

Good Companionship in Marriage

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Good Companionship in Marriage

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We pray that Allah, the Exalted, completes His favour on us and accepts each letter of this book in His august court and allows it to testify on our behalf on the Last Day.

All praise to Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds and endless blessings and peace by upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, on his blessed Household and Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Compiler's Notes

We have tried diligently to do justice in this volume however if there are any short falls found then the compiler is personally and solely responsible for them.

We accept the possibility of faults and shortcomings in an effort to complete such a difficult task. We might have unconsciously stumbled and committed errors for which we ask for indulgence and forgiveness of our readers and the drawing of our attention thereto will be appreciated. We earnestly invite constructive suggestions which can be made to ShaykhPod.Books@gmail.com.

Introduction

Marriage is an important aspect of Islam. In fact, it is an important aspect in most religions. Marriage has been advised in Islam as it safeguards and protects muslims from many sins, such as illegal relationships. An important aspect of marriage which many married couples seem to find difficult is maintaining a good relationship with one's spouse. Failing to learn and act on this aspect of marriage is one of the main reasons why the divorce rate within the muslim population has skyrocketed.

Married couples will never find true happiness or peace in their homes unless they live together in a kind manner. Allah, the Exalted, commanded good companionship between a married couple as it helps to maintain the different aspects of life they will encounter such as raising children and it will bring them happiness. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 19:

“...And do not make difficulties for them in order to take [back] part of what you gave them unless they commit a clear immorality. And live with them in kindness....”

This is a command from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, whoever violates this command has committed a sin. And whoever strives to fulfil it for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be greatly rewarded for their efforts. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, has commanded muslims who divorce to treat each

other kindly. Therefore, a married couple must strive even harder to treat each other kindly. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“...either retain them according to acceptable terms or part with them according to acceptable terms...”

Therefore, this short book will discuss some of the aspects of maintaining a good relationship with one's spouse.

Good Companionship in Marriage

Intention

The first aspect of good companionship within a marriage is that a muslim should always have a good intention towards their spouse. It is not possible for a married couple to treat each other kindly and be happy together without a good intention towards each other. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 231:

“And when you divorce women and they have [nearly] fulfilled their term, either retain them according to acceptable terms or release them according to acceptable terms, and do not keep them, intending harm, to transgress [against them]. And whoever does that has certainly wronged himself...”

When a married couple have a good intention to keep each other happy then Allah, the Exalted, will guide them towards mutual love and respect for each other. This has been indicated in chapter 8 Al Anfal, verse 70:

“...If Allah knows [any] good in your hearts, He will give you [something] better than what was taken from you...”

It is vital for the husband and the wife to have a good intention towards one another as it will manifest in their actions. Once this intention changes Allah, the Exalted, will change the relationship they share. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

“...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...”

This relationship will then become difficult and strained. Whenever a person has a good intention it will purify their spiritual heart. When their spiritual heart is purified the rest of their body will become purified, such as their tongue. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4094. This will cause every aspect of their marriage to take a large step towards goodness and happiness.

Kind Speech

The second aspect related to good companionship in marriage is one's speech. As one's intention is an inner aspect of good companionship good speech is the outer aspect of good companionship. Both husband and wife should fear Allah, the Exalted, in respect to their speech to one another. A marriage cannot succeed without this quality. The majority of divorces occur because of a lack of control over one's speech. A person's uttered words cannot be taken back so it is important for married couples to think before speaking as words can sometimes cause more lasting pain than physical actions. They should act on the all-encompassing and far reaching Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Muslim, number 176. It advises that a person should either speak good words or remain silent. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 70:

“O you who have believed, fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice.”

Good words benefit a married couple in this world and the next. Whereas, evil words will not only adversely affect their marriage but it will lead to evil in the next world. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314, that it only takes a single evil word to cause a person to plummet into Hell on Judgement Day.

Kind speech must be used when a married couple call each other. It is important that they only refer to each other in a kind manner. Even though joking while sticking to the truth is not unlawful in Islam it is best for a married couple not to give each other bad nicknames. Even though the couple may see it is a joke but a time will certainly come when one of them is not in a joking mood and calling them this nickname at this time will only anger them. So it is best to always refer to each other in a kind way while maintaining modesty especially, in front of others.

Addressing each other in a sarcastic or mocking way only leads to enmity. With time this enmity may grow until it becomes a reason for arguments and even divorce. It is human nature to react to people in a similar way to how they are treated. If one shows kindness when speaking to others they will generally find that others converse with them in a kind manner also. This applies even more so for married couples.

Kindness in speech should also be used when a married couple request something from one another. A husband should not request something in a commanding way so that his wife feels like she's more of a servant than a wife. It is commonly witnessed that when one requests something in a kind manner not only is there a greater chance of obtaining it but the other person will be more happier to fulfil their need than if they requested something in a harsh and commanding way. The wife should also request things in a kind way without over burdening her husband or without being too demanding especially, when the thing is not a necessity. A wife will more likely get what she requests if she asks in a kind manner instead of belittling her husband and questioning his feelings towards her when he hesitates to fulfil her request right away.

Neither spouse should get angry and utter harsh words if their requests are not fulfilled. Sometimes a bit of time is needed before a person gives in to a request. They should never bring up the past cases where their request was not fulfilled. Nor should they claim that their spouse does not care about them. This only leads to arguments and will only put the spouse further away from what they requested.

It is important to note, in order to avoid arguments and strain on the marriage neither spouse should request too many unnecessary things from their spouse. This attitude can become burdensome as the husband may feel as if he is nothing more than a cash machine for his wife. And a wife may believe she is nothing more than a servant in her husband's house.

Gratitude

It is important for both spouses to show appreciation to each other when requests are fulfilled. Even though, the source of blessings is Allah, the Exalted, alone none the less, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4811, that whoever is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allah, the Exalted. This is because even though the source of the blessing is Allah, the Exalted, alone yet, He has chosen a person as a medium to deliver the blessing. Therefore, thanking the medium is in fact an indirect way of thanking the source of the blessing. This is why ambassadors of kings are honoured. According to the Holy Quran when one is grateful to Allah, the Exalted, it causes them to receive more blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favour]...”

One of the ways Allah, the Exalted, provides more blessings to someone is when they show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, and the person who delivered the blessing. So in the case of a married couple showing gratitude to each other will cause them to fulfil each other's requests more leading to an increase in blessings.

Being Observant

It is important that each person appreciate the mood of their spouse before talking to them. Meaning, if they observe their spouse is tired, sick or in a bad mood it is important they choose their words even more wisely as speaking at the inappropriate time often leads to arguments. In situations like this giving each other a bit of space can have a huge positive effect on the marriage. One should not request unnecessary things from each other in these situations as it is less likely the spouse will have their request fulfilled and more likely the conversation will lead to an argument.

Arguments

As people are not perfect a married couple will have arguments throughout their marriage. In fact, no relationship is free of arguments. It is important to use kind speech during arguments as it is rare for someone to accept their fault and accept the truth when they are spoken to in a harsh manner. In fact, harshness will only cause one to be pushed further away from accepting their fault and changing for the better. Often, the one who treats others harshly causes more problems than the initial thing which led to the argument even if they are correct. Just like some truths should not be spoken about when it can offend someone neither should someone who is in the right use harshness during arguments. Being right does not give someone the right to use harshness in speech. This attitude will only cause enmity to grow within a married couple.

In addition, it is best to let certain things go which are not obligatory to admit or understand instead of arguing over them with one's spouse. To overlook, in most cases, leads to greater happiness than always reproaching and arguing with one's spouse over every little issue. Certain things which are important such as, the obligatory duties are something which must be addressed and discussed even if it leads to an argument. But in cases like this one should always use kind words as a successful outcome is more likely with this technique.

Too much criticism, even if it is constructive, can lead to enmity. A wise person understands that the majority of people especially, in this day and

age, do not like to be constructively criticized. This habit will only lead to enmity between a married couple. Constructively criticizing once in a while is acceptable as it helps one another improve as muslims but it should not be overdone. It must be done in a kind manner and at the appropriate time. Saying the right thing at the inappropriate time can lead to further problems.

Kindness in Actions

Another element of good companionship between a married couple is kind treatment. Not only should a person show kind treatment to their spouse through their words but also through their actions. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3895, that the best man is the one who treats their wife kindly. Therefore, a muslim will never perfect their character until they treat their spouse kindly even if they treat others with respect and kindness. The rights of all people must be fulfilled. One cannot expect success by fulfilling the rights of some relatives and ignore the rights of others. A true muslim strives to fulfil all the rights appointed to them by Allah, the Exalted.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the heaviest thing in the Scales of Judgment Day will be good character. It is therefore essential for muslims to adopt this behaviour especially, with their relatives, such as their spouse. It is clear hypocrisy to treat the outside world with kindness and treat one's own family, such as one's spouse unkindly. This person is only following their own desires and not Islamic teachings. This two faced person will eventually be exposed and disgraced in this world and they will encounter a great punishment in the next world unless they sincerely repent.

House Chores

An aspect of kind treatment in marriage is that each spouse should aid each other in the house chores. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would help his family with the house chores thereby proving these chores are gender neutral. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6039. But it is important to note, that a muslim should correctly follow the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not follow their own desires. This Hadith clearly adds that when it was time for the obligatory prayer he would leave for the Mosque. This clearly indicates that helping with house chores is important but the obligatory prayer with congregation at the Mosque is more important. Each tradition is prioritised and one should follow this order correctly and not cherry pick which traditions they desire to follow.

Show Affection

Another aspect of kind treatment is showing affection to one another. This does not reduce the manliness of a husband by doing so. It is a way to demonstrate to one's spouse that they have an important place in their life. This increases love and kind treatment amongst a married couple. But it is important to note, that modesty should always be maintained especially, in front of others. This is why it is important for a married couple to have a private space within their home where they can spend some private time together during the day.

Compromising

Part of living in kindness is understanding that marriage is about sacrifice and compromising. A spouse cannot expect to get what they desire all the time. Marriage is a relationship of giving and taking. In most cases, the more one gives up and sacrifices for their spouse the more they will appreciate and in return sacrifice for them.

Sincerely Reply with Good

Even when one's spouse demonstrates bad manners a muslim should not reply in kind as this is not a sign of a true muslim. Instead, they should fear Allah, the Exalted, and the consequences of bad manners and demonstrate good manners towards their spouse. This will only elevate their status in this world and the next. And even the worse of people will eventually appreciate this reaction from someone even if they do not show it. A muslim should remember Allah, the Exalted, is watching them and will reward them in both worlds. When a muslim treats their spouse kindly for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, then their reward is with Him. They should not seek compensation from their spouse. If one desires reward from Allah, the Exalted, they should act for His sake and only seek reward from Him not others. This is an extremely important point many overlook. They treat their spouse kindly expecting payment from them when they should act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, as He has commanded them to treat their spouse kindly. Whoever seeks reward from people will be told to gain reward from them on Judgment Day which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Overlook and Pardon

Another aspect of kind treatment is for each muslim to remove the fairytale images of marriage out of their minds as no one is a perfect person or spouse. They should instead understand that the same way they are far from perfect so are others. Meaning, the same way one makes mistakes so do others and the same way one would like others to overlook and forgive them so should they overlook and forgive the mistakes of others. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

This is even more important for married couples as not overlooking and letting things go will only ever lead to strain in their marriage. Each muslim should learn to let things go and not hold on to grudges thereby using the past mistakes of their spouse against them. Unfortunately, this mentality is very common in muslims today they refuse to let things go and remind others of their mistakes even decades later. This not only reduces the chances of them being forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, but also leads to enmity and difficulties in their relationships. As a married couple spend much time together this type of attitude can be disastrous. Learning to let things go not only makes one a better muslim and increases their chance of being forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, but it also creates respect and love for them in the heart of their spouse. This will cause their spouse to strive harder to please them. Apart from unlawful things a muslim should learn to

let other smaller issues go and not turn them into a big deal. It is sad to hear that married couples often argue over petty things. The one who nitpicks will never have a successful marriage. They will only make their own and the lives of others difficult. If Allah, the Exalted, does not nitpick even though He has knowledge over all things neither should muslims if they desire to find some joy in their relationships especially, marriage. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3645, that a person should not dislike their spouse over a characteristic they possess as they might possess other characteristics which are pleasing to them. This Hadith also advises that a muslim should try to observe their spouse in a positive way instead of always observing or assessing their negative characteristics. It does not mean they should behave as if their spouse is perfect. It means they should not nitpick at minor negative characteristics while gently encouraging them to abandon them with the passing of time. There is a vast difference between completely ignoring the negative characteristics of others and acting as if they are perfect and concentrating on their positive aspects while gently advising them to change for the better. People very rarely change overnight so muslims should be patient as it takes time to abandon negative characteristics.

Conclusion

The following is a summary of most of the advice given in this book so far. It was initially given to a woman but it has been edited so that it applies to both husbands and wives.

If a muslim behaves as the Earth and supports their spouse at all times then their spouse will become the sky for them by sheltering them from harm. If a muslim gives peace of mind and body to their spouse then in return they will become a pillar of financial, mental and physical support for them. If a muslim strives to keep their spouse happy within the laws of Islam then they will find that their spouse in turn does the same. If they respect and honor their spouse they will receive the same. Meaning, what one gives is what they will receive.

A muslim should be modest and only speak and act in a way which pleases Allah, the Exalted, and their spouse. They should be content with their marriage and what they possess as this is true richness and happiness. It is quite evident if one observes the media that fame and fortune does not bring happiness. In fact, the majority of celebrities end up divorced despite their fame and fortune. A muslim should ensure they should adorn themselves for their spouse while avoiding extravagance and waste as this is an aspect of maintaining the love they share. One should always be aware of the mood of their spouse and speak and act appropriately as arguments can occur even if the right thing is said at the inappropriate time for example, when one is hungry or tired. A muslim should appreciate the value of

money and not waste it as this is disliked by Allah, the Exalted, and disliked by a God fearing spouse. The married couple should give top priority to educating themselves in religious matters and ensuring their children gain a good education in both worldly and religious matters. This education will strengthen the bond between them. A muslim should try to fulfill the reasonable requests of their spouse as long as it does not challenge the commands of Allah, the Exalted. As constantly denying one's spouse can lead to anger and arguments. Anything which occurs between them should be kept secret as revealing secrets can fracture the trust between a married couple. The only exception is when one seeks the advice of another but even then it should not become a public matter and should not be spread to too many people. A muslim should within limits try to mirror the emotions of their spouse for example, they should not be openly happy when their spouse is sad as this can make a person believe their spouse does not care about their feelings. A muslim should learn to sacrifice and compromise for the sake of their spouse within the limits of Islam as this will cause their spouse to strive to keep them pleased. A good way to remember all this is that a muslim should treat their spouse in the same way they would like their beloved to be treated by their spouse. For example, a husband should treat his wife the same way he would like his son-in-law to treat his daughter. Or a wife should treat her husband the same way she would like her daughter-in-law to treat her son. Adopting this mentality alone would be enough to solve countless problems within marriage.

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