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by Imam Zafrullah Domun

As you are all aware later this afternoon there will be the Nikah ceremony of our son Mohammad Ismail. Since within our Jamaat we do not pronounce Nikahs quite often I have thought it appropriate to use this Friday sermon to say a few words about marriage in Islam. Of course this is a vast subject. So I will just touch on the subject so that our young ones (I mean those who intend to marry and those who have just married) may know what are the fundamental teachings of Islam on this most important matter.

I will begin with some hadiths because it helps to introduce the subject. A group of three men came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet asking how the Prophet worshipped (Allah), and when they were informed about that, they considered their worship insufficient and said, "Where are we from the Prophet as his past and future sins have been forgiven." Then one of them said, "I will offer the prayer throughout the night forever." The other said, "I will fast throughout the year and will not break my fast." The third said, "I will keep away from the women and will not marry forever." Allah's Apostle came to them and said, "Are you the same people who said so-and-so? By Allah, I am more submissive to Allah and more afraid of Him than you; yet I fast and break my fast, I do sleep and I also marry women. So he who does not follow my tradition(Sunnah)in religion, is not from me (not one of my followers)."

In another report he said "*Annikaaho sunnati faman ragheba an sunnati fa laysa minni*" meaning "Marriage is part of my way of life; he who turns away from it is not of me". The way our beloved Prophet Mohammad (saw) led his life is an example for every Muslim whether he is a man or a woman. You will recall that Allah has said in the Holy Quran "*Laqad kaana lakoum fi rasoulillahi ouswatoun hasanatoune le man kana yarjoullaha wal yawmil aakhera wa zakarallaha kasira*" which we translate as "You have an excellent example in the messenger of Allah for he who desires Allah and the last day and remembers Allah much." So each man and woman who is of age should do his or her best to intend to marry and they should even pray to Allah to get the partners that would be most suitable for them. Therefore, no Muslim worthy of that name should ever think that he or she would not marry. On the contrary they should always think that remaining single is not an option. They should eagerly seek to remain in the marriage mode if we may say, to use an expression that is easily understood by today's young people.

In another hadith the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) has advised us as follows: “In marrying a woman, a man’s choice of a spouse is determined by the consideration of her wealth, her family and her physical beauty and her religious piety, but thou should make thy life happy, prosperous and successful, by choosing a spouse, on account of her religious piety, otherwise thy hands will ever remain in dust.” (Bukhārī)

Most probably these days, choice is not being dictated particularly by religious piety. Nonetheless what we should understand is that the most enduring quality that helps to make a marriage succeed is piety and not personal beauty which fades after a few years or wealth which may be here today and be gone tomorrow or even family status which is also not an enduring quality. This hadith impresses upon our mind that we should help our children to know their religion well because it will help them to navigate through their life quite easily. Knowing what is the essence of Islam is a fundamental requisite in today’s world because on it depend our life in this world and the hereafter. If these days we see that Muslims are fighting each other and other groups are boycotting Muslims it is because a true understanding of the fundamentals of Islam is lacking. There is no doubt that a true Muslim is one who really does not harm others neither with his tongue nor with his hands. Many just make the declaration that they are such Muslims. But their actions speak eloquently against their words. And Allah does not like this at all. Even the mainstream Ahmadiyya caliph has reminded the members last week about this defect that is still present in many Ahmadi Muslims. They say something but they fail to live up to it.

In another hadith narrated by 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin Al-'As we read

“Allah's Apostle said, "O 'Abdullah! Have I not been informed that you fast all the day and stand in prayer all night?" I said, "Yes, O Allah's Apostle!" He said, "Do not do that! Observe the fast sometimes and also leave them (the fast) at other times; stand up for the prayer at night and also sleep at night. Your body has a right over you, your eyes have a right over you and your wife has a right over you." This hadith is very explicit. The Holy Prophet (saw) advised one of the most pious young man of his time to embrace life in its entirety and not to be inclined only to Allah neglecting duties that have a bearing on the life of this world.

In another hadith narrated by Ibn 'Umar we read:

“The Prophet said, "All of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards. The ruler is a guardian and the man is a guardian of his family; the lady is a guardian and is responsible for her husband's house and his offspring; and so all of

you are guardians and are responsible for your wards." This hadith helps us to understand that we have responsibilities and we should care for all the needs of those who are under our care.

In another hadith narrated by Al-Miswar bin Makhrama we read

"I heard Allah's Apostle who was on the pulpit, saying, "Banu Hisham bin Al-Mughira have requested me to allow them to marry their daughter to Ali bin Abu Talib, but I don't give permission, and will not give permission unless 'Ali bin Abi Talib divorces my daughter in order to marry their daughter, because Fatima is a part of my body, and I hate what she hates to see, and what hurts her, hurts me." We all know that Hazrat Ali was very close to the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw). Yet because of Hazrat Fatima, his daughter, he did not agree that Hazrat Ali should marry another of her cousins. Here we can appreciate how great was the love that bonded the Holy Prophet(saw) to his daughter Fatima(ra). Eventually when Hazrat Fatima died Hazrat Ali married that woman. This hadith is anecdotal, but it gives an idea how caring was the greatest of men in regard to his daughter.

In another hadith narrated by Amr Ibn Akhwas we learn that the Holy Prophet commanded "Be kind towards your women. Take heed! You have rights over your women and your women also have rights over you. Their rights over you are that you provide food and clothing for them in good faith. Your rights over them are that they do not allow and nor do they give permission, for people to trespass into your house whose presence you dislike." This is one of the important hadith which spells out the relationship between husband and wife. A man is expected to provide for his wife. The wife is expected to protect the honour of her husband by not allowing any other man he dislikes in his house.

In another hadith we learn that the Prophet (saw) said: " The greatest sin amongst all sins in the eyes of Allah, is of a person, who marries a woman and divorces her once his needs have been fulfilled and also usurps her dowry in the process. Secondly, is a person who after having employed somebody usurps his pay. Thirdly, is a person who kills animals for no apparent reason." (Al-Hakim and Al-Bayhaqi). Marriage is not a plaything. It is a serious matter and both partners should see to it that they understand its sanctity and they do their best to preserve it. There are many factors that help a married couple to stay together. My humble opinion is that each couple should learn what are these elements and they should do their best to preserve their marriage thereby. Unfortunately, we do not have enough time to go through these elements right now. In another hadith we learn that the Holy prophet (saw) is reported to have said." The fragrance of Jannat is unlawful upon that woman who asks her husband for a divorce for no apparent

reason." (Imaam Ahmed, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Ibn Maajah and Haakim). Although divorce is allowed in Islam we are told in a hadith that "It is the most detestable allowable thing". It is not a decision that should be taken lightly.

The Prophet(saw) has stated, "A person who speaks insolently towards his father is distanced from Allah the Great's Mercy. A person who speaks insolently towards his mother is distanced from Allah the Great's Mercy." And finally he stated, "A person who behaves in the manner of the people of Lot, meaning commits sodomy, is distanced from Allah the Great's mercy." (Imam Ahmad: Ibn Abbas). We all know that in Islam great emphasis is laid on the respect that are to be shown to parents. As good Muslims we are expected to behave with great humility towards our parents. If we do not do so we would be distancing ourselves from Allah's Mercy. So is the case of people who commit sodomy. In the west these days in the name of tolerance such a practice is allowed. But Allah disapproves of it and Muslims should not indulge in it.

The intimacy that exist between husband and wife is quite precious. No other person should be privy to it. Neither the husband nor the wife is allowed to speak about their intimate behaviour to anyone else. If there are psychological or physical problems that need professional attention, that would be something else. The Holy Prophet (saw) is reported to have said " A person who after having intercourse with his spouse, reveals their secrecy, will be in the lowest rank on the day of Judgement in the eyes of Allah." What goes on in the bedroom remains in the bedroom.

There are many other hadiths that one should make oneself aware of especially when one is getting married. We live in an era where these materials are freely available in English on the net and we should all make the best use of them. The last hadith that I will quote for today is that The Holy Prophet (saw) has stated, "Allah has made it compulsory upon Himself to assist four types of people (i.e. Allah has promised to do this) 1. A Judge; 2. A person who gets married (with the intentions of remaining pure); 3. A slave buying his freedom; 4. A *Haaji* (one who has performed the pilgrimage). (Ahmad, Tirmidhi)

From this hadith we can learn that Allah will help someone who gets married because he wants to lead a pure life. In fact, one of the objectives of marriage is to pacify the passions and to try to realize the true objective of our life which is to know Allah. *In cha Allah* I Will speak more on this matter in our coming sermons where I will quote some more hadiths and many of the verses of the Holy Quran which has a bearing on marriage. In another sermon I will also speak about what Hazrat Masih Maood (as) and some other divines have said about it. May Allah help each one who is married to learn to take all the physical moral and spiritual

benefits of marriage. May He also provide for all those who are not yet married, suitable partners so that they might lead a married life to the full. May Allah help us all to understand the purpose of our life and may we all realize it. Ameen.