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THE IMPORTANCE OF MARRIAGE IN ISLAM

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Abstract

The foundation of the family in Islam is blood ties or marital commitments. Islam builds the family on solid grounds that are capable of providing reasonable continuity, true security and mature intimacy. Marriage is a part of life, family as well society. The universality of marriage in different societies and cultures is attributed to the many basic social and personal functions. From Islamic point of view, marriage is a religious duty, a moral safeguard and a social commitment. Islam views it as a strong bond termed by Mithaqun Ghaleez that means a challenging commitment. It is a commitment to the dignified meaning full survival of the human race. Islam regards marriages the first and foremost righteous act and an act of responsible devotion. Islam recognized the religious virtue, the social necessity and the moral advantages of marriage. Islam considers marriage a very serious commitment; it has prescribed certain measures to make the marital bond as permanent as humanly possible. Marriage in Islam is neither a sacrament nor a simple civil contract; rather marriage in Islam is a something unique with very special features of both sacramental and contractual nature. The aim of his paper is to discuss of marriage institution in Islamic framework and its roles and significance in current global human society. The paper also tries to present a solution to the problems of family issues in the light of Quran and Sunnah.

Keywords: Islam; Marriage; Husband -Wife Relationship; Family; Society.

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1. Introduction

Marriage and the family are central in Islamic system. Islam views marriage as strong bound "Mithaqun Ghaleez" a challenging commitment. It is a commitment to life itself, to society and to the dignified, meaningful survival of human race. It is a commitment that married partners make to one another as well as to God. It is a kind of commitment in which they find mutual fulfillment and self realization, love and peace, compassion and serenity, comfort and hope. All this is because marriage in Islam is regarded first and foremost as a righteous act, an act of responsible devotion. Sexual control may be a moral triumph, reproduction and social necessity or service, and a sound health a gratifying test of mind. These values and purposes of marriage would take on a special meaning and be reinforced if they are intertwined with the idea of God. It would also conceive as

religious commitment, and internalized as divine blessings. This seems to be the focal point of marriage in Islam. Islam encourages its adherents to marry. Marriage is from the ways of the messengers and that those who follow their ways in this world will be resurrected with them in the Hereafter. There are four ways noted from the messengers: to be righteous, to use fragrant, to use m *Miswak* to brush the teeth and to marry. The Prophet is reported to have said, marriage is essential for every Muslim who is physically fit and who could afford it. The Prophet said: “O assembly of youths, whoever among you is able to have, he should marry, for it is a restraint to the looks and he who is not able let him keep fast” *Nikah* is considered obligatory to every Muslim, because of its being continued to be performed by the Prophet Mohammad, and on account of his rejecting from his followers, one who has no liking for it amongst Muslims, there is a tradition “*Nikah* is my Sunnat and one who dislikes my Sunnat is not mine”. According to the approved opinions, one commits sin by not marrying, and does a meritorious act for which, he will be rewarded in after life, because by marriage, he protects himself and the bride from committing adultery, and procreation of children in modern condition.

2. The Institution of Marriage

The family is a human social group whose members are bound together by the bond of blood ties or marital relationship. Marriage is recognized as the basis of society. Marriage as an institution leads to the uplift of man and is a means for the continuance of the human race. Spouses are strictly enjoined to honor and love each other. Marriage though essentially a contract, is also a devotional act; its objects are rights of enjoyment and procreation of children and regulation of social life in the interest of society. The main object of a Muslim marriage is the preservation of human race, sanctioning thereby sexual relations between two members of the opposite sexes with a view to the preservation of the human species, the encouragement of chastity and the promotion of love and union between the husband and wife and of mutual help in earning livelihood”¹ It is a contract for the legalization of intercourse and procreation of children.

3. Marriage in Islam

Marriage “*Nikah*” in Islam is the union of a man and a woman. In Islam, Marriage is a religious duty, a moral safeguard and a social commitment. As religious duty that must be fulfilled; but like all other duties in Islam, it is enjoined only upon those who are capable of meeting the responsibilities involved. Marriage is traced to the creation of Adam and the creation of Hauwa as his companion. The Quran states: “And one of Allah’s signs is that He creates for you mates from yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and has ordained between you love and mercy.” “And Allah has made for you mates from yourselves and made for you out of them, children and grandchildren.” From this union of love, the husband and wife are supposed to live in peace, procreate and nurture children who will continue the human race and development of the society. The union of the man and his wife is traced to a common origin of equality because both are created from a single soul. The Quran states: *It is He who created you from a single soul “Nafs” and therefrom did he make his mate, that he might dwell in tranquility with her.*”

The Islamic marriage is based on the need to achieve and maintain tranquility in society. Thus the family, which comes into being, as a result of this marriage is the basic foundation of society. Although, marriage is strongly enjoined and celibacy is discouraged, those who are not ready to

undertake this solemn covenant and the responsibilities attached to it should postpone it. Marriage is viewed “as a means of emotional and sexual gratification, as a mechanism of tension reduction, legitimate procreation and social placement; as an approach to interfamily alliance and group solidarity” Islamic marriage is also a social and religious institution. The Prophet is reportedly said; “He who marries completes half of his religion; it now rests with him to complete the other half by leading a virtuous life in constant fear of god”. “There is no mockery in Islam” “I keep fast and break it. I pray and I sleep and I am married so whoever inclines to any other way than my Sunnah, he is not of me”. “This is because marriage elevates the moral and spiritual standard of man. *Nikah* is my precept. Those who are unmarried, are the unworthy of the deed.”

4. Legal Aspect of Islamic Marriage

Legally, Marriage in Islam is considered as a contract; because the elements which constitute a marriage and the manner in which it is completed, is almost similar to that of a civil contract. The contractual nature of a marriage is explained on the basis of the following elements: The nature of Islamic marriage is similar to that of a civil contract. But only on the basis of the above mentioned contractual elements, it is not correct to define it as purely a civil contract. In its form, Islamic marriage may look like a contract; but it is not so in its essence. As is evident from the following arguments, its social aspect is also very important.

5. Social Aspect of Islamic Marriage

The social aspect of *Nikah* should also be studied to understand its real nature. *Nikah* is a social institution by which a definite and dignified status has been conferred upon the women. The Prophet of Islam brought about a reform in the society. No social reform was possible without giving equal status to the females. Therefore a definite institution or an established law was required to give equality and freedom to the females. With this object in mind, the Prophet of Islam introduced *Nikah* through which, the females could be placed on equal footing with males. It is therefore submitted that *Nikah* is a well established social institution which gives to the women, a separate and dignified status in the society. The social institution may be explained on the basis of the following arguments. In civil contracts, the general rule is that, there is no liability to pay consideration if it has not been specified or referred in the contract. But in Islamic marriage, even if the amount of dower has not been specified, the husband should pay proper dower to his wife as a mark of respect towards her.

6. Religious Aspect of Islamic of Marriage

Apart from the Legal and Social aspects, the holy Quran, which is the preeminent word of God, directs every Muslims to marry with a suitable woman of his choice. It is therefore a religious duty of every Muslim to contract a marriage according to the rules of Islam. A person who remains bachelor without any reasonable excuse disobeys the words of God. Moreover, marriage is also the tradition of the Prophet of Islam. In Islam, it is believed that marriage is a ‘*Sunnat Muwakkidah*’. This means it is an act of such a nature that if a person does it, he gets religious benefits. If he abstains from doing it, then he commits sin. In Islam, marriage is recognized as the basis of society. It is a contract but it is also a sacred covenant. Marriage as an institution leads to the uplift of man and is a means for the continuance of the human race. The main aim of the

institution of marriage is to protect the society from foulness and unchastely. It has also been said that marriage is so holy a sacrament that in this world, it is an act of *Ibadat* or worship, for it preserves mankind free from pollution. The least focal aspect of marriage in Islam is the economic factor. The Prophet is reported to have said that a woman is ordinarily sought as wife for her wealth, for her beauty, for the nobility of her stock, or for religious qualities; but blessed and fortunate is he who chooses his mate for piety in preference to everything else.

7. The Husband-Wife Relationship

Islam goes much further than this in setting the course of behavior for husbands and wives. There are many passages in the Holy Quran that describe the kindness and equity, compassion and love, sympathy and consideration, patience and goodwill. The Prophet (PBUH) goes as far as to declare that the best Muslim is the one who is the best to his family, and the greatest, most blessed joy in life is a good righteous wife. The consummation of marriage creates new roles for the partners. Each role is set of equitable, proportionate rights and obligations. The role of the husband revolves around moral principle that is his solemn duty before God to treat his wife with kindness, respect and to cause her no harm or grief in any manner. The role of wife is summarized in the verse that women have rights even as they have duties. According to what is equitable; but men have a degree over them. There are many passages in the Holy Quran and statements by the Prophet which go as far as to say that when a Muslim marries, he has thereby perfected half his religion; so let him be God- minded and careful with the other half. Men are trustees, guardians protectors of women because God has made some of them excel others and because men expend of their means. This degree may be likened to what sociologists call it "*Instrumental leadership*" or external authority in the household due to division of labor and role differentiation. It does however mean any categorical discrimination or superiority of one sex to the other. This degree has been misunderstood by Muslims and Non- Muslim alike. According to this Quranic verse, it does not mean at all that men are better than women. Nor does it say what excellence reality refers to, let alone identify it with manhood and women hood.

8. The Wife's Rights: The Husband's Obligations

Islam ensured to the wife certain rights and corresponding obligations. The Quran and Sunnah have ensured it by giving commands of kindness to women; it is the husband's duty to consort with his wife in an equitable and kind manner. One specific consequence of this Devine command is his responsibilities for the full maintenance of the wife, a duty which he must discharge cheerfully. Maintenance entails the wife's incontestable right to lodging clothing, nourishing, and well being. The Muslim woman is entitled to maintenance from her husband. This includes provision of shelter, feeding, clothing, education and security no matter how wealthy she may be. If however, the wife contributes financially or by other means to the maintenance of the family, it is considered as an act of charity which will earn her reward, from Allah. For most t is the welfare of the wife and stability of the marriage. The wife has right to be clothed, fed, and cared for by husband in accordance with his means and her style of life. The wife material rights are not her only assurance and securities. She has other rights of a moral nature. A husband is commanded by God to treat his wife with equity, respect her feelings. She is not to be shown any aversion by the husband. A corollary of this rule is that no husband is allowed to keep his wife with intention of

inflicting harm on her or hindering her freedom. If has no sympathy and love she has right to demand freedom marital bond and no one stand in her way to a new life.

9. The Husband's Rights: The Wife's Obligation

Marriage is often considered to equate to half of one's faith. There are specific guidelines for Muslims wanting to get married as stated in Islamic law including general codes of conduct for both men and women regarding etiquette and interaction. The Islamic provision of marriage applies to men and women equally. This is recognition of the facts that women needs are equally legitimate and are seriously taken into consideration. If she entrusted with any fund or assignment, she must discharge her duty wisely and thriftily. With respect to intimacy, the wife is to make she is desirable, to be attractive, responsive and cooperative. The wife is not permitted to do anything that may render her companionship less desirable or less gratifying. If she does any such thing, the husband has right to interfere with her freedom re rectify the situation. The obligation of wife, as a life partner is c to contribute to the success of marriage as such as possible. She must be attentive to the comfort of her mate. She has no right to offend him or hurt his feelings. The wife must be faithful, trustworthy and honest in her words and deeds. The responsibilities of the wife include showing respect for the husband who is the head of the household, religious and moral upbringing of children, creating a peaceful and conducive home environment, managing family resources, advising the husband, cooperating with him, protecting his interests and maintaining her chastity. Her responsibilities to society include enjoining good and preventing evil. The Quran states: *"Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. They are the ones to attain felicity."*

10. Conclusion

Islam considers marriage a very serious commitment; it has prescribed certain measures to make the marital bond as permanent as humanly possible. The parties must strive to meet the conditions of proper age, general capability, free consent, honorable intentions and judicious discretion. When the parties enter into marital contract, the intention must be clear to make the bond permanent, free from casual and temporary designations. For this reason, trial marriage, contract marriage and all marriages that appear experimental, casual or temporary are forbidden in Islam. To insist the permanent character of marriage does not mean that the marital contract is absolutely indissoluble. Islam is a religion with well balanced, well integrated system. This is quite clear in the case of marriage which Islam regards as neither a sacrament nor a simple civil contract. Rather, Marriage in Islam is something unique with very special features of both sacramental and contractual nature. The Islamic course is one of equitable and realistic moderation. The marriage contract should be taken as a serious, permanent bond. But if does not work well for any valid reason, it may be terminated in kindness and full honor with equity and respect.

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