

Chapter Four

Husband-Wife Relationship

Relation Between Spouses After Contracting and Before Marriage Consummation

True *Khulwah*

When the spouses stay alone unaccompanied by a third person, it is considered true *Khulwah* (*Khulwah Sahihah*) provided the following conditions prevail:

- No third person should attend between the man and his wife (which he contracted the marriage with).
- It should be with sufficient duration.
- If the previous conditions are not fulfilled, then the spouses' meeting is considered false *Khulwah*.

If divorce takes place after contracting the marriage before official consummation of the marriage

- **In case of true *Khulwah*:**
 1. The wife does not have a waiting period
 2. The wife has the right to keep the dowry without returning its half to the husband.
- **In case of false *Khulwah*:**

He should take back half of the dowry and the woman does not have to observe a waiting period in this case.

Ruling on the state of the wife in case of the death of her husband (after the contracting and before the official consummation of the marriage)

She inherits of his property. In case she gives birth, the deceased is recorded as the child's father, provided the conditions of true *Khulwah* took place between them. Her waiting period in this case is four months and ten days, or until she gives birth if she is pregnant at his death.

Her obedience is to her guardian

In case of disputes or conflicts taking place between the groom and the bride's family, the bride should obey her guardian since she is still living with her family. The consensus of Islamic jurisprudence agrees that a bride's obedience to her husband precedes her obedience to her family only after marriage consummation.

When does her right of financial maintenance begin?

Most Islamic scholars agree that a wife's right of financial maintenance is mandatory on her husband only after the consummation of their marriage. Hence, if a husband gives his wife any financial support before consummating their marriage, it is considered a gift from his side.

Their conjugal rights during this period

Contracting the marriage gives the spouses the right to meet in seclusion without the need of a third party. They may touch, kiss or exchange messages of love; however, they should better avoid what may lead them to practice the intimate intercourse. It is preferable that they wait until their marriage consummation takes place and is announced

publicly. This is in fact for the sake of the wife who may get pregnant before the announcement of her marriage consummation, which puts her in an embarrassing situation with regards to customs and traditions.

In addition, conflicts may take place leading to termination of the marriage; her husband may die or may even deceive her and does not continue the marriage.

Rights Due to Both Spouses

1. Each spouse should comply with the other's desires

That is to say, each partner should be willing to do things that she/he likes, if doing so would please the other partner.

2. Each spouse should show compassion and consideration to the other

One should never express his happiness at the moments of his partner's grief, or his sadness when the other partner is happy. Each partner should be positive, uplift the other and choose the right time for announcing any news, especially sad news, in a wise and gradual way.

Anas was reported to have said, "A son of Abu Talhah and Umm Sulaym died. She asked her relatives not to mention it to her husband before she did. When he came home, she prepared his dinner and he ate and drank. Then she made up herself for him in the most beautiful manner she had ever done, and thus he slept with her. When she felt that he was satisfied, she said, 'O Abu Talhah, what would you say about some people who left something in trust with a certain family, then claimed it back; can the family deny them the right?' He said, 'No.' Then she said, 'So, seek reward for your son's death.'"¹

¹ Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

3. Islamic Law encourages spouses to treat each other gently

Almighty Allah said,

[*Consort with them in kindness.*]

(An-Nisa': 19)

In his book, Tafsir Al-Manar, Rashid Rida comments on this verse, "This means that you, believers, must live with your wives honorably, so that your relation and company with them fall under the norms of kindness, and comply with legitimacy and custom. Harmful words and deeds, frowning and unpleasantness, all contradict the notion of consorting in kindness."

4. Each spouse should respect and accommodate the other's jealousy

The impact of jealousy that is somewhat beyond reasonable limits must be dealt with wisely, and its triggering factors must be avoided as well. On the other hand, the spouse suffering such unreasonable jealousy must try to control his or her emotions and behavior as much as possible and avoid violating Islamic measures.

Asma' bint Abi Bakr accommodated her husband's jealousy:

Asma' bint Abi Bakr (may Allah be pleased with her) was reported to have said, "When az-Zubayr married me he owned no property or slaves. One day, while I was carrying a heavy load on my head, I met the Prophet (pbuh) and a group of the Ansar with him. He offered me a ride behind him, but I was too shy to join the men, and I remembered az-Zubayr and his jealousy, for his was more than anyone else's."¹

¹ Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

`Umar controlled his excessive jealousy:

Ibn `Umar said, “One of `Umar’s wives used to attend morning and night congregational prayers in the mosque. She was asked, ‘Why do you go out, while you know that `Umar dislikes it and feels jealous?’ She replied, ‘What would prevent him from forbidding me?’ She was then told, ‘What prevents him is the saying of the Prophet (pbuh): *‘Do not forbid the women worshippers of Allah from going to the mosques of Allah.’*”

Here we notice how `Umar controlled his excessive jealousy and did not forbid his wife from going to the mosque in observance of the saying of the Prophet (pbuh).

5. Each spouse should treat the other with kindness

Almighty Allah says,

[And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect]

(Ar-Rum: 21)

In essence, families are set up on a foundation of compassion and love. However, if love abates, mercy must emerge as the second family foundation, with which pursuing rights becomes essential for preserving them. In many cases, even when love no longer exists between husband and wife, when mercy is retained as the sole motive for the couple to treat each other with kindness, compassion couples with mercy and intensifies it until a maximum level of mutual care is achieved.

We find an example of ultimate love-driven sacrifice in the wife of Prophet Ayyub (pbuh) who sacrificed her hair and continued to live with him in utmost patience during his serious illness.

6. Islam encourages spouses to tolerate shortcomings with patience

Allah, Exalted be He, says,

[O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should you treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the dower you have given them,-except where they have been guilty of open lewdness; on the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If you take a dislike to them it may be that you dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good]

(An-Nisa': 19)

In *Tafsir Al-Manar*, we find the following comment: “This refers to a situation where a husband may develop a dislike towards his wife. This could be due to something beyond her control, such as a defect in appearance or attitude. It could also be due to occasional failure in completing housework duties, which is common between all women and men alike. A third possibility is that such dislike results from an inclination, on the part of the husband, towards another woman. In all cases, Allah instructs men to avoid rushing into escalation or separation, because a thing that is disliked may often be a cause of abundant goodness.”

Fruits of patience

One of the superior forms of such abundant goodness is that of good children. A man may grow bored of his wife, and

dislike her and then be granted through her good children who would bring him happiness and contentment. At that point, his wife may very well gain higher esteem from him. Another form of such goodness is her improvement as a result of his patience and kind consorting, thus becoming his best source of comfort and well-being, especially if he is struck by illness or poverty. Hence, a man who dislikes his wife must remember that he has at least one defect that his wife bears with patience.

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

“No believing man should abhor a believing woman, for if he dislikes one of her traits, he will be pleased with another.”¹

The above-mentioned verse and *hadith* basically address men, but they may also be directed to women. Women must consort with their husbands in kindness. If a woman dislikes her husband, then it might be that she dislikes something and Allah makes it a cause of plentiful welfare. Also, no believing woman should abhor a believing man, for if she dislikes one aspect of his behavior she will accept another.

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

“I advise you to take care of women, for they are created from a rib and the most curved portion of the rib is its upper part; if you try to straighten it, it will break, and if you leave it, it will remain curved, so I urge you to take care of women.”²

The advice to take good care of women is based on an intrinsic attribute of women, for they differ in creation from

¹ Reported by Muslim.

² Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

men. A woman was compared to a rib since a rib is curved and not straight. Similarly, women's moods and emotions go through changes along a curve.

Women, in particular, are likely to yield to their emotions, sometimes making unwise decisions, or saying or doing unpleasant things. On the other hand, a woman's impulsiveness may result in moodiness. How truthful was the Prophet (pbuh) when he said, "*She will never maintain a single consistent mood with you.*" Such vacillations tend to irritate and infuriate men. This view supports what the Prophet (pbuh) said in his advice to women: "*You curse too much and bear ingratitude towards your companions.*" This behavior is likely to occur only at times of anger, which means that it would be a result of an intense impulse.

There is also guidance in the *hadith* for men to tolerate women's behaviors, resulting from such "crookedness", with patience. Men should remember that women do not behave as such, intentionally to annoy or embarrass them. Rather, such behavior is part of the special nature that was predestined by Allah for women, which is characterized by quick and intense impulses. So, men must demonstrate patience and tolerance. They must also understand that this aspect of women's behavior may have good effects on enabling them to endure their primary tasks of childbearing, nursing, and care, all of which need deep emotions and fine sensitivity. Men must also remember what the Prophet (pbuh) said, "If he dislikes one of her traits, he will be pleased with another." This means that any wife must be in possession of virtues and merits that would overshadow her minor deficiencies. Finally, any man should be fully aware that any attempt on his part to reproach his wife for every single fault can only lead to further distance

and rift between them, with the potential ultimate result of separation and divorce.

7. The right and desire to have offspring are instinctive in both men and women alike

Almighty Allah says,

[And Allah has made for you mates (and companions) of your own nature, and made for you, out of them, sons and daughters and grandchildren, and provided for you sustenance of the best: will they then believe in vain things, and be ungrateful for Allah's favors?]

(An-Nahl: 72)

The Prophet (pbuh) urged us to multiply offspring by saying, “Marry a woman who is amiable and fertile, so that I may outnumber other nations with you.”

The right and desire to have children are instinctive in both men and women alike. However, for one consideration or another, some people may be discouraged from having children at certain times. If that is the case, the partner who is so discouraged must respect and accommodate the right and desire of the other, especially if this reluctance is driven only by wishes for improvement, not by necessity or need. However, each spouse must also respect the other’s right to regulate birth in cases of necessity.

8. Each spouse has the right of sharing general and particular concerns

The Prophet (pbuh) shared his concerns with his wives:

Lady `A’ishah said, “The first introductions of revelation made to the Prophet (pbuh) were truthful visions shown to him in his sleep. Then, the truth (revelation) came to him

while he was in the cave of Hira'. The Prophet (pbuh) returned with these words, and his heart was shaking. When he met Lady Khadijah bint Khuwaylid at home, he said, 'Wrap me up, wrap me up.' So, they wrapped him up until his fright abated. Then, he informed Lady Khadijah of the incident and said, '*I feared for myself.*'"¹

¹ Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Spouses' Rights Supercede Allah's Rights

One should be aware that Allah has made some rights of spouses primary to His Rights.

Some of the wife's rights that supercede Allah's Rights

1. The Prophet (pbuh) instructed a man to forgo departure for jihad so that he might accompany his wife on her pilgrimage journey: Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) said, "A man asked the Prophet (pbuh), 'O Messenger of Allah, I wish to depart with the army of so-and-so and my wife wants to perform pilgrimage. He replied, '*Accompany her.*'"¹
2. The Prophet (pbuh) encouraged `Uthman to miss the Battle of Badr in order to take care of his ill wife: Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) said, "Regarding the absence of `Uthman from the Battle of Badr, he was married to the daughter of the Prophet (pbuh) and she was ill. The Prophet (pbuh) told him, '*Your reward and share are equal to that of the men who participated in Badr.*'"
3. The Prophet (pbuh) instructed pilgrims to make speedy returns to their families so as not to leave them for a long time: Lady `A'ishah narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said, "*Any of you who completes his pilgrimage should expedite his return to his family, for that would be more rewarding for him.*"²

¹ Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² Reported by al-Hakim.

4. A husband should never leave his wife alone in a deserted place or an isolated area where she might be subjected to any harm under any circumstances, even if he is to go to pray in a mosque. In such cases, he should either take her with him or arrange company for her during his absence.

Some of the husband's rights that supercede Allah's Rights

1. The Prophet (pbuh) forbade a wife to fast voluntarily without the permission of her husband: Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said, "*No woman should fast in the presence of her husband but with his permission.*"¹

Abu Sa'id was reported to have said, "A woman came to the Prophet (pbuh) while we were with him and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, my husband, Safwan ibn al-Mu'attil beats me if I pray and forces me to break my fast when I am fasting. So, the Prophet (pbuh) asked Safwan about what she said, and he replied, 'O Messenger of Allah, regarding her saying that I force her to break her fast, I am a young man and have no patience.' The Prophet (pbuh) then said, '*No woman should fast unless her husband permits her.*'"²

2. A wife is not allowed to go to the mosque or visit her relatives without the permission of her husband:

A wife is not allowed to leave her house to visit her parents, relatives or even go to the mosque without the permission of her husband. This is because obedience to one's husband is obligatory while visiting relatives or

¹ Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² Reported by Abu Dawud.

going to the mosque (for women) is not. However, it has to be noted that the man is ordered to live with his wife/wives on a footing of kindness and equity and it would not be fair to forbid her from seeing her parents or going to the mosque.

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

“If a woman performs her prayers, fasts her month (Ramadan), guards her sexual parts (i.e. preserves her chastity) and obeys her husband, she will enter paradise by any gate she likes.”¹

¹ Reported by Abu Nu`aym.

A Good Wife is Praised in the *Sunnah*

Islam has made a good wife the best treasure a man can have in his life, after believing in Allah and following His Commands. In numerous *hadiths*, she is considered the key to happiness, among which are:

- On the authority of ibn `Abbas who said, “The Prophet (pbuh) told `Umar,
‘Shall I tell you the best a man can treasure? It is a good wife. If he looks at her, she pleases him, if he orders her, she obeys, and if he is away from her, she remains faithful to him.’”¹
- On the authority of `Abdullah ibn `Amr who said, “The Prophet (pbuh) said, *‘The world is delightful and its greatest treasure is a good woman.’*”²
- On the authority of Anas who said, “The Prophet (pbuh) said, *‘Whoever is granted a good wife is helped to follow half his religion, let him obey Allah in the second half.’*”³
- On the authority of Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas who said, “The Prophet (pbuh) said, *‘There are three things that cause happiness and three things that bring about misery for the human being. A good wife, a good house, and good transport*

¹ Reported by Abu Dawud.

² Reported by Muslim.

³ Reported by al-Hakim.

*cause happiness. A bad wife, a bad house, and bad transport bring about his misery.”*¹

- Ibn `Abbas also narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said,
*“Four things when granted to any person, he, then, is granted the best of the world and the hereafter; a thankful heart, a tongue that always mentions Allah, a body that patiently endures misfortune, and a wife that does not seek his betrayal or money.”*²
(In another version, ‘does not seek sinning against him.’)

¹ Reported by Ahmad, al-Bazzar and at-Tabarani.

² Reported by at-Tabarani.

Wife's Duties, Responsibilities and Rewards

Concerning the issue of marriage, the three main religions share an unshakable belief in the importance of marriage and family life, and they all agree on the leadership of the husband over the family.

Judaism and Christianity view man as the head of the family: Corinthians 1, chapter 11, verse 11 and Chapter 5, verse 21-24.

“I want you to know that the head of every man is a priest and in turn the head of woman is a man and in turn the head of the priest is God.”

Islam teaches us that Allah has created everything in pairs, male and female, and assigned them roles that are complementary and not competitive. So the male will be the provider and protector of the family, while the female will have a supportive and dependent role which naturally involves a certain amount of obedience and submission to man.

Islam respects woman enough to guarantee that her obedience and submission to man never deprives her of her rights, rather it grants her entrance to Paradise. The Prophet (pbuh) said, “*Any woman who dies while her husband is pleased with her will enter Paradise.*”

Her duties and responsibilities

According to Islamic scholars, the wife's main duties, responsibilities and expectations serve to preserve the integrity of the marriage; they can be classified as follows:

1. In return for the preservation of her rights, a wife is obliged to obey her husband in everything except disobeying Allah. If the husband crosses the limits of Islam, in this case obedience to the Laws of Allah must take precedence over obedience to his demands. Areas of obedience include social life. She must respect his word concerning who may or may not be entertained in their marital home; she is not allowed to let any stranger in without asking the husband first. She must respect his word regarding whom she may mix with. She must also take his permission before leaving the matrimonial house to visit relatives or friends. On the other hand, a husband should not deny her right to social life, but if a particular individual is likely to cause some harm to the family, such as spreading gossip, exerting a bad influence or trying to disrupt the marriage bond in some way, the husband has the right to impose restrictions.
2. The wife is not allowed to deny her husband's sexual rights. This is because, in Islam, marriage is the only legitimate outlet for the natural sexual urge. If she denied such right, she would be forcing him to go beyond the bounds of Islam. Of course, this right to sexual gratification is reciprocal as the wife has equal right to it. It is worth mentioning that both partners, wife and husband, are forbidden to discuss their sexual relationship with anybody as it is considered as extremely private in Islam.

3. Fidelity is required on the part of both husband and wife. The wife, in particular, is mentioned in the following verse,

[Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard.]

(An-Nisa': 34)

In the previous verse, [*what Allah would have them guard*] is explained as meaning that a wife should protect her husband's reputation, property and her own honor. She is obliged to take care of his money and to spend it with his permission. A virtuous woman is faithful to her husband, and her behavior reflects on the family.

4. She should take care of her home and the welfare of her family, make her family's life secure, and raise her children well. It is worth mentioning that her early training of children has a lasting effect on the behavior and attitudes of the next generation when they reach adulthood.
5. Taking care of her beauty and watching over her looks are every woman's concern. However, when a wife does this for the sake of her husband's pleasure, she is rewarded in Islam. Wives are encouraged to greet their husbands pleasantly, and to take good care of their personal appearance so that they remain appealing to them. No woman should meet her husband with an unkempt hair or slovenly appearance. She should generally try to be as neat and clean as possible.

6. She may express her views and make suggestions concerning all matters, but she must recognize her husband as the person responsible for running the family affairs and thus to obey him provided that he does not go beyond the limits of Islam.
7. She may aid her husband if he is in need of financial or material help, provided she is willing and in a position to do so. This does not mean that in order to be a good wife, one must turn over one's earnings. Rather, a wife should be ready to help her husband if she is able to do so in case of an emergency or other legitimate needs. A rich wife may give her husband from the *Zakah*, if he is needy. Such act of hers is considered as an act of charity (*Sadaqah*) and she is rewarded for it.

On his part, a Muslim husband is forbidden to abuse his right of obedience; he should not overburden her with trivial requirements. On the contrary, his fear from Allah should awaken his conscience while treating her; trying to lessen her burdens, being as cooperative and understanding as possible and preserving all her rights.

Rewarding her fulfillment of matrimonial duties

A wife should regard her matrimonial duties, previously mentioned, as a religious duty and be sure that she is rewarded in Islam during her lifetime and in the Hereafter.

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) was once asked, "Who is the best among women?" He replied, "*She is the one who pleases her husband when he looks at her, obeys him*

when he bids her and who does not oppose him regarding herself and her riches, fearing his displeasure.”¹

Such a woman who tries her utmost to please her husband, will, in most cases, find that he will try to please her in return. Consequently, their marriage will be happy and successful.

A wife should consider her duty to her husband as one of the roads to paradise

Anas narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said,

“If a woman performs her prayers, fasts her month (Ramadan), guards her sexual parts (i.e. preserves her chastity) and obeys her husband, she enters Paradise by any door she likes.”²

In addition, Islam raises the importance of the woman as a wife and considers her fulfillment of matrimonial duties as *Jihad* (struggle for the sake of Allah).

On the authority of Ibn `Abbas who said that a woman came to the Prophet (pbuh) saying, “O Messenger of Allah, I am the women’s messenger to you.” She then presented her case as thus: “Allah is the Lord of men and women, and is their God, and you are Allah’s Messenger unto men and women. Fighting for Allah (*Jihad*) is meant for men; if they succeed, they take their due and if they die martyrs, they are alive (in the afterlife) and are provided for by Allah. So, what equals their deeds in our obedience to Allah?” He (pbuh) said, “*Obey your husbands and perform your duties. A few among you do that.*”³

¹ Reported by an-Nasa’i and al-Bayhaqi.

² Reported by Abu Nu`aym.

³ Reported by at-Tabarani.

How to Win Your Husband's Heart

The treatment of husbands has an etiquette that most of women need to learn. A wife should know how to win her husband's heart. It is a legitimate type of magic based on the words of the Prophet (pbuh): "*Indeed good words have the effect of magic;*" complimentary words which soften the hearts.

Almighty Allah has endowed women with instinctive tenderness and keen emotions that work as natural weapons and a means towards winning the heart of her husband. Woman's ability as seducer is undoubted.

Almighty Allah says in the Glorious Qur'an,

[Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet: Women and sons; Heaped-up hoards of gold and silver; horses branded (for blood and excellence); and (wealth of) cattle and well-tilled land. Such are the possessions of this world's life; but in nearness to Allah is the best of the goals (To return to)]

(Al `Imran: 14)

Women came first in the verse among the dearest things to a man's heart. Every woman should utilize that natural grant with which Allah has endowed her in a good way for a happy married life.

Let us review the advice that the wise eloquent Arab Lady, Umamah bint al-Harith gave her daughter Umm Iyas Bint `Awf on her wedding day. She is well-known for her wise advice. She said, "O daughter, it is needless to mention that if

a girl desires to lead her own independent life without a husband, she can go on living, but it is the natural human rule that necessitates women for men and men for women. O daughter, here is a new life and a new home awaiting you; a new daily life with a man with a different life style from that of yours. Be his mistress, he will be your slave. So dear, memorize these attributes through which, if correctly applied, he will be a real source of security, love and protection to you:

First and second: Show satisfaction in his company, concentrate on what he says and obey his orders, for satisfaction and acceptance are the secrets behind the comfort of the heart, while good manners and obedience are the secrets behind the satisfaction of Allah.

Third and Fourth: Always watch every corner of your house, which he might see, watch for every smell and odor. His eyes should never fall on any hateful sight nor should his nose smell a nasty odor. Nice fragrances have a real effect on him; and cosmetics and beauty, combined with purity and cleanliness, make you his angel. It is noteworthy that the best cleansing substance is water.

Fifth and Sixth: Be always prepared for both times of meals and of sleep, for hunger and sleeplessness bring about anger. A wise wife should never complain or arouse any problem while her husband is eating.

Seventh and Eighth: Provide full protection of his home, money and children. By preserving his money, you will gain his appreciation, looking after his children will win his consideration for your efforts and wise planning.

Ninth and Tenth: Keep his secrets in strict confidentiality. If you disobey his order or show excessive jealousy, it will stir his deep sadness. Beware of showing happiness when he is upset or showing sadness when he is happy, for the first is recklessness and the second is agonizing and troublesome. The more you are grateful to and appreciative of him, the more he will be generous with you. And the more you are obedient to him, the happier life will be in the long term.

Be a good wife and a source of care and comfort for him. Make him feel that you are really everything to him, and remember that man is a grown-up child and the smallest kind word can increase his happiness. Do not make him feel that your life before knowing him was better, for he also left his life for a new one with you.”

Strategies to win your husband's heart

Below are some strategies a wife can follow to win the heart of the husband and to quickly get over troubles arising between the spouses:

Always welcome him with a smiling face

A long hard day full of hard schedule and full agendas, crowded streets and noise has just finished. And here at last he opens the door and he is home. Think about his expectations from his family; think about the effect of a cheerful angelic smile of his beloved wife who welcomes him with a tender kiss as soon as she observes him approaching. The beautiful words, the shining smile, the attractive smell, the elegant dress, the hairstyle, the soft tender little touch and actions and the harmonious colors that fill the place everywhere, the jewelry and the cosmetics that blend with the color of the complexion in pure harmony, the constant

cleanliness; all that blended with the beauty and purity of worship and piety are all sources to happiness and creating a beautiful fairy-like angel.

A clean tidy house, the smell of tasty food, the well-set table and his children like roses everywhere in the house in their beautiful clean dress and appearance that shows they are well taken care of, rosy fragrance and comfortable atmosphere all over – what happiness! What a smart wife she must be!

Avoid listening to troublemakers

A wise, sincere and good believing wife should learn how to preserve the secrets of her home. She should never welcome the interference of others, regardless how close they are, in her daily marital life.

Here is the story of Abu Muslim al-Khawalani, who was known for his piety and the acceptance of his prayers to Allah. It was his habit whenever he returned back home from the mosque that he raised his voice praising Allah before entering, so his wife would hear him and recall the praise with him. Then as soon as he enters the house, she helps him take off his coat and shoes, then serves the dinner for him.

One day, he raised his voice by praise as he was coming, but she did not answer. He entered and found her sitting playing with a small stick in her hand while the lamp was put out. He asked what was wrong, she answered, “Mu`awiyah (the ruler) considers you high in rank and we do not have a servant, can you ask him for one?” Abu Muslim realized on the spot that a troublemaker had gone in between him and his wife and was trying to convince her of some faulty ideas. He went aside

where he whispered his complaint to Allah, “O Lord whoever spoiled what’s between me and my wife, take his eyesight.”

A woman had visited his wife before and whispered the idea to her. While that woman was sitting at her home, she went blind. She wondered: Is the lamp broken? They answered: No. She knew her fault and hurried running to Abu Muslim’s house crying begging him to ask Allah to return her eyesight. Abu Muslim sympathized with her. He prayed to Allah and it was accepted.

The lesson derived from the story shows the difference between the way his wife used to welcome him smiling, versus the attitude she took after the visit of the woman. Therefore, the smart wife is the one who knows how to win her husband’s heart, how to ban others from interfering in her marital life.

Beautification for the husband

Away from the artificial cosmetics, woman has an instinctive appealing nature that is innate in her. If cosmetics are added to this innate beautiful nature she can be a real source of charm and dazzling beauty to her husband.

To those who always complain that their husbands are always detached and spend most of their time outside home, to those who complain of their husband’s toughness and harsh manners, and to those hurt when the husband mentions or flatters another woman; for those also who complain that he doesn’t have any love for her anymore, our advice is: seek all means of attraction to your husband at home.

After years of marriage, observe the old faded beauty that has no longer any care. Observe your negligence in preserving your beauty and attraction. You have lost a strong

weapon. When the husband gets used to the frizzy hair, the untidy house and the ugly clothes, the continuous screaming and yelling at home, when he becomes no more than a machine for providing the material needs of the family – then you are losing a lot.

Most women primp themselves only when they go out of the house and have a slovenly appearance when they are at home. Some women aim for the flattery of their female friends and family members more than their own husbands.

Lady `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) used to adorn herself for the Prophet (pbuh) so that he could see in her only what would please him. She used to wear dyed garments and seek every kind of perfume the Prophet (pbuh) would like. Besides, she would avoid whatever would annoy the Prophet (pbuh). Once, Karimah bint Hammam asked her about the possibility of using *henna* (dyestuff), and she replied, "There is no objection to it, but I do not like it because my beloved, Muhammad, does not like its smell."¹

Here, one should know that the best of all kinds of beauty is the inner beauty, which is derived from purity of the heart and sincere worship of the Almighty, Exalted be He.

Exaggerate in cleanliness

Lady `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), the Prophet's wife, was known to have a good appearance and her clothes were very clean. Ibn Hajar narrated: 'It was said that she used to over-clean her garments in which she goes to bed with the Prophet (pbuh).'²

¹ Ibn al-Jawzi, *Ahkam An-Nisa'*, p. 145.

² Ibn Hajar, *Fat-h Al-Bari*, vol. 7, p. 136.

Moreover, she was keen on cleaning her teeth with *Siwak* (toothbrush). `Urwah said, "... Then we heard Lady `A'ishah, the mother of the believers, cleaning her teeth with *Siwak* in her apartment."¹

Jesting and lively manners

Another weapon of charm is the lively nature of the woman, a trait widely admired, especially by young men. A woman with tender nature and magnetic smile, who fills the house with happiness by her light manners and creative nature can eliminate any sense of monotony that sometimes infects the married life. Always remember the *hadith* of the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) stressing the importance of that nature, "*A young virgin who plays with you and you play with her, who laughs with you and you laugh with her.*"

Woman's initiation to the tender approach, to play and make jokes lead her to be the only queen of her husband's heart. It was narrated that Mother of the Believers, Lady Safiyyah (may Allah be pleased with her) once caused the Prophet (pbuh) to be upset. She went to Lady `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) and asked her to make peace between her and the Prophet (pbuh) and in return she would give up her day to Lady `A'ishah.

See what Lady `A'ishah did to perform the plan, an attitude that shows her wisdom and deep understanding. She said, "I put on a perfumed long veil, splashed drops of water on it to refresh the smell of the perfume, and then with a playful step I entered the room where the Prophet (pbuh) was sitting and sat beside him. He (pbuh) said, "*Away from my side `A'ishah, this is not your day (the day assigned to spend with her).*"

¹ Reported by al-Bukhari.

The *hadith* shows the way Lady `A'ishah approached her husband (the Messenger of Allah, pbuh) in a lively and light manner. It presents the way to approach a man and draw closer to his heart.

That is the meaning behind the supplication that the newly married couple should say on the first day of their marriage: "O Allah, I ask You to give me the best of her and her manners; and I seek refuge in You from her evil and her evil manners".

Be available for your husband

A good wife should learn how to save time to be available for her husband in a fresh mood, attractive appearance and sweet tongue. As long as your husband is at home, you should not get busy with anything other than practicing your basic role of providing him with cheerful friendly company.

One idea is to cook when your husband is absent. You can cook a variety of meals in small quantities and freeze them for the whole week. You can wash and dry up the vegetables and fruits and supervise cleaning the house. So, during the week, whether you are working or not, you will have plenty of time to spend with your husband.

Be moderate in your jealousy

Moderate jealousy is praised in Islam; however, one should not cross its limits by being either over jealous or too cold. A wise wife should not hold her husband hostage with excessive jealousy. You should give him enough space and trust so that he will not feel imprisoned by your fears. Have more confidence in yourself. Always remember that what keeps a husband tied to the marital bond is his wife's manners with him and not his fear of her.

Uplift your spouse's spirits

You should always remember your basic role of providing affection and comfort for your husband. If for any reason you husband is depressed, you should uplift his spirits by encouraging him to do his best and reminding him of his merits and his good deeds, just as lady Khadijah used to uplift the Prophet (pbuh) by repeating, “Verily, you treat your kindred well, bear the burden of the helpless, help (the afflicted) against the ordained misfortunes, and entertain the guests... Thus, Allah will never debase you.”

Forget past problems

Do not bring up past problems once they have been solved.

Never let a night go without sorting out your problem

Whenever conflicts take place between you and your husband, do your best and try hard to sort it out before the end of the day to make sure that both of you spend the night in peace.

Learn the art of proper listening to your husband

- You should never get busy with anything when your husband talks to you.
- You should always react to what he tells you and never make him feel that you are considering his speech worthless even if he is actually talking nonsense. This helps bring your husband closer to you and makes him turn to you whenever he faces something and needs to talk about it.
- Whenever he talks, you should pay attention to him turning all your body to his direction, just as the Prophet (pbuh) used to talk with anyone.

- You should summarize what he said shortly after listening to him to avoid any misunderstanding before giving your opinion and to assure to him indirectly that you've been listening to him attentively.
- Respect his point of view even if you disagree with him and try not to change him but display your opinion in a way that makes him willing to listen to you instead of admonishing him harshly. Remember that no man likes to be disciplined by his wife, so unless you approach him in a smart and lenient way, you won't win his friendship.

Compromise

It is very common among wives to be very organized while their husbands are messy. A wise wife should compromise. Provide your husband with a place of his own to control it as he wishes.

Qualities a Husband Likes in His Wife¹

These are the traits that each man wishes to see in his wife:

Concerning the husband's rights

1. To guard and protect him in herself (by maintaining her chastity and good reputation). To preserve his property in case of his absence.
2. She should not spend of his money without his consent.
3. She should not leave the house without his consent. However, this should be understood as etiquette for both husband and wife. The purpose for this is a protection for the women's reputation and to gain the trust of her spouse. It is important for both spouses to know the whereabouts of the other at all times, so that no false accusation might be made. As for all daily routine activities that the husband and wife agree upon in advance, there is no need for daily permission or consent. On the other hand, emergency situations require no permission or consent if it cannot be obtained without serious consequences. The husband is not permitted to keep his wife from going out for her needs or to the five daily obligatory prayers and *Eid* prayers even though it is a requirement for her to attend.

¹ Extracted from “*Your Consultant to the Happy Family*” seminar.

4. She should pick the best time and manner to make a request from him. She should approach him with a tender polite manner and should follow the best way her husband admires and selects the wording that attracts and charms him most.
5. To do her best to define the things that her husband admires and hates, to study his emotional sides, what makes him happy or sad, angry or calm, laugh or cry. Knowing this will save her a lot of the marital troubles.
6. To obey him when he orders her to do something, as long as it's not contradicting obeying Allah and His Messenger (pbuh).
7. She should not always remind him of what she presents him as gift or favors in degradation.
8. She should not fast a supererogatory day without taking his permission.
9. She should not permit anyone to enter his house during his absence except by his prior consent especially in case the visitor is non-*mahram*¹ to her, to close all doors to accusations or suspicions.
10. She should be keen on obeying her husband's requests as her priorities and giving his desires preference to her own desires. Doing this, she can be assured that he will also fulfill her requests and will be keen on attaining her happiness as she did with him.
11. Any husband admires that his wife plays with him in lively and kind charming manner. The Messenger of Allah

¹ *Mahram*: the male relative whom the woman is prohibited to marry (i.e. Her brother, uncle,....etc).

(pbuh) said to Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him), “*Won’t you marry a young girl to play with you and you play with her.*” A wife should be always available for her husband.

12. She should encourage him to maintain the bonds of kinship, visit his parents, family and friends.
13. She should drive her husband to feel how important and valuable he is to her and that she’s in constant need to him. Once the husband feels that his wife needs him, he’s driven closer to her, while if he feels that she’s ignoring him or that she doesn’t need him, whether financially or emotionally, he will start feeling boredom and rejection towards her.
14. When he talks, she should listen attentively to him and remains silent. This makes the husband feels his wife’s appreciation to and interest in him.
15. She should refrain from reminding him of his mistakes, but rather recollect always the nice beautiful memories which they both experienced.
16. She should seek to adopt what her husband favors, in the dress, food, manners, habits. Applying what he favors increases his love and attachment to her.
17. If he travels for any reason, she should always make supplication for him to return home safely and that Allah protects him while he is away. If he calls her on the phone, she shouldn’t tell him the bad or the distressing news nor makes him worried, but she should rather makes him feel safe and peaceful, uplifts his spirits and selects the beautiful words that make him happy and eager to come back faster.

18. When he comes back home, she should welcome him warmly and try to alleviate his exhaustion.
19. She should keep his secrets and be honest in keeping all his affairs as confidential as possible and not to tell them to anyone.
20. While he's at home, she should be available for him, stays with him and gives him all attention. She should try not to be involved with other activities that might distract her attention from him, be with him spiritually and physically.
21. She should respect his opinions, show respect and tactfulness.
22. She should give attention to the way he dresses, to keep his clothes clean and tidy so when he goes out to meet his friends, they would realize the cleanliness and tidiness of the wife at home.
23. If he becomes angry with her, she should try to handle his anger with patience and silence as fast as possible and prevent the situation from growing to a bigger problem.
24. On the time of his anger, the wife should follow the following steps:
 - a. Apologize to him even when he was wrong using the wording: "I know you might be exhausted or tired which pressed you to say so and so."
 - b. Remain silent and do not argue or shout.
 - c. After he is calmed down, approach him tenderly, serve him the kinds of food he likes, then you can, at that time, blame him kindly for his behavior. This is a very important action that a wife should make to prevent the mistake from recurring.

- d. Blaming should be with lenient and kind voice. She should try to give him excuses justifying the way he reacted.
 - e. The main purpose behind this is to drive his attention to the things that make her upset.
25. The man should also do the same thing with his wife in time of her sadness. Through this, both spouses will show care and love to each other.
26. According to the advice of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the married couple should not spend their night with their problem unsolved or when one is upset from the other. They should not go to sleep except after reconciliation. It was reported that the wives of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them) after any conflict, did not go to sleep unless they tell him “My eyes will not blink for sleep unless you’re satisfied with me.”
27. She should consult him with her general and private affairs, to build bridges of trust with him especially when she consults him in her financial matters (if she has her own money or business). This adds to the trust and the respect of her husband.
28. To share with him his thoughts and ideas for a better and happier married life, to exert the efforts and to bring up the new ideas for the welfare and happiness of their home.
29. If he gives her a gift, she should thank him, show her cheerfulness and appreciation even if the gift was not big or expensive or unsatisfactory to her. When he feels her happiness for the gift, her love will increase in his heart, while showing frustration or complaining creates hatred between them.

30. She should know her defects well and work her best for their remedy in a brilliant way. She should also accept the advice of her husband regarding her defects. `Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “May Allah shower His Mercy on the one who shows my faults to me.” That adds to the happiness of the family.
31. The nice appealing word is the key to the heart. Any husband seeks the love of his wife through her tender, meaningful and emotional expressions, especially when these words are of deep warm and romantic meanings, and are true from the bottom of the wife’s loving heart.
32. She must bring up her children on the love of Allah and His Messenger (pbuh), to bring them to respect their father, to obey him and never helps them or encourage them in doing a matter, which she knows her husband hates.
33. She should avoid complaining while sitting to have their meal. She should wait until the husband finishes eating in peace. Bringing up hateful issues during eating causes mal-digestion. It is scientifically proven that even seeing a quarrel in the television for example during having food causes mal-digestion of the stomach.

Concerning the wife’s characteristics

1. She should have good manners.
2. She must not over-burden her husband physically, financially, etc.
3. She should refrain from repeating the mistakes.
4. To show love and respect to her husband’s family and make him sense it. To wish for them all goodness in his

presence and absence. She should make him feel that she's fond of his family. If the husband feels any hatred from his wife towards his family, this will create troubles, which might threaten their family's stability.

5. She should not compliment or flatter any other man to her husband, except only for the better religious manners. Flattering another creates jealousy in the husband's heart, and may result in feelings of rejection towards his wife.
6. She should not describe another woman's qualities to her husband. So doing, he may imagine her and get tempted. Such an act threatens the family's stability.
7. Every matter at home should be either made by the wife or under her supervision. If the maid is the one who makes the food at home, this should be under the wife's directions.
8. She should not make others interfere with her married life. If troubles happened at her home, she should make haste to solve them without the interference of the relatives or friends.
9. She should make the best use of her time in doing the beneficial deeds for both her worldly life and the hereafter. She should benefit from her spare time and stay away from misusing the time in gossiping or chatting or backbiting.
10. She should invite others to the righteous path of Allah and of His Messenger (pbuh), having her husband and children at the first priority, then her family, then her neighbors, friends and relatives.

11. She should be a good example for her colleagues and friends in her actions, appearance, words, rationality, tactfulness and good manners.
12. She should have a distinguished character, which makes her different. She should have her own special style away from imitating others, whether in dress code, words or general manners.

How to Make Your Wife Happy

By getting married, you are not just getting a wife; you are getting your whole world. From now and for the rest of your life, your wife will be your partner, your companion, and your best friend. She will share your moments, your days, and your years. She will share your joys and sorrows, your successes and failures, your dreams and fears.

When you are ill, she will take the best care of you; when you need help, she will do all she can for you. When you have a secret, she will keep it; when you need advice, she will give you the best advice.

She will always be with you: when you wake up in the morning the first thing your eyes will see will be hers; during the day, she will be with you, if for a moment she is not with you physically, she will be thinking of you, praying for you with all her heart, mind and soul; when you go to sleep at night, the last thing your eyes will see will be her. In short, she will be your whole world and you will be hers.

Almighty Allah says,

[And Allah has made for you Mates (and Companions of your own nature.)

(An-Nahl: 72)

The Prophet (pbuh) simplifies how a husband should treat his wife, “*The best among you are those who are kindest to their wives.*”

The following are just examples of what a husband should do towards his wife:

1. Meet her with warmth upon entering the house. For example, be the first to wish peace (*Salam*), in addition to pleasantness and handshaking.
2. Talk to her sweetly. Call her with gentleness using her favorite name or nickname. Show her how much you care. Speak to her in a loving and friendly way.
3. Be good and amusing company. The Prophet (pbuh) used to spend time in the company of his wives even if it is late in the night, in spite of his big duties. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "*Everything that is not related to remembrance of Allah is waste and play except for four things: a man playing with his wife, a man training his horse, a man moving between two targets, and a man learning how to swim.*"
4. Help her with her chores at home, such as shopping, preparing meals, tidying up the house, etc. All of that will please her and foster the love and sentiment between both partners. The Prophet (pbuh) was never a difficult or tyrannical husband of the type who regards all household chores as "women's work". Lady `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) was asked by al-Aswad ibn Yazid what the Prophet (pbuh) used to do in the house. She replied, "He used to work for his family, i.e. serving his family, and when prayer time came, he went out for prayer."¹ Another *hadith* tells us that he used to mend his own clothes.

¹ Reported by al-Bukhari.

5. Do not get angry quickly: One could hardly prevent himself completely from getting angry, yet the wise person chooses and tries not to be aroused quickly to anger, not to shout or yell at any occasion, hence prevent anger from being one of his domineering personality traits. People who get angry very quickly are ones of the most miserable, because when one gets angry so quickly, he will get beyond the limits of mercy, fairness and justice and will be an aggressive and oppressive person to others. The Prophet of Allah (pbuh) says, "*The strong (person) is not the one who knocks others down but is (rather) the one who tams himself (at the time of) anger.*"¹
6. Do not get used to complaining especially when it comes to food. The Prophet (pbuh) did not make a fuss about food. It is reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (pbuh) never complained about the food or its cooking: "Allah's Messenger never found fault with food. If he liked something, he ate it, and if he disliked it, he just abstained from it."²
7. Consult with her. The incident that took place between the Prophet (pbuh) and his wife Umm Salamah on the day of Al-Hudaybiyah Pact is well known. The Prophet (pbuh) also used to consult with his Companions quite often.
8. Take her with you from time to time on visits to relatives, friends, and righteous people.
9. When traveling, always observe Islamic noble manners, such as bidding her farewell, asking others to take care of

¹ Agreed upon.

² Reported by Muslim.

her, asking her to remember you in her prayers, and leaving her sufficient money and provisions. While you are away, call her regularly, and buy her a present. When you return, do not surprise her by showing up suddenly so that she has enough time to prepare herself for meeting you in a pleasant way. Whenever possible, let her accompany you in your travels.

Anas (may Allah be please with him) was reported to have said that the Prophet (pbuh) never returned to his family after traveling late in the night. He would either return between sunrise and noon or between sunset and first third of the night.¹

The Prophet (pbuh) ordered husbands to approach al-Madinah gradually after a military campaign so that wives may prepare themselves:

Jabir ibn `Abdullah said, “We were returning with the Prophet (pbuh) after a military campaign, and as we were about to enter, he said, ‘*Slow down so that you enter by evening, permitting an unkempt woman to comb her hair and the wives of returning men to use the blade (to give them time for hair removal and prepare themselves to meet their husbands in a pleasant form).*”²

Dr. M. `Imarah, a Muslim scholar, says that it is from the Islamic manners for a husband to consult his wife about the timing of his travels or at least make her aware of his travels in advance since a husband's role of maintaining his family obligates him to provide for his wife's company and fulfill her needs.

¹ Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

² Reported by al-Bukhari and Mulsim.

10. Be generous in supporting her, because that contributes substantially to household stability.
11. Share your wife her hobbies. If your wife has a certain hobby like gardening, reading or painting, it is recommended that you share these interests with her even for a little time. This adds to her happiness a lot and strengthens her trust in you as well as to empowering her self esteem.
12. Always try to look your best. Good appearance, cleanliness, and use of nice fragrance are all important. Ibn `Abbas said that he liked to beautify himself up for his wife just as he liked her to do the same for him.

Meticulous physical and moral cleanliness is required. Cleanliness is a very important aspect that increases the happiness between the married couple. Unclean husband turns off his wife and rebels her away from him. Strange enough, in some cases matters related to cleanliness were the reasons behind divorce. Issues like the cleanliness of the spouse's mouth, body, shaving, insisting on smoking, or leaving the bathroom dirty and other similar cases, which show the recklessness of the husband to the point of cleanliness.

Ibn al-Jawzi said, "I have met a lot of people who are reckless to their physical cleanliness. Some don't clean their teeth after food, some would not wash their hands thoroughly after eating, especially from some sticking scents or grease, some would not use the eye and lashes oils, some would not shave underneath their arms, etc. Such recklessness emerges from a shortage in their adherence to the right rules of life and religion.

As to religion: Islam pays great attention to issues and manners related to the personal cleanliness such as taking bath before attending the Friday prayer so as not to harm others. It also prohibits one from entering the mosque if he ate garlic due to the bad smell of one's mouth. It advises Muslims to trim the moustache, clip the nail, use the *Siwak* (stick special for cleaning the teeth) consistently, and shave the pubic parts.

Among the words of wisdom: cleaned clothes decrease one's miseries and beautiful scents increase one's wisdom. It adds to the wife's happiness – and since women complement men – so he hates the same things she hates of him, nevertheless he might bear these bad points he hates while she might not bear them in similar patience.”¹

Be generous even with your wording. Remember that the Prophet (pbuh) was clean and pure both in his thoughts and person. He says, *"Verily Allah is pure and loves the pure, is clean and loves the clean, is beneficent and loves the beneficent, is generous and loves the generous."*²

13. Satisfy her sexual needs. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) mentioned that even the couple's sexual intercourse is rewarded from God. As reported by Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him) the Messenger of Allah said, *"...and in your sexual parts a charity"*, the Companions said, *"O Messenger of Allah! Will we fulfill our physical desires and also take a (divine) reward! He said, "Do you see if he fulfills it in a prohibited way, will he bear a sin?"*

¹ Ibn al-Jawzi, *Sayd Al-Khatir*.

² Reported by at-Tirmidhi.

Similarly if he fulfills it in a lawful (Halal) way he will gain a reward.”¹ (This is something in Islam and cannot be found in other religions.)

Imam an-Nawawi said, “This *hadith* is an evidence that a normal lawful act turns to be a good deed through one’s intention. The sexual intercourse between a married couple is turned to an act of worship if the intention of the husband is to: provide his wife her rights, treat her kindly as Allah’s Commands, seek the birth of a good son, satisfy their desires and maintain their virtuousness.”

14. Be generous in showing her your affection and sympathy.
15. Soothe her. A Muslim husband must be sensible enough to detect the pains of others. Every now and then, your wife will be exposed to difficulties and problems. At such times, she will be in desperate need for a kind smile and a feeling of sincere concern to comfort her and alleviate her pains.
16. Guard your marital secrets. The Prophet (pbuh) was quoted to have said, “*One of the most grave matters of trust before Allah on the Day of Resurrection is a man that confides to his wife and she to him then he discloses her secrets.*”
17. Encourage and help each other to obey Allah. Share your acts of worship together, such as late-night prayers, praising Allah, and benevolence. If you are used to praying in the mosque, this should not ban you from praying with your wife at least the '*Sunnah*' prayer. You should help to develop her religious culture. The Prophet (pbuh) said, “*May Allah have mercy on a man who wakes up*

¹ Reported by Muslim.

in the night to pray and wakes up his wife, even by sprinkling water on her face if she refuses.”

18. Be good and kind to her relatives and friends.
19. Educate and advise her.
20. Show reasonable jealousy.
21. Be patient, tolerant, and lenient with your wife. Even if she makes a mistake, seek justification on her behalf and do not avenge yourself.

Remember how `Umar ibn al-Khattab tolerated his wife's loud voice and endured her anger patiently and kindly saying that, “She tolerated me, washed my clothes, prepared my bed, brought up my children and cleaned my home. She did all that without being ordered by God to do so, she did it voluntarily. Besides, I enjoy peace of mind because of her and am kept away from indecent acts on account of her. I therefore tolerate all her excesses on account of these benefits. It is right that you should also adopt the same attitude.”

22. Be forgiving. Even if you are going to reproach her, do so gently.
23. Give her rights high priority. For example, taking care of an ill wife or fulfilling a wife's wish to perform pilgrimage were favored by some scholars to struggling in the cause of Allah. Besides, caring for her during the difficult times of pregnancy is highly rewarded in the Sight of Allah.
24. Always show confidence and goodwill towards her.

25. Respect her rights and be aware that her rights supercede Allah's rights in many cases¹.
26. Show love for your children. While it is good that the mother shows her love and concern, it is not approved for the father to regard his role only in terms of financial responsibilities. A father should not abandon his own moral duty in showing his love and concern for his children, which is very essential in their psychological upbringing. He should provide time for his children, accompany them in regular outings, play with them, make them feel his friendship and consult with their mother regarding their affairs.

There are also numerous *hadiths* indicating the Prophet's (pbuh) love for children and his practice of showing his love for them.

For example, Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) related, "The Prophet of Allah kissed his grandson al-Hasan, the son of `Ali in the presence of al-Aqra` ibn Habis, whereupon al-Aqra` said, 'Verily, I have children and yet I have not kissed any of them.' The Prophet (pbuh) looked towards him and said, '*What can I do for you if Allah has taken away mercy from your heart. He who shows no mercy shall have no mercy shown to him.*'"²

Finally, continuous good relation and communication with Allah is a sufficient way to bring you happiness whereas cutting this relation is also sufficient source for your misery.

¹ Kindly refer to: Spouses' Rights Supercede Allah's Rights

² Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

The Almighty says,

[But he who turns away from remembrance of Me, his will be a narrow life, and I shall bring him blind to the assembly on the Day of Resurrection.]

(Taha: 123)

How to maintain a consistent good relation with Allah

- a. Observe your five obligatory prayers in Congregation (*Jama`ah*).
- b. Maintain the supererogatory prayers/acts.
- c. Stick to (*Dhikr*) Remembrance of Allah.
- d. Supplicate to Allah excessively and sincerely.
- e. Always ask for Allah's Forgiveness.
- f. Recite some Qur'anic verses daily.
- g. Always invoke Peace and Blessings of Allah upon His Messenger (pbuh).
- h. Adhere carefully to the lawful and stay away from the prohibited acts.
- i. Accompany those who remind you with Allah.
- j. Attend religious lessons and gatherings.
- k. Purify your house from any bad prohibited actions.

Advice to Husbands Qualities a Wife Desires in Her Husband

Women's priorities of the desirable qualities they should seek in an ideal Muslim husband:

1. A pious Muslim.
2. Just and fair leadership.
3. Loving for children.
4. Kind and considerate.
5. Ready to consult his wife.
6. Of good-manners and loving nature.
7. Chaste.
8. Trustworthy, honest and reliable.
9. Pure habits.
10. Intelligent and broad minded.
11. Gentle.
12. Generous emotionally and financially.
13. Of loving nature.
14. Contented with having one wife.
15. With a sense of humor.
16. Rational.

17. Good-looking.

18. Physically strong.

This list of qualities is not of course comprehensive. However, it raises many interesting points for our brothers to consider in their endeavor to be qualified as potential or actual ideal Muslim husbands.

Marriage Tips for a Better Husband-Wife Relationship¹

Examples of a negative relationship between husband and wife

Many husbands and wives treat each other like adversaries rather than partners. The husband feels that he is the boss, and whatever he says goes. The wife feels that she must squeeze everything she can out of her husband. Some wives never show their husband that they are satisfied with anything he does or buys for them in order to trick him into doing and buying more. They make him feel like a failure if he does not give them the lifestyle that their friends and relatives enjoy. Some husbands speak very harshly to their wives, humiliate them, and even physically abuse them. Their wives have no voice or opinion in the family.

Many of us treat our spouses in ways that we would never treat others. With others, we try to be polite, kind, and patient. With our spouses, we often do not show these courtesies. After a tough day at work, husbands usually come home angry and on the edge. The wife has probably also had a hard day with the children and the housework. Wives and husbands should discuss this potential time bomb so that if they are short-tempered with each other during these times,

¹ Collected from different articles.

they will understand the reasons rather than automatically thinking that their spouse no longer loves them.

Marriage as prescribed by Allah

It is very sad that this relationship, which Allah has established for the good has been made a source of contention, deception, trickery, tyranny, humiliation, and abuse. This is not the way marriage is supposed to be. Almighty Allah described marriage very differently in the Glorious Qur'an,

[He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts).]

(Ar-Rum: 21)

But Allah knows that the human heart is not a static entity, it is sometimes weak and at times dynamic. Feelings can and do change with time. Love may wither and fade away. The marital bond might weaken if not properly cared for. Happiness in marriage cannot be taken for granted; continuous happiness requires constant giving from both sides. For the tree of marital love to remain alive and keep growing, the soil has to be sustained, maintained, watered and nurtured.

Good marriages require patience, kindness, humility, sacrifice, sympathy, love, understanding, forgiveness, and hard work. Following these principles should help any marriage to improve. The essence of them all can be summed up in one sentence: Always treat your spouse the way you would like to be treated. If you follow this rule, your marriage will have a much greater chance for success. If you discard this rule, failure is just around the corner.

1- Do not be an opinionated, be partners in decision-making and understand your partners' priorities

Regardless of whether or not Islam has made the husband the head of the household, Muslims are not supposed to be dictators and tyrants. We are taught to treat our wives well.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was reported to have said,

“The most perfect Muslim in the matter of faith is one who has excellent behavior; and the best among you are those who behave best towards their wives.”¹

Follow the principle of consulting and make decisions as a family. There will be much more harmony in the family when decisions are not imposed and everyone feels that they had some part in making them.

2- Communication is important

Communication! This is the big word in counseling and it should be. Husbands and wives need to talk to each other. It is better to deal with problems early and honestly than to let them pile up until an explosion occurs. Try to find a solution to one problem at a time and not all of them.

3- Work together in the house

The Prophet (pbuh) is known to have helped his wives in the house. And if the Prophet (pbuh) did not disdain from helping his wives with their household chores, modern Muslim husbands should follow his example.

4- Never be emotionally abusive

Never be emotionally, mentally, or physically abusive to your spouse. The Prophet (pbuh) never mistreated his wives.

¹ *Mishkat Al-Masabih*, No. 0278 (R), Reported by at-Tirmidhi.

He (pbuh) is reported to have said, "How could they beat their women in the daytime as slaves and then sleep with them in the night?"

5- Be careful of your words

Be very careful of what you say when you are upset. Sometimes you will say things that you would never say when you were not angry. If you are angry, wait until you calm down before continuing the conversation.

6- Show affection

Show affection for your mate. Be kind, gentle, and loving. Share your spouse in his/her interests. Enjoy fun times together.

7- Show appreciation

Show appreciation for what your spouse does for the family. Never make your husband feel that he is not doing well enough for the family or that you are not satisfied with his work or his efforts, unless, of course, he is truly lazy and not even trying to provide for the family. The Prophet (pbuh) was reported to have said,

"On the Day of Judgment, Allah will not look upon the woman who has been ungrateful to her husband. Show your wife that you appreciate her. If she takes care of the house and the children, do not take it for granted. It is hard work, and no one likes to feel unappreciated."

8- Be your spouse's friend

Show interest in your mate's life. Too often, we live in the same house but know nothing about each other's lives.

Whenever you feel that life has become monotonous, one piece of advice is to cooperate as soldiers of Allah in good deeds together such as visiting orphanages, feeding the poor, etc.

9- Live simply

Do not be jealous of those who seem to be living a more luxurious life than your family. In order to develop the quality of contentment, look at those people who have less than you, not those who have more. Thank Allah for the many blessings in your life.

10- Give your spouse some time alone

If your mate does not want to be with you all the time, it does not mean he or she does not love you. People need to be alone for various reasons. Sometimes they want to read, to think about their problems, or just to relax. Do not make them feel that they are committing a sin.

11-Admit your mistakes

When you make a mistake, admit it. When your mate makes a mistake, excuse him or her easily. In general, never go to sleep angry with each other because negative feelings are stored and amplified in the subconscious during sleeping and have bad effect on your health.

12- Have meals together

Try to eat together as a family when possible. Show appreciation for the wife's cooking efforts. The Prophet (pbuh) did not complain about food that was put before him.

13- Be mindful of your discussion topics

Never discuss with others things about your marriage that your spouse would not like you to discuss, unless there is a reason to do so. This is a recipe for disaster. Information about your intimate relations should be kept between you and your spouse.

14- Have worship together

Try to always find some time for both of you to pray together. Strengthening the bond between you and Allah is the best guarantee that your own marital bond would always remain strong. Having peace with Allah will always result in having more peace at home.

Remember that the Prophet (pbuh) gave glad tidings for those couples who wake up at night to pray together. The Prophet (pbuh) even urged the spouse who rises up first to wake the other spouse up even by throwing cold water on his/her face.

Prayer or *Du`a`* for a happy married life

“O Allah! Grant us such wives and offspring who have a coolness of the eyes, and make us leaders of the Allah-Fearing.”

Prayer or *Du`a`* for protection of one's religion, life, family and wealth

Ma`qal ibn Yasar narrated, “Once I expressed my fears to the Prophet (pbuh) over five things in my life. I feared that I would be misled or deviate from the Righteous Path. The second was regarding my life. I feared harm or illness would befall me. The third was about my children, that they would experience harm. My fourth concern was my wife, that she too may suffer physical or spiritual harm. The fifth fear I had was over my wealth, should there occur a loss of income or property. After listening to my fears, the Prophet (pbuh) taught me the following prayer to be recited three times morning and evening, *“May the blessings of Allah be on my religion, life, children, family and wealth.”*¹

¹ *Kanzul-Ummal*, vol. 2, p. 636.

How to Solve Your Marital Conflicts

It is worth mentioning that rude words and tough phrases have a long lasting recurrent effect on the spouse even after the conflict is solved, not to mention the emotional trauma and disturbance, which accumulate inside each individual.

On the other hand, choosing to remain silent and passive in facing the conflict is a negative temporal way of treatment, for shortly the accumulated anger will soon erupt at the least cause or dispute. Moreover, curbing the emotions of anger is the first cause of the psychological illness.

So, there're two options: either to forget and forgive, or to try to make a complete settlement of the issue involving all the parties, and to wipe out all the emotions of anger left in the hearts, with fairness, love, tenderness and tolerance.

There are some points to be taken into consideration:

- Arranging for settlement of the conflict should be done in the most suitable time after the other individual regains his/her stability and state of calmness.
- Refraining from the methods that might bring fast victory of one over another will have the most dangerous effect on the long run as it deepens the hatred and the conflicts in the hearts. Examples of these methods: being sarcastic, laughing at the spouse, rejection or refusal or insistence on winning the situation and to appear to be the one on the right by all means.

Lady `A`ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that some Jews passed by the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) and said to him “As-Sam `Alayk (poison be unto you, instead of Peace be upon you).” So Lady `A`ishah replied, “And unto you, and may Allah put His Curse and Anger on you.” He (pbuh) said, “*Calm down `A`ishah, be lenient and stay away from harshness and bad words.*” She said, “Didn’t you hear what they said!” He (pbuh) replied, “*And didn’t you hear what I said? I answered them so my prayer for them will be answered while their prayer for me will not.*”¹

Lady `A`ishah also narrated, “The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, ‘*Indeed the worst of people in the view of Allah as in their situation on the Day of Judgment are those whom other people stay away from as to avoid their evil.*’”

It was narrated that Abu `Abdullah al-Gadli said, “I asked Lady `A`ishah concerning the manners of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh). So she said, “He was neither a *Fahish* (one who speaks bad words), nor a *Mutafahhish* (one who speaks obscene evil words to make people laugh), nor does he speak in a loud voice in the markets, nor pay back harm with a similar harm, but he rather forgives and tolerates.”²

Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) “I served the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) for ten years, and he never asked me why did you do this or why did you do that? Nor did he ask if I left something, why did you leave it?”

One should be aware of the painful influence of conflicts on one's spouse. There is no doubt that when a woman experiences a conflict with the one she loves and respects,

¹ Reported by al-Bukhari.

² Reported by at-Tirmidhi.

this causes her a lot of worries, confusion and distress especially if she has a highly sensitive nature.

Preliminary Steps

1. Understand the nature of the conflict: Is it a deep one or is it just a misunderstanding and difference in opinions? Explicit expression of one's view and reason of anger helps in solving the issue and overcoming the misunderstanding.
2. Focus on the situation causing the dispute, as one should only address this issue, especially without mentioning other issues that happened in the past or bring up old troubles because this would add to the current trouble and would widen the conflict's gap.
3. Each one should weigh the issue as being a product of the way he/she understands it, and should not consider that his/her opinion is the only right one and any other opinion is wrong. One should not consider his opinion as a given or not liable for discussion or corrections because such insistence on one's opinion kills all possibilities for solution even before trying.
4. Try to limit the dispute and avoid spreading it publicly among other people other than the involved parties.
5. It's preferable to begin the discussion for solving the problem with mentioning the good and positive sides of both parties in order to soften the hearts, expel the devil, bring the opinions closer, facilitate each other to sacrifice for the other and help to forgive a lot of the hard feelings that were in the hearts, as Allah says, [*...and don't forget the favors among you.*]

If one told the other, “I don’t forget your favor to me when you did such and such, I don’t forget your good sides and I will not ignore the common points that we agree on.” All these can help the other to compromise, sacrifice for the other and wipe out a lot of the hard feelings that he/she has towards the other.

You should think positively deep inside yourself about your partner and stress your partner's merits even if his/her merits do not directly affect you, e.g. his/her kindness to parents, love for his/her children, etc. These positive thoughts should be repeated regularly as if it is a positive program for the subconscious. In time, the negative program existing in oneself will be replaced by a positive one. What is amazing is that the other partner will act differently and kindly. One will think that his partner has changed, but in fact, one's positive emanating vibrations will affect one's partner on a positive resonance level.

6. It is preferable to begin the discussion for solving the problem with offering your spouse something he/she likes to eat or drink as means of pleasing your spouse before discussing any conflicting subject. As Allah says,

[O you who believe! When you consult the Messenger in private, spend something in charity before your private consultation. That will be best for you, and most conducive to purity (of conduct). But if ye find not (the wherewithal), Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.]

(Al-Mujadilah: 12)

A decent conversation will be opened in order to put an end to such a conflict and avoid the same conflict to be repeated.

7. Try hard to solve your conflicts before going to sleep so that both of you will sleep in peace.
8. Confessing one's faults when it becomes clear. Each party should have self confidence and courage enough to admit his/her faults while the other party should face this with consideration and full respect, thank him and show gratitude for such an admission. Remember that admitting one's fault is better than proceeding with it. Admitting fault is the first step in the right direction. Yet, such an admission should not be abused by the other party; should not use it as a means of pressure over the other party but rather consider it a good bright side in the marital relationship and should be counted in one's good record which should be often remembered and referred to.
9. When one apologizes, the other should accept his/her apology, since Islam encourages prompt forgiveness and tolerance and treats the one who refuses the other's apology as the mistaken party:

[The Believers are not but brothers so make peace between your brethren.]

(Al-Hujurat: 10)

10. The husband should be patient and tolerant in handling some of the woman's dominant habits like jealousy, as per the *hadith* of the Prophet (pbuh) when he said to his Companions (may Allah be pleased with all of them) (referring to Lady `A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her), "*Your mother was jealous.*" As we find in the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) the best human model in his consideration to people and situations, in his experience with human habits and inevitable emotions.

Lady `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "I never saw one who was a better cook than Safiyyah. When she presented a dish of food as a gift to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) I could not help but break it. Then I asked the Messenger of Allah about the way of compensation I should pay her, he said, "A dish like the dish (that she broke) and food like the food (that was spilled)."¹

The husband should consider the feelings of jealousy that his wife might have. He should try to soothe these emotions by keeping her always informed of her place in his heart, how much he appreciates her and he should not leave her always worried about him.

11. One should stay away from settling the disputes at a time when anger is aroused, but rather should wait until the anger is calmed down. Decisions made at the times of anger are wrong mostly.
12. One should compromise some of his/her rights to the other person. It is almost impossible to give each person his full rights.
13. One should try to search for one's own mistakes and to claim one's defects. One should do this in regard to his sins with his Creator. Through this, you can find it easier to consider the sins of others against you as minor. One should remember also that no calamity befell anyone except by a sin that one made and having disputes with our loved ones is considered a form of the personal calamities that might happen. Muhammad ibn Sirin, the great Muslim scholar, said, "I can realize my sin in the manners of my wife and my ride."

¹ Reported an-Nasa'i, Abu Dawud and at-Tirmidhi.

14. Lowering the gaze from seeing the minor mistakes and the unintentional errors from the other person, for where is the person who never errs or where is that one who never did a good deed!

Who is to be consulted in marital conflicts?

Who is to be consulted in case a conflict arises with the married couple? And should they consult their families applying the saying of Allah, the Almighty,

[Appoint an arbiter from his family and an arbiter from her family.]

(An-Nisa': 35)

To answer these important questions, we have to bear in mind a main principle to be followed in case of marital conflicts. This is: the frame of the family is dependant only on the married couple, and should be totally independent from the outside interference by any external parties. Keeping the family's secrets confidential is a prime factor in any family and hence preventing any interference from the couple's families. Accordingly, we can set the following rules:

- a. In case of minor conflicts: they should be discussed between the married couple only without any external interference.
- b. In case the conflict is between the husband and the wife's family: The wife here plays an important role. She is the one who should settle any disputes between her husband and her family because her family will accept the criticism from her rather than from her husband since he is still not as close to them as she is due to the kinship relation. Therefore,

the husband in this case should not interfere to prevent any escalation in the troubles.

- c. In case the conflict is between the wife and the husband's family: Here the husband plays the important role in settling this dispute with his family the same way the wife must do with her family.

Priorities

If conflicts take place, the dispute will be settled for the sake of the nearest party of each spouse according to the following priorities.

| The wife's priorities | The husband's priorities |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Her husband's satisfaction | His mother's satisfaction |
| Her mother's satisfaction | His father's satisfaction |
| Her father's satisfaction | His wife's satisfaction |

For example, the wife should give her husband's satisfaction preference over her mother's. Also, a husband should give his mother's satisfaction preference over her wife's. However, it should be taken into consideration that one should not show such preference in direct attitudes especially in the presence of the other. This means, a husband should not show his preference to his mother over his wife. On the contrary, he should show his wife that his love for her is similar to his love for his mother in a diplomatic way in order to avoid jealousy between them.

Evidence for the previous priorities is found in the prophetic traditions:

- A man asked the Prophet (pbuh), “Who should I honor most?” The Prophet replied, “*Your mother.*” The man said, “And who comes next?” The Prophet replied, “*Your mother.*” The man said again, “And who comes next?” The Prophet replied “*Your mother.*” The man said, “And who comes next?” The Prophet replied, “*Your father.*”
- It is also reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said,
“If I to command a human to prostrate for another human, I would have commanded the woman to prostrate to her husband (as a sign) as to the greatness of his rights (bounty) over her.”