With this faith, a spouse always feels motivated to choose the best dealing in marriage which results happiness in marriage.

Making choices for spouses plays a great role either in happiness or in unhappiness in marriage. Allah gave that freedom of choice in the hands of humans including spouses. That freedom is for the test from Allah:

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ۚ إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا ۝ ٣

“Surely, WE have created man from a drop of mixed sperm and ovary fluids, to test him, so, WE gave him (the gifts) of hearing and of sight. Verily, WE showed him the Way: Whether he be thankful or not (Best and worst choices)”

[Al-Quran 76:2-3]

Importance of the best choices in marriage.

Best choices in marriage are very important for best result in marriage. The reasons are so many, but I shall give only few reasons below for a better understanding:

- **To grow a healthy marriage:** If you consider Islamic marriage is a tree, then to grow a healthy tree, you must make the best choices about the best seed, the best fertile land, the best sunny spot, the best fertilizer, the best watering, and the best anti bugs spray etc. Similarly, in Islamic marriage one must choose the best spouse, must choose the best Islamic manners, must behave the best, must deal with one another in the best ways etc. All these requires the best decisions, or the best choices. Happy marriage or unhappy marriage never falls from the sky as rain. Happiness or unhappiness is earned by both spouses. So, they must make plan about what exactly they want. If they are careless about how they want to shape their marriage, then sooner or later their marriage will be a shamble.
- **To pick the healthy fruit:** Again, if one really wants to get the best fruit from a tree, then he or she must make best decisions right from the beginning, about how to look after the plant in the best possible way. Planting a best seed means making a best choice because one hopes the best fruit from a best seed. Anyone understands the importance of a best seed to get best fruit one day. Marriage is like that. What the couple decide today, the result will come tomorrow. Whatever choices they make today, tomorrow will bring the result of that. For example, if they choose to love with half a heart in marriage, tomorrow that half empty space in heart may be filled by another person. But if they choose to love one another with full heart, then there won't be any room for the third person in their hearts.
- **To prevent the marriage from suffering:** Again, a tree needs the best course of decisions or choices for preventing any damage. Once it becomes sick, affected by fungus, suffered from lack of water, affected by flood or storm, it receives damages, and the result is loss for the grower. Similarly, if the Islamic marriage suffers from the bad choices like hot temper, cold hearted frozen love, fiery talks, stormy fights and so on, then definitely the healthy and happy marriage will suffer terribly. All marriages are not necessarily happy. So many marriages are hanging on the sky. It may break anytime. In my field, I hear so many cases of marriages. When I look for the root of it, I find, it was one or many wrong choices is liable for the anger, anguish, and fights in later days. The truth is, every miserable situation in marriage is the result of wrong choices, and every miserable situation could have been avoided, or could have been prevented if there were best choices practiced. If spouses chose to learn from mistakes, that will be a best choice to prevent from further damage. But if they choose not to learn from mistakes, then that will be a worst choice for their own damage.

The importance of preventing suffering in Islamic marriage and every other aspect of life, Muslim spouses must follow Allah's codes because Allah's guidance is to provide best choices for them.

Often, spouses are carried away from best choices due to the pressure of own desires, cultures, traditions or family demands. Allah warns believers to be careful about it:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ٩

“O you who believe! Let not your properties nor your children (Family) distract you from remembering Allah (Allah’s code including in marriage), if any act like this, the loss is their own.

[Al-Quran 63:9]

Some important choices

Choices in Islamic marriage is not limited in one or two. They are far too many, and I do not think that I need to go through too many of them. I would only like to stimulate the wisdom of the wise readers to get a few hints, and then for them to figure out the rest. For that reason, I shall highlight a few choices to cover the basics and the most important ones that guides the spouses in their day-to-day choice making. They are as below:

Choice 1 - about who is the boss: Are you thinking you are the boss? Please think about this point very seriously because this is the first choice you make in marriage, and if this one is best, then half of your happiness in marriage is guaranteed. But if this choice is wrong, then suffering is awaiting you. Sometimes I received this question, “Who is the boss in the marriage?” The question came from male spouses in front of their female spouses, and the motive behind the question gave me feeling that the male spouse would want me to say that he was the boss in the marriage in front of his wife as to remind her. But my answer did not fulfil their expectation. What is the real answer then?

To get the real answer, we need to reframe the question too. The real question is, whose choice is the final (Boss) in Islamic marriage? Is it husband, or wife, or both? No, none of the answers are correct. In Islamic marriage, a husband’s desire and opinion, or wife’s desire or opinion are not the boss, but only Allah’s choice is the boss. Islamic marriage is submission to Allah’s choice voluntarily without any reservation because this is the fundamental requirement of Islamic faith. This is the first-choice Muslim spouses must make. They must be clear on this point, and do they choose to put Allah’s guidance first in their marriage or their desires first? With this choice, the whole marriage institution may be guided or misguided. The marriage journey takes direction based on this choice. The journey, its preparation, its managements, its struggles, its aim, its results, and everything else takes shape with this first choice.

If the couple chose to put Allah first in their marriage, then what happens? How does putting Allah first change the whole perspective in marriage? How does this choice bring different expectation? How does this choice prepare the mind of spouses in a different way? If you think deeply, then you will realize how putting Allah first in marriage guides you towards happiness in this life and happiness in Paradise in next life. Putting Allah first in the marriage means doing everything in marriage as Allah says. It means for every action, both spouses seek guidance from Allah. They learn about Islam, Quran, and Hadis to know what Allah and HIS messenger taught them to follow in marriage. Before or after marriage they make their no. 1 priority to learn Allah’s codes about Islamic marriage. They take other things less important after marriage and they take learning of Islam as the most important thing in marriage. Unfortunately, many Muslim married couples put Allah as last option. Before or after marriage they are busy with cultural and traditional customs. They spend lots of time and energy to learn about cultural expectations. They spend lot of money to follow the culture. They spend lot of time after marriage in honeymoon, in holidays, in fulfilling other things, not the way Allah commands them. But many

of them have no plan at all to go through, or to learn about what Allah expects the husband and wife to follow in their marriage.

In Islamic marriage, what is the number 1 best choice? The number 1 best choice is to put Allah first in the marriage. Why is it number 1? Let us find the answer from the holy Quran in Allah's own words:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَىٰ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُبِينًا

“It is not right for a believer, man or woman, when something has been already judged by Allah and HIS messenger (Muhammad), to have any choice about the judgment: And whoever disobeys Allah and HIS Messenger (Muhammad), he is indeed on a clearly wrong path.”

[Al-Quran 33:36]

Choice 2 - to be positive not negative: Happiness or unhappiness in marriage, depends a lot on this choice. Many couple do not pay much attention about this attitude for either carelessness, or for their ignorance. When a spouse knows about the difference of positive or negative attitude towards the marriage and the spouse, can be determined to practice the positivity in everything regarding marriage. The positivity or negativity can be on speaking, comments, treatment, dealing with differences or problems etc. Despite good heart, in many times, the negative approach can bring disharmony, disrespect and mistrust. Often, Satan attacks on undetermined minds in spouses, and injects ill-feeling between loving spouses, or some ill-willed family or friends can inject their venoms to bring divisions between the spouses. If they are not determined in positive attitudes, they might not push back those disasters. A negative comment from a spouse for example can shake the happy foundation in marriage.

In marriage relationship, a spouse must be careful about each move or each comment. Spouses should train themselves to think, to feel, to say or to act positively. Some more examples about positivity should benefit the readers, and they are as follows:

- **Taking the marriage as a positive union:** Think positively about your marriage. Never bring any doubt that your marriage was a mistake. Think that Allah has chosen you as couple, or Allah made you two for one another, or marriage between you is the best thing happened to you and so on. Remember! When you face trials and tribulation, never be doubtful about your union, or never say negative words out of frustration, “Why did I marry you?” or “I ruined my life marrying you.” One negative thought, or one negative comment can be enough to ruin the marriage. Do not allow Satan to win over you? Satan loves to ruin your happiness in marriage.
- **Looking at one another's positive qualities:** Do not look at each other's negative traits. You must try to see and admire the positive sides in your spouse. Be pleased with whatever Allah has given you in spouses. If you look for faults in your spouse, then you are looking for negative qualities. Looking at spouse negatively will make you unhappy. There are so many positive things you can discover in your spouse. Focus on positive things in your spouse that will make you happy, that will give you pleasure, that will make you feel fortunate, that will make you thank Allah, and that will save you from misery.

Deal everything in marriage positively. The two of you will face lots of challenges in your marriage. How are you going to deal with those challenges? Again, take everything positively. If one of you is sick, take it as a positive thing such as, take it as Allah's test for higher rewards, or take it as an opportunity to earn rewards by serving your spouse. You may have financial problem. Take it positively that Allah is testing you and put your trust in Allah that HE will provide you a way. For it, do not think negatively such as, “My spouse brought misfortune for me,” Or do not make negative

comments such as, “Since I married you, you brought misfortune for me?” These negatives are superstition and creates negative environment in happy marriage. Islam teaches for positivity. Allah commands:

وَعَايِزُوهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۖ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ۙ ١٩

“(O believers!) Live with them on a basis of kindness and justice. If you take a dislike to them, it may be that you dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good.”

[Al-Quran 4:19]

Choice 3 - to serve or not to be served: Did you marry your wife to be your free slave? Or did you marry your husband to be your yes man? You are a man with a lot of power, or you are a woman with huge wealth and powerful family. To understand that I need to understand your expectation from your marriage. Do you prefer to be a free slave of your spouse, or do you prefer to receive service from your spouse? What is your choice? Your test result, your happiness, and your destination after Allah’s judgment depends on this choice. You must make up your mind before marriage to avoid mess or damage. If you choose to be served only, then your motive is very selfish. You are a problem because your selfish choice will create unhappiness in marriage. But if you choose to serve, then your choice is unselfish. You are a blessing because your unselfish choice will contribute happiness in marriage.

For example, some husbands in certain countries expect their wives to serve them only with cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, not eating before husband, serving the food on the plates for husband, doing massage when necessary and so on. Then, husband expects his wife to serve his parents, brothers, and sisters. The poor wife must serve them 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Besides, the abusive language, mental torture, and lack of care makes the wife’s marriage life terrible. Some of them wish that they had never married. In that service, the wife’s choice, health, and abilities are not given importance. Thus, in many cases a wife’s health breaks down, mentally she thinks she is a servant of husband and emotionally she never enjoys the happiness in marriage. Marriage becomes for those wives a job for survival.

Some wives can be very selfish too. They may demand more jewellery, luxury lifestyle from their husbands. Some wives are very ruthless about those services. Their harsh remarks, their continuous reminder may make husbands corrupt to take bribes, or to do unfair things. Often rich spoiled girls may expect lots of services in marriage without giving much. I saw a family where wife never worked, and husband had a very good job. He looked after his wife and children very well. Then suddenly he had a heart attack and became bedridden. That was the beginning of his unhappy life. Allah tested his wife with his sickness. She refused to serve him. She was angry and frustrated with the sick husband as well as with GOD. Her harsh unkind remarks made him sicker, and he died after a week. Her selfish attitude did not make her happy nor her husband.

Islam teaches spouses to serve one another for Allah’s sake, without expecting service in return from the spouse but to seek reward from Allah. With that serving mind, the marriage is bound to be happy because two unselfish minds can serve one another happily without feeling bad at all. Muslim spouses must be like a garment for each other. What a garment does? It serves the body by giving warmth, by providing comfort, by protecting from discomfort and so on. Husband and wife also must serve one another to give comfort by removing discomfort. That way they can be happy in their marriage. Holy Quran asserts:

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ

“They (wives) are your garments, and you (Husbands) are their garments.”

[Al-Quran 2:187]

Choice 4 - to have peace only: Every spouse wishes for peace in marriage, but every spouse does not work for the peaceful marriage. They must know that peace in marriage must be earned. How can they earn it then? A few tips below:

- *Strong determination for peace:* Both spouses must be determined to live in peace. The proverb is, “If there is a will, there is a way.”
- *Knowledge about what destroys peace:* They must know what factors damages the peace between spouses. Such as, ignorance, prohibited traits, unwilling to learn from mistakes, and not following Islamic guidance etc.
- *Plan for peaceful home:* Only good wish is not enough, but both spouses need to plan for it. They can agree to place ban on swearing, shouting, angry gesture, violent behaviour, slamming door, angry argument, breaking things with anger, abusive language and so on in their house.
- *Keeping heart at peace:* If a heart is peaceful, then the outer expression of the heart will be peaceful too. Why spouses need peaceful hearts? The answer is that the peaceful heart can only radiate peaceful manner through smile, joke, calmness, talk and gestures etc.
- *Choice to control manner:* Avoid stormy manner. Stormy manner is rough, violent, and with scary lightening that takes peace away from others. Your manner must be peaceful too. Be gentle, kind, pleasant and peaceful in your manner. That will contribute peace in your marriage. Ask yourself often, “Is my manner rude or loving? Do I sound angry or pleasant? Do I move roughly or gently? How does my manner make my spouse feel?” Remember, you may have good heart, but abrupt manner will hide it. So, control yourself to shine with good manners. Make this choice firm!
- *Chose regular prayer for peace:* Do your best and then pray to Allah to bestow peace between you. Allah is the Main Source of Peace and peace in marriage must come from HIM. The spouses should never think that they can attain peace only with their own effort. They must do their efforts and supplicate to Allah to accept it for granting peace on them. You just choose to pray, and Allah will send peace in your hearts:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“It is HE WHO sent down the peace and calmness (As-Sakinah) into the hearts of the believers.”

[Al-Quran 48:4]

Choice 5 - accept spouse without forcing to change: Some spouses want to change their spouse’s habits (halal habits) because they dislike those habits. They try to control their spouse’s habits, or choices. That often creates problems. On the other hand, some spouses are flexible, accommodative and they accept their spouse’s habits or choices as it is without any effort to change them. That keeps the harmony intact and saves the relationship from many unhappy occurrences. If you choose to change your spouse, then you are looking for fight, argument, dissatisfaction, resistance, and unhappiness. But if you choose to accept your spouse as he is or she is, then you can avoid so many problems and you can enjoy happiness in your marriage. Usually, most people want things to be done in their own way. Husband may want things done in one way, and wife may want in another way. When one tries to force his/her choice on another, that bring coercion. Ask yourself, “Do I like to be forced to change my habit?” If not, then why would you force your spouse to change just because you want it changed? Why can’t you compromise? Why can’t you enjoy the diversity, and turn it into a strength?

Remember, if you choose to force your spouse for change, your spouse may try to change you, or your changing effort will borrow troubles, or your coercion will be a disrespect to your spouse, or you will earn sin for changing a halal habit in your spouse, or it will promote intolerance, overcontrol and inflexibility, or will incite anger, and will ruin the enjoyment that you could enjoy by accepting differences between you. Trying to change means the practice of obstinacy, and the attitude of self-righteousness which causes hurt feelings between spouses. It initiates with annoyance, then defending, and then displeasure at the very least. So why would you take risk? If one's habits or choices is allowed in Islam, then spouses need to relax, have fun, and enjoy each other's differences. Unfortunately, many spouses argue even about where to put the dishes, or how to clean or dress, and ends up with arguments, fighting, injuring, swearing, even in hospital, police, or court.

Allah created man and woman with differences for so many great reasons. Respecting the halal difference means respecting Allah. An advice that applies for both spouses is stated below. Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said for husbands how to advice their wives nicely without forcing them:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «اسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّهُنَّ خُلِفَنَ مِنْ ضِلَعٍ وَإِنَّ أَعْوَجَ شَيْءٍ فِي الصَّنَلِ أَعْلَاهُ فَإِنْ دَهَبَتْ تُقِيمُهُ كَسَرَتْهُ وَإِنْ تَرَكْتَهُ لَمْ يَزَلْ أَعْوَجَ فَاسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ»

“Give best advice to your wives. They are created from bend bones----. If you try to straighten the bone (By force) then it will break; but if you leave it will remain bent forever. So, (My advice is) offer best advice to your wives (Without forcing them for change.)”

[Bukhari & Muslim]

The same is applicable for wives. They must not try to control their husbands to change them because forcing them might cause losing them all together. Accept them for the sake of Allah and try to correct them with wisdom and best manner. Allah guidance in the Holy Quran:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ

“Invite ‘all’ to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and kind advice.”

[Al-Quran 16:125]

Choice 6 - to be thankful without complaining: Would you choose to complain in marriage about small or big issues? Or would you choose to be thankful with whatever Allah gave you without complaining? Complaining does not solve the problem but increases the tensions. But feeling thankful with everything gives peace in mind and happiness in relationship. Why do people complain? People mainly complain when they do not understand why something happens to them. But if people surrender their limited understanding to the All-Knowing Allah, then they accept things without complaining. For example, Prophet Musa (a.s) complained that why did Khidir make a hole in a boat? But Khidir explained that a tyrant was seizing all good boats by force. He made a small hole on that boat to save it from the tyrant king. After the explanation, Musa (a.s) did not complain any more.

Similarly, in marriage, so many things happen that we dislike without understanding the reason behind it. With our present knowledge, it appears not in favour of us. That's why we complain. But from the story of Musa (a.s) we should learn that Allah knows best why things happen, and Allah knows what is best behind it. If we accept this simple fact, then we won't complain in marriage life. Often, we dislike something in spouses for which we complain, but Holy Quran says, maybe there is good behind that disliked thing.

وَغَاثِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۖ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَبِيرًا كَثِيرًا

“(O believers!) Live with them on a basis of kindness and justice. If you take a dislike to them, it may be that you dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good.”

[Al-Quran 4:19]

Remember, complaining may add the following problems:

- **It may become a habit:** Those who complain often, complaining becomes a habit in them. There is a saying, “People are slaves to their habits.” Once a spouse has bad habits, then it is hard to change.
- **It may give a “never enough” feeling:** Spouses often expect more and when they do not get what they expect, then they complain. Regular complaining may increase the feeling of not having enough.
- **It may grow bitterness:** Complaining creates a bitterness in the heart. It takes away happy feeling in a spouse.
- **It gives rise to negative thinking:** People complain about their spouses because they see negative in them. Complaining means also displeased with Qadr that Allah has planned for them for good reasons.
- **No one listens:** Complainers are annoying to most people. Even a loving spouse after listening to complaints a few times would say, “Oh! Here you go again! Give me a break please!” Spouses want support, positive contributions but not just complaints.
- **It may spoil the best bit:** Surely everything in your spouse you do not dislike. Maybe you like 80% in your spouse and 20% you may not like. Is it wise then to spoil 80% enjoyment of liking for 20% disliking? No, it is not. But this is what happens with most complainers. They lose the good part for their complaining for the bad part.
- **It can’t change the fate:** Marriage is a test from Allah. Allah fixed the fate to test spouses whether they are patient, or they surrender their liking and disliking to Allah. Complaining proves that they could not accept their fate happily. In fact, they can’t change their fate. So, what’s the point of complaining!
- **It causes a miserable life:** So, complaining adds nothing but more misery. For their complaining, they lose Allah’s blessings in their marriage, they lose the love and respect from their spouses, and they lose the happiness in their hearts.

But, if you choose to be thankful for whatever you have, then you have won the peace in mind. No matter what you dislike, you can easily accept it by comforting yourself, “Well! It could have been worse! Allah is testing me. I am happy with whatever I have. I thank Allah for giving me whatever I have!” Giving thanks instead of complaining is a best choice for any spouse. Giving thanks has no harm at all. Giving thanks is like a moon light, it only spreads joy in one’s heart as well as in other’s hearts. I shall describe more about the benefit of thanking Allah and thanking spouse below:

- **Giving thanks increases Allah’s blessings in marriage:** When a Muslim spouse chooses to thank Allah for everything HE has been given in his marriage, then he does it for his or her best. He or she should be busy with giving thanks to Allah for numerous blessings Allah has provided. Allah increases blessings for those who give thanks to HIM:

وإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ ۖ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ ۚ

“And (also) remember! Your Lord has (Openly) Proclaimed: ‘If you are thankful, I will add more (gifts) for you; But if you show thanklessness (By complaining), Verily, MY (Allah) Punishment is really terrible.”

[Al-Quran 14:7]

- *Giving thanks increases happiness between spouses:* Giving thanks to Allah and to spouse, removes bitterness from hearts, and brings joy and happiness. Giving thanks encourages your spouse to do more, but complaining discourages your spouse from doing. A thankful spouse can offer lovely smile, which can radiate to the heart of other spouse, bringing happiness. Moreover, giving thanks is a sign of respect, appreciation, value, and care. It is a sign of gratitude. Islam teaches believers to give thanks, to show gratitude and to feel thankful to Allah as well as people: In a hadis Holy Prophet (s.a.w) said:

مَنْ لَمْ يَشْكُرِ النَّاسَ لَمْ يَشْكُرِ اللَّهَ

“The one who is not grateful to other people is not grateful to Allah.”

[Tirmidi]

- *Giving thanks never harms the spouses:* Giving thanks never harms the spouses in marriage at all. Thanksgiving wins the hearts of another spouse. Often money cannot buy a heart, but some little thanks can do.

Choice 7 - to ignore little mistakes without fighting: Ignoring little mistakes is a best choice for happiness in marriage but choice to fight about little mistakes is a worst choice in marriage. To err is human. In marriage, man and woman are never perfect. They are bound to make mistakes. These mistakes are not deliberate to hurt one another. Such mistakes are happening every day due to some of the following reasons:

- *Not being careful:* Often spouses make mistakes because they were not careful enough about a certain issue. Often one said or did something without proper thinking, which may make the other spouse feel offended. For example, during talk a spouse said something about the family member of the other spouse which made the other spouse upset.
- *Too busy with other things:* Sometimes mistakes happen due to busyness. For example: A wife is waiting for husband to attend a function on time. She is waiting and waiting but husband arrived late. She was angry and told him off, “What kind of insincere person are you? I made a big mistake marrying you. You have no respect for the time? Etc.” In this case, may be the husband did not deliberately delay but was caught in a traffic jam, or had to deal with an unexpected issue in his work.
- *Lack of understanding:* Sometimes spouses may make mistakes due to lack of understanding. Suppose a wife is sick. Husband is in-charge for cooking today. He may be a horrible cook. She advised him from bed what to do, how to cook, how to clean and how to feed children etc. He says, “Ya-Ya! I will do that.” Then he begins his cooking. Even though he got instruction, but cooking is a fine art. It requires time and effort to learn the mastery. So, he could not do as he was instructed and made some mistakes.
- *Due to sickness:* Sometimes spouses make mistakes due to sickness. May be a husband asked his wife to telephone the power company to clarify few things while he will be busy at work. She said: “Not a problem! Consider it is done.” Husband came back from work and asked about the result of her discussion with the power company. But he found out that she was sleeping. She suffered from headache and unintentionally, she fell asleep.
- *Due to wrong information:* Often spouses may make mistakes due to wrong information. For example, a spouse learnt rules for ablution from a less learned person, in which there is a mistake. This mistake is not deliberate.
- *Due to different culture:* Nowadays cross-cultural marriages are many. One culture may expect that men should eat first in a function. If it is a mistake to another spouse, then that mistake was due to the difference in culture.

So, above examples are about little mistakes. How would you like to deal with those little mistakes? If you choose to ignore them, then you will be a happy person. By ignoring them, you can avoid anger, anxiety, bitterness, fighting, swearing, arguments, hard feelings and so on. Islam wants you to choose this option of understanding, ignoring, forgiving, and pardoning. If spouses practice that, then Allah will also ignore and forgive their mistakes on the Day of Judgment. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

وَإِنْ تَعْفُوا وَتَصْفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ١٤

“But if you forgive them and overlook, and cover up (their faults), Surely Allah is Often Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

[Al-Quran 64:14]

Choice 8 - to correct without blaming: A spouse may choose to blame the spouse for mistakes or may give up blaming to focus on correcting. Happiness or unhappiness depends a lot on this choice. Let us discuss about the option of blaming. What is wrong with blaming? Blaming for mistakes adds more problems such as:

- *Blame makes one feel humiliated:* Each spouse has an ego. The ego demands for respect. Especially in front of other people or family members each spouse likes to uphold that ego. If a spouse blames the other, and in front of others, the result is injury to the heart on the blamed ones. That wound causes pain in heart and the blamer loses the love from the blamed one.
- *Blame makes one feel belittled:* Who does not want to live in marriage with a high head, with respect? Everyone does! If you have ever made mistakes, did you remember how you felt? Some people say, “I felt my head was going down with shame. I felt that I belittled myself with silly mistakes.” On top of it, if someone continued blaming you without mercy, you will feel more belittled. Do you really expect to be belittled by your loving husband or wife? Aren’t you supposed to be merciful to each other in marriage?
- *Blame makes one feel angry:* When your spouse makes a mistake, how do you want to make him or her feel? Do you want to make him or her feel guilty to learn for it? Or do you want him or her to feel angry at you for your blaming? When you blame and blame, you give your spouse an excuse to feel angry about your mistreatment.
- *Blame makes one to defend:* Blaming makes the blamed one to defend, because he or she finds the blaming person is not doing fairness fully. So, if you throw a fire, you should expect a fire back. Even a very gentle spouse will often give back a gentle fire signalling annoyance and displeasure towards you. Why do you have to choose a style that may backfire?
- *Blame does not necessarily change a person:* When a mistake happens, what is the best result do you expect? Do you expect more mistakes, or do you like a smooth solution? Suppose you are giving your wife a driving lesson. To protect her, you are blaming her for her faults. You are not helping her but making her more nervous to make more mistakes. So, instead of blaming encourage her. That will work.

Islamic teaching is as following:

وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ

“Nor defame nor be nasty to each other, nor call each other by offensive nickname.”

[Al-Quran 49:11]

Keep correcting nicely without blaming is a best choice in marriage. Let us go through a few benefits of correcting one another in marriage:

- *Correcting choice brings out a sympathetic mind:* Desire to correct own spouse carries a sympathetic mind. Correcting a spouse's mistake to make him or her better, has a noble desire behind it with a sympathy. When a spouse looks at the mistakes of his or her spouse critically the result is blaming. But when a spouse looks at his or her spouse's mistake with a kind look, then the result is sympathy.
- *Correcting choice is a gentle approach:* Correction also demands for a gentle approach. Sympathetic mind along with gentle, nice, polite talk helps to correct one another. Your spouse is your best friend, not enemy. So why would you deal with your spouse's mistake with military style? No, you need to be gentle, for the sake of correction.
- *Correcting choice is a wise approach:* What is a wise approach? It means thinking well before you do the action. Correcting requires wise approach. Look! The fact is that blaming is easy because it is an impulsive, unwise response to a situation which causes more problems. But solving or correcting the mistake is far harder than blaming. It requires wise approach such as, you make sure that you are not offending the one who made mistake, or you are talking in simple term that makes sense to the one who made mistake, or you are showing your sympathy to the other one so he or she will trust you, or you are respecting his or her feelings, or you are keen to understand his or her reasons and you are seen to be keen, or you are not overwhelming the other person, or you are patient enough and not giving up easily, or you are very nice and gentle in talking, or you are trying for correction only and not forcing it, or you measure your every word and action wisely, thinking the likely result of your words and actions in terms of correcting the other etc.

Correction is the best choice, and it must be done wisely and nicely. Allah's message is:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ

“Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and holy teaching, and reason with them by ways that are best.”

[Al-Quran 16:125]

Choice 9 - find ways to solve without giving up: You must choose either to find ways to solve marriage problems or to give up doing nothing. Choosing to find ways is hard work but the result is happiness in the long run. But choosing to give up is easy and the result is unhappiness in the long run. So, which one would you choose in your marriage? Suppose you want to win a gold medal in sports. You may struggle to find ways to win it, or you may give up after a small struggle. Both is possible by humans. Happiness in marriage is like winning a happiness medal for life. It requires continuous efforts, and not giving up. Therefore, you have two choices to choose from. One choice is to find ways for happiness in marriage, and another is to be defeated with little storm and break down your happy nest.

One may ask, every spouse choose solution. I disagree. Every spouse may wish it, that part I agree with, but all spouses do not work on it with strong determination. It must be a well-informed choice that spouse must take seriously. If they take it lightly saying, “We will see when problems come,” then it might be too late in some cases. If both spouses are determined, careful, avoid hazards, and stick to the best choices, then finding ways for happiness in marriage will be easier. If you choose to find ways to overcome all the obstacles, you have chosen the best choice. You have chosen to run for the gold medal. With this choice, you will bring out so many other best qualities from you. Some of them are below:

- *You will have a target:* You will have a target as a spouse. Many spouses are like vines bending with winds. You are different. You have a target in your mind that you want to make your

marriage happy. This target is like a strong foundation; without it your whole marriage building will be weak.

- *You will focus on the prize:* You have chosen to find ways to make your marriage happy because you are focusing on the end prize. The end prize is paradise for both of you if both of you are righteous spouses. Your focus will help you to ignore unimportant elements in marriage.
- *You will be determined to reach to the target:* You have chosen to find ways for happy marriage. You have high degree of determination. Good on you! Without determination, no one can achieve success. Now you can overcome some trials and tribulation in your marriage.
- *You will be patient and perseverant:* When you have chosen to find ways to make your marriage happy, you have chosen the path of patience and perseverance. Good on you! Allah helps those who are patient in their journey.
- *You will get rid of negativism from you:* You have determination to make your marriage happy, it means you have rejected all the negative feelings from your hearts. You rejected doubts, lacking in confidence, weakness in decision, tendency to give up etc. You have done well because without getting rid of negative feelings you cannot overcome trials in your marriage.
- *You will have a heroic mind for success:* When you are committed, devoted in your marriage and you rely on Allah, surely you have a heroic mind for success. Allah does not help those who do not try hard. Marriage is a test and to win the test both husband and wife needs heroic mind, not cowardice mind.

In happy marriage one must choose to remain patient and constant. This choice Allah prescribes in the Holy Quran:

ط َفَاصْبِرْ

“So patiently remain constant (and firm).”

[Al-Quran 30:60]

Choice 10 - to win heart with love without losing with hate: Winning or losing is very important in anything. So far, I know, no one wants to be a loser, yet we lose sometimes. In marriage, when there is a dispute or disagreement, then how can a spouse win the heart of another? Can it be won by hate? Or can a spouse win by becoming more loving and caring? Well, a heart cannot be won with weapons, bullets, by force, by hate, or by suppression, but that can be won by love. Spouses must choose this policy of winning one another if necessary. In marriage, we can argue cleverly, we can put one another down with logics, we can corner one another with shouting, we can scare one another with threats, we can take one another in court, we can hit one another with might, we can hire hooligans to harm one another, we can suppress or oppress one another, or we can hate one another as much as we want, but with any of those we cannot win one another's heart. No doubt we will lose more if we choose to hate more.

That's why people who are bullying one another in marriage, they are not winning, but they are losing. They are losing a lot including the nice relationship, the loving relationship, the peace of mind, the quality time, the valuable energy, the rewards from Allah, the team effort to progress, the good moral character in them, the battle against Satan, and the happy marriage for which they got married in the first place etc. Now, what would you like to choose? Winning or losing? Loving your spouse to win or hating your spouse to lose?

If you choose winning with love, then you have chosen the best choice here. Love is the best tool to win your spouse's heart. Because every spouse is in need for love. For the love, you two began your marriage journey. For the love, you two could leave your families and for that love you came to live together. For the love, you are very sensitive to one another. For this love, you easily feel offended or hurt. For the love, you become overprotective to one another and for that love you try to control one another. For that love also comes disagreement, disputes, and fights. So, the root of dispute in marriage is in most cases the "love" between spouses. So, the solution of it must come with love too. That's why only love can be the best weapon to fight against unhappiness in marriage.

Therefore, you should choose to love more to solve problems between you. Choose to love more to win one another. How can you love your spouse more? You need some practice on it, and you will be perfect soon. Let me give couple of tips below:

- *Make your heart a loving heart:* If you can remove the hatred feeling from your heart towards your spouse, then you are a spouse with a loving heart. The more you will love your husband or wife the more your heart will enjoy the inner joy and the more rewards you will gain from Allah. The secret of true love is loving your spouse for the sake of Allah. If your spouse does not love you, that is his or her problem, not yours. You can feel sympathy towards your spouse for not enjoying joy in heart and for not earning rewards as much as you are. But his or her lack of love towards you should not make you angry, bitter, or hateful in your heart. Why do you need to bring suffering in you for your spouse's mistakes? Your loving heart is your joy, is your great investment in marriage. Maintain that love in your heart all the time. Insha Allah! you will win your spouse because loving heart cannot hide its love. It will come out sooner or later to win your spouse without a war.
- *Talk with love:* A loving heart cannot talk unloving harsh, rude, abusive talk. Just like a sweet mango tree cannot produce bitter onions. Offer your loving talk to your spouse. Use words that are sweet, gentle, heartwarming, and caring. Remember! Just one loving and caring word may melt all the disappointments in your spouse's heart.
- *Show your love through gesture:* Your love needs to be seen. Show it through your gestures. Show it in your face, in your hand movements, in your body posture. Show your spouse how much you love him or her. It will not harm you at all. It will earn charity reward as well.
- *Love what your spouse loves:* Give some interest to things that your spouse loves. It may be a very small things like knitting or feeding ducks. Do it together. Show that you care about his or her hobby. It will take your relationship a long way. It will win your spouse's heart.
- *Avoid what your spouse dislikes:* Avoid contradictions. If your spouse does not like to attend in a meeting late, then make real effort to be in time. Try to decide to avoid things that makes your spouse anxious or worried. That way also, you can win your spouse's heart.
- *Never retaliate wrong with wrong:* In case your spouse makes a wrong comment, or does something wrong, do not return it with another wrong. Return that mistake with something much better. Return it with your love, care, co-operation, sympathy instead. That way you can win the heart of your spouse. Allah's message is:

وَلَا تَسْتَوِ الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ۚ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ ٣٤

“And good deeds and evil deeds cannot be equal. (So) give up (evil) with what is better: The verily, he (the one) between whom and you, were hatred, will become like your friend and close companion.”

[Al-Quran 41:34]

Wrong ideas guide to worst choices:

Some ideas are wrong. Husband or wife or even both may have wrong ideas about some aspects of the Islamic marriage. These ideas develop in mind from wrong teachings or from ignorance, or from deliberate following of wrong desires and traditions. The interesting fact is that people with wrong ideas think they have right ideas. They may have good intention, or sincerity in heart, or good morality and so on, yet they may have wrong ideas. People with wrong ideas usually practice wrong thing, and wrong choices thinking that they are doing the right thing. That is where Satan comes in. Each human is born with pure disposition. But Satan tries to implant wrong ideas into the mind of people, or Satan discourages people from learning the right thing to choose what is the best. Satan, does it in a subtle way. He knows that no human wants to feel wrong, or to do wrong as every human has this inner natural tendency to dislike the wrong. So, Satan makes it seem right in their mind. Then some people take Satan's tips out of ignorance, and they become carrier of the satanic message, without realizing that they are doing wrong under the banner of right.

If we go back to the beginning of human history, the first man Adam and his wife Hawa were deceived by Satan in the same way. Satan explained to them that eating forbidden fruit would take them closer to Allah either by being angels or by living in paradise forever. Satan offered a lie to show the best result of their action. So, Adam and Hawa thought that they were doing the right thing, yet they did a wrong thing. For that wrong they faced the consequences. Satan carried on the same tricks on Adam's children by injecting wrong ideas seeming right. In marriage, husband or wife might be tricked by the Satan or Satan's agents from men or Jinn, unless they are careful. Allah revealed that secret weapon of Satan in the Holy Quran. Allah revealed exactly what Satan promised to do against humans to ruin them. Look at Satan's vows stated in the Quran:

قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ۝ ٣٩ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ٤٠

“(Iblis) said: “I will make (wrong) seem fair to them (Adam’s children) on the earth, and I will put them all in wrong, except YOUR servants among them, truthful and purified (By YOU).”

[Al-Quran 15:39-40]

To be careful about wrong ideas, let us go through a few points below of sources for our reminder:

- *Wrong religious teachings:* Often wrong ideas come from wrong religious teachings. For many spouses the teachers are grandfathers, or grandmothers, or brother-in-law or sister-in-law who guide in planning, programmes, performances, and advising without sound Islamic knowledge. Spouses should directly study Quran and Hadis, or they should be guided by knowledgeable people in Islam.
- *Religious and culture mixed up:* Very often wrong ideas come from the mixture of religious and cultural ideas. Due to the lack of knowledge, some Muslims cannot differentiate what is religious idea and what is cultural idea about so many things in marriage. They just follow the norm, and if someone points them out, they take offence. In many cases, they react saying, “We have seen our fathers and forefathers doing it. So, we do not think that what we are doing has any wrong.” Again, husband and wife should have basic knowledge about Quran and Hadis, to be able to differentiate the religion from culture. Otherwise, they may follow wrong ideas and will make wrong choices to borrow sufferings.
- *Superstition:* Some husbands or wives have wrong ideas from superstitious belief. They heard from others about something, and they believed in it. For example: a wife has superstitious belief that if she eats before husband, then her husband's life will be

shortened. It means husband will die soon. From that belief, she waits whole day without eating. Busy husband comes home after 11pm at night and leaves home around 9am in the morning. For her wrong idea, she eats less and soon she becomes sick. Her suffering is due to her superstitious belief, and that belief is a wrong belief in the light of Islam. Like this many Muslim husbands or wives may have so many superstitious wrong ideas for which they are making wrong choices in marriage life.

- *Own twisted mind:* Often wrong ideas generate from one's own twisted mind. When someone overly loves himself or herself, then it happens. One may think a nice smile from a spouse means the sign of cheating or pretence. For some reasons, he or she may have developed this wrong idea. For that wrong idea, he or she suffers from suspicion, jealousy and reacts badly to the beautiful smile. For some reason this wrong idea is implanted in his or her mind which produces many more wrong actions and choices from him or her. So, one wrong generates many wrongs. Moreover, every wrong brings suffering. No wrong brings happiness in marriage.

Even one wrong idea is enough to create chaos in an Islamic marriage. Chaos starts with a wrong idea, then the idea turns into planning, and then the planning turns into bad actions, and then the bad actions turn into bad reactions etc. So, the longer the wrong idea travels in marriage the longer the sufferings continue. How can a wrong idea harm a happy marriage? How can a wrong idea generate so many more wrongs? Let us go through few examples below of what other wrongs are generated by one wrong in a marriage:

- *Wrong idea brings one-sided rules:* A wrong idea never pleases both. It is there to look after one side more than another. Wrong ideas are generated in the first place to make one win and to make another lose. Suppose from the wrong idea, "If wife eats before husband, then husband will die soon," we see one-sidedness such as husband gets more privilege, husband gets the opportunity to eat the best part, giving husband power to reprimand or punish her if she ate before him, giving husband wrong idea that he should live long and wife's living long is secondary, giving husband power to control wife's eating habit, giving husband power over his wife, giving wife guilty feeling if she eats early, and giving wife the options to suffer for the sake of husband's life etc. Every aspect from that wrong idea sets wrong and worst choice to either be a victim or to victimise a spouse. Thus, it brings unfairness in marriage that Allah never likes.
- *Wrong idea brings imbalance in due rights:* A wrong idea never gives proper rights for both. It promotes false rights to borrow unhappiness in marriage. Again, let us take the above example of wrong idea, "If wife eats before husband, then husband will die soon," then see how that sets the tone of wrong path such as, it gives husband more rights, it gives wife less rights, it emphasizes more on husband's life, it emphasizes less on wife's life, it gives more importance on husband's eating and good health, and it gives less importance on wife's eating and good health etc.
- *Wrong idea brings Injustice:* A wrong idea is always unfair. When a wrong idea deprives one and provides another more, it becomes an act of injustice. One injustice creates more injustices. Again, let us take the above example of wrong idea which says, "If a wife eats before husband, then husband will die soon" and see how that wrong idea promotes injustice. It motivates unfair distribution of food, it makes unfairness the norm, it deprives wife unfairly, and it allows unfair treatment etc.
- *Wrong idea produces sinful conduct:* A wrong idea gives actions that are sinful. From one wrong comes out many sins. Again, if we take the above example, "If wife eats before husband then husband will die soon" we can see many sins are coming out from it, such as,

taking this wrong idea without Allah's permission is a sin, giving importance on an idea over Allah's guidance is a sin, discriminating a wife is a sin, making a wife suffer is a sin, not giving wife's due right is a sin, giving more rights to husband is a sin, making a wrong idea as normal practice is a sin, imposing a wrong is a sin, punishing for not obeying wrong idea is a sin, and doing anything to justify a wrong is also a sin etc. Wrong idea makes a wrong choice, and the result is sin.

- *Wrong idea contributes unhappiness in marriage:* Wrong ideas bring nothing but problems. In marriage, wrong ideas are like infections. What does it do to harm the marriage? It allows a spouse to take advantage on another, it allows a spouse to be victim, it replaces true love by ill feelings, it complicates the easy and simple relationship, it brings bitterness between spouses, it allows Satan to incite one against another, it gives room for suspicion and quarrels, and it allows hurt and drives away happiness.

Some wrong ideas for bad choices

I shall try to continue to list a few common wrong ideas in marriages. They are dangerous because they lead spouses to either be an oppressor or an oppressed. Wrong ideas motivate them to take bad choices and practice in their marriage life. Muslim spouses should have sound knowledge in Islam, and they must avoid wrong ideas to avoid wrong choices to be saved from sins, and unhappiness.

Wrong idea 1 - "I am the boss of my wife": Many husbands hold the idea simply thinking, "I am the boss of my wife." Many husbands told me that with pride and boast. For many husbands, "Boss" is a pleasing term for their ego. How this wrong idea misleads them in their attitudes and unfair actions? Let me highlight some of them in below:

- *Tyranny:* They think wrongly that Islam has given them supreme power over their wives. With that power, they can be like a tyrant. In some cultures, they are expected to be tough and ruthless to rule their wives. Some cultures encourage that.
- *Commander:* They think wrongly that a boss can hire or fire his wife. I heard a story about a husband who said to his wife, "Listen! You are like my shoes. I can keep it, wear it or I can throw it away."
- *Final say:* They think they are boss to order, and wife is there to listen. Nothing else is in between. The final say is upon the boss, and husband is the boss. If she listens without any complaining, that makes her a good wife in their books, otherwise she is a bad wife per their wrong idea.
- *Ruler:* They think wife is to follow their commands only because they are the rulers. Why would she say "no?" She has no right to say no to their husbands. Some wives also believe that they are made to serve, even when husband rules wrongly.
- *Decision maker:* They think for decision making that no consultation with wife is necessary. "Why consultation? I am the boss; I will tell her what to do. My word is final. I won't tolerate anything different than that."
- *No apology:* Their thinking is like, "I am higher than my wife, so even if I make mistakes I should not apologise. Apology is a sign of weakness. So, apology is not suitable for me, but it is suitable for my wife."

These are some examples how some husbands have wrong idea that they are the boss of their wives, and how they interpret the role of them as being boss. With this one wrong idea, the whole chemistry of loving marriage changes into tyranny vs victim relationship. How can a marriage

enjoy love, mercy, complementing one another, feeling safe and cared for with this kind of attitude? How can one expect fairness and justice and happiness in a marriage if one is bossing over another?

Now, what is Islamic teaching in this issue? Islam is a religion of peace. It never promotes ideas that may make one oppressor and another oppressed. Or it never endorses any idea that makes one master and another slave. Islamic purpose of marriage is about proper rights and responsibility, sharing, caring, and love and mercy. In the light of Islam, “who is the boss in marriage” is a wrong question. The right question in the light of Islam is, “who is more responsible in marriage?”. Islam gave husband more responsibilities to serve in marriage for the pleasure of Allah, not to boss around over his wife. Marriage is a team, and, in that team, they need an Imam, a leader who will take certain responsibilities. Those responsibilities are strictly guided by Allah and HIS prophet’s teachings. A husband cannot boss around outside the boundary set by Allah and HIS messenger. For his responsibilities, he will be questioned by Allah on the Day of Judgment as well. Islam gives the role of leadership on husbands with conditions such as, they will take responsibility given by Allah, that responsibility should be free from arrogance, tyranny, dictatorial, injustice, unfairness, control, abuse, love of power, domineering, neglect, disrespect and rudeness, that responsibility on them is a trust from Allah to test them how they discharge it and Allah will take account about that leadership trust from them, that they have no right to exercise their own will over Allah’s code in leadership, that they can only expect their wives to follow them if they advise to follow Allah’s rules not their own rules, that they are not allowed to command wives to follow their own rules against Allah’s rules, and that they should fear Allah’s punishment if they do not follow Allah’s code in their leadership etc.

Islam wants believers to change their pattern of thoughts. Instead of bossing they should think it as responsibility with strict code, and with accountability to Allah Almighty. That pattern of thought will make them humble, dutiful, sincere, polite, caring, loving and so on as a leader and husband. With that type of leadership, the marriage can enjoy stability, fairness, and happiness.

Now let us look at few aspects of leadership role for husbands, per the Quran and Sunnah:

- *Husband is given one step high for responsibility:* Allah has made men with qualities to work hard, to provide for family and to take risk and to sacrifice to protect their wives and children from danger etc. On that basis, they are given one-degree higher responsibility over their wives. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

وَالرِّجَالُ عَلَىٰ نِجَابٍ مِّنْ دَرَجَةٍ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

“But men have a degree (Of responsibility) over them (Wives). And Allah is Almighty and All Wise.”

[Al-Quran 2:228]

- *Husband is given responsibility to protect:* Allah gave men responsibility to protect women, and to maintain the wellbeing of the women. So, they are not given a free licence to boss around women as they like. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ

“Men are the caretakers of women, as men have been provisioned by Allah over women and tasked with supporting them financially.”

[Al-Quran 4:34]

- *Husband is given responsibility to earn:* Allah has placed the main responsibility of earning on husband. It makes the husband work hard to earn. He must work hard to the best of his ability, because for him earning is also a worship. Allah says in the holy Quran:

وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ

“And tasked with supporting them financially.”

[Al-Quran 4:34]

- *Husband is not free to do whatever he likes:* This leadership for husband comes with a string attached. That string is that he is accountable in the court of Allah about his role, his duty, his attitude, his treatment, and his choices. In a Hadis reported by Abdullah ibn U'mar (may Allah be pleased with him), Holy Messenger of Allah said:

وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُمْ

“And husband is responsible about his family. And he will be questioned on the Day of Judgement about his responsibility.”

[Muttafaqun A'laih]

- *Husband cannot force his own will on his wife:* Here is another very important string attached with Islamic leadership in marriage, or in any other Islamic leadership. That string is, neither husband has right to impose his will on wife nor the wife has any right to obey husband's own wrong wish. Allah only allows husband as a leader to instruct wife per what Allah and HIS messenger has guided. If husband instructs anything against Allah's rules, then he becomes a criminal in Allah's court. Similarly, if wife obeys husband's own will that is against Allah's rules, then she also commits crime in the sight of Allah. Therefore, husband must obey Allah in leading and the wife also must obey Allah in following. In a Hadis narrated by Hon Ali (May Allah be pleased with him), Holy Messenger of Allah said:

لَا طَاعَةَ فِي مَعْصِيَةٍ، إِنَّمَا الطَّاعَةُ فِي الْمَعْرُوفِ

“There is no obedience in disobedience to Allah. Obedience only applies in just and good deeds.”

[Muttafaqun A'laih]

If a wise husband keeps the above Islamic aspects in his mind, he will not wish to be bossing over his wife, for the fear of Allah's Judgment. His whole attitude will be different than the common wrong practices. He will be a dutiful humble leader with love and kindness. He will possess noble disposition, and he will choose righteous practices, and he will lead the marriage towards happiness according to Allah's guidance.

Wrong idea 2 - “My husband is my 2nd God”: Some women have this wrong idea about their husbands. In some cultures, this idea is taken like a religion. Men and women are brain washed in this way. It could be either for men to extremely dominate women or women to extremely respect men. But either way it is an extreme idea that is far away from moderation. It puts men into the place of God. What is the practical meaning when husbands are placed in the position of gods? Practically it means the following examples:

- *Husbands are above justice:* One cannot judge a god, can she? God is above justice because God never makes mistakes. If God does something that the wife does not understand about, that means the wife has lack of knowledge. So, when a wife takes her husband as a god, she must accept the fact that her husband is beyond judgment. She cannot seek any justice against her husband, even if he makes horrendous crime against her.
- *Husband's wrong is not wrong:* How can God make wrong thing? Husband is a god, and whatever he does is automatically right. Wife must accept it as right without defying her husband. She cannot question her god, can she?

- *Husband's wrong is not to be corrected:* Can one dare to correct the god? What authority does she have to correct her god? Won't that be a contempt of god's court? Won't that be a challenge against the rights of God? The same way if a wife takes her husband as 2nd god, then she gives up her rights to even correct her husband when he does wrong. That way a husband gets free licence to do whatever he likes.
- *Wife cannot question husband:* Can anyone question God? She cannot question him because questioning is like defying him. Who can defy a god? The need for a god is to serve and not to ask questions. A wife is the slave of a husband when she takes her husband as God. So, a slave has no right to question about what her master does.
- *Wife must obey husband all the time:* She must obey her husband, because he is her god, and she is his slave. Any little disobeying of husband is like committing sin for disobeying god. She must obey if he orders for right thing, or the wrong things. If she wants to be a good wife, then she must bow her head down to his every command.
- *The salvation of wife depends on obeying husband:* Then she must strongly believe that obeying husband in right or wrong is her way of salvation. The Supreme GOD will be happy, she thinks, if she follows the 2nd god (her husband).

Satan taught mankind to take many gods beside one Allah. Satan tricked people to divide their loyalty to many gods beside Allah. To do that Satan used emotions, extreme thinking, ignorance etc to make some people master and to make other people slaves. Some people unfortunately fell victim into Satan's tricks, and they have put their honourable heads down to some other people like them. By doing that they have degraded themselves, they have dishonoured their high position given by Allah Almighty. Islam never taught, that a creation of Allah can be the god of another creation. Islam never teaches about 2nd or 3rd god. Islam teaches that there is no god at all except Allah. Allah is the God, and all others are HIS creations and servants. Islam teaches mankind to be free from un-necessary slavery of many imaginary gods and to be free from being taken advantage of by others.

Behind the invention of wrong idea that husband is 2nd god, is also a trick of Satan to give husbands upper hands and to give wives lower hands. Or to make husbands lords and to make wives slaves. In different ages, Satan took opportunity of the ignorance of mankind and injected wrong poisonous ideas into them. By those ideas, Satan created the path of inequality, injustice, tyranny, abuse, oppression, and corruption. So that some will find opportunity to commit sin and other will allow the sinners to continue their sins by following them. Thus, both the oppressor and the oppressed will assist one another to spread the corruption, unhappiness in marriages, as well as they can be qualified for Allah's punishment in next life.

What is husband in Islam? A husband in Islam is not God. A husband is supposed to be a true humble servant of Allah, A leader who fears Allah, a role model of righteousness, a responsible protector and provider for wife, a leader to inspire his wife to obey Allah and Allah's messenger as he does, a leader to guard wife from worshipping other gods except Allah, a leader to save his wife from misguidance, ignorance and to lead her to the guidance of Islam with Islamic knowledge, a leader to motivate his wife to work for the pleasure of Allah to earn paradise, a leader to safeguard his wife from the wrong doings to be saved from the Hell Fire, a leader who only advises his wife what Allah and HIS messenger asked him to do, a leader who never advises his wife from his own desire, ego or selfish wants, a leader who never expect his wife to follow his wrong-doings, and a leader who always expect his wife to follow him if he is following the code of Allah etc.

Therefore, in Islam a husband is not a 2nd god. In Islam putting someone in the position of God is called Shirk (Giving partners with Allah or joining partners with Allah). In Islam Shirk is the biggest sin of all. Allah says in the holy Quran:

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

“And when Luqman said to his son while he was advising him: ‘O my son! Do not join (others) with Allah in worship: Verily, joining others in worship (with Allah) is a terrible wrong indeed.”

[Al-Quran 31:13]

Obedying a husband as 2nd god is worshipping him. In Islam obeying husband as a leader is conditional. The condition is, if husband advises according to the obedience of Allah and HIS messenger (not his own), the wife must follow it. But as soon as the husband instructs anything against the rules of Allah, the wife must not follow it. Because the husband and wife are both servants of Allah, they both must obey Allah’s rules. Both of their salvation depends on following Allah’s rules. If they defy Allah’s rules to follow their own rules, then they will commit sin, and for the sin they will be liable in the court of Allah. So, it must be very clear to Muslim husband and wife, that they are not allowed to worship one another. They are made to worship and obey Allah unconditionally in every aspect of their life.

Wrong idea 3 - “I must support my spouse unconditionally”: This is another wrong idea in many spouses. It may sound good. You may hear spouses saying, “We should love each other unconditionally.” Then they justify supporting one another in everything due to the unconditional love. Do you support that idea? Is it the choice you have taken? If you do, then allow me to ask you some questions to think. Insha Allah, your thinking will help you to correct the wrong idea in Islamic marriage. The questions are not to you but to me as well. They are for all the wise readers.

- a. *Will you support your wife to be with another man?* Would you not call it beyond boundary? Would you not feel hurt about it? Would you not try your best to prevent an affair between your wife and another man? Could you honestly support your wife if she exceeds the boundary?
- b. *Will you support your husband to be with another woman?* Would you support your husband if he intermingles with another woman? Would you ever thank him for doing that? Would you congratulate him lavishly from the bottom of your heart? Or would you feel cheated, betrayed or not appreciated?
- c. *Will you support your spouse for insulting you?* Suppose your wife insults you in front of your mother, father, and friends or even in front of your children, would you thank her for doing that? Would you feel very proud of your wife? Or if you are a wife, would you take your abusive husband to your friends and relatives or colleagues to be insulted by him? Would you really support him to insult you more?
- d. *Will you support your spouse kicking you out of home?* A young man said to me that his wife was wonderful. He was praising her so much that I had to say with a smile, “Maybe you should leave some praises for later time.” But I admired his positive thoughts about his wife. I was truly happy for him. After few months, I received a call from him. He was crying on the phone and was very distressed. I asked him the reason for crying. He said: “My wife has kicked me out of the home this morning.” Could he support his wife’s action unconditionally?
- e. *Will you support your husband to divorce you against your will?* You love your husband too much. For him you left your home. Some family members did not support your marriage because they did not like your husband. But you chose your husband over them. After few

months, you found out your husband has a short temper. With little argument, he says, “I want to divorce you. You get out of my life.” Would you support him on this?

- f. *Will you support your wife to poison you?* You found out that your wife hates you. Or she is after your insurance money. Or a husband wants to get rid of his wife for another woman or for insurance money. So, he or she tries to poison his or her spouse. If you are targeted to be poisoned, would you support that act of killing?
- g. *Will you support your husband to torture you?* Suppose your husband is very violent. He has a hot temper, and he hits you every time he is angry. He kicks you, beats you, slaps you, pulls your hair, and cuts your hands with sharp blades. He may torture you to get more money from your parents for him. Or he may torture you to leave him so he can marry another woman. Would you support his torture for your love for him?
- h. *Will you support your husband to sell you for money?* Some husbands only care about money. To them money is everything and their wife is second. They can bet their wives in gambling. If a husband wants to sell his wife to bad people for money, would that wife support it if she has less morality for the love of her husband?

I gave some questions above for the readers to find the answer to the question, “Can a spouse support everything unconditionally that another spouse does?” The obvious answer is, “no”. A spouse should support the other spouse for only good things and should not support the spouse in wrong things.

Why then some people take this wrong idea? There are so many reasons why some people take this wrong idea. Or Satan has injected this idea to accommodate many wrong things among people. Briefly I shall list a few reasons below:

- *To justify immorality:* Some people may take this wrong idea to justify their immorality. They know that they will cross the boundary in their marriage, so they train their minds to take it easy. So, that when one will cross the boundary, can expect the other one to support it.
- *To get support in crimes:* Some people buy this wrong idea to increase their support in crime. For example, husband is a thief, and he wants his wife to lie for him, so that he can continue stealing with the support of his wife. With this kind of motivation, so many married couples are committing crimes by supporting one another.
- *For own selfish reasons:* Some people take this wrong idea in marriage for their own selfish desires, greed etc. For example, if a wife is greedy for money and is crazy for an extravagant lifestyle, then she would choose to keep quiet, when her husband is earning money from bribe. She would support her husband in this case unconditionally because she is a beneficiary, and that extra money would facilitate her extravagance.
- *Out of ignorance:* Some people take this wrong idea out of ignorance. They do not know what their rights and responsibilities are. They do not know for what things they will be punished by Allah. So, any ideas that is put forward they take it without seeking knowledge about it.
- *Out of extreme emotion:* Some other people take this wrong idea out of extreme emotion. They take the definition of “true love” as supporting one another unconditionally in marriage. They think that is the ideal love. They do not realize that it is an extreme and wrong idea.
- *Satan makes it seem right:* Satan make wrong things seeming right for mankind. Unless married people have clear idea about the purpose of their life and their marriage and how Allah wants them to fulfil their purpose, they can be in a vulnerable position to be deceived by Satan. But people accept it due to their lack of divine knowledge. They think any idea is a good idea if it feels right in them. But sometimes what humans feel is the result of their selfish

desires or a bad inspiration from Satan. Only divine guidance is the criteria to check which feeling is best and which feeling is worst. Or to check which idea is correct and beneficial and which idea is wrong and harmful.

What is Islamic teaching regarding supporting spouse? Islam teaches to be responsible to avoid failure in the test in Islamic marriage. It teaches that marriage is not a free game that anyone can play it any way. It teaches that Allah is testing spouses through marriage, whether they follow Allah's guidance in marriage or not. It teaches that to pass the test, spouses cannot be blindly doing whatever they like. Nor they can support each other blindly against Allah's law. Allah's Message is:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

“You help one another in righteousness and in good deeds, but do not help one another in sin and evil: Fear Allah: Because Allah is strict in punishment.”

[Al-Quran 5:2]

Wrong idea 4 - “Husband and wife have equal rights in marriage”: This is also a wrong idea. It sounds good but not practical. Allah did not make husband and wife equal. Then how can there be equal rights for them. In some areas husbands has more rights and in other areas, wives have more rights. Each of them has shortcomings and strength. Everything in them is not equal. For example, a husband is strong physically, wife is weaker than husband physically, a husband can do more physical work, a wife can do comparatively less physical work, husband has no monthly period with pain, wife has monthly period with pain, husband is generally tough to face the tough world, wife is generally gentle equipped with love, husband can never be pregnant, wife is designed to be pregnant, husband is not so good with nurturing children, and wife is best suitable for nurturing children etc.

Allah has created men and women with differences, to do different jobs efficiently. Each one will have to depend on another to complement. Therefore, they are not equal in every aspect, then the rights also should not be equal in every aspect. For example, in the difference of physicality how can you make equal rights? Or in the difference in childbearing how can you make equal rights? Or in the difference in nurturing ability how can you make equal rights? That's why Islam teaches about fair rights between husband and wife. Fair right means most appropriate right, exact the right one deserves, no less or no more, no one is subject to disadvantage, and just right etc.

Islam divides the rights of husband and wife in three main different categories based on fairness, such as:

Category 1: *Both husband and wife will get equal rights in some areas:* Examples are, equal rights in offering and receiving love, giving and receiving best manner, treating one another equally with respect, love and mercy, devoting for one another sincerely, in mutual consultations for decision making, in sharing joy and happiness, in sharing trials and tribulation, equal rights in bed-sharing, in loving children and guiding children, to be best role model for children, equal rights in eating and drinking Halal food and drink, leading conjugal life according to Allah's codes, doing good deeds and earning rewards from good deeds, equal right to be in Paradise, to be Muttaqi (God fearing) to receive high honour in the sight of Allah, and the equal rights to believe in Allah and worship Allah etc. There are many verses from the Quran, and many Hadis to support what I listed briefly above. Just to be clearer maybe I should mention a verse from the Holy Quran, which shows how husband and wife has equal rights in terms of good deeds and rewards.

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ٩٧

“Whosoever works right, (be it) man or woman, and has Faith (in Allah), surely, to him (or her) WE will give a good life, a life that is good and pure, and WE will bless upon those their reward by the best of their actions.”

[Al-Quran 16:97]

Category 2: Wife will get more rights in some areas: But in some areas a wife contributes more than her husband, and she receives the fair rights in those areas. Such as,

- Wife will receive 3 times more gratitude from children because she goes through 9 months of suffering in pregnancy, goes through the fine line between life and death through child delivery, and she contributes to rearing the baby through sleepless nights, breast feeding and so on. May Allah bless all the mothers, Ameen! In the Holy Quran, Allah has mentioned these 3 major contributions from a mother which hints why a mother has 3 times more rights to receive gratitude from children.

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَلَدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا ۚ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا ۚ وَحَمْلُهُ وَفِصَالُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا

“And WE commanded that it is essential for man to be kind to his parents (This part is equal right): In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. The carrying of the (child) to get him to eat food (away from the mother’s milk) is (a period of) thirty months.”

[Al-Quran 46:15]

- Wife will receive Mahr from husband in marriage. This is her right to receive a wedding gift from her husband as a token of love, respect, appreciation, and taking her responsibility to provide and to protect. In the Holy Quran, Allah has commanded husbands to offer Mahr (Dowry=wedding gift) for their wives:

وَأَتُوا النِّسَاءَ صَدُقَاتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً

“And give the women (in Marriage) their dowry as a gift.”

[Al-Quran 4:4]

- Wife will receive provisions from husband. Wife has huge responsibilities about getting pregnant, childbirth trauma, rearing the child, taking care of household work and on top of it some of their jobs or other social services. Allah made it compulsory on husbands to provide for their wives but left it voluntary for wives. That distribution is fair. If here we want equality, then it becomes unfair. For example, then wife must carry too much responsibility in the name of equal rights. If a wife is expected to take equal responsibility in providing food, then that is not equal right. If she must bear the 50% cost, then going through monthly pain, then going through pregnancy, then going through childbirth with all the blood loss, then taking major share in rearing the child, then fulfilling the need for her husband, then doing household work more than husband, then does it sound like equal rights to you? Isn't it too much on a wife in the name of equal rights? Allah has distributed the rights and responsibilities, considering husbands and wife's capacity and contributions fairly. Allah has chosen, that husband should provide for wife.

وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ

“And tasked with supporting them financially.”

[Al-Quran 4:34]

- Wife will receive rights to do less risky jobs. Due to the softness in nature, wife makes major contribution in mothering, nurturing, caring jobs. But husbands are given to take care of harder jobs like earning, protecting the wife and children from danger, fighting

even if necessary to protect wife and kids. Allah made it obligatory on husbands to protect their families from enemy or evil doers. But that risky job is not obligatory on wife. Again, this is Allah's fair distribution. In the Holy Quran Allah says clearly:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ

“Men are the caretakers (Protectors and maintainers) of women, as men have been provisioned (One more strength than other) by Allah over women.”

[Al-Quran 4:34]

- Wife will receive wealth share from father and husband. Wife receives share from paternal property. What she brings in marriage belongs to her. Husband has no right on her property. It is up to her to share or not to share with husband. If she shares, that is her generosity, and Allah will reward her for that. On the other hand, whatever husband earns, she has automatic share in it, even though she is not obligated to earn. Allah commands about it in the Holy Quran:

لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ ۚ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا ٧

“There is a share for men and a share for women, for what is left by parents and those nearest related; whether the property be small or large-A determined share.”

[Al-Quran 4:7]

- Wife will have right to earn paradise with less risky duties. For example, 5 times prayer is forgiven for a wife during her menstruation, fasting during menstruation is made easy for her to break the fast and then she can make up in a later convenient time, for wife going to the Mosque to pray is not compulsory and she can earn same reward for praying at home, joining holy War is not compulsory on a wife and she can earn same reward for her righteous stay at home, and she will receive the status of martyr if she dies with complications from childbirth etc. An example, Hon Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Holy Messenger of Allah said:

إِذَا صَلَّتِ الْمَرْأَةُ خَمْسَهَا وَصَامَتْ شَهْرَهَا وَحَفِظَتْ فَرْجَهَا وَأَطَاعَتْ زَوْجَهَا قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي الْجَنَّةَ مِنْ أَيِّ أَبْوَابِ عَوْفِ الْجَنَّةِ شِئْتَ (احمد ، عبد الرحمن بن عوف)

“If a wife prays 5 times, observes fast in the month of Ramadan, safeguards her private parts (From illegal actions), and obeys her husband (In righteous things), then she can enter in Paradise through any door she wants to.”

[Abu Nu'em fee Hilyah]

Category 3: Husband will get more rights on some areas: In some areas husband has more contribution and higher responsibility. So, considering his high responsibility he gets some special fair rights as well. Some examples are as following:

- Rights to be the leader of the family. Family is a team needs a captain who will take more responsibility and in Islamic marriage, husband has the right to be that captain. Allah says in the holy Quran:

وَاللرِّجَالُ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ دَرَجَةٌ

“But men have a degree (Of responsibility) over them (wives).”

[Al-Quran 2:228]

Hon Abdullah ibn U'mar (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Holy Messenger of Allah said:

وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُمْ

“And husband is responsible about his family. And he will be questioned in the Day of Judgement about his responsibility.”

[Muttafaqun A'laih]

- Rights to gain obedience and support from wife in good leadership. If the captain leads according to Allah's codes, and the teachings of Allah's messenger, then the wife must not defy, be obstinate, resist, discourage, and fight against it for her own desires or traditions. If she does, the team will be weak and misguided from Allah's Path. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَنَاطٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ

“Therefore, the righteous women are devoutly obedient and guard in (the husbands) absence what Allah would have asked them guard.”

[Al-Quran 4:34]

Therefore, equal rights in marriage are an unrealistic expectation. It sounds good but not fair or realistically possible. Islam teaches about fair rights rather than equal rights.

Wrong idea 5 - “I can beat my wife if she disobeys me”: This is another wrong idea many husbands like to hold on to. This idea gives some husbands power to control their wives. So, they want a licence to justify controlling their wives by beating or inflicting pain and injuries. Wife beaters may have the following lacking in them:

- *Lacking in explaining:* Some husbands are not good at communicating and explaining with their wives. So, when wives ask them questions, without explaining properly they feel frustrated and angry. They try to hide their own weakness by beating and/or by shouting at their wives.
- *Lacking in knowledge:* Some husbands lack knowledge and do wrong. When they are challenged by their wives, they hide their weakness by applying force like beating their wives.
- *Lacking in patience:* Some husbands lack patience, and out of impatience they inflict pain on their loving wives.
- *Lacking in compassion:* Best husbands are more kind to their wives. They feel the pain of their wives. But if husbands have hard heart with lack of kindness, they can only beat their wives cruelly.
- *Lacking in confidence:* Some husbands are domineering because they are lacking in them, or in their performance, and they beat wives fearing of losing them. Often domineering nature is to hide some secrets.
- *Lacking in role-modelling:* If a husband is a best role model by his words and actions, then his wife will be inspired by him. But if he is not, yet expect his wife to be perfect, then tensions arise, and sometimes, that husband can become a wife beater.
- *Lacking in anger control:* When husbands cannot control their anger can hurt their wives.

Why do some husbands beat their wives? I asked some of them in the villages, and they gave me the following reasons:

To make wives obey them: This is a wrong idea. Beating never wins a heart; it only suppresses a person. Beating may turn a lovely wife into a slave ruining the loving relationship.

To control their wives: Wrong again. Husband can use love to influence wife's heart without beating. Allah gave love and mercy to make bond between the spouses to support one another, not the beating.

To correct their wives: Wrong again. At what cost a husband beats his wife for correction? He must consider all the far-reaching loss in beating. Nice advice, love and care can be far more effective in correction between spouses.

To discipline their wives: Wrong again. The best way of correcting one another is becoming a best role-model. Educating and reminding are best tools too.

Some husbands think that their wife is bound to obey them with every single action. They think they are such bosses that they have right to command anything, and if wives refuse to obey them, then they can beat their wives. Does Islam allow that? No! Islam never gives a husband the role of God. Islam only commands husband to practice Allah's rules, not to follow own rules over his wife. Let me give few examples to explain this.

- If a husband asks his wife not to pray 5 times, then she must not follow his advice against Allah's rules. For that he must not beat her to force her to follow his wrong way. Islam made that teaching very clear. Hon Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Holy Messenger of Allah said:

لَا طَاعَةَ فِي مَعْصِيَةٍ، إِنَّمَا الطَّاعَةُ فِي الْمَعْرُوفِ

“There is no obedience in disobedience to Allah. Obedience only applies in just and good deeds.”

[Muttafaqun A'laih]

- Allah's law is that both husband and wife must stay away from adultery. If husband practices adultery, and wife oppose to it, can he beat her? No, he is not allowed to force her accepting his sinful conduct. Or if he asks his wife to sale her body for money, which is against Allah's codes, and she refuses to follow his sinful order, can he beat her? Again, he has no right to beat her. Can he say to his wife, “I am your leader. Follow what I command?” He cannot because he got the trust of leadership totally wrong.
- Some neutral actions are not mandatory in Islam. Such as eating salt or not, drinking tea with sugar or not. If wife loves tea and husband does not, can husband say, “I am your leader. You must like what I like, or else I have right to beat you.” Has he got this right to beat her? Off course not.

I gave some examples above to explain that husband has no licence to beat his wife for inflicting pain, injuries, humiliation, and grief. Now the question is, what is the Islamic teaching regarding the treatment to wives? We should look at some evidence from the Holy Quran and Sunnah below. With each point, I shall add a tag question to prove our thoughts about wife-beating.

Based on mutual love: Allah commanded in the Quran 30.21 that the relationship between the husband and wife in Islamic marriage is **based on true mutual love and mercy**.

وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۚ ٢١

So, where is beating and violence found in love and mercy?

Husband must treat wife with kindness: In the Quran 4.19 Allah commands husbands saying,

وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ۚ ١٩

“Live with them on a basis of kindness and justice. If you dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good.” Again, in kind and just treatment where is the room for beating, abuse, and violence?

Based on compromise: In the Quran Allah commands both husband and wife to deal with issues through compromise. In Quran 4.128 Allah says,

وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ

“Compromise is the best.” So, in compromise where is the room for becoming a cruel beater?

Husband should follow the policy of forgiveness and kindness: In the Quran 64.14 Allah commands the husbands as,

وَإِنْ تَعَفُّوا وَتَصْفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ١٤

“But if you forgive them and overlook, and cover up (their faults), Surely Allah is Often forgiving, Most Merciful.” So, where is room for wife beating if husband should forgive his wife?

Husband should not beat wife: In a Hadis reported by Abdullah ibn Jam’aa (May Allah be pleased with him), Holy Messenger of Allah said:

لَا طَاعَةَ فِي مَعْصِيَةِ، إِنَّمَا الطَّاعَةُ فِي الْمَعْرُوفِ

“No one should beat his wife like a slave and then at the end of the day sleeps with her.”

[Muttafaqun A'laih] So, where is room for wife beating?

Respect the Halal hobbies of wives: In a Hadis Ayesha (May Allah be pleased with her) said:

أَنَّهَا كَانَتْ تَلْعَبُ بِالْبَنَاتِ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَتْ وَكَانَتْ تَأْتِينِي صَوَاجِبِي فَكُنَّ يَنْقِمَعْنَ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَتْ فَكَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُسَرِّبُهُنَّ إِلَيَّ وَقَالَ فِي حَدِيثٍ جَرِيرٍ كُنْتُ أَلْعَبُ بِالْبَنَاتِ فِي بَيْتِهِ وَهُنَّ اللَّعَبُ.

I used to play with doll in front of Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). I had some play mates (Some girls) who used to play with me. Whenever Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to enter my mates used to hide, but holy prophet (Peace be upon him) used to send them back to me. Then they used to play with me.” [Muttafaqun A'laih]

Wife beaters are not good people: Holy prophet (s.a.w) said in a Hadis,

لَقَدْ طَافَ بِأَلِ مُحَمَّدٍ نِسَاءٌ كَثِيرٌ يَشْكُونَ أَزْوَاجَهُنَّ لَيْسَ أَوْلَنُكَ بَخَارِكُمْ

“Some of your wives are complaining against their husbands (about beating) to the prophet’s family, they are not good people amongst you.” [Abu Dawood, Ibn Maazah and Daremy]

From the above perspective of Quran and Sunnah one finds how Islam teaches husbands and wives to have a loving relationship based on mutual respect and mercy. Therefore, Islam does not allow or condones domestic violence, inflicting pain, and injuries on wives. Besides, we should also clarify about the nature of Holy prophet (pbuh) by putting a simple question forward. That question is, “Was holy prophet (pbuh) a wife beater?” The answer is in the true testimony of his (pbuh) wife Hon Ayesha (May Allah be pleased with her). She said:

مَا ضَرَبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا قَطُّ بِيَدِهِ وَلَا امْرَأَةً وَلَا خَادِمًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَجَاهِدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

“Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) never had beaten anyone with his hands except in the holy war for the sake of Allah. He never had beaten his wives nor the servants.” [Muslim]

Wrong idea 6 - “Quran permits wife-beating”: This is another wrong idea. After finding the general rules from Quran and Sunnah regarding the kind treatment, we are sure that Islam

teaches for loving relationship, and not violence in relationship. Islam does not give licence to husbands to be violent towards their wives. But some people take one verse from the Holy Quran out of context to say that Quran allows wife-beating and domestic violence. They do not try to look at the holistic view from the Quran and Sunnah. If Quran allows beating and violence, then how come in the same Quran there is command to have relationship based on love and mercy? The answer is that Quran never contradicts with its message, but some people may misinterpret this verse due to misunderstanding. The verse in the Holy Quran is in below:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۚ فَالْصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۚ وَاللَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَأَهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَأَصْرِبُوهُنَّ ۚ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ۝ ٣٤

“Men are the caretakers of women, as men have been provisioned by Allah over women and tasked with supporting them financially. And righteous women are devoutly obedient and, when alone, protective of what Allah has entrusted them with.¹ And if you sense ill-conduct from your women, advise them ‘first’, ‘if they persist, ‘do not share their beds, ‘but if they still persist, ‘then discipline them ‘gently’.² But if they change their ways, do not be unjust to them. Surely Allah is Most High, All-Great. [Al-Quran 4:34]

Now, notice in the above verse that:

- It never asks for violence nor condones violence,
- Does not give general licence to beat wife for any disobedience,
- It specifies that discipline only in faults that is immoral sexual illicit acts prohibited by Allah,
- It offers some solution for correction to save the marriage from immorality and breaking away,
- It offers step by step actions,
- It offers the last option to beat lightly for example with finger, Miswak, Toothbrush or with flowers as a symbol of displeasure and disapproval,
- This beating is a symbolic touch to a loved one for serious illegal misconduct should there is any,
- This light strike is a guidance to handle the most delicate disputes with extreme care and wisdom,
- This light strike is not to suggest any physical injury, mental or emotional damage with the aim of inflicting pain and damage etc.

Comment from an Islamic scholar about wife beating: Dr. Jamal Badawi, Professor at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, and a cross-appointed faculty member in the Departments of Religious Studies and Management, adds:

"If the problem relates to the wife's behaviour, the husband may exhort her and appeal for reason. In most cases, this measure is likely to be sufficient. In cases where the problem persists, the husband may express his displeasure in another peaceful manner, by sleeping in a separate bed from hers. There are cases, however, in which a wife persists in bad habits and showing contempt of her husband and disregard for her marital obligations. Instead of divorce, the husband may resort to another measure that may save the marriage, at least in some cases. Such a measure is more accurately described as a gentle tap on the body, but never on the face, making it more of a symbolic measure than a punitive one.

Even here, that maximum measure is limited by the following:

- It must be a rare exception to the repeated exhortation of mutual respect, kindness, and good treatment. Based on Quran and Hadith, this measure may be used in the cases of lewdness

on the part of the wife or extreme refraction and rejection of the husband's reasonable requests on a consistent basis (nushuz). Even then, other measures, such as exhortation, should be tried first.

- As defined by Hadith, it is not permissible to strike anyone's face, cause any bodily harm or even be harsh. What the Hadith qualifies as "**Dharban ghayra mubarrih**", or light striking, was interpreted by early jurists as a (symbolic) use of siwak! They further qualified permissible "striking" as that which leaves no mark on the body.
- The permissibility of such symbolic expression of the seriousness of continued refraction does not imply its desirability. In several Hadiths, the Prophet (p.b.u.h) discouraged this measure. Here are some of his sayings in this regard:

"Do not beat the female servants of Allah".

"Some (women) visited my family complaining about their husbands (beating them). These (husbands) are not the best of you."

In another Hadith the Prophet (p.b.u.h) is reported to have said: "How does anyone of you beat his wife as he beats the stallion camel and then he may embrace (sleep with) her?"

- True following of the Sunnah is to follow the example of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) who never resorted to that measure, regardless of the circumstances.
- Islamic teachings are universal in nature. They respond to the needs and circumstances of diverse times, cultures, and circumstances. Some measures may work in some cases and cultures or with certain persons but may not be effective in others. A "permissible" act is neither required, encouraged nor forbidden. In fact, it may be to spell out the extent of permissibility, such as in the issue at hand, rather than leaving it unrestricted or unqualified, or ignoring it all together. In the absence of strict qualifiers, persons may interpret the matter in their own way, which can lead to excesses and real abuse.
- Any excess, cruelty, family violence, or abuse committed by any "Muslim" can never be traced, honestly, to any revelatory text (Quran or Hadith). Such excesses and violations are to be blamed on the person(s) himself, as it shows that they are paying lip service to Islamic teachings and injunctions and failing to follow the true Sunnah of the Prophet (p.b.u.h)."

Allah Almighty knows best.

Chapter 6: Give up bad qualities for happiness.

Bad qualities injure happy marriage.

Marriage is a very close relationship between a husband and a wife. They are so close emotionally that any little or big actions or treatment from one easily influences the other. Especially bad qualities in both or in one of them affect them in many ways. Bad qualities bring unhappiness in marriage and ruin the happiness. So, for the sake of happiness in marriage Muslim spouses must give up bad qualities. How does bad qualities ruin happiness in marriage? Below are some examples:

- **Bad qualities hurt the feeling:** A bad quality from a spouse hurts the feeling of the other spouse very easily. Suppose a husband puts down his wife in front of family members. He hurts her feelings even though he is good in other ways. He may spend for her lavishly, he takes her for expensive holidays, and he says many times daily that how much he loves her. But one single bad quality of putting her down, will make her unhappy, despite all other good qualities. So why ruin all good by adding a drop of poison?
- **Bad qualities invite bad reactions:** When you hit the shadow the shadow hits you back. Often that's what people say. It is true in most cases. Some spouses take and take and then they explode one day. The explosion does not bring good reactions at all. It brings unhappy and unpleasant reactions. So why burn down all the good with backfire of bad qualities?
- **Bad qualities weaken trust:** Bad qualities are so powerful like rays. These rays penetrate the heart and mind. This penetration burns their inner trust. What element makes a strong bond between husband and wife? That element is called "trust" which is invisible and not written in any marriage contract. That trust is built between them based on good qualities, but when bad qualities are practiced, slowly the foundation of that trust starts wearing down. One cannot fix that wearing with plaster, or medicine, or by surgery. The only way that foundation of trust can be made stronger is by continuous good treatment with good qualities and by avoiding bad treatment with bad qualities.
- **Bad qualities break the unity:** Husband and wife must be a happy, trustworthy, and united team. They cannot achieve success unless they have unity in them. But bad qualities break their trust, and mistrust prevents them to rely on each other, or to cooperate with each other with heart and souls. Then they become disunited. When unity in mind goes away, then it works like an auto-immune disease which begin its destruction from within. When husband and wife have unity in hearts, they can face the world together. But as soon as their inner united hearts is disunited, then their destruction begins from within. Therefore, they must avoid bad qualities to save themselves from the devastating disunity.
- **Bad qualities are the worst role modelling:** Every bad spouse with bad qualities is the worst role model in the family especially for children. Whatever children see their parents doing, they take their parent's actions as the perfect examples. To the child the parents are their inspiration. They like to copy their parents. So, Muslim spouses must be careful about their bad qualities because someone will copy them as their role model.
- **Bad qualities make them adapt with bad:** Once others accept a bad quality from a father or a mother, then they start adapting with it. They accommodate some tyranny, some unfairness, some rudeness, laziness etc for the sake of peace in the house. Then those bad habits become the norm in the family. One day some family members do not consider the bad quality as bad. That's how some children are trained with certain bad habits, because they saw it at home and to them that is cool. Some bad treatments in marriage travels from one generation to the future generations.

- **Bad qualities make them sink in sin:** At some stage one begins sinning with a bad quality, and that sin continues to grow. For example, one spouse practices lying in jokes, which is a sin, then if there are no correction efforts by others, then that is also sin for other, then if others follow that sinful wrong quality, then they all sink into the sin.
- **Bad qualities reduce Allah's blessings:** No marriage can enjoy the taste of happiness unless they are blessed by Allah. Righteous treatment earns rewards from Allah and receives Allah's blessings. On the other hand, sinful bad qualities lose the blessings of Allah. Allah never blesses on wrong practices.
- **Bad qualities attract unhappiness:** So, the result of bad qualities is hurt feeling, angry reactions, arguments, disputes, bullying, abuse, disrespect, disunity, no blessings etc. All these bad results take the married couple towards unhappiness. Unhappiness therefore is earned by spouses by their own bad habits, bad treatments, and bad qualities.

Allah sent HIS messenger (pbuh) as a best role model for Islamic married couples. Holy prophet (pbuh) practised only good qualities in his marriage, and he taught his wives to practice best qualities in marriage as well. The result was happy marriage. So, Allah commands Muslim spouses to practice good qualities that HIS messenger practised, and to avoid what HIS messenger asked them to avoid. In the Holy Quran Allah Almighty commands:

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۙ

“So, take what the Messenger gives to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you. And fear Allah; for Allah is Strict in punishment.”

[Al-Quran 59:7]

Bad qualities that damage happy marriage.

Now we can go through a few bad qualities with description. These bad qualities are very commonly known and does not need much explaining. But I decided to include them briefly for reminding wise people.

Over suspicion: If you have an over suspicious husband or wife, then you are in big trouble. You would not like your spouse to suspect you, would you? If he or she does suspect, would you feel happy? Or would you be annoyed? Sometimes, a spouse may have suffered from betrayal in the past and since then he or she is stuck into that situation. For that past, a spouse may feel vulnerable to be cheated again and looks at the spouse's every move with suspicion. With suspicion, often the person makes a mountain out of a mole hill and exaggerates everything out of proportion. Often people act upon suspicion, and it damages the spouse's reputation, therefore regretting later. A spouse must have trust on the other spouse. Having trust brings peace in his or her heart and saves him or her from over-beating and over-worry in the mind and emotion. Give up suspicion and rely on evidence. Until something is proven feel or think positive. That is healthy for the wellbeing for the whole marriage. Allah commands believers not to be suspicious:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ

“O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion (as much as possible): Indeed, some (types of) suspicions are sins:”

[Al-Quran 49:12]

Giving room for suspicion: Too much suspicion must be given up. But what about giving room for another spouse to become suspicious? A spouse should not be careless in doing things that may raise suspicion. Satan is always looking for a chance to create misunderstanding. So, one must avoid actions that may bring suspicion into the heart of another. This avoidance is to prevent suspicion. Suppose a spouse is talking on the phone but stopped talking as soon as the

other spouse came in. Satan will surely try to inject the thought in another heart saying, “What was the secret that he or she could not share with you? Is there anything fishy going on?” or a husband giggle when talking on the phone, and his wife asks, “Who were you talking with?” He says, “It’s not important for you to know about.” He gave room for Satan to inject suspicion. Allah reminds the believers that Satan is looking for opportunity as the enemy to inject suspicion or misunderstanding about one another.

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا

“Surely, Satan is an enemy to you: So, treat him like an enemy.”

[Al-Quran 35:6]

Spying: Is there any husband or wife who like being spied on? Will you enjoy freedom, if your own spouse spies about what you do, who you talk to, or what you talk about? Will it increase respect and trust between you two? Spying is a bad quality. It shows one does not trust another. Once spying is revealed misunderstanding deepens, trust begins to lessen. Sound stability in marriage gets shaken up. Spying must be avoided. Never ask your family member to spy on your spouse. If you have any valid suspicion, instead of spying ask gently, diplomatically, and wisely. That is a far better straight-forward honest approach. But spying is a secret action in the absence of other person’s knowledge, and a violation of other spouse’s privacy. It is like stealing secretly and once you are caught, then your dignity is under question for the rest of your life. So why should taking the risk of importing problems in marriage? That’s why it is best to give up spying in marriage against each other. Allah commands believers not to spy.

وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا

“And do not spy on each other.”

[Al-Quran 49:12]

Not spending time together: After marriage, do you spend more time with your friends than your wife, and vice versa? If you do, you are an unwise spouse. Remember, you are making a gap between your spouse, and that gap might be filled with something dangerous. You are supposed to be the garment for another. Garments and body are so close that if the clothing moves a little then the skin can register it. Do not create separate worlds for you two. You must make a world for you two and share your feelings, joys, enjoyments, warmth, love, and kindness. Make time for one another for play, talking, listening to each other’s concerns. Follow Allah’s Messenger Muhammad (pbuh). He (pbuh) spent time with spouses despite busy life. An example:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا أَنَّهَا كَانَتْ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي سَفَرٍ قَالَتْ فَسَابَقْتُهُ فَسَبَقْتُهُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ فَلَمَّا حَمَلْتُ اللَّحْمَ سَابَقْتُهُ فَسَبَقَنِي فَقَالَ " هَذِهِ بِنَاتُكَ السَّيِّئَةِ "

Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that once she was with Prophet (pbuh) in a journey. She said: “I joined in a running competition with Holy Prophet (pbuh) and I won. Later, I became bit heavier and had another running competition with Holy Prophet (pbuh) and he won. After winning he (pbuh) said to me, ‘This winning of mine is over your winning in the past’.”

[Abu Dawud]

Revealing secret information: Every marriage has some secrets and that must be kept secret. Marriage must have some privacy around certain special things. But family, friends, and relatives often (some of them) put pressure on you to tell them some of the secrets. They love to gossip about those private issues. Once you start telling them, then it is hard to stop. Your private issues will spread around. Then, you will lose respect from some people. You will be looked at as bad and you would be subject to be laughed at. So, deal with your private issues privately and

honourably, and push away any mischief coming in between you two. For your privacy, no one can take advantage of your privacy, nor will your ugly things come out, and you will be a strong united team. Abu Sayeed Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Messenger of Allah said:

إن من أشر الناس عند الله منزلة يوم القيامة الرجل يفضي إلى امرأته وتفضي إليه ثم ينشر سرها

On the Day of Judgment, the worst person to Allah is the one, who goes to his wife, and she comes to her husband; and then reveal that secret information to other people.”

[Muslim]

Obstinacy: Obstinacy is a sign of mental imbalance. It is like a strait jacket without flexibility. Obstinate spouses do not see the other points of view except their own. They do not like to compromise, and for that rigidity they suffer in marriage. They dislike compromising, negotiating, respecting other's view, accepting other's reasonable logics, seeing an issue with an open mind, taking moderate option, admitting own weakness, and dislike working as a team player. Often, their stubbornness can lead them to break point if they are not careful. Marriage is like a partnership business. It requires respecting each other, and heart-felt supports from one another. But if one is so obstinate, then the other one feels being looked down upon. That feeling paralyses the team spirit and so many unhappy scenarios come out into the surface. Obstinacy also comes with arrogance. Obstinacy is one of the traits of Satan. He was sure that he was the best, and Adam was opposite. With that arrogance, he refused to show respect to Adam, even when he was commanded by Allah. For that arrogance, Allah did not like him, and he received curse. Allah told Satan:

قَالَ فَأَهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا

“(Allah) Said, ‘get yourself down of it (paradise): It is not for you to be arrogant here.”

[Al-Quran 7:13]

Bad mouth: What do I mean by bad mouth? Bad mouth means talking loose to each other. Some examples are, using bad language for little dissatisfaction, cursing the other one with foul language, cursing the parent of the other spouse for his or her mistakes, cursing the friends and relatives of the spouse for his or her mistakes, shouting at the other spouse, arguing with one another in front of guests, telling private issues to the relatives to get support against the spouse, inciting the spouse for a fight, and showing disrespect to the spouse before strangers to bring a fight at home. People observe you as a couple. Only few minutes of your conversation can reveal so many things about the relationship between you and your spouse. If you have a bad mouth, then people will sense your weak, fragile relationship. Some naughty people will get in between you two to incite you against your spouse, or Satan will come in between you two, to inject ill-feelings between you two. Allah commands:

وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْزَغُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُبِينًا

“And say to my servants that they should (only) say those words that are best: Verily, Satan brings in disagreements and disharmony between them: Surely Satan is to man an open enemy.”

[Al-Quran 17:53]

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Messenger of Allah said:

سباب المسلم فسوق

“Scolding-cursing (using bad words) to a Muslim is the act of Fasiq.”

Bad mouth is a bad quality. You must check what you are talking about. You must not allow your mouth to be loose, imbalanced, and unwise in talking. It may ruin your sweet relationship.

Extremism: What is extremism? It is without moderation. When a spouse does not allow any flexibility within halal options, then he/she is an extremist. For example, one prays at night and cannot tolerate if another spouse does not pray with him/her. For that the praying spouse curses, criticizes, and humiliates another spouse every way possible. Whereas, Allah did not make night prayer compulsory, instead Allah made it voluntary. Some healthy people, or not so busy people can pray, but the praying spouse is making it compulsory on another spouse without considering the situation, health, busyness, and works etc. This extremism can break the marriage or can bring many sufferings. With extremist views, a spouse can act with cruelty, anger, and impolite words. The irony is that extremist people think that they are doing it for good, but they are damaging the marriage. Allah made HIS Deen with flexible options, so that HIS servants will find it easier to practice. Therefore, always check if you are following any extreme view regarding your spouse. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ

“Allah intends every facility for you; HE does not want to put you to difficulties.”

[Al-Quran 2:185]

Holy Prophet (s.a.w) used to choose easiest halal (permitted) option for his followers. In a Hadis Hon Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her) said:

، ما خير رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بين أمرين إلا أخذ أيسرهما ما لم يكن إثماً

“There was not even a case where Prophet (pbuh) was given two choices, and he (pbuh) had chosen the easiest option. But he (pbuh) did not choose the sinful option.”

[Bukhari-Muslim]

Impulsiveness: Impulsiveness is a mental imbalance. It does not allow the person to think well before doing or saying anything. Some people get a quick idea in their mind, and without filtering or editing those ideas they commit in something. Then they may suffer from guilt that their decision was not based on the truth, or they can suffer from the damage they have caused and from its consequences. They are dangerous like unguided missiles. Holy prophet (pbuh) advised to act after proper thinking. In a Hadis reported by Hon Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), once a man asked holy Messenger of Allah to advise him. He (pbuh) said:

، خُذِ الْأَمْرَ بِالتَّوْبِيرِ فَإِنْ رَأَيْتَ فِي عَاقِبَتِهِ خَيْرًا فَاَمْضِهِ وَإِنْ خِفْتَ غِيَا فَاْمْسَكَ

“Do anything after proper thinking. If its result seems good to you then do it, but if there is chance of harm then abstain from it.”

[Shorhe Sunnah]

Hot temper: Hot temper is another weakness in mind. Our mind is like a heater, and if you run it without proper guard, then instead of heating the room, it will burn us. If a spouse has a hot temper, then the home environment will be scary. How? Some examples:

- Another spouse will fear what to say or what not to say,
- Other spouse will often not say right thing out of fear,
- Another spouse will not feel safe around the hot-tempered spouse,
- Other spouse will not find much love in a hot-tempered spouse,
- Hot tempered spouse will terrify the household to damage the loving environment,
- Another spouse will not be able to work or deal easily with the hot-tempered spouse,

- No spouse enjoys the company of a hot-tempered spouse,
- Hot tempered person at some stage does not like himself or herself.

A wife said that she is always terrified to take her husband to a function because he has hot temper. With little disagreement, he would hit or beat someone, or he would start yelling at others. She feels her respect in the society is always at the edge just because of her hot-tempered husband. Hot temper must be avoided. Hot tempered spouse must learn self-control and must learn to be opposite which is gentle, cool, and calm. Your spouse will feel comfortable, will feel safe, and will feel peace in sharing issues with you if are a cool person. Coolness adds peaceful sweet relationship between husband and wife. Islam teaches to have gentle, calm, and cool temper. A hot-tempered person loses many benefits such as: love and respect in marriage or in society. Also, he or she loses rewards from Allah due to causing suffering for others. In a Hadis reported by Hon Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Holy Messenger of Allah said:

مَنْ يُحَرِّمُ الرِّفْقَ يُحَرِّمِ الْخَيْرَ كُلَّهُ

“Whosoever is deprived from gentleness or softness, is deprived from all the wellness.”

[Muslim]

Telling stories behind the back: Some spouses practice this bad habit. Often, good spouse with good heart do it because it is the norm in the society. In their society, when husbands meet, or wives meet, they tell stories about their spouses to others. Others enjoy the juicy gossip, and they spread it to others. In a day, everyone in the area talks about it like fishes. Or they would go to work and would talk about husband or wife as a gossip. With this talk they like to gossip about, or to pass time, or to unload some of the disappointments about the spouse, or to get some advice. But per Islam it is a terrible habit because it is gossiping against a spouse behind his or her back. If he or she hears that spouse is talking behind their back it would upset that spouse. It breaches the privacy. It taints your spouse’s respect and honour in the eyes of others. It does only give one side of the story, and many believe in it to form a one-sided idea against your spouse. If your spouse finds out that you talked behind him or her, would mistrust you from then on, and often friends give wrong advice and when wrong advice is followed, then that adds more mistakes and misery in marriage. It has many harms, and it is forbidden by Allah Almighty. Allah commands the believers in the Holy Quran not to do it.

وَلَا يَغْتَابَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا ۚ أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ ۝ ١٢

“Do not speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? No! You would hate it, but Fear Allah.”

[Al-Quran 49:12]

Laziness: No one likes a lazy person. Imagine a wife is hard working and the husband is lazy. He sits around, watches TV, leaves the bed in a mess, eats the food, and leaves the plate in the sink for his wife to clean, and then sits in the sofa and calls his wife, “Honey! Bring me a cup a tea!” How would that wife feel as a wife? Or suppose a husband is very active but his wife is lazy. He gets up to pray Fajr when she sleeps. He then eats breakfast, and she is still sleeping. Then he goes to work and comes back home when she is having a long bath. He asks his wife with a hungry tummy, “Honey! Is food cooked?” She replies, “Can’t you cook something for us quickly?” How would you feel as a husband? These things may happen between husband and wife. If one is lazy then another gets annoyed, then angry, then telling off and then bad relationship. So, laziness is not welcome for a happy marriage. Both must do their best. In a Hadis reported by Hon Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), the Holy Messenger of Allah used to say (in his supplication):

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحَزَنِ، وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ، وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْجُبْنِ، وَضَلَعِ الدَّيْنِ وَغَلَبَةِ الرِّجَالِ

“O Allah! I seek your protection from worry, grief, disability, laziness, cowardice, stinginess, burden of debt and oppression from people.”

[Muttafaqun A'laih]

Jealousy: Jealousy is a big sickness in the heart. It does not allow the spouse to relax, or to have peace of mind. It allows the flow of suspicion in the mind and make the heart burn. Jealousy also motivates the spouse to harm and sometimes, jealousy can be too much with insanity. Many marriages are being damaged due to jealousy. I had a case about two spouses who were arguing and fighting regularly. The husband does not like his wife to speak to any man with smile, and the wife cannot tolerate her husband to speak to any women. They love one another but not free from jealousy, and their jealousy made them go the extra mile to cause far more damages to them and to others. Sadly, their marriage did not last. Jealousy makes a spouse very mean, very selfish. Jealousy creates an intolerable attitude in mind giving rise to anger, cruelty to damage the other spouse. Some jealousy is minimal, and some are excessive. A spouse can become crazy paranoid with excessive jealousy. They can imagine things about the spouse to become more jealous and can even plot to kill the spouse.

Jealousy is dangerous for sweet relationship. Jealousy is prohibited in Islam. Jealousy is sinful. Jealousy burns the good deeds as fire burns the firewood. Allah commands in the holy Quran:

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ

“And it is not wise to seek out those things in which Allah has bestowed HIS gifts more freely on some of you than on others.”

[Al-Quran 4:32]

In a Hadis Hon Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Messenger of Allah said:

يَاكُمُ وَالْحَسَدُ، فَإِنَّ الْحَسَدَ يَأْكُلُ الْحَسَنَاتِ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ النَّارُ الْحَطَبَ

“Save yourselves from envy (Jealousy). Because as fire burns firewood the envy also burns your good deeds.”

[Abu Dawood]

Unforgiving: An unforgiving mind is full of pain. Unforgiving attitude is bad for own, and bad for another spouse. How is it bad for own? Some reasons are:

- *Dwelling in pain:* If one cannot forgive, it indicates the person is still deeply affected with the past emotional trauma. It also shows the person is refusing to come out of their terrible past. It shows that the normal softness of the heart is turned into hardness. An unforgiving mind broods with old pain to suffer more and more. Husband and wife cannot afford to be unforgiving in their close sweet relationship. Unforgiving nature will turn the sweet relationship into a sour one.
- *Choosing negative life:* One has choice to forgive and to move on. One may choose to be feeling positive saying, “Maybe next day the Sun will rise again, life is not always night.” Husband and wife often makes mistakes and if they can forgive one another, they choose the positive about life. But if they choose not to forgive, then they live with the negative. They condition themselves and isolate themselves from so many happy occasions just because they have not forgiven the other spouse.
- *Losing rewards:* In marriage if one forgives another, then Allah forgives the spouse who forgives his or her spouse. That is the greatest reward from Allah for forgiving spouses for Allah’s sake. Allah is forgiving and Allah loves those servants who forgive for the sake of Allah.

If spouses forgive each other for Allah's sake, then Insha Allah they will receive Allah's forgiveness on the Day of Judgment when they need it the most. Allah says:

وَإِنْ تَعْفُوا وَتَصْفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ١٤

“But if you forgive them, and overlook, and cover up (their faults), Surely Allah is Often Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

[Al-Quran 64:14]

Remember, forgiveness does not give licence for a spouse to keep doing wrong in the marriage. In case one does mistake, must feel sorry for it, must apologize, and must change the wrong to the right. If a spouse continues the wrong and expects forgiveness without changing own bad action, then there is no guarantee to the happy return. Therefore, forgiveness must not be abused.

- *Earning sin:* If after making mistake a spouse learns from the mistake, and seek forgiveness, then the other spouse should forgive him or her. A sincere apology with correction gives genuine reason to give the spouse a chance for saving the marriage from rupture. But despite sincere apology and correction, if a spouse does not forgive, then it becomes a sin for not forgiving. In a Hadis reported by Hon Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him), Holy Messenger of Allah said:

من اعتذر الي اخيه فلم يعذره او لم يقبل عذره كان عليه مثل خطيئة صاحب مكس
(البیهقي شعب الايمان)

“A person who seek forgiveness from his (her) Muslim brother (sister), yet does not forgive or does not think that the wrong doer is not fit to be forgiven, then the unforgiving person will be a sinner as an oppressor collector of U'shor (One kind of Zakah-charity)”

[Al-Bayhaki]

Cunningness: What is cunningness? It means deceitful with lies and cheatings. Can there be trust in spouses if one cheat another? Will there be full reliability on one another if they are caught in cheating? Many people in some societies deceive their spouse even before the marriage. For example:

- Will supply false age,
- Will show false qualification,
- Will show false properties to present as very rich,
- Will promise big Mahr (Dowry) to show people with the intention of not paying,
- Or any other.

They think that once marriage is done, the other spouse must accept anyway. Like that, many cunning actions or show can be in marriage to deceive one another. Cunning behaviour is dangerous for this world and in the next life. No cunning ones can deceive Allah. Allah knows their tricks, plots, and evil intentions. For evil things Allah never grants blessings. So, cunningness must be avoided in the trusting marriage relationship. Believers cannot be mean selfish manipulators. They must be trustworthy honest, fair, and truthful. In a Hadis reported by Hon Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him), Holy Messenger of Allah said:

المؤمن غر كريم والفاجر خب لئيم

“A true believer is simple and gentle; on the other hand, a sinner is cunning and mean character.”

[Ahmed. Tirmidi. Abu Dawood]

Flattery/Excessive praising: Many spouses do not realize that they use flattery to please their husbands or wives. They think it is nice to please the other spouse without thinking that flattery is harmful. You would have seen some husbands or wives are praising excessively in front of each other. For example, a husband may praise his wife for everything she does saying, “You are perfect.” Or a wife may praise everything her husband does or say. Spouses do it usually for some reasons like, to please the spouse, to show the love, to show the unconditional support, to avoid upsetting, or hoping to increase bond. But excessive praise has bigger dangers. One cannot afford to get into greater danger for just pleasing another. Some greater dangers from excessive praise are; such as, it may make the spouse feel he or she does everything right, or it may prevent a spouse seeing his or her wrongs, or it may prevent the practice of correcting one another, or it may prevent a spouse’s duty of supporting what is right and stopping what is wrong, or a spouse may receive humiliation from others for action, that was praised by own spouse.

Excessive praising is flattery; it is not real praise. In marriage, why one must please another with false praising? They should please one another with proper truthful praise. Any improper praise is sin, and sin will eventually import suffering for the couple. So, they must avoid flattery, or excessive praising to each other. They should please Allah, and to please Allah if they see one is not acting per the code of Allah, then should correct politely. In correcting they should please Allah, not to please each other. Just for example I would mention a Hadis here. In this Hadis Hon Miqdad, ibn Aswad (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Messenger of Allah said:

إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الْمَدَّاحِينَ فَاحْثُوا فِي وُجُوهِهِمُ التُّرَابَ

“When you see, someone praising excessively, fill up his or her mouth with soil (stop them).”

[Muslim]

Lie with joking: In marriage one needs to depend on another. You don’t want to be known to your spouse as a liar. Some people do not lie in serious things, but they lie while joking. They think it is a simple joke and a simple lie. But it is not simple, and it can make your spouse not take you seriously when you are really in trouble, and you are telling the truth. You must have a good image to your spouse. The image that you are truthful. Your word should be trusted by your spouse without any doubt or any question. To have that clean image and reputation you must avoid any kind of lie. Any kind of lie is a sin. For joking why would you want sin? Sin never brings benefit in you or in your spouse. If you find your spouse is lying while joking, advise him or her to give up that habit very politely, and remind him or her the following Hadis. In this Hadis Hon Bahz, ibn Hakim reported through his father from his grandfather that the Holy Messenger of Allah said:

وَيْلٌ لِمَنْ كَذَبَ لِيُضْحِكَ الْقَوْمَ ثُمَّ وَيْلٌ لَهُ ثُمَّ وَيْلٌ لَهُ

“Grief (and warning) to that person who talks and lies in his talk to make people laugh.

Grief (and warning) for him, Grief (and warning) for him.”

[Ahmed. Tirmidi. Abu Dawood. Daremy]

Breaking of Promises: Even little promises that husbands or wives make every day needs to be kept. The trust loosens gradually if spouses break their promises. Even breaking small promises can cause big damage in a marriage. Be careful when you make little promises with your spouse such as, I shall eat dinner with you, I am coming home at 11 am, I shall book a ticket for you today, I shall call your brother today informing him that you are sick, I will resign if I fail in this project, I shall pray regularly from tonight, I shall never hit you, or I shall never scold your mother etc. A little promise takes your relationship a long way. If you are a promise breaker, you get less respect in marriage. Your spouse will not trust you fully. So, in one hand, you will lose your value and

respect to your spouse and on the other hand, Allah will question you for breaking the promise. Promise is a trust; it is one of the foundations for a true solid bond in relationship. How true you are in your words is proven by whether you honour your promise or not. No matter how small your promise is with your spouse, never ever break it. Allah commands believers in the Holy Quran:

أَشَدُّهُ ۖ وَأَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ ۚ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا ۚ ٣٤

“And fulfil (every) promise (and commitment), verily (every) act will be questioned (on the Day of Judgment).”

[Al-Quran 17:34]

Quick blame: Husband and wife both must make small or big decisions every day. When they seek each other’s advice for a decision making, they choose to follow one spouse’s advice. If the result is not as expected, then they should not blame the one who gave the idea. Often a spouse would say, “It was your idea. See how bad the idea was. If we would choose such and such an idea it may have been successful.” Blaming like this brings problems in couples. Such as, it demotivates suggestion giving, it downgrades the one who offered the suggestion, the blaming makes the other spouse sad, the blaming may even shatter the confidence of the spouse, blaming weakens the team effort and spirit, blaming angers the other spouse and makes the other spouse react badly often saying, “I am not going to offer any advice if you ask again.”

Whatever is written in the Qadr (fate) takes place. If a spouse depends on Allah and believes strongly in Qadr, then would easily accept the result saying, “Insha Allah there must be some Khair (benefits) in it.” With strong faith one would never blame the other. Blaming and saying “If this or if that” opens the door for Satan to inject venomous suspicion between husband and wife. Therefore, blaming habit must be removed. In a Hadis reported by Hon Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him), the Holy Messenger of Allah said:

وَإِنْ أَصَابَكَ شَيْءٌ فَلَا تَقُلْ لَوْ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ كَانَ كَذَا وَكَذَا . وَلَكِنْ قُلْ قَدَرُ اللَّهِ وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ فَإِنَّ لَوْ تَفْتَحُ عَمَلَ الشَّيْطَانِ

“If in any of you face calamity (Failure) then never say like, “If I did the task such and such way would have been successful!” Rather say, “Allah kept it in Qadr. Allah does whatever HE wishes. The word “If” opens the works for Satan.”

[Muslim]

Acting without verifying: Sometimes, a spouse informs another spouse against other family members, or against neighbours. Then the other spouse, without verifying takes drastic action against family members or against neighbours. Thus, sometimes the family breaks up, fighting takes place, and many things happens which cost health, times, money or even lives. Mostly it can happen within the family about parents, brothers, or sisters. Husbands and wives must be careful to maintain fairness, and to avoid unfairness against anyone. Give room to investigate to establish the truth before drastic actions. Some spouses can be too naïve, and too trusting of the other spouse and to think, “He must be right, or she must be right.” Whereas he/she might not hear well, or might have misunderstood it, or might be advised by someone to create troubles. Often a simple misunderstanding turns into a long-standing dispute, just for one naïve and unverified action. Islam teaches to be thorough in checking information, to make sure that wrong actions are not done based on wrong information. Husband and wife needs to be very careful about it. By doing that, they can avoid many regrets and losses in marriage life. Allah commands the believers in the Holy Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ ٦

“O you who believe! If an ungodly person comes to you with any news, verify the truth, in case that you may harm people unwittingly (Unwillingly or unknowingly), and afterward must be regretful for what you have done.”

[Al-Quran 49:6]

Verifying is not done to humiliate the informing spouse, but it is done for taking the best and the safest decision to avoid any regrets, embarrassment, and humiliation later. For verifying, the informing spouse should not feel upset for following Allah’s order.

Rudeness: Rudeness is impoliteness, harshness, or roughness. Especially in talking, some spouses can be very rude. Rudeness is noticed by others easily. Rudeness is opposite to gentle speaking. Rudeness is an expression with harshness that may offend others, or hurt other’s feelings, or make another feel being told off, or may incite anger in others as reaction, or may break friendship, or may discourage people to talk to the rude person, or may get a bad reputation among families or relatives etc. Basically, no one likes rudeness or a rude person. Some wives feel embarrassed due to their husband’s rudeness to others, and some husbands may feel the same. A rude husband could be a pain to a wife, and a rude wife would be a pain to a husband. A rude comment can put your smile off dramatically. Alternatively, a polite comment can make your day happy. So, husband and wife must avoid rudeness and should practice politeness to enjoy their divine love and mercy in them without poisoning. A rude person is not a good person in the sight of Allah. May be because a rude person hurts others, ruins the happy moments, ruins the relationship, produces so many bad results that adds up more and more sins for him or for her. In a Hadis, reported by Hon Haresa ibn Wahb (may Allah be pleased with him) the Holy Messenger of Allah said:

لا يدخل الجنة الجواظ الجعظري قال والجواظ الغليظ الفظ

“Harsh and rude natured (Hard and bad natured) person will not enter into paradise.”

[Abu Dawood. Bayhaki]

Reminding for help: What is reminding for help? It means that one mentions about the favour or help he or she gave to another. Usually, spouses may remind each other to put another down, or to make another feel that they are owing to the helper, or to injure the feelings of the receiver of help, or to make the receiver feel guilty, or to hurt other purposely. Long time ago, I visited a family. I felt suffocated when husband and wife was reminding one another for an hour before I stopped them. For the readers, I shall mention only couple of their comments below:

- a. Husband: “You are an ugly girl; I gave you a favour by marrying you. You can’t repay me for that ever.”
- b. Wife: “You are a poor man, and I am rich. I did you a big favour by marrying you. You can never repay my favour.”

In their reminding, they were furious, and they attempted to attack one another few times. I noticed one thing and that is reminding did not make them happy. Each one was screaming back with anger, and disrespect. Reminding increased hurts, injuries, and pain in them. At the end they burst into tears and asked my advice. Reminding lost their true love which is to give one another without complain due to the mercy. Giving one another in marriage is also considered voluntary charity, and the reminding destroys the rewards for charity. Allah calls the believer to avoid reminding:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَبْطُلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ ءَآخِرِ

“O you who believe! Cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity, or by injury—like those who spend what they own to be seen by men but believe neither in Allah nor in the Last day.”

[Al-Quran 2:264]

Cursing: What is cursing? Cursing is wishing some sort of evil on other person such as, “Go to hell, or may you be destroyed, or may you be humiliated, or may you be beaten etc”. Cursing is a bad quality. It manifests many other bad traits in the cursing person such as; impatience, grudges, retribution, cruelty, destructive, unsympathetic, unloving, merciless, unforgiving, abusive, and out-of-control anger. As a spouse, do you want to adhere with those bad qualities? Would you be happy if your spouse is one of those? Cursing is a bad habit. Cursing incites fighting between husband and wife. It must be avoided by true believing husbands and wives. In a Hadis reported by Hon Abdullah ibn Omar (May Allah be pleased with both), the Holy Messenger of Allah said:

المؤمن ليس باللعان

“A believer cannot be the one who curses.”

[Tirmidi]

Demanding 100% liking from spouse: Do you demand that your spouse must love everything in you? Do you think you are 100% correct in everything? No, you also know that humans are full of shortcomings. Then, why do you feel angry if your spouse does not support your every decision? Why some people expect 100% support from spouses? They feel they are perfect, or they have excessive love for themselves, or they are over-controlling, or they cannot tolerate to think that they should be unsupported in everything. Marriage is an agreement to support one another in the righteous actions not in criminal or wrong actions. Marriage is to correct one another in mistakes, not to support mistakes for destructions. If you and your husband is in a boat at sea, would you expect to support another if he/she is angrily drowning that might kill you both? Allah’s message is:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

“You help one another in righteousness and in good deeds, but do not help one another in sin and evil: Fear Allah: Because Allah is strict in punishment.”

[Al-Quran 5:2]

Beating: I have discussed about beating before in this book. But here I would like to make a few quick brief points for the readers. Beating is a bad habit. Some people quickly use their hands if they do not like something. Mostly men use their hands and rarely women use their hands to beat their husbands. Some wives also beat their husbands. They use provocative words to incite a fight, and they also become violent towards husbands. Anyone knows that beating never increases love between husband and wife. The beating spouse must give up beating to maintain the loving relationship. In an Islamic marriage, a spouse should feel safe around the other spouse. One should not fear another. One should not anticipate any injury from another one. Why? Because it is a fundamental character to become a true Muslim. In a Hadis reported by Hon Abdullah ibn Amor (may Allah be pleased with him), the Holy Messenger of Allah said:

الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ

“The true Muslim is the one from whose hands and tongue other Muslims are safe.”

[Bukhari]

Laughing at one another: Muslim spouses should not laugh at each other. One may have some shortcomings, but for that shortcoming never laugh at him or at her. It can damage your sweet

relationship. It makes the other spouse feel hurt, not appreciated, looked down upon, being mocked at, and being criticised etc. When can a spouse laugh at another spouse? When a spouse is haughty, has superiority complex, insane with jealousy, sarcastic, malicious, rude, and insensitive about other's feeling, can laugh at another spouse. With laughing at your spouse, you are pushing another away from you. You are earning dislike from your spouse. Besides, Allah dislikes laughing at one another. People laugh at others when they fail to see the best part of them. Allah's message is:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ

“O you who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: It may be that they (later) are better than the former: Let not some women laugh at other women: It may be that the later are better than the former.”

[Al-Quran 49:11]

Calling in bad names: Calling an offensive nickname is also injurious to healthy relationship. Spouses may call by bad names for showing anger, or for expressing disgust, or to criticise some traits, or to make the other one suffer, or to incite the other person for a fight, or to humiliate the other person in front of others etc. But the damage caused by it comes back to the spouse saying the bad name. It is not an Islamic manner to call someone with names to hurt them, or to offend them. Allah has forbidden calling with offensive nickname in the holy Quran:

وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ ۚ بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ ۚ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ١١

“Do not defame one another, nor call each other by offensive nicknames. How evil it is to act rebelliously after having faith!”

[Al-Quran 49:11]

Arrogance: Arrogance is a big moral sickness. It is the root for many worse habits such as, unapologetic, obstinately defending, putting own pride before the truth, inability to accept own faults, inability to receive correction, haughtiness, always thinks himself or herself high, scornfulness, and not humble. An arrogant person has false pride. They hate their spouses if they do not support to inflate their ego. Arrogant spouses do not know how to respect other spouses. Their bragging, boasting, pride etc makes another spouse annoyed. It is difficult to have a reasonable moderate living with an arrogant spouse. No spouse would like his or her spouse to be arrogant. Nor does Allah love the arrogant one. Holy Quran describes:

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ١٨

“And do not turn your cheek (with pride) from men, and do not walk in arrogance on the earth: Verily, Allah does not love any arrogant boaster.”

[Al-Quran 31:18]

No mutual consultation: Marriage should not be governed by tyranny. It is a team to decide with mutual consultation to learn from one another, to include both contributions, to promote cohesiveness, to bring different ideas from both into consideration to decide the best, and to nourish love, knowledge, and experience to grow together as a best team. If there is absence of mutual consultation, then so many problems may develop such as, one will not feel respected, or one will feel dominated, or one will feel not valued enough, or different suggestions will not come for best decision, or there won't be a true team spirit, or in decisions, both will not feel part of it, or both won't be similarly enthusiastic, or the decision may not represent both of their interests, or there won't be training for the other spouse to carry on leading if one is down, or success will be less or impeded etc. Muslims spouses must practice mutual consultations to

assist, correct, encourage, and train one another. Allah commands the believers to consult in marriage:

قَدْ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا

“After due consultation, there is no blame on them if you decide on a foster mother for your baby.”

[Al-Quran 2:233]

Anger: If you have an angry spouse, then happiness will say goodbye to you. Angry spouses are sitting on the edge, looking for an excuse to explode. You are as a spouse always terrified for that explosion. You do not know how bad the explosion will be, and how far the damage will spread. Some angry spouses lose their control when they are angry, and they do not know what they are doing when angry. An angry husband may beat his wife so badly, that she needs hospitalisation. Or an angry wife may curse or scold her husband which incites him to hit back prompting a police officer to visit afterwards. Spouses must control their anger, or they must try not to get angry at each other. After all, if one harms another, it will be a loss for both. So why angry? If you can say goodbye to your anger towards one another, you have secured a calm, cool, safe, and relaxed home environment. You will feel happy in your marriage. Islam teaches for anger control. In a Hadis reported by Hon Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him), Holy Messenger of Allah said:

لَيْسَ الشَّدِيدُ بِالصُّرْعَةِ، إِنَّمَا الشَّدِيدُ الَّذِي يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ عِنْدَ الْغَضَبِ

“That person is not strong who defeats his opponent. But the real hero is that person who controls own self during anger.”

[Muttafaqun A'laih]

Fault finding: If one spouse looks for fault in another, then it is like digging one's own grave. People are buried in the grave after death, and fault finding kills the loving relationship to be buried into the unhappiness. If a spouse looks for fault, he/she might suffer from the many immoral sicknesses such as, has suspicious attitude, has Mr or Mrs negative syndrome, has inability to be satisfied, has excessive and obsessive fastidiousness, has tendency for challenge, feels self-righteous, feels others are wrong and feels other one must be wrong by hook or crook etc. Fault finders are unhappy people in their hearts. They are negative people, and they exert their energy looking for faults in others. Or maybe they are jealous people. That's why they are always critical towards other spouses. A fault-finding husband will come up with dozens of faults in his wife daily. She will want to block her ears from it. He thinks he is smart, clever but he is a loser. He is losing her respect in him. No one is perfect in marriage. You are looking for fault in your spouse, what if she starts looking for faults in you? She will find many. If you can ignore little issues and turn your mind in positive things in your spouse, then you are a true champion. You have won yourself over a terrible moral sickness. So, give up fault finding, otherwise Allah will find faults with you, and HE will punish you for it. Would you like to be punished by Allah for fault finding? Or would you like to punish your heart by finding faults in your wife or in your husband? You must not. Fault finding goes both ways. It can be from Muslim males or females. In a Hadis reported by Hon Abdullah ibn Omar (May Allah be pleased with them), the Holy Messenger of Allah said:

من يتبع عورة اخيه المسلم يتبع الله عورته ومن يتبع الله عورته يفضحه ولو في جوف رحله

“Whoever finds faults with his Muslim brother, Allah will find faults with him. And whoever Allah will find fault with, Allah will humiliate him even though if he is hiding in his own house.”

[Tirmidi]

Addiction: Addiction is a bad habit that brings lots of troubles in marriage. Addictions could be in different types such as, gambling, drugs, alcohol etc. Whatever the addiction is, the suffering is huge for the family. Some sufferings are such as, deterioration of health, abnormal behaviour, loss of sanity, loss of income, financial ruin, domestic violence, family abuse, loss of moral character, aversion to prayer, hindrance to remember Allah, earning of sin, and marriage break up etc. Addiction is a deed of Satan. Enemy Satan wants to ruin people with many tricks. Addiction is one of those tricks. If Satan can hook a spouse up with addiction that is all Satan can do to break the family easily or can make the marriage a living hell. In my childhood, I knew a family. The man was a gambler. He used to lose money most of the time. His wife and kids used to wait for him to return from shop with groceries, but he used to come back home angry. Neighbours could hear screaming at his wife, as he used to beat her every now and then. Later, he sold everything except his house. Islam calls the believers to avoid addiction totally. Allah commands in the Holy Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَمُ رَجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ٩٠

“O you who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, stones (for idyllic gestures), and (divination by) arrows, are (all most) undesirable of Satan’s tricks (and his works), Avoid such (undesirable things), so that you may prosper.”

[Al-Quran 5:90]

Crime: If you have a criminal spouse, you are in trouble. You are now in dilemma and stuck between two rocks. If you support your spouse in crime, then you are earning sin, and you will also face your law of the land if you get caught. But if you do not support your spouse’s crime, then your spouse may harm you and you may either live in agony or you may be over with the marriage. Crime of any sort brings anxieties, worries, humiliations and suffering for the family. Suppose a husband is jailed for bribing, then wife and kids suffer in many ways and forms. Or if a spouse is fined by tax department a large amount of money, then the whole family may suffer financially, or to the least their prosperity will be hindered. So, do not go near a crime due to greed. Some spouses push other spouses for big money, for a luxurious life. Due to pressure the spouse starts taking bribes or invests money with interest. These are crimes in the sight of Allah, and you must pay consequences for that. So, do not encourage your spouse to do crime of any sort, and do not bow down to the pressure of your spouse to take unfair means. Save yourself from troubles. Most importantly, avoid crimes to avoid Allah’s punishment. An example of crime in the Holy Quran:

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتُدْخِلُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ١٨٨

“And do not eat up one another’s property among yourselves for show or pettiness, and do not use it as bribe for the judges, with intent that you may eat up wrongfully and knowingly (even) a little of (other) people’s property.”

[Al-Quran 2:188]

Illegal Haram Income: Illegal haram income blocks the blessings of Allah in marriage. Money without Allah’s blessings cannot make spouses happy. Regarding income, some couples make mistakes. They think more money will make their marriage happier. A husband may say, “I am doing it for us, for you and me, so we can enjoy a happy life.” But he does not realise that haram money comes with bad strings attached. The greatest string of all is, that Haram earning brings immoralities in husband and wife and in children, and due to immorality, love, respect, mercy, peace, and happiness all deteriorate to cause sufferings. Suppose a police officer takes bribes to provide for his wife and kids a luxury life. He thinks money will buy happiness for his family. With that money, his wife develops habits of buying expensive things, and he finds his bribe is not enough. Then his kids hang around with rich spoiled young people, and they get into drugs, and

he finds his bribe money is not near enough. Moreover, his entire family become used to with high status in the society with expensive cars, with expensive gifts, with expensive trips, with expensive house and furniture, with expensive marriage ceremonies, for which again he finds his bribe money is not enough. At the end, what did he gain for himself and for his family? Besides, Haram income ruins the happiness in both lives and Allah does not accept their Dua. Hon Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Holy Messenger of Allah said:

حَرَامٌ وَمَشْرَبُهُ حَرَامٌ وَمَلْبَسُهُ حَرَامٌ وَغُذِيَ بِالْحَرَامِ فَأَلْفَى يُسْتَجَابُ لِدَلِكِ الرَّجُلِ بِطِيلِ السَّفَرِ أَشَعَتْ أَعْيَرَ يَمُدُّ يَدَيْهِ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ
يَا رَبِّ يَا رَبِّ وَمَطْعَمُهُ

“A man travelling far (Usually Allah accepts the dua of travellers) with dirty hair, dusty body and he raises his hands to Allah and calls with weak voice “O Allah! O Allah!” But his food is Haram, drink is Haram, cloth he wore is Haram and he eats Haram. How the dua of this person can be accepted?”

[Muslim]

Stinginess: What is stinginess? Does it mean not spending? No! Actual stinginess is, “not spending where Allah commands to spend.” Spending for the family per the need is like charity. Allah gives rewards for charity if spouse or spouses spend for each other for the pleasure of Allah, in necessary things with moderation, and in areas that Allah approves. But if a spouse cuts down on necessities for the family yet spend a lot for other things for name and fame, then that is also stinginess. Or if spouses spend for extravagance but do not spend in the cause of Allah for parents, relatives, poor, and charity, then that is also stinginess. Lots of spouses are stingy in that regard. They love to spend for their leisure, but when it comes to donation to a good cause, their hearts resist them from spending. Or if a husband is earning, but instead of spending on necessary things for his wife, he spends for friends, then that is also stinginess. That is unfair on his wife and sooner or later it causes sadness, disputes, and arguments in marriage. A spouse must not support the stinginess of another spouse, because supporting wrong thing is sinful and sins brings Allah’s punishment. So, Muslim spouses must avoid stinginess to be free from sins and sufferings. A spouse must not be either stingy or suggesting for stinginess. Allah made it clear in the Holy Quran:

الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ

“Such persons are stingy (with a selfish desire to own) and (they) suggest stinginess to men.”

[Al-Quran 57:24]

Overspending: Some spouses think overspending is the sign of true love. The more expensive gift is the happier the spouses are, and family members are. They often do not realize that Allah will question them for overspending. If one gets over (More than necessary) then someone else becomes deprived. That imbalanced spending makes a society with too rich and too poor. Does overspending increase happiness in marriage? Or does it increase greed, and competition to have more? Overspending is becoming a common practice in Muslim marriages. What happens with overspending? It opens windows for troubles in marriage such as, it causes sin, it removes morality, it inspires to worship own greed, it inspires to worship the wrong social expectations, it put them under financial pressure for maintaining it, it brings disputes over who got what or who got more importance than whom, it may make them poor one day, it may spoil each other to develop bad habits, and if one day they have less money they can’t handle it, or their children may learn to be over spenders, to ruin their hard-earned wealth one day etc. The biggest problem is Allah does not like the over spenders in wrong causes. Married couples must spend moderately only in Halal causes to earn rewards and blessings from Allah. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

وَأَتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تَبْذِرْ تَبْذِيرًا ۚ إِنَّ الْمُبْذِرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ ۚ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ
كُفُورًا

“And give the relatives their due rights, and (also) to those in need, and to the wayfarer: But do not waste (your wealth extravagantly) like a spendthrift. Surely wasters are brothers of the Satan. And Satan is very ungrateful to his Lord.”

[Al-Quran 17:26-27]

Greed: Greed is a killer of happiness. Greed prevents sharing, makes a spouse feel he or she must have most, and greedy spouse may demand a lot. Greed can be even for the small things or big things such as, give me the best piece of meat or fish, or give me the bigger part of cake, or give me the bigger plate, or I must eat first with satiety and the left over is for you, or I must have expensive things for me and for you ordinary, or I must have rest while you must do the work, or you must buy a house in my name, or my family members must get priority over yours, or I must have money to travel while you carry on with your job, or I saw a nice thing and I must have it, so buy it for me, or take bribe for our luxurious life, or occupy our neighbours land to make a bigger house, or do black magic on our relative to capture his wealth, or kill your brother to get all his money etc. Greed can make spouses ruthless, unkind, dishonest, and unhappy. Greed brings destruction. Greed takes away piety and makes people unfair. So, Muslim spouses must avoid greed. They must treat greed as a moral disease, and they must get rid of it for their happiness in marriage. Allah commands the believers in the Holy Quran:

وَلَا تَمْدَنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ ۚ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ

“And do not strain your eyes in the desire of the things WE have given for enjoyment to some of those people, the splendour of the life in the world, by which WE test them: But the gift from your Lord is better and more lasting.”

[Al-Quran 20:131]

Give up bad talking for happy marriage.

How can talk make the marriage happy or unhappy? Well, talk is the expression of, and worst talking is the sign of worst heart. Once two spouses come together in marriage, they begin their journey of marriage with speaking to one another. Speaking becomes their best vehicle for communication. In marriage they must talk a lot about so many issues such as, about their love for one another, about earning and expenses, about the house they live in, about friends and relatives, about neighbours and communities, about societies and countries, about children and their upbringing, about their happiness and sadness, about their fear and worries, about their health and sickness, about their good days and bad days, about their belief or religion, about their agreements and disagreements, about their good and bad habits, about their correction to one another, about their past, present and future, about their ambitions, about their hobbies, and about any other necessary talks.

The point is, spouses need to talk a lot for effective communication, and talking takes a big chunk of time in their daily lives. If that chunk of time is filled with bad talk, then they may get into arguments daily because arguments begin mostly from talks. Wise talk is like sweet chocolate, and you like to eat more, but bad talk is like poison, and it brings aversion in your heart. That's why, how Muslim spouses talk in their conjugal life is extremely important. Often, spouses think that lovely talk will follow their marriage automatically. No, that is not true. For best talk, spouses need to be aware of what or how they are talking to one another, they need to practice good habits in best talking, they need to make effort to choose the best words, and they need to monitor themselves to correct one another when necessary. This is my experience, and I have learnt a lot

from mistakes. The good part in me was always keen to improve my word selection to avoid any offending to my beloved wife.

Why best talking between spouses are so important? Below are a few reasons in brief:

One, best talking to pass the test: Allah commanded to talk in the best manner. So, believers must speak best to obey Allah's guidance in speaking for passing the test. Allah's guidance is:

وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا

“Speak kindly and justly to the people.”

[Al-Quran 2:83]

Two, best talking for best deed book: All the talks are recorded by angels in a deed book to present in Allah's court on the Day of Judgment. Can the spouses escape Allah's court if they talk to one another roughly with bad language? Not at all. They must talk best for their happiness and must avoid worst talk to avoid Allah's punishment. Thus, Holy Quran states:

إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ ۚ ۱٧ مَّا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

“(Remember) that two (Guardian angels) appointed to learn (to note his deeds), one sitting on the right and one on the left. Not a word does he say, but there is a guard by him, ready (to note)”

[Al-Quran 50: 17-18]

Three, best talking to follow Allah's command: Allah has commanded HIS beloved servants to speak what is best. Husband and wife must always remember that. They need to check whether they are following Allah's commands in talking or not. Allah commands:

وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

“And say to MY servants that they should (only) say those words that are best.”

[Al-Quran 17:53]

Four, Best talks leads to Paradise: A Hadis is sufficient to understand it. In a Hadis reported by Hon Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him), the Holy Messenger of Allah said:

إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مِنْ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى مَا يُلْقِي لَهَا بَالًا يَرْفَعُهُ اللَّهُ بِهَا دَرَجَاتٍ، وَإِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مِنْ سَخَطِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى لَا يُلْقِي لَهَا بَالًا يَهْوِي بِهَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ

“Servant of Allah (often) says such words in which is pleasure of Allah, yet he does not know the importance of it (his words), but by that Allah increases his status. On the other hand, (often) servant says such word in which is the displeasure of Allah, whereas he is unaware of its (his words) harms, but that word causes him to be thrown into the Hell Fire.”

[Bukhari]

How many main types of talking in marriage? We need to summarize all the talking in a few categories to understand better and to remember easier. There are three main categories of talking (speaking) in marriage. If we remember them and practice the best one and avoid the worst one, then the marriage should be happier. What are those three main categories of talking?

Worst talking: Considering its nature, style, far reaching bad results and so on, this type of talking is the worst. This type of talking has no good result at all. Spouses must avoid it. This type of talking is sinful, and it leads to unhappiness in marriage and in next life. Some talks are worst talks, even though they may give some temporary pleasure. Worst talks have mainly two characteristics, one is that these talks are sinful, and another is that these talks bring problems. Without detail analysis, I have given a few examples below:

- *Talks with ingratitude to Allah:* With small test some spouses may become impatient and talk angrily. In their talks they might express no gratitude to Allah. For example, “We are poor! Can’t Allah see us?” Or “Why did Allah make our luck so bad?” Or “Allah gave other couples long life to live together but why did Allah take my spouse away?” Or “We are smart! Everything we got is due to our talents.” Or “Poor people need Allah, but we are rich, why do we need Allah?” etc. If believers are not patient, and in their talks, they show no thanks to Allah, they lose Allah’s love, blessings and mercy resulting in loss after loss for the believing spouses.
- *Talks that give partner to Allah:* Placing a spouse in the power, position and status of Allah is called “giving partners to Allah.” It is the greatest sin, and Allah does not forgive until sincere repentance and taking U-turn from it. Some examples such as, “You were sick, and this doctor saved your life!” Or “O holy soul! Give us a child!” or “O Messenger of Allah, save us from this danger!” Or “Do wear this ring otherwise your husband’s life will be shortened!” Or “I should not eat before you (husband), if I do you will die soon” Or “Who will look after me if you die?” Or “You are my love; you are everything for me!” or “I live and die for you!” or “I love you more than anything” etc. [Note: Only Allah deserves our highest love because for HIS love we exist, live, die, resurrect, and can go to Paradise, Insha Allah. So, we must not place our spouse in the place of Allah]
- *Talks that earn major sins:* Any talks that Allah has prohibited are called worst talking. It earns sins and troubles. Some examples are, Talking behind spouse’s back (backbiting), talking for slandering against spouses, talking with pride, talking to boast, talking to humiliate each other, talking with lies, talking with jealousy, talking with hatred, talking to abuse or to curse another spouse, talking to conspire against someone, talking to plan for harming others, talking to bring a false blame against someone, talking to inspire one another in unfair things, talking to support each other in wrong doing, talking how to make haram money, or talking how to cheat others etc. The list can be very long. Muslim husbands and wives must have basic Islamic knowledge to know which talks are sinful. So, that they can avoid earning sins. Remember, sins are poison to happiness in Marriage, so stay away from it.
- *Talks that hurt feelings:* This is another example of worst talk, because the talk that hurts other spouse may have to be compensated on the Day of Judgment with good deeds. Giving up good deeds on the Day of Judgment is a serious cost. It may cost a spouse Paradise for worst talking. Would you like to take that risk? No! You would not. We must not. Let me give a few examples to understand better. Such as, with talks hurting the feeling of another spouse, or causing the heart bleed with harsh words without a knife, or words to make another sad and depressed, or to words to make another cry with grief, or angry talks with threatening to take the sleep away for another spouse, or talk to incite another spouse for fighting, or talk to generate hatred between the spouses, or talks for destroying the united spirit between them, or talk without love and kindness to damage one another etc.
- *Talks with evil intentions:* Intention of talking valuable in the sight of Allah. Talk can be very nice, but is the intention behind that talk is nice too? If not, maybe another would not know but Allah does know. According to intention talking between spouses can be best or worst. One example is the intention can be for flattery to get some favour. Flattery is excessive or exaggerated praising that might not real. Spouses need to appreciate one another with moderation. With excessive praising with bad intention cause sins, and arrogance in the spouse. Another intention can be to deceive by excessive praising. Or another evil intention can be to deceive by praising. Or if the intention behind the talking is conspiracy, then that

talking becomes sinful as well. Sinful talking is always bad, contributes bad, and must be avoided for securing happiness.

Useless talking: This type of talking has no benefit. It wastes precious time and fails the talker to earn any rewards from Allah as well. For own best future, husbands and wives should avoid them. Imagine! You are in the examination hall. Your time is fixed for 3 hours. You have 3 choices, one is to write the correct answer, two is writing the wrong answers, and three is wasting the time with useless talks or actions without writing. What would you do? You will not waste your exam time to avoid failure. Similarly, talking in marriage is also part of the test, and to pass the test why spouses should talk useless talks? Below I have given a few examples:

- *Useless joking:* Just for the sake of fun, using vulgar language, shameless words, or unnecessary gossip is wasting precious time. Muslim spouses can joke with right intention, and with right content. Right content includes no added exaggeration or false information to make it juicy, or not to defame others, or not to overpraising etc. Holy prophet (s.a.w) used to make jokes, but in his jokes, everything was true. He (s.a.w) made joke with his wives, with his servants, with his companions but never with any false contents in it.
- *Excessive talking:* Talk should be in moderation. Unnecessary talking is useless. Suppose in a crisis both spouses need to make a quick decision, but if they are not talking to the point, and talking unimportant thing, that's a big waste of time.
- *Lazy talk:* Lazy talk is unproductive talk. Or talking for the sake of talk. Any talk without benefit, but to pass the lazy time is lazy talk. Lazy talk wastes time and does not benefit either.
- *Unimportant talk:* Some spouses may sit over a cup a tea and start talking about game. One supports a team, and another one supports the different team. In their talk, both are passionately using their gestures, their emotions and they are arguing and arguing for hours. Their talk is neither helping any team nor increasing bond between them.
- *Childish talk:* What is childish talk? Talk without aim, wisdom, or without knowing whether the talk is sinful, harmful, and what consequences it could bring. Muslim couples must talk responsibly.
- *Shameless talk:* Shameless talk without respecting the environment, family and children do not earn any rewards but causes damage too. Or sharing shameless private issue with friends and spending much time talking about shameless matters are not a good habit either.
- *Too much gossiping:* Some spouses may love gossiping. Gossiping is very common in any given society. Gossip about love stories, own private stories with bragging, about other couple's private matters, or about the marriage life of popular people etc.

Best talking: This type of talking brings best result in this life and in next life. It is per the guidance of Allah. For a happy marriage life, Muslim husbands and wives must learn and practice best talking. Best talking includes talking that is necessary and reminds Allah, that reminds spouses to thank Allah, with respect, with smile, with love, with care, with sympathy, with kindness, with pleasant voice, without criticism, without judging, without putting down, with fairness, with honesty, politely, with best intention, with positive attitude, for correction, for teaching Islamic guidance, for explaining any issue with Quran and Sunnah, to learn Islamic guidance from each other, with the intention to please Allah, to make each other happy for Allah's sake, about important things, for mutual consultation, and all other within righteous guidelines. Spouses must remember that Allah has appointed two angels with each human to record their good and bad talks:

إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ ۚ ۱۷ مَّا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

“(Remember) that two (Guardian angels) appointed to learn (to note his deeds), one sitting on the right and one on the left. Not a word does he say, but there is a guard by him, ready (to note)”

[Al-Quran 50:17-18]

What about some Islamic guidelines for the best talk? I am sure that, guidelines are always beneficial and makes things clearer. Let us look at the following guidelines regarding the best talking:

Allah commanded all prophets to teach their followers to talk best: For example, for the followers of Musa (peace be upon him), Allah commanded:

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ

“And (remember) when, WE took promise from the Children of Israel, (that you will) worship only Allah, treat with kindness your parents and relatives, and orphans and those in need; Speak with best (kindly and justly) to the people; Be regular in prayer, and practice regular charity.”

[Al-Quran 2:83]

Allah commanded all the Muslims to talk best: To be saved from Satanic tricks.

كَانَ لِلْإِنسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْزِعُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ هُوَ الْعَدُوُّ

“And say to MY servants that they should (only) say those words that are best: Verily, Satan brings in disagreements and disharmony between them: Surely, Satan is to man an open enemy.”

[Al-Quran 17:53]

Allah commands Muslims to use kind words in talking for best deeds:

قَوْلٍ مَّعْرُوفٍ وَمَغْفِرَةٍ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتَّبِعُهَا أَذًى ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَلِيمٌ ۚ ۚ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُلْغُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَىٰ

“Kind words and the overlooking of faults are better than charity followed by injury. Allah is Free of all wants, Most Forbearing. O you who believe! Do not cancel your charity by reminders of your generosity, or by injury”

[Al-Quran 2:263-264]

Allah commands to talk with moderate voice: Talk gently and politely with moderate voice.

وَأَقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَأَغْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ ۚ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ ۙ

“And be moderate in your walking (and actions) and lower your voice, verily, the harshest of sounds is the call (braying) of an ass.”

[Al-Quran 31:19]

Allah commands to talk without sarcasm: Talking with offensive names, dishonouring titles, vindictive laugh, and cursing are not allowed in Islam.

يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ ۚ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ ۚ بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ

“O you who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: It may be that they (the latter) are better than the former: Let not some women laugh at other women: It may be that the latter are better than the former: Nor defame nor be nasty to each other, nor call each other by (offensive) nicknames: Ill seeming is nickname:”

[Al-Quran 49:11]

Allah will grant Paradise for those who avoid useless talking: Paradise is for those who avoid useless talking. Allah described the qualities of true believers in the Quran and one of those qualities is that they avoid useless talking.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۝ ١ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ۝ ٢

“Successful! Indeed, must be the believers! Those who make themselves humble in their prayer; and those who avoid useless talk:”

[Al-Quran 23:1-3]

Believers should not return worst talk with worst talk: Islam teaches to offer best in return to any worst, and that includes best talking.

وَلَا تَسْتَوِ الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ۚ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ ۝ ٣٤

“And good deeds and evil deeds cannot be equal. (So) give up (evil) with what is better. Then verily, he (the one) between whom and you, were hatred, will become like your friend and close companion!”

[Al-Quran 41:34]

Allah commands to talk with respect and honour: Allah commands:

فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ۝ ٢٣

“Do not say a word of (hate and) disrespect to them, and do not brush them aside, instead, talk to them with (respect and) honour.”

[Al-Quran 17:23]

Calling to the teachings of Allah is also the best talk: Advising one another to follow Allah’s guidance, or to follow Allah’s messenger is best talking in the sight of Allah.

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ۝ ٣٣

“And who is better in speech than the one who calls (Other human) to Allah, and works righteousness and says, ‘I am one of the Muslims (who surrenders to Allah completely including his talking).”

[Al-Quran 41:33]

Hypocrites use incident and useless talking: In a Hadis reported by Hon Abu Umama (may Allah be pleased with him), Holy Messenger of Allah:

الحياء والعبي شعبتان من الإيمان والبذاء والبيان شعبتان من النفاق

“Shyness and less talk (Necessary talk only) are the two branches of Islamic Faith. And indecent talks and useless talks are two branches of hypocrisy.”

[Tirmidi]

Control your talk for Paradise: In a Hadis, reported by Hon Sahl ibn Sa’d (may Allah be pleased with him), Holy Messenger of Allah said:

مَنْ يَضْمَنْ لِي مَا بَيْنَ لَحْيَيْهِ وَمَا بَيْنَ رِجْلَيْهِ أَضْمَنْ لَهُ الْجَنَّةَ

“Whoever will be guarantor to me about the things between his two jaws (Tongue) and about the thing between his two legs (Private part), then I will be the guarantor for him about the Paradise.”

[Bukhari]

Being silent is better than talking rubbish: In a Hadis reported by Hon Abdullah ibn A’mor (may Allah be pleased with him), Holy Messenger of Allah said:

مَنْ صَمَتَ نَجَا

“Whoever remains silent is saved (From sin and from punishment).”

[Ahmed. Tirmidi. Daremy. Bayhaki]

Talking the truth and avoiding lie: In a Hadis reported by Hon Abdullah ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be pleased with him), Holy Messenger of Allah said:

نَ الصِّدْقُ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْبِرِّ، وَإِنَّ الْبِرَّ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ، وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَصْدُقُ حَتَّى يَكُونَ صِدِّيقًا، وَإِنَّ الْكَذِبَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْفُجُورِ، وَإِنَّ الْفُجُورَ يَهْدِي إِلَى النَّارِ، وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَكْذِبُ، حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَذَّابًا

“You must stick to the truth. Because truth leads to virtues and virtues leads to the Paradise. And whoever will always speak the truth and tries to speak the truth, his name is recorded to Allah as “Siddiq” (Truthful). And you must save yourselves from lies. Lies leads to sins and sins leads to the Hell Fire. And whoever always tells lies and tries to tell lies, his name is recorded to Allah as Kajjaab (liar).”

[Muttafaqun A’laih]

Tips to avoid bad talking for happiness:

Talking best is an art. It requires articulating the thoughts into language. Talking anything is easy, but talking best requires careful efforts. To talk best one needs right knowledge, right ways of thinking, right manner, right gesture, right habit, right motivation, and right efforts and so on. Islam provides guidance for the best talk. Muslim spouses should practice them to develop best talking habits for the best result in their sweet relationship. Below are a few tips:

Tip one: Think of the result before you talk: You need to exercise this to make a habit. Never rush into talking or never talk too fast, or never talk too much when you are angry. Allow your mind to take a pause to think. Think about all possible results of what you are going to say. This thinking will give you so much benefit such as, you will be wiser, will make less mistakes, will commit less sins, will earn more respect from your spouse, can control your impulse, will talk factually, will avoid useless talking, and you will earn rewards from Allah etc What kind of things you should think before you talk? They are a series of questions such as, will my talk offend my spouse, will it be appropriate, will it be a burden, will it add anxiety, will it sadden, will it cause pain or anger, will it sound criticizing or argumentative, will it increase love or misunderstanding etc. Thinking before talking is a part of wisdom. Wisdom demands to see the possible results before an action. Consider the person, the personality, the culture, the temper in your spouse for articulating wise talk. Remember, your aim is to get the best result and the best reward from Allah.

Tip two: Keep improving your talking style: No one talks perfectly except with Allah’s guidance. A little slip of the tongue often makes people fall from grace. The top honoured people have the greater risk of falling. How can you improve your best talking style? Below are some tips:

- **Never feel overconfident about your talking:** Overconfident people lose the chance to learn. There is always room to improve your talking. So be patient and keep improving.
- **Check with your own talking:** Check with your own talking after every talk. Try to find areas in your talk that you wish you talked better. What better words could you have used? What better sentences could you have used? Always re-assess your talks.
- **Learn from others talk:** Always pay attention when other talks. Try to find how they talk best if any, or how they talk worst if any. Learn from it.
- **Learn from the talking of Holy prophet (pbuh):** Prophet (s.a.w) is the role model for Muslims for everything. Learn from his habits of talking. For example, his (pbuh) moderate speed in talking, moderate voice in talking, nice gesture in talking, respect for elders and love for the

young in talking, slow yet clear talking that anyone could count his words, short selections of words or sentences with greater meanings, habit of allowing others to talk, habit of listening of others talk during conversation, sense of humour in talking, gentle smile during talking, eye contact during talking, and his (pbuh) selection of polite words during talking etc.

Tip three: Choose the right time for talk: When you talk to someone, you try to give your message wisely through your words, to make the listener understand your message clearly, and to achieve your aim without failure. To fulfil these objectives, one of the most important things is choosing the right time for talking. If the time is not right, your objectives may not be achieved. So, avoid such time that gives bad results. Ask yourself:

- *Is it an angry time?* Will your talking flare the anger more? Or will it be ok if you make your point gently and briefly? Assess the situation in that time to avoid further damage.
- *Is it a time one wants to be left alone?* You may like to be left alone now, or your spouse may want to be left alone now. Allow that when necessary. Often you need a little time out to process your thinking into the right perspective. If you push your talk at that time the result may be bad. But let your spouse know, “Please talk to me when you feel comfortable, I will wait for you”.
- *Is it a time your spouse will feel embarrassed?* Sometimes the timing is not right to talk because some other people are around. In that case, be patient and do not embarrass your spouse to avoid unhappy dramas.
- *Is it a time when one is in good mood?* Mood is an important factor for the right timing to talk. One may be sick, or sad, or very upset. Consider yourself or your spouse’s state of mind. Especially with complex issues one may need some mental preparation to offer best answer or to offer best suggestions etc.

Tip four: Talk with best gesture: Talk is a release of energy. That’s why depending on how much energy you want to release, your talk at times is forceful and at other times is less forceful. That energy is expressed through gestures. Talk therefore is an energy and you expect another person to absorb it. If your gesture is right and appropriate, then the listener will absorb it better. But if your gesture is poor, then the listener will repel it. Would you like to be unpopular to someone you talked to? If not, then be mindful about your talking gesture. For the best gesture, watch the following:

- *Your tone:* Ask yourself, is my tone higher than it should be? Is my tone appropriate to the topic and for the audience?
- *Your emotion:* Depending on your topic the emotion should vary. If you express joy in a sad story, then it will give a wrong gesture to confuse the listener.
- *Your sound:* Check how you sound like. Do you sound angry, critical, arrogant, desperate, blaming, sarcastic, or unloving etc?
- *Your face:* Face speaks a lot because face is the prime organ for gestures in talking. Check if your face is tightened, grimacing, nervous, blushed, embarrassed, down when speaking, looks cruel or kind, confident or lacking, lovely or rude, angry, or calm etc.
- *Your eyes:* People say that the eyes are the windows of the soul. People look at your eyes or you need to look at people’s eyes to understand their talking. Eye gesture will give you lots of clues about other’s talk. Be aware about your eyes during talk to give right message. Check your own eyes, are they tough or timid looking, red with rage or calm with good-will etc.

- *Your hands:* Use your hands in a non-violent appropriate manner. With it, you can make lovely gestures or scary ones. Use your hands appropriately to make your talk live within your spouse. Remember! Your spouse is your best audience. Use this audience for happy outcome. Gestures makes the talk not boring. Gestures attracts the attention of the listener quickly. Gestures helps to sink the talk into mind easily.
- *Your head:* Head also can be used as a gesture tool to give correct message. One can nod the head to indicate agreeing, move the head side to side to indicate disapproval, shake the head to indicate frustration, or slide the head down on one side to indicate sleep etc.

Tip five: Avoid negative and use positive words: Saying positive words is not flattery. Flattery is exaggerating the words with false praises. Positive words are a fine art of talking. During frustration or anger people usually say negative words. Muslims should be careful about every word they say. Negative talking demotivates the spouse, or make the spouse angry, or gives Satan to bring disharmony between spouses, or shatter confidence in another spouse, or make the spouse feel worthless, loveless, and deserted. Spouses must avoid negative talks or comments for happiness. Examples of negative comments includes, Why are you talking like an idiot, or you are talking like a criminal, or I never found a bigger liar than you, or go to hell, or don't you get it dummy, or I wish I never married a horrible man like you, or I wish I never married a horrible woman like you, or remove your ugly face away from me, or you are nothing but useless, or you are good for nothing, or you are a pain only, or didn't your parents teach you anything good, or don't talk to me like a lower cast people, or you must be the worst Muslim, or God will never forgive you, or everyone hates you, or how can I love you again? Etc.

We need few examples of positive talks, don't we? They are:

- a. I believe you can do better with your intelligence,
- b. You will never let me down I know that,
- c. I have full trust in you, please respect my trust,
- d. My heart breaks seeing you in this mess, please change it to save your loved one,
- e. You are a good Muslim you know that, and surely you can change this wrong habit,
- f. You are so lovely when you smile, I don't want to see you angry,
- g. You look more pretty with the scarf,
- h. I am sure you can do it if you try harder etc.

Positive talking has patience, wisdom, controlled wording, well-thought phrases, peaceful approach and so on. Positive talking encourages, motivates, and corrects a listener. It prevents further unhappiness.

Tip six: Begin and end your talking with prayer: Especially when you want to talk about some critical issues, or issues that you can't agree with each other, or issues you are disputing, begin with prayer and end with prayer. To begin both of you pray for Allah's guidance. Some examples of what you can pray below:

- *Seek Allah's protection from Satan:* You may recite 3 times, **"A'uju billaahi minash shaitaanir rajeem."**
- *Seek Allah's protection from any harm:* You may **recite Sura Falaq and Sura Naas** from the holy Quran.
- *Pray to Allah for guidance:* In your talk and thoughts you want Allah to guide you on the right way. So, you can pray, **"Allahummah dinaa feeman hadait."** (O Allah! Guide us in the guidance like the one YOU have guided.)
- *Pray for Allah's mercy and blessing:* Begin with **Bismilla hirrah maa nirraheem.**

- *End with repenting:* After the talking it is always best to say a prayer. Maybe in talk Allah disliked something. A prayer is needed to seek Allah's forgiveness. In a Hadis reported by Hon Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him), Holy Messenger of Allah said:

من جلس في مجلس فكثر فيه لغطه، فقال قبل أن يقوم من مجلسه ذلك: سبحانك اللهم ربنا وبحمدك، أشهد أن لا إله إلا أنت، أستغفرك وأتوب إليك. إلا غفر له ما كان في مجلسه ذلك

“Whenever someone has spoken useless (wrong) in a sitting, and made a supplication before getting up saying, “Subhaanaka Allahumma wa-behamdika, Ash-hadu Allah Ilaaha Illaa anta, Astagfiruka wa-atoobu ilaik.” Surely Allah will forgive whatever wrong was said in that sitting.”

[Tirmidi. Bayhaki Da'watul kabeer]

Tip seven: Do as you talk: Often talking is easy. Husband and wife can talk a lot to win one another's heart, or to impress one another, or to show own self-worth etc. Thus, sometimes their talk may become just flattery, bombastic, egoistic, false promises, and flowery talks without putting them into actions etc. The trouble is husbands and wives live together, and they observe one another very closely. When they notice the empty words without actions, then they lose respect on one another. Islam teaches to practice what one talks about. So, he or she can be a good role model, can earn respect, can have a good reputation, can receive value for their words, can be taken seriously, can be trusted, and can be safe from Allah's wrath. Allah loves a spouse to be “A man of words, or a woman of words.” Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ۚ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ۚ

“O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? Surely, it is most unpleasant, in Allah's sight that you say that which you do not do.”

[Al-Quran 61:2-3]

Managing displeasure or dispute in Marriage:

Displeasure in marriage is natural if it does not lead to disputes, arguments, and fighting. Spouses must be careful to avoid displeasure and dispute for maintaining the happiness in marriage. Spouses come to marriage to enjoy the pleasure, to live in peace with love, but often they feel displeasure. The contributing factors can be due to their different mentality, upbringing, educations about values in life, ways of thinking (male and female), hormonal differences, cravings, emotional needs, different physically, or cultural difference etc. How can spouses avoid displeasure regarding their differences? Following are some tips:

- *Take the differences as natural:* Accept the differences as normal. Never sweat about it. If you do not like something in your spouse, accept it if it is within Islamic code. But if it is outside Islamic code, never panic, but work positively to find a solution for it. Just remember! Differences is for wise reasons. It is to learn, to be patient, to be wiser, to practice positivity, to appreciate differences etc.
- *Take the differences as compliment:* Remember! Each one of you have some strength and some weaknesses. The purpose of marriage is that two people will come together with different capacities for completion. So never expect your wife to be exactly like you, or your husband to be exactly like you. If you are similar, then how can you complement one another?
- *Take the differences as fun:* Have good fun about one another. Your husband is bald headed, so what! Your wife is shorter than you, so what! You are good at writing, but your spouse is good at knitting, so what! Remember! If your spouse is not doing anything against Allah's guidance, then do not allow yourself to be displeased with it. Be happy and have fun, and say, Alhamdulillah.

- *Take the differences as a learning curve:* If you take any displeasure as a learning curve, then you are walking on a positive path. Differences often brings displeasure in marriage, and from displeasure the harm spreads like a virus. You don't need that. You must take positive thinking. Take it as a little project to learn more.

What are the common causes for displeasure? How can we learn and know what to do to avoid if we face them. I shall make a list for Muslim spouses about some causes of displeasure.

- *Sex related:* Dissatisfaction in sex related issue can be from ignorance, sickness, wrong timing, anxiety, lack of confidence, cultural differences, shyness, not sharing ideas, not talking about it, not taking proper treatment, not addressing the problem right from the beginning, obstinacy, ignoring the importance of it, not seeking help etc.
- *Financial:* Money can be a big issue for displeasure between spouses. It may be due to the different choices, different hobbies, different expectations in earning and spending.
- *Habits:* Two different persons have two different habits, and one may dislike another's.
- *Attitudes:* Different ways of thinking mean different attitudes. Two come in marriage from two different education, upbringing and so on. That differences may contribute displeasures between them.
- *Leadership:* Husband may make mistakes as a leader, or wife may not co-operate fully for some reasons. That may cause displeasure between them.
- *Responsibilities:* If one is lazy and the other one is active, then displeasure is obvious.
- *Cultural expectations:* One wants to follow one culture and the other may feel burdened with it. Often displeasure comes through this window.
- *Family interference:* Often family interference causes tension, displeasure between husbands and wives.
- *Age differences:* If two spouses are with different ages, may bring two different experiences and knowledge. One may think wisely, and another may think childishly. That may cause displeasure as well.
- *Emotional demand:* Each spouse emotionally demands something that another one may not understand or may not provide. That may cause displeasure as well.
- *Miscommunication:* It happens quite often. One may have said "Sneak," but another heard, "Snake." Lack of good communication often creates displeasure between spouses.
- *Wrong knowledge:* This is often the cause of displeasure. If one is holding on the wrong knowledge, then it is hard to avoid displeasure.
- *Lack of effort:* If both do not make hard effort to make the marriage happy, then displeasure will flood into the marriage to corrupt their happiness.
- *Lifestyle:* It is also very common. Spouses have choices where to live, how to live, what kind of houses they like to live in, which weather suits whom, which neighbourhood suits whom, closer or away from relatives, in town or in country etc always can cause some degree of displeasure.
- *Dressing:* Some spouses have different taste about dress. One may like one sort, and another may not. Often, they are displeased about the colour, style, design, moderate or immoderate, dress with Islamic code or opposite etc.

Why did Allah allow differences between spouses? Is there any positive learning aspect in differences to get rid of displeasures and disputes? Yes, there are many benefits, and as believers our responsibilities are to look at the positives in everything to avoid displeasure. I shall list a few in the below examples:

- *Acknowledgment*: It acknowledges two unique personalities to respect each other's differences.
- *Understanding*: Differences makes them to understand and learn about one another.
- *Love*: Differences between two people glues them in love to find common ground.
- *Maturity*: Spouses learn to be wiser by dealing with their differences.
- *Sensitivity*: In a team, you must need to know each other's sensitivity by understanding each other's sensitive points to build a strong team.
- *Healthy mind*: To build a healthy mind, one must learn how to adjust with different person, and situations. Differences in spouses helps promoting healthy mind.
- *Appreciation*: Similarity is boring, but differences are to appreciate the positives and remove the negatives.
- *Rewards*: Spouses can advise one another in different wrong things for corrections, and they can receive rewards from Allah for doing that.
- *Progress*: Differences in spouses are to train them, mature them, and to make them wise, patient, and to progress.

In the process of dealing with differences, there may come displeasure and dispute. What should the spouses do? Should they suppress their displeasure until they burst out, or should they express them within guidance? Yes, spouses should express their displeasure in moderation without taking it to dispute and fighting. Expressing displeasure helps in many ways such as:

- *For unloading*: Displeasure is like a heavy burden on your mind, emotion and even on your body. Would you prefer to carry the load longer which really bothers you? No! You would not. So, express it in a moderate way.
- *For preventing serious illness*: If the spouses suppress their feelings of displeasure, then it is like putting a lid on a boiling pot. You may not hear it, but it is still boiling and will be boiling and if it gets an opportunity, then it will erupt like a volcano. Encourage one another to spell out early before it affects health.
- *For seeking quick solutions*: Express it, deal with it, and solve it as soon as possible, and add that solution as another experience towards working for happy marriage.
- *For sharing thoughts*: Sharing thoughts and feelings increases bond, removes misunderstanding, and refreshes the love and mercy.
- *For achieving harmony*: For harmony two hearts need to come as one, and sharing pleasure and displeasure with sorting out helps increasing that harmony. It takes time.

What are the best ways spouses can cope with displeasure or dispute? Well, the simple answer is that do not make more mess with it. If you deal with it negatively, then the mole hill will turn into a mountain. You will reach to a point of no return. To avoid the worst outcome, remember the following tips:

- *Do not think of the worst*: This is the first thing you need to do. Avoid thinking of the worst. Do not exaggerate about it. Take it easy without beating yourself too much. Just relax. Just think that it is not the end of the world. Save yourself from un-necessary worries, guessing and anticipations. Remember! Satan inspires people to exaggerate the matter to think for the worst. Do not allow Satan to win over you.

- *Hope for the best:* Just say, “Insha Allah khair! By the will of Allah there is some benefit in it!” That will give you a chance to start with positive thinking. Do not feel you lost everything. Do not think this is the end of everything. Think it is a test and you can overcome it with positive feeling and actions.
- *Give benefits of doubts:* Always give room for misunderstanding. Never jump into conclusion without concrete evidence. Think that it might be just a misunderstanding, or a misinformation, or a conspiracy to damage your marriage etc. Make some good efforts to find out the bottom of the issue.
- *Start checking with you:* Instead of becoming displeased with your spouse at first, check with yourself thoroughly whether it is your mistake or not. Maybe your spouse has just made a joke and you are displeased about it due to your own anger problem etc.
- *Stick to Islamic guidance:* About your displeasure stick to Islamic guidance. For example, check about, is your displeasure or dispute based on suspicion? Islam does not allow to hold bad feeling just based on suspicion. Or is your displeasure or dispute from your selfish wants? Islam does not allow you to do that. Or are you abusive from displeasure or dispute? Islam doesn’t allow to be abusive. Or are you causing injury out of displeasure or dispute? You can’t do that. Make sure you are following Islamic rules.
- *Do not start spreading until you are sure:* Don’t press the phone buttons for every little disagreement to give other people to control your conjugal life. One day, your dispute may end, but your bad reputation among others will stay. Try to live honourably.
- *Take advice from a trustworthy one with knowledge:* Ask the one who has balanced knowledge in Islam, honest, Allah Fearing, and will offer best advice without breaching confidentiality.
- *Think for solution; not to create more problems:* With any displeasure or dispute never take destructive path. Avoid obstinacy, ego, and look for solution.
- *Leave the worry with Allah:* Put your trust in Allah and ask Allah to fix your problems without becoming hopeless, anxious, and sick with worries. You do your dutiful part without trying to control the outcome. Leave the outcome with Allah. Allah will help.
- *Pray to Allah for the best outcome:* This is the best coping mechanism of all. Have a good cry to Allah. Cry for HIS mercy and help. If Allah helps, then everything will be easy. If Allah guides both of you, then right intention and right thinking will embrace you two, to find a best solution for your displeasure or dispute.
- *Do not be angry:* Do not allow your anger to overcome you. With anger, you may say something wrong, or you may show some unpleasant gestures, or you may act unfairly to make the things go against you. You don’t want to regret later.
- *Pray to Allah for As-Sakinah (peace of mind) in your heart:* You are hurting inside and let Allah hear it from you. Where can you find peace of mind except from Allah?
- *Feel sympathy for your spouse:* Instead of anger, argument, and hatred, feel sympathy for your spouse and say, “Thank you Allah for granting me more understanding, and grant my spouse the same.” Always keep your heart away from hatred.
- *Feel if you were in your spouse’s shoes:* If you did wrong as your spouse did, you would have expected forgiveness. So, offer forgiveness. Or how painful your heart would be if you were in your hurting spouse? So, correct yourself to relieve his/her pain.

- *Never stop communicating:* You have displeasure or dispute, so what? Never stop communicating with your spouse. Take time and keep talking until you sort out your dispute.
- *Take Islamic solution:* Put your ego aside, and both of you follow the guidance from Allah and HIS Messenger. That way you will never suffer from disputes, and you will always find the Straight Path. Allah says:

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ٧١

“And he who obeys Allah and HIS Messenger, he has already reached the greatest goals.”

[Al Quran 33:71]

An example from the marriage of Holy Messenger of Allah (pbuh) should be beneficial. From it, we can learn few etiquettes of displeasure management. Let us look at the Hadis below.

إِنِّي لَأَعْرِفُ غَضَبَكَ وَرِضَاكَ. "قَالَتْ قُلْتُ وَكَيْفَ تَعْرِفُ ذَلِكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ " إِنَّكَ إِذَا كُنْتَ رَاضِيَةً قُلْتُ بَلَى وَرَبِّ إِذَا كُنْتَ سَاخِطَةً قُلْتُ لَا وَرَبِّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ. " قَالَتْ قُلْتُ أَجَلُ لَسْتُ أَهَاجِرُ إِلَّا اسْمَكَ مُحَمَّدٍ

“Hon Ayesha (May Allah be please with her) said: Once Holy Prophet (s.a.w) said to me: ‘Ayesha! I understand when you are pleased or not pleased with me.’ I said: How do you understand? He (pbuh) then said: ‘When you are pleased with me you say: No! By the Lord of Muhammad, and when you are not pleased with me, you say, No! By the Lord of Ibrahim. Hon. Ayesha said: I said yes! That is true. By Allah! Then I do not leave anything except your name.”

[Muttafaqun A'laih]

What can we learn from this Hadis for believing spouses? Some key lessons are:

- *Displeasure is natural:* As humans it can happen to any spouse or spouses. But it must not be malicious, hurtful, for fighting, for abusing, or with bad intentions. Hon. Ayesha was a role model who dealt with the displeasure wisely and Islamically. Holy Messenger of Allah did not discourage about it, rather dealt with it positively without harms.
- *Displeasure should be expressed:* She did not hide or suppress it. She brought out her feelings to seek remedy for it. She brought the required attention without showing any disrespect, deceit, harsh words, or manner to lead the displeasure into dispute, or fight.
- *Expression was peaceful:* She gave the message in a peaceful manner. She never crossed the fair boundary. Her reminder was with true love and admiration for the Messenger of Allah. Allah’s messenger acknowledged it openly to encourage her more. Her peaceful approach brought the solution quicker without hurting one another.
- *She did not do anything wrong:* For her displeasure, she did not do anything sinful. She was loving, understanding, and anger, harsh remarks, disrespecting words, or action could not pollute her righteous disposition and moral actions. Her patience and perseverance to achieve her goal was admirable. May Allah bless her, Ameen!
- *Husband was sensitive too:* Holy Prophet (s.a.w) was sensitive to feel it. He (pbuh) did not neglect the feeling of his dear wife, did not say anything wrong to her, did not try to hide the issue under the bed, did not try to control her, did not disrespect his wife, did not show any anger or displeasure nor did he dispute with obstinacy to win, but he (pbuh) was humble, down to earth, loving, and caring. He (pbuh) said polite words with sincere heart full of love, to win her heart and he (pbuh) did.

In conclusion, no matter what happens in marriage, Muslim spouses must give up all the bad treatment in displeasure, disagreement, and dispute, and must follow Allah and HIS Messenger

to receive definite success in solution. When two souls surrender to the guidance of Allah that HIS Messenger taught, and follow that guidance, then there is nothing in this earth that can break an Islamic marriage for displeasure, disagreement, or disputes because they will always find a third way, and that is the way of Allah. That can solve all the problems in the marriage. Remember! No matter how good a partnership business is, it must have a contingency plan. In case, something is not going right, or partners are disagreeing, then there must be planning to resolve the dispute. In the life-partnership in marriage, spouses must have a plan to face disputes. Allah made that plan easy. That plan is that both spouses will compromise according to Allah's guidance. But often, if they follow people's ideas, cultural system, family demands, and their own haughtiness or ego, then they will stumble and stumble failing to achieve the peace and harmony in their marriage. Therefore, surrendering to Allah is the best choice to avoid trouble and to achieve happiness.

Chapter 7: Self-checking for happiness

Why self-checking?

Self-checking is a very important tool for becoming a best person in general. Every person has an ego, a feeling of self-respect that resists being told off by someone else. Even a husband or a wife likes own respect and dislikes being told off by the other half. Especially in close relationship it hurts more to be told off. If a boss at work tells you off, you may digest it but being told off by your own husband or wife is painful, isn't it? But the fact is, each spouse has some shortcomings that needs correction to improve the marriage relationship. For that correction process, self-checking is an important tool. It does not hurt, nor bleed, nor cause pain, nor gives side-effects by harsh prescription drugs. It is a tool to uphold one's respect, prestige, self-worth, confidence, and good reputation. It does not need a licence to practice, nor a premises with accessories, nor to bring it open, but one can do self-check any time in any moment in his/her mind. Allah gave this extra-ordinary tool for human's self-assessment with so much importance. Let us go through a few points to understand the best reasons for self-checking:

To learn: Self-learning is very good because you can be your own teacher, or your own boss. It allows you to see your own mistakes when you check privately, without revealing your secret to anyone. That way you can save yourself from unwanted embarrassments. Self-checker is a best learner because:

- A self-checker is committed to learn,
- A self-checker uses his or her consciousness,
- A self-checker is self-motivated in learning,
- A self-checker is careful about his or her actions,
- A self-checker is not careless about own actions,
- A self-checker is brave to face his or her own monster inside,
- A self-checker is critical about himself or herself,
- A self-checker learns quicker than others,
- A self-checker does learn quickly without going to courses or to teachers,
- A self-checker put himself or herself in the mirror of Islam and sees his or her own faults,
- A self-checker is a best spouse because, before the other spouse says something he or she works on it,
- A self-checker is a best spouse because he or she is very sensitive, and by checking through own issues understands better about the issues of spouse and so on.

To be wise: Self-checking makes you a wiser spouse every day. Because it makes a spouse check his or her action before doing it. It gives a habit of checking past actions, to learn from mistakes, and to be able to do better next time.

To avoid humiliation: Self-checking saves them from being humiliated, because through self-checking they learn from mistakes, and they avoid the same mistakes next time. So, other people cannot humiliate them. Self-checking scans any unwanted traits in a spouse. Then the spouse gets rid of it to retain honour and respect in the relationship.

To be accepted with admiration: You like to be admired by your spouse, don't you? Well, you are not alone in this, I am with you too. But how can you be admired? Admiration is earned with good qualities and by getting rid of bad qualities. Self-checking every day gives you the chance of searching for bad qualities in you. So, you can remove them to earn admiration.

To be loved: Love in marriage is like a thermometer. The mercury in it goes up and down per the temperature. Love in marriage also goes up and down depending on lots of things. Maybe you feel less loved these days by your spouse. Instead of wasting your time and energy in anger, blaming, argument and so on, just do the self-checking thoroughly. That may give you the clue about what you have done wrong. Then you can correct it, and you will see love will be as usual.

To be happy: Happiness in marriages comes from mainly the righteousness. It is a combination of belief, and actions. Self-checking reminds the spouse if he or she is doing anything unrighteous which may cost happiness. That way, self-checking contributes happiness in marriage.

To learn self-control: Self-control is the most important objective of self-checking. In marriage game, two players are playing without a referee. Each one is a referee in marriage. Their consciousness is their own referee. They need to control their own actions fairly, through their consciousness, to avoid crossing the boundary in fair dealings. How can they do that? The answer is again, by self-checking.

To clean sins: How would you know that you are doing something wrong to put your lovely spouse in distress? Many spouses come to me and each one portrays as an angel without any faults. When I listen to their talking, I can see their faults, and I wonder, why they do not see it? They can't see because they do not practice self-checking. They are deluded that they are above mistakes and wrong, and that false delusion refrain them from looking at their ugly traits for correction if there is any. The dangerous aspect of it is, if the wrong from spouses are continuing without self-checking and correction, then sins are adding in their deed account every day. For sins, they can't escape paying the price in this life and in next life. Whereas self-checking allows the spouse to pinpoint own wrong, allows to repent to Allah and to the spouse, and can clean the sins from the deed-book.

To repent early: In Islamic marriage the love for the spouse is not without the love for Allah. It is other way around. To succeed in marriage test, one condition is that spouse will love one another for the love of Allah (for the sake of Allah). Again, for wrong treatment between spouses, they must face Allah's court, and their love cannot save them from Allah's punishment unless they receive Allah's love. Now, Allah loves those who are pure from sins (wrong actions), and those repent to Allah in case they commit wrong. Without self-checking, that repentance is less in a person. With proper self-checking, a spouse will always find shortcoming in him or her prompting to seek Allah's forgiveness, and to receive forgiveness from Allah. How can a spouse repent regularly without the habit of self-checking?

To receive Allah's blessings: Self-checkers are Allah-fearing people. They do not want to face Allah with huge shortcomings. They want themselves clean from wrong. They fear Allah's fair judgment, and they fear Allah's punishment. That's why, they earn Islamic Knowledge, uses it to self-check for self-improvement, and seek Allah's blessings. Allah has promised to Allah-fearing righteous people to bless them in both lives. For their self-checking they become better righteous servants of Allah, and Allah looks after their affairs including happiness in marriage.

Self-checking helps self-control:

What is self-control? The Arabic term for this is Taqwa. For example, Allah has prescribed a month long fasting for the purpose of self-control or learning Taqwa. [Al-Quran 2:183] Here we are dealing with three terms, and to avoid confusion, I have written them separately below to explain them a bit:

Taqwa: Taqwa is the goal here, and it is very important. It is divine medicine for all spiritual sicknesses. If a believer acquires it, then all the doors of blessing from the heavens and the earth

opens for that servant. Taqwa is a highly elevated state of Faith that believes in Allah's Judgment, and fears Allah's punishment. From that fear, that believer finds strong motivation to do what Allah has permitted, and to avoid what Allah has prohibited. It is an unseen device yet the best device for correction and perfection. A Muttaqi believer is self-motivated in leading a careful life to stay away from sins in every aspect of life. If a spouse is Muttaqi, then he/she is the best spouse because he/she will be honest, sincere, loving, righteous in words or actions. These Muttaqeen spouses follow the rights and responsibilities without being asked or forced because they are always careful about, they do to avoid Allah's punishment on The Day of Judgment.

Self-control: Self-control is controlling one's wrong desires, impulses, words, and actions. People can learn from culture that such and such things are not appreciated in society, and they must control those actions for respect, and good reputations. Or for example, anger control is a part of self-control. There are many courses, counselling, and therapies to learn that self-control. Another example is, controlling one's greed to reject bribes. Again, Taqwa is the ultimate choice of controlling oneself from sins with fear of Allah, and Taqwa is the best tool to master that self-control. Faith about the Day of Judgment is vivid in a Muttaqi, and for his/her ultimate peace and happiness he/she controls all the illegal, criminal, immoral, and unfair urges. As a result, the spouse with self-control contributes love, peace, and happiness in the marriage.

Self-checking: Self-checking is a regular checking that everything from a spouse is fair, right, and positive. When people have high blood sugar, they need to monitor the sugar level to avoid troubles. Or in any company, they must have quality control to check the quality of the product. If they sleep without checking, their business might go down with a red-light in the business. For the best qualities, the checking system must be the best as well. Similarly, a spouse who is practicing self-control must check whether it is going according to the rules, and it is working well. For Taqwa, the same thing is necessary. No one must take Taqwa or self-control for granted. To maintain the best quality close look, self-assessment and self-correction must be a continuous thing. In a word, what is the purpose of self-checking in spouses? That one word is self-control. Therefore, we find that Taqwa, self-control and self-checking has correlation. That's why, I am suggesting that Muslims must increase the habit of self-checking in them for their best.

What are the main things we must control with Taqwa, and we should check that we are achieving well without lacking? To put emphasis on the main ones, I shall add the following areas that we must control and check all the time:

- *Control your mind:* You may have bad thoughts, bad motives, selfish thinking, sinful attitudes, or any other harmful elements going through in your mind. With self-checking, you can easily identify them and can quarantine them immediately.
- *Control your emotion:* You may have irrational feelings. Or you may have grudges unfairly being held in your heart. Or you may be rearing jealousy in you against your innocent spouse. Or you may have selfish love. You know your own emotion and with self-checking you can identify any bad feelings inside you.
- *Control your own impulse:* Maybe you are an impulsive spouse, for which you regretted so many times. Well, use your self-checking tool. It will help you to identify what is impulsive and what is wise in you. Then, you can block your impulses with wise decisions to avoid loss, embarrassments, and unhappiness in your marriage.
- *Control your anger:* Anger is like fire which burns happiness in marriage. Through self-checking an angry spouse can detect what makes him/her angry. Then that spouse can find ways to control anger. Every spouse has the power of reasoning and the willpower to control own anger.

- *Control your evil desires:* Evil desires in a spouse can destroy own happiness as well as the happiness of another spouse. Self-checking helps to identify those evil desires by yourself to control them. Without self-checking, a spouse may never know how evil he or she is inside. Self-checking points out Haram desires in a spouse quietly to remove them. That way a spouse can remove selfishness, unfairness from his or her part. The result of it is happiness in marriage.
- *Control your tongue:* Self-checking will point out your lies, abuse, cursing, and so on. Then you can control those hurtful talks that destroys the happy relationship in your marriage.
- *Control violent hands:* Hands can be used violently against a loving spouse. You need to control your hands from harmful use, and you need to make your hands to be used for providing safety for your spouse. Only you should control it. The power of control your own hands is in you. Self-checking will inform you the truth. It will tell you whether you are a violent person or a lovely person. It will tell you whether your hands are tied up with your neck as stingy or they are too widely extended to be extravagant. You can assess your own traits accurately by self-checking to impose proper control over you for a peaceful stay in marriage.
- *Ongoing self-control:* Some products for quality control you do not need to check every second. For example, you made a toy with a fixed structure, and you checked it thoroughly. Once you are satisfied, you can replicate it with a relaxed mind. But what about your mind, emotion, impulse, anger, and bad desires? Can you check once a year and then sleep tight without worries? No, you can't do that. Human mind is adjusting with different situations second by second. Now you are smiling but maybe an hour later you are weeping for being told off by your spouse. Or you are calm, but something might irritate you minutes later. Will you be calm then? So, human feelings are ever changing with ever changing challenges, and to make sure Taqwa, and self-control are in place, believers must continue self-checking all the time. This is our job to pass the test in this life until we die.

The best device for self-checking:

The best device for self-checking for self-correction is "Fear of Allah's punishment". I explained it before under TAQWA. But because it's the best device, Muslim spouses must know as much as possible about it. Every believing spouse must have this device in him or in her. Without this device, one cannot be a true believer. A true believer strongly believes that Allah is watching his or her actions, Allah's appointed angels are recording the actions in deed books, and Allah will judge the person on the Day of Judgment fairly per the deed book. So, a believer is afraid of doing anything against a spouse, or in marriage for the fear of Allah's fair judgment and for the fear of Allah's punishment.

If a believer has that device installed in him or her, then self-checking becomes very easy for him or her for own salvation. With fear of Allah, when one does self-checking, asks himself or herself the following questions frequently:

- Am I thinking, doing or saying anything in marriage against Allah's rules?
- Am I thinking, doing or saying anything in marriage that will displease Allah?
- Am I thinking, doing or saying anything in marriage that neglects my duty to Allah?
- Am I thinking, doing or saying anything for which I will be charged in Allah's court?
- Am I thinking, doing or saying anything for which Allah may punish me?
- Am I thinking, doing or saying anything that is unfair on my spouse?
- Am I thinking, doing or saying anything for which I am not giving the rights of my spouse and Allah may punish me for that? Etc.

Fear of Allah motivates the righteous spouse to do self-checking. Fear of Allah's punishment makes the righteous spouse amend wrongdoings in marriages. That results in happiness. In marriage or in life in general, if a believer has this device active in him or in her, then life or marriage is bound to be pure, free from corruption and success will embrace. Let me quote a few verses from the holy Quran to establish the fact, that "fear of Allah" is the best device for self-checking for the best outcomes in life:

Fear of Allah is the key to happiness: In marriage, if spouses use this "Fear of Allah" as a device for self-checking, and then they can control their wrongdoing, then happiness is obvious for them. Holy Quran describes:

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ٦٣ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۚ لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ٦٤

“(They are) those who believe and guard against evil: and fear Allah-for them is happy news, in the present life and in the Hereafter: There can be no change in the Words of Allah. This is truly the supreme happiness.”

[Al-Quran 10:62-63]

Fear of Allah is the best tool for self-correction: Fear of Allah's punishment shakes the believers' hearts, makes those hearts to repent and motivates them to be the best husband or the best wife. Whoever has it, receives aid from Allah for correction. Holy Quran describes:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ٧٠ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ فَفَقَدْ قَارَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ٧١

“O you who believe! Fear Allah and always speak words straight (so) that HE (Allah) may make your actions pure and true and forgive your sins:”

[Al-Quran 33:70-71]

Fear of Allah is the source of Allah's blessings: Allah guarantees blessings for those who Fear HIS fair judgment and do righteous deeds. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ ءَامَنُوا وَأَتَّقُوا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَٰكِن كَذَّبُوا فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

“And if the people of the towns had only believed and feared Allah, certainly WE should indeed have opened out to them blessings from heaven and earth.”

[Al-Quran 7:96]

Fear of Allah is the best vehicle to arrive in Paradise: Husbands and wives must look forward to arriving in Paradise successfully and safely. The everlasting happiness for them is waiting in paradise. To get there they need to guard the evils through "Fear of Allah' punishment", and self-checking. Holy Quran describes:

وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا وَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا خَالِدِينَ

“And those who feared their Lord will be led to the Paradise in groups. When they arrive there, and its gates will be opened; and the keepers (of Paradise) will say: “Peace be upon you! You have done well! You enter here to live in there forever.”

[Al-Quran 39:73]

Why self-checking is a duty of each spouse?

Each spouse has a duty to make the marriage happy. Each one must try to guard from evil and practice the good actions in marriage for happiness. To do that they need a self-evaluation process in them constantly. That process is self-checking. Without it, one may become careless, insensitive, obstinate with self-love, and unwilling to correct, which will result in unhappiness in marriage. Happiness is the result of two spouse's effort. If one is willing and another is not, then

it won't work. That's why both must make active effort in this. Self-checking is that first step towards that responsibility because with it, a spouse takes positive step to learn, to correct, or to adjust to make the marriage happy.

Let us look at couple of verses from the Holy Quran about self-responsibility.

Allah never changes the grace until people take responsibility to change: If they stick to the guidance of Allah, HE never removes HIS Mercy away from them. Through self-checking spouses can make sure that they are sticking to the guidance of Allah. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِّعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ ۚ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

“Because Allah will never change the grace which HE has given to a people until they change what is in their (own) souls: And surely Allah is All Hearing, All Knowing.”

[Al-Quran 8:53]

Allah changes the condition of people when they take responsibility to change: Unless spouses try for happiness, Allah will not force happiness on them. Through self-checking, they can monitor their own effort for happiness. Allah says in the holy Quran:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ

“Surely Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change it themselves.”

[Al-Quran 13:11]

The one takes responsibility to purify his/her own soul receives success: Allah has created humans with everything they need for self-correction. For example, Allah has placed a self-consciousness in them to judge their own right or wrong actions. Through self-checking, easily they can identify their own faults and can rectify them. In marriage, spouses can use that tool to remove faults to maximise their happiness. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ۚ فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ۚ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن زَكَّاهَا ۙ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَن دَسَّاهَا ۚ

“And by the soul and the proportion and order given to it; And its enlightenment and to its wrong and to its right. Truly, he succeeds who purifies it (soul from wrong), And he fails who corrupts it (soul with wrong)”

[Al-Quran 91:7-10]

Are there any spouses who do not like self-checking? Yes, there are some spouses who do not want to do self-checking. Why do they avoid it? What are the reasons for them? There are some common-sense reasons behind it. Some wrong attitudes either prevent or discourage some spouses to do self-checking. I have mentioned them here and there in the book, but I shall still mention a few for sharp reminder.

- *Mr or Mrs perfect:* They think that they are Mr or Mrs perfect. They think that they can never be wrong anyway. So, self-checking is not for them. You will find some spouses are never apologetic because of their delusion.
- *False pride:* They are proud people. They avoid anything that may puncture their pride. Self-checking is the first step of accepting one's wrong, that's why they avoid it, because admitting wrong will damage their ego.
- *Arrogance:* Arrogance makes them too haughty. Haughty people never want to learn from own mistakes. Only humble servants of Allah do feel down to earth, and they do self-checking to be free from mistakes, sins and so on. Arrogant spouses are opposite to that.
- *Ignorance about own self-worth:* Some people are ignorant about their own self-worth. They are not aware of their own values. They want to remain ignorant about it. Thus, they are not

soul searchers. Only wise people dare to ask questions to measure their own level of values, morals and from there they try to improve further. Self-checking is necessary for that soul-searching in spouses. But if a spouse wants to remain in the dark, or in the ignorance, then he or she will find self-checking is a waste of time.

- *Obstinacy*: Some spouses have a bent nature. They never think straight or look straight. They are like bent hard timber. They tend to oppose anything they dislike. Thus, they lose the flexibility to adapt easily by learning the facts. Obstinate people do not self-check because self-checking goes against their weird nature. They are not easy spouses to live with.
- *Fear of facing own ugliness*: Some people know that they have serious ugly sides. They are afraid of facing those ugly sides in them. That fear prevents them to self-check. A part of the mind tells them to ignore or to give time or to care less. They are cowardly people. The one who fears facing own ugliness is more cowardly, then the one who fears facing stronger people.
- *Lost soul*: Some souls have surrendered to wrong traits. Even though they are Muslims in name only, but they are doing most of the wrong, prohibited things. After doing wrong for long time, they have a habit of continuing in wrong. With that loss now, they have no tendency to be better. They have surrendered themselves to the wrong. So, they have no urge to correct themselves. That's why they do not like self-checking about their own wrong doings.

What should you check in you?

What type of things should a spouse check within self? I shall give some examples below about what to check. For self-checking, a spouse should ask questions to self, such as:

Questions to own mind:

- Have I surrendered my mind to Allah?
- Am I thinking it wrong?
- Am I thinking right way?
- Do I have evidence from Quran and Sunnah that I am thinking right way?
- If I have no evidence, then am I ready to accept my mistakes?
- Do I think wisely?
- Do I think well before doing or saying anything?
- Do I use my mind to find the truth, etc?

Questions to own emotion:

- Am I feeling rationally?
- Am I feeling jealous?
- Am I feeling bad based on guess, without evidence?
- Am I selfish about it?
- Am I generous about it?
- Am I greedy for this?
- Am I dwelling a hatred feeling?
- Am I feeling angry?
- Am I exaggerating in my feelings?
- How do I know that my feeling is not sinful? Etc.

Questioning to own speaking:

- Is my speech polite?
- Is my speech harsh?

- Is my speech abusive?
- Is my speech cursing?
- Are my speeches sounds caring?
- Is my speech useless?
- Is my speech unclear?
- Is my speech abrupt?
- Is my speech to incite my spouse?
- Is my speech best?
- Is my speech worst?
- Am I earning sins with my speech?
- Am I hurting my spouse with my speech?
- Am I following Islamic manner in my speech? Etc.

Questioning to own gesture:

- Do I sound angry?
- Do I sound mean?
- Do I look scary?
- Do I look unmindful?
- Do I look lovely?
- Am I smiley?
- Am I rude looking?
- Am I a good listener?
- Do I look humble?
- Do I look keen?
- Do I appear gentle?
- Is my gesture violent?
- Do I appear a caring person?
- Do I appear a horrible person?
- Am I sure that my intention and gesture are similar?
- Do I need to change any of my gesture?
- Am I making any sins with my gesture? Etc.

Questioning to own hands:

- Is my hand within control?
- Do I use my hands to scare my wife?
- Do I use my hands to incite my husband?
- Do I use my hands to protect my family?
- Is my spouse safe from my hands? Etc.

Questioning to own eyes:

- Do I show red eyes?
- Do I show angry eyes?
- Am I using my eyes to see something forbidden?
- Am I using my eyes to pry illegally?
- Am I cheating my spouse with my eyes?
- Am I crying with pretence?
- Am I giving a loving look?

- Am I giving a harsh look when necessary?
- Am I doing any sins with my eyes? Etc.

Questioning to own face:

- How do I look like?
- Do I look coward?
- Do I look confident?
- Do I look smiley?
- Do I look tough?
- Do I look gentle?
- Do I make wrong gestures with my face?
- Do I show a gloomy face?
- Do I have an unwelcoming face?
- Do I have a scary face?
- Do I show my love and care in my face for my spouse? Etc.

Questioning to own heart:

- Do I have a kind heart?
- Do I have a greedy heart?
- Do I have a jealous heart?
- Do I have an insincere heart?
- Do I feel remorseful for my sins?
- Do I truly love my spouse?
- Do I truly have the feeling of mercy for my spouse in my heart?
- Is my heart very hard?
- Have I got a forgiving heart?
- Do I hold grudge in my heart?
- Am I cheating with my spouse about my true feelings?
- Have I surrendered my feelings to Allah?
- Do I worship my own selfish desires?
- Am I committing any sins with my heart? Etc.

Questioning to own actions:

- Have I done it right?
- Was there anything wrong in my action?
- Did I act per the divine guidance?
- Has my action made my spouse upset?
- Could I have acted it in a better way?
- Can I do it in a better way next time?
- What was the reaction from my spouse after my action?
- Was my action unwise?
- Was my action silly?
- Was my action impulsive?
- Was my action Islamic?
- Was my action sinful?
- Did my action give room for suspicion?
- Did my action create confusion or misunderstanding? Etc.

Take feedback as part of self-checking:

Self-checking is very good to be the best spouse for happiness in marriage. It should work in most spouses. But some spouses may need an additional tool for better improvement because one may not see own shortcomings through self-checking, or one may have shortage of knowledge to detect wrong through self-checking, or one may have too much self-love, which fails to see own faults through self-checking and so on. In those cases, taking feedback from spouse is an additional backup plan to detect mistakes, and to correct mistakes for happy marriage. Do you want to be a popular spouse in your family? Do you like being admired by the spouse, young and old in the family? I know, that is a dream for most spouses, and I admit, I had the same ambition. Despite my ambition and efforts, time to time when my wife did not support my actions eagerly, I decided to take one step ahead to receive feedback from her.

Was it a smooth ride for me asking her feedback? It wasn't. We had a rough start because my spouse was listing every negative thing about me, and she enjoyed the power I handed over to her. Sometimes, she was fair, wise, and constructive and sometimes she could not maintain the balance. Did I give up? I did not because I took it as an opportunity to discuss, exchange ideas and to learn about the Islamic process of feedback. In that process, I needed to learn and follow few things, and she had to do the same. The outcome was that we became two counsellors in the same house. She could use her experience and learning in counselling many spouses who had bad issues, and I did the same. We adjusted over the time, and then we knew about one another so much more. That's why, I humbly ask many spouses, "How much do you know about your spouse in thoughts, feelings and wants?" I will be honest with you about it, and I had understood my wife so much better once I started receiving her feedback. But remember! You will be tested by patience, self-control, and wisdom. Good luck!

What are the benefits of taking feedback from your spouse? They are many but I shall highlight a few of them for you insha Allah!

- **It will make you brave:** Asking for feedback from your own wife or husband is a courageous step. Once you get used to it, without realizing you have got huge courage you needed for your improvement.
- **It will make you relax more:** Now you can relax. You are no longer afraid of what your spouse will think about you. You need that relaxation to be free from anxiety about your performance in marriage.
- **It will make you more patient:** Listening to feedback needs patience. Now you can be more patient. You won't get frustrated when your spouse suggests that your talk was bit rude which has hurt her feeling. You are now listening patiently and trying to adapt best performance to make your spouse happy.
- **It will give you a best adviser:** Your spouse is a free adviser, why not use that free adviser? You have two minds now working for the same aim. You have a caring wife or husband who is ready to see you doing best. You can use each other all the time.
- **It will make you more tolerant:** Most people cannot take criticism easily, because they cannot tolerate criticism. But you ask for feedback because you are more tolerant now. Keep asking and then you will find yourself very calm and a cool spouse soon. Your tolerance will make you happier.
- **It will remove your fear:** From fear of losing face, or from fear of humiliation often some people do not ask for feedback. But now you are asking feedback by removing your fear. You can be free from fears if you carry on seeking feedback.

- **Your spouse will like you more:** When you ask your spouse to tell you how she or he felt from your action, you are showing your love, care, trust, and respect towards your spouse. Even if he or she had hurt feelings, will melt down with your caring question for feedback. That increases the bond and trust between spouses. Your spouse won't have to suppress any ill feeling any more about you. He or she can now share the feeling freely because you two are open to take feedback to learn from it.
- **It will make you keen to be the best:** Seeking feedback from spouse will give you tips to improve. You will find a nice method for self-improvement and self-growth. Your husband or your wife will offer you best advice, and by following that you can climb the ladder towards the best. You can help one another to become a best husband and a best wife. It does not take too much to become happy in marriage. Just have open minds and just listen to one another more often and check with your ideas with Islamic guidance to rectify them. That's all you need to move towards happiness in Islamic marriage.
- **It will give amazing result:** I am positive that you will gain more if you seek feedback from your spouse. Even if sometimes your spouse gives a mistaken idea, still it is good, because then you can correct your spouse. By that you can continue learning from one another. Soon you will see amazing result. You will notice day by day, you both are growing with right knowledge, maturity, and wisdom.

Now, your spouse has asked you for feedback. Do you think that you have got the power and control to say anything you like? Or saying anything to bring the worst out? What are the etiquettes in giving feedback? Yes, there are etiquettes. It has become a trust on you as a giver of feedback and you must not misuse it. If you deliberately misuse it, then instead good you will earn sin and you will cause more damage. Know very well that when husband and wife seek feedback from each other, they put their trust on one another. That trust must be kept. How to keep that trust? Well, to the least, the feedback must be honest, truthful, correct and the best. If a spouse gives feedback wrongly, then that would be a misuse of the trust placed on him or her. So, spouses must make sure that they are giving the best advice. To do that, they must ask themselves 3 main questions before giving feedback. The questions are:

1. **Do I know enough about it?** You are asked to give feedback? Remember Islam asks you to give advice with Islamic knowledge. If you do not know enough about it, then tell the truth that you are not sure. Be truthful. Do not try to persuade for your own selfish desires. Remember Allah will question you if you do not discharge your advice with full sincerity, honesty, unselfishly and correctly.
2. **Am I giving right advice?** Make sure that you are giving the right advice. No matter how painful it may sound, tell the truth for the sake of Allah politely with wisdom. Again remember! Allah will question you if you deliberately hide the truth for flattery.
3. **Am I giving wrong advice?** Never give wrong advice because if your spouse follows your wrong advice, then he or she will be in trouble, and you will be in trouble too. One day the wrong thing will haunt you in this life. Besides, Allah will question you for giving wrong advice.

Keeping the above questions in mind, now we should look at Islamic teachings about feedback.

Feedback giving is a trust: Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that Holy Messenger of Allah said:

المستشار مؤتمن

“The one from whom advice is being asked, is a trustee.”

[Tirmidi]

Believers must discharge their trust: Islamic guidance is a trust on us from Allah and HIS messenger. So, in marriage, feedback for each other is also the part of that trust, and spouses must discharge that trust by offering feedback according to Islamic guidance. Allah warns believers in the Holy Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَخُونُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ وَتَخُونُوا أَمَانَاتِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ٢٧

“O you who believe! Do not betray to the trust of Allah and the Messenger, and do not cheat knowingly from the things given to you in trust.”

[Al-Quran 8:27]

Discharging trust brings success: Successful are those believers who keep their trust for Allah’s sake. In marriage life, they should give each other feedback, to discharge their trust vested upon them. Allah says in the Holy Quran about the successful believers, who will be admitted in the Paradise:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رُءُونَ ٨

“Those who truly keep their trusts and their promises.”

[Al-Quran 23:8]

Concluding words

To conclude this book, I would like to express my heart-felt gratitude to Allah for helping HIS servant (me) in ideas to write some tips on happiness in Islamic Marriage. I seek HIS forgiveness in my shortcomings, and I pray for more knowledge and wisdom from HIM to serve HIS Deen, and to pass HIS Deen to others correctly. May Allah accept me as a Da'ee for HIS Deen, Ameen!

In this book, I tried to offer tips for how to be happy in Islamic marriage with my best intention and with the best of my knowledge. If there is anything wrong in it, that is due to my shortcoming in knowledge and Islam is not to be blamed for this. If I have written correctly, then the whole praise is to Allah for HIS immaculate divine guidance for the mankind.

Happiness in Islamic marriage is a dream for every Muslim. For happiness, we do not need miracles from heaven in our daily marriage life, but for it, we need to guide our mind, emotion, body, speaking and actions etc according to Allah's guidance. I tried to explain that in this book. We have Holy Quran and to explain it Holy Messenger of Allah's practical marriage life as guidance, and we only need to learn and follow for our happiness in our marriages. If we try, Allah will help us:

وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ ۖ فَسَنِيَرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ ۙ

“And (in all sincerity he) accepts and follows the best, WE will indeed make smooth for him the path to happiness.”

[Al-Quran 92-6-7]

Some asked me, “Is there truly any happiness in the marriage or is it just a myth?” The answer is, “Yes! There is true happiness in marriage!” But to feel it we need to mould our minds per Islamic Faith. If we can do that, then we will feel happy with something that we did not feel happy before. Because the true faith changes our ways of thinking and feeling, shifts our focus and priority, makes us see negative things positively and encourages us to make efforts towards happiness for our own gain in Paradise.

Marriage is tested by Allah with some hiccups. But people with true Faith never see these hiccups as unhappy episodes, rather they see them happily as opportunities for higher status with more happiness in Paradise. Allah always tests the righteous couples with some difficulties, but at the same time Allah makes it easy for them for their strong Faith in Allah. Allah never leaves HIS true loyal servants alone without help. Allah assures about it in the Holy Quran:

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ۝

“So, surely with every difficulty there is relief.”

[Al-Quran 94:5]

So, Muslim spouses have nothing to be frustrated about anything in their Islamic marriage. They just need strong determination to make their marriage happy, and they need to follow Islamic guidance in their marriage, and then Insha Allah! Allah will help them with happiness. May Allah guide us and grant us happiness in this life and in the life hereafter, Ameen!

-----The end-----