



*What a Bride
Needs to Know*

What a Bride Needs to Know

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful
O Allah, send Your abundant peace and blessings upon Your messenger, the Mercy to Mankind,
Muhammad, and his pure progeny; and hasten the revolution of our Holy Imam (AS)

Our Lord, accept from us. Verily You, You are the Hearing, the Knowing.¹

¹ Holy Qur'an; Surah al-Baqarah (2), aayah 127

Preface

All praise belongs to Allah (SWT), Lord of the Worlds, Who, by His mercy and kindness bestowed opportunity for this work to be compiled.

This work is aimed to be a guide for brides-to-be, to help to ensure that one of the most special days of their lives, and perhaps one of the most significant turning points, is full of blessings for everyone involved. *Insha'Allah* by following the guidance in this booklet, which has been referenced throughout, we will all move a step towards attaining the pleasure of Allah (SWT) and His chosen ones; and our weddings, which are planned and awaited with so much joy and excitement will not become a breeding ground for *Shaytan*, inviting the displeasure and wrath of the Almighty.

Most of this booklet is addressed to the bride herself. However, the groom, the families of the bride and groom, the bridesmaid and the best man, and anyone else who might be involved in organising the wedding proceedings may find benefit in reading it.

In the compilation of this book Islamic scholars and personalities involved in resolving marital problems have been consulted. To find out what was relevant and important for brides-to-be, those who have already married as well as those who have been bridesmaids were consulted to identify the pitfalls and difficulties with respect to conducting the marriage proceedings in an Islamic way.

Most of the *fiqh* (jurisprudential) rulings quoted in this booklet are according to the *fataawa* (edicts) of *Ayatullah al-Udhama Syed Ali al-Husaini al-Seestani*. Followers of other *maraji'* (authoritative references) are requested to refer to books of Islamic Laws of their own *marja* (authoritative reference).

May Allah (SWT) grant us the will and strength to obey His commands. May He bless all marriages, making them a source of love and mercy for the married couples and yielding from them children who will be the helpers and defenders of Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (ATF).

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Glossary of Terms

- 'Aba** cloak
'Aalim scholar, lit. learned person
'Amal, pl. a'maal acts
'Aqd contract
Aayah verse (of the Holy Qur'an), lit. sign
Buloogh puberty
Chaadar covering
Dhikr remembrance
Du'a supplication
Fatwa, pl. fataawa edict
Al-ghina singing
Ghusl, pl. aghsaal major ablution
Hadeeth narration
Hajj major pilgrimage to Makkah
Haydh menstruation
Haraam prohibited
Hijaab veil
Ihraam state of ritual devotion of the Makkah pilgrim
Ihtilaam discharge of semen during sleep
Inda al-talab on demand
Insha'Allah if Allah (SWT) wills
Istihaadha a type of blood seen by women
Janaabah the state of major ritual impurity arising due to sexual intercourse
Jumu'ah Friday
Junoob one in the state of *janaabah*
Kohl antimony, a cosmetic item that is used to darken the edges of the eyelids
Kurr a unit of volume equivalent to 384 litres
Mahr, pl. muhoor the gift presented to the bride by the groom
Al-mahr al-mithl the *mahr* that is traditional in the family
Al-mahr al-musammaa the *mahr* that is mentioned in the *'aqd* and agreed by the wife
Al-mahr al-sunnah the *mahr* that was given to Sayyidah Fatimah Zahra (SA): 500 dirhams
Mahram one with whom matrimony is forbidden, lit. forbidden
Majlis gathering
Makruh detested
Marja, pl. maraaji' authoritative reference
Masjid, pl. masaajid mosque, lit. place of prostration
Ma'soom, pl. ma'soomeen infallible
Mehndi henna
Muajjal delayed
Mu'ajjal immediate
Mu'min, pl. mu'mineen believer
Mustahab recommended
Najaasah ritual impurity
Najis a thing that is ritually impure
Nifaas bleeding after childbirth
Nikaah marriage

Niyyah intention

Qadha overdue, lit. termination

Qaleel a body of still water that is less than *kurr*

Qiblah direction toward which Muslims face to pray, i.e. the Holy *Ka'ba*, lit. direction

Rajaa' hope

Rak'ah unit of prayer

Sajdah, pl. *sujud* prostration

Salah, pl. *salawaat* ritual prayer, lit. blessing

Shari'ah Islamic law

Surah, pl. *suwer* chapter (of the Holy Qur'an)

Taahir a thing that is ritually pure

Turbah earth (used to prostrate upon)

Ummah nation

Waajib obligatory

Wudhu minor ablution

Zeenah beautification

Ziyaarah greeting, lit. visitation

Dear bride,

The Mahr

- In the 'aqd (contract) of *nikaah* (marriage), the husband undertakes to present a suitable gift to his wife, called the *mahr*. It is not a 'bride price', nor is it a recompense for her (future) services, and neither is it something to fall back on in the future in the case of separation or death. The moral significance of the *mahr* is a symbol of the man's respect and love for his wife.¹
- The *mahr* must have some monetary value. Once agreed, it becomes a debt on the husband. The wife can specify whether she wishes it to be paid immediately (*mu'ajjal*), at a later date (*muajjal*), or whenever she demands it (*inda al-talab*).²
- There are three types of *mahr*:³
 1. *al-mahr al-sunnah* – this is the *mahr* that was given to Sayyidah Fatimah al-Zahra (SA): 500 dirhams
 2. *al-mahr al-mithl* – the *mahr* that is traditional in the family
 3. *al-mahr al-musammaa* – that which is mentioned in the 'aqd and agreed by the wife
- There are no means of calculating *al-mahr al-sunnah* at present time.⁴
- If no *mahr* is fixed then the marriage is valid, but if at any time the wife claims the *mahr* she will be paid *al-mahr al-mithl*.⁵
- It is *mustahab* (recommended) to ask for small *muhoor*, and it is *makruh* (detested) to demand a big *mahr*. The Holy Prophet (SAW) has said, "The best among the women of my *ummah* (nation) are those who have brighter faces and smaller *muhoor*."⁶ He (SAW) has also said: "Avoid exaggeration in the *muhoor*, because this causes enmity (between you)."⁷ The Holy Prophet (SAW) also initiated the desirable practice of limiting *mahr* to five hundred dirhams. He (SAW) and the Holy Imams of the Ahlul-Bayt (AS) never exceeded this amount of *mahr* in their marriages.⁸
- Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an,

و ءاتوا النساء صدقاتهن نحلة ۚ فان طبن لكم عن شيء منه نفسا فكلوه هنيئا مريئا

'Give to women their dues of your free will; but if they willingly forego part of it themselves, then you may use it to your advantage; (it shall be) beneficial (to you).'⁹

¹ Mrs U Merali, www.KhojaMatch.com; Article submitted on Wed 10/08/05 Subject: MAHR

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ See Appendix I 1

⁵ Mrs U Merali, www.KhojaMatch.com; Article submitted on Wed 10/08/05 Subject: MAHR

⁶ Jurisprudence Made Easy According to the Edicts of His Eminence Grand Ayatullah as-Sayyid Ali al-Hussaini as-Seestani Pg 227. Published by Imam Ali Foundation

⁷ Abu-Muhammad Ordoni (Jordanian), Fatima the Gracious; Chapter 25 Fatima Zahra (AS) on the way to marriage Pg 121. Ansariyan Publications

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Holy Qur'an; Surah al-Nisa (4), aayah 4

- It is recommended that the bride divide the *mahr* into three parts to gain the maximum benefit from it:¹⁰
 1. $\frac{1}{3}$ should be forgiven
 2. $\frac{1}{3}$ should be used as an investment in her husband's business
 3. $\frac{1}{3}$ should be used to buy honey as a cure for those who are sick
- There is no *khums* liability on *mahr* which a wife receives.¹¹

¹⁰ Mrs U Merali, www.KhojaMatch.com; Article submitted on Wed 10/08/05 Subject: MAHR

¹¹ Islamic Laws According to the Fataawa of Ayatullah al Uzama Syed Ali al-Husaini Seestani; Rule 1763 Pg 320. Published by The World federation of KSIMC

Choosing a bridesmaid

- When it comes to choosing a bridesmaid, think about whom you are most comfortable with. It may be a relative, e.g. an older sister, or a friend. You will be spending a lot of time with your bridesmaid and discussing personal issues so look for someone trustworthy, whose company you enjoy and would feel comfortable talking about personal issues with.
- Remember that your duty is to protect yourself from sin. If it is expected that a particular person should be your bridesmaid, e.g. an older sister or a cousin, but you fear that they may lead you to sin, then you will have to put your foot down and refuse for that person to be your bridesmaid. Try to accommodate for the feelings of others, but not at the expense of your soul.
- Since you want your wedding to be full of blessings, look for someone who knows what Allah (SWT) expects from you at this time, will not be embarrassed to set you aright when she sees you doing something wrong, and will readily guide you to the Truth.
- During the wedding proceedings, times may arise when some people try to pressure you into sacrificing your *hijaab* (veil). Look for a bridesmaid who will help you to protect your *hijaab*.
- Look for someone who is organised and punctual. You don't want to turn up at the wedding venue *just* before your *nikah* is to be recited!
- Your bridesmaid may need to be with you until quite late at night if the functions run late. This may not be convenient for her if her family needs her at these times. For this reason, it may be more convenient for both her and yourself, if she and the groom's best man are a couple. This may also be helpful for them as they may have to communicate with each other to arrange things like transport to and from venues for yourselves, or to ensure that you both have a complementary understanding about certain matters.
- After the wedding you will feel much closer to your bridesmaid and admire the way in which she sacrificed her own comfort to make sure that you were at ease. Although the reward for her efforts will be with Allah (SWT) *insha'Allah* (if Allah (SWT) wills), you could give her a gift to express your appreciation. If you would like to give her a gift, then keep it wrapped and ready for an appropriate time.
- You will be turning to your bridesmaid for valuable advice in preparing for your wedding. Imam Sajjad (AS) says regarding the right of a person who seeks someone's advice: "And the right of him who seeks your advice is that you should exert all efforts to advise him if you can provide him with a good opinion. Suggest to him to choose what you would have chosen if you were in his place. You should do so with mercy and lenience since leniency will eliminate fear, while rudeness will eliminate friendship. But if you do not have any good advice for him, you should refer him to someone whose advice you trust. You should

spare no efforts to guide him towards the good and do your best to advise him. And there is no might nor power but in Allah (SWT)".¹²

¹² Imam Sajjad (AS), A Divine Perspective on Rights; 39 The right of him who seeks your advice Pg 407. Ansariyan Publications

The occasions preceding the wedding

- Brides usually become extremely self-conscious as the wedding draws near! If you would like to even out your skin tone and get rid of any spots and/or blemishes to look radiant on your big day, use this daily facemask starting from 2 weeks before the first occasion, up until the wedding day. It has been tried, tested and is known to work! It can be made in a couple of minutes at home: Mix 1 heaped tablespoon of gram flour with 1½ tablespoons of fresh milk and ¼ teaspoon of turmeric powder in a small bowl. This will form a thick paste, which can be thinned with more milk if required. Apply this mask on the face and leave it on until it dries. Wash it off with cool water. Any leftover mask should be covered with cling film to prevent it drying out and stored in the fridge to be mixed in with the following day's freshly made mask.
- Most brides like to be perfumed with *oud* (hair and body). This is usually practised once or twice a day starting from up to 1 week before the occasions begin, until the wedding day. Each session may take up to 45 minutes. If you would like to be perfumed, ask your bridesmaid if she is able to do this for you and decide on timings for these sessions. Find out whether there is *oud* available or if it has to be bought. *Oud* should be done after you have showered in the morning so that the fragrance has time to 'be absorbed' during the rest of the day.
- There may be traditional occasions preceding the *nikaah* during which you will be in the spotlight with all eyes on you. But don't worry, we've all been through it, it's really not that bad! Besides, your bridesmaid will be going through the same thing as she will be sitting right next to you throughout most of the events. She will be there as a friend to make you feel comfortable. If you feel that you need advice about anything, just ask her and she will be happy to help.
- Arrange a session with your bridesmaid so that she can brief you on matters relating to the wedding night, etc. Note down any questions that may arise from this session and ask your bridesmaid. She will help you to find the answers if she does not know them herself and she will also be able to learn through the process *insha'Allah*. It is best not to leave questions unanswered as the knowledge may be valuable to you later on.
- When you ask your bridesmaid for advice, there are certain rights of hers that become incumbent upon you to fulfil. Be mindful of these and do justice to her by fulfilling them. Imam Sajjad (AS) says with regards to the rights of a person whose advice you seek, "And the right of him whose advice you seek is that you should not accuse him when he gives you advice that does not conform to your own opinion. It is quite natural that opinions are divergent and people may disagree. You are free not to accept his advice if you doubt it. However, you are not permitted to accuse him of providing you with ill advice as long as you consider him to be of those worthy of consultation. Do not stop thanking him for the thoughts and the good advice he has given you. And if it was appropriate for you, you should thank Allah (SWT) for it, accept it from your religious brother with gratitude, and

be ready to act similarly for him should one day he seek your advice. And there is no power but in Allah (SWT)".¹³

- The period leading up to the wedding will be very exciting for both of your families. Remember that the marriage is Allah (SWT)'s favour upon you both. Thank Him for it by being obedient to His commands. Remember that observing *hijaab*, *salah*, etc. are not exempt for brides and have to be fulfilled. Keep the following rulings in mind when arranging the gatherings:
 1. It is permissible to applaud in a marriage ceremony, religious gatherings, seminars and other functions. This is equally permissible for men and women.¹⁴
 2. *al-ghina* (singing) is *haraam* (prohibited) - doing it, listening to it, or living off it. By *al-ghina*, it is meant an amusing statement expressed in the tunes that are suitable for those who provide amusement and entertainment.¹⁵
 3. Music that is permissible is the music that does not entail entertainment in gatherings held for that purpose. Forbidden music is the music that is suitable for entertainment and amusement gatherings.¹⁶
 4. It is *haraam* to invite musical performers to perform, regardless of whether it is a gathering for women or men.¹⁷
 5. It is not allowed to purchase, borrow, etc. cassettes or musical instruments for entertainment.¹⁸
 6. It is not a problem to invite poets with the intention of having them read poetry, or those poems in praise of the Prophet of Islam (SAW) and his family (AS), as long as it is not in the manner of singing.¹⁹

Many rules from this point forth use the term *mahram*, so the following gives an explanation of this term:

- (a) Matrimonial relation is *haraam* with women who are one's *mahram*, for instance, mother, sister, daughter, paternal aunt, maternal aunt, niece (one's brother's or sister's daughters) and mother-in-law.²⁰

¹³ Imam Sajjad (AS), A Divine Perspective on Rights; 40 The right of him whose advice you seek Pg 413. Ansariyan Publications

¹⁴ A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West; Rule 545 Pg 241. Published by Imam Ali Foundation

¹⁵ Ibid. Rule 541 Pg 240

¹⁶ Ibid. Rule 536 Pg 239

¹⁷ A Code of Ethics for Muslim Men and Women; Chapter IV: Rules relating to marriage and its ceremonies; Rule 264 Pg 138. Published by Islamic Humanitarian Service

¹⁸ Ibid. Rule 276 Pg 141

¹⁹ Ibid. Rule 265 Pg 138

²⁰ Islamic Laws According to the Fataawa of Ayatullah al Uzama Syed Ali al-Husaini Seestani; Rule 2394 Pg 441. Published by The World federation of KSIMC

- (b) If a man marries a woman, then her mother, her maternal grandmother, her paternal grandmother and all the women as the line ascends are his *mahram*, even if he may not have had sexual intercourse with his wife.²¹
 - (c) If a person marries a woman, and has sexual intercourse with her, the daughters and grand-daughters (daughters of sons or of daughters) of the wife and their descendants, as the line goes down, become his *mahram*, irrespective of whether they existed at the time of his marriage, or were born later.²²
7. It is permissible to listen to the voice of a woman who is not a *mahram* (a person with whom matrimony is forbidden) without any sexual overtures. Similarly it is permissible for her to make herself be heard by non-*mahram* men except when there is fear of getting sucked into a *haram* act. However, she is not allowed to soften or make her voice palatable to an extent that would normally arouse the listener, even if that person was *mahram* to her.²³
 8. It is not permissible for a woman to recite songs individually, i.e. not in a chorus, which are not entertaining, such as poems in praise of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and his Ahlul-Bayt (AS), if non-*mahram* men can hear her voice.²⁴
 9. It is permissible for a woman to dance in front of her husband to please and arouse him. But it is not permissible for her to dance in front of other men; based on obligatory precaution²⁵, she must not dance in front of other women also.²⁶
 10. If the groom knows that in the event that he goes into a gathering of women he will look at non-*mahram* women who have beautified themselves, then he must not go into that gathering, even if his looking is not with the intention of lust or gaining pleasure.²⁷
 11. If a groom is present (in a women's gathering), it is no exemption and therefore non-*mahram* women must observe proper *hijab* in front of him.²⁸
 12. It is *haram* for men and women to inter-mingle in wedding ceremonies if it involves looking at the bride or other women, in the event that they do not have proper covering, or have *zeenah* (beautification) on and thus one must refrain from these types of gatherings.²⁹

²¹ Islamic Laws According to the Fataawa of Ayatullah al Uzama Syed Ali al-Husaini Seestani; Rule 2395 Pg 441. Published by The World federation of KSIMC

²² Ibid. Rule 2395 Pg 441

²³ A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West; Rule 458 Pg 217. Published by Imam Ali Foundation

²⁴ A Code of Ethics for Muslim Men and Women; Chapter IV: Rules relating to marriage and its ceremonies; Rule 311 Pg 156. Published by Islamic Humanitarian Service

²⁵ See Appendix I 2

²⁶ A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West; Rule 544 Pg 241. Published by Imam Ali Foundation

²⁷ A Code of Ethics for Muslim Men and Women; Chapter IV: Rules relating to marriage and its ceremonies; Rule 322 Pg 160. Published by Islamic Humanitarian Service

²⁸ Ibid. Rule 340 Pg 167

²⁹ Ibid. Rule 324 Pg 161

13. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an,

...وكلوا واشربوا ولا تسرفوا ۗ انه لا يحب المرففين

‘...and eat and drink and be not extravagant; surely He does not love the extravagant.’³⁰

14. Imam Sadiq (AS) has said: “Certainly moderation is liked by Allah (SWT) and He dislikes extravagance; even in the throwing away of a date-seed because that too can be used.” (Arabs feed date-seeds to their camels.)³¹ Hence food should not be thrown around at the bride, groom or anyone else for that matter. Finish the leftovers or feed them to the animals, and try to recycle whatever can be recycled.

- For each occasion, including the wedding and any occasions proceeding it, check each of the following carefully:

1. Will the function run through *salah* (ritual prayer) time? If it does then you may need to perform *wudhu* (minor ablution) before getting ready for the function. Ensure that you will have sufficient time to pray without the danger of your *salah* becoming *qadha* (overdue). Your bridesmaid may need to keep your make-up remover (including nail-polish remover) and make-up with her in case you need to perform *wudhu* again and then reapply your make-up.
2. Will you be served a meal at the function? If so, you may wish your bridesmaid to keep some (small) mints in her purse for you to have after the meal so that you smell just as nice as you look!
3. You will need approximately 2½ hours to get ready. This includes dressing/hair/make-up, etc. Who will be dressing you? Ensure that they are aware of what time they need to be with you so that you do not run late and keep your guests waiting.
4. Will there be someone filming the event or taking photos? In either case, if you will not be in *hijaab* during filming/photography, then make sure that these people are either *mahram* to you or they are women. Remember: A non-*mahram* man must not take a photograph or video of the bride and groom or any other non-*mahram* women even if they are his close relatives (if the women are not observing their proper *hijaab*).³²
5. Will the photos or video be shown to men? If these men are not *mahram* to you then either ensure that they will not see the photos and video or do not allow the filming/photography to take place. Remember: If a woman knows that in the event that she has a photograph taken without her *hijaab* on, a family member who is her

³⁰ Holy Qur'an; Surah al-A'araf (7), aayah 31

³¹ Shirazi, Ayatullah Abdul Hussein Dastaghaib, Greater Sins Vol II; The thirty-second greater sin: Israaf Pg 262. Published by Islamic Study Circle

³² A Code of Ethics for Muslim Men and Women; Chapter IV: Rules relating to marriage and its ceremonies; Rule 345 Pg 169. Published by Islamic Humanitarian Service

non-*mahram* will see it, then she must not have the photograph taken, and it does not matter if the photographer is a woman or a *mahram* man.³³

6. Remember that you will have invited many guests who may be observing a degree of *hijaab*. If men will see the wedding video/photos, then ensure that the guests are not recorded/photographed without their *hijaab*, or let them know beforehand that filming/photography will be taking place so that they can wear their *hijaab*. Cover any windows if men will be able to see the women through them, etc. Do not allow your guests' *hijaab* to be violated. Remember the following rules:
 - (a) It is not a problem to look at 'commonplace' women (those who do not observe *hijaab* whatsoever, or the proper *hijaab*) whom, if told to observe the *hijaab* would not comply, with the condition that it is done without the intention of lust and one does not fear that he will fall into a *haraam* act. In this ruling there is no difference between Muslim and non-Muslim women. Also, there is no difference in the hands, face and other parts of the body, which they normally do not cover.³⁴
 - (b) As for those people whom it is not permissible to look at, it does not make any difference if one looks at them from behind a glass, in a mirror, through the reflection of water or any other thing that reflects their image.³⁵
 - (c) Men are permitted to look at the photographs of non-*mahram* women who are properly observing their *hijaab* (in the photo) with the condition that it is not with the intention of lust.³⁶
 - (d) In the event that the photograph is that of a non-Muslim woman, or of a woman who does not care, or is a commonplace woman, then it is not a problem to look at it if it is without the intention of lust or deriving sexual pleasure.³⁷
7. Often after the guests leave, the men of the family join in the proceedings. Check if any men who are not *mahram* to you will be joining in. If they are, then ensure that you are able to exit before they enter in order to put on your *hijaab*. Remember: Body contact is not allowed with one who one is not allowed to look at, and every kind of touching of the body to any part of the other one's body is *haraam* and one must refrain from this; unless it is from on top of the clothing and it is without the intention of lust.³⁸
8. Having brought you into this world, cared for you and nurtured you, and raised you to this day, your parents will be very emotional about your wedding. Remember their rights upon you and that you cannot repay them for their goodness unless with

³³ A Code of Ethics for Muslim Men and Women; Chapter IV: Rules relating to marriage and its ceremonies; Rule 347 Pg 169. Published by Islamic Humanitarian Service

³⁴ Ibid. Rule 26 Pg 36

³⁵ Ibid. Rule 28 Pg 36

³⁶ Ibid. Rule 57 Pg 50

³⁷ Ibid. Rule 59 Pg 52

³⁸ Ibid. Chapter III: Rules related to socialising; Rule 193 Pg 107

the help of Allah (SWT). Imam Sajjad (AS) says regarding the rights of the parents:

- (a) “Then the right of your mother is that you should know that she carried you where no one carries anyone, and she fed you with the fruit of her heart – that which no one feeds anyone, and she protected you with her hearing and sight, and her hands and legs, and her hair and skin and all her other organs. She was highly delighted to do so. She was happy and eager, enduring the harms and the pains, and the heaviness and the grief until the Mighty Hand expelled you out of her and delivered you out to the Earth. She did not care if she went hungry as long as you ate, and if she was naked as long as you were clothed, and if she was thirsty as long as you drank, and if she was in the sun as long as you were in the shade, and if she was miserable as long as you were happy, and if she was deprived of sleeping as long as you were resting. And her abdomen was your abode, and her lap was your seat, and her breast was your supply of drink, and her soul was your fort. She protected you from the heat and the cold of this world. So you should thank her for all that. You will not be able to show her gratitude unless through Allah (SWT)’s help and His granting you success.”³⁹
- (b) “And the right of your father is that you should know that he is your root and you are his branch. And without him, you would not be. Whenever you see anything in yourself which pleases you, you should know that your father is the root of its blessing upon you. So praise Allah (SWT) and thank Him in recognition of that. And there is no power but in Allah (SWT).”⁴⁰

Along with this, it is also important to remember:

- (c) The orders and restraints of the parents are of no significance with respect to the *waajib* (obligatory) acts and the Divine prohibitions. For example, if the parents order the child to drink wine or restrain him from the obligatory prayers and fasts, they should not be obeyed. It is expressly mentioned in this verse (15) of Surah Luqman: ‘And if they contend with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, do not obey them...’⁴¹
- (d) No wedding can proceed without the bride; so if you refuse to turn up to an event where you know something *haraam* will take place, then it will not go ahead. Therefore, the prevention of *haraam* may be in your hands, in which case you will be answerable if you allow it to occur.
9. You may like to have your clothes perfumed with *oud*, in which case it should be performed after that day’s *oud* session. Let your bridesmaid know if you would like this so that she can allow for the extra time that it will take.

³⁹ Imam Sajjad (AS), A Divine Perspective on Rights; 22 The right of your mother Pg 291. Ansariyan Publications

⁴⁰ Ibid. 23 The right of your father Pg 304

⁴¹ Shirazi, Ayatullah Abdul Hussein Dastaghaib, Greater Sins Vol I; The fifth greater sin: Murder Pg 156. Published by Islamic Study Circle

10. For each occasion run through exactly what you will need with your bridesmaid. Keep all of your things for the different occasions in separate bags/drawers so that they are not mixed up/lost when everyone is trying to get ready in the same place at the same time!
- (a) CLOTHES. These may need to be ironed either the night before the occasion or in the morning. Arrange for this to be done. It is not likely that you will be welcomed near the iron, so ask somebody to prepare your clothes for you and let them know when they will need to be ready for you to wear. Shoes/sandals, a matching scarf, an *'aba'* and socks will need to be kept together with the clothes, and the scarf ironed if necessary. If you will need to change after the function before the men enter, then keep these clothes ready too. Ensure that plenty of safety pins of different sizes are available as clothes with heavy embroidery slowly tend to slip off!
 - (b) JEWELLERY. Matching jewellery for each event should be kept with the clothes. This may include a necklace, earrings, a watch, bangles, a bracelet, and/or rings.
 - (c) ACCESSORIES. Matching accessories for each event should be kept with the clothes. These may include body gems, a purse, a bouquet, a garland, a *bindi*, a tiara, and/or flowers for your hair.
 - (d) HAIR-DO. Decide which hairstyle you would like for each occasion, and whether someone is available to do your hair for you or this needs to be arranged. Keep plenty of hairgrips (of different sizes of both types) at hand as these will be needed. See that tongs or a curling iron, a straightener, hair mousse and/or a hairspray are available if needed.
 - (e) MAKE-UP. Matching make-up for each event should be kept with the clothes. These may include a concealer, foundation(s) (try using a lighter shade of foundation for your neck if your facial skin is lighter than your neck), a lip balm, a lip-liner, a matching lipstick, a lip gloss, blusher(s), matching eye-shadow(s), a tub of Vaseline (for eyebrows, but lip balm does the same job), body glitter, an eye-liner, henna tattoo(s) and/or nail polish.
- Imam Kadhim (AS) is reported to have said that whenever a person would like to put on a new dress he should wipe his hand over it and say:⁴²

الحمد لله الذي كساني ما اوارني به عورتني و اتجمل به في الناس...

“Praise belongs to Allah (SWT) Who clothed me with what I cover my shame and beautify myself among the people...”

⁴² Abu Muhammad Zaynu'l 'Abidin, Manifestations of the All-Merciful; Section 4 Pg 40. Published by Tabligh Center of KSI Jamaat Dsm

Preparing for the wedding day

- Most brides are under ‘curfew’ starting from 2-3 weeks before the wedding. If you would like a facial done before the wedding, then find out if you will be able to leave the house for this or if a beautician is able to come to your house. Either way, make an appointment as close to the wedding as possible.
- The Holy Prophet (SAW) had a new dress made for Sayyidah Fatimah Zahra (SA) for her wedding.⁴³
- The Messenger of Allah (SAW) ordered his wives to embellish Sayyidah Fatimah Zahra (SA) before the wedding; they perfumed her and dressed her with jewellery.⁴⁴
- Remember that you will be beautifying yourself for your husband and not all the women in the mosque, so beautify yourself according to his likes and dislikes.
- A session will need to be arranged to try out the bridal hairstyle and make-up before the wedding. Book a bridal beautician and a session for the trial. Ensure that the beautician will have transport to where you will be getting ready on the wedding day. Confirm the time that she will be arriving and let her know if anyone else in the family would like her to do their hair as well, so that she knows how much time she will need.
- Most brides have their hands and feet decorated with *mehndi* (henna) for their weddings. If you would like *mehndi* to be applied on yourself, then this will have to be arranged with a beautician. Remember that *mehndi* is considered to be a beauty item and will have to be concealed in front of men who are non-*mahram*.⁴⁵ It is *haraam* to expose hands with *mehndi* to non-*mahram* men and this will violate your *hijaab*. So, you will have to be very careful during and after the wedding, and you may have to wear gloves or cover your hands in some other way, particularly when you visit relatives’ houses for dinner after the wedding. Please beware of non-*mahram* men living with you, they do not become *mahram* just because they live with you. Obviously this may create problems that you may feel are better avoided.

If you would still like *mehndi*, then an alternative may be to use henna tattoos. There are some very nice tattoos available with or without glitter. They take much less time to apply and dry than *mehndi*, but quite a while to remove by scrubbing with a sponge and water, which you will have to spend part of your wedding night doing as the tattoos prevent the water of *wudhu* and *ghusl* (major ablution) from reaching the skin. If you would prefer a henna tattoo then ensure that one is bought, or two if you would like both the front and back of your hands decorated. *Mehndi* on the feet should not be a problem as the feet need to be covered as a part of *hijaab* anyway.
- Find out how you and your bridesmaid will be getting to the wedding venue on the wedding day. The groom’s family may wish to arrange your transportation.

⁴³ Abu-Muhammad Ordoni (Jordanian), Fatima the Gracious; Chapter 28 Preparations for the Wedding Pg 128. Ansariyan Publications

⁴⁴ Ibid. Pg 129

⁴⁵ See Appendix I 3

Preparing for the wedding night

- There are certain *a'maal* (acts) that have been recommended to be performed by the bride and groom on the wedding night (See Appendix II for details). Please note that the sprinkling of water mentioned as a part of these *a'maal* carries many blessings, but the water should be sprinkled in your home. There's no point in leaving the blessings in a hotel room that you may never even see again! You may want to store the water in a small bottle and sprinkle it in your house once you reach home if you will be spending your wedding night in a hotel suite.
- There is no specific verbal *dhikr* (remembrance) of Allah (SWT) to do on the wedding night. The best supplication is that for a successful marriage.⁴⁶ Make notes of the *a'maal* that you would like to perform, and keep these ready in the wedding suite.
- You may feel more comfortable on the wedding night if you take some of your own things with you in an overnight bag. If you would like to do this then prepare it and arrange for it to be dropped off at the wedding suite with your nightwear, dressing gown, and a change of clothes for the following day, before the wedding if possible. You may need:
 1. a compass, if you don't know which direction *qiblah* is at the venue
 2. prayer mats and *turbah* (earth used to prostrate upon)
 3. a prayer *chaadar* (covering)
 4. make-up remover, including nail-polish remover
 5. make-up remover pads
 6. a sponge for removing henna tattoos
 7. spectacles/contact lenses and solution
 8. a toothbrush and case
 9. facewash
 10. a face towel
 11. a hair brush
 12. hair accessories
 13. hand lotion
 14. make-up
 15. jewellery
 16. an '*aba*'
 17. a scarf
- Arrange for there to be a few towels for you to use at the wedding suite. This includes bath towels and towels to clean yourselves.
- When will you be leaving for your honeymoon? Will you have time to pack in the days preceding the wedding? If not, then pack beforehand and keep your suitcase ready.

⁴⁶ See Appendix I 4

On the wedding day

- Certain days of the week belong to certain *Ma'soomeen* (Infallibles) (AS).⁴⁷ You may like to recite the *dua* (supplication) for the day and *ziyaarah* (greeting, lit. visitation) for the *Ma'soom/Ma'soomah* (AS) and seek his/her blessings and intercession for a successful marriage. These can be found in the book *Mafatihul Jinaan* by Shaykh Abbas al-Qummi.

⁴⁷ al-Qummi, Shaykh Abbas, Selections from Mafatih Al-Jinan Du' aas and Ziyaarahs; The Ziyaarah of the Holy Prophet on Saturdays Pg 484. Ansariyan Publications

On the wedding night

- You probably know many of the rules related to the wedding night, but a reminder is always beneficial. Below are some *fiqh* rules that may be useful for you to know and other advice that you may like to be informed about.
- It is permissible for the husband and wife to look at the body of one another, outside and inside, including the private parts; and also to touch any part of one another with any part of their own body with lust and without it.⁴⁸
- The Holy Prophet (SAW) has said: “Three people are cruel:...a person who has sex with his wife before foreplay.”⁴⁹
- As for the role of the woman in sexual foreplay, the Imams (AS) have praised a wife who discards shyness when she is with her husband.⁵⁰
- Q. During foreplay, a sticky substance is discharged in the woman’s vagina; and when the foreplay continues, she sometimes has an orgasm. Is it obligatory on her to perform *ghusl* when she reaches the first stage of discharge or only when she reaches the climax? And will this *ghusl* make up for *wudhu*? A. *Ghusl* does not become *waajib* for the woman until she reaches the level of sexual excitement. Once she reaches that level and the liquid is discharged, it becomes obligatory on her to perform *ghusl* of *janaabah* which compensates for *wudhu*.⁵¹
- A woman is not required to perform *ghusl* of *janaabah* until reaching orgasm, during which the liquid discharged from her is *najis*.⁵²
- According to Shi’ite *fiqh*, family planning...is permissible. Neither is there any Qur’anic verse or *hadeeth* (narration) against birth control, nor is it *waajib* to have children in marriage.⁵³
- If a person has intercourse with a woman and the male organ enters the private parts of the woman up to the point of circumcision or more, both of them enter *janaabah*, regardless of whether they are adults or minors, and whether ejaculation takes place or not.⁵⁴
- The semen of human beings, and of every animal whose blood gushes when its large (jugular) vein is cut, is *najis*.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West; Rule 400 Pg 198. Published by Imam Ali Foundation

⁴⁹ Rizvi, Sayyid Muhammad. Marriage and Morals in Islam; The Islamic Sexual Morality (II) Pg 85. Ansariyan Publications

⁵⁰ Ibid. Pg 86

⁵¹ A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West; Question 465 Pg 218. Published by Imam Ali Foundation

⁵² See Appendix I 5 & 6

⁵³ Rizvi, Sayyid Muhammad, Marriage and Morals in Islam; Contraceptives and Abortion Pg 96. Ansariyan Publications

⁵⁴ Islamic Laws According to the Fataawa of Ayatullah al Uzama Syed Ali al-Husaini Seestani; Rule 355 Pg 62. Published by The World federation of KSIMC

- If a couple enter the state of *janabah* after having performed sexual intercourse, they do not need to perform the *ghusl* of *janabah* before performing sexual intercourse again, however after performing sexual intercourse for the final time they will need to perform the *ghusl*.⁵⁶
- Forbidden acts for those in *janaabah*:⁵⁷
 1. To touch with any part of one's body the script of the Holy Qur'an or the name of Allah (SWT) in whatever language it may be. And it is better that the name of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and Imams (AS) and Sayyidah Fatimah Zahra (SA) should also not be touched in that condition.
 2. Entering *Masjid al-nabi* (The Prophet (SAW)'s Mosque) or *al-Masjid al-haraam* (The Sacred Mosque), even though it may be only passing from one gate and going out of another.
 3. To stay or halt in all other *masaajid* (mosques), and similarly on the basis of obligatory precaution, to stay in the shrines of the Holy Imams (AS). However, there is no harm if one crosses or traverses through a mosque, entering from one gate and exiting from another.
 4. To enter a mosque with the intention of lifting away something or placing something in it.

Note: Rules 3 and 4 refer to *masaajid* (purpose-built mosques), and not Islamic centres, which are not considered to be *masaajid*.⁵⁸

5. To recite those verses of the Holy Qur'an on the recitation of which performance of *sajdah* (prostration) becomes obligatory. These verses occur in four *suwer* (chapters) of the Holy Qur'an:
 - (a) Surah al-Sajdah (32), *aayah* (verse) 15
 - (b) Surah Haa-mim (41), *aayah* 38
 - (c) Surah al-Najm (53), *aayah* 62
 - (d) Surah al-Alaq (96), *aayah* 19
- Things which are *makruh* for those in *janaabah*:⁵⁹
 1. to eat
 2. to drink(But if the *junub* (one in the state of *janaabah*) washes his or her face, hands and mouth, then eating or drinking in that state will not be *makruh*. And if he or she washes the hands only, then the unworthiness of the acts is reduced.)
 3. to recite more than 7 verses of the Holy Qur'an other than those in which the obligatory *sujood* occur

⁵⁵ Ibid. Rule 88 Pg 16

⁵⁶ See Appendix I 7

⁵⁷ Islamic Laws According to the Fataawa of Ayatullah al Uzama Syed Ali al-Husaini Seestani; Rule 362 Pg 63. Published by The World federation of KSIMC

⁵⁸ See Appendix I 8

⁵⁹ Islamic Laws According to the Fataawa of Ayatullah al Uzama Syed Ali al-Husaini Seestani; Rule 362 Pg 63. Published by The World federation of KSIMC

4. to touch the cover, margin or border of the Holy Qur'an or the space between the lines with any part of one's body
 5. to keep the Holy Qur'an with oneself
 6. to sleep, but this is not *makruh* if the person performs *wudhu*
 7. to dye one's hair
 8. to apply oil on one's body
 9. to have intercourse after *ihtilaam* (discharge of semen during sleep)
- A person who does *ghusl* of *jan'aba't* should not do *wudhu* for the prayers. In fact one can offer prayers without performing *wudhu* after all *waajib aghsaal* (obligatory major ablutions) (except the bath for medium *istihadha*) as well as after *mustahab aghsaal* (recommended major ablutions). In the case of *mustahab aghsaal* however, it is better to do *wudhu* as a recommended precaution.⁶⁰
 - After having taken the *mustahab ghusl* one can perform acts (e.g. prayers) for which *wudhu* is necessary. However, *aghsaal* performed with the *niyyah* (intention) of *raja* (hope) do not suffice for *wudhu*.⁶¹
 - Based on obligatory precaution it is not permitted for a man to have anal intercourse with his wife without her consent⁶² regardless of whether she is in *haydh* (menstruation) or not.⁶³
 - Sexual intercourse is *haraam* in the following states:
 1. during menstruation⁶⁴
 2. during *nifaas* (bleeding after childbirth)⁶⁵
 3. while fasting⁶⁶Please note: It is *haram* for a wife to keep a *mustahab* fast if by doing so she would not be able to attend to her duties to her husband. And the obligatory precaution is that even if she can attend to her duties towards her husband, she should not observe a *mustahab* fast without his permission.⁶⁷
 4. while in *ihraam* (state of ritual consecration of the Makkah pilgrim)⁶⁸
 - There are certain *ahadeeth* that say that sexual intercourse during some days and at some times is *makruh*, but not *haraam*. These times and days are as follows:⁶⁹
 1. during frightful natural occurrences, e.g. eclipse, hurricane, earthquake

⁶⁰ Islamic Laws According to the Fataawa of Ayatullah al Uzama Syed Ali al-Husaini Seestani; Rule 397 Pg

69. Published by The World federation of KSIMC

⁶¹ Ibid. Rule 653 Pg 124

⁶² See Appendix I 9

⁶³ Islamic Laws According to the Fataawa of Ayatullah al Uzama Syed Ali al-Husaini Seestani; Rule 456 Pg

80. Published by The World federation of KSIMC

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Ibid. Rule 520 Pg 95

⁶⁶ Ibid. Rule 1581 Pg 291

⁶⁷ Islamic Laws According to the Fataawa of Ayatullah al Uzama Syed Ali al-Husaini Seestani; Rule 1749 Pg 317. Published by The World federation of KSIMC

⁶⁸ A Manual of *Hajj* Rituals; Prohibitions during *Ihraam* Pg 127. Published by Imam Ali Foundation 1999

⁶⁹ Rizvi, Sayyid Muhammad. Marriage and Morals in Islam; Islamic Sexual Morality (II) Pg 83. Ansariyan Publications

2. from sunset until *maghrib* (when the redness in the eastern sky appearing after sunset passes from overhead)
 3. from dawn until sunrise
 4. the last three nights of lunar months
 5. the eve of the 15th of every lunar month
 6. the eve of 10th *Dhul-hijjah*
 7. after becoming *junub*
- We have certain *ahadeeth* which say that it is better to have sexual intercourse at the following times:⁷⁰
 1. Sunday night
 2. Monday night
 3. Wednesday night
 4. Thursday noon
 5. Thursday night
 6. Friday evening
 7. whenever the wife wants to have sex
 - Although sexual intercourse is *haraam* while you are menstruating, etc. as already mentioned, if your husband requires your services it will be incumbent on you to satisfy him through other means.
 - It is not *waajib* to consummate the marriage on the first night. Whenever the first time is, it may be painful. Be open with your husband and let him know if you are in pain or discomfort. Remember though, it may be *waajib* for you to bear this difficulty if it is what your husband desires.
 - The hymen is a thin layer of tissue outside the vagina, which partially conceals its entrance. It is quite delicate and many women tear their hymen without even realising, during activities such as riding a bike. If the hymen is still present, it may only stretch during intercourse in which case bleeding will not occur, or it may tear in which case bleeding will occur. It may be that the hymen rips part at a time in the beginning. This is nothing to worry about and it may or may not be painful. It is best to take the precaution of keeping a towel underneath the first few times to prevent bed sheets, etc. becoming *najis* (ritually impure).
 - It may take some time (weeks or even months) for you to feel comfortable during intercourse and find pleasure in it. You will need to be patient during this time and allow your pleasure to lie in pleasing your husband and satisfying him.
 - Natural lubricants may not be sufficient in the beginning and artificial agents such as lubricating jelly may be needed.
 - The following rules may be useful if spillages occur:
 1. If the ground, cloth or similar things are wet, then only that part will become *najis* where the *najaasah* reaches, and the remaining part will be *taahir*.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Ibid. Pg 84

2. If anything becomes *najis* with *najaasah* other than urine, it becomes *taahir* by first removing the *najaasah* and then pouring *kurr* water once, and allowing it to flow off. But if it is a dress, etc. it should be squeezed so that the remaining water should flow off.⁷²
3. It is possible to purify the carpet or the mattress that has become *najis* by the elements that do have a mass (i.e. do leave marks or stains like blood or semen) by the same method as mentioned in no. 41 (below) provided that the impure element is removed while washing or prior to washing. The only difference is that if it is purified by the *qaleel* water (e.g. from a jug or glass), then the water removed from the carpet will be considered *najis* as a confirmed opinion and not as an obligatory precaution.⁷³
4. Rule no. 41. If the carpet or the mattress become *najis* by the elements that do not have a mass (i.e. do not leave any marks or stains on the mattress or the carpet), it can be purified by sprinkling water over it from a kettle or jug once until the pure water covers the impure area, and then wipe the water away by using a piece of cloth or a vacuum cleaner. The carpet or the mattress will now be considered pure; and the water removed from it will be considered, on the basis of obligatory precaution, *najis*.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Islamic Laws According to the Fataawa of Ayatullah al Uzama Syed Ali al-Husaini Seestani; Rule 129 Pg 21. Published by The World federation of KSIMC

⁷² Ibid. Rule 163 Pg 28

⁷³ A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West; Rule 43 Pg 57. Published by Imam Ali Foundation

⁷⁴ Ibid. Rule 41 Pg 57

Rights of the husband

- The Holy Prophet (SAW) was asked, “O prophet of Allah! What is the right of a man incumbent upon a woman?” He replied, “She should obey him, and not rebel against him. She should not give away anything from his house as charity unless by his permission. She should not fast when not required to do so unless by his permission. She should not withdraw herself from him even if they are riding a camel. She should not leave the house without his permission. Should she ever leave the house without his permission she will be damned by the angels in the heavens and on the earth, and the angels of wrath and mercy until she returns home”.⁷⁵
- Among the qualities of a good wife is refraining from harassing, hurting and irritating her husband. Among the qualities of a good husband is refraining from harassing, hurting and irritating his wife. The Holy Prophet (SAW) said, “If a man has a wife who harasses him, Allah (SWT) will neither accept her ritual prayer nor any of her good deeds – until she has pleased him - even if she fasts and prays at all times, emancipates slaves, and gives away her wealth in charity for the sake of Allah (SWT). She will be the first to enter the fire.” Then he said, “And the husband has the same burden and chastisement, if he is a harasser and unjust (in his behaviour towards his wife)”.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Mashayekhi, G., A Divine Perspective on Rights; 20 The right of your subject through matrimonial contract Pg 280. Ansariyan Publications

⁷⁶ A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West; Rule 303 Pg 157. Published by Imam Ali Foundation

Rights of the wife

- It is obligatory on the husband to provide for the wife if she is a permanent wife and obedient to him in matters in which she is required to obey him. In this case, it is obligatory on the husband to provide whatever the wife needs in her life like food, dress and accommodation with the required amenities...that are commensurate with her status as his wife.⁷⁷
- It is permissible for a woman to use contraceptives (the pill) to prevent pregnancy, provided that it does not damage her health in a serious manner, irrespective of whether or not the husband has agreed to it.⁷⁸
- It is not permissible for the husband to abandon sexual intercourse with his youthful, permanent wife for more than four months, except when sexual intercourse is harmful to him, or involves unusually more effort, or when the wife herself agrees to avoid it, or if a prior stipulation to that effect was made at the time of the *nikaah* by the husband.⁷⁹
- It is recommended for the wife to do the household chores and to provide the needs of her husband unrelated to conjugal matters like cooking, sewing, cleaning, laundry, etc. These things are not an obligation on her.⁸⁰
- Man has no right to compel his wife to render household services.⁸¹
- Imam Sajjad (AS) says regarding the right of the wife: “And the right of your subject through matrimonial contract is that you should know that Allah (SWT) has made her a repose, a comfort and a companion and a maintainer for you. It is incumbent upon each of you to thank Allah (SWT) for the other and realise that the other one is Allah (SWT)’s blessing for you. It is obligatory to be a good companion for Allah (SWT)’s blessing and to honour her and treat her gently. Yet your right over her is more incumbent and she must obey you in every matter that you like or detest – except in acts of disobedience to Allah (SWT). She should enjoy the rights of mercy and intimacy as she is an object of tranquillity. You should care for her through consummation of the lust that must be consummated. And that is surely great. And there is no power but in Allah (SWT). She also has the right that you have mercy on her since she is subject to you. You must feed and clothe her. Whenever she makes a mistake out of ignorance you should forgive her.”⁸²

⁷⁷ A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West; Rule 401 Pg 198. Published by Imam Ali Foundation

⁷⁸ Ibid. Rule 407 Pg 200

⁷⁹ Islamic Laws According to the Fataawa of Ayatullah al Uzama Syed Ali al-Husaini Seestani; Rule 2427 Pg 447. Published by The World federation of KSIMC

⁸⁰ A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West; Rule 457 Pg 216. Published by Imam Ali Foundation

⁸¹ Islamic Laws According to the Fataawa of Ayatullah al Uzama Syed Ali al-Husaini Seestani; Rule 2423 Pg 446. Published by The World federation of KSIMC

⁸² Imam Sajjad (AS), A Divine Perspective on Rights; 20 The right of your subject through matrimonial contract Pg 272. Ansariyan Publications

Practical tips for life

- Exfoliating using:
 1. a razor is very fast and pain-free. However, hair-growth normally resumes within a few days and the process needs to be repeated at least once a week to keep the body hair-free, depending on the growth rate. You may notice that this method results in the growth of thicker hair with stronger roots, making exfoliating successively more difficult.
 2. hair-removing cream is also a quick process and equally pain-free. However, the associated negative aspects are similar to those of shaving.
 3. wax is much more time-consuming and quite painful (depending on your pain threshold!) when compared to the above two methods, but you may find that the hair which grows back is successively thinner and has weaker roots. Hair growth normally slows down the more you wax and becomes easier and less painful to remove. If waxing is tried after shaving or using hair removing cream the difference should be noticed immediately – it will be very painful! With waxing, hair-growth normally resumes after about a week and usually does not need to be repeated for another 4 weeks.
- Exfoliating sometimes causes in-growing hair. This can cause the skin's pores to become infected which may lead to the skin appearing spotty and becoming itchy and painful. Rubbing the skin in the opposite direction to the hair-growth with a loofah and soapy water when showering should help to prevent the condition developing.
- To help prevent halitosis (bad breath), brush your tongue too when you brush your teeth. This will remove the bacteria which build up on the tongue and contribute to bad breath.
- It is not obligatory to remove pubic hair, but it is recommended at least once every 40 days.⁸³ Your spouse's preference should be kept in mind.
- Asian cooking involves the use of many pungent herbs and spices. If you are going to be cooking, you may find it useful to reserve a pair of clothes especially for this purpose. Although you may not be able to smell your cooking on yourself after having been surrounded by it for a long time in the kitchen, chances are that your husband will notice and won't find it too attractive.

⁸³ See Appendix I 10

Some Advice

- Remember that your husband will have more right over you in certain matters than anyone else. For a happy marriage be there for him without him having to ask.
- After the wedding, many people (mostly family members) will invite you both over for dinner. It is *mustahab* to accept the invitations of *mu'mineen* (believers) and helps to strengthen family ties and although it may get a bit tedious after a while depending on how big your families are, keep smiling!
- Traditionally, brides go to their parents' houses to spend *Jumu'ah* (Friday) with them. Your parents will miss you very much once you leave their house and this will be quite obvious to you from their actions whenever you go back there. You will also miss your family very much, but remember that you should be there for your husband first. If he wants you to be with him on Fridays, then it is his right, bestowed on him by Allah (SWT) that you should stay with him. Even practices that are established in tradition as if written in stone are not necessarily Islamically correct. Do not assume that you would be going to your family's house on Fridays; rather assume that you would not do this. If you then wish to go, on occasion, then you should seek your husband's permission before going. You should realise that if your husband refuses then Allah (SWT)'s pleasure lies in you not going, and you should be pleased with your husband's decision.
- Try to perform any activities that you need to do either when your husband is not at home or when he is busy with something else, so that you can be there for him when he needs you without him feeling as if he is disturbing you.
- When you move into your new home, your new family may only have seen your behaviour in public. They may know very little of you as a person apart from what they have heard, most or all of which will have been good. This will be your chance to start your new life as a new you. You should think of any negative traits that you possess and should make a conscious effort not to practise them in your new home. This is much easier in new surroundings, so this is a great opportunity. In the same way, you may want to think about any positive traits that you wish to adopt. Such an opportunity may never arise again as it becomes difficult to change habits when the people around you are used to you behaving in a certain way and notice any changes you try to make to yourself.
- Do not be very sensitive. If you are going to live with your husband's family, they will try hard to help you to fit in and feel at home. They may have been living a certain way for many years so try to respond to their kindness with kindness and try to practice whatever you can in the way that they are used to. If you have ideas on how to improve things then tell them with kindness.
- Concentrate on fulfilling the rights that people have over you as this is what Allah (SWT) will question you about.
- You may feel a bit overwhelmed by all the attention that you will receive after the wedding. This may be embarrassing, but you will find that you will quickly become comfortable with your husband's family if you make an active effort to join in.

- Do for your husband whatever pleases him in return for the pleasure of Allah (SWT), expecting your reward from Him and not from your husband.
- What happens in your husband's house should remain within the walls of that house. Imam Sadiq (AS) has said: "Tale-telling leads to bloodshed, homes are destroyed and secrets are exposed. The worst creature to walk the earth is the tale-teller."⁸⁴
- It is very nice to have a wedding video/photos to look back on and remember your special day, but remember that if you have taken photos of women who wear *hijaab*, without *hijaab*, then you have the responsibility of guarding these from their non-*mahram*.
- If you will be living with your husband's family then any brothers-in-law who have reached the age of *bulooah* (puberty) will be non-*mahram* to you and you must observe *hijaab* in their presence just as you would in front of any other non-*mahram*; i.e. they will not be any less non-*mahram* to you just because they are living in the same house.
- After the wedding, when the dinner invitations start pouring in from family and friends, remember not to sin by keeping the following rules in mind to start your new life in the obedience of Allah (SWT) and earning the pleasure of the Holy Imam (AS):
 1. A woman is allowed to keep her face and hands uncovered in the presence of a non-*mahram* man provided that she does not fear of getting into a *haraam* act, that the exposure of her face and hands does not cause men to gaze at her in a forbidden way, and that it does not give rise to immorality in general. Otherwise, it is obligatory on her to conceal (her face and hands), even from those who are *mahram* to her.⁸⁵
 2. Q. A vast majority of Muslim women who observe *hijaab* are used to keeping their chins and a small part of the under-chin exposed but they cover the neck. Is this permissible for them? And how big an area of the face can women expose? And are the ears included in that? A. The ears are not part of the face, therefore it is obligatory to cover them. As for the part of the chin and the under-chin that are seen when putting on the common headscarf, it is to be considered as part of the face.⁸⁶
 3. Q. In the West it is possible to wear coloured contact lenses. Is it permissible for a Muslim woman to wear them for the sake of beautification and then appear in front of non-*mahram* men? A. If that is considered as an item of cosmetics it is not allowed.⁸⁷
 4. A woman is allowed to use *kohl* (antimony) on her eyelashes and wear rings on both hands, provided that it is not intended for drawing lustful attention of men toward herself and that she is confident of not getting into a *haraam* act.⁸⁸ Note: The wearing of make-up other than this in front of non-*mahram* men is *haraam*.

⁸⁴ Shirazi, Ayatullah Abdul Hussein Dastaghaib, Greater Sins Vol III; The forty-second greater sin: tale-telling Pg 262. Published by Islamic Study Circle

⁸⁵ A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West; Rule 449 Pg 215. Published by Imam Ali Foundation

⁸⁶ Ibid. Question 467 Pg 219

⁸⁷ Ibid. Question 480 Pg 222

⁸⁸ A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West; Rule 451 Pg 215. Published by Imam Ali Foundation

5. Q. Is it permissible for a woman to wear rings, bangles or a necklace for the sake of beautification? A. It is permissible and it should be concealed from non-*mahram* men except for the rings and bangles, provided that there is no danger of committing that which is *haraam*, or that exposing them should not be with the intention of drawing forbidden attention.⁸⁹
6. It is not permissible for a woman to expose the top part of her feet to a non-*mahram* onlooker.⁹⁰
7. Some women feel very hot and claustrophobic when they wear socks. It is permissible not to wear socks in front of non-*mahram* men as long as the legs are covered with something else or hidden from their view.⁹¹
8. Q. Is it allowed to wear thick socks in which the shape of the foot is visible in front of non-*mahram* men, or not? A. In the event that there is no corruption related to it, and the skin of the feet does not show, then it is not a problem.⁹²
9. Wearing of thin, see-thru socks through which the skin of the feet is visible is not considered as covering, and therefore, women must refrain from wearing these kinds of socks in the presence of non-*mahram* men.⁹³
10. Q. There are some stockings whose colour matches that used to embellish the legs. Is it permissible for a young woman to wear it? A. She is allowed to wear it but if it is considered a beauty item, it is necessary to conceal it from non-*mahram* men.⁹⁴
11. Q. A Muslim woman wears high heel shoes that hit the ground in such a way that it draws attention. Is she allowed to wear it? A. It is not permissible, if it is intended to draw the attention of non-*mahram* men to herself, or if it generally causes temptation (for committing sin).⁹⁵
12. It is permissible for a woman to go out wearing perfume even if non-*mahram* men can smell her perfume; in so doing, she should not aim to arouse or attract such men.⁹⁶

⁸⁹ A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West; Rule 479 Pg 222. Published by Imam Ali Foundation

⁹⁰ Ibid. Rule 450 Pg 215

⁹¹ See Appendix I 11

⁹² A Code of Ethics for Muslim Men and Women; Chapter II: Rules related to covering; Question 118 Pg 75. Published by Islamic Humanitarian Service

⁹³ Ibid. Rule 119 Pg 75

⁹⁴ A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West; Question 475 Pg 222. Published by Imam Ali Foundation
Question

⁹⁵ Ibid. Question 478 Pg 222

⁹⁶ Ibid. Rule 452 Pg 216

13. Women are permitted to speak to non-*mahram* men if the following conditions are met:⁹⁷
- (a) the speaking is not done with the intention of lust and seeking pleasure
 - (b) the woman does not make her voice soft and attractive
 - (c) there is no fear of falling into corruption

⁹⁷ A Code of Ethics for Muslim Men and Women; Chapter III: Rules related to socialising; Rule 182 Pg 104.
Published by Islamic Humanitarian Service

Some terms, definitions and related rules

- When a people revert to Islam from another religion, e.g. India saw a mass reversion from Hinduism to Islam, they may retain any practice that is not prohibited by *shari'ah* (Islamic law). Such practices include the tradition of eating sweet food before the main meal as this is not *haraam*, but eating sweet food is recommended after the main meal in Islam.
- It is permissible for a Muslim to adopt practices from a religion other than Islam if that practice does not contradict the *shari'ah*. The practice must be a common practice, that is, it should be practiced among all people, e.g. wearing a neck tie, and not be associated with a particular religion, e.g. wearing a cross around the neck.
- ANNOUNCEMENT (*NONDH*). The *nondh* is the announcement that is made to make public the fact that a boy and girl are to marry. There is no specific recommendation for this in Islam but it serves as a practical convenience in that the community is made aware. Along with this, it allows for *mu'mineen* to join in each other's joy, which is recommended in Islam.
- ENGAGEMENT (*SAGAI*). There is no engagement period in Islam. The time period between the deciding to marry until the wedding, is simply to serve as an opportunity for the groom to prepare himself to support his future wife. This time is not for the couple to 'get to know each other' as is often misconceived. In fact, if it is *waajib* for either the groom or the bride to marry, and this may only be known to themselves, then it may be *haraam* to delay the marriage. It may be necessary to leave aside norms and ask the bride and groom of their opinions.
- If the meaning of engagement is just that a man and woman have the intention of getting married to each other but no kind of marriage contract has taken place between them, then the man and woman are non-*mahram* to one another, and there is no difference between them and other non-*mahram*.⁹⁸
- It is not a problem to recite the temporary marriage between the spouses-to-be with the permission of the woman's guardian.⁹⁹
- Q. Before the permanent marriage, are a boy and a girl permitted to read the temporary marriage contract for themselves, without the permission of the girl's father (guardian)? A. If the girl is a virgin then it is not correct to read the temporary marriage contract without her father's permission. In any other instance it is not necessary to have the father's permission.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ A Code of Ethics for Muslim Men and Women; Chapter III: Rules relating to marriage and its ceremonies; Rule 243 Pg 130. Published by Islamic Humanitarian Service

⁹⁹ Ibid. Rule 244 Pg 131

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. Question 245

- In the event that a temporary marriage contract has been recited, then even if after the end of its period a permanent marriage is not read, the mother of the girl will remain the *mahram* of the man for as long as she lives.¹⁰¹
- If the couple wishes to have a permanent marriage contract recited before the time of the completion of the temporary marriage, then the man must forgive the remainder of the period of time to the woman.¹⁰²
- If out of ignorance, neglect or forgetfulness, a couple enter a permanent marriage before the end of their temporary marriage contract, without the husband having forgiven his wife the remaining days of their temporary marriage, then the second, permanent marriage is void.¹⁰³
- As the wedding draws nearer, some brides are advised to practice superstitions such as keeping a lemon, needle, thread and such things with them, which are wrongly believed to ward off evil spirits. Practices that are carried out with any sort of belief attached to them such as those mentioned are *haraam*.
- *MAJLIS (SHURUWATE SHADI)*. A *majlis* is usually held to start the wedding proceedings. This is based on reports about a companion of Imam Sajjad (AS), called Zuhri, inviting him to the wedding of his child. The Imam (AS) is reported to have attended on the condition that Imam Husain (AS) was first remembered. It has been suggested that this report is not authentic, but regardless of this, remembering the Prophet of Islam (SAW) and his Holy Ahlul-Bayt (AS) carries many blessings. It should be noted that this *majlis* is not a condition for the wedding to proceed.
- *WEDDING (NIKAAH)*. The recitation of the *'aqd* of *nikaah* is the only *waajib* part of the Islamic marriage. The bride and groom can recite their own *nikaah* or it can be done via agents.

We find that some couples have their *nikaah* recited at their registration and then repeated at the actual wedding ceremony. It should be noted that the couple are Islamically married at the first recitation and although the *nikaah* is allowed to be repeated, the second recitation is of no effect.¹⁰⁴

It should also be understood that the *nikaah* is the only obligatory part of the wedding ceremony.
- *WALIMAH*. The *walimah* is the meal that is served *after* the *nikaah* has been recited. The serving of the *walimah* has been recommended by the Holy Prophet (SAW) on five occasions: after a marriage, after circumcision of a male child, after buying a new house, on returning from *hajj* (pilgrimage), and on returning from *ziyarah* (visitation) of the Ahlul-Bayt (AS). The *walimah* of *nikaah* is recommended to be served by the *groom*, not jointly as is commonly practised.

¹⁰¹ A Code of Ethics for Muslim Men and Women; Chapter III: Rules relating to marriage and its ceremonies; Rule 246 Pg 130. Published by Islamic Humanitarian Service

¹⁰² Ibid. Rule 247

¹⁰³ See Appendix I 12

¹⁰⁴ See Appendix I 13

Appendix I

1. Correspondence with the Office of Ayatullah Fazel Lankarani, Qum, Iran via Fazel@Lankarani.com.

Question: What are the recommendations for the *mahr*?

Reply: Small *mahr* is good and recommended. Some consider *al-mahr al-sunnah*, i.e. Hazrat Zahra's *mahr* as a criterion but the amount of that *mahr* cannot be determined or calculated at this time.

2. Correspondence with the Office of His Eminence Grand Ayatullah as-Sayyid Ali al-Hussaini as-Seestani, London, UK via eanswers@najaf.org.

Question: What is the definition of an obligatory precaution

Reply: An obligatory precaution is the level of judgement whereby the follower has the option to follow the rule or refer to the second most knowledgeable in the hierarchy of jurists.

3. Correspondence with the Office of His Eminence Grand Ayatullah as-Sayyid Ali al-Hussaini as-Seestani, London, UK via eanswers@najaf.org.

Question: During certain occasions, women apply henna on their hands. Does exposing hands with henna to non-*mahram* men by these women violate their *hijaab*, i.e. is it *haraam*?

Reply: If it is considered a beauty item, it is necessary to conceal it from non-*mahram* men.

4. Correspondence with the Office of Ayatullah Fazel Lankarani, Qum, Iran via Fazel@Lankarani.com.

Question: Do we have any *ahaadeeth* stating the best *dhikr* for a bride to recite on the wedding day or during the recitation of the '*aqd*'?

Reply: You can recite any *zikr* that you would like; there is no special dua' for this purpose. However, the best thing you can do is pray to God to make the marriage a marriage of success and blessing.

5. Correspondence with the Office of His Eminence Grand Ayatullah as-Sayyid Ali al-Hussaini as-Seestani, London, UK via eanswers@najaf.org.

Question: Is a woman required to perform *ghusl* of *janaabah* before reaching orgasm?

Reply: Without sexual intercourse she is not (required to perform *ghusl* of *janaabah* before reaching orgasm).

6. Correspondence with the Office of His Eminence Grand Ayatullah as-Sayyid Ali al-Hussaini as-Seestani, London, UK via eanswers@najaf.org.

Question: Is the liquid which is discharged from a woman during orgasm *najis*?

Reply: *Ghusl* does not become *wajib* for the woman until she reaches the level of sexual excitement. Once she reaches that level and the liquid is discharged, 'it is *najis*'. It becomes obligatory on her to perform *ghusl* of *janaabah* which should compensate for *wudhu*.

7. Correspondence with the Office of His Eminence Grand Ayatullah as-Sayyid Ali al-Hussaini as-Seestani, London, UK via eanswers@najaf.org.

Question: If a married couple have sexual intercourse until climax, is there any objection to them having sexual intercourse again, without performing *ghusl* of *janabat* after the first time?

Reply: It is not necessary to perform *ghusl* before having sexual intercourse again.

8. Correspondence with the Office of His Eminence Grand Ayatullah as-Sayyid Ali al-Hussaini as-Seestani, London, UK via eanswers@najaf.org.

Question: There are a number of places mentioned in the book of Islamic Laws where it is *haram* for a person in the state of *janaabah* to enter or traverse. Do these mosques refer to *masaajid*, i.e. specifically built for prayers, or Islamic centres too? What is the ruling for entering Islamic centres in the state of *janaabah*?

Reply: Mosques refer to *masaajid* such as *al-Masjid al-haram* or *Masjid al-Nabi*, other *masaajid*, and similarly, on the basis of obligatory precaution, to stay in the shrines of the Holy Imams (AS). And that does not include the Islamic centre which is not a mosque.

9. Correspondence with the Office of His Eminence Grand Ayatullah as-Sayyid Ali al-Hussaini as-Seestani, London, UK via eanswers@najaf.org.

Question: Is a man permitted to have anal intercourse with his wife?

Reply: It is permissible with her permission but, based on obligatory precaution, it is not permissible without her consent.

10. Correspondence with the Office of His Eminence Grand Ayatullah as-Sayyid Ali al-Hussaini as-Seestani, London, UK via eanswers@najaf.org.

Question: What are the rules related to the removal of pubic hair?

Reply: It is not obligatory to remove pubic hair, but it is recommended at least once every 40 days.

11. Correspondence with the Office of His Eminence Grand Ayatullah as-Sayyid Ali al-Hussaini as-Seestani, London, UK via eanswers@najaf.org.

Question: A lady feels very hot and claustrophobic when she wears socks. Is it permissible for her not to wear socks in front of non-*mahram* men in this condition?

Reply: Yes, as long as she covers her legs with something else or hides them from non-*mahram* men.

12. Correspondence with the Office of His Eminence Grand Ayatullah as-Sayyid Ali al-Hussaini as-Seestani, London, UK via eanswers@najaf.org.

Question: As I understand it, when a couple who have entered a temporary marriage wish to enter a permanent marriage before the end of the time period for the temporary marriage, the husband must forgive the wife the remainder of the time. If out of neglect, ignorance or forgetfulness, a couple enter the permanent marriage without the husband forgiving the remainder of the time to the wife, is their permanent marriage valid?

Reply: The second, 'permanent' contract is void.

13. Correspondence with the Office of Ayatullah Fazel Lankarani, Qum, Iran via Fazel@Lankarani.com.

Question: Can the *nikaah/’aqd* of a couple be recited more than once? Is there any value in the second recitation for either the couple or guests who have come to partake in the wedding ceremony?

Reply: Reciting the formula of marriage contract once is sufficient; reciting it more than once is of no effect.

Appendix II

The *a'maal* for the wedding night are as follows:⁹⁴

- Imam Sadiq (AS) has said, “Take your wife home at night time and during the day eat food.”
- A recommended act is that when the bride enters the room, the husband should greet her, and take off her shoes and socks. He should then wash her feet in a basin and sprinkle this water around the house. It is through this act, according to the Prophet of Islam (SAW), that 70,000 types of poverty will be removed and 70,000 types of desires (that the inhabitants need) will enter the house. The Holy Prophet (SAW) went on to mention that 70 blessings and mercies will be showered upon the bride such that each of these will fill the house with mercy and as long as the wife is alive, she will never be afflicted with madness or leprosy.
- In the well-known book, *Makaarim al-Akhlaaq*, it has been narrated from Imam Sadiq (AS) that when the new wife enters the room where her husband is, they should both face *Qiblah* and he should place his hand on her forehead and recite the following supplication:

اللهم بامانتك اخذتها وبكلماتك استحللت فرجها فان قضيت لي منها ولدا فاجعله مباركا
سويا ولا تجعل للشيطان فيه شركا ولا نصيبا

O Allah, I have taken her through Your trust and have made her lawful for myself by Your words. Therefore, if you have decreed for me a male child from her, then make him blessed and pious and do not let *Shaytan* have any part in him.

- It has also been recommended that the husband perform *wudhu*, a two *rak'ah salah* for the wedding night and recite the following supplication:

اللهم ارزقني الفها وودها ورضاها بي وارضني بها واجمع بيننا يا احسن اجتماع وايسر
ائتلاف فانك تحب الحلال وتكره الحرام

O Allah, bless me with her affection, love and acceptance of me; and make me pleased with her, and bring us together in the best form of a union and in absolute harmony; surely You like the lawful and dislike the unlawful things.

- In another narration from Imam Sadiq (AS), it has been mentioned that when a man intends to have intercourse with his wife, he should start in the name of Allah (SWT) by saying *بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم*. If this is not done, then *Shaytan* puts his hand in the conception of the child.