

INTRODUCTION

A myth that western culture believes is that *Islam* teaches oppression of women. A woman's youth, clothes, habits, marriage, motherhood, etc, are all in subjugation. This is hideously false. Islam teaches that a woman's role in the house is that of royalty, dignity and respect. Sadly many Muslims adopting customs native to their birthplace, have shown their bad habits and mannerisms as representative of Islam whereas this is not the case.

Numerous *Ahadith* have explained the elevated status of women, how they should be respected and even revered.

The Prophet ﷺ has stated that paradise lies under the feet of one's mother (i.e. in serving her).

The messenger of Allah ﷺ has also commented, *'It is better for you that a metal rod be plunged into your head than that you should touch a female who is not lawful for you'*.

The prevailing misconceptions that many people, including Muslims have, regarding the issue of women's rights and their roles will be cleared out in this book. In due course, because of *Islam's* beautiful teachings, a person will be able to judge for themselves exactly what *Islam's* stance is, and an open mind will differentiate between customs (whether they are Arabian, African, Indian, Western or otherwise) and Islamic teachings.

WHY MARRIAGE?

A person may ask; what is the importance of *Nikah*? Many people consider it merely as a legitimate way of fulfilling one's desires. Is this correct? In the Light of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* what must one know regarding the rights of the wife and husband. How must a husband behave towards his wife and how must she behave in return? These and other questions are seriously worth thinking about, as their answers may not be known to all.

Due to *nikah*, a lady who was at first prohibited to view, now not only becomes lawful for sexual relationship, for her husband but she, more importantly becomes his soul-mate to share in each other's joys and sorrows.

There are numerous benefits of *nikah* (religious, moral, physical, psychological, etc), the most significant of which is its being the *Sunnah* of all the Prophets ﷺ especially emphasised by Rasulullah ﷺ.

In a *hadith* the prophet ﷺ has stated that *nikah* is his *sunnah*, and emphatically warned that he, who does not like or disowns his *sunnah*, is not of him or his followers.

MARRIAGE IS PERPETUAL IBADAH

Rasulullah ﷺ has stated; '*To fulfil your sexual desires in a Halal way, is sadaqah.*'

The Sahabah ؓ (surprised) asked; '*O Rasulullah ﷺ! How is it sadaqah, if a person is fulfilling his desires?*'

Rasulullah ﷺ replied, '*If a human fulfils his urges in a Haram way he is*

sinful; accordingly, when he fulfils his urges in a lawful manner then (undoubtedly) he receives reward.'

Mishkat

To spend one's wealth upon one's family with the intention of reward is also charitable. The messenger of Allah ﷺ has said; 'When one spends upon his family, be it very little in quantity, with the intention and hope of reward, then for him it is charity.'

Mishkat

From such narrated virtues it is obvious that nikah is a totally peerless ibadah but its perpetual nature of reaping rewards is rarely thought of.

MUTUAL CONCEALMENT

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ ۗ

'They are libas (concealment) for you and you are libas for them'

Al Baqarah 187

The manner in which clothes cover and hide a person and their physical faults, and also offer privacy, is similar to the married couple and their being a covering for each other, from the revealing of defects or deficiencies. It is also a medium of safeguarding from sins. Just as clothes grant a person protection from many harms, in the very same way, *nikah* provides peace and relief to the heart. Like a person is closely attached to his clothes (both physically and psychologically), similar is the bond between husband and wife.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا لَيْهَا

وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ

لَا يَتْلُوَنَّهَا قَوْمٌ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

And amongst His signs is that He created for you wives from amongst yourselves, that you may find repose in them and, He has created between you affection and mercy. Indeed, herein are signs for people who reflect.'

Ar Rum 21

IS MARRIAGE NOT A CONTRACT?

Nabi ﷺ has declared marriage as his *Sunnah* and those who dislike it as being disowned by him. *Nikah* is a instinctive need of man and woman, and a means for the preservation of mankind. Moreover, not only is *nikah* a desired ideal, but its lifelong fulfilment and safekeeping have in actual fact, been stressed upon.

Nabi ﷺ has described spending on one's wife, even affectionately placing a morsel into her mouth as a means for the husband acquiring the pleasure of Allah ﷻ. Similarly, obedience and service to the husband has been described as a pathway to Paradise for the wife.

The rank of *Nikah*, in Islamic terminology, can be raised to that of being mandatory, because it can guarantee spiritual purity and protection from sin. It also gives rise to the concept of the family which is foundational for a morally inclined community. The Muslim family concept is the most successful and considerate of everyone's needs. The non-Muslim world look with envy at the Muslim family concept because they too are not blind of its benefits and purpose.

This view may seem to some, as typical of those held by religious fanatics, who cannot tolerate the flow to modernisation, but one should for one's self weigh the pros and cons. In western societies,

women have been brought out of their homes to leave for the office. Yes, there are some economic advantages to this, such as an increase in productivity, but it has made many compromises from which a necessary consequence has been the destruction of the family system. Because of this many psychological, moral and functional disasters which outweigh the economic benefits will have to be borne. Many of these problems have become apparent and also apparently insolvable. Dysfunctional families, juvenile delinquency, uncontrollable behaviour of affected individuals, lack of parenting, casual sex, etc are only some of the problems modern society faces, because of the absence or destruction of the maternal pillar of the family.

If *nikah* can be seen as a *Sunnah* of Nabi ﷺ and an *ibadah*, instead of a 'social contract, and also acknowledge the roles of family members as equal and unique instead of equal and identical, will then the vices which plague society and its very fabric, end.

A SINGLE IS DEPENDENT UPON SOMEONE WHO ISN'T THERE

Rasulullah ﷺ has mentioned about the unmarried person;

Dependent and helpless is he who has no wife!' Those listening asked, 'What if he is very wealthy, is he still dependent?' Nabi ﷺ replied, 'Yes, though he may be extremely wealthy. And dependent and helpless is she who has no husband!' Those listening asked, 'What if she is very wealthy, is she still dependent?' Nabi ﷺ replied, 'Yes, even though she may be extremely wealthy.'

Mishkat

'For a woman there is nothing better than either the (companionship) of her husband or the grave. From everything of benefit in the world and most beneficial thing of this world is a pious lady.'

Mishkat

THE ALTERNATIVES AND THEIR RULINGS

Rasulullah ﷺ has said 'Who ever guarantees me the safeguarding of his tongue and his private parts, I give him the guarantee of Paradise'. Bukhari

In view of the horrific increase of sexual diseases, medical experts encourage everyone to abstain from sex until they marry. Sexually active teenagers are also more likely to be emotionally hurt and have an increased risk of depression and suicide. The discipline of abstinence in teenage years is a good preparation for fulfilling sex in later life.'

Islam shows a path which not only is perfect in its ideology but it is also perfect in practicality. *Islam* not only differentiates between right and wrong, but it also shows the alternatives. Regarding sex or any use of the sexual organs outside of a proper heterosexual marriage, *Islam* squarely states its prohibition.

PROMISCUITY

Promiscuity, or the practice of sex outside marriage is *Haram*. The reason for this is obvious. No person would like it if their mother, father, wife, husband, brother, sister, son or daughter were to have sex or made to have sex with a stranger. In this very same way one should understand that in the same way they would look for a partner who is a virgin, untouched by any stranger, one must also understand that they also have the right to the same.

In a lengthy *hadith* mentioned in *Bukhari* it has been mentioned that those who perform this despicable act, will, in *Jahannam* be burnt in a massive furnace. Remembering that the fire of Hell burns more than 70 times hotter and fiercer than the fire of this world, facing eternity in such a furnace will be unbearable.

A horrendous new trend, romanticized by the filth of the pornographic industry, include such lewd acts as 'swinging', 'orgies' 'wife swapping' and 'open marriages'. All these filthy acts include a sexual free for all under the guise of mutual consent. This is *Haram* to the extreme.

The prophet of Allah ﷺ narrated that on a night of spiritual ascension to the heavens, Allah ﷻ also showed him the depths of Hell. A giant furnace had been prepared and filled with naked men and women who were burning inside in a fire 70 times more hot and fierce than the fire of this world. Those in this punishment will be guilty of adultery. This has been narrated in *Bukhari*, and the fire's temperature has been narrated in *Tirmidhi*.

Those who perform such acts with the 'reason' of consent, will face a punishment far worse than this.

KEEPING 'FRIENDS' OF THE OPPOSITE SEX

Keeping 'friends' of the opposite sex is *Haram*. The reason for this is the above. Besides that there are people who think that having such friendships without sexual activities is permissible. There is no guarantee that it won't lead to sex. But besides that, the warning of the prophet ﷺ is not a joke. 'It is better for you that a metal rod be plunged into your head than that you should touch a female who is not lawful for you'.

HOMOSEXUALITY

Homosexuality is *Haram* in *Islam*. It's reason being that it destroys the very fabrics of family and society in general. It's religious ruling can be understood from the following *Qur'anic* statement regarding the destruction of a homosexual nation:

وَلَوْ طَآءَ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا
 مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾ إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ
 شَهْوَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النِّسَاءِ ۗ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ ﴿٨١﴾
 وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا ۗ فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ
 عِقَابُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾

*And (remember Prophet) Lut, when he said to his people:
 'Do you commit the worst sin such
 as none proceeding you has committed in
 the Alamin (mankind and jinn)?
 Indeed, you practice your lusts on men instead of women.
 Nay but you are a people transgressing
 beyond bounds.' And We rained down upon
 them a rain (of stones). Then see what was the end of
 the criminals and transgressors.'*

Al A'raf 80-81, 84

Rasulullah ﷺ warned; 'Whomsoever commits an unnatural act with
 another, Allah ﷻ will not look at them mercifully!' *Ma'riful Hadith*

Thereafter, it can also be understood that this is not only the view of
Islam, but also the view of all, apart from those who engage in it.

It's physical harms are also noteworthy as one can clearly see the
 advent of many sexual diseases (including AIDS) due to this dirty habit.

MASTURBATION

Masturbation is *Haram* and also Harmful, for both male and female. There are many *ahadith* that state it's prohibition in very clear warnings. The one stated is typical of them.

Once a young man attended the lecture of the great Sahabi Abdullah Ibn Abbas ؓ and thereafter stayed behind to ask a question, 'I am a young person with no wife, I often masturbate with my hand, is it sinful?' Ibn Abbas ؓ, turned his face away (this was the prophet's ﷺ way of showing disapproval) and advised, 'It would be better for you to marry the worst woman than commit this act!'

There are numerous harms in masturbating, including that of potential impotence. If a person gets married and is unable to have sex, then it will be too late to consider masturbation a vice while the marriage blows up in smoke.

In regards to celibacy, before marriage it is the only way. But it is not an alternative to marriage. The prophet ﷺ expressed extreme dislike for that person who wished to remain celibate in favour of perpetual worship. The prophet ﷺ has clearly stated that *Nikah* is his (cherished) *Sunnah*.

From the above we can understand that only sex within marriage is permitted within *Islam*. Thus *Islam* has made what is permitted clear from what is not permitted. Thereafter the prophet ﷺ has also given the alternative, in case of not being able to marry.

'O youth, who ever amongst you has the means of getting married, should do so because it lowers the gaze and protects the private parts; and whosoever does not have the ability, should fast, for indeed, it is a protection for him.'

Bukhari

Thus the ideal would be for a young person who experiences carnal urges to get married, with their parents' consent, as soon as possible. This has so many benefits to society, including the obvious one's like keeping away from malaces like; prostitution and girlfriend-boyfriend relationships, as well as other vices. This is for both the young and old to understand, as this is the Islamic teaching; the order of Allah and His messenger ﷺ, which holds more importance then cultural dictates and ignorant practices.

HARMS OF ADULTERY

A common problem in the west is that life is made 'too fast' for marriage, and instead people think it as socially acceptable for two consenting adults to engage in a 'casual sexual relationship'.

Allah ﷻ says in the Glorious Qur'an:

وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا الزِّنَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَحِشَةً ۖ وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٣٢﴾

***Do not come near to adultery,
indeed it is a shameful deed and an evil way.'***

Al Israa 32

Rasulullah ﷺ commented;

'O Muslims! Beware of adultery, for indeed, it is accompanied by six evil consequences: three in this world and three in the Hereafter. The three in this world are; loss of radiance (of Iman) from the face, reduction in life span and continuous poverty. And the three of the Hereafter are; the Wrath of Allah ﷻ. a damned reckoning and Infernal punishment.'

Baihaqi, Al Kabair

It is now a proven fact that many of our Muslim youth are involved in

sexual relationships prior to marriage. It is a grave worry and concern. And instead of people taking responsibility to take active steps in ending this horrid wave of destruction, people would much rather shift the blame to the other party; stating in the process that our own children despite their devilry were born angels. It's sad to actually hear many parents try to justify their children despite their wrongs out of pride, or feeling that good parentage requires them to stand up for their kids.

The majority of Muslim youth grow-up in an immoral environment without correct upbringing and true sense of purpose in life. And suffering from an identity crisis; we have forgotten our true purpose in life. In this, parents especially, must take a pro-active role towards their children and not allow this to happen, that their children think of them as their worst enemies. Obviously this isn't going to happen by beating the message into them (which as it is, is un-Islamic). But by tooth and nail we must all make an effort to end this problem by prior education and firm love. (This will be explained in due course)

Thereafter we must also remember that physically and even more significantly, spiritually *Halal* or good consumption equals good in actions and being, and *Haram* or bad consumption likewise breeds bad actions and being. Many of our youth consume *Haram* or ambiguous foods; as well as being prey to what they see and listen to through the modern mediums of today which indoctrinate them with thoughts and actions that are also *Haram*. The fundamental reasons, mediums and routes which lead to adultery and immorality are either accepted, overlooked or worse still, ignored by many parents and so called well wishers/guardians, whereas Allah ﷻ says in the Glorious *Qur'an*:

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّيْنَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَحِشَةً ۖ وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٣١﴾

***'Do not come near to adultery,
indeed it is a shameful deed and an evil way.***

Al Israa 32

And Rasulullah ﷺ has also outlined; *'The adultery of the eyes is evil glances. The adultery of the feet is to walk towards evil. The adultery of the tongue is lustful talk. The adultery of the heart is evil desire. But in the end the sexual organs testify to all this or deny it'.* Bukhari

BEHIND NIKAH

Allah ﷻ, Who has changed *Haram* to *Halal*; and sin to obedience and *ibadah*, through the means of *Nikah*, gives two families as well as two individuals a new bond and relationship. However it is also a time when one and all are reminded of their obligations and rights towards existing relations. It must never happen that one only remembers one's wife and forgets one's mother, or in aiding the in-laws to forget one's father.

With the bridegroom's acceptance, the *Qur'an* bears a message, *'O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allah ﷻ and fear him, and speak the truth (always)...*' The newly wed are being advised to ponder upon the huge responsibilities and duties of their acceptance. Their entire lives and behaviour must be formulated in accordance to what the *Shari'ah* has stipulated, and must be transformed into an exemplary model for whom the Forgiveness and Pleasure of Allah ﷻ is assured.

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧٦﴾

***'..And whomsoever obeys Allah and His Messenger ﷺ,
he has indeed achieved a great achievement***

Al Ahzab 71

LIFE'S CHORES ARE ALSO IBADAH

The beloved Prophet ﷺ stated; '*From amongst you the finest is he who is the best for his household, and for my family I am the best.*'

Rasulullah's ﷺ lifestyle is the best example for how we should live our lives in every aspect, especially that of the married life. His life was full of incidents which show exactly how we should be in regards to consideration, justice, and perception for the needs of women, which cannot be learnt from the mannerisms of other great historical figures. The close bond with his wives; and forethought for their needs and desires; as well as mindfulness of taking part in the household chores; is beyond comparison. His amicable and warm approach was not restricted to his wives but encompassed his children, as well as children in general. When performing an act as formidable as *Salaah*, he would shorten it if a child were to cry, to save it's mother from worry. This is the role model for all humanity and the standard aimed for when husband and wife in Allah's ﷻ name unite.

'MODERN' SOCIETY'S BLUNDER

Life in a secular society demands that *Muslims* not only represent the beliefs of *Islam*, but also display true family-structure, and the domestic and social life as par *Islam*. The love, respect and trust between husband and wife in the secular world, is deteriorating. The greed for money and luxuries overtakes the minds of all in such a way that the love of wealth overtakes the love of family.

It is accepted by all especially the rich that money cannot buy happiness. When the love for this money enters the heart, it kills its contentment. And solace thereafter cannot be found in anything else.

Muslim couples in poorer countries who may not have cash in hand, but because of the presence of mutual love, respect and trust, their relationship is so concentrated with mutual concern that poverty, hunger and all hardships and tribulations are tolerated and overcome, and replaced with contentment and complacency.

THE CRITERIA FOR SELECTING A PARTNER

Rasulullah ﷺ commented; *'A lady is married for one of four reasons: wealth; rank; beauty; or piety. One should marry a pious lady and achieve success'*.
Bukhari and Muslim

Society has now become so blind and evil inclined that we have applied our own standards which have no basis in Islam. E.g. An Asian father knows (in his heart) that in marrying his daughter to a particular pious boy of poor African origins lies her religious and worldly success, albeit out of racism and generalising as well as pride and megalomania he refuses her marriage to him.

Compare this with the behaviour of Amirul Mu'minin Umar Faruq ؓ. Who used to travel through Madinah at night to monitor the state of the Muslims. On his usual rounds Umar ؓ, felt very tired and rested against the wall of a house; from which he heard the voice of a mother awakening her daughter and saying, 'wake up its Fajr time; hurry milk the animals and pour some water into the milk; so that we may earn more money for our needs. It is still quite dark outside; quickly pour some water, nobody will see you!'

The honest young maiden ؓ replied; *'Mother, do you not remember what Umar ؓ said yesterday in his lecture about deceiving people?'*

The mother commented; *'Get up and pour the water, there is neither Umar ؓ nor anyone else to see what we are doing!'*

The young maiden ﷺ replied; *'But mother, it just is not possible for me to obey Amirul Muminin ﷺ when he is present and disobey him behind his back. Moreover, even if nobody is watching us, Allah ﷻ is always watching us!'*

When Umar ﷺ overheard this conversation, he was so amazed at the young lady's piety, that he immediately told his assistant to make a careful note of the house.

Later that morning, Umar ﷺ, summoned his slave and asked him to find out the details of the girl who he had overheard and find out whether she was married. He returned with news that the mother and her unmarried daughter were poor members of the *Banu Hilal* tribe.

Hearing this, Umar ﷺ, summoned his son Asim ﷺ. and advised; *'Son, accept my advice, I know of a girl to whom I shall send a marriage proposal on your behalf, for she is pious. I have hope that Insha Allah a pious son will be born from her, who will raise the flag of Islam.'*

Asim ﷺ accepted his father's suggestion and agreed to him to send a proposal on his behalf. Umar ﷺ, invited both mother and daughter to attend, she was indeed beautiful, both in character and appearance.

Umar ﷺ. addressed her; *'I acknowledge your pious qualities. I would consider it a honour if you will accept my son's marriage proposal and become my daughter-in-law.'*

The girl with the consent of her mother accepted and married Asim ﷺ. From this union a daughter who became the mother of the great Umar bin Abdul-Aziz (R.A.), who was known as the second Umar.

WHEN SHOULD THE KNOT BE TIED?

REACHING MATURITY

According to the *Shari'ah*, children are classified as baligh (mature) when;

- their periods (menses) commence, or when they become capable of reproduction (e.g. seminal discharge)
- when they experience 'wet-dreams.'
- Should these signs not be present,
- when they reach 15 years of age.

Bulugh heralds the commencement of accountability. Should a *baligh* person fail to uphold any *fara'idh* or *wajib* (both are different categories of necessity), they will be liable for punishment on account of transgressing the divine law of Allah ﷻ, unless they repent **and** also offer compensation (qadha)'.

This phase of their lives is very delicate. Parents should be extra precautionary and protective at this stage, taking care not to be overprotective or paranoid as this also has negative effects. When their children reach this stage, they must ensure that the youngsters keep appropriate company, not favorite company.

Exposure to TV, pornography and intermingling of the sexes from a young age has destroyed the everyday Muslim's natural shame and modesty.

Rasulullah ﷺ has stated; 'Every religion has a distinguishing feature, our's is haya (modesty/shame).'

'Whenever Allah ﷻ wishes to destroy a person, He snatches haya away from him, without which he becomes disgraced and wretched'.

Humans generally possess two instinctive wants: the first being sexual desires and the second being a need for affection, love and companionship. With adolescence, these features become almost uncontrollably more pronounced. To make things worse, in youth, understanding is still incomplete. Thus, the amalgamated problem of all these issues must be stemmed before establishment, as the saying goes “*prevention is better than cure*”. The way of doing this is;

- Always keep children occupied with constructive work, paying heed to the saying, '*The idle mind is the Devils workshop.*'
- Our children must be encouraged to keep the company of the pious and those of noble character. If their friends are Islam-orientated and well-mannered our children will be safe from many vices.
- Indecent material and company of all forms magnify carnal urges or “curiosities” in a very incorrect way. The only way to stop them is to be active in guidance not dictatorial.
- When the child appears to have developed some understanding separate their sleeping arrangements, even between sons and even between daughters.

WHEN?

‘O youth! Whomsoever is able to fulfil the responsibilities of nikah should perform nikah: because it lowers (saves) one's gaze and safeguards one's private organs!'

Hadith

Maturity, although introduces thoughts and enthusiasm for marriage, but still early teenage sex, when the body is still physically developing, is harmful.

Sperm, although dirty, is still for health purposes valued. It takes eight

drops of pure healthy blood, to make just one drop of sperm. If it is wasted in youth, major organs will be deprived of vital nourishment; health weakens and growth may be stunted, as well as a probability of sexual problems later in life.

On the other hand if the youth protect this period of their life and bodies from unlawful use, then when married, they will experience true contentment and fulfilment. This is why it is necessary to find a 'suitable' match for one's children when they reach a suitable age (approximately 17 years for girls and for boys 19 years) so that their desires are focused towards their lawful partners. If the parents express concern that the children are too young to marry, that is exactly where the parents' help and guidance should be offered.

WHAT ALLAH SAYS?

Allah ﷻ states in the Qur'an;

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيْمَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ
وَإِمَائِكُمْ ۖ إِن يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

*'And marry those amongst you who are single and pious.
If they be poor, Allah will enrich them out of His Bounty.
And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knowing.'*

An Nur 32

Rasulullah ﷺ advised Ali ؑ although the advice applies to all;
'O Ali! Do not delay in three matters: firstly, salaah when its time arrives;

secondly, (burial of the) *janazah*, when it is ready; thirdly, in the marriage of a single boy or girl when a (suitable) match is found.¹

Tirmidhi

It is from these injunctions that *nikah* in different situations have different rulings.

OBLIGATORY (FARDH) NIKAH

If one possesses the means, as well as a carnal urge that the probability exists of falling prey to some *Haram* act, then under such a dire situation dictates that to get married is obligatory. *Haram* also includes *Haram* viewing as well as masturbation. To refrain from *nikah* in this instance is a sin.

NECESSARY (WAJIB) NIKAH

When with experiencing a strong carnal urge one possesses an income to support a wife then the situation warrants marriage as *wajib*. To refrain from *nikah* in this instance is also a sin.

ADVISABLE (SUNNAH) NIKAH

If one has the means to marry but the urge is not such as to cause an inclination towards sin. Then *nikah* is *sunnah*. It is strongly advisable because a persons urges/needs can change in an instance, and it is always advisable to take precaution.

IMPERMISSIBLE

However, if there is real fear, not just apprehension of being unable to fulfil the rights of one's spouse, whether it be their physical or material right, then undoubtedly it is wrong for such a person to wed.

MARRIAGE WITH NON-MUSLIMS

The original permissibility of marriage with non-Muslims is only in the situation of a Muslim male marrying a Jewish or Christian (Ahlul Kitab) female. Any other type of relationship is *Haram*, and even if marriage is performed every second of such a relationship is spent in sin, and all sexual relations are classified as adultery, and will be punished accordingly.

This only applies if the spouse chooses not to accept *Islam*. If they accept *Islam* prior to *nikah*, this ruling is not applicable. One must not allow the prospective spouse to accept *Islam* for the sake of marriage. As their *Islam* is not accepted, and their lives spent with their spouses is in sin.

Thereafter comes the question of what is appropriate. One must bear this in mind that one's partner's beliefs and ideology will almost certainly affect one's own beliefs, but they will become one's children's beliefs. This in the long run will mean that if one is happy in marrying and loving a person who will ultimately enter Allah's wrath, it will also mean that one is happy if his children also enter Allah's wrath.

وَلَا تَرْكَبُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ ۖ

***'And incline not towards those who do wrong,
lest the Fire (of Hell) touches you'***

Hud 113

During the rule of Umar ؓ, the condition of Muslims was one of extreme piety and purity; wherein the general inclination was towards *Deen*. Despite this, Umar ؓ, forbade the Muslims from marrying Christian or Jewish women. He stated, *'I am not declaring*

what Allah ﷻ has made Halal as Haram; for undoubtedly Allah ﷻ has granted permission to marry Ahlul Kitab women; nevertheless, the general welfare of the Ummah demands that Muslims be prevented from acting upon this permission (and prefer what is better).'

Again it must be clearly stated that if one does intend marriage to a Christian or Jewish woman then one must ascertain that she is such, and not an atheist possessing such a name. This means that if a man did want to marry a Christian or Jewish woman then one must find one who is closest to the original scriptures as possible. (Catholic/Nasorean Christians or Orthodox Jews) but even this is not recommended, and according to most authorities is not allowed.

MANNERISMS OF NIKAH

It is proven from the *Qur'an* that the purpose behind *nikah* is:

- Protection of dignity, chastity and children, this is the true purpose of *nikah*, not merely to fulfil one's desires like animals.
- Men have a natural need towards affection, friendship and warmth. Women represent the pinnacle of caring and love for a man, this quality is not found in anyone else.
- It is accepted that women are generally weaker than men. This does not suggest that they are inferior to men. It means that their roles are different.
- It is all too obvious that men and women need to reproduce, and fulfil their carnal urges. Allah ﷻ has compared the married couple to a farmer and his field, and pious children to a good harvest.
- *Nikah* breeds good habits in a married couple, including responsibility and premeditation.

INTENTIONS

Amongst the necessary requisites of marriage the most important is correct intention, as this in even conjugal and domestic activities is rewarded:

- *Nikah* is performed to act upon the *sunnah* of Nabi ﷺ who stated; '*Nikah is my Sunnah.*' The prophet ﷺ also stated; '*whoever dislikes my Sunnah is not of me.*'
- Perform *nikah* because it saves one from evil and keeps one under control. Additional benefits include; one's heart being saved from evil thoughts as too the eyes are protected from staring at *Haram*.
- Allah ﷻ bestows the husband and wife, pious children. The obedience to Allah ﷻ that they portray, will also earn their parents reward.
- A person with a family receives more reward for good deeds than a single person, therefore one should include this in his intention also.
- More children mean an increase in the number of Muslims. Rasulallah ﷺ will take pride in this.

ETIQUETTES OF FINDING A PARTNER

Rasulallah ﷺ commented:

'Do not marry women (merely) on account of their beauty, for it is possible that this very beauty may become the cause of her destruction. Neither marry women because of their wealth, for it is possible this may be a cause for her rebellion and mischief. Rather marry women because of their piety. A lowly slave-girl graced with piety and noble character is infinitely superior to a beautiful high class women of poor character.'

Ibn Majah

When one reaches the age of marriage, their opinion should always be

taken into account. If due to uneasiness, they do not say anything or appear lost, their wishes can be ascertained by close friends or relatives who the child feels comfortable talking to.

Parents becoming aware of their child's thought patterns should consider the desired partner's mannerisms, character, piety and suitability. At this stage, it is totally morally and *Islamically* wrong and detrimental to the parent-child relationship, to act in total disregard of the child's wishes or behind their backs in arranging a suitable 'equal by caste' match.

One should always remember that it is the couple who will be living together. If this is not considered, the possibility of unhappiness and divorce, ending in heart-break and pain for our children is very real. One must bear in mind the wishes of the couple. Obviously in the situation that should they be so irresponsible and foolish as to refuse every good, pious choice of their parents, and insist on marrying some blatantly sinful person then coupled with gentle, loving and tact persuasion, resort to *du'a*, for Allah ﷻ has full control over all situations. One must never get hysterical or forceful, or even deaf to the child's talk, as this has adverse effects. One must relate the benefits of marrying a good person in a caring, concerned way explaining that they will also be the one's to affect their children. Moreover, it will ensure no hatred arises in the parents' hearts, nor the children's.

VIEWING A POSSIBLE MATCH

It is advisable for the possible match to meet each other with the consent and guidance of parents. Private meetings and communications (be it by email, phone calls or text-messaging, or by anything else that comes along) where they are alone/unsupervised is not permissible and is extremely sinful.

This one meeting is encouraged by Rasulullah ﷺ. Its benefit is that, what each person has heard of the other is based on gossip or reports based on bias opinions. Inclinations and perception of people vary greatly, thus a first-hand view and questioning allows a more truthful and open decision from both parties. This will stop hidden problems from turning up in future.

When considering a match, consider the following;

- Preferably the boy should be a year to four years senior to the girl. Both boy and girl, being of the same marital status (which includes virginity) is a major factor of compatibility.
- The prospective partner's piety, character must be considered in both boy and girl. Additionally, girls should also possess the ability to manage household chores and management. And boys should also possess piety and additional skills.

Imam Hasan al-Basri (RA) stated: '*Marry your daughter to some pious person; for if nothing else, at least on account of his bond with Allah ﷻ he will not abuse her nor fail to fulfil her rights.*'

REASONS FOR CHOOSING

Nabi ﷺ has stated;

'Women are married because of four reasons; wealth, family rank, beauty and piety. Marry a pious lady to achieve success.'

BEAUTY

Beauty whilst being a blessing and something that should be considered, as this will be a major factor of the husband loving the wife and the wife loving the husband. Beauty however is not eternal, as external factors beyond one's control can destroy it, as well as youthful beauty diminishing in a few years.

Something to think about is that if only beauty is sought disregarding piety, then the beautiful person will be hard to satisfy on account of their arrogance that is born out of vanity. Also such people who are devoid of shame will also enjoy being watched and 'appreciated' by all and sundry. This can never be a good thing. If beauty is possessed by one who is pious then for their spouse it is an additional blessing.

WEALTH

This mind corrupting reasoning should not determine one's reason for choosing a spouse. Wealth is even more unpredictable and inconsiderate than beauty. The phrase; 'here today gone tomorrow' aptly describes it. A prospective husband should also reflect that although the girl's family may be rich, *nikah* is made to her, not her wealth. Should she be wealthy, it should be below one's honour and dignity to enjoy being a parasite off one's wife's wealth. In addition, if she is from a wealthy background, her tastes and 'requirements' will also be expensive. So before considering marriage to a wealthy girl think; will she be satisfied with one's more humble income?

FAMILY RANK AND CASTE

People consider that marriage to someone of a lower social class, or colour is something to shudder, degrading and bringing of disgrace to the family name. White may think lowly of black, Arabs may despise non-Arabs and certain tribes of one race may think lowly of others. Some backward thinking parents, refuse their daughters to get married to anyone outside of their tribe or it's equivalent. This is wrong. Such thinking is draconian, and actually reminiscent of pagan customs and ideology.

PIETY

According to *Shari'ah* the only criteria that determines a person's real rank and true worth, as according to Allah ﷻ, is piety and godliness. All

other criteria are superficial and/or made up. The most precious of traits are honour and chastity.

Ali ﷺ narrates, 'We were present with Rasulullah ﷺ when He asked us: 'Tell me, what is treasured most by women?'

The Sahabah ﷺ present maintained silence. Ali ﷺ relates; 'I returned and asked Fatimah ﷺ 'what is treasured most by women?'

She replied 'She should not look at any *ghair-mahram* (someone to whom marriage is not incestuous) male nor should any male look at her.'

Ali ﷺ related this reply to Rasulullah ﷺ who commented; 'Fatimah is a portion of my heart (she understood)."

This is what both the parents and the person marrying should very carefully consider about their prospective partners:

- *Aqaid* (beliefs). Many secular educated Muslims suffer from distorted beliefs regarding *Islam* which were taught to them by non-Muslim avenues. One must be wary of the beliefs of whoever is going to be the other parent of one's child.
- *Ibadah*. The person must be punctual on the fundamental pillars of *Islam*, e.g. *Salaah*, *Sawm*, *Zakaah*. These are major issues which must not be trivialized; as if one were to look in the long run, both husband and wife will want to be together also in the next life.
- Good character. For obvious reasons one would want to get married to one who has good character, and who understands that in different situations, one's 'humble' opinion should not supercede sense.
- Transactions. No one wants to marry a thief or be called the partner of one.
- Social conduct. Although one should not worry about what people say, one should also not give the opportunity to be spoken bad

About because of one's own conduct. One's spouse should also be up to this standard.

- Health. One must not discriminate against a person because they suffer from an illness. But one must remember that it is natural that a person has a dislike of it. This will lead to problems, if the illness is not curable or controllable.
- Relationship. Often, though definitely not always, there is greater compatibility and understanding between relatives and people of the same ethnic origin.
- Temperament. Ideally both the boy and girl should enjoy the same outlook, otherwise life would present more problems than solutions.
- Education. Both should have received at least a foundational level of *Deeni* education and basic secular education and not be intellectually miles apart.
- Housekeeping Skills. It is important that both the partners be competent in all or most aspects of domestic responsibilities, and be willing to help each other in their's. The boy should also have a profession or skill (either *Deeni* or worldly) so he may maintain responsibility over his family without dependance.
- Bad habits. It is also imperative to find out whether the prospective boy or girl suffer from any problems or bad habits, e.g. drugs, alcohol or TV.

DU'A

Allah ﷻ promises in the *Qur'an*:

'Make du'a to (call) Me, I shall accept

Rasulullah ﷺ also gave the glad tidings;

'Whoever is given the ability to make du'a, for them the doors of acceptance are opened.'

He also explained:

‘Only du’a is able to alter taqdir (fate)’.

Thereafter further elaborating:

Du’a is always accepted by Allah ﷻ, provided one does not perform those actions which prevent du’a from being accepted (i.e. Consume or ask for the impermissible). But one should remember that du’a is accepted in one of three ways.

- That which was specifically requested is received.
- Some misfortune or calamity coming one's way is diverted.
- A great reward is reserved for one in the Akhirah.

Examples Of Appropriate Du'a

رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا
وَذُرِّيَّتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ
وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

RABBANĀ HAB LANĀ MIN AZWĀJINĀ
WA DHURRIYYĀTINĀ QURRATA A'YUNIW-WAJ' ALNĀ
LIL MUTTAQĪNA IMĀMĀ

*O Allah! Give to us through our wives and children
the comfort of our eyes, and make us the leaders of the pious.*

Furqaan 74

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ صَالِحِ مَا تُوتِي النَّاسَ مِنَ الْمَالِ
وَالْأَهْلِ وَالْوَالِدِ غَيْرِ ضَالٍّ وَلَا مُضِلٍّ

ALLĀHUMMA INNĪ AS'ALUKA MIN ṢĀLIHI MĀ
TU'TIYAN-NĀSA MINAL MĀLI WAL AHLI WAL
WALADI GHAYRA ḌĀLLIW WA LĀ MUḌILL

*O Allah! I ask You for those noble things which
You give to people: of wealth; wife and offspring;
what are neither astray nor lead astray.*

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِي دِينِي
وَدُنْيَايَ وَأَهْلِي وَمَالِي

ALLĀHUMMA INNĪ AS'ALUKAL `AFWA WAL `ĀFIYATA
FĪ DĪNĪ WA DUNYĀYA WA AHLĪ WA MĀLĪ

*O Allah! I seek Your forgiveness,
and I seek peace in regards to my
religion, dunya, family and wealth.*

اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي أَسْمَاعِنَا وَأَبْصَارِنَا وَقُلُوبِنَا وَأَزْوَاجِنَا
وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا وَتُبَّ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

ALLĀHUMMA BĀRIK LANĀ FĪ ASMĀ`INĀ
WA ABṢĀRINĀ WA QULŪBINĀ WA AZWĀJINĀ
WA DHURRIY-YĀTINĀ WA TUB `ALAYNĀ
INNAKA ANTAT TAWWĀBUR RAḤĪM

*O Allah! Bless us in our hearing, seeing and hearts,
and in our wives and offspring.*

*Accept our repentance, for only You are
the Most forgiving, Most Merciful.*

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ امْرَأَةٍ تُشَيِّبُنِي قَبْلَ الْمَشِيْبِ
وَأَعُوْبِكَ مِنْ وَلَدٍ يَكُوْنُ عَلَيَّ وَبَالًا وَأَعُوْذُ بِكَ
مِنْ مَالٍ يَكُوْنُ عَلَيَّ عَذَابًا

ALLĀHUMMA INNĪ A`ŪDHU BIKĀ MIN IM-RA`ATIN
TUSHĪBUNĪ QABLAL MASHĪBI WA A`ŪDHU
BIKĀ MIW WALADIN YAKŪNU `ALAYYA WABĀLAN
WA A`ŪDHU BIKĀ MIM MĀLIN YAKŪNU `ALAYYA `ADHĀBĀ

*O Allah! I seek Your protection from such a wife
who ages me before old age.*

*I seek Your protection from such children
who may vex me.*

*Also, I seek your protection from such
wealth which is a punishment.*

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ النِّسَاءِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوْذُ بِكَ
مِنْ كُلِّ عَمَلٍ يُخْذِنِي وَأَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ كُلِّ صَاحِبٍ
يُوْذِنِي وَأَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمَلٍ يُلْهِنِي

ALLĀHUMMA INNĪ A`ŪDHU BIKĀ MIN FITNĀTIN

NISĀ'I. ALLĀHUMMA INNĪ A'ŪDHU BIKA MIN
KULLI `AMALIN YUKHDHĪNĪ WAA'ŪDHU BIKA
MIN KULLI ŞĀḤIBIN YŪDHĪNĪ WAA'ŪDHU BIKA
MIN KULLI AMALIN YULHĪNĪ

O Allah! I seek Your protection from the tribulations of women.

*O Allah! I seek Your protection from those
actions which may disgrace me.*

*I seek Your protection from those companions
who may harm me, and I seek Your protection from
that hope which keeps me negligent.*

Al-ad`iyatul Ma'thurah

THE NEED FOR COUNSELING AND ISTIKHARAH

Istikharah means to seek guidance/good from Allah ﷻ by means of *salaah* and *du'a*.

Mashwarah means to seek advice/counsel from others.

Allah ﷻ says in the Holy *Qur'an*;

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ۖ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾

*'And consult with them in actions.
Then when you have taken a decision,
put your trust in Allah, certainly,
Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).*

Al Imr'an159

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ

شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

***And those who answer the Call
of their Lord and perform Salaah and
who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation and
who spend of what We have bestowed on them.***

Ash Shura 38

Jabir ؓ narrates; 'In the same way Rasulullah ﷺ imparted upon us the verses of the Qur'an, he also taught us to perform Istikharah in all our important work. He ﷺ commented, 'Whenever an important matter arises, perform two rak'at nafl (salaah) and the du'a (for Istikharah).'

Riyadus Salihin

Whenever a Muslim decides to perform any important task, they should firstly seek the opinion of a person who as well as being a true friend and well-wisher, is also knowledgeable, preferably an *Alim*. This *mashwarah* is very important, more virtuous and more beneficial than *Istikharah* alone. One should not disregard the opinion of one's well wisher, in the event of their opinion being against one's wish or desire. But the opinion given should be reflected upon with an open mind. *Istikharah* should be performed on the sincere advice given.

Istikharah is beneficial for that person who keeps a non-onesided mind. If one's pre-conceived choice dominates the heart, the outcome of *Istikharah* will be ignored or manipulated to justify this previous choice.

Istikharah (i.e. its *salaah*) can be performed at any time besides the

makruh times. Although most prefer it's performance at night, with the reasoning of it being more effective at that time, it can be performed whenever convenient.

DU'A OF ISTIKHARAH

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ وَأَسْتَقْدِرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ
وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيمِ فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ وَلَا أَقْدِرُ وَ
تَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ • اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتَ
تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ خَيْرٌ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ
أَمْرِي فَاقْدِرْهُ لِي وَيَسِّرْهُ لِي • ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ • وَإِنْ كُنْتَ
تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ شَرٌّ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ
أَمْرِي فَاصْرِفْهُ عَنِّي وَاصْرِفْنِي عَنْهُ وَاقْدِرْ لِي الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ
كَانَ ثُمَّ ارْضِنِي بِهِ

ALLĀHUMMA INNĪ ASTAKHĪRUKA BI `ILMIKA.
WA ASTAQDIRUKA BI QUDRATIKA.
WA AS`ALUKA MIN FAḌLIKAL `AẒĪM.
FA`INNAKA TAQDIRU WA LĀ AQDIRU.
WA TA`LAMU WA LĀ A`LAMU.

WA ANTA `ALLĀMUL GHUYUB.
 ALLĀHUMMA IN KUNTA TA`LAMU ANNA
 HĀDHAL AMRA KHAYRUL-LĪ FĪ DĪNĪ
 WA MA`ĀSHĪ WA `ĀQIBATI AMRĪ.
 FAQDIRHU LĪ WA YASSIRHU LĪ.
 THUMMA BARIK LĪ FĪH.
 WA IN KUNTA TA`LAMU ANNA HĀDHAL
 AMRA SHARRUL LĪ FĪ DĪNĪ WA MA`ĀSHĪ
 WA `ĀQIBATI AMRĪ.
 FAṢRIF-HU `ANNĪ WAṢRIFNĪ `ANHU.
 WAQDIR LIYAL KHAYRA ḤAYTHU KĀNA.
 THUMMA ARḌINĪ BIH.

O Allah, I seek good from You, in that which You know.

And I seek ability from You, in Your power.

And I ask You from Your great benevolence.

*For You possess power while I have no power,
and You are the knowledgeable,
while I have no knowledge.*

And You are the Knower of the unseen.

*O Allah, if in Your knowledge this action is good
for me in so far as my religion,
my living and in the consequences of my actions are concerned,
then ordain it for me, and make it easy for me,
then bless me in it.*

*And if in Your knowledge this action is bad for me
in so far as my religion,
my living and in the consequences of
my actions are concerned,
then turn it away from me, and turn me away from it.
then destine for me that which is better,
in whatever form it may be,
then make me content with it.*

ENGAGEMENT

Rasulullah ﷺ commented:

'When some pious person of noble character sends a proposal of nikah to your home, then accept his proposal. Otherwise, there will be great tribulations and anarchy upon earth.'

Tirmidhi

'No Muslim should propose upon the proposal of another Muslim, until he either marries or withdraws his proposal.'

Mishkhat

Engagement is a promise between prospective spouses and/or their families of marriage.

The custom of having an engagement party; engagement cards; distribution of sweets, cakes, drinks or any other silly arrangement is incorrect.

One must however remember that this like any other promise or pledge is no light matter. One must consider very carefully before making this promise on one's own marriage or on behalf of others, and thereafter this promise must be honoured. Only in the event of the disclosure of a hidden fault/vice can this promise be reconsidered.

PERMISSIBLE ACTS FOR AN ENGAGED PERSON

The meeting, touching, seeing, and acting like a couple of the prospective spouses with each other, before marriage, without nikah, is Haram, even after engagement. Until they do not perform the nikah, they are like strangers and are not permissible for each other.

PERMISSION OF ELDERS

The benefits and blessings observed in marriages where permission was sought from the elders of the household, and the entire arrangement was made with the families, is not seen in weddings where the couple marry on their own, disregarding all others. This type of marriage arrangement when the couple decide everything for themselves, including the premarital formalities, is witness to the fact of their being totally bereft of modesty and decency.

Islam considers decency, modesty and restraint, unsurpassable virtues of women. The absence of these qualities, are the inciters of all sorts of problems.

MODERN DAY ARRANGEMENTS OF MARRIAGE

The curse and plague of placing and responding to the shameless adverts placed by boys and girls in classifieds, personals, internet dating sites, text dating services, and chat-lines has become rampant. Wherein the boy will boast of his qualifications, profession, wealth, sporting interests, as well as good sense of humour. He thereafter lists his desire for a lady with specific qualities, and whoever is interested must send a photo and details. Girls too advertise their good points: qualifications, western birth, beauty, desirable figure, age, and also G.S.H. without any shame or fear. She too outlines her requirements. Thereafter, they will start to communicate with the multiple responses that they have received and meet a few times so they may try out their prospective partner before a 'serious relationship' begins. If this produces a match, they will take the matter further (i.e. undercover), otherwise this whole process is repeated and tried out again and again until a match is found and the much romanticized 'hearts beating together' is thought to be experienced.

The prophet ﷺ forewarned about emulating such evil cultures and practices;

'Most certainly, you will follow the ways of those who preceded you step by step, inch by inch. If they enter into a lizard's hole, you (will emulate them) and follow them into the lizard's hole.'

Somebody asked: 'O Rasulallah ﷺ Do you mean the Yahud and Nasara?' Nabi ﷺ replied: 'Who else?'

Mishkat

Should a genuine need arise to approach such an organisation then it must only be a reputable 'Muslim Marriage Bureau,' not a dating bureau, that is in line with *Shari'ah*. This too only should be a last resort and only with the consent, approval and supervision of one's family.

WALI AND THEIR ROLES AND DUTIES

Wali is a person who represents the person marrying, and is known in English as a custodian.

For both the bride and bridegroom, the father enjoys this right. In his absence the grandfather will be custodian, in both their absence, mature, older real-brother, then paternal and maternal uncles, etc. All of these must be mature Muslims.

Rasulallah ﷺ commented:

A previously married women has greater right and say over her affairs than her wali; and the father of a virgin (previously unmarried) should still ensure that he obtains her consent.'

Ma'ariful Hadith

Scholars elaborate;

'From this (and other ahadith) it is quite obvious that no wali may marry any mature and intelligent lady (whether previously married or not) without her willing consent.'

ibid

The trend is for one male, from both families, to be physically present when requesting the girl's permission. This is totally wrong and completely against the Shari' command of hijab. Only mahram males should seek the girl's permission and thereafter ensure they be present when the nikah is solemnized. A father, brother or uncle of the girl should place the request and witness the consent. Non-mahram males cannot go to the girl at all.

ETIQUETTES OF NIKAH

Nikah should be publicized, and performed in public as our Nabi ﷺ has advised; '*Perform nikah with announcement and in the Masjid.*'

Ma'ariful Hadith

Another lesson from the *ahadith* is that it is preferable to perform *nikah* in the Masjid, preferably after a *Salaah*, when a greater number of Ulama and pious people will be present; whose presence will attract the mercy of Allah ﷻ, and whose *du'a* will benefit the newly-married.

Unfortunately common behaviour of Muslims on occasions of *nikah* is extremely disrespectful of the Masjid. Muslims, who are on the true path, should contrast this with the behaviour of non-Muslims inside their places of worship, and think which is more better/appropriate. At all times we must uphold the sanctity of the Masjid.

Rasulullah ﷺ commented, '*Do not make a commotion like that of markets.*'

Abu Dawud

An *Alim* (or pious person), should perform the *nikah*. After the sermon (*khutbah*), should the proposal and acceptance take place. The bridegroom should ensure he recites the complete sentence: 'I have accepted,' clearly, so that others may hear.

Cultures vary, and many ways of performing the *nikah* and conducting ceremonies have been coined. The *Sunnah du'a* of congratulating the newly weds is (only) the following:

بَارَكَ اللهُ لَكَ وَبَارَكَ اللهُ عَلَيْكَ وَجَمَعَ بَيْنَكُمَا فِي خَيْرٍ

BĀRAKAL-LĀHU LAKA WA BĀRAKAL-LĀHU
`ALAYKA WA JAM`A BAYNAKUMĀ
FĪ KHAYR.

*'May Allah bless you and shower His blessings
on you and may He grant you both a
pleasant and prosperous life.'*

MAHR (DOWRY)

Rasulullah ﷺ commented:

'Whomsoever marries a lady, whether with a small or large amount as mahr; with the intention in his heart of not actually paying will be gathered before Allah ﷻ on the Day of Qiyamah as a fornicator!'

Ma`ariful Hadith

Mahr is *wajib* (compulsory). Even if it is not mentioned at the time of *nikah* one will still be obliged to pay it. The minimum quantity of *mahr* is the value of approximately 31 grams of Silver. Because this amount varies it is not correct to fix an amount in tendered currency. There is no maximum limit, however a light *mahr* has been praised highly by the prophet ﷺ.

The amount generally known as *mahr-Fatimi*, is what Ali ؑ gave at the time of his *nikah*, with Fatimah ؑ, which equates to approximately 1.6Kg of silver (1,584 grams).

THE MUSLIM BRIDE'S ARRIVAL AT HER NEW HOME

Our Prophet, Muhammad ﷺ arranged for his foster-mother Ummu Ayman ؓ, the noble lady who had breast-fed him and whom he lovingly referred to as 'mother', to escort his daughter Fatimah ؓ, to her husband's house after *nikah*.

The best of creation left an example for us to follow, in his actions which he displayed at the time of his beloved daughter's marriage. This example is of simplicity, plain and simple. It is compulsory upon us to disregard the incorrect rituals and huge expenses on these occasions and adopt the pure, simple and informal *sunnah* of Nabi ﷺ.

This means that one should be happy with taking one's daughter oneself to her in-laws after marriage. The arrogance and pride of many people dictate that they pay a fortune for the hiring of a limousine to head the entourage of thrill-seeking well-wishers. This is wrong and according to Islamic law, totally *Haram*, as well as utterly unnecessary.

Both the bride and bridegroom should ensure they receive sufficient sleep and rest before departure during the wedding day. In this way both will be in a refreshed condition for their first meeting at night.

The bride, at this time of making a new home and family is obviously going to be emotionally and psychologically under immense pressure. Added to this burden is the expectation of having to wear new, uncomfortable clothes, as well as having to sit in one place for unbearably long periods of time. Due to these and other difficulties she has to face, her parents should make a special point of removing her away from all this, and insist she sleeps/rest for a while. In addition, they and their daughter should be punctual about *Salaah*. Both the families should also on this occasion of neglect, be extra vigilant on the fulfilment of all requisites of *Islam*, especially *salaah*.

THE BRIDE'S ARRIVAL

Neither should the new wife be unladylike or foolish by talking too much, nor should she withdraw to the extent that people have to plead to get a word out, as this too is a sign of arrogance.

Should one find any aspect of living with in-laws displeasing, one must not relate this to one's own parents or anyone else, for them to gossip about. This is backbiting, and only serves to ignite strife, arguments and disputes, nothing positive is ever achieved.

The new wife should live amongst her in-law's with dignity from the very first day as first impressions last forever. Being merciful upon juniors and treating elders with respect. One must never delegate any of one's own responsibilities to others nor leave things lying around for others to put away, (i.e. Clean up one's own mess as one expects others to clean up theirs). One should help the in-law's in domestic duties, this will create mutual love. Whenever two people need to converse amongst themselves, it is better to leave the room, one mustn't assume that one is the subject of their talk. Upon arrival at one's in-law's, even if the heart feels uncomfortable with new people and a new place, one must keep calm and not spend all one's time in tears.

As long as one's spouse's parents are alive, one should serve them and consider this service as a source of reward. With sacrifice they brought up their child bringing them to the position where they are now. In old age, they can justifiably expect service from them. Such events must never be allowed to transpire, whereby immediately upon one's arrival, it seems that one is trying to distance the parents from their child.

This practical advice in no way refuses the wife her *wajib* (obligatory

right) of separate living quarters if she so wishes. But this should not be sought in a manner that portrays dislike of the in-laws. In the majority of cases, it is best if couples do separate their residence from parents, but on good terms.

THE ETIQUETTES OF MUSLIM SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

Rasulullah ﷺ commented;

Allah loves a man who caresses his wife. Both of them are rewarded because of this loving attitude and their rizq (sustenance) is increased.'

Rasulullah ﷺ commented, *'To make love to your wife too is sadaqah and one receives reward.'*

Upon this the Sahabah ﷺ inquired: *'O Rasulallah! Will a person be rewarded for even fulfilling his carnal desires with his wife?'*

Rasulullah ﷺ replied, *'If he were to fulfil these desires at some wrong place would he not be a sinner?'*

The Sahabah ﷺ replied, *'Of course'*

Rasulullah ﷺ commented, *'When he has gone to a Halal place to be safe from Haram, then he will surely be rewarded.'*

ETIQUETTE'S OF THE FIRST NIGHT

With the arrival of the bride at her husband's home, both will meet for the first time. This should be at the husband's own residence or that of a very close sensible relative. There is no need for expensive hotels and pocket breaking holidays, this is unnecessary and extravagant. If one does so within *Shar'i* limits then it is not wrong.

ISHA SALAAH AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THANKING ALLAH ﷻ

Isha Salaah and of course *witr*, are both compulsory and often neglected by the couple. This must under all circumstance be avoided, as it shows total ingratitude to Allah ﷻ, who in His mercy has allowed this marriage to take place. After their performance, both, husband and wife should take time to make *du'a* for good, blessings, mutual love, faithfulness, chastity, prosperity, marital success and pious offspring.

One should thank Allah ﷻ for saving one from *Haram* and granting one *Halal*, It is thus of good practice for the newly-weds to pray two rak'at together, either with the husband leading, or both individually performing *salaah* simultaneously, with a combined intention of *shukr* (gratitude), *tahajjud* (night prayers), *tawbah* (prayer of repentance) and *hajjah* (prayer requesting fulfilment of needs). Since all of these are *nafl* (optional) prayers, all four can be combined into one.

WHEN MEETING YOUR SPOUSE FOR THE FIRST NIGHT

Within means and without extravagance, parents/relatives can try to prepare the room with appropriate items where the newly-weds will meet, and what they are likely to need. Items such as comfortable bedding, perfume, fruit, drinks, mithai (sweetmeats) and chocolates, are items which will be to their comfort and which are within limits, befitting.

'Friends' like to resort to pranks and practical jokes (and even pay to enter blackmail) in order to irritate the couple on the first night. This is wrong. It can have adverse effects on the couple and their outlook to each other. It is essential for the couple to have full privacy and not to

be disturbed in any way. The practice of eavesdrop or for either of the couple to gossip about the other regarding the activities or secrets of the first night (or any other night) is a grave sin.

Nabi ﷺ said, 'On the Day of Qiyamah, that person will be of the lowest rank who makes love to his wife and thereafter reveals details to others.'

Ma'ariful Hadith

Usually the new-wife sits in wait for her husband. People should ensure that the husband is not kept in idle chatter or any other pre-occupation so as to keep her waiting. The husband should proceed to meet his queen without delay after *Isha Salaah*. After knocking and requesting permission, the bridegroom should make *Salaam* clearly and audibly. This is a *Sunnah* which should be maintained throughout your married life. The bride should reply to the *salaam* and welcome her husband.

When Ummul-Muminin Ummu Salamah ؓ married Rasulallah ﷺ she exclaimed, Marhaban bi Rasulallah ﷺ (Welcome O Messenger of Allah ﷺ).

The couple can sit down shake hands and he with affection should place his hand upon her forehead, reciting this *du'a*;

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِهَا وَخَيْرِ مَا فِيهَا وَخَيْرِ مَا
جَبَلْتَهَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهَا وَشَرِّ مَا فِيهَا
وَشَرِّ مَا جَبَلْتَهَا عَلَيْهِ

ALLĀHUMMA INNĪ AS'ALUKA MIN KHAYRIHĀ

WA KHAYRI MĀ FĪHĀ WA KHAYRI MĀ JABALTAHĀ
`ALAYHI WA A`ŪDHU BIKA MIN SHARRIHĀ
WA SHARRI MĀ FĪHĀ WA SHARRI
MĀ JABALTAHĀ `ALAYHI

*O Allah! I seek from You, the good and blessings of this lady,
and the goodness, which You have created within her.
In addition, I seek Your protection from the evil of this lady,
and whatever evil You have created in her.'*

The bride may also recite a similar *du'a* (this is not *sunnah* but good nonetheless):

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِهِ وَخَيْرِ مَا فِيهِ وَخَيْرِ مَا
جَبَلْتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهِ وَشَرِّ مَا فِيهِ
وَشَرِّ مَا جَبَلْتَهُ عَلَيْهِ

ALLĀHUMMA INNĪ AS'ALUKA MIN KHAYRIHĪ
WA KHAYRI MĀ FĪHI WA KHAYRI MĀ JABALTAHŪ
`ALAYHI WA A`ŪDHU BIKA MIN SHARRIHĪ WA SHARRI
MĀ FĪHI WA SHARRI MĀ JABALTAHŪ `ALAYH.

*O Allah! I seek from You, the good and blessings of this man,
and the goodness, which You have created within him.
In addition, I seek Your protection from the evil of this man,
and whatever evil You have created in him.'*

The benefits of this is that Allah ﷻ will remove evil from the spouses and prevent evil from befalling them, and He will bless the household.

Starting a conversation is always easier than anticipated. Appearing happy and smiling affectionately through this nervous ordeal helps each other and benefits the relationship. The conversation should be initiated by asking about each other and listening appreciatively and attentively. And without trying too hard (or being obscene) a few jokes can be cracked to lighten the atmosphere. Thereafter engage in speaking about Allah ﷻ and His mercy. After which the purpose behind the *nikah* can be explained. Upon this the couple should make an agreement with each other to always obey Allah ﷻ and be faithful and loyal to each other.

It is very fitting at this point, for each to present an appropriate gift (e.g. a necklace for her, a watch for him) to the other. This shows love, commitment and appreciation. Light refreshments can be served to each other to overcome any remaining shyness. One must bear in mind, that (ideally) both before this meeting were strangers, thus it is natural (and a very good sign) for both to feel uneasy about being alone with one of the opposite sex, with whom intimacy is permitted. Both should thus bear the feeling of the other, if any signs of shyness or uneasiness are shown.

Indulgence in sexual activity, should not be commenced or demanded immediately. The husband should take the lead in creating an atmosphere, and 'breaking the ice' by use of words of love, humour and mutual caring and caressing. All this time, slowly getting physically closer, caressing and embracing her.

Ignorant men advised by ignorant friends think sex must be performed immediately to demonstrate manliness and dominance over the wife. Only a complete idiot can behave in such a selfish manner, not taking into consideration the feelings and disposition of the wife; one's future life partner. Both husband and wife have the rest of their married lives

for this. Selfishness at this stage will give the new wife the impression of being used only to fulfil the husband's sexual desires. This will create more problems than can ever be resolved.

Modesty in Muslim ladies prevents them from immediately jumping for sex. When she does eventually become prepared for it, she will be extremely nervous, and in dire need of support from the husband.

The breaking of her virginity will cause immense physical pain which will be felt more than sexual pleasure. If the husband is not attentive towards her or behaves rashly at this intimate and delicate stage, the wife will hate him, and this hatred's negative effects will continue for a long time into the marriage.

In marriage, the wife (and also the husband) both experience an entire new lifestyle which was previously unknown to them. In the delicate stage of the building up of roles of both the husband and wife it is imperative for both to be neither selfish and subjugating nor so selfless as to allow the other to unwittingly take advantage. Ideally both will recognize their responsibilities as their's and not expect any help in it. They also should help and assist the other in the other's work acknowledging the fact that it is still the other's responsibility.

Both husband and wife while regarding the other as the person of their dreams should also understand that ultimately their dream, just as they are, are still human and prone to mistakes and faults. This is not said as a put off, but it is a reminder that mistakes will occur from both sides, and just as one wishes for one's own mistakes to be overlooked and forgiven, they should overlook the mistakes of the other.

The 'Mother of the Believers', Ummu Salamah ؓ narrates; that if ever the eyes of any of the wives of Nabi ﷺ ached, he would not cohabit

with them. This was due to consideration of their health. This and other issues are such that both partners should consider at all times in order to maintain a happy mutual-loving relationship.

COHABITATION

INTENTION

Muslims should realize that conjugal fulfilment is a fundamental need of humans, therefore *Islam* has not only dealt with this subject openly, but in great detail. A Muslim's every action should be performed with the goal of Allah's ﷻ pleasure. As has been explained by the prophet ﷺ even the fulfilment of nocturnal marital rights merits reward if done with the right intentions, i.e. acquiring of pious offspring, protection from adultery and fulfilment of mutual rights in a permitted manner.

ETIQUETTES OF SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

Allah ﷻ says in the *Qur'an*:

نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ فَاتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّىٰ شِئْتُمْ ۚ
وَقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ
مُلْقُوهُ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*Your wives are your fields.
So, come unto your field from where you will,
and advance something for yourselves,
and fear Allah and know that you are to meet Him*

and give good news to the believers.'

Al Baqarah 223

Rasulullah ﷺ explained:

Therefore come unto your soil from the front in the front part (i.e. the vagina only of one's wife), or come from the back into the front part (vagina). And save yourselves from the back portion (anus) in the way you save yourselves from the pubic region during the period of menstruation.¹

Tirmidhi

As long as the wife is not in her monthly cycle, the couple may engage in sexual intercourse as long as it is in the vagina, whatever position is comfortable to both. Anal and oral sex is not permitted.

Regarding the issue of different positions allowed for the husband and wife, Islam gives permission for any position for this act, as long as entry is in the vagina. The couple should however ensure that both are comfortable, and under no circumstance ashamed of, or psychologically forced into it. Medically (this is also considered in Islam) standing whilst having sex is harmful, thus not recommended, although permissible.

Regarding which positions are preferred, two are hinted at in the *Qur'an* and *sunnah*, these are sitting and lying down whilst engaging in sexual contact. It is further recommended that the husband be on top covering her totally. This is practically more fulfilling, more likely to allow conception and is also much more healthier.

Rasulullah ﷺ commented:

'Whenever any of you makes love with his wife (i.e. Before he starts), he should recite the following du'a to Allah ﷻ (it is also appropriate for the wife to read this du`a):

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ اللَّهُمَّ جَنِّبْنَا شَيْطَانَ وَجَنِّبِ شَيْطَانَ مَا رَزَقْتَنَا

BISMIL-LĀHĪ ALLĀHUMMA JANNIBNASH-SHAYṬĀNA
WA JANNIBISH-SHAYṬĀNA MĀ RAZAKTANĀ

'With the name of Allah!

*O Allah! Save us from the evil of Shaytan and
save whatever children You bestow us.'*

Shaytan will not be able to harm any child conceived from this union.'

Ma'ariful Hadith

One must at this time, remember Allah ﷻ and thank Him abundantly. If one is oblivious of Allah's ﷻ mercy, then this defiance will be seen in one's children and their behaviour towards the parents.

SEX DURING MENSTRUATION

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an:

وَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ ۗ قُلْ هُوَ أَذًى ۖ فَاعْتَزِلُوا

النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ ۖ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَطْهُرْنَ ۗ

'They ask you about menstruation.

*Say, 'It is an Adha (an impurity and harmful act
for a husband to have sexual intercourse with his wife
whilst she is undergoing menses),
therefore keep away from women during menstruation;
and do not have intimacy with them until they are cleansed...'*

Al Baqarah 222

Zayd bin Aslam (RA) (a Tabi') relates:

'Once a person asked Nabi ﷺ, 'During the days of my wife's monthly periods, what leeway is their for me regarding intimate relationships?'

He ﷺ replied, 'Cover a cloth between her navel to knees, thereafter you may derive pleasure from her upper torso (e.g. Kissing and caressing).'

Mishkat

During the days of menstruation, it is *Haram* for a husband to cohabit with his wife. However, besides actual cohabitation, the husband is permitted to fondle the other parts of her body.

If during *Haydh*, a person makes the grave mistake of cohabiting then it is necessary to repent from it and also to make a donation to charity. For he who has sex with his wife during *Haydh*, the Prophet ﷺ has instructed the donating of one or half a dinar in charity as recompense.

Ibn Majah

Medical evidence shows that for both the spouses to cohabit during the wife's *Haydh* or *nifaas*, it is extremely harmful. Many women have even suffered near-fatal blood loss and also haemorrhages due to cohabiting too soon after childbirth.

ORAL SEX

The fact that the genital organs; on condition of washing them; are clean, does not mean that every clean item be placed in the mouth. It is *makruh* i.e. sinful to orally fondle the genitals. This action is extremely dirty and only through it being romanticized by the sex industry, has even been contemplated. It is not becoming of a Muslim to follow the west's filthy example.

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

Purity. One should brush one's teeth, use perfume and ensure of no body odours or disheveled appearance. This should be done at all times, but on occasion of intimacy it takes on a greater significance.

There is no greater cause of abhorrence than foul odour. Clean cloth should be used to prevent the bed from being polluted, besides that two small towels should be utilized to clean the private parts after cohabitation.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPARATION

Psychological preparation must be made prior to cohabitation. This increases enjoyment and is much more mutually considerate. Each should express their desire for the other both verbally and practically.

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه has said; *'I love to adorn myself for my wife as much as I like (her) to beautify (herself) for me.'* The habit of dressing to go out and staying scruffy (or 'casual') at home is very inconsiderate. Allah سبحانه has granted the wife much reward in 'dressing-up' for her husband.

WHEN TO HAVE SEX

There are a few occasions every month, usually just after the menstrual bleeding, that most women develop an intense craving for sex. Besides these there are also many other times where the urge might rise. The husbands need to recognize these moments and endeavor to fulfil her desires. This will increase her love and respect for him.

A wife should also remember that the husband also has needs (which can arise at any time) and she should also be willing to cater for them. This will increase his love and respect for her.

The best time to make love is at least three (3) hours after having eaten. To make love immediately after having eaten a heavy meal, or when completely famished or tired is detrimental to health.

HOW OFTEN?

Everything runs at an optimum (most productive/best) rate if all things concerning it are kept in balance i.e. within moderation (not too much or too little). Thus for the body and mind to function at their most productive rates, total deprivation from carnal fulfilment is hazardous, and excessive indulgence (although hard to believe) is also hazardous. Bluntly put; too much or too little sex is harmful for a person as an individual and also the couple and their relationship.

Our *Shari'ah* has not set out any specific limits for cohabitation, as individual strength, needs and physique vary. Indulgence is however encouraged (as well as bathing) on Thursday night. Greater sexual prowess or craving does not make one more of a man, as this is something men like to generally boast about. But whoever has a greater need may indulge at least twice a week. But to have sex every night or more than once a night as a habit can be harmful.

Ejaculation of semen depletes a considerable amount of the body's energy and nourishment, which must be replenished; otherwise the rest of the body suffers. Thus, it becomes obvious that repeated depletion of this energy and nutrients, too quickly may result in illness. Also over indulgence becomes burdensome upon the wife. As women usually become satisfied with considerate, fulfilling sex, at moderate intervals, rather than frequent 'quickies' .

The newly married couple, are encouraged to engage in conjugal activities initially once every two to four days, gradually slowing down

to once a week and whenever a really strong urge is felt by either partner.

FOREPLAY

Prior to having sex the couple should engage in foreplay. Through this there is greater enjoyment and pleasure, especially for the wife. This is in accordance to the Sunnah of our beloved Nabi ﷺ who has stated, 'When the husband and wife hold each others' hands with love and affection; Allah ﷻ forgives their sins.'

Caressing, kissing, fondling, massaging, playing, whispering, stroking, all arouse passion, craving and 'enthusiasm' for sex. The couple should spend considerable time indulging their selves and each other in these activities. The couple should explore each other whilst considering each other's dispositions and making sure no aspect of Shari'ah law is disregarded (i.e. Anal and oral sex are not permissible, so must not be engaged in). Also when one is fondling those areas of the wife's body especially her breasts one must ensure that no milk is drank or tasted in the arousing process.

ORGASM

At the time of orgasm of either of the partners, it is best not to engage in speech. Should the husband experience early ejaculation he should not separate until his wife achieves orgasm and vice versa. If this is not done it is denying the other their right, as well as there being a danger of physical harm to the wife and discontentment setting into her heart.

It appears in a *hadith*, 'When any of you makes love to his wife, then he should do so with relish, vigour and enthusiasm. And when the husband reaches his desire (orgasm and wishes to ejaculate) then he

should not hasten until his wife's desire (orgasm) is achieved.

Adaabul-Jima

During ejaculation, both should silently pray in the heart:

اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَجْعَلْ لِلشَّيْطَانِ فِيمَا رَزَقْتَنِي نَصِيبًا

ALLĀHUMMA LA TAJ' AL LISH-SHAYṬĀNI
FĪMĀ RAZAQTANĪ NAṢĪBĀ

O Allah! Do not allow Shaytan any part of what You grant us.'

After cohabitation, both should wipe their genital organs clean with clean towels/cloths. Thereafter the couple should try to perform *ghusl* (bath) if this is too inconvenient then *wudhu* (ablution) is sufficient. If this too is difficult then *tayammum* should be performed. One should not indulge in more sex without at least washing the genitalia.

As long as the body remains warm, it is not medically advisable to expose it to cold air or water. Whoever suffers from inflammation or pain while urinating or during vaginal discharge are recommended to urinate and thereafter perform *Istinja* (washing of genitals after urination or excretion) prior to and after (not necessarily immediately after) cohabitation. To have sex a second time or multiple times until 'true' satisfaction is met, although not prohibited in Islam, can be medically harmful. Also one should only have sex if true desire is experienced (i.e. This is when a burning craving from within exists through which one does not need to physically arouse one's organs) not only when one has time on their hands. If the need arises for cohabitation a second or more times; one must again indulge in foreplay and prepare the wife.

EDIBLE APHRODISIACS

(food For Increased Sexual Performance / Appetite)

Sexual capacity depends upon the food one consumes, it's quality and type. It nourishes blood and thus semen. One should always consume food which is nutritious and healthy. When one is trying to increase libido and sperm quality the importance of eating sensibly increases.

Allah ﷻ reveals regarding the birth of Prophet Isa (عليه السلام) in the Qur'an;

فَاجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ إِلَى جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ ع ...

وَهَزِيءَ إِلَيْكَ بِجِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ تُسْقِطُ عَلَيْكَ رُطْبًا جَنِيًّا ۝

*'And the pains of childbirth drove her (Maryam (عليها السلام))
to the trunk of a date-palm,
And shake the trunk of date-palm towards you,
it will let fall fresh ripe dates Upon you.'*

Maryam 23,25

Ayshah (رضي الله عنها) relates that Nabi (ﷺ) was very fond of **honey** because Allah ﷻ reveals in the Qur'an:

يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَنُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ ط

*'There comes forth from their bellies, a drink of varying colour
wherein it is healing for men, '*

An Nahl 69

Unlike other foods, honey does not lose any of its benefits, even over a long period of time. Its nutrients are lapped up by the blood extremely quickly, and it generates immense energy without disturbing or causing an imbalance in the body's system or processes.

Milk according to Abdullah Ibn Abbas ؓ was the favorite drink of our prophet ﷺ. It develops sexual potency, dispels dryness and because it is so easily digested provides energy to body organs. Its nutrients are extremely beneficial for the body.

Hareerah is a soupy dish of meat, clarified butter, wheat and a little seasoning. This dish was recommended to Nabi ﷺ by Jibr'il ؑ and it was explained as having a potency enhancing capacity sufficient for 40 men.

Garlic was disliked by the prophet ﷺ when eaten raw before entry into the Masjid. According to some hadith, garlic contains healing properties. Some people have researched garlic and found it to be very beneficial in boosting sexual potency in people, especially those with weaker temperaments and tendencies.

Other foods that have all been recommended by Nabi ﷺ.

Beetroot, Saffron, Eggs

Foods which are Harmful to Potency - all types of sour fruits, pickles, chutneys, tamarind, vinegar, red chillies, hot spices, tea & coffee.

To drink cold water or any other cold drink immediately after sex is not recommended medically as it is harmful.

Besides which it is worth noting that smoking, as well as having

countless other harms, can also cause irreparable harm to the reproductive organs as well as sperm production and quality.

Note while certain foods are good in promoting sexual prowess, it does not mean that food is meant to be used during sex, in places where they were not intended to be. This is very disrespectful and wasteful, thus deserving it's ruling of impermissibility.

FRAGRANT APHRODISIACS

Flowers and fragrances are known to have a very positive effect on the sexual potency of both men and women. The classical fragrances (e.g. musk, amber, rose etc.) have superb arousing capabilities.

The newer types of perfumes also have this same type of effect. Although many scholars allow the use of alcohol including perfumes, one should still try to acquire the alcohol-free range to avoid the differences of opinion surrounding the permissibility of the alcohol-including range.

VISUAL APHRODISIACS

Clothes and self portrayal of the husband to the wife and even more so of the wife to the husband also have an effect in increasing a craving for each other and intimacy.

So called erotic lingerie can be worn by the wife to arouse the husband and intensify the foreplay. But this intimate costuming must be kept in total privacy between the husband and wife, both in action and talk. The only limitation to this is that it is compliant with the guidelines of Islam. These are mutual permission, no impersonation of others and no shamelessness (anal and oral sex).

BATHING

Janabah is the impure state that leaves one requiring a bath in which one is categorized in the event of any of the following;

Ghusl is the ritual bath which if performed in its entirety, will free one from the state of *Janabah*.

1. Entry of the tip of the penis in the mouth/opening of the vagina (or even the anus if one were to commit this filthy Haram act), whereby the head of the penis is no longer visible, irrespective of whether semen is ejaculated or not. In this event both involved require a compulsory bath.
2. Discharge of seminal fluids of either male or female on condition of it being experienced with the thought or pleasure of sexual activity, be it in the form of wet dreams or in the state of consciousness, regardless of whether it is caused by anything touching the private parts or not, or by merely thinking about sex, whether permissible or impermissible (thinking about impermissible sex is not permissible).
3. *Haydh* (menses) & *Nifas* (blood flow after childbirth).

One should note that for men it is only the ejaculation of semen that necessitates the bath

Purification from the state of *janabat* is obtained by means of *ghusl*, in the instance of water being available, otherwise by *tayammum*, (please refer to our publication titled *salaah* for more details)

Prohibited Actions Whilst One Is In The State Of Janabah

In the state of *janabah* the following acts of worship are prohibited:

1. Performing Salaah, the touching of and reciting of the Qur'an.
2. To enter a Masjid or to make Tawaaf of the Ka'bah.

WALIMAH (FEEDING AFTER THE MARRIAGE NIGHT)

Rasulullah ﷺ commented;

'If one is invited to a walimah, they should accept it.'

'To eat of that walimah is makruh wherein only the rich are invited and not the needy or destitute. Whomsoever declines an invitation (without a legitimate reason), has acted contrary to the command of Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ'.

Ma'ariful Hadith

Walimah is offered by the new husband, and is an act of virtue as well as a display of appreciation towards the new wife and her family. It's status has been emphasised by the Prophet ﷺ as a time of happiness and a time to show additional thankfulness towards Allah ﷻ.

THE PROPHET'S ﷺ EXAMPLE

On the marriage of the Prophet of Allah ﷻ to Safiyyah ؓ, on the return journey from the *Khaybar* expedition, he ﷺ requested his companions ؓ to bring whatever food they had available for *walimah*, even if it were a few dates. This shows that the Prophet's ﷺ example was of simplicity. And that the main reason of *walimah* is the getting together of people to symbolize the importance of marriage.

A'ishah ؓ relates that at her *Walimah* there were no camels or sheep slaughtered. A bowl of milk was given by the family of Sa'd bin Ubadah ؓ and this on its own sufficed as the *Walimah*.

Muslims who consider it as socially essential to have a large *Walimah*

wherein dozens of different foods are usually served with countless other extravagances, simply cannot understand as to why the Prophet ﷺ chose such simplicity.

Anas ؓ narrates, *'The walimah Nabi ﷺ gave after marrying Zaynab bint Jahash ؓ was the largest he had given.'*

On that occasion, Nabi ﷺ arranged for a sheep to feed the guests, and Ummu Sulaym ؓ, (the mother of Anas ؓ) sent Hareera (a special soup). Nabi ﷺ had instructed Anas ؓ to invite many friends by name, as well as anyone who he happened to meet. A total of about 300 men gathered at the residence of Nabi ﷺ who whilst reciting a *du'a* instructed people to eat in clusters of ten, and to eat from in front of them. After all had eaten to their fill, Nabi ﷺ requested the food be removed. Anas comments, *'At the time of removal, I was unable to distinguish, whether more food was present when I had served the meal, or upon its completion!'*

Nabi ﷺ had although generously invited a large number of people for this *walimah*, no expensive halls had to be hired, there was thus no *ghibat* or gossip, no intermingling of sexes, no time wasting after the food had been eaten, no pomp, no show. This showed that the Prophet's ﷺ example was not only simplicity but also hateful of extravagance.

Regarding *walimah*:

- It is Sunnah for the new husband's family to offer *walimah*. There is no basis in the Shari'ah for the new wife's family to hold any party.
- Upon arrival at a *Walimah* if one finds any form of sin taking place, then one should leave immediately.
- It is wrong to incur debt in order to have a *walimah*.

- *Salaah* and other *Islamic* obligations must not be compromised by any of the hosts or guests.
- It is idiocy for one to think it is a requirement of nobility and rank to hold an extravagant, wasteful meal and invite many. Where are we, our peers and our interpretation of honour and respect compared to the example of our beloved Prophet ﷺ and his companions ﷺ?
- The ill-practices of intermingling of the sexes, photography, music and all the other 'stuff' that now have become part of the ceremonies are sins totally against the *Shari'ah*.
- It is not permissible to bring any extra people (or children) with those who have been invited without prior permission.
- If the revenue of the inviting person are known or strongly thought to be of ill-means (this is anything not permissible according to Islamic law), then his invitation should be rejected politely.

GOLDEN ADVICE FOR THE COUPLE

Marriage makes one spouse, the lifetime companion of the other. Whatever the circumstance, all events are to be faced as a couple. No matter how happy others may appear, one's circumstances if accepted with contentment upon the will and wisdom of Allah ﷻ will be a bearer of happiness and reward.

The wife should accept her husband, his home and income as their's together, and she should always bear in mind that her husband is her true beloved, best friend and well-wisher in all family decisions. The husband too must always accept his wife as his life-partner.

Husbands and wives are well informed of their individual rights of the duties the other owes them. If this taking selfish mentality was replaced with a more concerned, selfless, considerate outlook towards the

other, then they will get their own rights as well as improve the relationship no end.

During the initial stages, the couple must try and spend as much time together as possible, as it provides an opportunity to understand each other's nature and also to lay a strong marital foundation. It also plays an important part towards securing a successful marriage. Many people think it appropriate that the husband goes on a long journey immediately after marriage, there is no Islamic necessity behind it but rather it is harmful for the relationship and should be postponed for at least two months.

The couple must make a point to arrive home early every evening and avoid the habit of wasting time in idle chit-chat with friends. Whatever work/activity one is involved in should be completed early or postponed and time set aside for spending together.

The love between the couple in the initial stages of marriage is blinding, in the sense that it overcomes logical reasoning and thinking. It is thus immensely vital for the couple not to let the marriage tumble towards an irreligious direction, because of this blinding love that they have for each other. Both husband and wife should pledge to each other that they will follow Deen at all costs.

The new husband must show compassion to the wife who has left her parents and family to start a new family with him. Her sacrifice and her feelings should be respected and appreciated. Similarly the wife should also appreciate the husband's sacrifice in his willingness to sacrifice his earnings to share them with his new wife. Thus both should feel for each other, and also for the establishment of the family. A wife should treat her husband's parents as her own, and he should also feel the same way about her parents.

One point for the wife to bear in mind is that the husband at the beginning would spend almost every evening with her as is normal. Thereafter the husband would naturally become more preoccupied with either work or recreation. This too within limits is normal and must never be misconstrued to mean that the husband does not care.

The husband must understand that he should not impose on the wife, even if she says she doesn't mind. Many times husbands like to entertain friends and family at his home. This is not discouraged, but should not be performed too often or too many of the responsibilities put onto the wife.

THE MARRIED COUPLE

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ ۗ

*'They (your wives) are a libaas (cover/screen)
for you and you (men) are a libaas for them.'*

Al Baqarah 187

This ayah vividly describes the unique bond between husband and wife. With nikah, both acquire responsibilities and rights for and over each other. True consideration is that one is lenient when it comes to one's own rights being neglected, and adamant when it comes to fulfilling the right of others.

In the way that life cannot be lived without clothes, similarly, without the protective garment of nikah, neither can man nor woman achieve an inner gratifying peace. This does not refer to only carnal desires, as both the spouses are in need of each other and in need of each other's support.

RIGHTS GIVEN BY SHARI'AH

The *shari'ah* demands that the husband treats his wife with fairness and affection at all times. In addition to this the *Shari'ah* dictates that the wife has an irrevocable right to the following three things;

1. Food - must be sufficient for her.
2. Clothing - she must have at least two full sets of clothes to cover her.
3. Housing - she must at least have a room wherein she has privacy.

In so far as the first two rights are concerned, the husband is fully responsible for their fulfilment. From whatever he eats and wears, he must make sure that she receives the same quality. There should be no need for the wife to go out to work, as her needs are catered for and she will also have her responsibilities in managing the affairs of the house. Both the husband and wife should appreciate each other's rank and role commanded by Allah ﷻ. Also in fulfilling each other's rights, each should take into consideration the other's tastes and wishes. As long as they be within limits of the Shari'ah, they should try to fulfil these, as long as they are within one's means.

LIVING ACCOMODATIONS

Women must realize that a good Muslim wife does not resort to placing her husband in a situation where he is forced to choose between her and his parents even when her rights are at stake. This is not demanding her to relinquish her rights, but it is teaching that a wife should use her common sense and only ask her husband for separate accommodation if he is able to give her it. If he is unable to provide a house then he will be fulfilling her rights by giving her one room that only she has the key for, wherein she has total privacy whenever she requires it.

Practically the best arrangement is that the couple arrange for separate living accommodations. Through this, one will avoid falling prey to arguments and quarrels. Parents should within means help their children to arrange separate accommodation immediately upon marriage.

If the wife wishes for separate accommodation and it is within the husband's means, then it is necessary for the husband to fulfil this right of her's. Even if the husband's parents do not wish for their son to live separately, but the wife demands it, whether in be in the same building or in a separate one, it is imperative for the husband to grant her this right, and he should refuse the parents in an amicable, pleasing way. Parents must also be understanding and not stubbornly insist on imprisoning their daughter-in-law.

In the event of the newly wed couple living with the husband's parents, all who live there must at all times respect the new wife's privacy. Some people automatically assume that since she is the daughter she becomes a possession of the family, and thus does not have any rights or privacy. This view is *Haram* and those who continue neglecting her will be liable for severe punishment from Allah ﷻ.

HUSBAND-WIFE RELATIONSHIP

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ

عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ؕ

'Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has made one excel the other and because

they spend to support them from their means

An Nisa 34

Nabi ﷺ has declared;

'The Mu'min with the most perfect Iman is one who has the best character and who is the kindest to his wife'.

Undoubtedly, Allah ﷻ has blessed men and women with many qualities, many are shared by both, but there are some which are specific to women and some specific to men. Of the qualities specific to men are such which are necessary for a leadership role. This is why men have been described as having command over women.

This leadership role, as can clearly be seen from the *Qur'anic* injunction, is a responsibility on the husband as he must fulfil the rights of the wife and children, and also ensure that they are overseen for moral and character related betterments. In this an overwhelming majority of husbands fail in their duty, for which they will be questioned.

In so far as the wife is concerned she is not being subjugated, as how the media are forever trying to indoctrinate us, but her role is a different one. In the same way there can never be two leaders of a country there can never be two leaders in one household. The wife is not being told she has no input in the goings-on of the house, but she is being educated that just as everything else has one person making the ultimate decision, so too must there be only one decision-maker in the family environment and this is the role of the husband, and the giver of this role to the husband is the Giver of life Himself ﷻ.

The wife and family must also understand that this is not enslaving them, but rather it is a responsibility on the husband which the family should help (not subjugate him) with.

The core of unity and equality is to recognise and accept that every one has their individual role. If one is leader whilst all others serve him, it does not negate equality. Groups such as women's rights etc, all in their crying out for equality want women to do the same and be the same as men. They too fail to see that individuality and unique roles do not negate equality.

Allah ﷻ decrees:

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
 وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ
 وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ
 وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّامِتِينَ وَالصَّامِتَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ
 فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا
 وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٢٥﴾

*Verily, Muslim men and Muslim women;
 and believing men and believing women;
 and obedient men and obedient women (to Allah);
 and truthful men and truthful women
 (both in speech and deeds);
 and patient men and patient women
 (who perform all the duties which Allah has ordered
 and in abstaining from all that Allah has forbidden);*

***and humble men and humble women (before Allah);
and donating men and donating women
(of Zakaah, and alms);
and fasting men and fasting women
(during the month of Ramadan);
and guarding men, of their chastity,
and guarding women (from illegal sexual acts);
and remembering men who abundantly remember
Allah and remembering women;
Allah has prepared for them forgiveness
and a great reward (i.e. Paradise).***

Ahzab 35

Here Allah exemplifies the equality of both men and women, both are given equal responsibilities (albeit different roles); both on the fulfilment of these responsibilities will be equally rewarded.

It is an often occurrence that the wife is at her parents'/family's residence and is needed by the husband for many different reasons. Suspicious or a dictatorial manner must not be employed, but rather in a concerned, loving tone should her company be requested for her departure from there. This applies to the first time when she is to be called, as well as every time after that. Neither spouse nor their families have any right to throw accusations or suspicions at the other. If any ill-feeling is thought, it should at once be thought of as ill-founded.

BEHAVIOUR OF BELIEVERS

First and foremost one should have the correct intention that one is adopting good mannerism as fulfilling the command of Allah ﷻ and also a means of practically propagating the beauty of Islam. If one has this correct intention then one will be rewarded.

Thereafter it is imperative to have knowledge of what is right and wrong. This for obvious reasons is necessary, as it tells one what stance must be adopted in different situations. E.g. If one is at fault and somebody reproaches one for a fault; one must not make excuses, and immediately accept errors and apologize.

Amongst those things which Allah ﷻ and his Prophet ﷺ have strongly emphasized, and described as beloved to them, is the adoption of good manners and amiable characteristics. This applies to everyone at all times, but the husband and wife should even more necessarily adopt them, if they wish for a happy life together.

One mustn't look for the faults of or think bad of others. Instead one should keep one's own shortcomings in mind, and make one's mission to rectify them. If one has people under one's jurisdiction or responsibility, one should tolerate their shortcomings, and forgive their mistakes, in the same way that one would also hope for such leniency in such circumstances. If one becomes aware of the faults or secrets of another, they must be kept concealed. If, however they are planning to harm anyone, then one must make the target aware of it.

At all times one must remember and thank Allah ﷻ; whether by the heart or tongue. Do not remain negligent. If one derive's pleasure in remembering Allah ﷻ; one must thank Him. If ever hardship, or grief is faced, one should consider it to be from Allah ﷻ and not become disheartened; one should instead convince oneself that a content and subservient response will always be rewarded. Hope must always be on Allah ﷻ, this stance will be beneficial in both the worlds.

PROBLEMS

A sexual problem for one person might not be a problem for another.

Everyone is different and their understandings and problems vary, so both of the spouses should be willing and open when discussing any problems; no matter how private they may be; and their possible solutions. If one needs to seek medical advice, one has no need to feel ashamed as such problems are not new or disgracing (although one need not go around publicizing it). There are usually simple *Halal* cures available, for almost all the different problems that either of the spouse may face. Miracle cures like *Ta'weezes* and other such things of dubious origins should be avoided, while *du'a* should be continually made and *Waza'if* be constantly read.

MEN'S PROBLEMS

EARLY DISCHARGE

Premature ejaculation is probably the most common sexual problem for a man. Wherein the husband, before reaching a peak while cohabiting, releases semen early (sometimes within two minutes of penetration, when it should be greater than this) without any pleasure for him or his wife. Because of this, the wife is constantly left sexually unsatisfied.

Very rarely this is due to physical cause, as the majority of times the reasons are due to lack of psychological preparation which is within one's own power to cure. When this problem affects young men it's cause is anxiety or sex-related vice (e.g. Illicit thoughts and viewing, pornography, masturbation, etc).

People often worry about their organ size. This is a direct ploy of the sex industry, who, through media and advertising have shamelessly indoctrinated the lay, with the lie that real manhood and sexual prowess is to have an abnormally broad and long penis. This has been proven medically to be a lie.

According to doctors an erect penis five inches in length and one inch in width is normal. Anyone with a penis smaller than this should not feel that they are inferior in any way whatsoever.

Even on an intellectual point the length of a penis is irrelevant, just like the size of the wife's vagina is irrelevant. Biologically all women have the sensitive tissues area (clitoris) located near the mouth of the vagina. So as long as one has a penis he can fulfil his wife's conjugal rights.

It is always ignored by the sex industry that the most fulfilling way of cohabitation according to women is that of a caring, loving, affectionate, and considering nature. Women do not want to be treated like dogs (or "bitches") and their rights are what *Islam* caters for.

When this problem affects middle-aged men, it is probably caused by their over-concern of the natural loss with age in the firmness, frequency and duration of their erections. This has been proven by doctors to be mythical. Psychologically prepared men can be as sexually active in old age as they were when they first married. This state can be achieved/sustained by a healthy diet and again, having everything in moderation. Sexual desires do not stop in old age, this is why the *Shari'ah* has ordered women, from even elderly men, to remain veiled.

PREPARATION IS THE CURE

One suffering from premature ejaculation should not continue thinking of sex or its pleasure prior to cohabitation, as this excites one too quickly and incites one to ejaculate too hastily. Confidence of satisfying one's wife and determination also play a big part in allowing one to have more fulfilling indulgences.

Medical research estimates that almost one in eight women have never

experienced an orgasm. And almost eight in ten find difficulty in achieving one by sexual intercourse alone. This is because it is not penetration of the penis alone which is enjoyable for women, but rather it is more to do with prior emotional preparation and arousal, as well as prolonged foreplay, caressing of the erogenous zones and stimulation of the clitoris.

The same way that for the male, the tip of the penis is more sensitive to the joys of sex, similarly women also have a spot in their vaginas which is extremely sensitive during sex, commonly known as the G-spot, and often holds the key to their orgasms.

The husband and wife should not be afraid to explore each other to find different styles and positions, that are comfortable and pleasing to each other. Even if one ejaculates early, this is no reason to become despondent and separate; but rather in continuing with the rhythm, fondling and caressing, will still instigate her orgasm. This is consideration towards her needs.

LOW LIBIDO

This is a dwindling desire for cohabitation. This can be caused either by physical or psychological reasons. If it is caused by psychological reasons then the same treatment for premature ejaculation, will be what is required in this instance. If it is physical then it is essential to try and diagnose the cause, if required medical help should be sought, so that effective treatment is prescribed.

Positive thoughts and determination are the body's best healing tool and driving force. Lack of sexual appetite is reported in almost nine out of ten of all depressants. From this one must try to adopt a more positive approach to all things. One major contributor to general well-

being is the constant remembrance of Allah ﷻ and the elating feeling that it causes.

A Muslim husband should also remember that to have her carnal desires fulfilled is the right of his wife. The fulfilment of which will earn the couple rewards greater than what they could have imagined.

ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

The causes of this problem of obtaining and maintaining an erection are many. Most (e.g. alcohol, drugs and their like) are not applicable to Muslims. But those which are caused by blood diseases, there are plenty of practical solutions available which can, under medical advice be administered (e.g. pumps and sprays which induce concentrated blood flow).

A doctor's advice can also be sought to improve the duration of erections by means of appropriate exercises.

WOMEN'S PROBLEMS

NOT CLIMAXING

This topic has been discussed previously and its solution has also been given. (i.e. They should try to work together to make it work for them).

The wife should indulge in foreplay and encourage the husband to do the same. By him stroke her clitoris with his fingers whereby she becomes fully aroused and only then moving on to penetrating will allow both to time their orgasms together.

The wife should also encourage her husband if she feels he is about to

ejaculate too early, by talking and get him to take deep breaths and withdraw his penis. By gently clasp the base of the penis allowing him to regain his breath, the husband will slowly regain composure and a 'second wind'. There is no harm in allowing the wife to take the leading role, as long as she too caters for both. By together addressing the problem as it rises, the wife by supporting and nurturing his self-belief can return the sparkle to their relationship. For this faithfulness, loyalty and chastity a Muslim wife receives tremendous rewards.

LUBRICATION

The use of water based lubrication is a must for those who experience dryness or pain during sex. The rough and ready approach of *hard* men which again has been propagated by the sex industry, is also a distortion. The use of lubrication should be resorted to without any fear or feeling of inadequacy.

VAGINAL INFLAMMATION

Lack of thorough cleaning, is one of the main causes of this. The vagina is also irritated by the use of deodorants or powders whether dirty or too strong. Also uncomfortable and dirty underwear and tight fitting garments bring problems. the husband can also be a cause of transmitting certain infections. Both are thus advised to consider this problem as a shared problem, instead of her problem.

Muslim women should have a routine for personal hygiene; including regular showers. It is recommended to change underwear daily, shave the pubic area regularly (once a week) and wear such material and light-fitting garments that allow the body natural movement and air.

WASHING THE PRIVATE PARTS

Women, when cleaning their private parts with tissue and water have the habit to start from the anus and move towards the vagina and follow on to the urethra. By stroking upwards, the bacteria that will be present in the anus (faeces) may enter the vagina and cause infection. The technique of washing downwards away from the vagina is much more better as it reduces the chances and possibilities of vaginal infection.

The habit of washing the private parts of each spouse after each sexual session is recommended as, this minimises the risk of sexual infection being transmitted.

THRUSH

Thrush is a bacterial/fungal infection that affects the vaginal area due to uncleanliness of the female genitals. It can be recognized by an unpleasant white frothy appearance around the mouth and lining of the vagina.

This causes the woman excruciating pain, whilst having sex or during urination. Medication of this is however easily available in the form of anti-fungal creams and ointments. But as is the general rule 'prevention is better than cure'. Thorough regular washing of the vagina and it's surrounding areas, this painful unsightly state can be avoided.

IMPORTANT

As was mentioned earlier, sex related diseases/problems should be included in the problems faced as a couple. Encouragement and advice as well as sincerity and concern are all what are needed in such situations

to provide a cure or at least be in the right direction for a solution.

If in the unlikely event that of no solution being available, then too the mutual concern would not be without benefit.

MISCELLANEOUS

ABNORMAL SEXUAL CRAVINGS

What may appear as a more promising sex drive may be because of illicit sexual fantasies/arousing. Muslims must inculcate taqwa (god-fearingness), discipline, and also keep one's gaze low, and one's mind and thoughts as clean as possible.

DECREASE IN OR LACK OF SEXUAL DESIRE

The problem of having dwindling sexual desire has been discussed and the solutions also have been mentioned.

A Muslim wife who feels disinclined towards sex with her husband should bear in mind that it is an act of *ibadah* (worship). A *hadith* mentions, 'Allah ﷻ loves a man who caresses his wife. Both of them are awarded rewards because of this loving attitude, and also their rizq (sustenance) is increased.' Such a positive outlook with appropriate counseling and medical treatment will Allah ﷻ willing, solve the problem.

WOMEN'S ISSUES REGARDING MENSTRUATION

For a detailed work on all the related issues of the menstruation cycle, post-natal bleeding and pregnancies; please refer to our publication "A Gift for women"

GLORIFIED ARE YOU, O ALLAH!

You are undoubtedly:

The Cherisher and Nourisher of Mankind.

The Master of the Day of Judgment.

Awake O Muslims!

You are servants of Allah,

Worship none but Allah,

And secure purity of your Souls,

Surrender yourselves to Him,

To enter the highest heaven.

Worship is a barrier to Allah's punishment.