

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Hadith Umm Zar'

Living Quran

Live Session Oct 2019

Justice - Bed of Roses or Warzone

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A Bed of Roses or a Warzone: the Importance of Justice in Marriage

We choose Hadith Umm Zar to reflect on how we can improve our relationships with our spouses and families. This begs the fundamental question: What is the purpose of marriage?

I was reflecting on the verses of the Quran, and there are about ten verses which talk directly about it. Let's start from the most famous and memorised verse in Surah Naba 'wa khalaqna hum azwaja':

And We created you in pairs (78:8)

The purpose of marriage is joint journey

Allah Almighty says here that He created us in pairs, in other words we were not created to be alone, we were created to be in pairs – your spouse is your partner. Allah Almighty sent Adam to earth with his wife and made him His representative on earth, and then his children and grandchildren, (and we, by extension) continue carrying this *amanah*.

In Surah Nahl, Allah Almighty said:

Allah has made for you wives of your own kind, and has made for you, from your wives, sons and grandsons, and has bestowed on you good provision. Do they then believe in false deities and deny the Favour of Allah (by not worshipping Allah Alone).

In Surah Arum, which is quoted at every wedding and much memorised, Allah Almighty said:

And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought. (30:21)

These are the foundations that underpin marriage – tranquillity, mercy and affection. They characterise the relationship which Allah Almighty created for us through marriage.

He made this bond halal. What if it hadn't been halal? Allah Almighty made the relationship between husband and wife halal with rules and regulations.

In Surah Baqarah, Nisa and Nur we find the remainder of the verses that mention marriage. What lessons can we learn from these verses?

How to choose a partner

The first lesson is how to choose a partner. Allah Almighty instructs us in Surah Baqarah not to choose partners who worship idols. When He says DO NOT marry non-believers, especially idol worshippers, (People of the Book are a different discussion) the command is very clear. We need to understand this.

Do not marry idolatresses, unless they have believed. A believing maid is better than an idolatress, even if you like her. And do not marry idolaters, unless they have believed. A believing servant is better than an idolater, even if you like him.

*These call to the Fire, but God calls to the Garden and to forgiveness, by His leave.
He makes clear His communications to the people, that they may be mindful.
(2:221)*

Justice – the core of all relationships

The main message that comes through the ayahs is the thin line which connects all the verses together. It illustrates the underlying principle of the bond between husband and wife, (and ultimately all people) being a relationship of mutual fairness and justice.

The top command in marriage is to deliver justice. Not only should the relationship between husband and wife be built on justice, but all our relationships. This is even more necessary in the relationship between husband and wife.

In the beginning of Surah Nisa, Allah Almighty says:

If you fear you cannot act fairly towards the orphans—then marry the women you like—two, or three, or four. But if you fear you will not be fair, then one, or what you already have. That makes it more likely that you avoid bias. (4:3)

Here Allah Almighty uses the Arabic word *qist* which is equivalent of *adl* meaning fairness and justice. These are the basic principles of marriage. You cannot compromise the basics. They are the foundation of any relationship, not just husband and wife. They inform any decisions which are made – if they are fair, you can take them, if they are not fair you cannot take them.

In divorce, Allah Almighty continues to highlight the importance fairness. Good character is not just for when you are experiencing honeymoon times but also when you are experiencing hell, which is so complicated and challenging and tiring.

How to deal with bad times

Don't allow your emotions to control you.

Do not make the hatred of some people drive you to deliver injustice. (5:8)

Even in the ayahs about divorce, Allah Almighty instructs the husband says take nothing back from the *mahr*:

If you wish to replace one wife with another, and you have given one of them a fortune, take nothing back from it. Would you take it back fraudulently and sinfully? (4:20)

The overarching meaning of this ayah is not let your hatred of some people to drive you to deliver injustice. Allah Almighty here uses the word *shana'aan* (hatred) which is an emotion. Thus Allah Almighty is saying the characteristic of the believer is not to allow their emotions to rule them. To allow emotions to control us is not *imaan* (belief).

Imaan is about '*sami'na wa atana*' (we hear and we obey). It is a way of life. It is obedience to Allah Almighty. Not simply a slogan. We can't park it or pause it. Across the board, we have to abide by it, whether it concerns financial matters or other obligations.

I am saying this because I have seen many cases where everyone is pulling the rope to his side; Shaytan is filling their ears. There is no fear of Allah, or *sami'na wa atana*. What is true becomes

false and what is false becomes the truth. This is wrong. Emotions, if you are controlled by them, obliterate justice. However, justice is to give everyone their right.

Just because you are upset, you cannot take away someone's right. You cannot falsify stories against them to push your case through. You can win in the court of dunya, but don't forget you will go to the bigger court in akhirah. And Allah Almighty will expose everything you falsified to everyone. So be careful. This is why Allah's Messenger (peace be on him) said:

A believing man should not hate a believing woman; if he dislikes one of her characteristics, he will be pleased with another. (Muslim)

Again and again it is about fairness. A believer should not hate a female believer. If he hates one of her characteristics, he should be content with another.

If you hate one of out ten things, or even 5 things, don't allow them to let you forget the good things. Because when we are controlled by emotions we can go off track. We allow the Shaytan to play us. He promised:

I will lead them astray. (15:39)

When we go off track, we are certainly following the footsteps of Shaytan. And I keep receiving different cases and I can tell you when I connect these cases together, every time when there is conflict, injustice is dominant – whether from his side or her side. Their relationship becomes a war zone. Allah Almighty says:

'Do not forget the good things you have among yourselves.' (2:237)

Don't be a person of ungratefulness. Being grateful means recognising the good elements even in the midst of the bad.

Whenever we read an ayah about conflict, we see that Allah Almighty uses one of His beautiful names to reflect justice, to tell us to be careful not to allow Shaytan to drive us beyond the boundaries of what is right.

We have to have mutual respect. And principles. These are the basics. They should be praying. They should be people of belief and principles. They can make compromises on alternating visits between both spouse's parents, but they can't deliver justice today and injustice tomorrow. Stop salah today and pray tomorrow. We cannot compromise principles.

The Prophet (peace be on him) is saying be fair with your spouse. When there is something wrong, as happens in human relationships, this is where you need extra understanding patience and wisdom to deal with it.

You also need wisdom. Every time there is conflict you don't have to tell the truth in the minutest detail. Yes and no. Sometimes going through every detail might escalate the issue to a more problematic scenario. You must choose part of the scenario to minimise the harm – this is wisdom. Do not lie but do not necessarily say everything.

Some people unfortunately say everything that comes into their heads. Think before you deliver anything. Think about what the receiving end will feel like. Put yourself in their position. If it is good for you it is good for them.

The Prophet (peace be on him) mentioned in many narrations from the sunnah that the best of you is the best to his family and that he was the best role model:

And I am the best among you to my family. (Tirmidhi)

Being a person of justice and kindness is what the Prophet (peace be on him) is telling us and we should behave like this. We need to action the sunnah in our life. Train ourselves not to be controlled by our emotions.

Allah Almighty is testing everyone. Our test is how to control our desires. And it is more testing for men to control their desire. I am not saying women have no desire. They definitely do. But it is more testing for me. For women it is more testing for them to control their emotions. I am not saying that men don't have emotions, but it is harder for women to do this.

We need to work through this and learn how to have control. And learn how to always deliver justice. Because we never know when our time will be up. Every day we lose someone - a relative, a friend or a cousin. Tomorrow it might be me or you. We need to meet Allah Almighty without any issues and unfinished business. Without injustice. It is very heavy in the scale when we oppress others. It is heavy.

We ask Allah to enable us always to deliver justice. And we ask him to follow the footsteps of the Prophet (peace be on him). Ameen.