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As I said previously I will conclude this series of sermons on marriage in Islam by sharing with you some verses of the Holy Quran where Allah has spoken about this important institution. I use the word “important institution” because in a hadith the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) is reported to have said: “There is no foundation that has been built in Islam more loved by Allah, (The Greatest and Noblest) than marriage.” Although as I said before, this institution existed even before Islam, yet within Islam it has been given even greater importance. Unfortunately, it will not be possible to speak about all the verses that are related to marriage, So I will tell you some of them and I hope they will suffice to give an idea of the instructions of Allah concerning it.

Allah says: "O' mankind! Have consciousness of your Lord who has created you from a single soul. From it He created your spouse and through them He populated the land with many men and women. Have spiritual awareness of the One by whose Name you swear to settle your differences and have respect for the wombs as well. Without doubt, Allah (SwT) keeps watch over you all."(Surah 4, Verse 1).

This is the verse that we usually read on occasions of *Nikah* ceremonies to remind ourselves of our origin. Allah created men and women from a single soul. Physically how that really happened has not yet been clarified but we know that Allah speaks the truth and so if He says it was so, so should it be. With the onset of puberty and with the influx of hormones that inundate our bodies the interest in and the desire for the opposite sex invades our existence. It is this desire that will eventually crown into a marriage. So in the midst of physical desires Allah reminds us to be conscious of Him, to fear Him because He watches over us. Once the marriage is over and physical desires have been satisfied one immediately is confronted with other types of problems that will invade the new couple's existence. Most newly married couples are not aware of these problems. They confront them as they go along. Particularly when faced with these problems that Allah calls our attention to have regard for Him and to be careful of what we do or what we say. He watches over us and so we should heed Him.

In another beautiful verse Allah says “*Hounna libaasoul lakoum wa antoum libaasoul lahounna*” which is usually translated as “they are a garment for you and you are a garment for them.” Now if we ponder over this verse carefully we will immediately understand the role that husband and wife should play for each other.

Each partner acts as a garment for the other. In other words, each offers comfort, protection and acts as an embellishment for the other. Each partner should be well aware of his and her role and try to fulfill it in the best possible way seeking Allah's Pleasure as well. Regarding the comfort that each partner can bring to the other, another verse of the Holy Quran makes it quite clear. It says "And one of His signs is that He has created for you, spouses from amongst yourselves so that you might take comfort in them and He has placed between you, love and mercy. In this there is surely evidence (of the truth) for the people who carefully think." (Surah 30, Verse 21) And in order to help us to find this comfort in our wives and in our children Allah has taught us that those who are the servants of Allah the Rahman manifest many characteristics and one of them is that they pray to Allah in these following noble words. They say "*Rabbana hablana min azwaajena wa zourriyatena qurrata ayyoniw waja'alna lil mouttaqeen imama*". We translate this as follows: "O our Lord grant us from our wives and our children the delight of our eyes and make us a guide for the righteous". We all should manifest this characteristic of the righteous and keep on making this prayer every day and you will see Allah will answer it insha Allah.

Very often husbands are fed up with their wives. This is true in almost all societies. However, Allah tells us in the Holy Quran "O ye who believe! it is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will; nor should you detain them wrongfully that you may take away part of that which you have given them, except that they be guilty of a flagrant evil; and consort with them in kindness; and if you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing wherein Allah has placed much good. (4:20)

Men are not expected to forcibly take anything from their wives. Allah advises men to deal kindly with women and the last part of the verse is most revealing. Sometimes even if you dislike what they do there are still benefits that may be found in them and one should learn to look for them.

Since I will not be able to repeat all the verses here it is good to know that many verses in the beginning of chapter 4 of the Holy Quran speak about the degrees of prohibition and allowance in marriage in Islam. If anyone is interested, he may read them there in order to know the limits that have been prescribed by Islam as far as marriage is concerned.

In Islam intercourse between a man and a woman can take place only when they are married to one another. If they are not married and they have sex with one another they would be guilty of adultery which is punished in Islam by 100 lashes to be administered in public. Some people especially those in the west and those who are under their influence call these punishments barbaric. It is true that it is quite

difficult to administer this punishment in modern day states because the law of the land has preference. However, Muslims should just bear in mind what could have been the consequences when they take the evil road to adultery. For those who are interested and who wish to know more about the subject of adultery and Islam I refer them to chapter Al Noor (24) of the Holy Quran. Besides, one should look up marriage in the index of the Holy Quran and look up the verses referenced and one would know all the verses where marriage is mentioned. For those who want to have a thorough understanding of all its verses, they should start reading the Holy Quran from beginning to end and make note of all the verses that discuss marriage.

Among the verses which show that in the sight of Allah man and women are equal and they will be treated equally we read “Surely, men who submit themselves to God and women who submit themselves to Him, and believing men and believing women, and truthful men and truthful women, and steadfast men and steadfast women, and humble men and humble women, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their chastity and women who guard their chastity, and men who remember Allah much and women who remember Him – Allah has prepared for all of them forgiveness and a great reward(34:36)

Commenting on the verse where Allah says:

نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ مِمَّا تَرَثُونَ فَاتَّبِعُوا حَرْثَكُمْ  
 أَنِّي شِئْتُمُ زَوْجِدٍ مِّنْ أَلْفِ نَفْسِكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا  
 اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ مُّلاقُونَ وَبَشِّرِ  
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

*Your wives are a tilth for you; so approach your tilth when and how you like and send ahead some good for yourselves; and fear Allah and know that you shall meet Him; and give good tidings to those who obey. (2:224)*

Some people try to find in this verse a sanction for their own perversions. However, Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has commented on this verse in the following words:

“The (Arya) speaker said that it was written in the Qur’an that women were like plowing fields only for sexual intercourse. Now, we have to see how much this - filthy-minded person goes further in his malicious accusation, and how he coins his own words and then attributes them to the Qur’an. What else we can say about such

a liar other than “May God’s curse be on the liars.” In the Noble Qur’an the verse says only this much: “Your wives are sort of sowing field for you, so go into your - fields whichever way you like” (2:224). That is, your wives are like a field in which the seeds for your progeny are sown, so you may approach your field in any way you like. However, keep in mind that they are like tilth, do not approach them in a manner which may be a hindrance to them in giving birth to children...Thus, in this verse it is expressed that as a woman is like a field that gives birth to children like grain, therefore, it is not proper that such a field be hindered from giving birth to children. However, if a woman is sick and it is certain that her becoming pregnant certainly there is a risk of her death, or there is some other hindrance, then such cases are exceptions to the rule. Otherwise, according to divine law, it is not proper at all to avoid giving birth to children.

Thus, when God calls woman a tilth, every sensible person can understand that this name is given to her as she is the means to have progeny. One of the objectives of marriage is this very purpose that through marriage God's servants should be given birth who may remember Him. The second objective of marriage is determined by God the Exalted that man through his wife, and woman through her husband, may remain guarded against trespassing of the eye and illicit relations. The third objective also is determined that men and women live together in love and are saved from pain and sorrow of loneliness. All these verses are in the Holy Qur'an."(The fountain of knowledge)

In the end I would like to share something that has circulated on the net about marriage. I am sharing it because the idea expressed is quite interesting.

"Most people get married believing a myth that marriage is a beautiful box full of things they have longed for; companionship, intimacy, friendship, etc. The truth is that marriage at the start is an empty box. You must put something in before you can take anything out. There is no love in marriage. Love is in people. And people put love in marriage. There is no romance in marriage. You have to infuse it into your marriage. A couple must learn the art and form the habit of giving, loving, serving, praising, of keeping the box full. If you take out more than you put in, the box will be empty."

I think this quote sums it all. It is what we put in that we will reap. If we are not ready to sacrifice for the relationship, in the end we would be left with nothing. May Allah grant to each one amongst us who are already married the wisdom and knowledge and behaviour which will help us to preserve our marriage. May He also grant to all would be man and wife the bliss that one can really find in married life. May we all live and prosper by Allah’s Grace. Ameen.